

**WATCH VIDEOS BEFORE THEY  
FINISH DOWNLOADING**

Genius  
torrent  
hack p56



- Windows 10 'free' U-turn
- Set up RAID on your PC
- Best way to recover files
- Get all-day battery life
- Use Tor's new browser  
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# WebUser

Issue 372

2 - 16 June 2015

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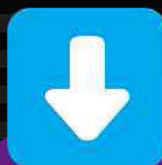
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# Capture what's seen on screen

**G**o to any concert these days and your view will inevitably be obstructed by some idiot recording the whole event on their mobile phone. Apparently, when you've spent £150 on a ticket to see the Rolling Stones (or whichever beat combo is currently rocking the charts), the best way to enjoy the experience is via a shaky 5in screen held above your head.

I mention this pet peeve to reassure you that this issue's cover feature (page 38) is not about recording events on your mobile device or PC, but about capturing what you do on it, such as streaming audio and video,

playing games, watching screencasts, making phone calls and much more.

Also in this issue, you'll notice that our Instant Expert section has been renamed FAQ (frequently asked questions). This is to better represent the varied topics we now cover, of which the latest is those cute (or annoying, depending on your point of view) little icons called emoji. Turn to page 36 for our complete guide.

**Robert Irvine**  
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[#webuser](#)



**ISSUE 372**

**3 - 16 JUNE 2015**

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Average sales, Jan-Dec 2014, 29,057 copies per issue



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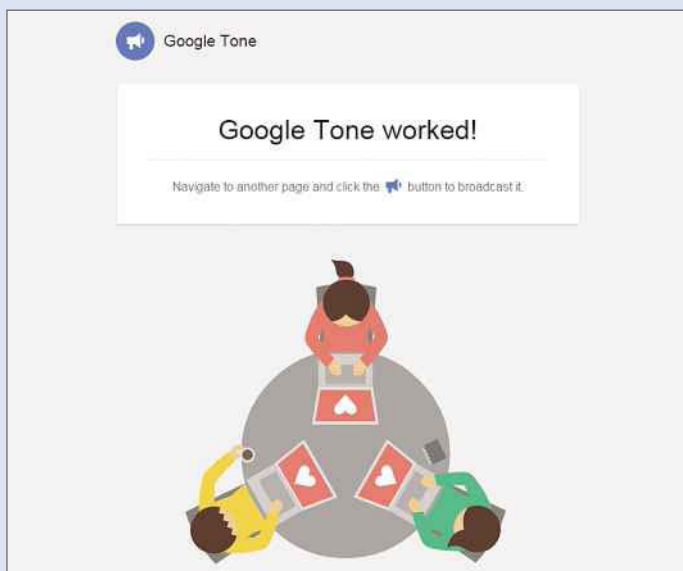


# What's New Online

## Share web content using sound

**T**hose clever people at Google have devised a way for computers to communicate with each other using sound. By installing the new Chrome extension Tone, and making sure your PC's volume is on, you can share the web page you've got open with any other nearby PC. Just click the blue speaker icon that appears in the top-right of your screen to play a sequence of bleeps. Any PC with Tone installed that 'hears' the bleeps will interpret them as a unique sound signature for the web page's URL, and display a notification. Clicking it opens the web page.

Google claims that Tone makes it much easier to share files and



websites with people in the same room, offering a faster alternative to email and messaging. But it does have limitations, as Google admits on its Research blog

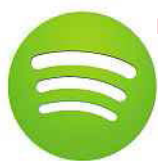
([bit.ly/blog372](http://bit.ly/blog372)): "The orientation of laptops relative to each other, the acoustic characteristics of the space, the particular speaker volume and mic sensitivity, and even where you're standing will all affect Tone's reliability".

On the day Tone was made available, it was called a "clone" by the developers of Chirp, a British app for iOS and Android that has been offering a similar 'send by sound' service since it launched in 2012. It has risen to Google's

challenge by releasing its own extension: [chirp.io/chirp-chrome](http://chirp.io/chirp-chrome). [bit.ly/tone372](http://bit.ly/tone372)

Turn to page 30 for more add-ons.

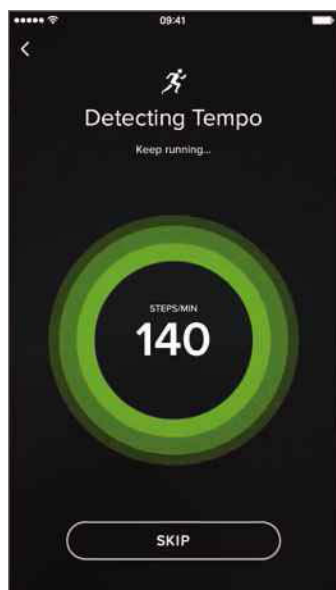
## Stream podcasts and videos in Spotify



[bit.ly/spotify372](http://bit.ly/spotify372)

Spotify is now offering videos and podcasts, expanding its catalogue beyond music. The content will come from several UK and US broadcasters, including MTV,

Comedy Central, ESPN, BBC and NBC. Also new to Spotify is the Now start page, which learns what kind of music you like to hear at specific times of the day, then tweaks the playlist to suit. Just as clever is the new Spotify Running feature, added to the iOS app, which works out how fast you're running, then plays music that matches your tempo (see screen grab). It's a brilliant idea, but whether it will really make you a "harder, better, faster, stronger" runner, as Spotify claims, is open to question.



## Watch live maps of transport systems

[bit.ly/travic372](http://bit.ly/travic372)

Each of the coloured dots in this screen grab is a bus, tram or train making its way through New York. It's one of the busiest cities included in this wonderful map, which shows the routes used by 249 transport systems around the world.



In most of the cities, the dots don't move in real time but are based on each city's "static schedule data" (tech-speak for timetables). For that special real-time info, you'll need to zoom into San Francisco and the Netherlands. But whether live or not, the maps are oddly mesmerising, and particularly therapeutic to watch after you've endured a journey into work on a packed train.

Click the All Feeds button at the top to see a world map showing which cities you can zoom into. These include Paris, Rome, Mexico City, Sydney, and dozens in Germany (the map was made by a Swiss-German IT company and the University of Freiburg). Hopefully, UK cities will be added soon.

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

## Watch Google's time-lapse videos

[bit.ly/lapse372](http://bit.ly/lapse372)

Researchers at Google and Washington University have found a superb use for 86 million photos stored online in the public domain. Using a process they call 'time-lapse mining', they've collated different people's pictures into videos that show the passing of time. Highlights include glaciers shrinking and skyscrapers being built.



## Explore Madagascar in Street View



[bit.ly/madsv372](http://bit.ly/madsv372)

Joining the many forms of transport Google has used to capture Street View images is the pirogue, a small fishing boat typically used in shallow water. Google hopped aboard one to take photos from the Mozambique Channel, which separates Madagascar from Africa. Click the link above for highlights of the world's oldest island, including these magnificent Baobab trees (pictured), along the north coast and the capital city Antananarivo. For more info, go to [bit.ly/mada372](http://bit.ly/mada372).

## Play retro cat simulator

[bit.ly/catsim372](http://bit.ly/catsim372)

It won't rival Candy Crush for playability, but this cat simulator – brilliantly titled 'My Garbage Cat Wakes Me Up At 3AM Every Day' – will chime with anyone whose pet moggy goes bananas in the middle of the night. It's very simple. You have to wake your owner by making as much noise as possible. You could jump up and down on his face meowing, or knock items off shelves. Either way, it's great fun, and the Nintendo Game Boy-style graphics add a stylish retro touch.



## Turn your typing into drumbeats

[typedrummer.com](http://typedrummer.com)

One of the cleverest timewasters we've seen this year, Typedrummer ingeniously turns your PC keyboard into a musical instrument by interpreting everything you write as funky drumbeats, with each letter producing a different percussion sound. The more letters you add, the more complex the pattern of beats.



## 5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

[@POTUS](https://twitter.com/POTUS)

Barack Obama finally makes his Twitter debut (POTUS stands for President of the United States)

[@CPWTweets](https://twitter.com/CPWTweets)

Competitions, special offers and news from Carphone Warehouse

[@ThePoke](https://twitter.com/ThePoke)

Viral videos, funny photos, satirical wit and bizarre internet trends from the British comedy site

[@achrisevans](https://twitter.com/achrisevans)

Upbeat messages from the Radio 2 DJ and self-styled "human alarm clock for the UK"

[@bbcworldservice](https://twitter.com/bbcworldservice)

Regular tweets containing video reports on global subjects

## + Use Skype Translator Preview

[www.skype.com/translator](http://www.skype.com/translator)

Microsoft has opened up the trial of Skype Translator to Windows 10 and 8.1 users. Previously, you had to sign up and wait to be admitted. It translates in real-time to and from English and three languages, Mandarin, Italian and Spanish.

## Listen to podcasts and radio on Deezer

[www.deezer.com](http://www.deezer.com)

Music-streaming service Deezer has added more than 20,000 podcasts and radio shows to its catalogue of 35 million songs.

## Use Office on your Android phone

[bit.ly/office372](http://bit.ly/office372)

After launching Office for Android tablets, Microsoft has done the same for phones, releasing Previews for Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Click the link to join Microsoft's Office for Android community.



## Microsoft confirms details of 'the last version of Windows'

### What happened?

Windows 10 will be launched at the end of July, but there's been some uncertainty over whether we'll have to shell out to upgrade from the versions of Windows we're currently running. Microsoft has now released more information, although final prices still hadn't been revealed at the time of going to press.

The details were confirmed in a blog ([bit.ly/windows372](http://bit.ly/windows372)) by Alex Snelson a Windows product manager for Microsoft Australia, although this was later amended, suggesting she'd revealed too much! The original post stated that if you're running the Home Basic or Home Premium versions of Windows 7, 8 or 8.1, you'll get a free upgrade to Windows 10 Home, the equivalent version of the new operating system.

Anyone running Windows 7 Professional or Ultimate, or Windows 8 or 8.1 Pro, will get a free upgrade to Windows 10 Pro. In both cases, the new version of the software will be delivered via Windows Update, so you shouldn't need to do anything to get it.

However, if you're running Windows XP or Vista, you'll need to buy Windows 10 and upgrade from scratch. It's likely that your hardware will support the updated OS, but it may be wiser to buy a new PC or laptop. Either way, with Microsoft no longer supporting Windows XP, it's not secure to continue running the outdated operating system, so it's time for an upgrade.

Microsoft has also said that anyone who has installed the preview version of Windows 10 and is helping the company beta test the new OS will get a free update to the final version. So if you're running the Insider Preview, you'll be able to upgrade directly to the release edition when it's ready. Of course, given that anyone testing the software will have needed to install it on top of Windows 8.1, and Microsoft is already giving free updates to anyone on that version, it's not much of a freebie.

Some users who definitely won't be



Windows 10 isn't for all of us, but for each of us

We are designing and developing Windows 10 differently from the way we've always done it. Millions of people are providing their feedback and helping us to shape the future of Windows.

Play video

**Free Upgrade Offer\***

Great news! We will offer a free upgrade to Windows 10 for qualified new or existing Windows 7, Windows 8.1 and Windows Phone 8.1 devices that upgrade in the first year! And even better: once a qualified Windows device is upgraded to Windows 10, we will continue to keep it up to date for the supported lifetime of the device, keeping it more secure, and introducing new features and functionality over time – for no additional charge. Sign up with your email today, and we will send you more information about Windows 10 and the upgrade offer in the coming months.

Sign up for email

getting a free upgrade are pirates. That may not sound like a surprise, but Microsoft suggested in March that anyone running a pirated version of Windows 7 or 8 would get a free upgrade to Windows 10. Now, the company has said it won't give a free licence to pirated copies of the software, but will let those users pay to upgrade instead, and offer good discounts to encourage them to go legit.

### How will it affect you?

If you're on Windows 8 or 8.1, this free upgrade will be well worth installing. Microsoft has taken on board criticism that Windows 8+ favoured touchscreens over standard desktops and laptops, making it more difficult to use for those of us still tapping away on a keyboard and scrolling with a mouse. Windows 10 looks set to fix those problems, while also working on tablets and similar devices, and it will still use apps to give your PC more flexibility and extra tools.

Microsoft appears to be offering the free update for a year, so you'll have plenty of time to upgrade to Windows 10. If you're not keen on being the first to update, you can always wait to see whether the update has any bugs before

making the move.

The company has also suggested that Windows 10 will be the last ever version of the operating system. Like Mac OS X, it will be updated incrementally rather than being replaced by Windows 11 in a few years time.

### What do we think?

Well done to Microsoft for making this a free upgrade for most users. Windows 8 wasn't ideal for most us, and while 8.1 fixed many problems, Microsoft frankly owes us some more improvements. We're also rather glad that Microsoft isn't rewarding pirates for running illegal software. Many users have stayed on XP rather than move to Windows 8+, and it would have been a shame to give a free upgrade to pirates rather than XP users.

We'd like to see Microsoft offer a smooth upgrade path to XP users, but it's not likely to happen. If you find the idea of switching operating systems intimidating, bear in mind this may well be the last time it happens. By moving to a regular update system rather than big releases, Windows 10 will slowly evolve and improve over time, rather than need big refreshes, which should make things easier for all of us.

## What we think of this fortnight's top tech stories and rumours

### Firefox users can now watch Netflix

#### What happened?

Mozilla added digital rights management (DRM) to the latest version of Firefox (38), allowing users to stream HTML5 video without a plug-in.

Mozilla has long been opposed to DRM, because it goes against its open-source ethos. However, concerns about having a browser that can't natively play content from some of the world's biggest streaming services has led Mozilla to back down, especially as alternatives such as Adobe's Flash and Microsoft's Silverlight are being gradually phased out. Chrome, Internet Explorer and Safari already support DRM.

In related news, it's been revealed that one in 10 Netflix users borrow login details from friends or family – and the streaming video service doesn't seem to mind. A study by analyst firm Parks Associates showed that 11 per cent of viewers share account details, even though it's technically against Netflix's terms and conditions.

#### How will it affect you?

Mozilla's move isn't really a surprise: Flash is becoming less popular and Microsoft no longer supports Silverlight, so streaming companies need to find another technology to play videos. That means Firefox also needs to support DRM, because content makers are too wary of pirates to let it be otherwise, and Mozilla risked losing users by disallowing Netflix.

If you have a Netflix subscription, there appears to be no practical reason not to share your account details – you certainly aren't the only one doing it. And it isn't much different from lending a friend a DVD to watch on their TV.

#### What do we think?

We can only applaud both Netflix and Mozilla: the former for not foolishly cracking down on its own customers for using the service in a flexible way, and Mozilla for holding out against DRM for as long as it has. It's good to see tech firms being thoughtful for a change.


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### LogJam flaw puts websites at risk

#### What happened?

A flaw in Transport Layer Security (TLS) could leave encrypted communications open to hackers and spies. TLS is used by many websites to protect email and other data, shown in browsers by a small green padlock in the address bar. However, a weakness introduced in the 1990s to help software comply with US rules against cryptography means the encryption is easier to crack than it should be.

#### How will it affect you?

This is one of those security stories that there's little you can do about – it's up to websites and software makers to fix the problem as quickly as possible, with

developers such as Mozilla already issuing updates. Researchers from Microsoft have suggested that as many as 8 per cent of HTTPS sites are at risk.

#### What do we think?

There's much debate at the moment about encryption, with security services suggesting they need 'backdoors' into secure systems to access the communications of suspected criminals. However, stories such as this highlight how that can put the rest of us at risk. Introducing weaknesses into security systems is never a wise idea.



# Digital payments now more popular than cash

## What happened?

The Payments Council ([www.paymentscouncil.org.uk](http://www.paymentscouncil.org.uk)), the body that represents the UK payments industry, revealed that cash now makes up less than half of all transactions and we prefer paying for things digitally.

The council's report shows that the amount of cash payments made by consumer, business and financial organisations in the UK fell to 48 per cent last year – a four per-cent decrease from 2013. The other 52 per cent of payments were made using cards, standing orders, internet and phone transactions, and other non-cash methods.

However, while the use of cash is decreasing, it's still the single most popular method of payment. Notes and coins continue to figure high in newsagents (84.8%), pubs (83.9%) and convenience stores (68%), but are less popular in petrol stations (24.5%) and supermarkets (43.8%). Unsurprisingly, in places where a small number of items are being paid for and the retail process is fast, people are still using cash.

## How will it affect you?

Although the report suggests that physical money is now less commonly used, most of us rely on both cards and cash, and switch between the two depending on what we're paying for and



where. After all, it's not as if you can feed a banknote into your PC to buy products online. Equally, you probably don't use your debit card for small purchases in the real world – such as a newspaper or a pint of milk – unless your card is capable of using contactless payment.

One advantage cash has over digital payments is that there's less risk of being defrauded. Card ID theft cost banks £29.9m last year, with card cloning resulting in a further loss of £47.8m.

## What do we think?

There are pros and cons to both

electronic and cash payments, so there's no reason why both shouldn't survive. Cards are certainly becoming increasingly convenient, especially now that many of them feature contactless technology, but it's not uncommon for card readers in shops, pubs and restaurants to break down, leaving you reaching for old-fashioned notes and coins.

We were surprised when last year Transport for London stopped accepting cash on its buses, but when the company's figures revealed that 99 per cent of passengers were using electronic methods to pay for their journey, the decision made more sense.



## FIRST LOOK

### LG G4

[bit.ly/g4lg372](http://bit.ly/g4lg372)

LG's latest flagship phone can easily be picked out from among its competitors thanks to its unique real-leather casing. At 8.9mm thick, it's not the slimmest smartphone we've seen, but it's comfortable to hold and doesn't slip from your grip.

Unfortunately, you'll have to part with a whopping £630 to get your hands on one. Although that's more expensive than an entry-level Samsung Galaxy S6, we think the curved, textured rear of the G4 almost justifies the extra premium. If you object to the leather cladding, the G4 is also available in cheaper 'ceramic' and 'metallic' variants (both are actually plastic), which is slightly cheaper (£530) but we found these

cases dull and tacky in comparison.

Elsewhere, the handset sees several other improvements over its predecessor. Most notably, the 16-megapixel camera uses a colour spectrum sensor that LG claims is capable of reading and interpreting colours in exactly the same way as your eyes. Combined with a f1.8 aperture lens and an impressive manual mode, this makes the G4's snapper one of the best we've seen on any smartphone.

The 5.5in screen has also been improved and now uses a new type of liquid crystal that noticeably enhances its brightness



and overall colour accuracy. Under the hood, the G4 uses a slightly slower chip than LG's G Flex 2 and HTC's One M9, but it still performed very well in our benchmark tests and its impressive 3GB of memory was more than enough to handle multiple apps running at once. Unlike its rivals, the G4 offers a fully removable battery along with the option to expand its 32GB of storage using a microSD card. If you want a top-end smartphone that you can adapt to your needs, this handset comes highly recommended.





## WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

## Will Google ban the new Adblock Plus browser?

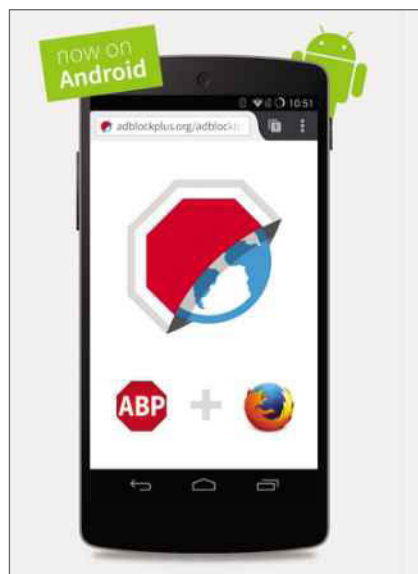
The makers of Adblock Plus have launched Adblock Browser for Android, despite having their previous app banned by Google.

Google controversially booted the original Adblock Plus out of the Play Store, citing "interference with another service or product in an unauthorised manner". The app is still available to download from the Adblock Plus website ([adblockplus.org/android](http://adblockplus.org/android)), but it has to be sideloaded onto your device.

The new browser doesn't interfere with any other browser on your phone or tablet, potentially giving Google – which makes virtually all of its money from advertising – no good reason to bar it from the Play Store. The developers claim it is the only Android browser to offer ad-blocking by default, and that it will help mobile users see pages load more quickly and preserve battery life.

As on the Desktop, users of the Adblock Browser will be given the option to let "acceptable", non-intrusive ads through, but annoying ads – those that use animations or audio – will always be blocked.

"As people have embraced the mobile web, advertisers have rushed in after them and destroyed the user experience with ads that are often thoughtlessly designed, as well as mobile ad networks that are riddled with security holes," said Till Faida, co-founder of Adblock Plus. "Adblock Browser for Android puts



the control back into users' hands."

You can join the Adblock Browser beta by following the instructions on its Google+ page at ([bit.ly/adblock372](http://bit.ly/adblock372)).

## LIKELIHOOD RATING



The app had just appeared in the Google Play Store as we went to press, which is a good sign. However, the original Adblock Plus was also initially approved by Google before being kicked out, so it might not stay.



## WEBOMETER



## WE LIKE...



## Amazon to pay corporation tax

Following the government's introduction of a diverted profit tax, Amazon will no longer process its UK sales through Luxembourg to avoid paying corporation tax. Over a period of 11 years, £5.3bn of the company's worldwide sales came from Britain.



## Cost of premium phone calls to fall

From 1 July, the cost of calling a non-geographic number will be split into an 'access fee' charged by the telecoms provider and a 'service fee' made by the organisation being called. The effect of this standardisation is that the cost of making premium calls should fall.

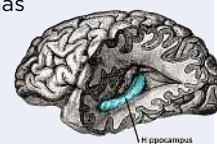


## WE DON'T LIKE...



## Shoot 'em ups increase risk of Alzheimer's

New research has shown that playing computer games such as Call of Duty can result in the loss of grey matter in the hippocampus, which increases the likelihood of neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's disease.



## Twitter troll encourages transgender suicide

Twitter has been criticised after allowing a troll to promote tweets encouraging transgender people to kill themselves. The troll set up a fake account impersonating Australian feminist campaigner Caitlin Roper to post the messages.



## What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

## Kokoon

[bit.ly/kokoon372](http://bit.ly/kokoon372) | From \$139 (£89)

Described as "the ultimate sleep sanctuary", Kokoon is a comfortable pair of headphones that helps you doze off to music. It uses EEG sensors to detect how deeply you're sleeping and adjusts the audio accordingly to ensure it doesn't wake you up. Because Kokoon blocks out external disturbances, it's ideal for kipping while camping, or travelling by train or plane, as well as in the bedroom at home. Just slip the headphones on and press Play. Funding closes on 10 July and the project has already surpassed its target of \$100,000.



# Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

### Android factory reset won't wipe sensitive data



Using the 'factory data reset' option on Android devices could leave behind valuable information,

according to a recent study by Cambridge University. Researchers analysed 21 handsets running Android versions 2.3 to 4.3 and found that all the devices retained some data. In most cases, they were able to recover important files including the 'master key' that provides access to Google services such as Gmail.

[bit.ly/android372](http://bit.ly/android372)

### Apple patches Watch security flaws



The first software update for the Apple Watch has been released, patching a total of 14 security flaws.

Eight of the flaws were related to the Watch's kernel (the deepest level of

its operating system) with some of these leaving users vulnerable to malware.

Other patched vulnerabilities include one that enables an attacker to run malicious code via a font file. However, the update

did not include patches for two of the Apple Watch's most well-publicised flaws, one of which allows the device to be reset without entering a password.

[bit.ly/apple372](http://bit.ly/apple372)

### PATCH TUESDAY: May

May's Patch Tuesday consisted of 13 security bulletins, three of which had the highest rating of Critical. The first Critical update, bulletin MS15-043, patched a vulnerability in Internet Explorer that could allow remote code execution if a user viewed a specially crafted web page in Microsoft's browser. Meanwhile, bulletin MS15-044 fixed a flaw in Microsoft's font drivers that could also result in remote code execution if a user opened a specially crafted document or visited an untrustworthy web page containing TrueType fonts. Affected software for this update included Windows, .NET

Framework, Office, Lync and Silverlight. The last remaining critical update patched a vulnerability that could enable remote code execution in all versions of Windows if a user opened a specially crafted journal file.

The remaining 10 bulletins were all given the severity rating of Important and fixed a range of flaws relating to remote code execution, elevation of privilege, security feature bypass, denial of service and information disclosure. Only bulletin MS15-043 requires a system restart, but if you haven't done so already, we strongly recommend performing the necessary updates.

## Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

**THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:**  
**Sean Sullivan, Security Advisor at F-Secure**  
([www.f-secure.com](http://www.f-secure.com))



Android device is more about wanting than needing, which is why F-Secure offers "mobile security" rather than just anti-virus and bundles a number of security features together. The bulk of what we alert our customers to is adware that comes from "safe" sites.

your privacy is a very useful tool for shielding your identity. But many people use VPNs to securely connect to personal services. For example, I use my VPN to connect and log into my online banking when travelling. Obviously, I can't have complete privacy and also do my banking at the same time. What I have is a secure and private connection to my bank.

If you need anonymity for personal safety reasons, tools such as Tor browser may be useful (see our Workshop on page 54). Tor can even be combined with a VPN to give you benefits that you can't easily get otherwise.

**Q** Should Mac users be more vigilant about malware, rather than thinking only PCs get infected?

Owen Stephenson,  
Facebook

**Q** If you install apps and download files from safe sites, do you need anti-virus on your mobile device?

Conor Reed, Facebook

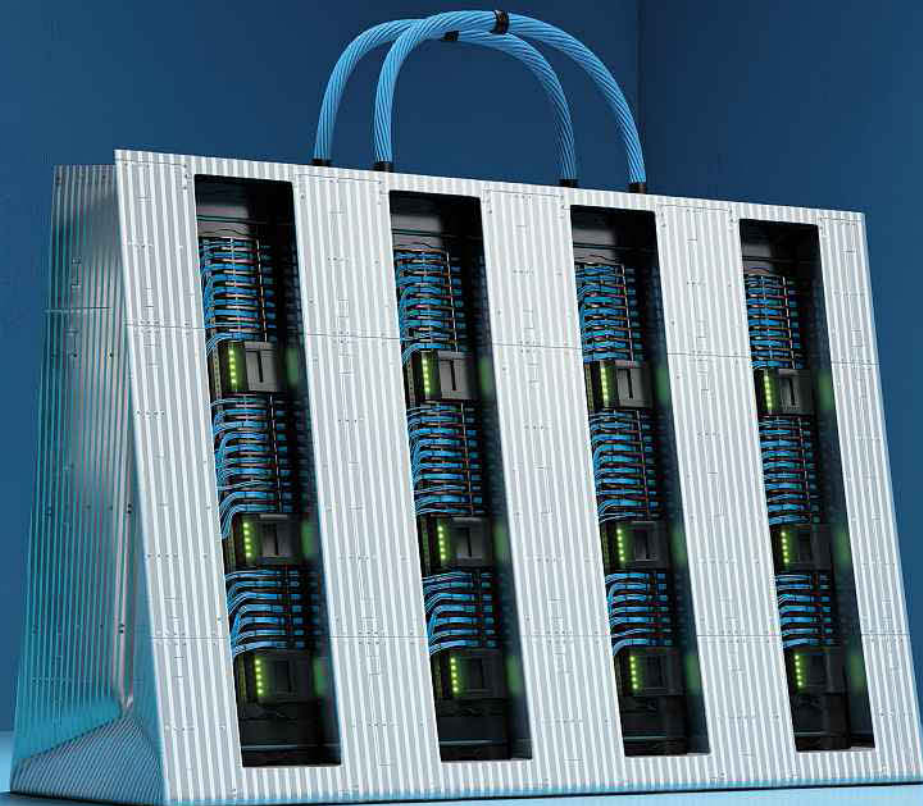
**Q** Is the only way to remain completely private online to use a VPN?

Jason Shufflebottom,  
Twitter

**A** If you have a new device running the latest OS, I'd say having anti-virus on your

**A** That depends on what you mean by "private". A trusted VPN provider that respects

**A** Macs aren't at risk from the same level of crimeware as Windows (and Linux servers), but there is a growing amount of invasive adware targeting Macs. There are also more malicious hackers out to extort Mac users. The threat is different, but that doesn't mean security issues should be ignored.



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# ★ Best New Websites

## Site of the Fortnight

TECHNOLOGY

NEW

### Techccessorize

[www.techccessorize.com](http://www.techccessorize.com)

Techccessorize, whose name treads a fine line between clever and clunky, is an impressive new source of accessories for your tech products (obviously). It has cases for your camera, phone and tablet; speakers and headphones for your gadgets; and wireless chargers. There are also quirky items such as Bluetooth beacons to help locate lost devices and love-'em-or-hate-'em selfie sticks. The range of stock isn't huge, but it's good quality and affordable, and presented in a pleasant design. The site also offers free, fast delivery on all items; same-day dispatch if you order before 1pm; and 30-day "no quibble" money-back returns.

Our rating



#### SMARTPHONE

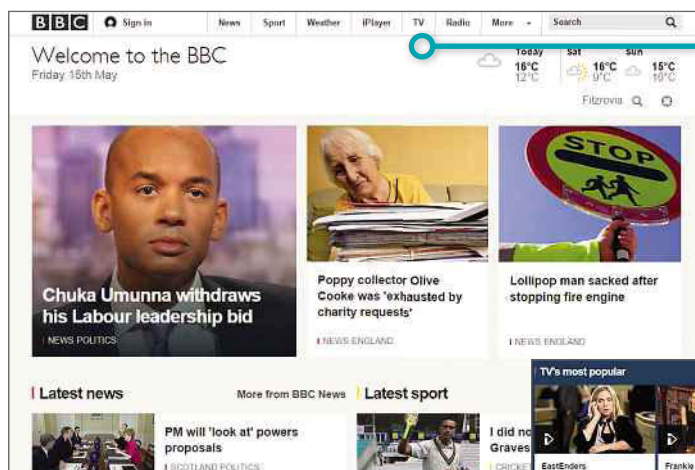
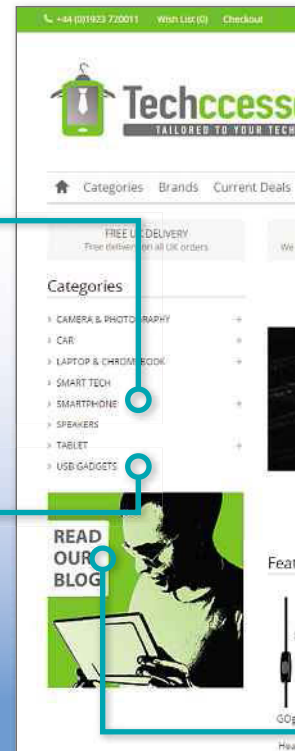
Treat your phone to a protective case or even a selfie stick!

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MEDIA

### BBC

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

The revamped BBC News site received a mixed reaction, and this overhaul of the main BBC hub is also likely to divide opinion. It's unashamedly targeted at mobile devices, with a design that automatically adjusts to fit your browser or screen, but on a Desktop it looks very basic and requires too much scrolling. The acres of white space and short headlines beneath each photo make the site look unfinished, and the big, bold font feels shouty and vulgar. We also think the '3 things we love today' selection rather undersells the site - does the Beeb not like the rest of its content? It's a work in progress and the BBC is seeking feedback, so hopefully user complaints will be noted.

Our rating



HOTELS

### Wedding Guest Rooms

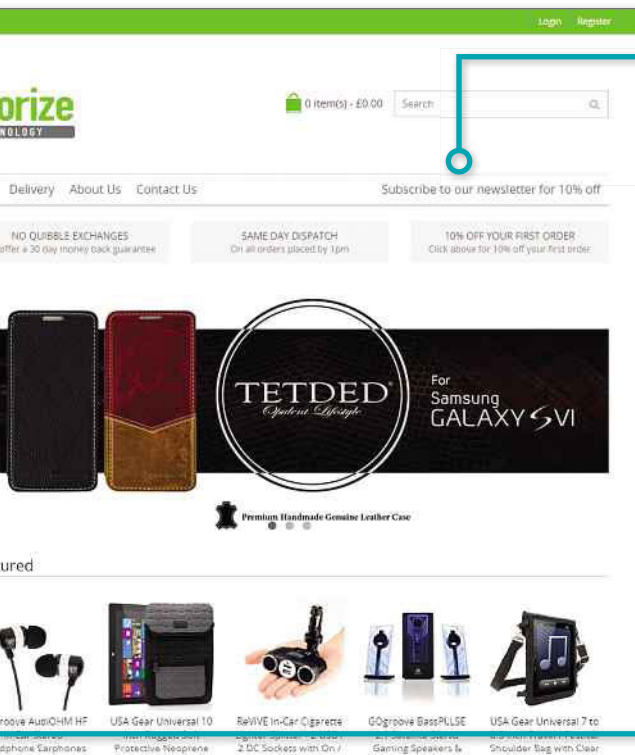
[www.weddingguestrooms.com](http://www.weddingguestrooms.com)

This site from LateRooms.com lets brides and grooms create a bespoke page of hotels near their wedding venue, so their wedding guests can find somewhere to stay. Usefully, this isn't just a list of any old B&Bs, but a selection of the best places in the area, complete with live availability and room rates. The hotels are presented on a map, and you can sort the options by price, distance and star rating. The site also lets you customise the page with a title, photos and message of your choice. It's a good idea that could cut some of the cost of attending friends' weddings.

