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YOU MUST REVERSE** p46



**WINDOWS 10
START MENU**

The 14 best tips to
make it work better
page 64

Issue 383

WebUser

4 - 17 Nov 2015

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**1,496 apps
tested – only
15 recommended
page 38**



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Make your phone happy again

The first thing you notice when you get a new phone, aside from how clean and bright it looks without all those smudges and smears, is how fast it seems. Free of all the junk you accumulated on your old handset – temporary files, redundant apps, photos of amusingly shaped vegetables – a fresh device will respond instantly to every tap, as if it couldn't be happier to help, compared to the grumpy, can't-be-bothered attitude of an 18-month old phone. Fortunately, you don't need to buy a new handset to regain space, speed and sprightliness, because there are lots of

great apps that will give your current device a new lease of life. In this issue's cover feature (page 38), we pick 15 of the best free tools to turbo-charge your phone and tablet.

Next issue, to tie in with the first major update to Windows 10, we've got a 10-page special about the acclaimed but controversial OS. We're expecting this to prove as popular as our previous Windows 10 covers, so don't miss out!

Robert Irvine
robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk
[#webuser](#)



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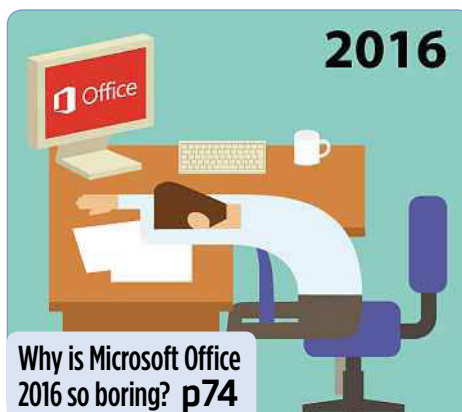
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Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

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What's New Online

Make your own GIFs online

You may not know this, but Homer Simpson is a *Web User* subscriber. You want proof?

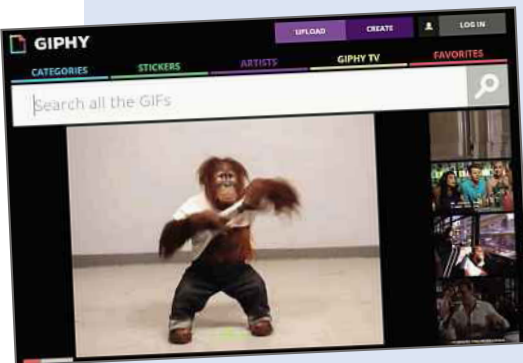
Here he is punching the air as Marge tells him that his new issue has just arrived. We've recreated the emotional moment as a GIF using Giphy's excellent new website. There are three ways to start: cut and paste the URL of a video; drag and drop videos from your Desktop; or search your PC for videos. Next, move the

sliders to edit the start time and duration, adding a caption if you wish.

For help, click the 'Wait, I'm confused. How do I use this thing?' link at the bottom. You'll learn how to add tags to your GIF, and how to make it private, so only you can see it. Make sure you scroll to the bottom of this instructions page for GIFs that Giphy hopes will inspire you – our favourite is the orangutan (see image left). If you think you can do better, create your own GIF using an issue of *Web User* and email it to webuser@dennis.co.uk.



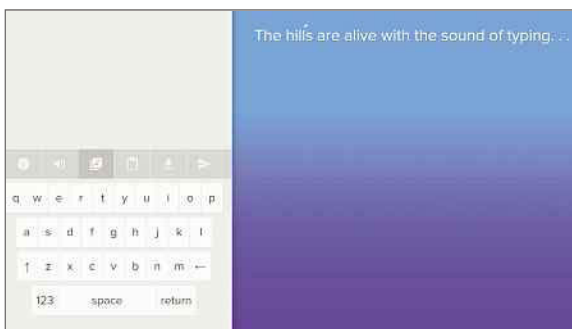
We'll feature the best in a forthcoming issue. giphy.com/create/gifmaker



Turn anything you type into music

www.typatone.com

No matter how rhythmically you type, your keyboard clicks will never sound musical. To hear what you're missing, visit Typatone, a Chrome Experiment that allocates a different musical note to each keyboard character. The more popular the character, the more melodic the note (so 'e' is soft and



soothing, while 'z' is high and piercing). When you've finished writing a phrase, click the musical quaver icon to play it. To

send it by email, or post it on Facebook or Twitter, click the envelope icon.

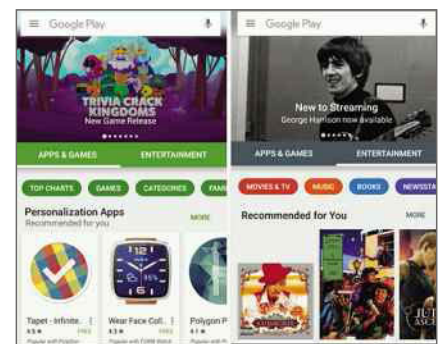
The programmer who created it, Jono Brandel, likes to mess around with keyboards. In 2014 he made the brilliant Patatap (www.patatap.com), which adds visual effects to everything you type.

Use the redesigned Google Play store

play.google.com

While we love Android apps, we've never liked how Google organises them on the Google Play store. So we're pleased that Google has simplified it, squeezing the six previous categories (Apps, Games, Movies & TV, Music, Books and Newsstand) into two tabs: Apps & Games and Entertainment. This helpfully separates apps, in the former, from music, TV, books and magazines in the latter.

Overall, the store feels fresher, cleaner and more modern, reflecting Google's influential 'Material' design (read the thinking behind it at bit.ly/design383). It has certainly come a long way from the early days of the Android Market (the Play store's original name), as this screen grab from 2009 shows (right).



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

Stream your games live online

bit.ly/tube383

If you're confident of a new top score in your favourite Android game, you can now impress your friends by streaming it live online. Install the YouTube Gaming app on your phone or tablet, get ready to play your game, then tap 'Go Live'.

You can read more on YouTube's blog: bit.ly/ytblog383.