Our rating



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



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### NEWSLETTER

Sign up for the newsletter to get 10 per cent off your first order

### BLOG

Browse info and videos about the latest Techcensorize products



RELAUNCH

### SPORT

## The Big Game

[www.thebiggame.co.uk](http://www.thebiggame.co.uk)

Find out what's happening in European football's top leagues at The Big Game, which has relaunched to make it easier to navigate and display perfectly on any screen. The much improved site organises content by league, including the Premier League, La Liga and Bundesliga, rounding up all the latest news, rumours and team analysis. There's also a new area for betting on matches, which rounds up promo codes. Although it's good to see a pan-European football site, it doesn't offer much scope for interaction, and all comments were closed when we visited.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

### DESIGN

## Houseology

[www.houseology.com](http://www.houseology.com)

Formerly called Occa-Home, this site aims to make interior design accessible by providing information and advice about doing up your gaff. Previously, it was more of an online store, but Houseology now offers how-to guides for designing every room in your house; buying guides for furniture and furnishings; and oodles of ideas and inspiration. The content is delivered in a clear, well-illustrated manner that breaks ambitious projects into digestible chunks. We'd like to see some more video content, but otherwise this is a helpful resource with a suitably tasteful design.

Our rating



NEW

### REFERENCE

## Forbear's Surnames

[bit.ly/surnames372](http://bit.ly/surnames372)

Discover the origin of your surname and its prevalence across the world at this site from genealogy portal Forbear's. It tells you the meaning of more than 11 million family names (although not all are known) and how common they are in each country, now and in 1901 and 1881 (when many censuses were taken). Despite a rather plain design, the site provides lots of interesting statistics, and draws its information from several reliable sources. We were fascinated to learn that the surname 'Irvine' is the 11,550th most common in the world, and to view its many variants.

Our rating





RELAUNCH

DRINK

## Fullers

[www.fullers.co.uk](http://www.fullers.co.uk)

Raise a glass to this fantastic site for pub chain Fuller's, which is a triumph of style and simplicity. Its huge, subtly animated photos do a great job of promoting Fuller's drinks, food and comfortable inns and hotels, of which there are more than 400 across the South of England. There's a useful pub finder, which lets you filter results by criteria such as Wi-Fi, 'Outside seating' and 'Pets welcome', and we like the option to book a tour of a Fuller's brewery. For real-ale lovers, the highlights of the site will be the fun tools that let you explore Fuller's beers and bitters by clicking a bar pump, bottle or beer mat.

Our rating



NEW

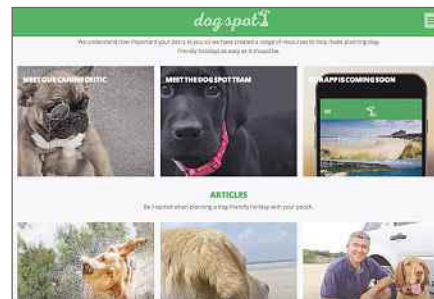
MUSIC

## The Opera Platform

[www.theoperaplatform.eu/en](http://www.theoperaplatform.eu/en)

Opera aficionados will love this EU-backed site, which lets you stream live performances from opera houses across Europe, for free. The plan is to broadcast at least one production per month, the first of which was Verdi's *La Traviata* in May, with future transmissions set to include works by Mozart and Wagner. As well as providing information about the productions, the site features documentaries, cast and crew interviews, and details of the 15 companies participating in the project. And if, like us, you don't know your aria from your elbow, you'll soon discover there's a lot more to opera than a fat lady singing.

Our rating



NEW

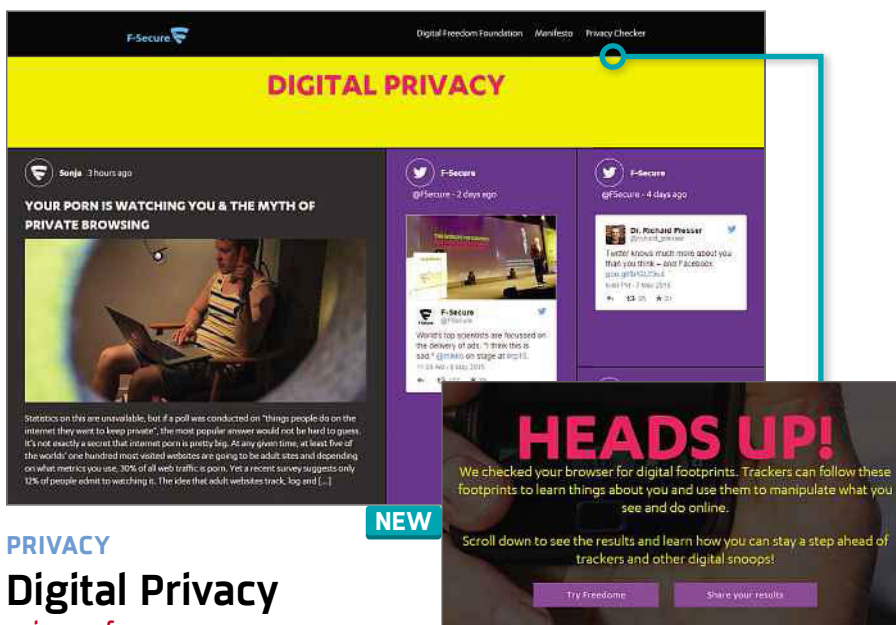
HOLIDAYS

## Dog Spot

[bit.ly/dogspot372](http://bit.ly/dogspot372)

Find the perfect holiday home for you and your pooch at this micro-site from Holiday Cottages ([www.holidaycottages.co.uk](http://www.holidaycottages.co.uk)). It provides articles and interviews about booking a dog-friendly getaway, and insights from the Canine Critic, a chocolate Labrador who tests the accommodation. Options include cottages by the sea and working farms, and you can filter the search results by criteria such as enclosed garden, near shops and hot tub (presumably for you, not the dog). We love the big photos of cute canines, and although Dog Spot inevitably leads you back to its parent site, it has a lively character of its own.

Our rating



NEW

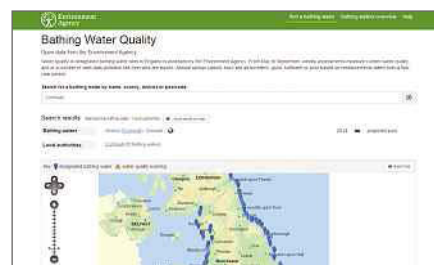
PRIVACY

## Digital Privacy

[privacy.f-secure.com](http://privacy.f-secure.com)

This excellent site from security company F-Secure provides information and advice about online privacy issues. It cleverly combines blogs, Facebook posts, tweets, videos and links to F-Secure products in an attractive tiled design, and you can either view the content together or as individual feeds. The most interesting feature is the Privacy Checker, which analyses the data stored in your browser to reveal how online trackers can monitor your web activities. Yes, it's intended to promote F-Secure's VPN tool, Freedome, but it's still a useful and potentially eye-opening tool. We also like that you can share each item on the site, to spread the word about privacy protection.

Our rating



NEW

ENVIRONMENT

## Bathing Water Quality

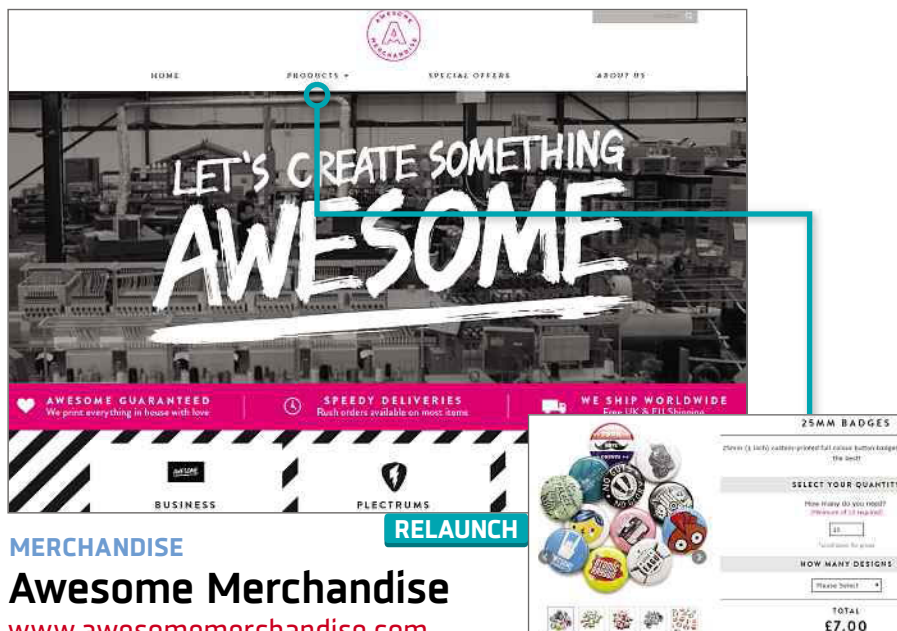
[bit.ly/bathing372](http://bit.ly/bathing372)

If you go for a dip in the sea this summer, make sure you're swimming in clean water by checking this website from the Environment Agency (EA). It provides annual ratings for the quality of bathing water on beaches and in lakes around England, based on studies carried out from May to September. The data is displayed in the form of markers on a map, which you can click to view the projected rating, from poor to excellent, and a detailed breakdown of the water content and surroundings, including evidence of pollution. It's all very scientific, so if you're seeking sun, sea and sand tips, you'd best look elsewhere!

Our rating







## MERCHANDISE

## Awesome Merchandise

[www.awesomemerchandise.com](http://www.awesomemerchandise.com)

From badges, bottle openers and business cards to T-shirts, tea towels and temporary tattoos, this awesome site sells an eclectic range of custom merchandise, all of which is made in-house. This redesign has expanded the site to create space for more product information, photos and related items. The 'Download artwork template' and 'Add to cart' buttons are more prominent, so you can design and order your print job with a minimum of fuss, and get a clear explanation of how the process works. Items are sold in bulk, usually with a minimum of 10 units, and you can combine several designs in the same batch. It's a great source of products to promote a business or event, with free delivery on everything unless you pay extra to get your stuff faster.

Our rating



## SEARCH

## ImageIdentify

[www.imageidentify.com](http://www.imageidentify.com)

We've long been fans of 'computational knowledge engine' Wolfram Alpha ([www.wolframalpha.com](http://www.wolframalpha.com)), so we were excited to try this new spin-off, which tries to identify the content of any image you throw at it. While this isn't a new idea – reverse-image search engines such as TinEye have been around for years – ImageIdentify is quick and easy to use: just drag and drop or upload an image to find out what it is and view a definition. Results aren't always accurate (it thought Donald Duck was an instrument), but you can tell the site it "could be better" to view alternative suggestions and identify the thing yourself.

Our rating



## + ALSO NEW

## HEALTH

## Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation

[www.roycastle.org](http://www.roycastle.org)


The UK's only lung cancer charity has relaunched its website with a friendlier, image-led design. You can read about the charity's research, patient support and campaigns; find out how you can help through fundraising, volunteering and donating; and learn more about spotting the symptoms of lung cancer.

## MUSIC

## The Coldplay Timeline

[timeline.coldplay.com](http://timeline.coldplay.com)


Future generations will now be able to trace the history of Chris Martin and the other ones through this fancy interactive timeline, which tells Coldplay's story through videos, photos, blogs, interviews and handwritten notes. You can switch between chronological and map view, or jump to a specific 'era' in the band's history.

## ACTIVITIES

## Three Peaks Partnership

[www.threepeakspartnership.co.uk](http://www.threepeakspartnership.co.uk)


This site challenges you to scale the three highest mountains in the UK: Snowdon, Ben Nevis and Scafell Pike. As well as offering advice about planning your climb, staying safe and protecting the environment, it provides inspiration in the form of gorgeous photos, mountain info and tales from those who have taken up the challenge.

## FOOD &amp; DRINK

## Yorkshire Food &amp; Drink

[foodanddrink.yorkshirepost.co.uk](http://foodanddrink.yorkshirepost.co.uk)


Find the best places to eat and drink in Yorkshire at this champion site from Yorkshire Post Newspapers. From pub and restaurant reviews to recipes, interviews with food producers and details of culinary events, there's plenty here to get your mouth watering and your stomach rumbling, from the county that boasts six Michelin stars.



## WEBSITE SECRETS

## Spot the pigeon-head people in Street View

We love all the weird sights you can find in Google Street View, and they don't come much stranger than the gang of people wearing pigeon-head masks on a street in Tokyo. To find these avian pranksters, go to [bit.ly/pigeon372](http://bit.ly/pigeon372) where you'll be greeted by eight pairs of beady eyes. It's even freakier if you flee the scene by clicking in either direction down the street, because when you look back, the scary bird people will still be stood there staring at you! ■



# Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

## Top Tips of the Fortnight

### Design sites online and off

Xara has just launched Version 11 of its Web Designer Premium software (£59.99 from [bit.ly/xara372](http://bit.ly/xara372)) with a brand new tool that lets you edit your website online, even if you don't have



access to the software. Simple changes to the text of a site can be done remotely from any browser, making it much easier to update sites and correct simple errors without having to open Xara Web Designer.

There are also new tools to create the latest trendy web effects, including sticky objects

that stay on-screen even if you scroll away, and stretchy backgrounds that fit any size of browser.

### Back to social-media school

Successful websites thrive on visitors but you need to promote your site to attract them. Social media is an important tool for this but it can be difficult to get right. If you want to learn more, Buffer ([buffer.com](http://buffer.com)) has a seven-day course you can try. It's free and will take just a few minutes of work each day. Sign up at [bit.ly/buffer372](http://bit.ly/buffer372).

### Deal of the Fortnight

Fasthosts ([www.fasthosts.co.uk](http://www.fasthosts.co.uk)) is offering three months of its Bronze hosting package for £1.18 per month, as long as you sign up for the rest of the year at its standard price of £5.99 per month.

## Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Darren Lavender,  
Network Operations

at Planet Hippo ([www.planethippo.co.uk](http://www.planethippo.co.uk))



**Q** What's the easiest way to add a payment system to my website and how much do SSL certificates cost?

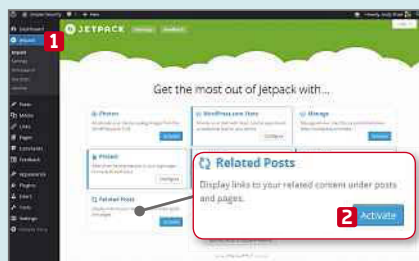
Si Mellor, via Facebook

**A** The easiest way would be to use a ready-made solution such as PayPal ([www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com)). This has many benefits, including easy integration, ease of use and a tried, tested and secure platform known by all. The best thing about using PayPal is that the client's payment details are not stored physically on the web host's network and always remain within the secure protection of the PayPal system. SSL certificates can be purchased from as little as £15 per year, giving you 256-bit encryption and a site security seal to inform your users of its authenticity.

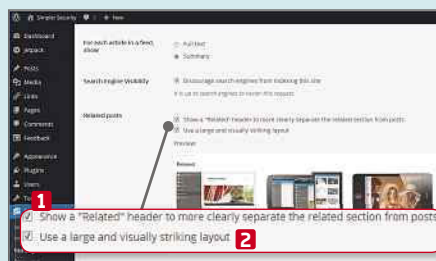


## MINI WORKSHOP | Add automated Related Posts to WordPress Jetpack Related Posts: [bit.ly/jetpack372](http://bit.ly/jetpack372) | 10 mins | Any WordPress site

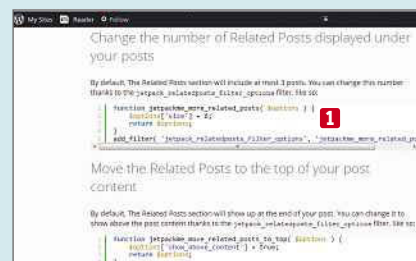
You often see links at the bottom of web pages designed to take visitors to other pages they might like. Doing this manually for every page is cumbersome, so WordPress has its own automated tool in the Jetpack add-on



**1** Install Jetpack if you haven't already, then select it from the side menu. **1** Related Posts should be on the main screen, so click its Activate button. **2** The service will be highlighted in blue and the button will change into a Configure button. Click it again to move to the set-up screen.



**2** There are only two basic options to configure. You can choose whether to separate the links from your content with a header **1** and whether to include thumbnails to make it look more visually striking. **2** Scroll down to the bottom and click the Save Changes button.

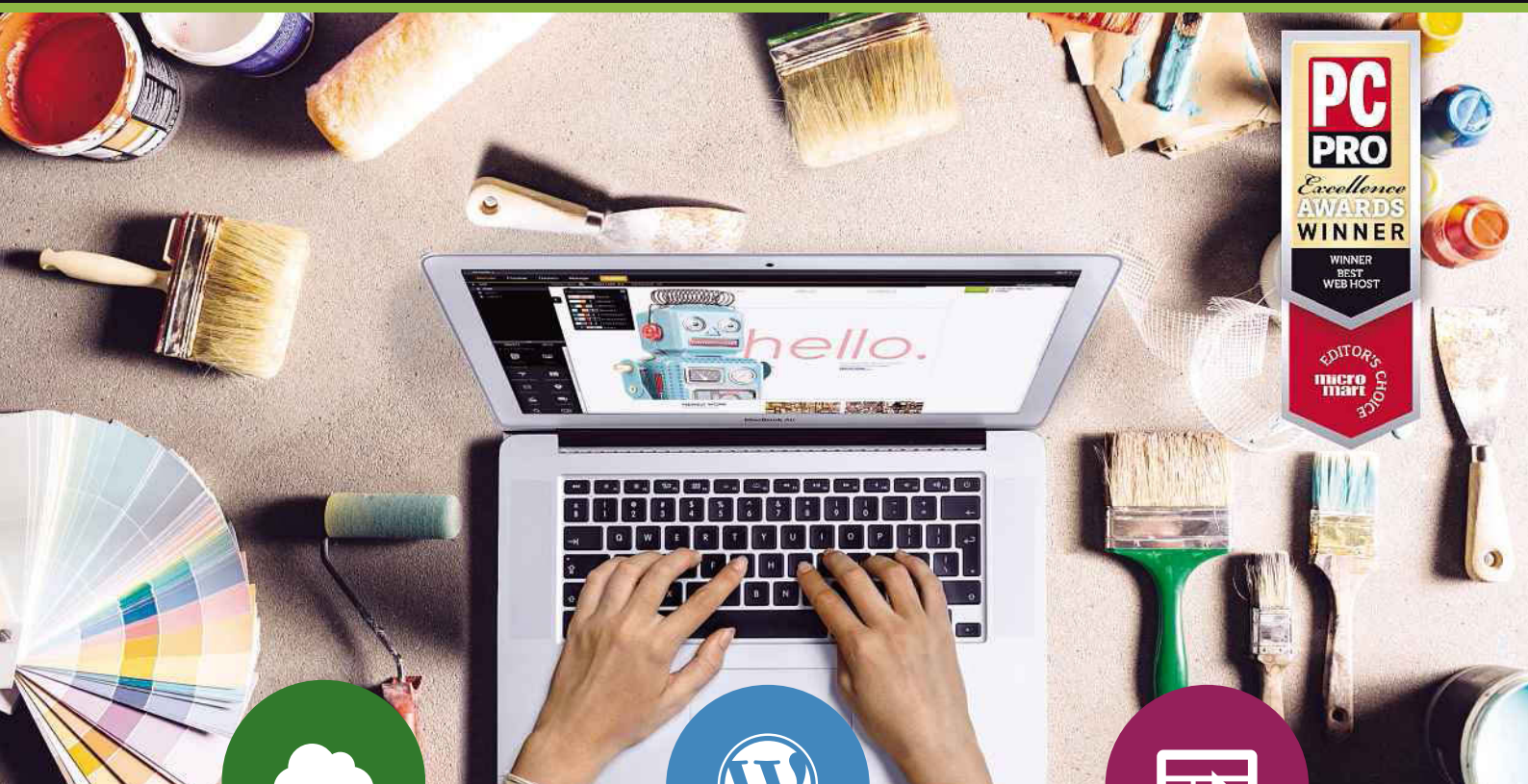


**3** Jetpack adds the box to your site automatically and fills it with content it thinks is appropriate, based on tags and categories. If you don't like its choices, you can configure it by cutting and pasting code **1** from [bit.ly/cust372](http://bit.ly/cust372) into your functions.php file. Some of the supplied snippets may need adapting to work with your site.



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# Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

## BT Home SmartPhone S II

**Andy Shaw** tests a home phone that has Android built-in, so you can browse the web, block nuisance calls and more

**M**obile phones have come a long way in the last few years, with Android and iOS turning them into pocket computers, rather than simple telephones. But despite such development in their mobile equivalents, our home phones have barely changed since they went wireless with the introduction of digital cordless (DECT) phones in the early Nineties.

The BT Home SmartPhone S II is an attempt to breathe new life into the humble landline phone. It includes all the usual functions of a home phone: it can hook up to an existing cordless system, has an answerphone built-in and it will work with any standard landline. The usual keypad has been replaced by a touchscreen, but it otherwise behaves like a normal home phone, and we found the calls we made on it sounded crystal clear.

### Built-in Android

The S II is the second Android model in BT's Home SmartPhone series, but its predecessor was severely restricted because it didn't have access to the Google



Play Store. This has been fixed with this latest incarnation, so it can install and run any Android app that's available through Google's shop.

Disappointingly, neither the hardware or software is cutting-edge. The screen of the Home SmartPhone S II isn't as high quality as the screens you'll find on even cheaper mobile phones, and the operating system feels like it's being held back by the hardware – you sometimes have to tap and wait for the phone to respond, rather than getting instant action from your touch. It also runs Android version 4.2.2 (Jelly Bean), which is two versions behind the current Lollipop.

You'd think that this might keep the price down and, to be fair, the S II is still significantly cheaper than the latest mobile handsets. However, if it's Android you want, there are plenty of less expensive mobiles and tablets around that have better screens and a more up-to-date operating systems. For the £169.99 that BT is asking for the standalone version of this phone, you could get a digital cordless home phone for every room of your house.

It's a shame the hardware isn't up to scratch because the addition of the Play Store makes Android worth having

“ The SmartPhone S II can install and run any Android app that's available through Google's shop ”

# BT Home SmartPhone S II Product Test

on your home handset. It's genuinely useful to be able to download your favourite apps onto your home phone, and while the phone is too slow to be running the latest games, you can still download and use any non-standard communication tools that you might like, such as Skype or a messaging app. The phone also has a front-facing camera, which makes it a handy way to get basic video calling on a home phone.

There's a limit to the number of apps you can install because the device only has 2GB of storage, less than half of which is available for apps. There is a microSD card slot hidden inside the battery compartment, though, so you can upgrade its memory if you run out.

## Useful tools

We found that one of the most useful things about having Android on your home phone is the integration of contacts. If you already keep your contacts up to date on a Google account because you use Android on your phone, then it's a real bonus to be able to access them quickly and easily from your home phone, too. Having a single point where you can quickly

check your other communication channels, such as email and social networking, is also handy,

“One of the most useful things about having Android on your home phone is the integration of contacts”

though more so if you don't have other devices like tablets or mobiles that you already use to do this.

While the phone will beep or ping when emails arrive and other Android events occur, the screen doesn't light up to let you know what's happening at a glance. This can have you reaching for the phone to wake the screen and check what's going on, which is annoying if it isn't something important. You might also want to avoid having your email arriving at a central point in your household, where any family member or visitor can access it.

One very useful function of this phone is its nuisance-call blocker. This is basically a pre-installed app that filters calls as they come through to the phone, as long as you're subscribed to a caller ID service. It operates a kind of white- and black-list system, checking the incoming number before deciding whether to let the call through or not. There's a 'do not disturb' setting that will block all calls, or only allow calls coming from a

pre-configured list of known numbers. Similarly, you can block specific numbers or

types of numbers, such as international calls or calls coming in from a number that's been withheld.

## OUR VERDICT



Having Android on your home phone is a great idea, because it provides instant access to email, contacts and other apps, and you can configure it to suit your preferences. However, we were disappointed with the implementation because the low-spec hardware leaves Android feeling sluggish and unresponsive.

With a bit more power under the bonnet, this could have been a useful additional phone, bringing

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

Android's services and some of BT's good ideas (such as the nuisance-call blocker) onto your home-phone network.

Sadly, it's not quite good enough yet to merit an unreserved recommendation.



## PRODUCT INFO

### BT Home SmartPhone S II

Price: £169.99  
([shop.bt.com](http://shop.bt.com))

## SPECIFICATIONS

- DECT cordless telephone answering machine
- Android 4.2.2 (Jelly Bean)
- Google Play Store
- Wi-Fi connectivity
- 1,500 contact storage
- 3.5in capacitive touchscreen
- Web browsing
- Facebook and Twitter pre-installed
- Email software
- Video and music player
- Nuisance-call blocking

## FOR

- ✓ Get Android apps and contacts on your home phone
- ✓ Block nuisance calls

## AGAINST

- ✗ Sluggish interface
- ✗ Needs additional memory to store many apps

## A PHONE IN EVERY ROOM

Panasonic KX-TG 6826  
Sextet, £119.99  
[bit.ly/dect372](http://bit.ly/dect372)



## BETTER AND CHEAPER ANDROID

Hudl2, £99  
[bit.ly/hudl372](http://bit.ly/hudl372)



The phone's base station connects to the phone socket

# Maxell Digital Split Soundbar MXSP-TS1000

Andy Shaw gets a significant sound boost from an affordable, configurable soundbar

**S**oundbars provide a significant boost to the often disappointing sound quality you get from many flat-screen TVs. The long and narrow shape is designed to lay in front of your TV without getting in the way of the screen or taking up space around it. However, the new Split Soundbar from Maxell has an extra dimension – an ingenious mechanism that lets you convert it to a pair of upright speakers that can sit either side of your screen, clipped to the supplied speaker stands.

There are three ways to



connect the soundbar to your audio source: the supplied lead with standard red and white stereo phono plugs on one end, and a 3.5mm jack on the other, that plugs directly into most TVs; an optical socket (but you'll need to supply your own cable because there isn't one included in the box); and, for mobile devices, a Bluetooth connection to stream music

good-quality low-priced Philips TV. Connecting to the optical output and switching between the TV's own speakers and the soundbar produced a discernible difference in sound quality. The front-facing speaker had a significantly richer tone than the TV's own rear-facing speakers, which sounded dull

control.

We also tried the speaker in its split mode, untwisting the two interlocking halves and slotting them into the bases to stand upright. The two bases are cabled together and can only be separated by a couple of metres but it's a configuration that works very well and the speakers look great either way.

You can turn on the soundbar and switch between its input options from the device itself, but the supplied remote control makes this more accessible. Sadly, it's one of those cheap, dinky units with raised bubble-style buttons, which feels like a bit of a corner-cutting exercise in an otherwise classy package. However, if you're happy to spend a few hundred pounds on a TV, then another £109 for a palpable step up in sound quality is a worthwhile investment.

“ Its ingenious mechanism lets you convert it to a pair of upright speakers ”

or any other audio straight from your phone or tablet.

We tested the speakers by hooking them up to a

in comparison.

The Bluetooth connection also worked well. A blue light appears when the speakers are in Bluetooth mode, which flashes while it waits for a device to be connected. When we linked an iPad to the soundbar, it played our Spotify playlist perfectly and even let us move between tracks using the remote

## PRODUCT INFO

### Maxell Digital Split Soundbar MXSP-TS1000

Price: £109  
([uk.maxell.eu](http://uk.maxell.eu))

## SPECIFICATIONS

- 3.5mm analogue input
- Digital optical input
- Bluetooth
- 40W RMS (20W x 2) total power output
- 904 x 60 x 60mm

## FOR

- ✓ Great value for money
- ✓ Improved the sound quality of TVs we tested

## AGAINST

- ✗ May get more improvement from more expensive soundbars



## OUR VERDICT



The Maxell Digital Split Soundbar MXSP-TS1000 makes a good, affordable upgrade to the basic speakers you find in cheaper flat-screen TVs. You could spend more and get even better sound, but

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

this is a great speaker for a very attractive price.





# Web User's Best Buys

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

## HARDWARE

### BUDGET PC

#### Chillblast Fusion Cyborg

**£600 with monitor, £500 without**  
from [www.chillblast.com](http://www.chillblast.com)  
**Date tested:** May 2015



The Chillblast Fusion Cyborg is compact, quiet and capable of excellent performance. There isn't much room in the case for future expansion, but it's a great-value PC.

#### KEY SPECS

Quad-core 3.2GHz Intel Core i5-4460 ■ 8GB of memory ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 21.5in monitor ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 3 x USB 3 ports, 5 x USB 2 ports ■ Windows 7 or 8.1 ■ 427 x 364 x 189 mm ■ Three years return-to-base warranty

### BUDGET LAPTOP

#### HP Stream 11

**£179.99** from [store.hp.com/ukstore](http://store.hp.com/ukstore)  
**Date tested:** April 2015



The HP Stream 11 offers excellent performance and a respectable battery life. It's a sleek, attractive laptop, available in blue or magenta, with a good screen that offers wide viewing angles.

#### KEY SPECS

Dual-core 2.16GHz Intel Celeron N2840 processor ■ 2GB of memory ■ 11.6in non-touchscreen ■ 32GB flash drive ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ Single-band 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 300 x 206 x 20mm ■ 1.29kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

### MULTIROOM SPEAKER

#### Sonos Play:1

**£167** from [www.currys.co.uk](http://www.currys.co.uk)  
**Date tested:** March 2015



The Sonos Play:1 offers impressive audio quality and comes with excellent software and great apps that provide seamless integration with music services. It's the ideal speaker to use as a starting point for a home entertainment system.

#### KEY SPECS

Two speakers ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi, 1 x 10/100 Ethernet ■ Android and iOS apps ■ Compatible with UPnP and SMB servers ■ AAC, FLAC, MP3, OGG and WAV ■ 161 x 12 x 12mm ■ 1.8kg

### SSD

#### Samsung 850 Pro 256GB

**£136.03** from [www.kikatek.com](http://www.kikatek.com)  
**Date tested:** February 2015



The Samsung 850 Pro is crammed with new technology that makes it faster and more durable than its competitors. You could buy a similarly sized SSD for much less, but in our tests the cheaper models weren't as fast and they don't come with the 850 Pro's generous 10-year warranty.

#### KEY SPECS

256GB (also available in 128GB, 512GB & 1TB) ■ 53p per GB ■ SATA III interface ■ 2.5in drive case ■ 10-year warranty ■ 100 x 70 x 7mm ■ 66g

### TABLET

#### Google Nexus 9

**£319** from [play.google.com](http://play.google.com)  
**Date tested:** February 2015



The Nexus 9 is our favourite Android tablet. It has a fantastic screen, even better than the iPad Air 2's, and superb battery life, lasting over 15 hours in our tests. It's cheaper than the latest iPad and comes in 16GB and 32GB capacities.

#### KEY SPECS

8.9in screen ■ 2,048 x 1,536 pixels resolution ■ Dual-core 2.3GHz 64-bit Nvidia Tegra K1 Denver processor ■ 16/32GB storage ■ 4G option costs £60 extra (32GB models only) ■ Android 5.0 ■ 228 x 154 x 8mm ■ 425g

### WINDOWS 8.1 LAPTOP

#### Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA

**£449.95** from [www.johnlewis.com](http://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.

#### KEY SPECS

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



## WIRELESS ROUTER

### D-Link DIR-868L

**£65.97** from [www.dabs.com](http://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. It's simple to set up and provides a handy wizard to guide you through the process.