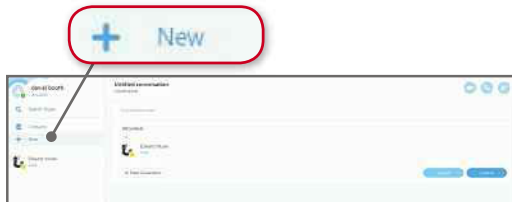


Chat in Skype by sharing a link

bit.ly/skype383

You can now chat to people in Skype without them needing an account or having to install software. Just send them a unique link by email, on Facebook and Twitter, or in a messaging service such as WhatsApp, and they can join the chat using 'Skype for Web' (<https://web.skype.com>) as a 'guest'.

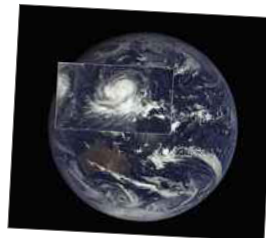
It works for Skype's 'group chat' option, which means that up to 25 people can join in by clicking the same link. Only the person launching the chat needs a Skype account. Click '+ New' in the left-hand menu to start.



See NASA's photos of Earth rotating

epic.gsfc.nasa.gov

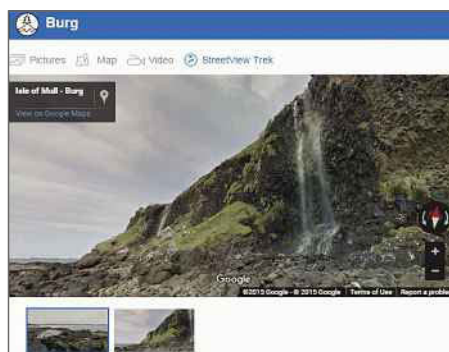
One million miles away in space sits NASA's DSCOVR satellite. Its main purpose is to analyse space weather, such as solar winds. But it also takes spectacular high-resolution photos of our planet using EPIC - the Earth Polychromatic Imaging Camera. A dozen of these will be displayed on NASA's new website, showing Earth as it rotates over a period of 24 hours. Hover your cursor over an area and click to magnify it, as we've done here with a storm circling menacingly in the Pacific.



Explore Scotland's natural beauty in Street View

www.nts.org.uk/treks

Simon Goodall has had one of the best jobs in Britain over the past few months. As The National Trust for Scotland's Wildlife Filming Editor, he strapped the Street View Trekker to his back and captured some of the country's most beautiful scenery. You can see what he saw on the Isle of Mull, Glencoe, Iona and 13 other locations.



5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER



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

Thoughts on gaming and links to new products from the London PC makers

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

News on guests and clips from the show, which is in the middle of a 10-episode return

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

Book-signing events and information on the latest titles

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

Tech opinion, blog posts and computing advice from our very own Roland Waddilove (see p66)

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

Ye olde screenshots of Nineties sites from the Wayback Machine

+ Access video-only feed on Facebook

bit.ly/face383

Facebook desperately wants you to watch more videos (and presumably more ads) on its site. To this end, it has launched a new video section that shows nothing but video.

Mute noisy Chrome tabs quickly

www.google.co.uk/chrome

Last year, Google added a speaker icon to noisy Chrome tabs, but said it wouldn't let you silence them. It's now had a change of heart. Next time you want to hush a tab, just right-click it, then click Mute Tab.

Read Apple News on iOS 9.1

www.apple.com/uk/ios

Apple's 9.1 update brings its News app to the UK (it was previously US-only). It brings together news from different sources, including the BBC, *The Week* and the *Daily Telegraph*. Read more on our sister website Alprh: bit.ly/apple383.

Need to Know

TalkTalk hack puts millions of customers' data at risk

What happened?

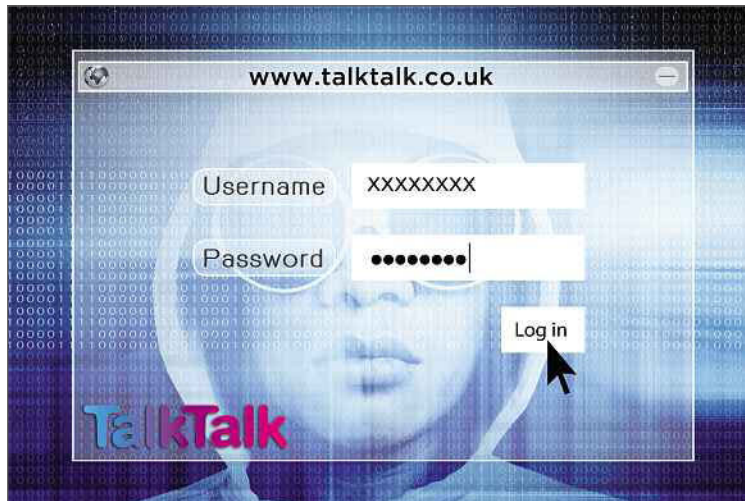
Millions of TalkTalk customers were forced to change their passwords after the ISP and mobile phone provider warned them that their data may have been accessed by criminals who hacked the company's website. After TalkTalk went public about the hack, it received a message from the purported hackers, demanding a ransom payment under threat of releasing the data online.

It's the third time this year that TalkTalk has been targeted by hackers, but this time it admitted that customer data including names, addresses and even payment info could have been compromised – and that some of it wasn't encrypted. However, TalkTalk said it doesn't store complete credit card details in the section that was breached, and that no passwords were stolen. The data taken "would on its own not enable a criminal to take money from your account," the company said, not very reassuringly.

As we went to press, the Metropolitan Police had arrested a 15-year-old Irish boy in relation to the hack.

How will it affect you?

It's not clear if data from all four million



your financial provider immediately. That way, you're more likely to be reimbursed for any losses. TalkTalk has already warned banks that its customers may be affected, and is also offering a free year of credit monitoring for all customers to help identify and prevent fraud. You can sign up for this at help2.talktalk.co.uk/oct22incident.

What do we think?

This attack is a major embarrassment for TalkTalk. If a technology giant can't protect itself against hackers, how can any other company be expected to? It's a good reminder that no security system is perfect, but we'd expect better from TalkTalk.