#### 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](http://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](http://www.kikatek.com)  
**Date tested:** November 2014

The Cherry MX-Board 3.0 is a hard-wearing mechanical keyboard that's a pleasure to type on. It's quiet for a mechanical model but still makes more noise than a standard keyboard. It doesn't have a lot 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



## NAS DRIVE

### Asustor AS-202TE

**£199.66** from [www.scan.co.uk](http://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



## WQHD MONITOR

### AOC q2770Pqu

**£367.96** from [www.dabs.com](http://www.dabs.com)  
**Date tested:** August 2014

The AOC q2770Pqu has an exceptional, high-quality 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 428 x 245mm ■ 8kg ■ Three-year return-to-base warranty



## HD MONITOR

### BenQ EW2740L

**£194** from [www.ebuyer.com](http://www.ebuyer.com)  
**Date tested:** July 2014

The BenQ EW2740L 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 warranty



## SOFTWARE & SERVICES

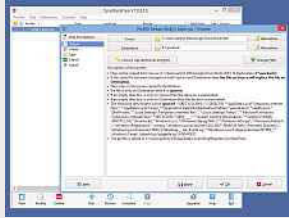
### BACKUP AND SYNC

#### SyncBackFree

**Free** from [bit.ly/syncback366](http://bit.ly/syncback366)

**Date tested:** March 2015

SyncBackFree is very capable software that gives you plenty of control over how it can be used. If you know what you need from your backups and you're prepared to spend some time configuring the options, SyncBackFree has everything you need.



#### KEY FEATURES

Synchronise: Copy files in both directions ■ Restore back-up files easily ■ Email logs ■ Schedule backups ■ Simple and Advanced mode ■ Runs on Windows 8, 7, Vista, and XP ■ Extensive Help documentation and support

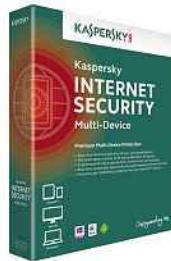
### INTERNET SECURITY

#### Kaspersky Internet Security 2015

**£17.99** from [bit.ly/kaspoffer](http://bit.ly/kaspoffer)

**Date tested:** January 2015

Kaspersky Internet Security performed near-perfectly throughout our tests last year, with only one unwanted program slipping through. Our sister title *Computeractive* is selling it at the reader-offer price of £17.99 (full price £39.99). Click the link above.



#### KEY FEATURES

Anti-virus and firewall tools ■ Protects online shopping and banking ■ Identity and privacy tools ■ Dangerous-website alerts ■ Advanced parental control ■ Licences for one, three, and five PCs; for one or two years, or pay monthly ■ Multi-Device version for Mac and Android protection

### PHOTO EDITING

#### Adobe Photoshop Elements 13

**£81.08** from

[www.adobe.com/uk](http://www.adobe.com/uk)

**Date tested:** December 2014

With its tidy interface and pop-out trays, Adobe Photoshop Elements provides everything an amateur photographer needs and helps you quickly find the right editing tools.



#### KEY FEATURES

Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8+ (32- and 64-bit) ■ Bundled photo organiser ■ Content-aware edits ■ Guided edits ■ People-beautifier tools ■ RAW support



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### VIDEO EDITING

#### Adobe Premiere Elements 13

**£81.08** from [www.adobe.com/uk](http://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 video-editing software for the price.

#### KEY FEATURES

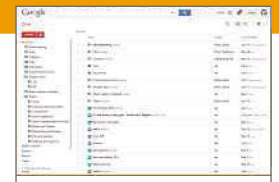
Automatic editing ■ Export to multiple video formats ■ Burn to DVD and Blu-ray ■ Image stabiliser ■ Stop-motion capture

### ONLINE STORAGE

#### Google Drive

**From free** from [drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com)

**Date tested:** August 2014



Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software integrates with Explorer, so saving and syncing files is like keeping them in any other PC folder.

#### KEY FEATURES

15GB free storage ■ Web-based office software ■ Works 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



# Best Free Software

## IMAGE EDITOR

### InPixio Free Photo Editor

[bit.ly/inpixio372](http://bit.ly/inpixio372)

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

**File size:** 1.6MB

Photo-editing programs such as GIMP and Paint.NET let you manipulate your images in all kinds of ways, from applying quick fixes to producing impressive layered compositions. But if all you need to do is tweak a shot before you share it via email or on Facebook, then the excellent InPixio Free Photo Editor should more than suffice.

Taking its cue from the popular photo-editing apps available for smartphones and tablets, the program opts for a simple one-click approach that lets you perform common tasks such as cropping a shot, applying a filter and adding a frame.

The main screen lets you open photos, view recent files and play around with the included sample shots. Open a photo, then use the menu in the top-right corner to choose the actions to apply. The first of these options is Effects, which provides you with a selection of filters sorted into categories



such as Artistic, Black and White, Colour, Monochromatic and Vintage. Click an effect to apply it to your photo. You can switch between effects and revert to the original image at any time with a single click. You can also compare the changes using a 'before-and-after' split view.

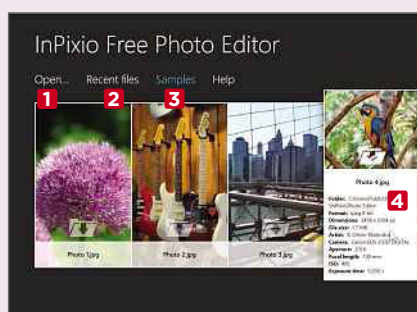
InPixio's Crop tool lets you apply a range of preset crop settings, and rotate the image using a slider. The Adjustments section gives you a more

hands-on approach to changes, and provides sliders you can use to adjust a photo's temperature, tint, brightness, shadows, highlights, contrast, clarity and more. There's also a colour-cast wheel, with sliders for tweaking the hue and saturation.

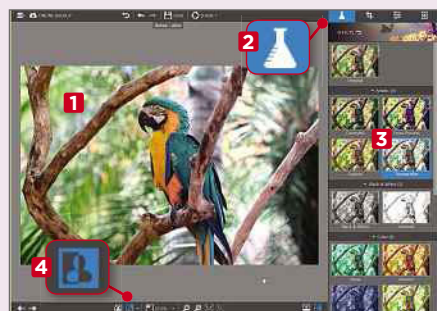
Finally, you can finish your picture by applying a frame. There are several to choose from, sorted into three categories – Classic, Design and Fantasy.



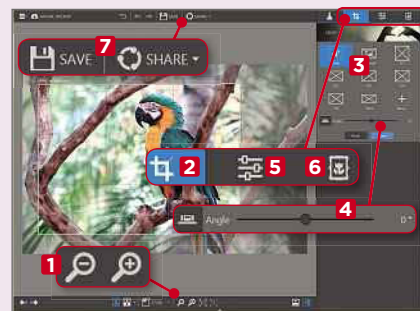
## MINI WORKSHOP | Enhance your photos using InPixio Free Photo Editor



**1** Launch InPixio Free Photo Editor and click Open **1** to load a photo. You can also choose a picture from 'Recent files' **2** or 'Samples'. **3** Hovering your mouse over one of the thumbnails will display information about that image, **4** including its folder location, dimensions, file size and details of the camera that took the photo.



**2** When you open a photo, it will appear in the main window. **1** You can apply a range of effects by clicking the flask button **2** and choosing a filter. **3** Changes will be made automatically. Click the split-view button **4** to see a before-and-after view. There are several different views available. Keep clicking the button to cycle through them.



**3** You can pan and zoom around the image. **1** Use the Crop tool **2** to select a specific section of the photo. There are several presets to choose from **3** and you can also rotate the picture. **4** Use the Adjustments menu **5** to make advanced changes, and add a border under Frames. **6** You can Save and/or Share **7** the finished image.

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



## ANTI-VIRUS

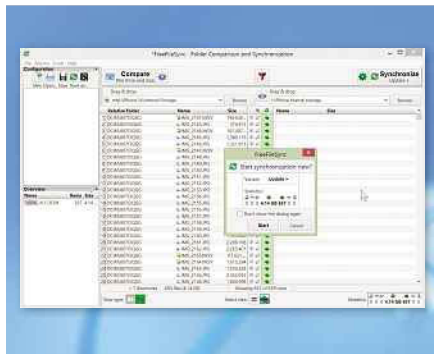
### Avetix Antivirus Free

[www.avaxoft.com](http://www.avaxoft.com)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ **File size:** 9.4MB

Avetix Antivirus Free promises to keep your system protected from all types of threats, including viruses, Trojans, worms and spyware. It can also kill annoying adverts that try to open in your browser. The software offers real-time and on-demand protection, and you can run quick, full and custom scans. There aren't many additional extras, although it can uninstall unwanted programs.

- Make sure you decline any unwelcome changes during installation.



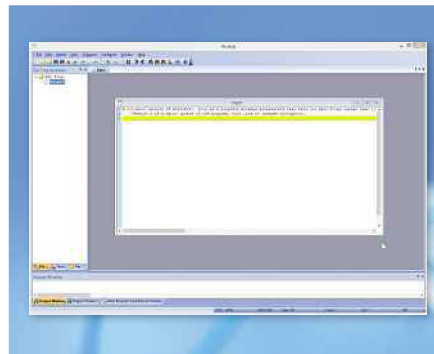
## SYNC TOOL

### FreeFileSync 7

[www.freefilesync.org](http://www.freefilesync.org)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+, Mac OS X or Linux **File size:** 13.7MB

This program makes it easy to sync files and folders, so you always have the latest versions to hand, wherever you are. It offers a choice of synchronisation settings (two-way, mirror, update and custom), and the new version supports sync for MTP (Media Transfer Protocol) devices such as phones, tablets and cameras. The program can compare files by time and size, or file content, and you can exclude certain file types.



## NOTEPAD

### PilotEdit Lite 8

[www.pilotedit.com](http://www.pilotedit.com)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ **File size:** 8.9MB

This cut-down version of a paid-for program is a powerful Notepad alternative that lets you edit files larger than 10GB in size, and upload and download large files via FTP (which is handy if you like to code websites by hand). It can handle numerous file types and offers word wrap, file comparison and merging, and unlimited undo. Version 8 is a major update with lots of changes throughout the program.

## New Windows 8 Apps

### 1Password Alpha

[bit.ly/1password372](http://bit.ly/1password372)

**Min requirements:** Windows 8+

**File size:** 3.26MB

This is a very early alpha release of the 1Password password manager. It's rather limited at the moment, and you'll need to register at [bit.ly/1passwordsignup372](http://bit.ly/1passwordsignup372) to use the app.



### Feed Candy

[bit.ly/feedcandy372](http://bit.ly/feedcandy372)

**Min requirements:** Windows 8+

**File size:** 4.66MB

This free physics-based game is clearly inspired by Cut the Rope. The idea is to feed sugary treats to the cute monster by manipulating onscreen objects, with 40 levels of increasing difficulty.



### N7player Music Player

[bit.ly/n7player372](http://bit.ly/n7player372)

**Min requirements:** Windows 8+

**File size:** 1.59MB

This beta music player can handle all the popular audio formats and download album art automatically. However, it only finds songs that are stored in your Music folder.



## ANIMATION SOFTWARE

### Express Animate

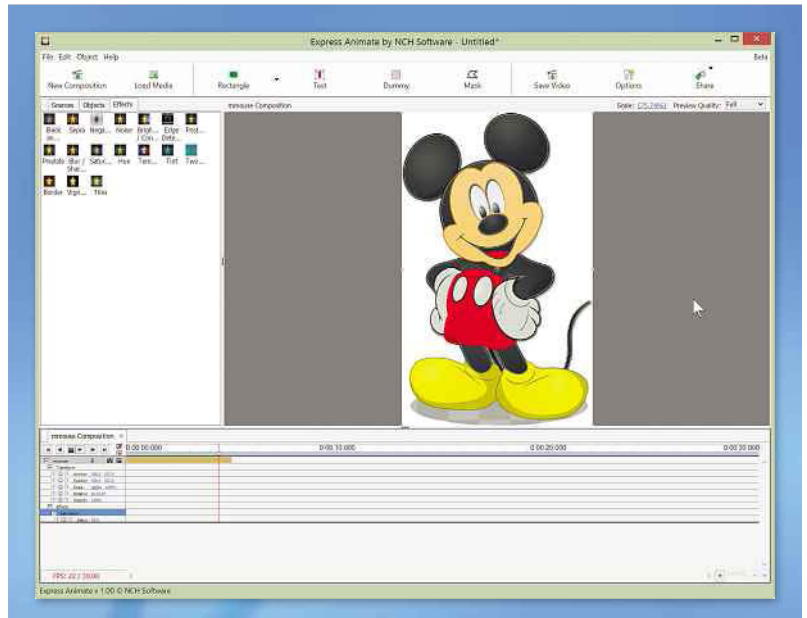
[bit.ly/exanimate372](http://bit.ly/exanimate372)

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

**File size:** 810KB

If you've ever wanted to create your own animations, Express Animate is a good way to get started. The software appears complicated at first glance, but is actually much simpler than it looks. Just add some media files to the program (videos, photos and audio), place some objects on the canvas and control the action on the timeline below. Objects can be moved, resized and rotated, and there are several effects you can apply including Black and White, Sepia, Brightness/Contrast, Blur/Sharpen and Saturation.

The animations you create can be exported in various formats, including the widely used GIF, and also uploaded straight to YouTube for the world to enjoy.



## FOLDER MANAGER

### WinCMder ShellEx

[wincmder.com](http://wincmder.com)

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

**File size:** 22.7KB

Fresh installations of Windows come with an almost empty Desktop, but over time this is likely to become cluttered with files and shortcuts, many of which you may rarely use. Creating folders and sorting content into them will make things tidier, but then you have to go hunting in a folder to find the item you want.

The tiny free tool WinCMder ShellEx gives you direct access to the content of any folder on the Desktop. Install the software by running the file wincmder-shelllex-install.bat as an administrator, then right-click a folder to view (or interact with) its contents.

Holding down the Shift key when right-clicking will display the usual menu.

## TIME-LAPSE VIDEO CREATOR

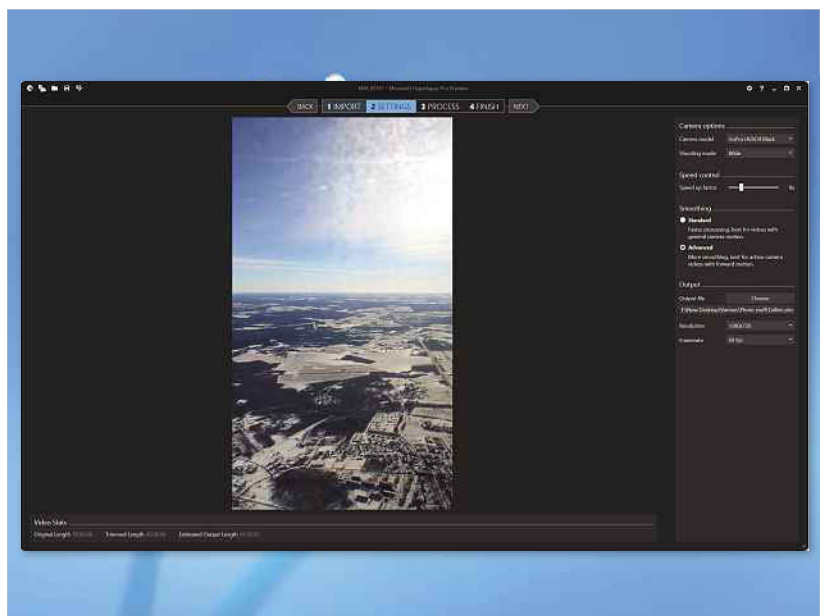
### Microsoft Hyperlapse Pro

[bit.ly/hyperlapse372](http://bit.ly/hyperlapse372)

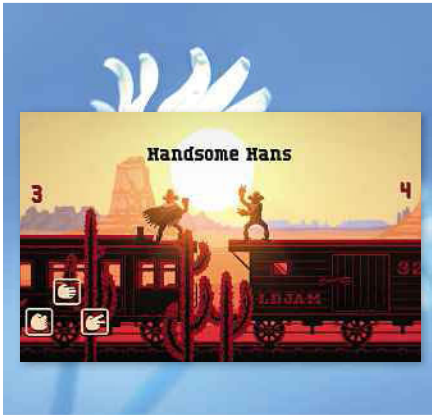
**Min requirements:** 64-bit Windows 7/8+, 64-bit processor **File size:** 14.9MB

First-person time-lapse videos filmed with a handheld camera can be jerky, overlong and may even induce motion sickness. Microsoft's free Hyperlapse Pro program (which is also available for mobile devices) lets you create smooth, stabilised time-lapse movies that are much more comfortable to watch. Just load your video, set the start and end points (rotating the video if necessary), then configure the settings and process the clip. There are settings to speed up the video and change the resolution and frame rate.

If the video was taken with a GoPro or Sony HDR camera, you'll have access to additional advanced settings.







## GAME

### The Rock the Paper and the Scissors

[bit.ly/rockpaper372](http://bit.ly/rockpaper372)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+, Mac OS X or Linux  
**File size:** 15.3MB

In this western-themed rhythm game, Lefty the bounty hunter takes on a crew of train robbers using the classic hand-gesture game Rock, Paper, Scissors. As you run along the roof of a train, you'll encounter a series of opponents and must defeat each one in turn by making the right choice at the right time.

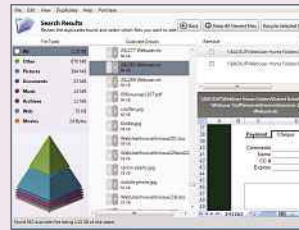
## Don't install...

### Duplicate Sweeper

[bit.ly/sweeper372](http://bit.ly/sweeper372)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+  
**File size:** 3.1MB

Duplicate Sweeper is another of those programs that promises to perform a specific task – in this case, removing duplicate files from your PC – but doesn't actually complete the job unless you pay. In fairness, the website points out that the download is only a demo, but we don't see why you should have to cough up £14.50 to delete your own files.



## ...Install this instead

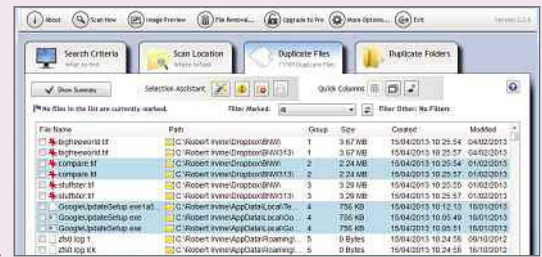
### Duplicate Cleaner Free

[bit.ly/duplicate372](http://bit.ly/duplicate372)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+  
**File size:** 4.9MB

The brilliant Duplicate Cleaner Free quickly scans your hard drive for items with the same name and/or content, searching within specific folders and excluding system files. It also offers an Audio mode for finding multiple copies of MP3s. You can preview your scan results to make sure you don't delete anything important, and either send files to the Recycle Bin, delete them for good or move them to a different location.

If you need more features, you can upgrade to the Pro version of Duplicate Cleaner for £19.95. This usefully detects photo doppelgangers, even if the image has been altered, and spots duplicates within ZIP files.



## UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



## PDF TOOLKIT

### PDF Shaper 3.5

[www.glorylogic.com](http://www.glorylogic.com)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+  
**File size:** 8.1MB

PDF Shaper is a collection of tools that let you merge, split, and encrypt and decrypt PDF files; extract text and images; and convert pictures to PDF. This update to the program lets you delete pages from a PDF file, and makes improvements to the split, crop and rotate tools.



## BACKUP TOOL

### AOMEI Backupper Standard 2.8

[www.aomeitech.com](http://www.aomeitech.com)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10  
**File size:** 69.4MB

This tool can back up your system drive and any connected drive partitions, as well as files and folders and clone drives. It supports scheduled, incremental and differential backups, and the new version can sync files and folders automatically with a schedule.



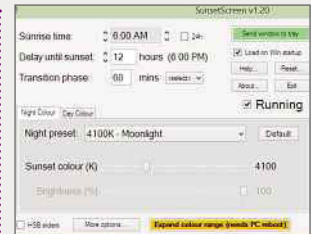
## SYSTEM TOOL

### WinUtilities Free 11.38

[hi.ylcomputing.com](http://hi.ylcomputing.com)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+  
**File size:** 6.1MB

This free tweaking suite repairs, optimises and protects your PC. As well as a number of general enhancements and bug fixes, the system-cleaning modules have been improved and the Process Security database has been updated. More languages have been added to WinUtilities, too.



## MONITOR TOOL

### SunsetScreen 1.20

[bit.ly/sunsetscreen372](http://bit.ly/sunsetscreen372)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+  
**File size:** 879KB

SunsetScreen changes the colour of your monitor display in the evening, reducing the harsh glare from the screen and limiting the 'blue light' it produces. The latest version works better with multi-monitor set-ups, and various bugs have been fixed. ■

GET FREE SOFTWARE FIRST subscribe to Web User at [subscribe.webuser.co.uk](http://subscribe.webuser.co.uk)



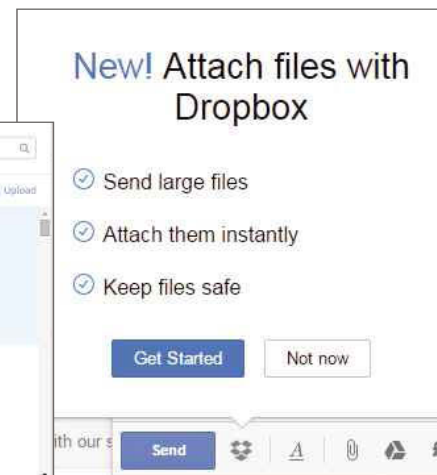
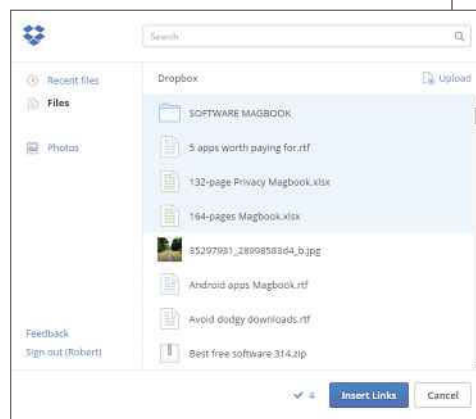
# Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

## Send large files using Dropbox for Gmail

Back in Issue 365 ([bit.ly/webuser365](http://bit.ly/webuser365)), we recommended the Dropbox for Gmail add-on ([bit.ly/dropbox372](http://bit.ly/dropbox372)), which lets you send files without leaving the Compose window. The extension has now been updated to make it even easier to share large files via Gmail, even if the recipient doesn't use Dropbox. Just click the Dropbox icon at the bottom of the message to select a single file, multiple files or even a whole folder (click to the right of the folder's name to attach rather than open it), then click the Insert Link(s) button. Additionally, when you receive a file via Gmail, you can click the 'Save to Dropbox' icon to save it directly to your account. It's a useful way to get around Gmail's 25MB limit for email attachments, other than using Google Drive to share the files.



## Protect your Google password

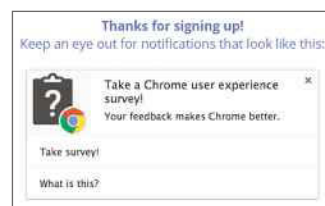
Lots of websites let you sign in using your Gmail address and password, to save you having to register from scratch, but not all of these sites can be trusted. To prevent your login details from being stolen by phishing sites, Google has launched the Chrome extension Password Alert ([bit.ly/password372](http://bit.ly/password372)), which tries to detect fake Google sign-in pages. If you enter your Gmail password on a site that hasn't been authorised by Google, you'll receive an alert telling you to reset your password immediately. If you think the add-on is being over-cautious and you know the site you're visiting is safe, just click the 'Ignore this time' button to bypass the warning.



## Give Google feedback to help improve Chrome

If you're ever annoyed or puzzled by

notifications you see in Chrome, you can now share your feelings with Google to help it improve your browsing experience. The new add-on Chrome User Experience Surveys ([bit.ly/surveys372](http://bit.ly/surveys372)) asks you to provide feedback when something unusual happens in Chrome, such as a malware alert or a strange symbol in your



address bar. Each survey takes a couple of minutes

to complete, and you shouldn't see more than four a week, with the option to ignore them if you're too busy. Google promises that it isn't using the extension to monitor your activities, and your feedback is sent anonymously. Once you've installed the add-on, you'll need to agree to participate and fill in a short form to join the programme.

## Make the web more colour-blind friendly

Browsing the web can be confusing if you're partially colour-blind. Colour Enhancer ([bit.ly/colour372](http://bit.ly/colour372)) is a new tool from Google Accessibility, which improves colour perception by applying



a filter to web pages. To configure the add-on to suit your eyesight, click the Setup button, then choose the faintest row of stars from the three options provided. Drag the slider until all the stars in that row are visible.

You can switch Colour Enhancer on and off as required, by clicking the toolbar button and selecting Enable. Here's how the Web User homepage looks with and without the filter applied.



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



## FIREFOX

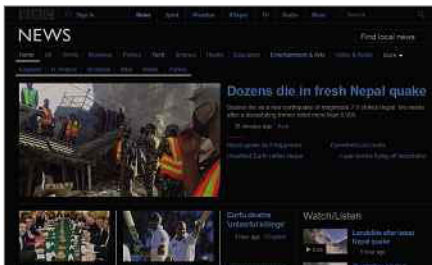
### Add useful tools to the Firefox image viewer

When you open a photo in Firefox, it's displayed against a black background with no options other than to zoom in and out. Viewhance ([bit.ly/viewhance372](http://bit.ly/viewhance372)) significantly improves the browser's built-in image viewer by adding lots of useful features. Pictures are opened against a more aesthetically pleasing grey background and the toolbar that appears in the top-left corner of the viewer lets you resize, rotate and flip images; adjust their brightness, contrast and colour; and look them up on services including Google, Bing and TinEye. Viewhance also adds tools to Firefox's video viewer, such as looping and muting what you're watching, and many of its actions can be performed using keyboard shortcuts – you'll find a full list in the add-on's Options.



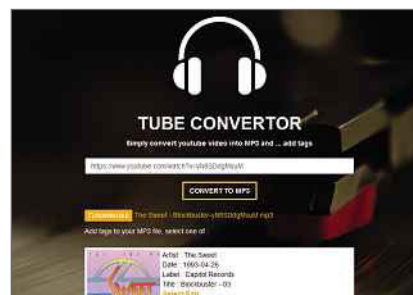
### Reduce the brightness of websites at night

Browsing the web at night can seriously hurt your eyes because the glare from the screen, especially on sites with white backgrounds, puts a strain on your tired peepers. A new Firefox add-on called Night Mode Page Dim ([bit.ly/night372](http://bit.ly/night372)) mutes the brightness of web pages and inverts their colours to reduce the strain on your eyes and make content easier to read. To toggle Night Mode on or off, either click the add-on's toolbar button or press Ctrl+F1 on your keyboard.



### Rip and tag songs from YouTube videos

There are lots of tools that convert YouTube videos into MP3s, but many of them create files without including track information. Tube Convertor ([bit.ly/tube372](http://bit.ly/tube372)) solves the problem by letting you tag the songs you rip from YouTube before you download them. It places a Download button below every video on



YouTube, which you can click to convert the clip into an audio file on the Tube Convertor website. The add-on fetches information such as the artist, year and record label, which you can either copy directly to the file or edit the details of, before clicking Download to save the MP3.

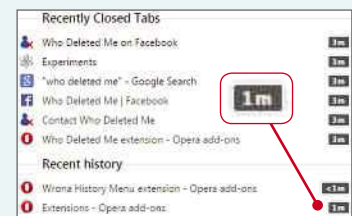
### Access web pages that have disappeared

Pages disappear from the web for all manner of reasons, from legal complaints about content to the site running out of money. If a page you're looking for has vanished, you can use Resurrect Pages ([bit.ly/resurrect372](http://bit.ly/resurrect372)) to access its ghost. This new add-on searches for dead pages and broken links in seven online archives, including caches from Google, Yahoo and Microsoft, and the brilliant Wayback Machine. There's no guarantee it will find the lost page, but it's certainly worth a try.

## OTHER BROWSERS

### Browse your recent Opera history

Although Opera's main menu lets you revisit pages you've recently opened and tabs you've closed, we much prefer the approach of Wrona History Menu ([bit.ly/history372](http://bit.ly/history372)). Not only does this handy add-on combine the two lists into a single record of your browsing activities, but it tells you how many minutes have elapsed since you closed each tab and accessed each page. You can also search your history for keywords contained in the titles of pages, and sync the extension with other devices on which you use Opera.



### Apply a night mode to YouTube

The YouTube Dark extension ([bit.ly/dark372](http://bit.ly/dark372)) works in a similar way to Night Mode Page Dim (see write-up on the left) by applying a dark theme to YouTube to make the site easier on your eyes when you watch at night. However, when using the add-on, the video player itself and any videos listed in the sidebar are unaffected by the theme, so you can focus on what's playing and not other YouTube elements. It works with both the Flash and HTML5 video players on the site, and uses very little memory.





# Best Free Apps

## App of the Fortnight

### COMMUNICATION

#### Bleep

[bit.ly/bleep372](http://bit.ly/bleep372)

**Min requirements:** Android 4.0, iOS 8, Windows, Mac

**Size:** 6.7MB

**NEW**

username, and you don't need to add your phone number or email address, although this makes it easier for your friends to find and add you. Once you've set up the app, it lets you import contacts from your address book to see who else is using it and invite those who aren't. If your friends choose to hide their phone numbers, too, there's a useful feature that lets you add them in person by scanning their QR code. Unlike many other communication tools, Bleep also encrypts all your messages and stores them locally on your device, so you can rest assured that you won't be the next victim of a cloud hack.



Developed by BitTorrent, Bleep is a cross-platform messaging client that aims to protect your privacy. Like WhatsApp, it lets you chat via text and make free voice calls, but you can also use its 'whisper' feature to send self-destructing text and picture messages. This functionality is reminiscent of Snapchat, however Bleep doesn't provide an option to store any part of your whispers and stops anyone taking a screenshot by only showing a contact's name or messages at one time.

Setting up the app was as quick and easy as picking a

Our rating



### BROWSERS

#### A5 Browser

[bit.ly/browser372](http://bit.ly/browser372)

**Min requirements:** Android 4.0.3

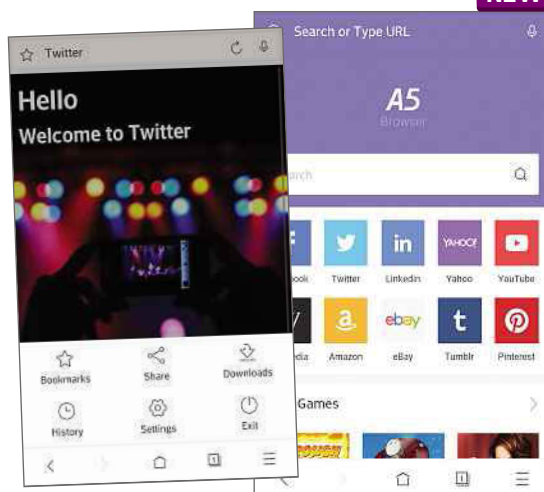
**Size:** 659KB

A5 Browser wasn't available when we covered Android browsers in the last issue of *Web User* ([bit.ly/371](http://bit.ly/371)), but it's fast and lightweight, and has a straightforward interface that makes it an appealing choice for smartphone and tablet users alike.

The browser doesn't have as many features as the award winners in our round-up, but it does offer quick access to your most visited websites as well as multi-tab support, bookmarks and a choice of search engines.

A5 Browser is less than 1MB in size and we found that it uses very little memory compared to other browsers, so this is definitely one to try out if you're trying to squeeze a little more out of a slow, old Android device.

**NEW**



Our rating



### TOOL

#### WiFi Mapper

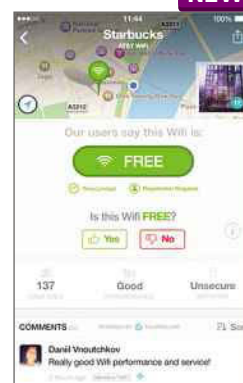
[bit.ly/wifi372](http://bit.ly/wifi372)

**Min requirements:** iOS 7.1

**Size:** 9.1MB

This handy app gives you access to a database of 500 million Wi-Fi hotspots so that you can find free internet anywhere in the world. As its name suggests, WiFi Mapper uses a map to let you browse nearby hotspots and you can also find information about the venues, how reliable their internet connections are and whether they sell good coffee or not! WiFi Mapper's data is crowd-sourced so, by using the app and identifying free hotspots, you can improve the service further.

Whether you have a small data allowance or travel abroad frequently, this useful tool could save you both time and money.



Our rating



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

## NEWS

### Huffpost Realtime

[bit.ly/huffpost372](http://bit.ly/huffpost372)

**Min requirements:**  
iOS 8.2

**Size:** 14.4MB

Aimed at news junkies, HuffPost Realtime gives you real-time (obviously) updates on the 2,000 articles posted to the news website every day. When you first launch the app, it lets you choose which of the 13 international editions you want to subscribe to; the articles then appear chronologically in your news feed and you get a notification whenever a new story is published. The app's interface is really simple and if you want to stop seeing a certain type of article, you can unfollow sections at the touch of a button. Realtime also offers handy built-in tools for bookmarking and sharing your favourite stories.



Our rating



## MUSIC

### Noon Pacific

[bit.ly/noon372](http://bit.ly/noon372)

**Min requirements:**  
Android 2.3.3, iOS 8.2

**Size:** 6.8MB

Noon Pacific is a great way to discover new music using your smartphone or tablet. Every Monday evening you receive 10 new tracks to listen to, handpicked from the best music blogs, and you can also play songs from more than 100 previous mixtapes. The app's layout is very simple and easy to use and there's no need to set up an account, meaning you can start streaming tracks right away. Due to licensing restrictions, you can only skip three songs an hour, but we were impressed with both the selection of music on offer and the sound quality.



Our rating



## ROUND UP | Quick bites

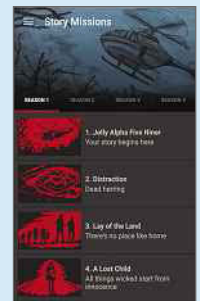
### Zombies, Run!

[bit.ly/zombies372](http://bit.ly/zombies372)

**Min requirements:**  
Android 4, iOS 7.1

**Size:** 244MB

This unique fitness app uses an immersive soundtrack to put you at the centre of a zombie-based running game. Following a major update, it is now free to play for the first time.



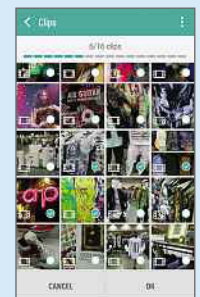
### Zoe

[bit.ly/htczoe372](http://bit.ly/htczoe372)

**Min requirements:**  
Android 4.3

**Size:** Varies with device

Once exclusive to its own flagship smartphone, HTC's video-editing app, Zoe, is now available on a range of Android devices. It's also been updated so that you can stream your videos to your Chromecast.



### Google Fit

[bit.ly/googlefit372](http://bit.ly/googlefit372)

**Min requirements:**  
Android (varies with device)

**Size:** Varies with device

When we first reviewed Google Fit, we were disappointed with the activity insights it offered, but it's since been updated to tell you how many calories you burn and the distance you cover.



## ALARM

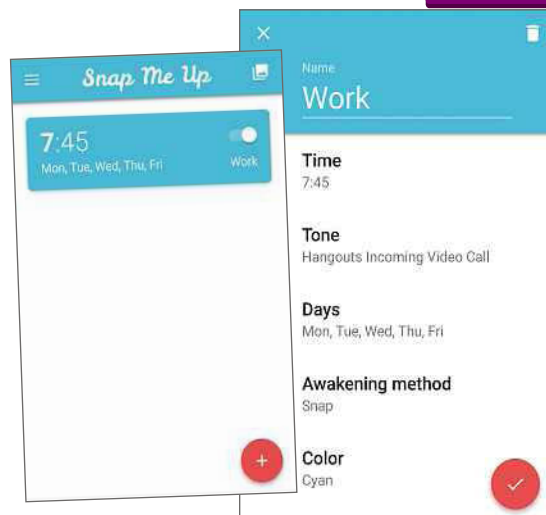
### Snap Me Up

[bit.ly/snap372](http://bit.ly/snap372)

**Min requirements:** Android 4.0.3

**Size:** 4.3MB

We've covered several quirky alarm clock apps in this section in previous issues and Snap Me Up is one of the barmiest yet. Unlike Wave Alarm, which we reviewed last issue ([bit.ly/webuser371](http://bit.ly/webuser371)), this app is likely to succeed in waking you, because it requires you to take a picture of yourself before the alarm is muted. What's more, Snap Me Up cannot be tricked by taking a snap of thin air, so you'll need to turn on the light before it can recognise your face. It sounds infuriating, but the silver lining is that all the photos you capture are saved to an album called 'My sleepy snaps', so you can entertain yourself (and others) with images of you looking less than your sprightly best! The app also has a handy countdown feature, which is convenient when you only want a short nap.



Our rating



## PROPERTY

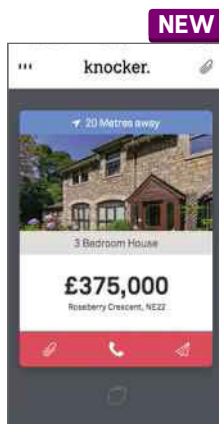
### Knocker

[bit.ly/knocker372](http://bit.ly/knocker372)

**Min requirements:** iOS 8

**Size:** 9.5MB

Knocker makes finding somewhere to live easier than ever by letting you swipe through nearby properties on your phone or tablet. Its developers say it's perfect for "those times when you're in a bar or cafe, away on business or holiday, or just feeling a bit nosy, and simply want to know how much it would cost to live in the area around you". The app uses your precise location to list places nearest to you first, and you can filter the results by properties to let or to buy. Knocker's listings are powered by Zoopla, so you can view full property profiles and once you find something you like, you can save it or share it to view later.



Our rating



## VIDEO

### YouTube Kids

[bit.ly/youtube372](http://bit.ly/youtube372)

**Min requirements:** Android 4.1, iOS 7

**Size:** 35MB

Packed with age-appropriate videos, channels and playlists, YouTube Kids is a must have if you'd like to leave your child browsing YouTube on your mobile device, safe in the knowledge that they won't stumble across anything unsuitable. As well as offering family-friendly content, the app provides simpler navigation with large buttons, easy scrolling and instant full-screen mode. There's loads of great content to watch, including *Sesame Street*, *Thomas & Friends* and *Peppa Pig*, as well as videos about music, gaming, science and anything else they might be interested in. We particularly like the app's built-in timer, which lets you tell your children when their watching time is up, (hopefully) without any argument!



Our rating



## 5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

### PHOTOGRAPHY

#### Nikon SLR Skills

[bit.ly/nikon372](http://bit.ly/nikon372)

**Min requirements:** iOS 5.1

**Size:** 467MB **Price:** £4.99

If you're struggling to get to grips with your Nikon SLR, this is the app for you. There are tips to help you understand everything from autofocus and focal length to aperture and shutter speeds.



### TOOL

#### Livescribe+

[www.livescribe.com/uk](http://www.livescribe.com/uk)

**Min requirements:**

Android 4.4, iOS 7.0

**Size:** 39MB **Price:** Free

Livescribe+ makes a digital copy of everything you write on paper and you can even convert your handwritten notes to live text. The app is free to download, but you'll need to fork out £129.95 to buy one of its smartpens!



### GAMES

#### Tamagotchi Classic

[bit.ly/tamagotchi372](http://bit.ly/tamagotchi372)

**Min requirements:**

Android 2.3, iOS 6.0

**Size:** 14MB **Price:** £3.11

The legendary handheld toy sold more than 80 million units worldwide in the



Nineties and now it's available to play directly from your smartphone. Tamagotchi has been out on iOS for a while, but it's brand new to the Apple Watch and Android.

### DESIGN

#### VoxelMaker

[bit.ly/voxelmaker372](http://bit.ly/voxelmaker372)

**Min requirements:**

Android 2.3

**Size:** 19MB

VoxelMaker lets you make 3D models from cube-shaped building blocks, before rendering them with realistic lighting and shadow effects. You can export your creations to other applications or share them as high-quality images.



### INTERIORS

#### Neybers

[bit.ly/neybers372](http://bit.ly/neybers372)

**Min requirements:** iOS 7

**Size:** 26.1MB **Price:** Free (with in-app purchases)

This fun app lets you play with interior design, decorating virtual rooms using a range of real products from different brands and designers. It's free to download, but to get the most from Neybers, you'll probably need to make some in-app purchases.



Nikon SLR Skills



Livescribe+



Tamagotchi Classic



VoxelMaker



Neybers

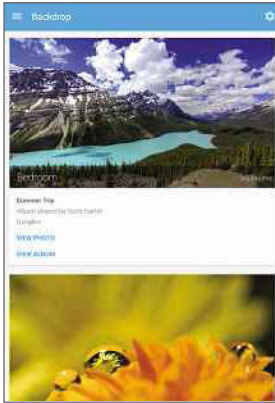






## Best New TV Apps

## TV

**Chromecast for Android**[bit.ly/chromecast372](http://bit.ly/chromecast372)**Min requirements:** Android 2.3**Size:** Varies with device

One of the best things about Google's Chromecast is that even when you're not watching web video on your television, it entertains you by displaying beautifully

photographed images on the screen. The Android app for the streaming stick has now been updated to store details of these 'backdrop' photos, so if you see a particularly stunning one that vanishes from your screen before you can fully take it in, you can now use the app to revisit it and get more information. Just tap the history icon below the image preview to browse through the five most recent images and discover their subjects and photographers. You can also learn more about the onscreen picture by asking aloud: "Ok Google, what's on Chromecast?".

## REMOTE

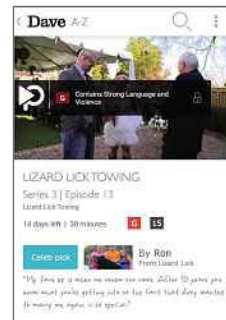
**Sure Universal Remote**[bit.ly/sure372](http://bit.ly/sure372)**Min requirements:** Android 4.2**Size:** 28MB

This ingenious app turns your phone or tablet into a remote control for every 'smart' device in your home, including your TV, Chromecast, Roku, set-top box, music player and even your vacuum cleaner, if you're lucky (or rich) enough to own a Roomba. The Sure Universal Remote controls devices using infrared and Wi-Fi technology, and allows you to get rid of all the different controllers for various devices that clutter your coffee table. It also lets you group related appliances so you can turn them all on and off by pressing a single button. The app works with smart TVs from all the main manufacturers, on selected handsets from Samsung,



HTC and LG. The free version is ad-supported, but you can pay £3.10 to subscribe to the ad-free version.

## TV

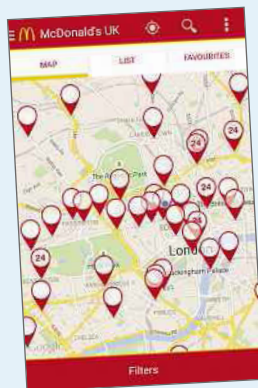
**UKTV Play**[uktvplay.uktv.co.uk/apps](http://uktvplay.uktv.co.uk/apps)**Min requirements:** Android 4.2 (inc Kindle Fire), iOS 7**Size:** 14MB

If you can't bear to miss your favourite shows on digital TV channels Dave, Yesterday, Really and Drama, such as *Birds of a Feather*, *Storage*

*Hunters* and *Red Dwarf*, you can now catch up with them on your mobile device using this app from UKTV. This lets you search for a specific programme, browse the A-Z list of shows and explore themed collections such as Real Crime, Gadget Geeks and New Stuff to Watch. There are also picks from UKTV staff and recommendations from 'celebs'. Unfortunately, these being free TV channels, you have to put up with quite a lot of ads, and the app lacks useful features such as Chromecast support. It's also only compatible with a few phones and tablets, and doesn't even work on our Moto G!

**Don't install...****McDonald's UK**[bit.ly/mcdonalds372](http://bit.ly/mcdonalds372)

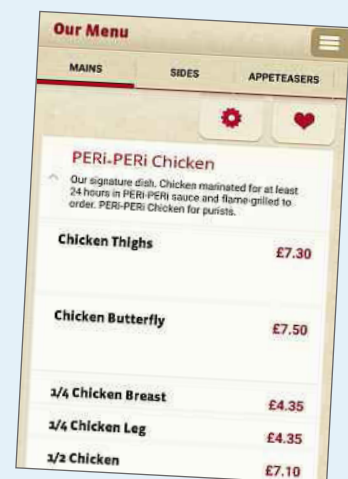
You're never far from a McDonald's so it should be easy for the fast-food chain's app to tell you where you can find its nearest restaurant. However, the official app merely displays a



mess of intersecting markers on a map, which is prone to crash almost as soon as you touch it. Try to browse the menu and the app simply opens the McDonald's website, which makes it rather pointless. We're also not sure why it needs to verify that you're over 16 years old!

**...Install this instead****Nando's**[bit.ly/nandos372](http://bit.ly/nandos372)**Min requirements:** Android 4.03, iOS 7**Size:** 28MB

Yes, it's a completely different cuisine to McDonald's, but Nando's shows how a fast-food chain app should be done. It's simple but visually appealing and lets you browse the full Nando's menu on your phone or tablet, so you can decide how you want your chicken, as well as your sides and 'appetisers', before you get to the restaurant. We also like that you can customise the menu according to your dietary requirements, view nutritional information for each item and use the calorie counter to ensure you don't get over-stuffed. The app automatically detects where you are to find your nearest Nando's and helpfully provides details of facilities and opening times. It's clucking good! ■





# FAQ

Everything you need to know about the most interesting new technology trends and events

## Our guide to emoji

Are you feeling happy or sad? Listening to music or watching the football? **David Crookes** looks at how a tiny picture can paint a thousand characters



### What are they?

Emoji are colourful, cartoon glyphs that have become a popular means of electronic expression, especially in text messages and emails, and on social media. The most recognisable is the round yellow face with a beaming smile, but over the years emoji have expanded in scope to encompass 802 tiny pictures, including flowers, animals, fruit, transport and much more.



messages would curtail these practices, emoji were used to make the writer's mood clear in one pictorial character.

### What does emoji mean?

The 'e' stands for picture while 'moji' is Japanese for letter or character, so 'emoji' is simply 'picture character'. Contrary to how many people say the word ("i-moji"), the correct pronunciation is "eh-moji".

### When did they become popular in the UK?

Emoji began to rise in popularity in 2011 when Apple included a standard emoji keyboard in iOS 5. They are now available



across all smartphones and tablets, and their use has snowballed. It helps that emoji are standard across the world, thanks to the intervention of

Unicode, which is the industry standard for handling computer text. The use of Unicode means that emoji sent on one device can be read on another.

### Does anyone own the copyright to them?

DoCoMo tried to get copyright on the designs, but it was told it couldn't because the images are too small. However, emoji are regulated to some

degree. To be universally accepted, they have to be on the Unicode list; otherwise, on an incompatible device they will appear as a black square. There is certainly room for some additional



characters, given that there are some startling omissions. There is no emoji for cheese, for example, or an expression of eye-rolling. There is,

however, a pile of excrement, which is disconcertingly similar to the emoji for ice cream.

### Are all emoji the same?

No, just as fonts are not all the same; and there can be slight differences in appearance depending on the device the emoji is being read on. Even so, the same emotion will always be conveyed, so a sad face is a sad face no matter what you're viewing it on. Twitter's emoji, designed with Icon Factory, have been released as an open-source library to the developer community ([bit.ly/twitter372](http://bit.ly/twitter372)).

### Can anyone else create emoji?

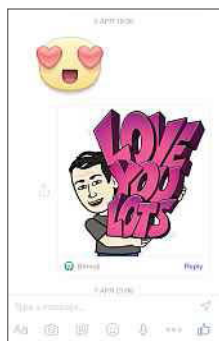
Yes, and they do. However, if you want a specific emotion or object to be added to the Unicode standard, you have to go through a long, formal process. Still, a message app called Line lets people

### Where did they originate?

The first example of these 12x12-pixel pictures came from Shigetaka Kurita in the late 1990s. He was working on a messaging feature for NTT DoCoMo, Japan's largest mobile network, and looking for an effective communication method. He and his team managed to create a set of 172 emoji, and Japanese mobile users lapped them up.

### What's so special about emoji?

In Japan, emoji serve a very useful purpose because they cut through complicated rules of etiquette. For example, letters are traditionally opened and closed with a lengthy seasonal greeting to avoid sounding abrupt, and notes take into account the relationship between the writer and reader, as well as the formality and style. When it became clear that the restricted space in text



purchase emojis and there are alternative systems such as Bitmoji that can be used in Facebook Messenger. Larger and more elaborate, Bitmoji are based on your likeness (you can design your own avatars).

In April, Apple expanded its emoji keyboard with 300 new characters when it rolled out iOS 8.3. This introduced six new skin tones for face, hand and body characters. Modelled on the Fitzpatrick scale, which is a recognised standard used by dermatologists, they were created in partnership with the Unicode Consortium.



## What's happened to emoticons?

Emoticons such as :- ( to denote sadness and :- ) for happiness are still in use. After all, they are very easy to type and don't entail looking through dozens of emoji to find the one you want. Some apps will translate an :- ) into an emoji smiley face but emoticons in their raw form remain popular with a lot of people.

What are on their way out, it would

seem, are acronyms. In May, researchers at Instagram found that people were more likely to use an emoji than type Lol, Rofl or Omg. Emoji, they said, were appearing in half of all comments and captions on the social network.

## Which country uses emoji the most?

Surprisingly, it's not Japan, but Finland. Instagram's research showed 63 per cent of all texts posted from the country contained at least one emoji, followed by France (50%), the UK (48%), Germany (47%), Italy (45%), Spain (40%), Japan (39%) and the US (38%).



## What are the most popular emojis?

Well, you can see which emoji are being used on Twitter right now by going to [www.emojitracker.com](http://www.emojitracker.com). Research by mobile keyboard developer SwiftKey ([bit.ly/swiftkey372](http://bit.ly/swiftkey372)) found that 70 per cent of the emoji used are positive, such as the happy face. French speakers are four times more likely to use the heart emoji; Australians select emoji related to alcohol and junk food twice as often as

emojitracker: realtime emoji use on twitter

| THUMBS UP SIGN |           |           |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| 721160457      | 518537387 | 327696952 |
| 199973003      | 194723391 | 172050680 |
| 89282119       | 85783664  | 84396038  |
| 62756527       | 60430228  | 60176693  |
| 53528194       | 53517157  | 52972469  |
| 43353272       | 42806154  | 41138188  |
| 33047738       | 32975169  | 32659839  |
| 27507161       | 26123726  | 25684367  |
| 22181698       | 22030736  | 21768508  |
| 19890588       | 19400632  | 19374295  |



the average; and Russian speakers tend to use cold weather emoji more than anyone else. Canadians are the most likely to use violent

emoji and are also the biggest users of the pile of poo.

## Are any emoji controversial?

Yes. In April, Instagram allowed users to create and search for hashtags on its service using emoji, but it banned searches for 'aubergine'. This was because the vegetable is usually used to represent male genitalia and there was a fear that nude images would swamp Instagram as a result. Microsoft has also split opinion by announcing that it's adding a swearing middle finger emoji to Windows 10. This emoji was approved by Unicode in 2014 although it has not been adopted by Apple or Android.

## Are emojis here to stay?

Who knows? Trends come and go but, for now, emoji are being widely welcomed. They were widespread during the UK General Election, with many people expressing support using emoji party logos. And when US President Barack Obama greeted Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on 28 April, he expressed his thanks for "manga, anime and, of course, emojis".



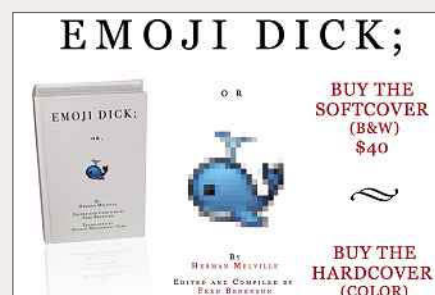
## EMOJI IN CULTURE



### Pop videos

[vimeo.com/88073857](http://vimeo.com/88073857)

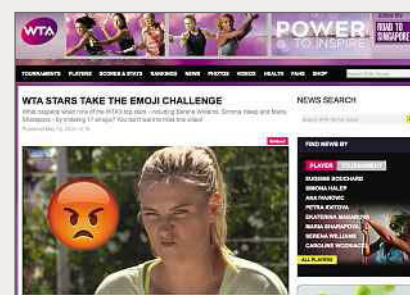
Producer Jesse Hill created an unofficial emoji-focused pop video for Beyoncé's song *Drunk in Love* by representing the song's lyrics with appropriate characters.



### Literature

[www.emojidick.com](http://www.emojidick.com)

Each of the 10,000 sentences that make up the book *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville has been translated into emoji. The resulting work *Emoji Dick* can be purchased from Lulu for \$40 (£25.91).



### Sport

[bit.ly/tennis372](http://bit.ly/tennis372)

The Women's Tennis Association asked its stars to take up the Emoji Challenge, imitating 17 emoji. Top players including Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova took part.



COVER  
FEATURE

# Record Anything ON ANY DEVICE

Capturing your screen lets you keep its contents to edit and share. **Wayne Williams** explains how to record anything you see, hear and do on your PC, phone, tablet and other devices

**T**here are lots of free tools you can use to record audio and video from the web when you're on your PC or Mac, many of which we covered in Issue 359's cover feature, 'Record All Video and Radio' ([bit.ly/webuser359](http://bit.ly/webuser359)). But you're just as likely to want to record something that's happening on your phone, tablet or other device, such as a game, conversation or screencast. Fortunately, this is a lot easier than you'd think.

In this feature, we reveal the best ways to capture and share content on whatever device you have to hand. Over the following six pages, we'll show you how to record and play back your phone calls, capture live video from a webcam, record and edit games you're playing on your Xbox, save radio broadcasts to your phone, record activity on a Chromebook, install and use secret screen-capture apps on iOS and Android, and much more.

## Phones and Tablets

### Record and play back your phone calls

There are times when it's useful to record a phone conversation, such as when you speaking to a company's customer service department. There are various apps that can do this. For Android, try Call Recorder – Boldbeast ([bit.ly/boldbeast372](http://bit.ly/boldbeast372)). This can record both sides of a call, but it doesn't

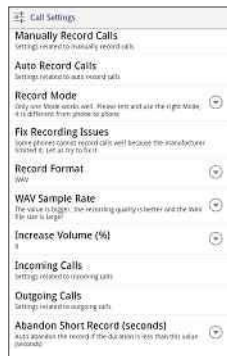
work on some Android phones, including the Nexus 5 and 6, unless you root the device. However, it's been proven to record without rooting on many other handsets, including the Moto G, Samsung Galaxy S6 and HTC One M8 and M9.

If you want to record calls on your

iPhone, try the app Call Recording by NoNotes.com ([bit.ly/nonotes372](http://bit.ly/nonotes372)). This records the call and saves it online. The free version limits you to 20 minutes of recording a month, with the

option to buy more time.

See 'Is it legal to record phone calls?' (below) for more about this topic.



### Record your Android screen without rooting

You can record any activity on your Android device, including the games you play, using Mobizen ([www.mobizen.com](http://www.mobizen.com)). You don't have to root your phone; just tap the Record button, then use the button that appears on-screen to start capturing the action. The app also offers real-time mirroring on your PC, which means you can capture app action from your Desktop.



### Record voice notes on your mobile device

Both iOS and Android have built-in voice-recording apps that you can use to record notes on your phone or tablet.

Android's app is called Sound Recorder. Launch the app, tap the red Record button and start speaking. You can access your notes in the Recording file list.

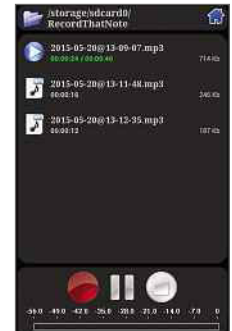
The iOS Voice Memos app works in the same way. Recent

recordings appear at the bottom of the app; just tap one to play it back.



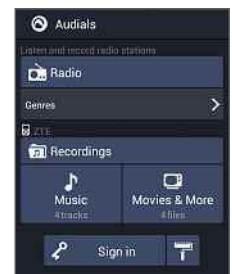
### Record audio without long pauses

If you're recording your thoughts, or other voice notes such as instructions, the chances are you'll have to pause every so often while you think of what to say next. Record That Note for Android ([bit.ly/recordnote372](http://bit.ly/recordnote372)) automatically pauses recording when there's no sound, and resumes when you start speaking again. You'll need to enable the Sensitive Level Recording (SLR) option in the app's settings.



### Record radio broadcasts on your phone

If you're not able to listen to your favourite show on streaming radio, then Audials Radio ([bit.ly/audials372](http://bit.ly/audials372)) will let you record it on your Android device in MP3 format. This easy-to-use free app has more than 63,000 streaming stations to choose from, and now supports Google Chromecast, so you can stream broadcasts to your TV.



### Save YouTube videos to Android

Want to watch your favourite YouTube videos on your phone or tablet without Wi-Fi, and without using your mobile data connection? It sounds impossible, but thanks to TubeMate YouTube Downloader, it's actually very straightforward. This free app lets you save videos directly to your device. Go to [m.tubemate.net](http://m.tubemate.net)

on your phone or

tablet and

download

TubeMate from

one of the

recommended

sites. You'll need

to sideload the

app – go to

Settings, Security

and enable the

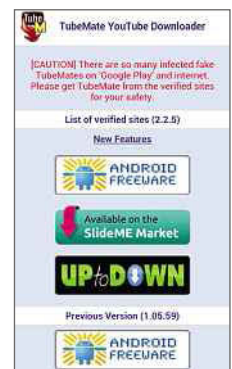
option to allow

installation from

Unknown Sources. Once installed, you

can browse YouTube videos to save

directly in the app.



## IS IT LEGAL TO RECORD PHONE CALLS?

Perhaps surprisingly, especially when you consider the warnings on customer helplines saying "this call may be recorded for monitoring and training purposes", it is perfectly legal to record your telephone conversations, whether on your landline, mobile phone or via Skype. That's according to telecommunications regulator Ofcom ([bit.ly/oftel372](http://bit.ly/oftel372)), which says: "the relevant law does not prohibit individuals from recording their own communications provided that the recording is for their own use". The "for their own use" is the key part here, because if you share the recording with a third party, then you *will* be breaking the law.

If you're recording the conversation for personal use, you don't even need to let the other person in the conversation know that you're doing so. Unless, as we've said, you plan to make the recording available to someone else.





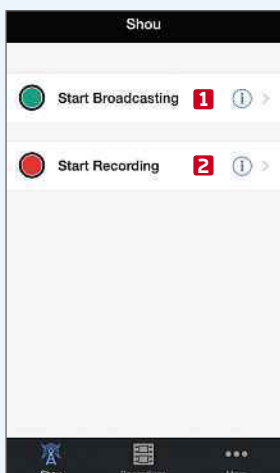
## MINI WORKSHOP

### Record streaming video on iOS with Shou

**1** Open Safari on your iPhone or iPad and browse to [emu4ios.net](http://emu4ios.net). Click the Get button next to Shou and the app will install. Tap its icon on your device and an 'Untrusted App Developer' message will appear, asking if you trust it. Tap Trust. **1** You can revoke this later if you wish.



**2** Sign up for a free account, or log in with Facebook or Google. You'll see two buttons: Start Broadcasting **1** and Start Recording **2**. Click the 'i' button to the right of the latter. From here, you can change the recording format, orientation, resolution and bitrate. If you are recording Periscope or Meerkat, set the orientation to portrait.

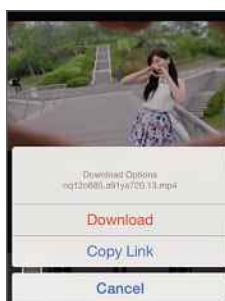


**3** Tap Start Recording and Shou will start capturing the on-screen activity. Go to the live stream and wait for it to finish. When it's done, return to Shou and tap Stop Recording. Tap Recordings **1** and select the relevant video. **2** You'll be able to play the file, open it in another app, save the recording to your Camera Roll or delete it.



### Save YouTube videos to iOS devices

There are several iOS apps you can use to download YouTube videos for offline viewing, but our favourite is Video Downloader Lite Super - Vdownload ([bit.ly/vdownload372](http://bit.ly/vdownload372)). It may not have the catchiest name, but it lets you save videos from all the major steaming sites and supports all the popular video formats.



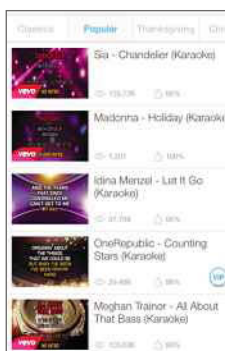
### Record videos from iPhone to YouTube

YouTube Capture ([www.youtube.com/capture](http://www.youtube.com/capture)) is an iPhone app from Google that lets you record and edit videos on your phone (with an optional soundtrack) and upload the result to YouTube. Oddly, Google hasn't yet released YouTube Capture for Android.



### Record karaoke versions of songs from YouTube

Yokee ([www.yokee.tv](http://www.yokee.tv)) is a fun iOS and Android app that lets you sing along to songs on YouTube and record the results. It uses auto-tuning to improve your voice and lets you share the results. Although the app itself is free, you'll need to upgrade to the Premium version to save your karaoke performances, which costs £2.29 a week. Installing another free app from the company will give you one recording credit.



### Change how your voice sounds

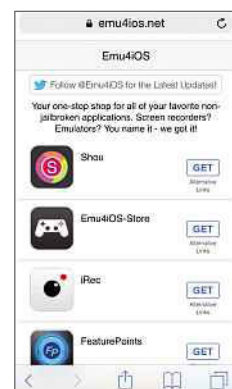
If you want to disguise your voice, play a prank on someone or you

just don't like how your voice sounds when it's recorded, install the Android app Change Voice & Record Sounds ([bit.ly/changevoice372](http://bit.ly/changevoice372)). It lets you record yourself, then manipulate the audio, applying a range of silly effects including Radio, Angry Wife, Baby, Pirate and Echo. You can also apply these effects to your voice in real time. The only drawback is that the app occasionally displays annoying full-screen adverts.



### Record your screen on iOS without jailbreaking

Apple doesn't allow certain types of apps on iOS, including screen recorders, and you can usually only get them by jailbreaking your device, which many people won't be keen on, because it can 'brick' your phone or tablet (render it useless). To get around this, browse the Emu4iOS Store ([emu4ios.net](http://emu4ios.net)) on your device. You'll see a selection of screen recorders, which you can install with a single tap. You didn't read it here, though!



### Record Periscope and Meerkat streams

As we explained in Issue 370, Periscope and Meerkat let you watch live streaming video, but there's no obvious way of saving the streams to watch offline or at a more convenient time. On an iPhone, you can record the streams using Shou, which you can get through the Emu4iOS Store mentioned above. You'll need to



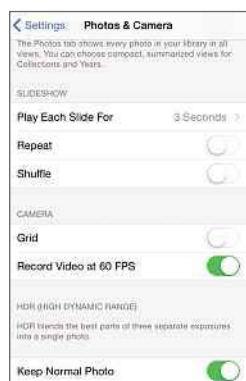


record the streams in a quiet room because Shou will also pick up external sounds and any notifications you receive while recording.

See our Mini Workshop on the left to find out how to use Shou.

## Record video at 60fps on iPhone

By default, the iPhone records video at 30 frames per second (fps), but if you own an iPhone 6 or 6 Plus, you can double this to 60fps. Open Settings and go to 'Photos & Camera'. You'll see an option to



'Record Video at 60 FPS'. Toggle this switch to on. When you record a video, you'll see a 60 FPS badge indicating the higher frame rate.

Bear in mind that videos recorded at this rate will be much larger.