More positively, at least TalkTalk was quick to inform users of the hack. It noticed "unusual activity" on its website on 21 October, and almost immediately started warning customers, even though the company didn't have full information about who was affected. That at least gave us a chance to protect ourselves. Such disclosure is important from businesses, but not yet required in the UK, so it's good to see a major company bite the bullet and put its customers' safety before its reputation, and warn them as quickly as possible. We'd rather no data was leaked at all, but at least that's one thing TalkTalk got right.

That said, it's difficult to feel sympathy for TalkTalk given that this is its third hack of the year. It seems obvious that TalkTalk needed to do more after the first two incidents to improve the security of its systems. We await with interest the results of the Met investigation, as well as TalkTalk's own probe to find out whether this fiasco could have been avoided.

TalkTalk customers was taken – in fact it's not even clear what data was taken – and the company warned that even former customers might be affected.

This means that the only real response from customers is to be wary, and to change your TalkTalk password, especially if you use it on other sites. Be on the lookout for fake 'phishing' emails claiming to be from TalkTalk, but which are really from criminals looking to get your login details. Also be watchful of unsolicited phone calls from anyone claiming to be from TalkTalk or with enough information about you to seem official; they may well be criminals looking to get bank account information. TalkTalk stressed it will never call customers and ask for their passwords or personal details.

Of course, that advice holds true all the time. However, if you know anyone who is a TalkTalk customer, but isn't particularly web-savvy, it may be worth refreshing their memory about phishing threats and good online security to help keep them safe.

Another threat from so much leaked information is stolen identity. Criminals can take your name, address, and payment card details and rack up debt or set up new accounts. Keep an eye on your bank and credit-card accounts, and if any unexpected charges show up, call



TalkTalk is offering all worried customers a free year of credit monitoring

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

Google charges for ad-free YouTube

What happened?

Tired of waiting for ads to finish before YouTube videos start playing, but don't want to resort to using an ad blocker? Then you may be interested in Google's new subscription service for its video site, which is called YouTube Red. As well as removing all ads from the site, YouTube Red will let you download videos to your phone or tablet to view offline, and from next year the subscription service will also include members-only video content. Red has just launched in the US for \$9.99 a month, following a one-month free trial. No UK launch date has been announced, but Google plans to extend Red to other regions, and we're normally top of the list.

How will it affect you?

If you subscribe to Google Play Music, the tech giant's answer to Spotify, you're in luck, because a paid-for membership to the music-streaming service will give you a free subscription to YouTube

Red, and vice versa. That's not likely to replace the combination of Spotify and Netflix that many web-savvy streamers use to get their music and television, but for half the price of that combination, it's a fair deal.

What do we think?

Google missed the boat by not offering an ad-free, offline-access version of YouTube when Spotify first launched. Given the number of music videos on YouTube, it could have been a ready-made rival to the streaming service. Still, YouTube viewers will be eager to skip ads and get faster, uninterrupted access to videos.

Perhaps the smartest move is the inclusion of exclusive content from YouTube stars, many of whom have huge fan bases who will eagerly shell out for a subscription. Add in free Google Play Music, and it's a pretty good deal for YouTube addicts, although anyone who only views the odd video won't have much incentive to sign up.



Tesco stops making its Hudl tablet



What happened?

Tesco will no longer be selling its budget tablet, the Hudl – despite the glowing reviews the mobile device has received from tech websites and magazines (including this one), and its huge popularity. The first version of the Android tablet sold 750,000 units in its first year, and Tesco naturally followed that up with the equally popular Hudl 2 last year. Now, the retail giant has said it won't be making a Hudl 3, or restocking the Hudl 2.

Much of the appeal of the tablet laid in its great specifications for a bargain price. It cost £129, but by spending Clubcard points, you could knock the price down to a mere £65.

How will this affect you?

If you recently ordered a Hudl, don't worry: your tablet is on its way. But if you'd been planning to pick up a Hudl for a Christmas gift, act fast: a few last tablets have been spotted in some stores, but it's no longer for sale online.

If you already own a Hudl or Hudl 2, Tesco has reassured customers that it will continue to offer technical support should you have any problems. It's not clear if tablet owners can expect any updates to the software or the built-in Tesco apps, but other Android apps will naturally be updated as normal.

What do we think?

The demise of the Hudl is sad news, but it's no surprise given that tablet sales have been stagnating. That's not because we're bored of the devices, but because anyone who wants a tablet is likely to have one already – thanks in part to affordable options such as the Hudl. Unlike smartphones, tablets don't need replacing every year or two years. Regardless, we're sad to see a well-made, low-cost device disappear from the shelves. See our feature on page 38 for tips on keeping your phone and tablet running quickly.

TESCO

Facebook makes all public posts searchable

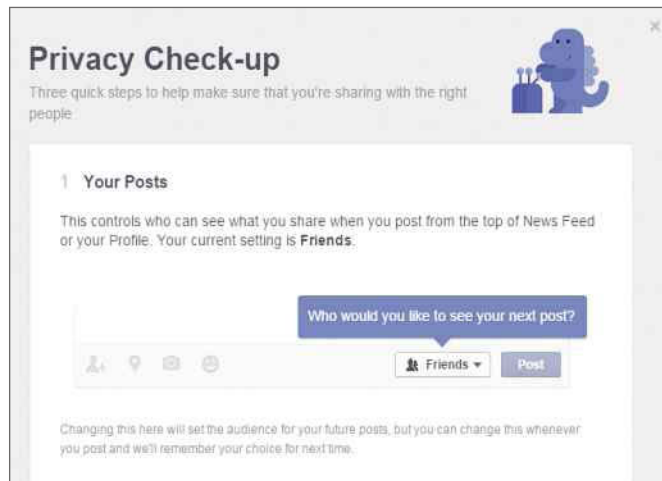
What happened?

Facebook introduced a new 'universal search' feature that lets you explore every public post on the social network – a total of more than two trillion pieces of content. Previously, if you typed something into Facebook's search box, you'd only see matches within your friends' posts and in posts on pages that you'd 'liked', but you'll now be able to see what everyone else is talking about, in real time.

"When something happens in the world, people often turn to Facebook to see how their friends and family are reacting," said Facebook's Vice President of Search, Tom Stocky, in a blog post (bit.ly/facebooksearch383). "Today, we're updating Facebook Search so that in addition to friends and family, you can find out what the world is saying about topics that matter to you."