## Record Hangouts and Skype calls on Android

If you want a record of video calls you make from your mobile device using Google Hangouts or Microsoft Skype, try Recordable ([bit.ly/recordable372](http://bit.ly/recordable372)). This free screen recorder for Android doesn't require rooting, although it will add a watermark to your recordings. There's a £5.50 paid-for version if you want to record without this



mark and in better quality. Install the app on your Android device, then install the Desktop

## Record stable timelapse videos on Android

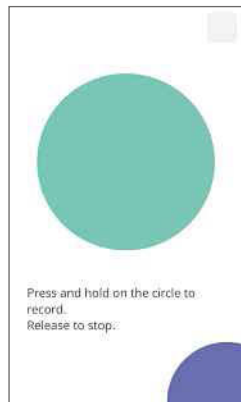
Microsoft's new Hyperlapse tool ([aka.ms/hyperlapse](http://aka.ms/hyperlapse)) turns first-person videos into smooth timelapses. We've included the PC version in this month's Best Free Software, but it's also available as

an early preview app for Android. Hyperlapse doesn't currently work on every make and model of phone, but support for new devices is slowly being added. You can get more details from [bit.ly/hyperlapsegoogle372](http://bit.ly/hyperlapsegoogle372).



## Record messages for your future self

Tomorrow ([bit.ly/tomorrow372](http://bit.ly/tomorrow372)) is an interesting iPhone app that lets you record notes for listening to the

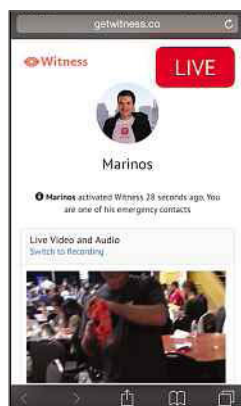


next day. These can be reminders, or inspiring and important messages. Once recorded, notes are locked away and can only be listened to

the following day. They will be deleted the day after, whether you listened to them or not.

## Record videos without anyone seeing

There may be a time when you want to record video on your phone, without anyone knowing you're doing it, for example if someone is being physically or verbally abusive to you. The new iPhone app Witness ([getwitness.co](http://getwitness.co)) is



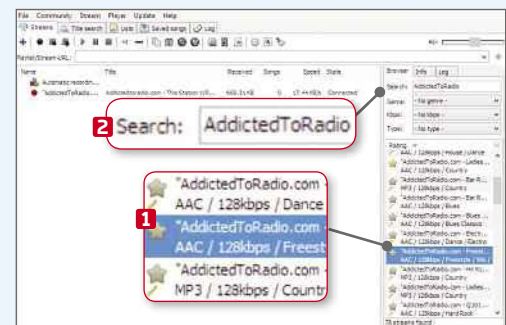
described as a "panic button for the smartphone age". When activated, it alerts your emergency contacts, recording and streaming what's happening

without showing anything on screen. You currently need to request an invite to try Witness.

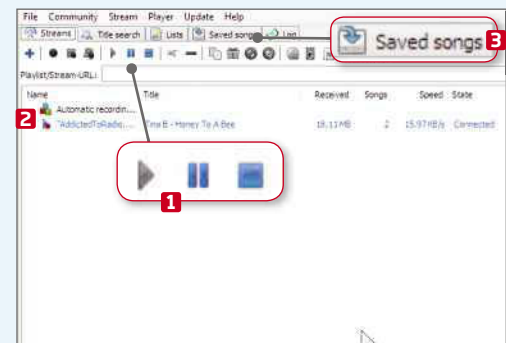


### MINI WORKSHOP

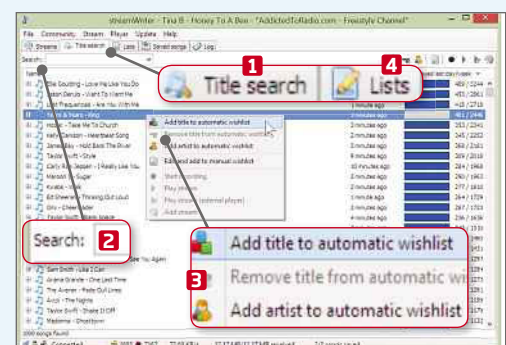
## Record internet radio using StreamWriter



**1** Install StreamWriter ([streamwriter.org](http://streamwriter.org)) and follow the set-up process. You can set where to save recordings, and optionally limit the bandwidth allocated to captures. When the program launches, browse the list of stations on the right. **1** You can also search for a station. **2** Double-click one to select it.



**2** Use the controls **1** to play, pause or stop the radio station. StreamWriter should automatically record the audio, but you can start and stop recording manually. The name of the current (or upcoming) track is displayed in the main window. **2** You can browse and play recordings under the Saved Songs **3** tab.

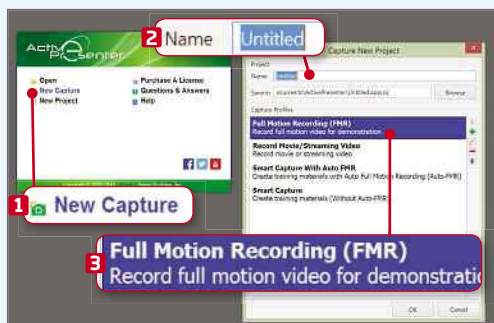


**3** If you're looking for a particular song, click the Title Search tab. **1** You can hunt for it by name **2** or browse the list of recently played tracks. Right-clicking will let you add a song or artist to your wishlist for future recording. **3** You can manage your selections under the Lists tab. **4**



## MINI WORKSHOP

### Record your PC activity with ActivePresenter



**1** Launch ActivePresenter, click New Capture **1** and enter a name for your project. **2** There are four capture styles available. Full Motion Recording (FMR) is the top choice. Select this **3** and click OK. The Capture New Project window will open.



**2** You can either capture the full screen or a custom area. **1** If you select the latter, the section to be captured will be framed in green **2** and you can resize it by clicking and dragging. You can lock the frame to the application. **3** If you choose full screen, you can set the capture resolution.



**3** ActivePresenter will record any sounds your PC makes, but if you don't want this to happen you can untick Record System Audio. **1** The small square under the red Record button **2** provides access to advanced settings and lets you calibrate the audio input. **3** Press the red button to begin recording.

## PC and Mac

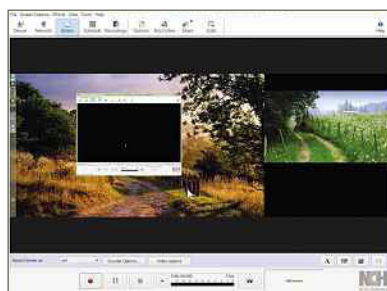
### Capture video from your webcam

There are many reasons why you might want to record what you're doing on your webcam, such as capturing a Skype video call for posterity or monitoring the room while you pop out for a while.

One of the best ways to grab footage from a camera connected to your PC is to use the brilliant Debut Video Capture Software ([bit.ly/debut372](http://bit.ly/debut372)). This powerful program is free for non-commercial use and can record video from your webcam directly to your hard drive. The software can save the video in all the popular formats, including AVI, WMV, FLV, MPG and MOV; and at different resolutions and frame rates – obviously, the better the video quality, the larger the file size.

Debut Video Capture can record everything that's on your screen, with audio, if you want to save both ends of a Skype call, or focus on a specific window. It even has a time-lapse mode for capturing webcam footage at set intervals, and lets you schedule recordings to begin at a time of your choice.

During installation, the website warns that you may be offered extra tools from the same company, so make sure you decline them (we didn't actually see any offers).



### Record, annotate and narrate a screencast

YouTube has lots of useful how-to videos in which people demonstrate specific tasks and tricks you can carry out on your computer. If you'd like to contribute your own PC-based video guides – or screencasts, as they're properly called – install the free program Ezvid ([www.ezvid.com](http://www.ezvid.com)). This excellent video editor and slideshow creator lets you record on-screen activity to create screencasts up to 45 minutes long.



You can include a voiceover or keep your film silent or, if you're feeling shy, the program can read out your text to save you recording your own voice. You can add doodles to what's onscreen using Ezvid's drawing tool and stamps, and upload your finished screencasts directly to YouTube.

### Record and keep any streaming audio

Whether you like to listen to music on Spotify, Soundcloud or another streaming service, Apowersoft's Free Online Audio Recorder ([bit.ly/apowersoft372](http://bit.ly/apowersoft372)) can capture any audio that's playing on your device so you can listen to it offline. Just start playing the track you want and click the Record button. Captured audio can be converted to various formats including MP3, AAC, WMA, OGG and WAV, and there's a scheduled-tasks option that lets you start and finish recording at set times.

You can choose between the Java-based web application (which works in most browsers) or the downloadable version of Free Online Audio Recorder for Windows and Mac OS X. The usual caveats about sharing copyrighted content apply (that is, don't do it!).

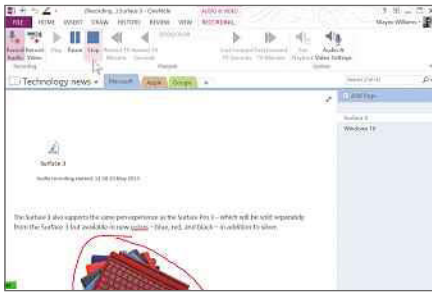


### Capture your thoughts using OneNote

Microsoft OneNote ([www.onenote.com](http://www.onenote.com)) is a great free web-clipping and note-taking tool that's now available for all platforms, from Windows and Mac to iOS and Android. You can clip content from



## Record anything on any device

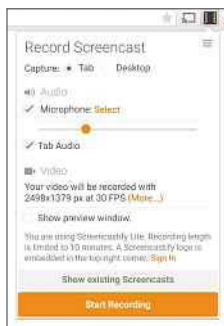
COVER  
FEATURE

web pages; add notes, photos and sketches; and record audio and video directly in the tool, which is handy for making voice notes or recording speeches. Microsoft recently added audio recording to the Mac version, which for some reason didn't have it previously.

### Record what's on your screen in Chrome OS

If you have a Chromebook or Chromebox, you won't be able to install many of the popular screen-recording programs, but that doesn't mean you need to miss out on the fun of capturing content. Instead, you can use the fantastic free tool Screencastify ([www.screencastify.com](http://www.screencastify.com)) to record what's happening in any Chrome tab, on your Desktop or through your webcam or microphone. The recordings can be saved directly to Google Drive and shared on YouTube, so you can access them from anywhere.

Screencastify works in any version of the Chrome browser, so you can use it on both PC and Mac. Just click the toolbar button and select Start Recording, or go into the add-on's Options to choose keyboard shortcuts to control the capturing



process. You can also specify your preferred resolution and frame rate, and whether to include the mouse cursor in your recordings.

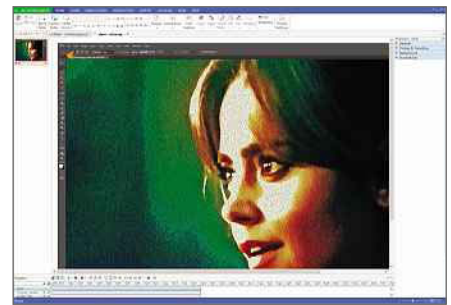
### Schedule radio recordings

If you're always missing your favourite radio shows, because they're on in the middle of the night or when you're at work, you can schedule StreamWriter ([streamwriter.org](http://streamwriter.org)) to record them without you needing to be at your PC. This free program can capture multiple streams at the same time, and has a clever tool that automatically records songs from your wishlist whenever it detects them playing in a web stream.

See our Mini Workshop on page 41 to find out how to use StreamWriter.

### Record everything you do on your PC

ActivePresenter ([atomisystems.com](http://atomisystems.com)) records exactly what's happening on your screen, which is useful if you have a PC problem that you want to show



someone (or vice versa), and can also be used as a means of capturing streaming video. You can record the entire screen, just a portion of it or a particular application; and edit the video afterwards, adding narration, captions, screenshots and so on. The free edition has a few restrictions, such as only saving recordings in WMV, AVI, MPEG4 and WebM format, but unlike similar tools, there's no time limit and it doesn't impose a watermark on videos.

See our Mini Workshop on the opposite page to find out how to use ActivePresenter.

## Games consoles

### Capture and edit gameplay on your Xbox One

Game recording is integral to Microsoft's games console. To record something, just say "Xbox, record that" and the console will grab the last 30 seconds of action (it also automatically stores the previous five minutes). To edit the video, you'll need to download the free Upload Studio app from the Xbox store, which will also allow you to share the finished footage.



### Record and edit video on the PS4

It's very easy to capture gameplay on Sony's new console. Just start playing your game and the PlayStation 4 will automatically record the action in the background. When you're done, hit the Share button on your game controller, select Video Upload in the menu that appears and choose the clip you want from the list (clips are 15 minutes or less in duration). You can edit the clip and, once you're happy with it, share it on Facebook. ■

## NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 17 June 2015

# SPEED-CLEAN YOUR PC

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# Best media centre software



Microsoft is retiring Windows Media Center in Windows 10, but if you want to watch and listen to content on your PC using a full-screen media player, there are plenty of alternatives to take its place.

**Andy Shaw** tests six of the best options



**Kodi** | **Free** | [kodi.tv](http://kodi.tv) | ★★★★★

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

**WebUser  
GOLD  
AWARD**

## What we liked:

Kodi used to be called XBMC (X-Box Media Center, because it was originally designed to run on a hacked version of Microsoft's gaming console)

but its developers changed its name last year to reflect the fact that it works on lots of different types of hardware, including Windows.

Kodi has one of the least flashy interfaces of all the media centres in this Group Test. Its large scrolling text menu across the middle of a relatively bland wallpaper makes it look a lot like Windows Media Center, but don't let this put you off; the familiar interface will make it easier to get started and the wallpaper adapts to the file you're playing. There are also hundreds of user-created skins that add a lot more flair and dynamism to the software, and

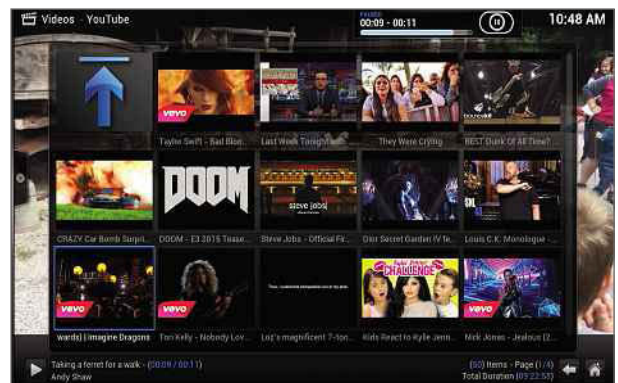
Kodi has dozens of optional plug-ins for performing various actions such as playing streaming content from the BBC iPlayer and YouTube.

Some of the key add-ons (including iPlayer) aren't as slick as those of our Silver Award-winner, Plex, but the YouTube app is wonderful. It gives you access to videos via thumbnails, which we think is even better than the official side-scrolling YouTube interface on Chromecast and Roku devices.

Playing your own videos and files is simple. Once you've set up the relevant folders, the files it contains are displayed in a list; just hover your mouse over them to see a thumbnail preview of the file, and click to start it playing full-screen. There's also a built-in server that lets you stream files from your PC to other compatible devices.

## How it can be improved

We like Kodi's interface but it isn't perfect. You can't see the content of a folder when adding media, so you have to already know you're in the right



place. The Back and Home buttons are tucked away in the bottom-right of the screen and they sometimes disappear, even while other controls are still available. It doesn't always show tool tips, either, so finding out what some icons do can require some research.

## OUR VERDICT

Whether you're a refugee from Windows Media Center or new to the concept of using your PC as a media hub, Kodi is our top choice. It's compatible with lots of file formats, so it should be able to play anything, and it can stream your files to other devices.



## Best media centre software

### Plex Media Server | From free | [plex.tv](http://plex.tv) | ★★★★★

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

WebUser  
SILVER  
AWARD

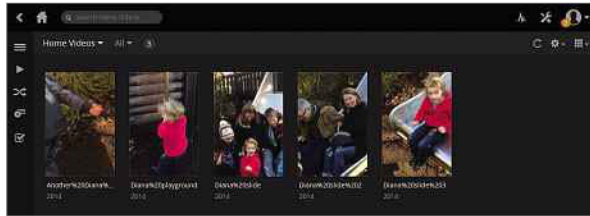
#### What we liked:

Plex is more of a media server than a player, designed to stream your

music, photos and videos to other devices. It can still play files locally, which it does by using your browser. This isn't as strange as it sounds. A quick tap of the F11 button makes the browser full screen. In this mode, the interface isn't so different to the others we've reviewed here, although you still have to use the mouse where other media centres provide keyboard shortcuts.

The main benefit is that, as long as your host PC is switched on and running the software, you can access your videos and music on any of your devices, as well as on the PC itself. There are apps for Android, iOS and Windows, but they aren't free.

The system is slick and well presented, and feels worth paying for. If you don't want to pay, most of its



features can be found in a free alternative, such as Kodi.

#### How it can be improved:

Plex's complicated pricing structure, with subscription fees, different prices for different apps and a variety of ways to pay, makes it tricky to work out the total cost of the service.

#### OUR VERDICT

Plex is slick and classy, but the options available in the free version are limited. If you're prepared to pay its modest fees, there are plenty of benefits but the pricing is confusing and it's hard to work out exactly what you're getting for your money.

### MediaPortal 2 | Free | [team-mediaportal.com](http://team-mediaportal.com) | ★★★★★

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

WebUser  
BRONZE  
AWARD

#### What we liked:

MediaPortal has a great-looking interface that takes over the whole screen while still allowing access to the taskbar and any other software

you've got open. There are large buttons ready to play any media files on your PC, and it displays different types of media in different ways, so you can flick through DVD covers or, if you have a TV tuner, browse the electronic programme guide to find something you want to watch.

Like Kodi, the software is well-supported with add-ons and skins; it does pretty much anything you want it to, and if an option isn't already there, there's likely to be an add-on to cover it, such as the OnlineVideos add-on that provides access to everything from iPlayer to YouTube.

#### How it can be improved:

Setting up MediaPortal isn't as



straightforward as it should be, particularly when you compare it to Kodi. And, while it looks great, MediaPortal's minimalist screen layout leaves you feeling it could do with a few more buttons and icons to perform standard, everyday tasks.

#### OUR VERDICT

MediaPortal is very similar to Kodi but it's harder to set up and doesn't have as many add-ons and skins. But once it's up and running, it's a slick and powerful media centre.

## BEST OF THE REST

### Emby

[emby.media](http://emby.media)

Emby is similar to Plex in that it is specifically designed to stream media from your PC to other devices. It looks very promising, with apps for lots of devices (including Roku and Chromecast) but it doesn't yet have an iOS app.



### MeediOS

[www.meedios.com](http://www.meedios.com)

MeediOS is still in beta and feels like it's got a long way to go before it can rival Kodi and the other award-winners. The interface is clearly influenced by Kodi but it's sparse and empty by comparison. Worth keeping an eye on, but not ready for the big time just yet.



### OpenELEC

[openelec.tv](http://openelec.tv)

OpenELEC is a spin-off from Kodi, shrunk down and designed to launch from boot. It's small enough to work on a Raspberry Pi, so it's a great way to turn the pocketable computer into a standalone media centre you can plug straight into a monitor or TV. If you're running Windows, go for the full version of Kodi, but if you want a dedicated media centre to plug into a TV, this is a brilliant option. Also consider OSMC ([osmc.tv](http://osmc.tv)).





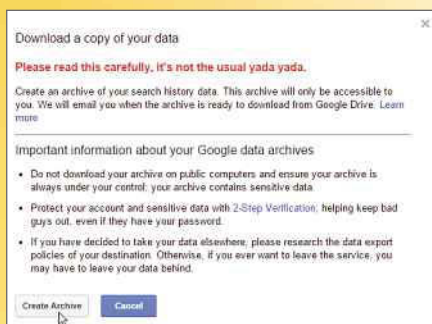
# Download all your data from the web

Every time you search, shop or share content online, you leave behind a trail of personal info. **Jonathan Parkyn** explains how to reclaim and review data you've posted on the web

## Download your Google search history

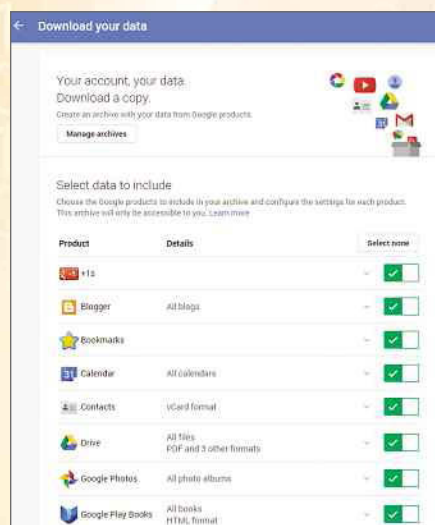
Google is famous for tracking our every online move. But the company also now makes it possible for you to download and review a lot of the data you leave in your wake, including your personal search history. All you need to do is log into your Google account on the Google History site ([history.google.com](http://history.google.com)), then click the cog icon in the top-right corner and select Download from the menu.

You'll see a warning telling you that you're about to download sensitive personal information and offering advice on how to keep your data private (which is rather ironic considering how eagerly Google gathers it in the first place). If you're happy to proceed, click the Create Archive button and Google will send you a link to your data archive, once it's ready for you to download. You can then grab the ZIP file from Google Drive, extract it and use the Index file to explore your search history in your browser.



Bear in mind that downloading your search data won't wipe it from Google – it will just let you review your history, identify trends and hold on to the info for safekeeping. However, it is possible to delete specific searches from your Google History page by ticking the unwanted terms – or clicking the square at the top of the page to 'Select all' – then clicking 'Remove items'.

## Download the rest of your Google data



If you followed the instructions in our previous tip, you'll have noticed that your search history was exported to a new folder in your Google Drive account called Takeout. Developed by the somewhat alarmingly named Google Data Liberation Front, Takeout is Google's way of letting you move your data to or from the company's services, which is particularly useful if you're switching from one company's tool – a calendar, for example – to another's.

To claim your data from Takeout, head to [bit.ly/takeout372](http://bit.ly/takeout372) and sign into your Google account. You'll see a list of all the Google services you can download data from, including Photos, Google+, Gmail, Drive, Contacts, Calendar and more. You can even download all your Google

Play books in HTML format. When certain items are clicked, you may be offered a choice of export formats, for example CSV, vCard and HTML for Google Contacts. Use the options on the right to select or deselect the data you want, then click Next and follow the remaining prompts.

## Download all your data from Facebook

Facebook, by its very nature, stores an astonishing amount of information about you – all your posts, likes, shares, photos, events you've been to and more. It's one thing to browse this via your own Facebook page, but to get the full picture of how much data Facebook has about you, you can download the whole lot as one big archive.

To do this, log into your account, click the small down arrow in the top-right corner and choose Settings. Select the option to 'Download a copy of your Facebook data', click Start My Archive, then re-enter your password when prompted and click Start My Archive again. As with Google, you'll be sent an email to tell you when your archive is ready. Download the file from the link provided as soon as you can (because the link is only valid for a few days) and enter your password again when asked. Unzip the archive and double-click the Index file to browse all your Facebook data. Scary, isn't it?





## Download all your photos from Flickr

Annoyingly, Flickr doesn't offer a built-in way to download all your photos at once. But there is a useful third-party app that unlocks this option. It's called Bulk and you can get it for free from [bit.ly/flickr372](http://bit.ly/flickr372). You'll need Adobe Flash and Adobe Air to run the tool, but you'll be prompted to install these if you don't already have them. Once you've installed Bulk, authorise your Flickr account so the app can access your photostream and download multiple photos and videos in a single click.

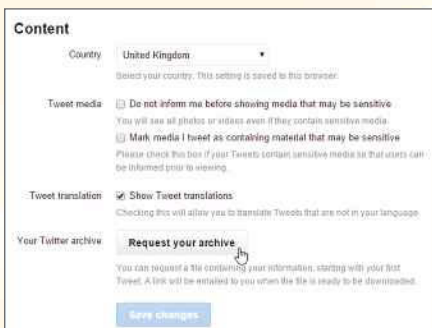
Bulk lets you grab copies of any Flickr user's albums – including your own – and download images in four different sizes (small, medium, large and original), along with their titles, tags, geotags and descriptions in EXIF format. The free version of Bulk has some limitations



– for example, you can only download up to 50 images at a time – but if you need them all in one go, you can buy the Pro version for \$40 (about £26).

## Download your entire Twitter history

If you've had enough of Twitter and want to delete your account, you might first want to consider downloading an



## DOWNLOAD YOUR AMAZON SHOPPING HISTORY

Frustratingly, Amazon.co.uk currently lacks one of Amazon.com's most useful hidden tools, which is the ability to generate and download an Order History Report ([bit.ly/order372](http://bit.ly/order372)). This effectively provides you with a list of all the purchases, deliveries, refunds and returns you've made within a specific time frame, or since you started using Amazon. All you need to do is log into the site, click Your Account, then choose Download Order Reports from the options listed under Orders. Choose



the type of report (Items, Orders and shipments, Returns and refunds), and the start and end dates, then click Request Report. The CSV data file this creates can then be imported and viewed in Excel. If that sounds like a feature you'd like on the UK site, why not email Amazon ([amazon372](mailto:amazon372@bit.ly)) to suggest it?

archive of all your tweets. Even if you're not about to permanently unplug yourself from the Twittersphere, grabbing a local copy of your posts and activity can be useful – and enlightening!

Go to your Twitter homepage and click your profile thumbnail in the top-right corner, then choose Settings.

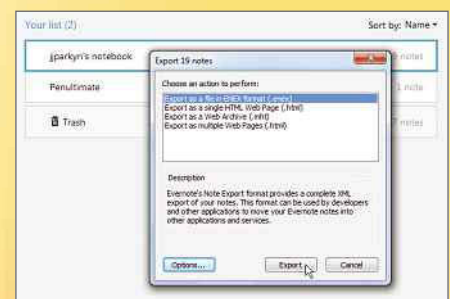
Scroll down and you'll see a 'Request your archive' button. Click this, then check your email for a link to download the file. Be patient, though, because the message can take a while to arrive.

again. On the next page, click the Account tab, choose 'Request an archive of your data' and select 'Request archive'. As with Twitter, a link to your data will be emailed to you. It can take up to 72 hours, so keep an eye on your inbox.



## Export your notes and notebooks from Evernote

Evernote already syncs your data between its online service and your computer, if you use its Desktop app. But if you want to make copies of your notes and notebooks, as a means of backing them up in case disaster strikes, you'll need to export them. You can't currently do this using the web version of Evernote, so launch the Desktop app instead, then right-click a note or notebook and select Export Notes. In the window that opens, select a suitable file format and click Export.



## Grab a copy of your LinkedIn profile

LinkedIn is another social network that lets you download a copy of your data. Log into your account, then move your mouse over your profile's thumbnail in the top-right corner and select Privacy & Settings. You'll be prompted to sign in

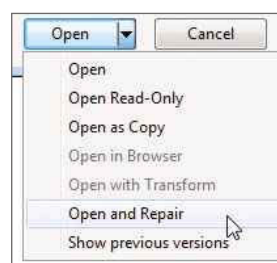


# Recover and repair files without software

You don't need to download a recovery tool to deal with deleted and corrupted files. **Robert Irvine** explains how you can find and fix them without installing anything

## Recover Word documents that won't open

There are few things more frustrating than being unable to open a file that contains important information, or finding that when you do open the document it contains a load of gobbledygook. Rather than tearing your hair out, try repairing the file using Word's built-in recovery tools. Click the Office logo (or File if you're using an older version of Office), then Open and

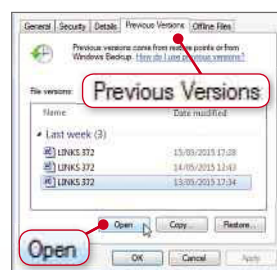


locate the corrupt document. Click the arrow next to the Open button and choose 'Open and Repair' from

the menu. If this doesn't fix the problem, try clicking the arrow next to 'All Word documents' in the Open dialogue box, choose 'Recover Text from Any File' and select the unreadable document. Word will then convert and try to recover the text from the damaged file.

If that doesn't work either, and you're using Windows 7 or later, right-click the document, choose Properties and select the Previous Versions tab. This lists older copies of the file that have

been backed up by System Restore. Select an entry and click Open, and it should open in Word without any problems, although you'll lose any data you entered after that version was saved. Note that System Restore needs



to be turned on for this to work.

If none of Word's built-in tools proves effective, try uploading the corrupt file to OfficeRecovery's online repair tool for Word documents ([online.officerecovery.com/word](http://online.officerecovery.com/word)). Just click 'Choose file' to select the troublesome item (it needs to be in DOC, DOCX, DOCM or RTF format), then click 'Secure Upload and Repair' to recover the data and save it to a new Word document. Now comes the catch: to download the repaired file straight away, you'll need to pay £6.45. You can see a free 'demo' version to find out whether the fix has worked, although this is usually limited to a few, partially obscured pages. Alternatively, you can sign up with OfficeRecovery for a free repair, although you'll have to wait two weeks to get your salvaged file. You can also recommend the service on your Facebook page, website or blog to get a discount code you can redeem against one free job.

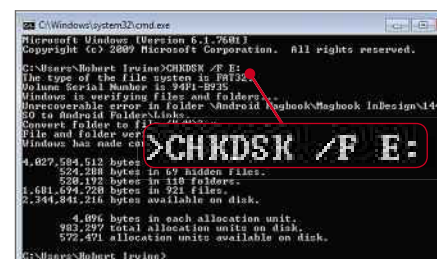


OfficeRecovery is rather hit and miss with what it can fix, but it's certainly worth a try. It also offers online repair tools for Excel spreadsheets, PDFs, Outlook mailboxes and many other file formats, with similar restrictions and workarounds.

## Recover photos from a corrupt memory card

Picture the scene: you've just come back from holiday with a memory card

full of photos, but when you connect your camera to your PC, it's unable to read the card to download the images. Before you panic, try the following to find and fix the errors on the memory card: on the Start menu, type cmd and press Enter to open Command Prompt or, in Windows 8+, point to the lower-right corner of the screen, click Search and type Command Prompt. When the Command Prompt opens, type CHKDSK /F followed by the letter of the drive (in this case, the SD card), for example E:, and press Enter. Windows will then



verify the files and folders stored on the card, and correct any problems it finds. With a bit of luck, you'll be able to access your images.

Another way to retrieve pictures from a corrupt card, as well as a damaged hard drive or USB stick, is to use PhotoRec ([bit.ly/photo372](http://bit.ly/photo372)). This is a portable tool that doesn't need to be installed, so it won't overwrite your images, although you do need to download the program (which comes packaged with another tool called TestDisk) and extract the photorec\_win file. When you run this, it will open a command-line window that lists all the devices connected to your PC. Select the one with the photos stored on it, press Enter and follow the instructions. You'll find a step-by-step guide to using PhotoRec at [bit.ly/photorec372](http://bit.ly/photorec372).

If a specific photo has been corrupted,

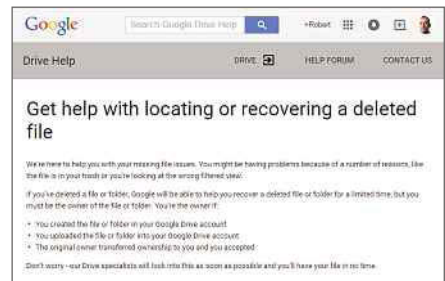


# Recover lost files

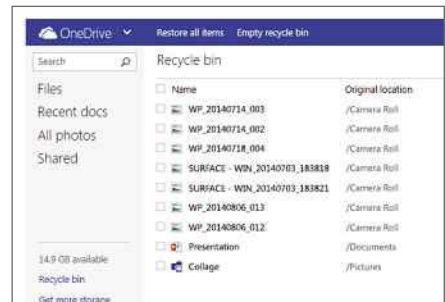
online tools that promise to repair corrupt PDFs, but most have a catch such as charging you to download the fixed file or superimposing a watermark on it. One of the best free options is PDFaid's Repair PDF tool ([bit.ly/pdfrepair372](http://bit.ly/pdfrepair372)), which looks a bit cheap and nasty, but actually works well, although it limits you to files up to 20MB in size. We also like the online PDF-repair tool from the improbably named Weeny Software ([bit.ly/weeny372](http://bit.ly/weeny372)).

## Repair corrupt system files

There are lots of programs that promise to fix problems with system files on your PC, but you can often solve them using a built-in Windows tool called System File Checker (SFC). This scans your hard drive for corrupted and missing files that may cause Windows to misbehave, and attempts to repair and replace them. To run SFC, launch the Command Prompt as an administrator, type `sfc /scannow` and press Enter. SFC will then scan all protected system files, and replace corrupted items with a cached copy. Don't close the Command Prompt window until the scan is complete (it may take some time).



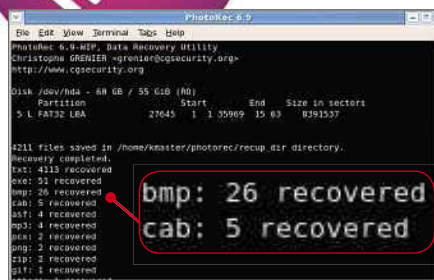
file' ([bit.ly/deleted372](http://bit.ly/deleted372)). This asks for information about the lost file, such as its name and when you last accessed it, and reassuringly promises: "Don't worry – our Drive specialists will look into this as soon as possible and you'll have your file in no time".



On the OneDrive website, click the 'Recycle bin' option at the bottom of the left-hand menu to view your deleted files, which are stored for one year before being removed, then select the ones you want and choose 'Restore items'. Unlike Google, Microsoft doesn't offer much help if your lost files aren't in the bin, other than advising you to check other folders carefully and "ask the owner to share them again". ■

## WHY SHOULDN'T I USE SOFTWARE?

Although there are some great free programs for recovering and repairing lost and damaged files, such as Recuva ([www.piriform.com](http://www.piriform.com)) and Windows Repair ([bit.ly/winrepair372](http://bit.ly/winrepair372)), other tools are more of a hindrance than a help. For a start, you run the risk of overwriting the data you've lost so that it can never be recovered. Also, some software charges you to retrieve or repair your own files, or simply doesn't work at all, meaning you lose your money as well as your files. In any case, it's useful to know tricks for fixing and rescuing files without installing anything, for times when you're using a computer other than your own.



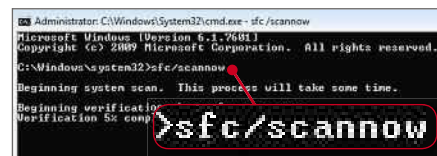
you could try the aforementioned OfficeRecovery, which offers an online tool for repairing images in JPEG, GIF,



TIFF, BMP, PNG or RAW format. Again, you'll either need to pay or wait to download the recovered image, or it will be obscured by a message like the one pictured, left.

## Repair corrupt PDF files online

PDF files usually do an accurate job of presenting documents in a format that can be opened by anyone with a PDF reader, but occasionally something goes wrong such as fonts or tables not displaying correctly. There are several

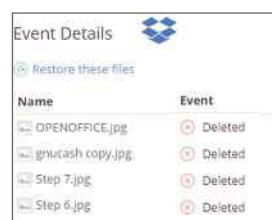


## Recover files deleted from cloud storage

Most files you save to Dropbox, Google Drive and other online storage accounts are backups of items you already have elsewhere, so it doesn't matter too much if you lose them. But if they're the only copies you have, then accidental deletion is more of a worry. Fortunately, it's usually easy to recover files that vanish from the cloud.

For Dropbox files, sign into the web interface and click the Events option in the left-hand menu. This provides a timeline of every change to your account, including file deletions. Find

and click the entry for the files you deleted, and click 'Restore these files' to recover them.













In Google Drive, first check your Trash folder to see if the lost items are there. If not, you can submit a recovery request to Google via its support page 'Get help with locating or recovering a deleted



# Broadband Deals

Call FREE on 0800 083 2357 to switch your broadband

|    | Provider  | Package name                     | Monthly price                           | Contract length     | Broadband speed             | Allowance            | First-year cost*                 |
|----|---|----------------------------------|---|---------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1  |    | TalkTalk: Broadband              | <b>£5.00</b><br>(12 months FREE)        | <b>18</b><br>months | <b>17Mbps</b><br>max speed  | ∞<br>unlimited       | <b>CHEAPEST</b><br><b>£0.00</b>  |
| 2  |    | Sky: Broadband & Calls           | <b>£7.50</b><br>(12 months FREE)        | <b>12</b><br>months | <b>17Mbps</b><br>max speed  | ∞<br>unlimited       | <b>£0.00</b>                     |
| 3  |    | Plusnet: Broadband & Calls       | <b>£9.99</b><br>(£2.50 for 12 months)   | <b>12</b><br>months | <b>17Mbps</b><br>max speed  | ∞<br>unlimited       | <b>£30.00</b>                    |
| 4  |   | EE: Broadband & Calls            | <b>£9.95</b><br>(£2.95 for 12 months)   | <b>12</b><br>months | <b>17Mbps</b><br>max speed  | ∞<br>unlimited<br>** | <b>£35.40</b>                    |
| 5  |  | TalkTalk Fibre Broadband         | <b>£10.00</b><br>(£5 for 6 months)      | <b>18</b><br>months | <b>38Mbps</b><br>max speed  | ∞<br>unlimited       | <b>£90.00</b>                    |
| 6  |  | Virgin: Broadband & Calls        | <b>£17.50</b><br>(12 months HALF PRICE) | <b>18</b><br>months | <b>50Mbps</b><br>max speed  | ∞<br>unlimited<br>** | <b>£105.00</b>                   |
| 7  |  | Plusnet: Fibre Broadband & Calls | <b>£14.99</b><br>(£3.99 for 6 months)   | <b>18</b><br>months | <b>38Mbps</b><br>max speed  | ∞<br>unlimited       | <b>£113.88</b>                   |
| 8  |  | EE: Fibre Broadband & Calls      | <b>£19.95</b><br>(£9.95 for 6 months)   | <b>18</b><br>months | <b>38Mbps</b><br>max speed  | ∞<br>unlimited       | <b>£179.40</b>                   |
| 9  |  | Sky: Fibre Broadband & Calls     | <b>£20.00</b><br>(6 months HALF PRICE)  | <b>18</b><br>months | <b>38Mbps</b><br>max speed  | ∞<br>unlimited       | <b>£180.00</b>                   |
| 10 |  | Virgin: Broadband & Calls        | <b>£30.00</b><br>(£20 for 12 months)    | <b>18</b><br>months | <b>152Mbps</b><br>max speed | ∞<br>unlimited<br>** | <b>FASTEST</b><br><b>£240.00</b> |

Call 0800 083 2357 or visit [www.broadbandgenie.co.uk/webuser](http://www.broadbandgenie.co.uk/webuser)

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

\*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.

\*\* Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by [www.broadbandgenie.co.uk](http://www.broadbandgenie.co.uk). Correct as of 19 May 2015.

**Ofcom**

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



# Take a Screen Break

Technology moves so quickly that it's easy to forget big stories from only a few years ago. This issue we're asking you to think back to **2006**



**1** What was the name of Nintendo's groundbreaking games console (pictured), which went on sale in December 2006 and quickly sold out?



**2** Which Apple product, launched in January 2006, was described as "an iMac on wheels"?

**3** Which video-sharing site did Google buy in October 2006 for \$1.65 billion?

**4** Also in October 2006, Microsoft finally added tabbed browsing to Internet Explorer. What was the version number of the new browser?

**5** Which website's popularity soared when it opened to anyone aged over 13, not just students?

**6** In April 2006, Gnarl's Barkley became the first act to top the UK Singles chart based on digital sales alone. What was the name of the song?



**7** Which ISP controversially promised its new customers "free broadband forever" when it launched an internet-and-calls package in April 2006?

**8** Which device prompted a security scare when one per cent of models were found to contain the RavMonE Trojan?

**9** What was the name of Microsoft's 'iPod killer' (pictured), which launched in the US in 2006 and was quietly abandoned in 2011?



**10** Which company had the six best-selling mobile phones worldwide in 2006?

**11** According to Google, what was the most searched-for term of 2006: World Cup, Paris Hilton, Bebo or Poker?

**12** Who on the web did *Time* magazine famously name as its 'Person of the Year' for 2006?



## CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE POPULAR WEBSITES FROM 2006?



Get the answers online at [www.webuser.co.uk/quiz372](http://www.webuser.co.uk/quiz372)

## COMPETITIONS

### WIN 1 OF 5 Magix Movie Edit Pro Plus 2015

The Plus version of Magix's excellent movie-editing software has more than 500 unique effects and templates, and 99 multimedia tracks. New in the 2015 edition is 64-bit support and a tool to fix fisheye distortion. To enter, email your address to [webusercomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webusercomp@dennis.co.uk) with 'edit' in the subject line. For more information visit [www.magix.com/gb](http://www.magix.com/gb), and follow Magix on Twitter (@MAGIX\_INT).



WORTH  
£79.99  
EACH

### WIN 1 OF 2 Livescribe Pro smartpens

To celebrate the launch of the Livescribe+ app on Android ([bit.ly/livescribe372](http://bit.ly/livescribe372)), we're giving away two Pro versions of the bestselling smartpen. The new app lets anyone use the Livescribe 3 smartpen to make digital notes on their phone and tablet. To enter, email your address to [webusercomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webusercomp@dennis.co.uk) with 'livescribe' in the subject line. For more info, visit [www.livescribe.com](http://www.livescribe.com), and follow Livescribe on Twitter (@livescribe).



WORTH  
£149.90  
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# Practical WebUser

17 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

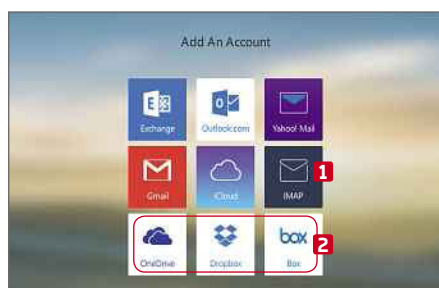
## Manage your email with Outlook for Android | [bit.ly/outlook372](http://bit.ly/outlook372)

Microsoft recently dropped the 'preview' tag on Outlook for Android, bringing the app in line with its iOS counterpart. Here's how to use it

**B**ack in January, Microsoft released Outlook for iOS and a preview version of the app for Android. At the time, the Android version was inferior both in tools and performance, but since then Microsoft has been working steadily to improve it, updating it no fewer than 17 times. The company has finally deemed it good enough to remove the 'preview' tag and make it

properly available to all.

You shouldn't confuse the Outlook app with Outlook.com, Microsoft's webmail service. The app is a comprehensive email client that works with any email service and includes additional useful features, such as a calendar, message management tools and a Contacts database. It's very easy to use, and it has a lot of options that may not be obvious at first glance.



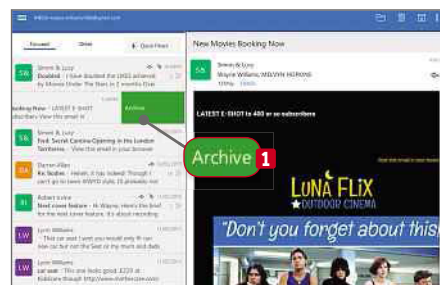
**1** The Outlook app supports every email service you're likely to use. From the Get Started screen, choose your email account - Exchange, Outlook.com, Yahoo Mail, Gmail, iCloud or IMAP (select this if your email provider isn't listed). **1** You can also connect a cloud-storage service: OneDrive, Dropbox or Box. **2**



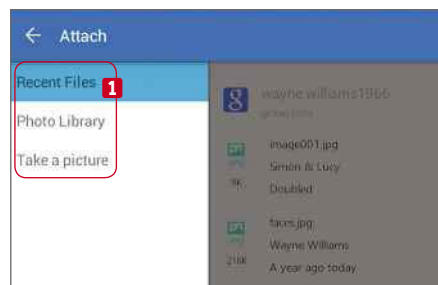
**2** Follow the steps to add your first account (you can add others later), and grant Outlook the permissions it requests. The app will load your email and present the messages in a strip down the left. **1** Select one to preview it on the right. **2** You can reply to or forward from the message. **3**



**3** The app manages your messages, providing "sharper focus" on the emails that matter. What this means in practice is that messages from people you know will appear under the Focused tab, **1** while other emails, including newsletters and promotional content, will be filed under Other. **2**



**4** You can manage messages with a simple swipe left or right. Swipe left to Archive an email. **1** A long swipe will turn the message from green to red, and the message will be deleted instead. Swipe right and you can schedule/defer a message. It will temporarily vanish and reappear at a time of your choosing.



**5** Attaching files to emails is very straightforward. Compose a message and tap the Attach button in the top-right corner. From here, you can access files found in emails, browse your phone or tablet's photo library, or take a photo using your device's camera. **1**







### QUICK FILTERS

This button lets you filter content to show unread or flagged messages, or those with attachments

### MESSAGE ORGANISATION

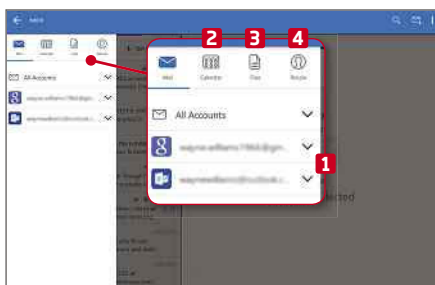
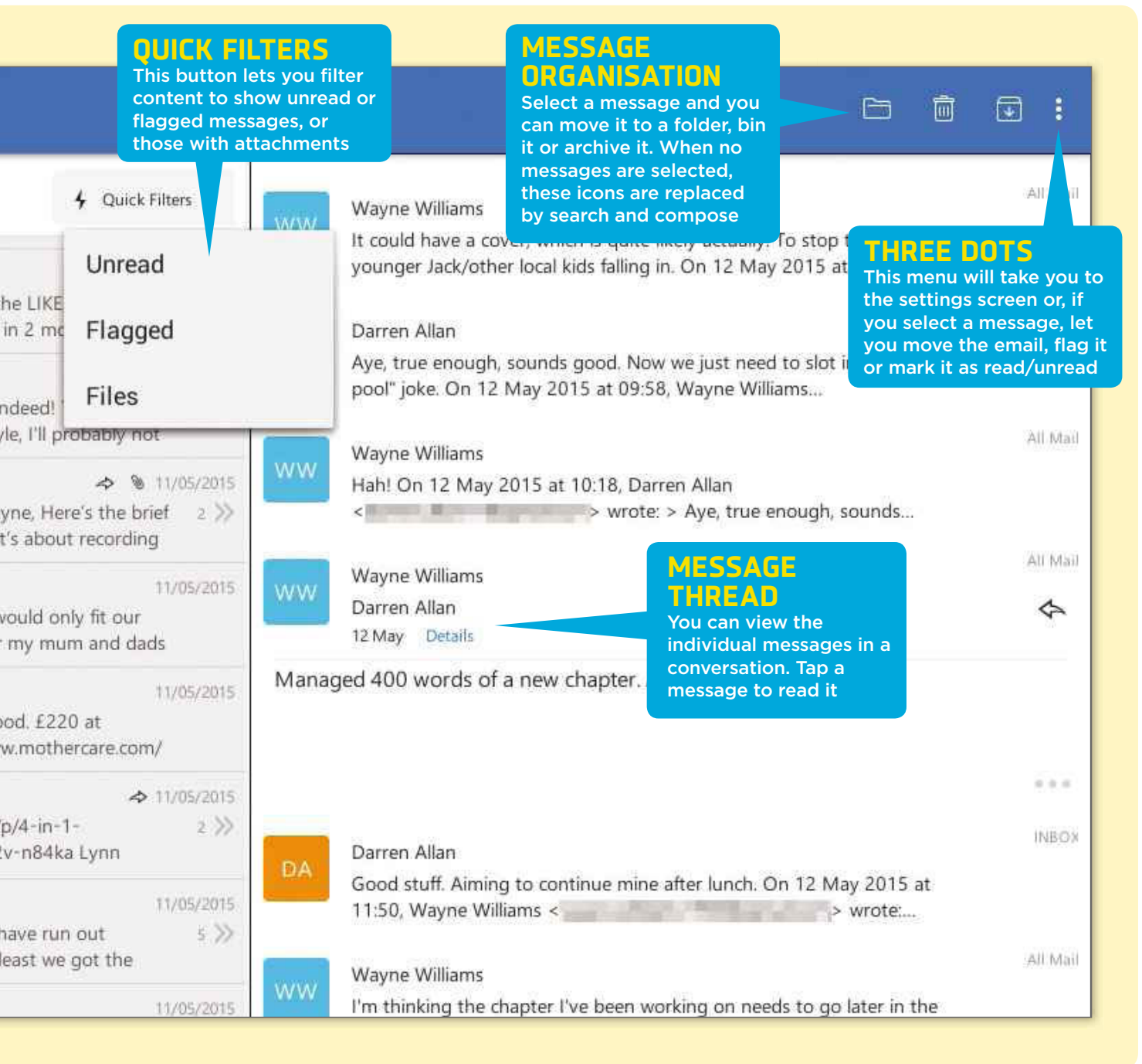
Select a message and you can move it to a folder, bin it or archive it. When no messages are selected, these icons are replaced by search and compose

### THREE DOTS

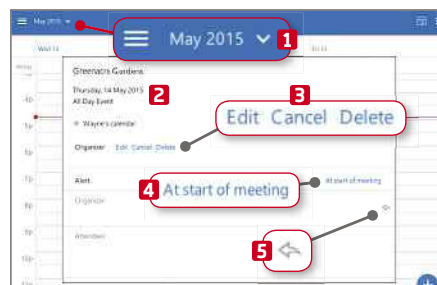
This menu will take you to the settings screen or, if you select a message, let you move the email, flag it or mark it as read/unread

### MESSAGE THREAD

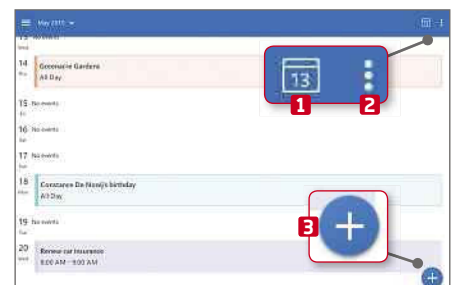
You can view the individual messages in a conversation. Tap a message to read it



**6** Click the menu button in the top-left corner. From the sidebar that opens, you can choose an email account to display (if you have more than one). **1** You can also switch to the Calendar, **2** view files contained in your messages **3** and open the Contacts database. **4**



**7** The calendar is basic but it does the job. Tap the down arrow **1** to change the month and tap an event to view its details. **2** You can edit, cancel or delete it, **3** and choose if and when to receive an alert. **4** Tap the organizer arrow **5** to send a note or tell someone if you're running late.



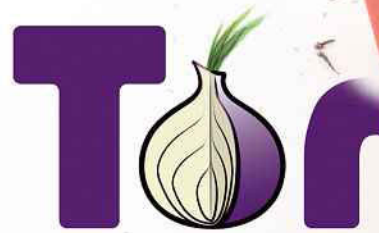
**8** Tap the small calendar **1** to jump to today's date. The three dots **2** let you switch between Agenda and Day views, and also open Calendar Settings. From here, you can choose the accounts to use and the calendars to display. You can add a new event simply by tapping the blue plus button. **3**



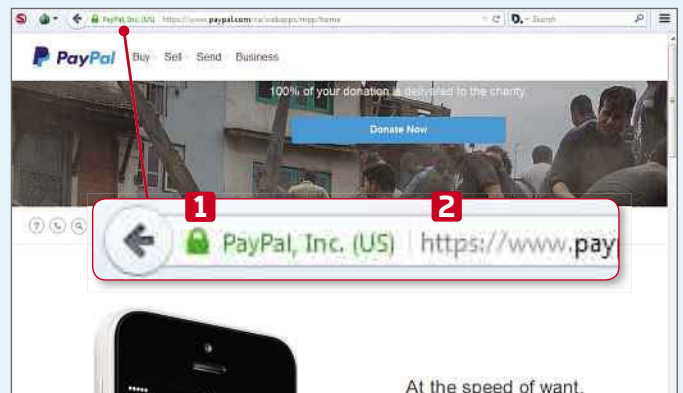
# Browse the web anonymously using Tor

Tor Browser: [bit.ly/torbrowser372](http://bit.ly/torbrowser372) | ⌚ 15 mins | 🖥️ XP, Vista, 7, 8+, 🍏 Mac OS X or 🐧 Linux

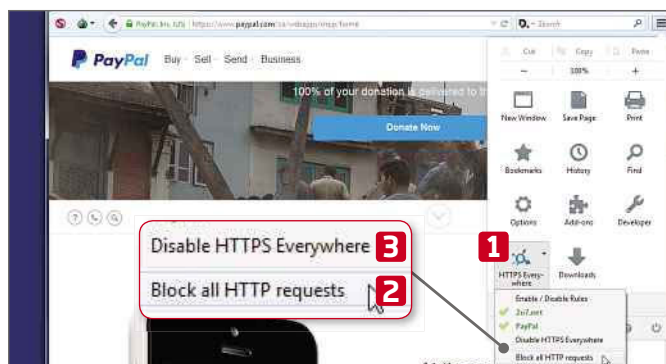
**T**or Browser uses a network of volunteer-run servers to connect you to the internet via a series of virtual detours. This protects your privacy and anonymity, and lets you access websites that might otherwise be blocked by your internet service provider. Tor also includes a range of tools to stop you compromising your anonymity, such as the add-on HTTPS Everywhere, which ensures that your personal data is encrypted wherever possible. Script-blocking extension NoScript is also installed as standard and is used by the browser's new Security Level slider to block potentially malicious scripts that might compromise your security or privacy. In this Workshop, we show you how to get the most from the latest version of Tor Browser, including searching the web anonymously using its default search engine and customising its security and privacy settings. We also show you how to access Tor Browser's network settings, in case you have problems connecting to the Tor network.



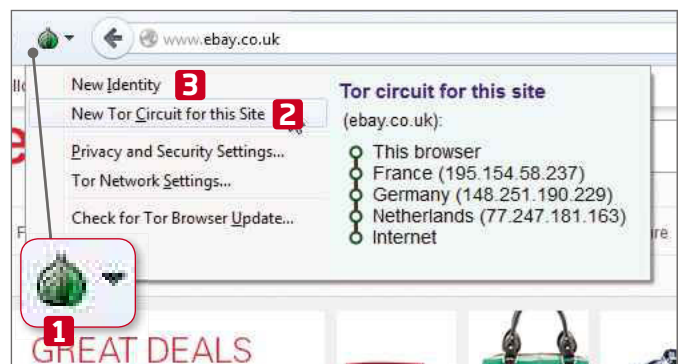
**1** Download, install and run Tor Browser, and connect directly to the Tor network. The browser's default search engine, Disconnect, **1** lets you search Google anonymously without entering CAPTCHAs. Click the drop-down menu to use other search sites **2** including DuckDuckGo and Wikipedia.



**2** Tor Browser uses the HTTPS Everywhere add-on to request secure, encrypted connections whenever possible. Before sharing sensitive information, check that you have a secure connection by looking for the green padlock symbol in the address bar **1** and ensuring the URL starts with 'https'. **2**



**3** Click the menu button and select HTTPS Everywhere's drop-down menu to see which requests were successfully switched to HTTPS. **1** Tick 'Block all HTTP Requests' **2** to make sure that only HTTPS requests are permitted or click Disable HTTPS Everywhere **3** if you want to turn it off.



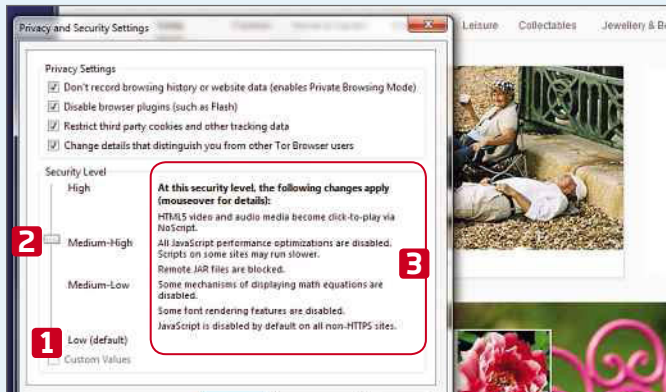
**4** After loading a page, you can click the Tor button **1** to see your current Tor circuit for that site. If you have any problems with how the page is loading, try clicking 'New Tor Circuit for this Site'. **2** You can also click New Identity, **3** but this requires you to close your tabs and restart the browser.



## EXPERT TIP

### Edward Munn says

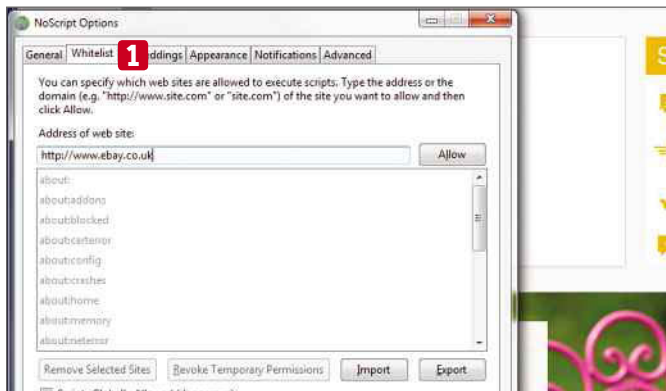
Tor Browser won't protect internet traffic for other applications on your PC unless they are configured to use the Tor network as a proxy server. Furthermore, if you set your torrent client to only connect via Tor, it will still reveal your real IP address when it sends requests to the torrent tracker, so to preserve your privacy, you should never use Tor in conjunction with torrent software.



**5** From the same menu, click 'Privacy and Security Settings' to set the browser's security level. By default, it's set to Low **1** but you can change this to Medium-Low, Medium-High or High using the slider. **2** There are explanations for each level **3** showing how this affects your browsing experience.



**6** Some of Tor Browser's script blocking is handled by the NoScript extension that's installed by default. If you've picked one of the security levels that blocks scripts, you can still enable them temporarily using the NoScript icon in the toolbar. **1**



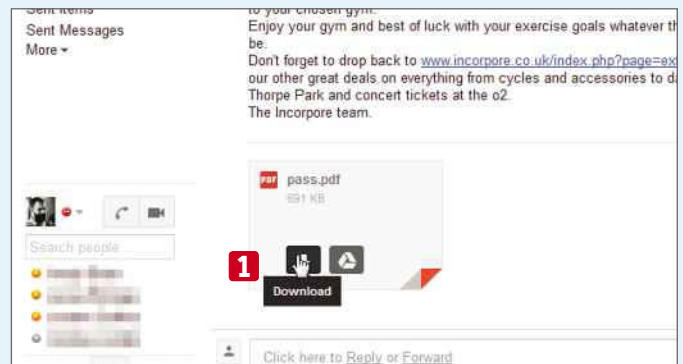
**7** From the same menu, click Options to access NoScript's settings. The Whitelist tab **1** lets you specify websites that are allowed to execute scripts, but the security level you choose in Tor's security slider may mean some elements (such as fonts) are still blocked.



**8** By default, the browser doesn't record browsing history or website data, **1** and it disables browser plug-ins such as Flash. **2** To switch off either feature, untick its box in 'Privacy and Security Settings'. You should avoid installing more add-ons or plugins if you want to protect your privacy.



**9** If your ISP blocks connections to the Tor network, click the Tor icon and Tor Network Settings, then tick the box **1** to try connecting to the network using other entry points. If your firewall only allows connections to certain ports, tick this box **2** and enter the appropriate port numbers.



**10** Tor Browser lets you download files such as email attachments, **1** but you should wait till you're offline to open them if you want to maintain your privacy, because Tor can't protect web traffic from other applications, unless they are correctly configured to use it as a proxy server.



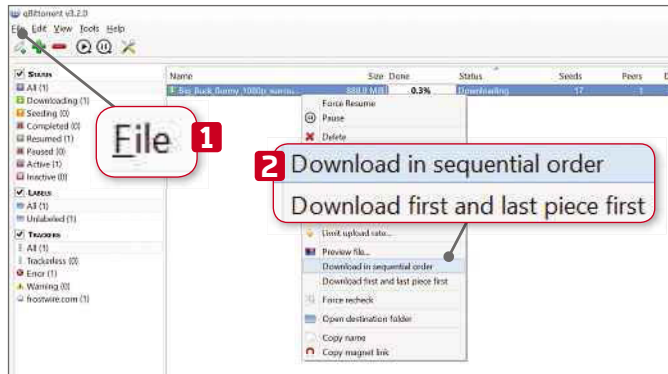


# Start watching a video while it's downloading

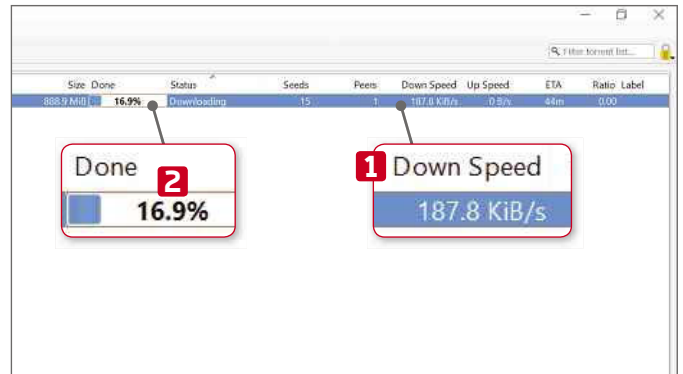
Recommended in last issue's ([bit.ly/webuser371](http://bit.ly/webuser371)) cover feature, qBittorrent gives you the option to download torrent files sequentially. Although this takes longer, it means you can start watching a video before it's finished

qBittorrent: [www.qbittorrent.org](http://www.qbittorrent.org) | 15 mins | XP, Vista, 7, 8.1+

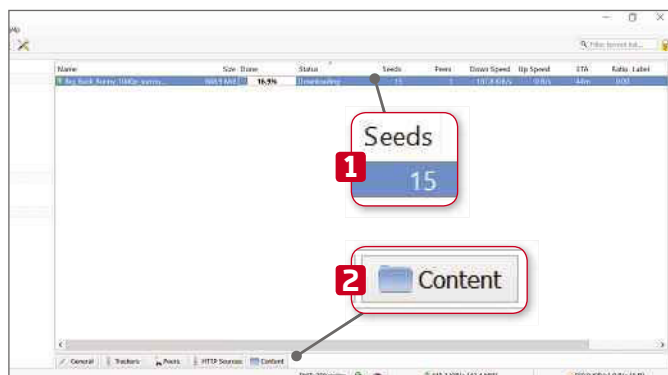
downloading. In this Workshop, we show you how to use qBittorrent in conjunction with VLC Media Player ([www.videolan.org](http://www.videolan.org)) to watch videos as they download.



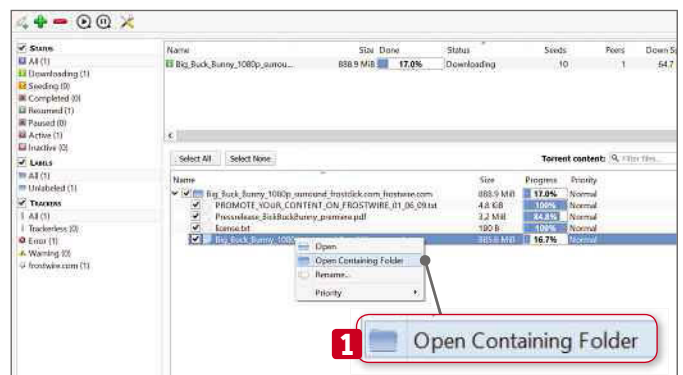
**1** Download, install and run qBittorrent. Click File, **1** choose 'Add torrent file' and select the torrent you want to download. As the files begin to download, right-click the torrent's name and select 'Download in sequential order'. **2**



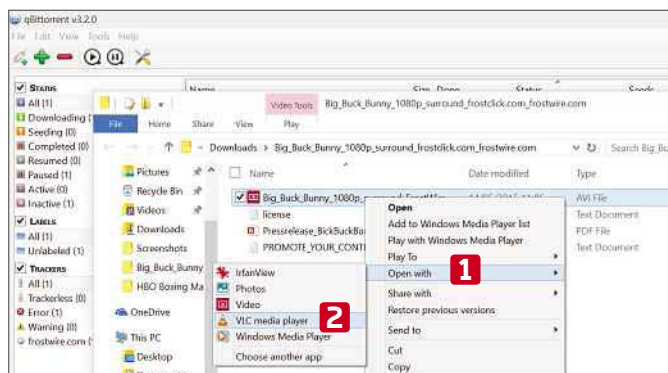
**2** Clicking this automatically ticks 'Download first and last piece first'. The speed of the download is shown in the Down Speed column **1** and you can check how the download is advancing by looking at the progress bar in the Done column. **2**



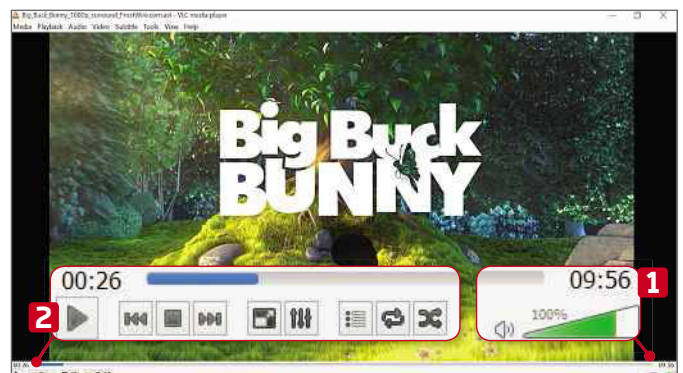
**3** The Seeds column shows the number of people sharing files with you. **1** This can have a significant impact on the speed and reliability of your download. If you're using a torrent to download more than one video file, click Content **2** to see the download progress of each individual file.