How will it affect you?

When you search Facebook, you'll now see the most recent, relevant public posts along with posts from your friends. Unlike on Twitter, this won't simply be a jumble of content, but will prioritise results from reliable news



Run Facebook's Privacy Checkup tool to prevent your posts from appearing in searches

sources and popular links that have been 'liked' by a significant number of users.

That's the useful part, but – as with anything to do with Facebook – the big concern about universal search is privacy. Do you really want complete strangers to be able to see what you're saying about David Cameron, West Brom or Tesco's new Prosecco &



Elderberry crisps? You can prevent your posts from showing up in public searches by ensuring that your private settings are suitably locked down. The quickest way to do this is to click the padlock icon in the top-right corner and choose Privacy Checkup. This lets you decide exactly who can see your future posts – choose Friends to ensure content isn't publicly viewable. Sadly, past posts that Facebook has indexed will still appear in search results, unless you delete them manually.

What do we think?

Once again, Facebook has made a change that it claims will benefit users, but actually raises questions about its true intentions. After all, consider all the additional advertising opportunities that will be created by making two trillion posts searchable. We're pleased that Facebook has improved its search facility, which has until now been even more useless than Twitter's. However, it's another reminder that you need to keep a close eye on your privacy settings if you don't want to end up sharing more than you realise.



FIRST LOOK

Moov Now

£59

welcome.moov.cc

Moov Now is a fitness tracker with a difference. Technically, it's a simple, £59 device – one that uses accelerometers to track your motion, but does little else. There's no built-in heart-rate monitor or fancy altimeter, because its cleverness lies in its companion app and the algorithms that analyse the data from its motion sensor.

The app (which is available for iOS and Android) includes a selection of workouts that cover the full range of fitness activities, from interval running to cardio boxing, cycling and swimming. By firing up its 'Brisk walking' workout and plugging in a pair of headphones, it took us through

a series of power-walking intervals, providing audio encouragement as we went. The commentary let us know if we were keeping up with the target cadence or landing too heavily, but it was the data provided at the end of each workout that was truly remarkable.

After a walk or run, the app provides a summary of your cadence, an impact score (how hard your feet are hitting the floor), your average stride length (expressed as the angle of forward/backward leg swing), and a whole series of detailed pace, cadence, elevation, range-of-motion and impact graphs for you to analyse.

The Moov Now takes a similarly



detailed and motivational approach to most of the rest of its workouts, but one principal departure from this template is its swimming workout. Naturally, it lacks the audio encouragement provided by the app for other workouts, but after you've completed your swim and synced your Moov with the app, it offers a complete breakdown of every length of the pool, including times, stroke types and stroke rates. All in all, if you're looking for something to provide an extra boost of motivation and more impressive data than standard fitness trackers, Moov Now is the perfect exercise companion!



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will Firefox block adverts by default?

Since September, Mozilla has been testing an experimental new feature in the beta version of Firefox called Tracking Protection. Unlike standard private-browsing modes, which tend to conceal your history locally, this new tool actively blocks third-party page elements that are able to record users' browsing activity – a move that's set to banish adverts, analytics and user tracking.

Mark Mayo, the Senior Vice President of Mozilla, told our sister site Alphr that Tracking Protection "will not load third-party resources that we believe are at a high risk of enabling tracking of your online behaviour across independent sites, whether that's a transparent pixel, an ad banner, analytics or JavaScript."

From the perspective of user privacy, built-in tracking protection is a big step towards greater individual control over the web. Tracking Protection includes an educational tutorial about how parts of web pages may not work when content blocking is enabled, and gives you the option of controlling the level of blocking accordingly.

However, it's important to note that Tracking Protection will initially only be available when you're using Firefox's private-browsing mode. Mozilla has also



made clear that, unlike Adblock Plus, it has no plans to take money from companies in return for unblocking their content.

LIKELIHOOD RATING



We're all for protecting our privacy online, but we can't see all browsers blocking trackers by default without causing an outcry among advertisers. As a non-profit organisation, Mozilla can afford to take certain risks, but it shouldn't be forgotten that a lot of the company's funding comes from Google, whose whole business model is based on advertising.



WEBOMETER



WE LIKE...



Apple Music set to be launched on Android

Apple Music is expected to be released for Android devices very soon, after screenshots of the service were leaked by tech website Mobile Geeks. It's not yet known whether it will have the three-month free trial offered to iOS users.



Facebook vows to fix battery-drain problems

Facebook has promised to fix its iPhone app, after users complained that it used a disproportionate amount of battery life (see page 41). A Facebook engineer said that two major flaws had been identified and that an imminent update would resolve the problem.



WE DON'T LIKE...



Apple to remove hundreds of apps for stealing data

Apple has removed more than 250 apps from the iOS App Store for using an advertising software development kit that secretly gathered users' personal information. The affected apps were mainly in China and included the official McDonald's app for Chinese speakers.



A quarter of Brits don't have 'online skills'

New research has revealed that nearly one in four UK adults do not have basic online skills. The report also revealed that there are significant regional differences in digital knowledge, with Wales the least tech-savvy region.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

The Family Unit

bit.ly/family383 | From £119

It can be very frustrating when your family are more interested in their phones and tablets than in interacting with one another, not to mention the fight for the power socket when those gadgets need charging. The Family Unit solves both these problems by letting you store and charge up to four devices at once, out of sight and out of mind, so you can enjoy each other's company for a while. Simply place the phones and tablets in its lockable drawers and plug them in for an hour or so of cable-free charging and undistracted family time. The project hopes to raise £12,000 by 12 December.



Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Most Android devices exposed to critical vulnerabilities



According to research conducted by the University of Cambridge, 87% of Android devices are exposed to at least one known critical vulnerability. The new study found that Android devices receive, on average, 1.26 updates a year, which leaves them unprotected for long periods of time. It was also noted that an information asymmetry exists between manufacturers, who know whether devices are currently secure, and customers, who do not. However, not all Android manufacturers were found to be equally slow in rolling out security updates, with Google, LG and Motorola significantly outperforming Samsung, HTC and Asus.

bit.ly/android383

Facebook to warn users of government attacks

Facebook's Chief Security Officer, Alex Stamos, announced in a blog post last month that the social network would notify its users if it suspects they might have been victims of attacks carried out by nation states. In the article, Stamos said he could not reveal how Facebook can attribute certain attacks to suspected attackers, but those users whose accounts have been targeted or compromised will receive a notification advising them to switch on the site's Login Approvals from its Security Settings page. Once activated, this feature requires you to enter a unique code whenever you log into Facebook from an unrecognised device or browser. You need to list a mobile number on your account to turn on Login Approvals, because the codes are sent to your mobile phone via SMS.

bit.ly/facebook383



Hackers discover iOS and Android voice-recognition vulnerability

Radio waves can be used to silently trigger voice commands on Android phones and iPhones, according to a paper published by French researchers. Importantly, however, the attacks can only be carried out on devices that have microphone-enabled headphones connected, and Android devices must also be set to accept Google Now commands from the lockscreen. In its portable form, the equipment that enables the attacks only has a range of 6.5 feet and the researchers also noted that in the real world attentive users would probably notice the mysterious commands and cancel them before they could have the desired effect.

bit.ly/voice383



Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
David Emm, Principal Security Researcher at Kaspersky Lab
(www.kaspersky.co.uk)



Q As a TalkTalk customer, how worried should I be about the latest hack (news story, page 8)?

Ewan McLean, via email

A What is worrying is that this is the third time TalkTalk has been compromised this year, with no apparent changes

to their internal policies and security strategies. There's no such thing as 100% security, so it's not possible to guarantee that systems can't be breached. However, because of this, it's essential that online providers take steps to encrypt the data they hold. TalkTalk hasn't yet been able to quantify the scale of the breach, but any loss of data is a matter for serious concern for customers; and I believe that such repeated leakage of data represents a breach of trust. It is alarming if any data is not encrypted.

I would recommend that all TalkTalk customers take the opportunity to change their

passwords – including changing them on any other sites where the same password has been used. It's a concern that many people use the same password and personal details across multiple online accounts, meaning if their details have been compromised by one attack they could find other accounts suffer too.

Customers should also be cautious about any emails they receive purporting to be from TalkTalk. The hackers behind the attack may have already formulated phishing emails. I would caution against clicking links in emails you are unsure of – it's always better to type the

website address manually, to avoid the risk of being redirected to a phishing site. People should also be aware that scammers may also approach people via telephone, claiming to be from TalkTalk and requesting remote access to your computer. Do not give out any of your personal details, or access to your computer, to anyone.

Finally, concerned customers should keep a close check on personal bank accounts and report any suspicious activity to the bank and to Action Fraud (www.actionfraud.police.uk).

2014 BACK ISSUES DISC

The 2014 Back Issues Disc contains all 27 issues from last year, plus 6 free issues from January-March 2015!

Perfect, all the old mags in a simple-to-find order

★★★★★ Peter Brown

Great stuff, now I can clear my stack of old mags without loss of info

Colinz ★★★★★

Lots of interesting articles and tips

★★★★★ Bill Daniels 1973

Easy to navigate around and clears so much shelf space

JK ★★★★★



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WHSmith



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★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

TRAVEL

RELAUNCH

Ryanair

www.ryanair.com

It's fair to say that Ryanair's reputation hasn't always been sky high but its new website soars in the right direction. It's still in beta, but we were very impressed by the smart design and user-friendly booking system, which lets you select a country, airport, dates and the number of passengers without using your keyboard. You can now keep a closer eye on costs thanks to the clearer 'flight extras' page and improved Help section. Checking in online and printing your boarding pass is no longer a baffling ordeal and you can access your most recent searches from the homepage without needing to sign in. It's a run(a)way success!

Our rating



PLAN A TRIP

If you can't decide where to go, the Fare Finder suggests lots of cheap destinations

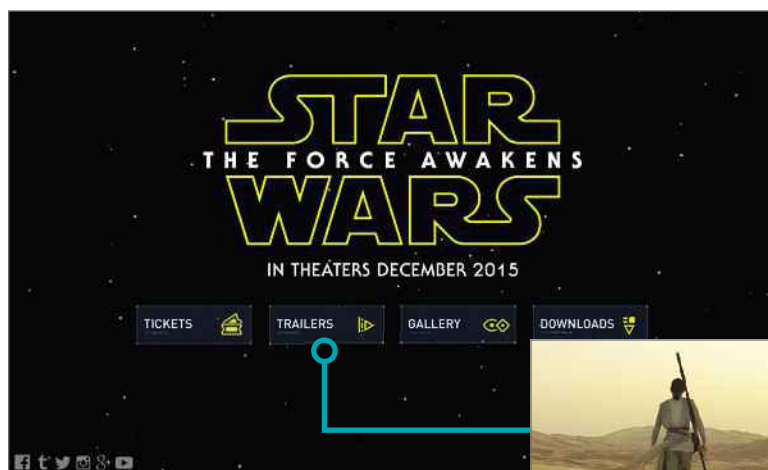
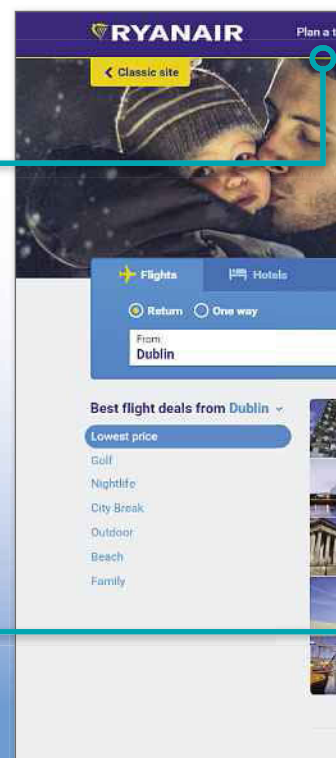
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Thu 22 Oct • Last update: 08:18 UTC • All displayed times are local airport times

From: Dublin To: All Airports Search

	All Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Flight No.	From	To	Departure	Arrival
FR 7124	Dublin	Lanzarote	06:10	18:30
FR 6875	Dublin	Barcelona	06:15	09:50