**4** After downloading and installing VLC, right-click the video you want to watch and select Open Containing Folder. **1** The size of the file and speed of your download will determine how long you should wait before you attempt to start watching the video.



**5** VLC lets you play incomplete video files if they've been downloaded sequentially, so right-click the file in its Windows location, select 'Open with' **1** and choose 'VLC media player' **2** when you're happy that enough of the video has been downloaded.



**6** The full length of the video is displayed in VLC, even before you've downloaded the entire file. **1** If you try to watch more than you've downloaded, the picture turns black. Pause the player **2** at this point and watch more of the video when it has downloaded.



# Get Edge's tools in Chrome and Firefox

Microsoft is introducing a new browser in Windows 10 called Edge. With ambitions to take on Chrome and Firefox, it will come with a range of interesting new tools, many of which we looked at in Issue 369 ([bit.ly/](http://bit.ly/)

[webuser369](http://webuser369)). However, if you'd prefer to stick with your familiar browser, here's how to get those features without having to switch to Edge.



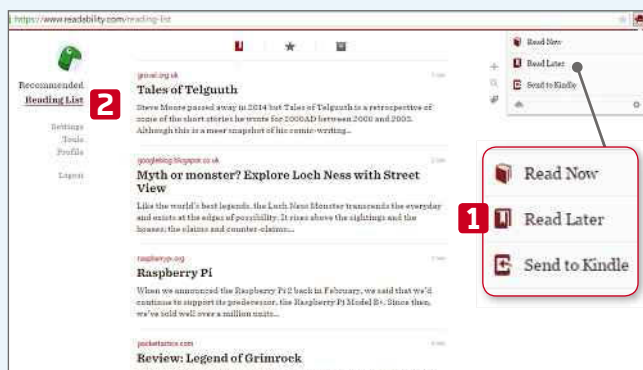
**Chrome & Firefox add-ons:** [bit.ly/store372](http://bit.ly/store372) & [addons.mozilla.org](http://addons.mozilla.org) | 10 mins |



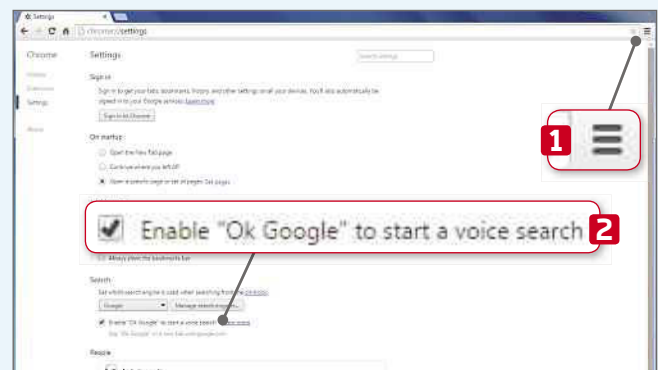
**1** Edge shows thumbnail previews of tabs when you hover over them. Firefox's Tab Preview ([bit.ly/ftabs372](http://bit.ly/ftabs372)) offers the same effect. **1** We couldn't find an equivalent add-on in Chrome but TooManyTabs ([bit.ly/ctabs372](http://bit.ly/ctabs372)) shows thumbnail previews of tabs when you click its toolbar icon.



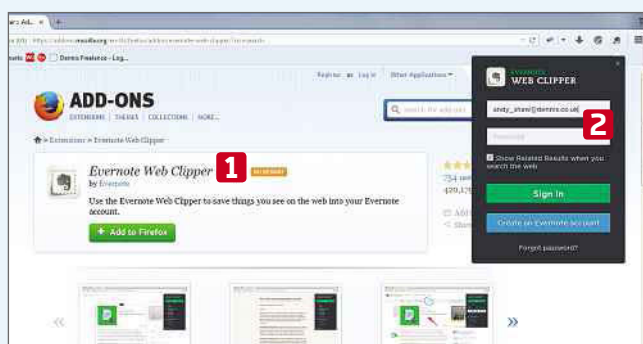
**2** Reading View strips the clutter from a page so it's easier to read. Firefox's Reader ([bit.ly/fread372](http://bit.ly/fread372)) does a similar job. Click its toolbar icon to open a smaller frame with a greyed-out website below. For Chrome, use Readability ([bit.ly/cread372](http://bit.ly/cread372)). Click its icon **1** and choose Read Now. **2**



**3** Read Later **1** in the Readability menu recreates Edge's Reading List tool. Register at [www.readability.com](http://www.readability.com) to access your list. **2** In Firefox, try Save-To-Read ([bit.ly/flist372](http://bit.ly/flist372)). Click the '+' button in the address bar to add a page and click the toolbar button to open the list as a sidebar.



**4** If you have a microphone on your PC, you can use a Cortana-style voice-activated search tool in Chrome. Click the menu button **1** and choose Settings. Scroll down to the Search section and tick the box by 'Enable "OK Google" to perform a voice search'. **2**



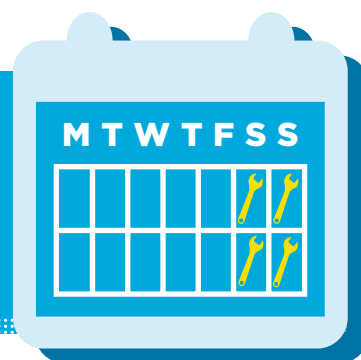
**5** Edge's Inking lets you write and draw directly on a site, then share a screenshot. Evernote does a similar thing. Install the Evernote Web Clipper in Chrome ([bit.ly/cever372](http://bit.ly/cever372)) or Firefox ([bit.ly/fever372](http://bit.ly/fever372)). **1** You'll need an Evernote account from [www.evernote.com](http://www.evernote.com) to save notes. **2**



**6** Click the Evernote icon **1** and choose Screenshot. Drag the selector around the area you want to work on. The annotation tools let you add text, **2** draw freehand **3** and highlight. **4** You can share the notes by opening the clipping on the Evernote website and clicking the Share link.

# Weekend Project

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



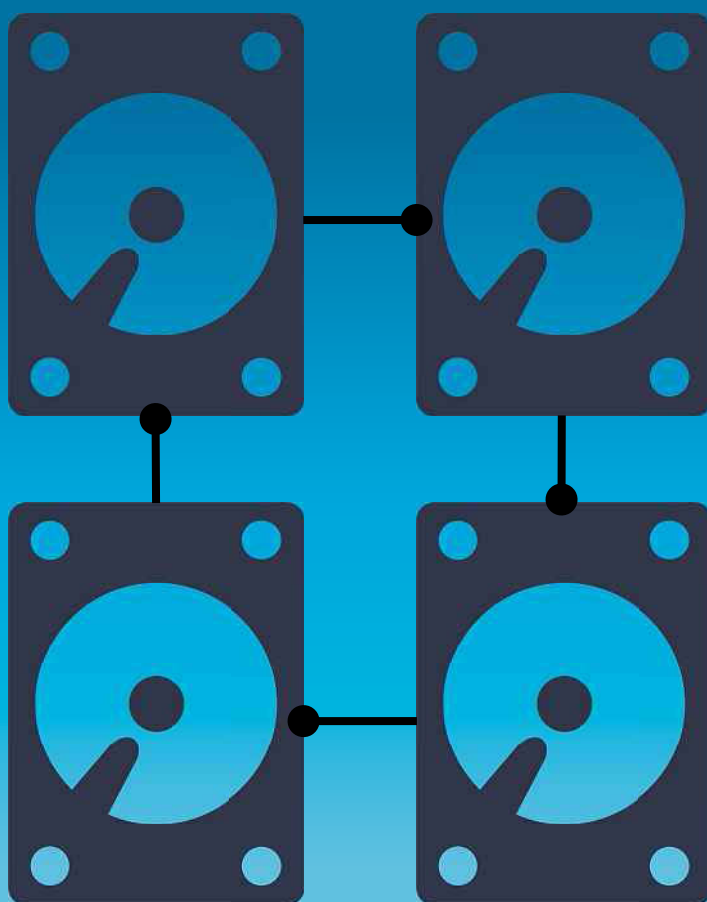
How to...

## Use RAID on multiple hard drives to safeguard data

**Wayne Williams** shows you how to make your data more secure by setting up multiple hard drives using RAID

**R**AID (Redundant Array of Inexpensive Disks) is a way of combining several hard drives to improve on what a single hard drive can do on its own. Because hard drives are becoming larger and cheaper, it's not uncommon to have upgraded your PC's storage and you may have spare hard drives sitting around gathering dust. These can be put to good use by combining them to create one large volume or twinning them to protect against data loss caused by drive failure.

If you don't have any spare SATA drives, or the drives you have are too old and potentially unreliable, you can buy and use new drives instead – it shouldn't be too expensive. Ideally, you'll want at least two drives of the same model and capacity.



### Understanding RAID

While the basic idea of RAID is to link together multiple smaller drives to create one large storage area, there's much more to it than that. There are seven core types of RAID, known as 'levels', which are numbered RAID-0 to RAID-6. Each one works in a slightly different way and can also be combined to make more levels. While that sounds confusing, there

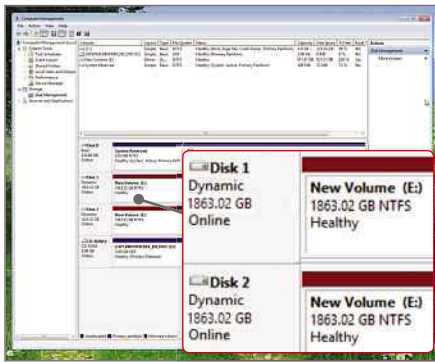
are really only three levels worth considering – RAID-0, RAID-1 and RAID-5 – and your hardware or operating system might also limit which levels you can use. To find out what the different RAID levels mean, see our handy guide on page 61.

### Software or hardware RAID

RAID support has been built into Windows since XP, but only certain levels

are available depending on the operating system you're running. Windows XP offers JBOD (Just a Bunch Of Disks, which spans a virtual drive over several disks), Windows 7 Home offers JBOD and RAID-0 (which it calls Striped), while the Professional, Enterprise, and Ultimate editions of Windows 7 add RAID-1 (called Mirrored). To find out how to set this up, see our Mini Workshop opposite.





**Mirrored drives in Windows have the same drive letter in Computer Management**

Setting up the Striped or Mirrored array is essentially the same process and uses a simple wizard. RAID-5 may be shown in the list of options, but it will be greyed out, because it's only available in Windows Server.

If you're recycling old SATA drives (which may be of different models and sizes), then you'll need Windows software RAID. RAID is also available in Linux, Windows Server and OS X Server, with additional options.

However, if you're really serious about RAID, then it's better to set it up using hardware. It's likely your PC will have a RAID controller built in. Check the motherboard manual to see if this is the case and to see which levels are supported. RAID-0, 1, 5 and 10 are typical on modern PCs. The manual will provide you with the information you need to get started and configure RAID on your PC.

If your motherboard doesn't have RAID hardware built-in, you will need to buy an adapter – a PCI or PCI Express (PCIe)



**You can create a striped drive in Windows using a simple step-by-step wizard**

card that you need to install inside your PC. Prices vary considerably and they tend to be quite expensive, so shop wisely. Make sure the card you buy supports the RAID level you want and aim for one that supports SATA 6Gbps devices.

If you're going for the hardware route, then we'd definitely recommend using SATA drives of the same make, model and capacity in order to avoid problems.

### Buying hard drives

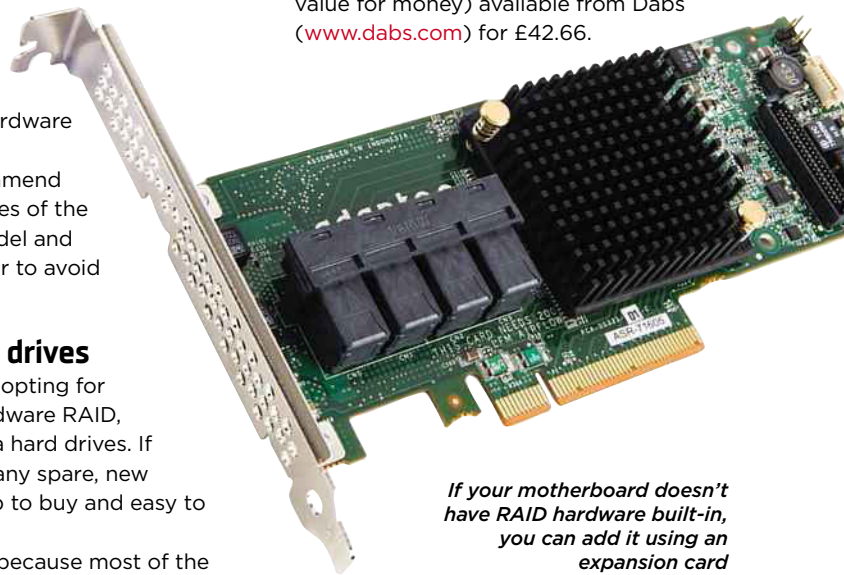
Whether you're opting for software or hardware RAID, you'll need extra hard drives. If you don't have any spare, new drives are cheap to buy and easy to install.

Shop around because most of the



**Some motherboards let you create a hardware RAID array from your BIOS**

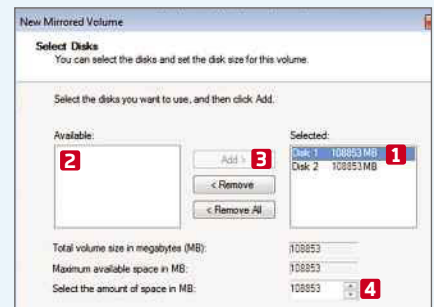
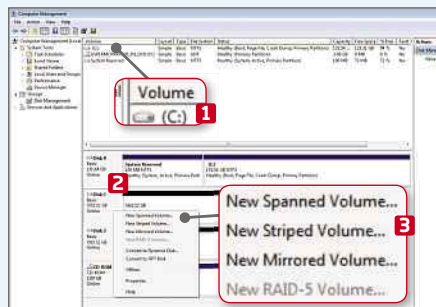
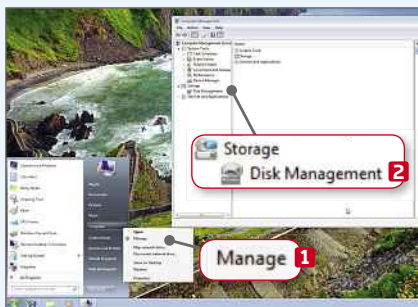
online retailers that sell computer components offer great value hard drives and their prices are very competitive. We found 1TB WD Blue models (general purpose drives designed to offer good value for money) available from Dabs ([www.dabs.com](http://www.dabs.com)) for £42.66.



**If your motherboard doesn't have RAID hardware built-in, you can add it using an expansion card**



## MINI WORKSHOP | Set up RAID-1 mirroring in Windows 7 Professional



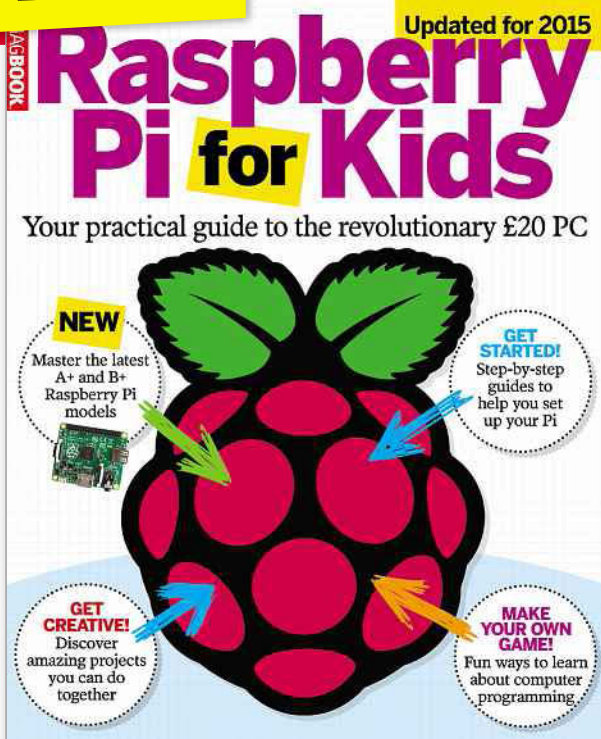
**1** If you want to protect your data from hard-drive failure, then RAID-1 – Mirroring – is the best solution (bear in mind, however, that the mirroring drive can't be used as additional storage). Install the drives you want to use for RAID and format them if required. In Windows, click Start, then right-click Computer and select Manage. **1** Click Disk Management on the left (under Storage). **2**

**2** The Computer Management screen shows your main hard drive **1** and all the newly installed drives. **2** Right-click one of the drives that you want to include in your RAID. You'll see four options – 'New Spanned Volume', 'New Stripped Volume', 'New Mirrored Volume' and 'New RAID-5 Volume'. **3**

**3** Select Mirrored to open the New Mirrored Volume wizard. Click Next. The drive you right-clicked will be shown as selected, **1** with the other drives shown as available. **2** Select it and click Add. **3** You can adjust the space as required. **4** Click Next, assign a drive letter and choose whether to format the volume. Agree to make the drive dynamic, and you're all set.

# WebUser Bookstore

**NEW!**



## RASPBERRY PI FOR KIDS

The Raspberry Pi is the incredible £20 British computer that's taking the world by storm. It's ideal for children of all ages to experiment, play games and learn valuable skills. We've updated this 148-page book for 2015 to include instructions on mastering the new Pi models (A+ and B+), helping children learn the coding skills needed to excel at the new school curriculum. We take you step by step through the basics of setting up and configuring the Pi and introduce many fun projects for families.

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## RAID LEVELS AND WHAT THEY DO

### RAID-0

With this level, data is written across multiple drives using a process called 'striping'. This can speed up your PC because it's reading and writing to multiple drives (a minimum of two, and it has to be an even number) instead of just the one. If you have two 1TB drives, RAID-0 will effectively turn them into a single 2TB drive. However, there is a downside: because different parts of your files are being written to different drives, if one drive fails, you could lose everything, just as if you were using a single drive.

### RAID-1

If you're worried about losing your data, RAID-1 is a useful choice because it copies data simultaneously from one drive to another, creating a mirror. If one drive fails, you'll still have access to all your data on the other drive. The downside here is that you lose storage space, so if you have two 1TB drives, you'll only have 1TB of usable space, because the second drive will contain the same data as the first. Like RAID-0 you need an even number of drives.

### RAID-2

This level is similar to RAID-5, but instead of striping data blocks across the drives, it stripes individual bits. However, you don't have to worry about RAID-2 because implementing it is expensive and very complex. For this reason, it's rarely used these days.

### RAID-3

Also similar to RAID-5 (and RAID-2 for that matter, since it stripes bits), this level requires a dedicated drive for 'parity' - additional data used for file recovery. As with RAID-2, it is seldom used these days.

### RAID-4

This is almost identical to RAID-3, except disk striping occurs at byte (block) level, not bit level. It also uses a dedicated drive for parity. Again, it's not a level that's used much.

### RAID-5

Popular with businesses, this level combines the benefits of RAID-0 (capacity and performance) and RAID-1 (data security). The downside is that you'll need three drives to use it, and one of those drives will be used for parity (see RAID-3). So if you have three 1TB drives, you'll only have 2TB of storage available to use. However, if one of your drives dies, it won't be a major problem: if it's the data drive, the parity drive can attempt to recreate the missing contents on a new drive; and if it's the parity drive, you can just replace it because your data will still be safe on the other two.

### RAID-6

This is the same as RAID-5 but with two parity blocks for each block of data, so it overcomes the problem of two drives failing at the same time. The robust nature of this level makes it popular with big businesses, but you lose additional storage space.

### RAID-10

Or RAID-1+0, is a combination of RAID-1 and RAID-0, giving the benefits of both levels (striping and mirroring). It's expensive and requires a minimum of four drives, but is beneficial (or even essential) for businesses, which often choose this over RAID-5. There's also RAID-0+1, which mirrors RAID-0 arrays. While it's easy to confuse this with RAID-1+0, it's not the same.



## Storage Spaces

Windows 8+ comes with an alternative to RAID called Storage Spaces, which lets you use multiple connected drives to create a pool of storage. This is treated as a single location with its own drive letter.

To use it, open the Control Panel, go to 'System and Security', and select Storage Spaces. Click 'Create a new pool and storage space link' and follow the instructions. If you start to run out of space, you can simply connect another drive to the pool.

It offers the equivalent of RAID-0

(Simple Space), RAID-1 (Mirror Space), and RAID-5 (Parity Space).

### Undo RAID in Windows

Should you decide you no longer want to use RAID in Windows (either Striped or Mirrored), start by backing up all your software. Next, go to Disk Management. Right-click one of the volumes being used in your RAID and then choose the action you require. You can remove a mirror or break the mirrored volume. If you no longer want a striped array, back up your data and delete the striped volume.



*Storage Spaces is Microsoft's own version of RAID that links drives together*

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# Web User's Top Tips

Our experts show how to extend the battery life of all your devices so you can use them all day

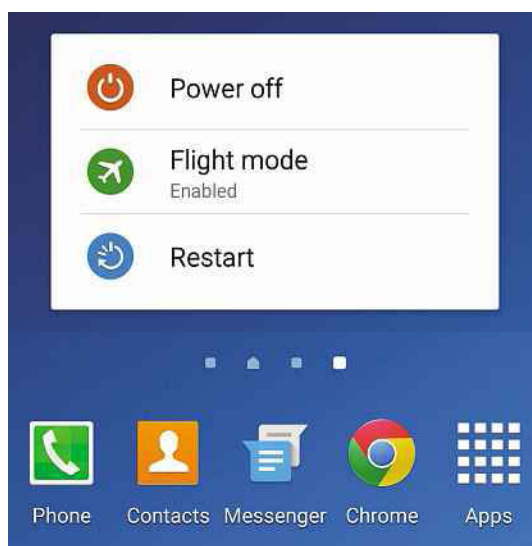
## TOP TIPS FOR EXTENDING BATTERY LIFE

### Switch your device to Flight mode

**H**ow often have you realised, as you're about to leave the house, that you forgot to charge your phone and the battery is down to 20 per cent or less? We're so accustomed to having unlimited texts and talk minutes that rationing phone use seems like an unendurable inconvenience. But there are ways to make that final bar of battery power last longer.

Flight mode cuts your phone's power usage to a minimum. The way you access Flight mode varies from one device to the next, but try pulling down from the top of the screen, pulling up from the bottom or holding down the power button.

If you get an opportunity to



*Enable Flight mode to reduce power consumption so the battery lasts longer*

plug in your charger, your phone will charge much faster in Flight mode and the battery life will be significantly prolonged. You can disable Flight mode for a minute or two to quickly collect emails and texts, or to make an essential call.

When you're in a location that doesn't have a strong phone signal, such as in the heart of the countryside or up a mountain, your phone works extra hard to find a connection. This continuous searching for a signal will drain your battery far more quickly than any normal use. In these situations, flipping over to Flight mode will help to keep your battery powered-up and ready for your return to civilisation.

### Reduce app updates

Apps update on a schedule and checking for new content requires battery power. Reducing this update frequency will extend your device's battery life. For example, open the Twitter app on Android, tap the menu button, then choose Settings. Tap your account and tap 'Sync interval'. There is a range of options, from every five minutes to every four hours. The longer the sync interval, the longer your battery will last.

Check your email app, too. Some email accounts automatically push new messages to you, but others require the



*Set longer intervals between automatic updates and syncs wherever possible*

forecasts, often have adjustable update frequencies. Changing this from hourly to once every six hours means four updates per day instead of 24, which will demand less from your battery.

On the iPhone and iPad, go to Settings, General, Background App Refresh. Turn off apps that don't need to update in the background, leaving only the essentials turned on. Also go to

email app to log on to the mail server and check for new messages.

Extending the time between checks from every five minutes to once an hour reduces battery drain.

Many other apps, such as those offering weather

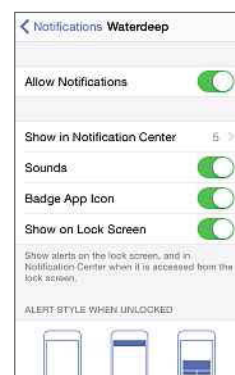
Settings, 'Mail, Contacts, Calendars', Fetch New Data and select Hourly.

### Disable notifications

Notifications use a sound and sometimes on-screen information to let you know when new text messages or emails arrive. Activating the screen and audio system to perform these actions

consumes battery power, so it's a good idea to limit notifications to essential apps to make your device last longer.

On Android, go to Settings, then Application manager or Apps. Tap an app and clear the tick next to



*Notifications are useful but they use battery power, so turn off any you don't need*

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.





'Show notifications'. Repeat this for every app except essentials such as email and messaging. The more you disable, the longer the battery will last. On iOS, go to Settings, Notifications and tap each non-essential app in the list, such as games, and set all the switches to the off position.

## Limit some apps to Wi-Fi

Some apps upload and download a lot of data, such as the app store, photo and video backup services, and so on. They work automatically in the background and some have a setting that limits activity to Wi-Fi so you don't use up all your data allowance. Enable this and you will have an easy way to stop these apps from running, simply by switching off your Wi-Fi. Your battery will get a double-boost because connecting to Wi-Fi also uses up your battery.

Go to Google+ on Android, for example, and tap the menu button. Select Settings, Auto-backup. There are options to back up photos and videos only when there is a Wi-Fi connection. Better still, select the option to only back up when the phone or tablet is plugged into a charger.

On iOS, go to Settings, iTunes & App Store and turn off Use Cellular Data to limit downloads to Wi-Fi only. You can then turn off Wi-Fi to stop downloads draining your battery.

## Don't auto-update apps

If you add the system apps bundled with your device to the ones you downloaded yourself, you may have more than 100. Some apps are updated as often as every two weeks, which means your phone is downloading and installing updates every day. This requires a lot of power, so it's worth putting off app updates until your device is connected to a power supply and your battery isn't bearing the brunt.

On Android devices, go to the Play



**You can control when your device updates apps**

When it's convenient, such as while your device is charging, go to Apps in the Play Store, tap the menu and select My Apps to select and download updates. Tap Update All.

Store, tap Apps, then the menu button. Select Settings and tap 'Auto-update apps', then select 'Do not update

apps'.

## TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

### Put Wi-Fi to sleep

When you've finished using a phone or tablet and have switched off the screen, the device goes into Sleep mode. iOS devices tend to switch off the Wi-Fi automatically, but Android may or may not. Some phones and tablets have a power-saving mode, while on others the Wi-Fi can be set to turn off. On Samsung phones, for example, go to Settings, My Device, and turn on 'Power saving mode'. On Some Android devices, you can go to Settings, Wi-Fi, tap the menu button and select Advanced, then tap 'Keep Wi-Fi on during sleep' and select 'Only when plugged in'.

### Turn off connectivity

Phones and tablets have several built-in wireless technologies and they all consume power. NFC is handy, but if you don't use it regularly, switch it off. Bluetooth can also be turned off when you're not using it, as can Wi-Fi. The switches you need are in Settings. You'll still receive emails, texts and phone calls, but your device's battery will last longer.

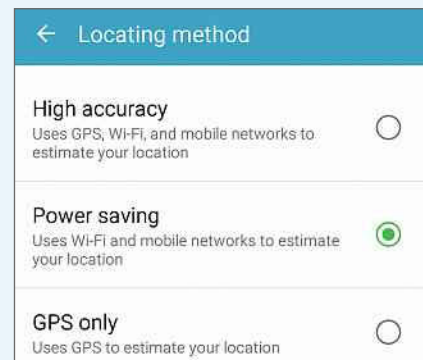


**Turn off Wi-Fi and Bluetooth when they aren't needed**

### Location services

Mobile devices work out your location using a variety of methods including GPS and Wi-Fi, and turning off some or all of these will extend the battery life. On Android, go to Settings, My Device and, for the best battery savings, turn off any locating methods, or at least tap Mode and select 'Power saving'. On iOS go to Settings, Privacy, Location Services and turn them off.

Some apps, such as mapping and navigation, will only work properly if they can track your location, so you may have to enable and disable some apps as required. However, it's



**Turn off the location feature or set it to 'Power saving' mode**

certainly worth switching off location services if your battery is running low.

### Extend your laptop's life

The brighter the screen, the more power it's using, so if your battery's running low, you should reduce your screen's brightness as much as you can bear. Laptops often have hotkeys – such as F2/F3 or a sun icon – to adjust the brightness. Click the battery icon in the taskbar, click 'More power options' and make sure the Power Saver plan is active. The same applies to phones and tablets.

If you use Chrome for browsing, go to the menu, Settings, then 'Show advanced settings'. Find the Privacy section and click the 'Content settings' button. Under Plug-ins, select 'Let me choose when to run plugin content'. This blocks Flash and other add-ons so that animated adverts and videos don't play automatically. If you want them to run, right-click and select 'Run this plug-in'.

Windows Update automatically scans the hard drive, goes online, checks for updates, and downloads any updated files. This takes a lot of power and can be disabled. Open the Control Panel, open Windows Update, click 'Change settings' and select 'Never check for updates'. You must change this back to 'automatically install updates' when the laptop is connected to mains power or click 'Check for updates' to perform a manual check when it's convenient.

Turn off Bluetooth if you aren't using it. In Windows 8, go to the Charms bar, click Settings, Change PC Settings, 'PC and Devices', Bluetooth. Also click the Network icon and select Flight mode if you can work without internet access.

# 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](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk)



## SECURITY

### Viruses on Android devices

**Q** Does my Android TV box need anti-virus software?

**Christos, via email**

**A** The reports of malware on Android are more often than not caused by apps from third-party stores, and cracked or pirated apps. If you only install well-known popular apps from the Google Play Store, then the chance of encountering a virus is very small indeed.

Android viruses and malware tend to target mobile phones because the creators can make money from phone calls and sending text messages. Even so, most people using an Android device don't need anti-virus software. The main security concern is having the device stolen, especially if the



**Android's anti-virus software is most relevant for phones**

phone isn't locked with a password or PIN. None of these concerns apply to an Android TV box, so it's not worth installing anti-virus on it.

introduced by Windows Update, one of which is the 'not genuine' error.

## EMAIL

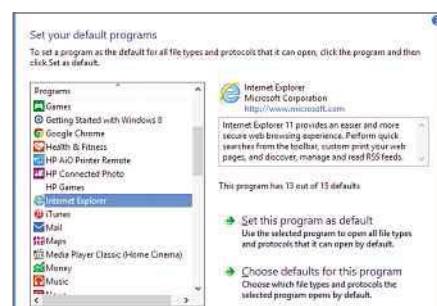
### Email links don't open

**Q** Suddenly, for reasons I can't fathom, I can't open links in emails. When clicked, a message with the link appears, but nothing happens. I don't think I've changed anything, but I'm no expert.

**Ted Berry, via email**

**A** This can happen when software is installed or uninstalled, and is often because there is no longer a program associated with the links. Resetting the default programs and associations usually solves the problem. Left-click (in Windows 7) or right-click (in Windows 8) the Start button and select the Control Panel.

In 'Small icons' view, click Default Programs, then 'Set your default programs'. Select the browser you use and click 'Set this program as default'. Click 'Choose defaults for this program' and, on the next screen, tick Select All and click Save. Return to Default Programs and select the email program, if you use one (some people use webmail in their browser instead). As before, click 'Set this program as default', click 'Choose defaults for this program', Select All and Save.