MANAGE TRIP

Get live flight information, manage your reservation and print your boarding pass



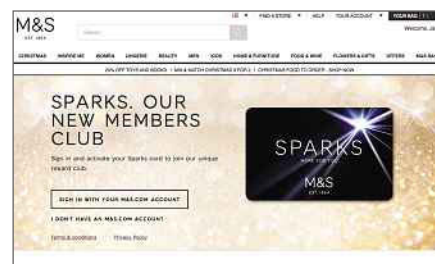
FILM

Star Wars: The Force Awakens

www.starwars.com/the-force-awakens

It's been 10 years since the last Star Wars movie was released on the big screen so it's no surprise that *Episode VII: The Force Awakens* is hotly anticipated. The film will be released on 18 December and this website teases fans with trailers, photos and wallpaper downloads, all of which can be selected via a swish revolving menu. The 'A long time ago' intro alone is enough to stir excitement and the huge, high quality videos gives you a closer look at characters old and new, but it's a shame there's no news, no stirring music, no interviews and no on-set gossip. Yet. You can also book cinema tickets through the site although only the IMAX link is of use to UK viewers.

Our rating



NEW

SHOPPING

Marks & Spencer Sparks

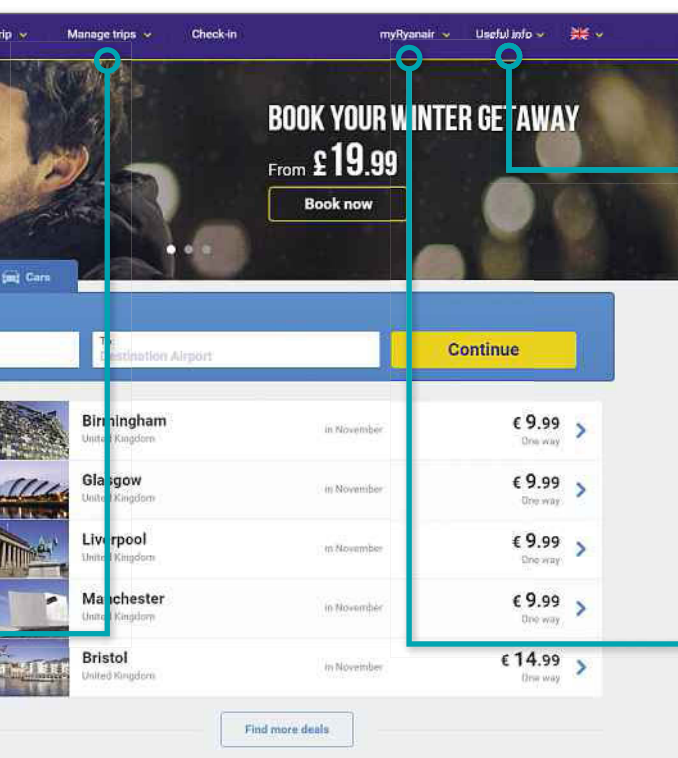
bit.ly/sparks383

Even if you only visit M&S to buy food and underwear, grabbing a new Sparks reward card may still be of interest. First, you need to pick up a card in-store and register it online. The site then lets you keep a check on your Sparks account while showing the offers currently available to you. Everything about the scheme is explained in detail and there's a full breakdown of how you can earn your 'sparks' (reward points) and the goodies you can expect to receive in return. The rewards have time limits, but you just click one to unlock it.

Our rating



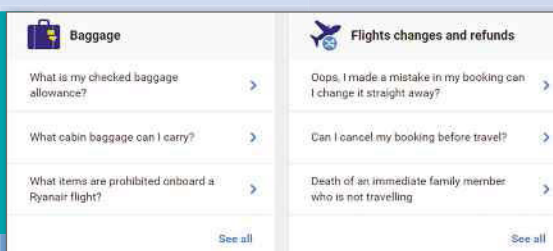
We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features



USEFUL INFO

View a route map of every destination Ryanair flies to in Europe and beyond

MY RYANAIR
Check your baggage allowance, get information about refunds and much more



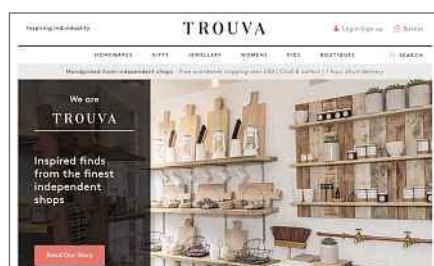
MOTORING

MOT History

mot-history.net

Do you often forget when your car is due for an MOT? Or perhaps you're buying a vehicle and want to know more about its history. With this great addition to the Gov.uk website, you can find this information in seconds. Just input the vehicle registration number and the make of the motor to see details of every MOT that the car has had. This includes the test date, the expiry date and the all-important result including any advisory notices. What's more, for MOTs after 1 August 2011, you can even view the mileage. It's a brilliant idea that could help to make our roads safer.

Our rating



SHOPPING

Trouva

www.trouva.com

Formerly called StreetHub, this website lets you support local businesses and still have the convenience of a large online store. At Trouva, you can find items at more than 350 independent shops, add them to a basket with a single click and have them delivered, in some cases (and areas) within the hour via Shutl. We like that you can buy items from different shops in one go (although they will be delivered separately by each retailer) and that Trouva promotes other goodies the businesses have to offer on each product page. It makes for a seamless and sophisticated shopping experience.

Our rating



FOOD

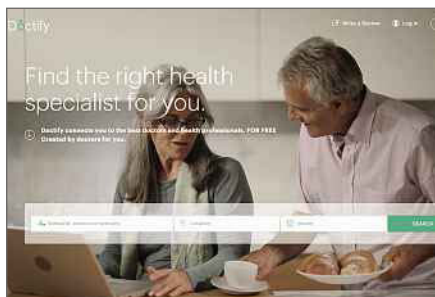
Yo! Sushi

yosushi.com

It may be a British restaurant chain, but there's no denying the Japanese influence on the design of this revamped website. The neon signs that litter the homepage evoke a Tokyo street and offer a stylish way to lure diners into finding out more about the company. Some elements are a bit fiddly – the icons for social media and YouTube are tiny – but the traditional menu bar in the top-right corner provides access to the important stuff. The menu is appetisingly presented with images of each dish and colour-coded bars to indicate the prices. It's certainly innovative. Kagayakashii!

Our rating





NEW

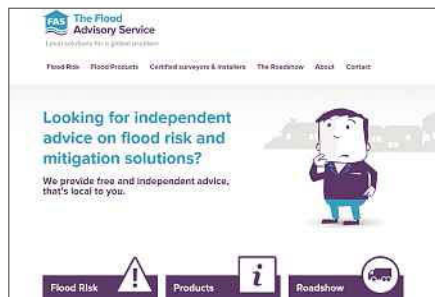
HEALTH

Doctify

www.doctify.co.uk

Whether you need a chiropodist, an osteopath or a urologist, Doctify finds you a private specialist in your area in seconds. The results are displayed in order of distance from your location, with accompanying maps; photos and biographies of each healthcare professional, including their qualification; and reviews from their patients. In many cases, it shows available appointments over the next few days, which you can book online or by phone. Doctify covers more than 3,200 specialists across 42 disciplines, although most are currently in London and the South East. Hopefully it will expand to the rest of the UK soon.

Our rating



NEW

ENVIRONMENT

The Flood Advisory Service

www.floodadvisoryservice.co.uk

The risk of flooding has increased in recent years, so this service has launched to provide free, independent advice about how to deal with it. Enter your postcode and click 'Find out my Flood Risk' to view a colour-coded map of your area highlighting the highest-risk places in red and medium-risk in orange. If you're concerned, you can ring the Advisory Service to discuss your flood-mitigation options; view its recommendations for protecting vulnerable parts of your property; and find local surveyors and installers. It's a friendly, easy-to-use site that saves you time, money and stress.

Our rating



NEW

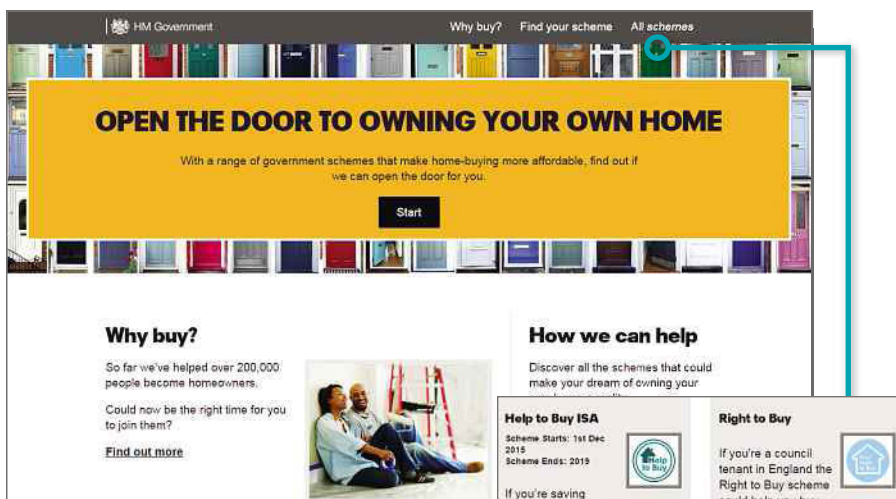
EDUCATION

Countryside Classroom

www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk

Launched by a partnership of various countryside organisations, this site hopes to educate schoolchildren about food, farming and the environment. Teachers can browse its huge collection of activity packs, information sheets and lesson plans, and download all the resources they need for their classes for free. There's also an excellent, searchable database of farms, green spaces and other places to visit, which you can filter by age, theme and curriculum subject; and a directory of individuals and organisations who offer learning support. Countryside Classroom is superbly presented and highly informative.

Our rating



NEW

PROPERTY

Own Your Home

www.ownyourhome.gov.uk

This government website wants to help "hardworking people" buy their own homes – but don't expect to leave with a mortgage and a set of front-door keys. It promotes government schemes such as Shared Ownership, Help to Buy ISA and Starter Homes, which may be well-intended but fail to solve the real problem of ridiculously inflated property prices. Also, we found that however we answered the site's questions regarding salary and status, it made essentially the same suggestions, without any specific advice tailored to our situation. Ultimately, it just sends you to the Money Advice Service to work out how much you can't afford.

Our rating



NEW

GIFTS

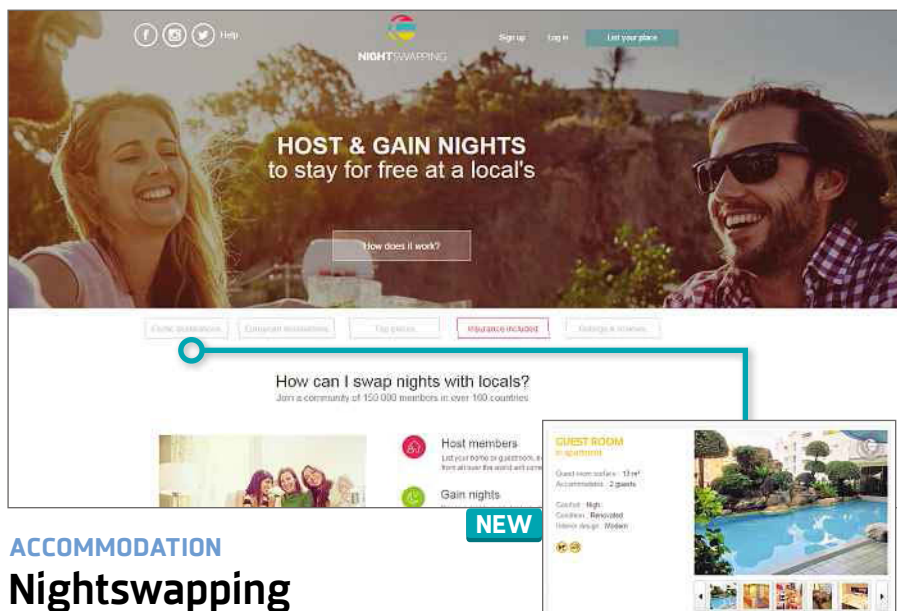
Brick or Potato

brickorpotato.com

As Christmas draws closer, it's time to decide what you're going to buy your friends and family: a brick or a potato? That's the big question at this bizarre site, which lets you post either item to someone, complete with a personal message, for £6.99 (including free delivery). Since potatoes and house bricks are both comparatively cheap, this sounds like a bit of a rip-off – like the café in East London that charges £4.40 for a bowl of cereal. However, the gifts are certainly unique and the dual choice makes this one of the simplest shopping sites we've ever seen, with some amusing testimonials from baffled recipients.