**Set the program defaults to solve problems when clicking files and links**

## SOFTWARE

### Find duplicate files on a NAS drive

**Q** Do you have any recommendations for free software I can use to remove duplicate files? My NAS (Network

## GENERAL PC

### Windows says it isn't genuine

**Q** I bought a Lenovo computer from Amazon approximately three years ago and I kept getting messages (and still do) that Windows 7 is not licensed. I contacted Amazon who in turn put me in touch with Lenovo, who then put me in touch with Microsoft, who verified that Windows 7 was licensed. They installed a remote search and despite a long drawn-out attempt couldn't solve the problem. This means my computer does not recognise Windows updates and I won't be able to update to Windows 10 when it's launched. Do you have any advice on solving this?

**Colly Graham, via email**

**A** This problem will not stop you installing Windows 10 but it might mean that you have to buy a full copy rather than getting the free upgrade that will be available to many users.

You're not alone with this problem. A few people have found a solution and

some are really odd, such as one person who uninstalled Flash and then found the error went away. Try it – you never know, it might work.

Another possible solution is to go to Start, All Programs, Accessories and right-click Command Prompt. Select 'Run as administrator' and, when the window opens, type `slui.exe 3`. This will prompt you to enter the license code again, which must be typed exactly as printed.

You could also try going to the Command Prompt and typing:  
`net stop sppsvc`  
`cd %windir%\ServiceProfiles\NetworkService\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\SoftwareProtectionPlatform`  
`rename tokens.dat tokens.bar`  
`cd %windir%\system32`  
`net start sppsvc`  
`slui.exe`

One final suggestion is to download and run the Microsoft update found at [bit.ly/update372](http://bit.ly/update372). It fixes some problems



Attached Storage) drive appears to have multiple copies of photos and although I use Microsoft SyncTool to keep some folders in sync from the PC, it's not obvious where the copies are.

**Paul Stone, via email**

**A** A NAS drive should appear as a regular hard drive in Explorer so you can do anything with it that you can with a regular hard drive, only it might work a bit more slowly. There are plenty of free duplicate file finders that will do what you want. CloneSpy ([clonespy.de](http://clonespy.de)) is a good general-purpose tool that can find identical files, even if they have different filenames. There are plenty of safeguards; you can choose which duplicate to delete based on rules you create; and duplicates can be moved to a temporary folder so you can double-check them before they're permanently deleted. SimilarImages ([bit.ly/simi372](http://bit.ly/simi372)) is old but it's still a great program for detecting duplicate photos because it spots similar pictures even if they're not completely identical, such as if you've resized a photo or given it a different filename.



*SimilarImages finds photos that are not only identical, but also just quite similar*

## BROWSERS

### Chrome won't start

**Q** I've used Chrome on my laptop for several years but all of a sudden I am no longer able to open it. I get a message saying there is no DSL. I have been in touch with my ISP who says the router is working and there is DSL. I know this is true because I can still use Chrome on my Nexus 7.

I tried to delete Chrome with a view to downloading it again, but I got a message saying there were programs working in the background that I had to close first. I don't know how to do this. In the meantime, I am using Firefox, which opens with no trouble.

**Enid Trull, via email**

**A** Firefox is working, and you know from your tablet that your internet connection and router are fine. The

problem is therefore with Chrome and it must be deleted and then reinstalled. Download an uninstaller tool such as IObit Uninstaller ([bit.ly/uninstaller372](http://bit.ly/uninstaller372)). Restart Windows and, when you get to the Desktop, right-click an empty part of the taskbar and select Task Manager. Select the Processes tab and look for any items with Google or Chrome in the name. Right-click them and select 'End task'.

Chrome can be uninstalled using 'Programs and Features' in the Control Panel, but this leaves behind files and settings. IObit Uninstaller will remove all traces of Chrome. During the uninstall process, select the option to delete user profile information. Restart Windows afterwards, then download and reinstall Chrome ([www.google.com/chrome](http://www.google.com/chrome)).

## HARDWARE

### My laptop keeps freezing

**Q** I have an HP laptop running Windows 7 Home. The problem I am experiencing is that the cursor and keyboard freeze for no apparent reason, and I am unable to do anything. I have to shut down my laptop by holding down the power button for several seconds. There is no specific time scale of use

before the freeze occurs. At first, with my limited knowledge of the workings of computers, I thought perhaps it might be an overheating problem, but because the timing of the freeze is so sporadic, I have discounted that idea.

**Ron Davis, via email**

**A** An overheating laptop is more likely to emit warning beeps and a slowing of the processor than a complete lock-up. The cause of this problem is likely to be software rather than hardware. Does the laptop always freeze with the same program or when two particular programs are used together?

Random lock-ups are hard to pin down so it's best to update everything. Go to Windows Update in the Control Panel and check for updates. You should also select the optional ones not installed by default. Next, download a copy of Driver Booster 2 Free ([bit.ly/drive372](http://bit.ly/drive372)). When this is run, it checks all the drivers on your PC against the latest versions on the web, and downloads and updates the system. Finally, check for updates for the software you use. There may be newer versions that fix bugs and are more stable.

## GENERAL PC

### 'Catastrophic' System Restore

**Q** I lost System Restore. If I try to create a restore point, it comes up with a message saying 'catastrophic error 0x8000ffff'.

**M Meehan, via email**

**A** It sounds like there is a problem with one or more restore points, which may be caused by corrupted files. First, check that your hard drive is OK. Open an Explorer window, select Computer or This PC, right-click the hard drive and select Properties. Select the Tools tab. In the Error-checking section, click the 'Check now' button. Click 'Scan drive' or Start. Windows 7 asks you to schedule a disk check and restart Windows.

With any drive errors repaired, click Start or go to the Start screen and type **command**. Right-click Command Prompt and select 'Run as administrator'. Type **sfc /scannow** to have the Windows files checked and repaired if necessary.



*Disable system protection to clear out old and corrupt restore points*

Open the Control Panel, open System, click System Protection, click Configure and select 'Turn off system protection'. Click OK, then OK again, and restart Windows. Press Windows+R, type **services.msc** and press Enter. Double-click the Volume Shadow service and set the startup type to Automatic. Click the Start button if it isn't currently running. Return to System Protection via the Control Panel and turn it back on. System Restore should now work correctly.



This fortnight Roland has been raising an army and plans to take over the world (but only in DomiNations on his iPad!)



# 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](http://forum.webuser.co.uk)



## TOP TIP

### BROWSERS

## Restore Chrome sessions manually

I don't set Chrome to automatically restore my previous session when I open it, because it can take an age waiting for all the tabs to load and I don't usually want to open all the web pages that I was looking at yesterday. However, I recently discovered that Chrome still lets you restore your previous session manually, which is really handy when you've accidentally closed your browser with lots of tabs still open.

To use this feature, click Chrome's menu button, hover your cursor over 'Recent tabs' and select the option named according to the number of tabs you had open when the browser was closed, such as '10 tabs'. You can also use the keyboard shortcut



*Chrome lets you re-open the tabs from your last browsing session*

Ctrl+Shift+T if you prefer. If you've closed more than one browser window, they can all be restored from this menu, but the keyboard shortcut will only restore the last one you closed.

I find this feature gives me the best of both worlds, allowing Chrome to launch quickly but also giving me the option to restore my last session when I need to.

**Justin Brooks, via email**

**£25 winner**

### GENERAL PC

## Keyboard shortcut to new windows

Here is a simple trick for when you want to open a new window in a program that's already running. Hold down the Shift key and click the program's icon in the taskbar. For example, suppose you have Notepad open to view a text file and you want to open another Notepad window to view another file at the same time – just Shift+click the Notepad icon in the taskbar.

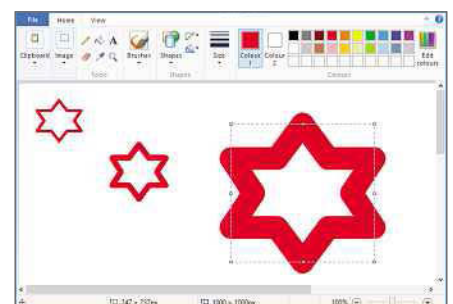
If you want to open a second Explorer window so you can drag files from one folder or drive to another, Shift+click the Explorer icon. If you want to open another browser window to view a second site without leaving the current one, Shift+click the icon in the taskbar. It's a useful trick.

**K Sweeney, via email**

### GENERAL PC

## Resize tools in MS Paint

Microsoft Paint comes bundled with all versions of Windows, and looks like a very simple program with basic drawing and painting tools, but there is more to it than people realise. For example, when you select the pencil tool and click the Size button, you'll see four choices. However, there are more size choices available. To get them, choose the largest size and draw something. Now hold down the Ctrl key and press the plus key



*Draw a shape, hold down Ctrl and keep pressing the plus key to thicken the border*

### WEBSITES

## Get money for your old mobile

If you've ever wondered what to do with old mobile phones when you've finished using them, you should have a look at phone recycling companies such as Mazuma Mobile ([mazumamobile.com](http://mazumamobile.com))



*Mazuma Mobile tells you how much second-hand phones are worth*

and Envirofone ([envirofone.com](http://envirofone.com)), who will pay you for your old handsets. Simply enter your mobile model or IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) number on either of the sites to find out how much you'll get for your device.

It's worth noting that the value of different handsets can vary enormously. For example, a 16GB iPhone 4S still fetches up to £65, while a Moto G, although much newer, is only worth £20.

Posting your devices is usually free, but if you'd prefer to get your phone recycled on the high street, you can also try visiting your local mobile phone shop (such as high-street branches of O2 and EE). And if you want to make sure you've found the very best price for your handset, you could check with MoneySavingExpert.com's MobileValuer site ([mobilevaluer.com](http://mobilevaluer.com)) or SellMyMobile ([www.sellmymobile.com](http://www.sellmymobile.com)).

**Tom Riches, via email**



on the numeric keypad at the right of the keyboard about half a dozen times. Draw again and you will see that the pencil is thicker. Ctrl+plus key makes the pencil thicker and Ctrl and minus makes it thinner, regardless of the size setting in the ribbon.

Select the line tool, then click and drag a line on the canvas. Now hold down Ctrl and hold down the numeric plus key. The line grows thicker. Hold down Ctrl and minus to make the line grow thinner. You can also do this with shapes such as ellipses, rectangles and stars.

**John Harris, via email**

## SECURITY

### Remove old anti-virus programs completely

Sometimes security software you've installed on your PC can be as hard to remove as malware, which can cause clashes when you install another security tool. I've just discovered a way to make a clean sweep of anti-virus programs, using the free ESET AV Remover tool ([bit.ly/eset372](http://bit.ly/eset372)).

Although its name suggests that it only removes security software from ESET, it actually does the opposite by completely removing programs from all the other security companies. I suppose the purpose is to install ESET software once you've cleared out everything else, but there's no reason why you have to. I found the tool very easy to use; it's just a case of scanning and clicking Remove. It works with all the big security names, including McAfee, Panda, Kaspersky, AVG and Trend Micro, and there are 32-bit and 64-bit versions available.

**Andrew Gibbons, via email**



**Use ESET's tool to remove all traces of rival anti-virus installations**

## BROWSERS

### Turn off full-screen messages in Firefox

Every time you switch to full-screen mode in YouTube (or indeed any other website) while watching a video in Firefox, a message appears stating: "YouTube.com is now fullscreen. Press Esc at any time to exit." If this gets on your nerves, there's a way that you can

disable it. Type `about:config` into the browser's address bar, click 'I'll be careful, I promise!' and type: `full-screen-api.approval-required` into the search box. When you see the preference 'full-screen-api.approval-required', double-click it to set it to False. Now, when you want to watch something in full-screen mode, the browser won't ask for your approval.

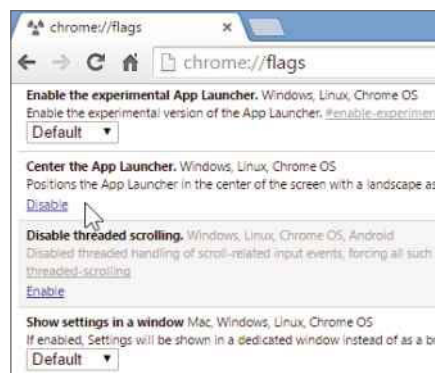
**Dan Whitley, via email**

## BROWSERS

### Move Chrome's App Launcher

When you install apps from the Chrome Web Store ([bit.ly/store372](http://bit.ly/store372)), an icon is added to the taskbar. Clicking it opens a panel of icons containing all the web apps. It is positioned just above the taskbar, but it can be centred on the screen if you prefer. Open Chrome and type `chrome://flags` into the address box. Find 'Center the App Launcher', then click the Enable link. Click the button at the bottom to relaunch Chrome, then try the new App Launcher in the taskbar.

**Kieren Doyle, via email**



**Choose which area of the screen you want the Chrome app launcher displayed**

## GENERAL PC

### Universal hotkeys

Every program has hotkeys for accessing certain functions and many are specific to particular programs, but there are some that work in every program. I have found that almost all programs that let you select something, such as text, images and files, use Ctrl+A to select everything. Click a file in an Explorer window to select one or press Ctrl+A to select them all.

Cut, copy and paste are three common functions in many programs and are accessed by pressing Ctrl+X, Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V respectively. It can be quicker to press these hotkeys than to use a mouse to select the menu options. Try it with files in Explorer; text in Word, WordPad and Notepad; selections in paint programs and photo editors; and so on.

The universal hotkey for Undo is

Ctrl+Z. If you have just done something and want to undo the action, press Ctrl+Z. It works in many programs such as word processors, photo editors and spreadsheets. Have you just accidentally deleted a file in Explorer? Press Ctrl+Z and it comes back.

**Bob Fox, via email**

## BROWSERS

### Install Chrome extensions in Opera

If you want to install Chrome extensions in Opera, try Download Chrome Extension ([bit.ly/chrome372](http://bit.ly/chrome372)). Once installed, just click 'Add to Opera' when you find an extension you want. After a while, you'll get a message at the top of the browser window telling you to go to the Opera extensions manager to enable it. When you do this, click Install twice and you'll know it's worked when the extensions page in the Chrome Web Store says 'Added to Opera'.

I don't know why, but I've noticed Download Chrome Extension occasionally disables itself, so if you want to download an extension from the Chrome Web Store, it's worth checking in Opera's Extensions Manager that it's Enabled. If it isn't, just click Reload to get it running again.

**Madeline, Web User Forums**

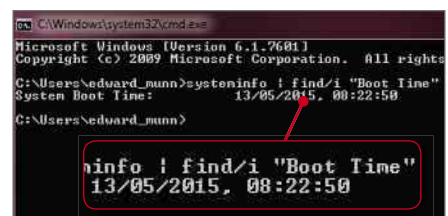
## GENERAL PC

### Find out when you last booted your PC

If, like me, you often use Sleep mode instead of shutting down your laptop, it's easy to forget when you last fully restarted your PC. While this generally doesn't matter, it's still important to reboot your PC from time to time so that it can install all the necessary updates.

If you want to check when you last booted your computer, you can find this information using the Command Prompt. To do this, press Windows+R, type `cmd` and press Enter. In the Command Prompt, type `systeminfo | find /i "Boot Time"` and press Enter. The Command Prompt will display the exact time and date that the PC was last booted. It can take the console up to a minute to find this information, so be patient if it seems like it's taking a while.

**Robert Duncan, via email**



**Command Prompt can tell you when you last booted your PC**



# Readers' Helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit [forum.webuser.co.uk](http://forum.webuser.co.uk) – it's friendly and free!

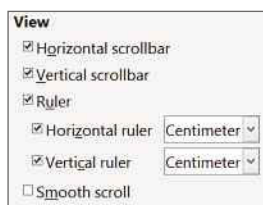
## SOFTWARE

### Does Libre Office Writer have a side ruler?

**Q** I have just installed Libre Office as recommended in issue 367 of *Web User* ([bit.ly/webuser367](http://bit.ly/webuser367)). It's great for free software, but the Writer program has no ruler on the side, unlike Microsoft Word, which has both top and side rulers. Also, can you tell me how to format text so that it's bold?

**Slickstar, Web User Forums**

**A** If you have no vertical ruler showing, go to Tools, Options, then expand the LibreOffice Writer menu using the



*Libre Office Writer's side ruler can be activated from its Tools menu*

plus icon. Click View and tick the box for Vertical Ruler.

To make text bold, select it and click the bold 'a' icon next to the font-size menu. If you

can't see this option, click View and Toolbars, then tick Formatting. Alternatively, select the text and use the keyboard shortcut, Ctrl+B.

**Moonshine and Stewart40, Web User Forums**

## HARDWARE

### Can I use my old router as a Wi-Fi extender?

**Q** Does anybody have any tips or instructions on how to use an old Wi-Fi router as a wireless extender?

**Henners, Web User Forums**

**A** Turning your router into a Wi-Fi extender is relatively straightforward if, unlike a BT HomeHub for example, it isn't tied to your ISP. The best way of finding out if it will work is simply to try it and see. Some routers won't act as a Wi-Fi pass-through device because they need to be connected directly via an Ethernet cable, for example.

## BROWSERS

### What's the best tool for syncing Firefox bookmarks?

**Q** Can anyone recommend a good bookmarks manager or syncing tool for Firefox? I was using Xmarks Sync, but recently a message has been popping up saying that it can't log me into my account, so none of my bookmarks are synced.

**Rob1955, Web User Forums**

**A** Have you tried the browser's built-in tool, Firefox Sync? I use it and never have problems with syncing my bookmarks, tabs, settings or passwords across



*Firefox Sync lets you sync your bookmarks, tabs and passwords between devices*

several computers. For more information see [bit.ly/firefox372](http://bit.ly/firefox372).

**Sneakybeaky, Web User Forums**

After logging into your old router, change its SSID and Wi-Fi password so that they match your primary router. Next, change its IP address to an address that won't ordinarily be needed on your home network. If the original router's IP range is 192.168.254.0-254, for example, you could pick 192.168.254.191 as the fixed address for the extender. You also need to change the extender's channel so that it's different to the main router – 1, 6 or 11 are all good choices. Other than picking a suitable site for the extender, that's pretty much it. Good luck!

**Izzit, Web User Forums**

*Web User says:* If you want more guidance, we did a Weekend Project on setting up a router as a Wi-Fi extender in Issue 356 ([bit.ly/webuser356](http://bit.ly/webuser356)).

## INTERNET

### What is a ping reading?

**Q** Whenever I perform a broadband speed test, I am given a ping measurement. In the last test I ran, the ping was 56.63ms. What exactly does this figure mean? Is it better for it to be low or high, and what kind of figure should I be aiming for?

**d307, Web User Forums**

**A** A 'ping' is the time taken for data to carry out a return trip from your PC to a distant server on the internet. The reading you get will therefore vary according to distance from the server, congestion, traffic management, time of day and so on. 56ms is a fairly typical figure – my ping to a UK site is normally 20-30ms, while to the US it's more like 100-150ms. A faster ping (also sometimes called the 'latency') is desirable for internet-based activities that require more than pure download speed, such as media streaming, online gaming and video communications. The faster the ping, the more responsive your internet connection.

**Helmut, Izzit and Cantrel, Web User Forums**



*Speedtest.net gives you a ping reading as well as upload and download speeds*



## Star Email

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### Why I've had it up to here with #hashtags

I don't personally use Twitter, but I've nothing against it in theory. If people want to argue with and upset one another, or tell their friends what they had for lunch or that their train has broken down, then that's up to them, and I don't begrudge them the 140 characters (or whatever it is) that it takes to do so. What I do object to, and which is becoming increasingly annoying by the day, is the use of these so-called 'hashtags' in places other than Twitter, for which the gimmick was created.

When I went into town the other day, I spotted hashtags everywhere: on posters for household products and cinema releases; in shop and restaurant windows; and even on packets of crisps. I've started seeing them at the beginning and end of



television programmes, too. I understand that the idea is to focus and generate conversation about whatever the hashtag topic is, such as #bakedbeans or #cottonbuds, but to me it just seems tacky and unnecessary.

If people want to talk about things

then they will do so naturally, and they don't need to be coerced into drivelling on about them as part of some awful marketing exercise. These companies that use hashtags outside of Twitter are treating us like sheep, and I would be happy to see a ban on them. I'm certain that the hash symbol wasn't invented to be overused and mistreated in this manner.

Sadly, I don't think hashtags will be going away anytime soon, even if Twitter falls from

favour, because they're the perfect promotional tool for lazy and unimaginative companies and people. But eventually some other gimmick will come along to replace them and it will probably be even more irritating!

*Patrick Tyler, via email*

### Keep the government's hands off our porn

Regarding Barry Collins' column in Issue 370, 'Knock the government's blocks off'. Like many older people in this country (England), I believe that the problem of porn cannot be solved by switching it off or regulating it. The question we have to answer first is: 'what is porn?'. Yes, there is child pornography, which is wrong, but porn has existed since man could communicate through pictures and words.

The internet and recording technology just make it easier to produce and distribute.

What we have to consider is: do we as adults need to be told what to watch and what not to watch? Of course we should not show our children porn, but when I was young, adult magazines were all the rage and magazines used to get passed from one child to the next at school.



Now that children have tablets, this is easier to control, because a parent can turn the internet off at night and take away their child's mobile device.

But if a child wants to see porn, they will find a way, as we did with magazines.

The whole idea of an independent regulator is a non-starter because you are going to cause more upset than good. Honest people who watch porn will be forced to be regulated.

Those that don't watch will be pleased, but children will just find a new way of accessing it. There will be no winners at all, and porn will end up like prohibition in America in the Twenties; it will go underground like many child porn sites these days, and you will never get rid of it.

We are educated people so we should let the parents deal with this and not let the government step in.

*Terry Bradley, Milton Keynes*

### Remember those of us on slow connections

Barry Collins' opinions about supposed illegal downloading (Issue 352, [bit.ly/webuser352](http://bit.ly/webuser352)) illustrate the arrogance of people who have absurdly high connection speeds. My connection speed varies between 0.45 Mbps and 1.1 Mbps. Today, I have spent hours trying to update the astronomy program Stellarium, but it has simply failed.

Before I continue, I'd like to point out the many reasons why I need a faster service. I am an author and a creator of online content. Several times I have bought games that rely on Steam. I have had to crack them to get a game that I can play, and even then they do not have the full functionality that's apparently available. Although Netflix would allow me to watch movies for a reasonable fee, my smart TV is useless without a reasonable download speed.

West Dorset is hardly the back of beyond and I pay the same money for my broadband as people who live in London. I would suggest that *Web User* should be pushing a lot harder for those of us who struggle with totally useless

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connections,  
and tell your  
columnists to stop  
insulting us.

**Terri Pierce-Butler, via email**

**Web User says:** Blimey, you're right about your connection being slow. Issue 352 went on sale last July, and we've only just received your email! We'll pass on your comments to Barry and in future we'll bear in mind that not everyone has speedy broadband.

## Google cares more about money than mobile

Am I the only voice of dissent arguing against the rule-makers at Google who are trying to micromanage every website on the internet? What is their aim in punishing sites for not being mobile-friendly (Build a Better Site, Issue 367, [bit.ly/webuser367](http://bit.ly/webuser367))?

If Google had done all this five years ago when internet speeds were far lower, screen sizes were smaller and the ability of mobile users to pinch and stretch their screens was in its infancy, then I would have no argument, but to enforce the new rules now



makes me think that this is all about money rather than helping mobile users.

I own a number of websites and every one of them will have to be rebuilt to accommodate Google's new regime. I even purchased a Dreamweaver extension to convert pages to conform and, although it works, the structure is either distorted or limited in functionality, and still Google finds fault.

**Paul Hildreth, via email**

## Does anyone actually use smart TV features?

Regarding Barry Collins' column in Issue 372 about smart TVs, I don't think I've ever met anyone who actually uses the so-called 'smart' features on their telly, aside from maybe Netflix. It's far too fiddly to browse the web using a remote control, and why would you want to stream music through your TV's tinny

## What you say...

### WILL YOU MISS WINDOWS MEDIA CENTER, WHICH MICROSOFT IS REMOVING FROM WINDOWS 10?

No, it's rubbish, and lots of its tools and features are useless. I wish they would take Media Player back to how it was originally, like Media Player Classic.

**Si Mellor**

I used Windows Media Center for years (starting with an XP version, if memory serves). It's a great product, so it's a shame to see it go. But things have moved on so much that it's not as relevant anymore.

**James McGinnis**

I haven't used it in years. It means less clutter in the Windows package. I just

hope they keep Movie Maker.

**Wolf Simpson @Dark\_Wolf**

I've never really used it much, so it's just another redundant feature.

**Chris Hughes**

No, I'll just use XBMC or Plex instead.

**Jack @imthegoldmaster**

### WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT MICROSOFT SAYING WINDOWS 10 WILL BE THE FINAL VERSION OF THE OPERATING SYSTEM?

Oh joy! And how much will we have to pay to be 'updated' on a regular basis?

**Claudia Ridley**

We don't really open windows anymore (the Desktop frames rather than the operating system). We have apps now. So maybe Microsoft should change the name.

**Bruce Lauderdale @BruceLauderdale**

There's always a catch. Some things sound too good to be true.

**Darren Phillips**

I don't believe it! They will continue to roll out new versions to keep the coffers full, don't you worry!

**Jason 'Boz' Bowyer**

Good move. The relevance of Windows releases will be less important with the decline of PC and laptop sales. Microsoft will save a ton of money not having to market a new operating system every few years.

**Chris Armstrong**

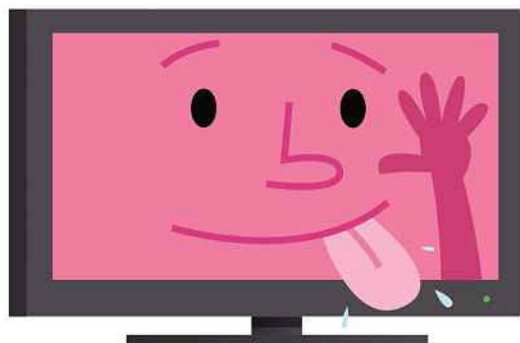
It might be the last version of Windows, but I doubt that it will be the final operating system released by Microsoft. That just doesn't make good business sense.

**Ewan Clayton**

### THE GOVERNMENT SAYS 2.4 MILLION HOMES NOW HAVE SUPERFAST BROADBAND. DOES YOURS?

I doubt that there is a fibre-optic service anywhere near my location. We have simple broadband and get, on average, 6Mbps.

**Gerrit Max**



speakers when you can listen on your stereo? The interface on a smart TV is clunky and slow, and in my experience you get even more adverts than you do when watching ITV!

As Barry says, you're better off spending £200 less and buying a non-smart TV and a Chromecast, which gives you more control over how you view web content on the big screen, as well as a lot more choice. It also means you can go for better picture quality and a decent-sized screen rather than

internet features that don't work properly.

*Chris Pritchard, via email*

## Why Web User got it wrong about Whovians

I've just found out that one of my companies, Whovian Companions ([www.whoviancompanions.co.uk](http://www.whoviancompanions.co.uk)), has been featured in your latest issue (370). I appreciate the exposure but I would like to correct some facts. There are actually 400,000 single Whovians in the UK according to statistics, not four million - we never



claimed that on our website.

Also, we may have had 49 members when you looked at our website but at that point we had only just launched. It's now one month after launch, and we currently have 376 members.

*Rémi Merlo, CEO Rémi Merlo Ventures*

**Web User says:** Apologies for these errors regarding Whovian Companions. We wish you all the best for the future (and any other time periods you may travel to).

## How stupid do I look?

So it seems that *Web User* has also been hoodwinked by Microsoft in its promotion of the How Old Do I Look? website ([how-old.net](http://how-old.net)). Don't you realise that when you upload your photos to this age-guessing game, it is actually harvesting your data? Microsoft may say that it doesn't store the photos afterwards, but why would you trust them? It's all to do with targeted advertising. I read a news story all about it. You won't catch me using it - I know how old I am, thank you very much Microsoft!

*Harvey Marsden, via email*



I am extremely fortunate because I get 120Mbps from Virgin Media. The downside is that we could do with less, but the only tariff with a decent upload speed is this one.

*Yvonne Clark*

I'm lucky if I get 2Mbps. I live in a maisonette above a shop, and can't get cable.

*Rachel Zurita*

Yes, we've had broadband since 2004. 100Mbps since 2012.

*Paul @abertawejack*

No, not a chance, we've been told. Billingshurst has some fibre but not where I live.

*Richard Bond*

Nope. They recently upgraded the exchange and then "moved" my connection to an exchange that's outside the range of broadband. Now they are refusing to let me upgrade my service because my property is too far away for the cables, even though my original exchange is less than 400 metres away.

*Peter Fitzsimmons*

## OF COM SAYS THE AVERAGE BRIT SPENDS 20 HOURS ONLINE EVERY WEEK. DOES THIS APPLY TO YOU?

I spend a lot more than 20 hours a week online. I spent more than that even 10 years ago!

*Chris Cole*

More like 20 hours a day! No, not really, but definitely more than 20 hours a week.

*Colin Wallace*

Not all of it is looking at comical kittens and ladies with no vests on. Some of us are working online. It beats sorting through mountainous filing cabinets for 45 hours a week.

*Richard Morgan*

Twenty hours a day sounds about right!

*Rich Grove @Rich\_Grove*

Who did they conduct this research with - people on dial-up? Twenty hours a week is less than three hours a day. Not very likely!

*Paul Giddings*

## Web User on holiday

The latest issue of *Web User* magazine has made its way to Playa De Las Americas in Tenerife, where it's currently a blistering 36 degrees!

*Simon Mellor @Simon9Hops*





# ! Page 404

Barry Collins is infuriated by the increasingly murky world of “customer reviews”



## Don't sell your soul for a good review

**N**othing hurts a company like a bad review. In the years I've spent editing and writing for tech magazines, I've had tears, threats and full-on tantrums from company reps who reckon we've unfairly trounced their products. Reviews can make or break a product, which is why companies are increasingly reluctant to leave such matters to chance.

Companies know they can't buy good reviews off reputable publications such as *Web User*. However, they can guarantee five-star verdicts on key sites such as Amazon, TripAdvisor and the various app stores if they write their own glowing reviews – or pay others to be their shills.

Amazon is currently embroiled in a legal battle with four websites, including the unashamedly named BuyAzonReviews.com, which offers companies “unlimited 4 and 5 star reviews” of their products. “All reviews will be posted by established Amazon accounts,” the site promises. “There is no need to worry about it looking fake or sketchy. You have final say on what the article will say and if it is posted or not.” Amazon insists such “sock puppets” only post a small proportion of reviews on its site, but the retailer clearly thinks it's a big enough problem to try and stop them.

Other cheats are more subtle. Last year, I bought a perfectly good USB 3 hub from a no-name Taiwanese company that sells its wares in the UK via Amazon. A few weeks later, the company sent me a letter offering a free USB drive in return for a positive review.

“I've had tears, threats and full-on tantrums from company reps who reckon we've unfairly trounced their products”



All I had to do was the post the review, send the link to a heavily masked email address and wait for my bribe to arrive. I didn't bother (I don't get out of bed for a USB stick, darling), but I dare say plenty of “satisfied customers” did. That innocuous USB hub currently has 496 customer reviews at the time of writing, with an average rating of four stars. The

Xbox One console only has 193 reviews.

Amazon clearly doesn't want companies to cheat its system, but even its “legitimate” reviews are suspect. The store lists its “Top Customer

Reviewers”, including their contact details, at [www.amazon.co.uk/review/top-reviewers](http://www.amazon.co.uk/review/top-reviewers), but to call these people “customers” is a bit of a stretch. They clearly aren't just reviewing products they've bought, but items they've been sent for free by companies desperate to

get their endorsement.

One of the top-ranked reviewers at the time of writing was a chap called John. Every review of his that we found said he was “delighted” to receive the product “in return for an independent and unbiased review”, but everything he's reviewed has a four- or five-star rating. Are these companies sending John all this kit (tablets, headphones, solar panels) for his impartial verdict? Or are they sending it in the knowledge that they'll almost certainly get a positive rating? And John's far from alone – most of the top reviewers seem to be supplied with a regular stream of freebies, and rarely do they dislike what they receive.

Accepting a “free product in exchange for your review” is perfectly acceptable under Amazon's rules, as long as you “clearly and conspicuously disclose” the gift. So is there really much difference between that and BuyAzonReviews.com? I'll let you be the judge.

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