Our rating





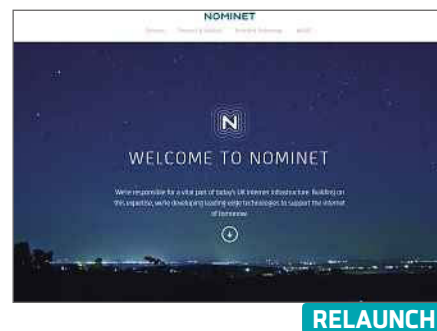
ACCOMMODATION

Nightswapping

nightswapping.com

Move over Airbnb, there's a new peer-to-peer accommodation service that doesn't charge a penny to guests or hosts. Let someone kip at your gaff to earn a free 'night' you can use to stay at another member's home. Alternatively, you can buy a night for between £5 and £36, although that rather defeats the object. The site already has over 30,000 rooms, flats and houses listed in 160 countries, which you can filter by date, number of guests and standard (rated from 1 to 7), and provides detailed descriptions and plenty of photos. Nightswapping vets all members and offers free home insurance if you're worried about burglars and vandals. So next time you're away, let your place for a day, then when you need a place to stay, you won't have to pay!

Our rating



TECHNOLOGY

Nominet

www.nominet.uk

Nominet may be the biggest domain-name registry in the UK, responsible for all '.uk', '.cymru' and '.wales' web addresses, but its revamped site is pleasantly restrained, if a little dull. Mostly, it consists of a lengthy homepage that presents facts about the company against different coloured backgrounds, which you click for information about domain names, DNS traffic and emerging technology. It's more of a corporate site than a consumer one, so much of the content is business-oriented, although there are a few interesting articles about topics such as the Internet of Things and an infrequently updated News section.

Our rating



+ ALSO NEW

TOURISM

Sheffield: The Outdoor City

www.theoutdoorcity.co.uk


Kudos to Sheffield for creating this smart, striking website to promote all the champion things to see, do and eat in the newly proclaimed 'Outdoor City'. The content is divided into four clear sections: Run, Walk, Climb and Ride; and each article provides all the information you need about that attraction or activity. Social-media content is seamlessly integrated, too.

ACCESSORIES

NameLabelsMagic

www.namelabelsmagic.co.uk


Buy personalised labels to stick on all your possessions from this colourful and friendly online store. You can browse the eclectic designs by size, shape, use (such as school or medical alert), dishwasher-resistant and washing machine-resistant, and design your labels online. Delivery is free on orders over £30, and takes 2-5 days.

HEALTH

How Young My Heart

www.heart-age.com


Based on a "clinically validated test", this is more an online survey than a proper estimate of your heart's 'real' age. Enter some personal details, such as your height and weight, any medical conditions, whether you smoke and your cholesterol level (if you know it) to view the result. Our heart is apparently eight years older than we are – eek!

PETS

Dog Charmed

dogcharmed.uk


Make your pooch look more fetching in a stylish paisley bandana or a tartan bowtie from this fun site, which sells a small, quirky selection of dog accessories. Dog Charmed even has its own in-house (or should that be in-kennel?) model – a miniature 'labradoodle' named Mabel. If you're not a fan of canine clothes, you can also purchase collars and leads.



WEBSITE SECRETS

Sing Rick Astley on an Apple Watch

It's at least four years since Rickrolling was last amusing, but that hasn't prevented Apple from paying tribute to Mr Astley and his most famous song on a support page for its smartwatch. To uncover this, go to the Use Digital Touch article on the Apple Watch Support site (bit.ly/watch383) and scroll down to the 'Add a Friend' section. Look carefully at the picture of the watch and you'll notice the letters 'NE VE RG ON NA GI VE YU UP' on its face, which it doesn't take a genius to decipher. Quite why Apple is referencing the Stock, Aitken and Waterman classic in this manner is a mystery! ■



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Free software to help you code

If you've ever considered learning how to program, you'll probably know that most web programming can be done using a text editor as basic as Windows Notepad. However, the majority of professionals usually use an IDE (Integrated Development Environment), a type of software tool that's a little like a text editor, but has a range of extra features. CodeLobster (www.codelobster.com) has just updated the free version of its PHP Edition IDE, which can help you create HTML, CSS, JavaScript and PHP files. It's ideal for people tinkering with WordPress (wordpress.org), which uses a lot of PHP behind the scenes, but it marks up and validates JavaScript and the other web standards just as well.

What else are your visitors into?

You should never run out of things to put on your website, especially if you use a tool like Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics) to work out what your site's most popular pages are. However, you can also use it to find out what else your visitors are interested in. From the menu, click Audience, Interests and Overview. Affinity is where you'll find the broad interest categories your readers fall into, In-Market is what they tend to buy and Other drills down to their actual interests. Click on each category heading to see more results.

Deal of the Fortnight

Namecheap (www.namecheap.com) is living up to its name by registering .XYZ domains for £1.12 for the first year.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Fraser Boag, Senior Front End Developer, Easyspace (www.easyspace.com)



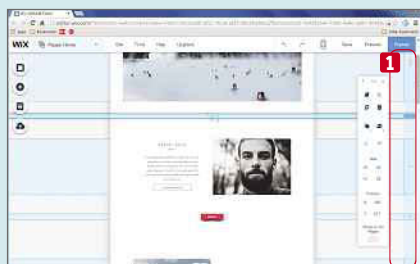
Q Can you recommend a good gallery for displaying photos on a standard website that's been built from scratch using HTML?
Colin, Web User Forums

A There are loads of options online for displaying images on your website, and the best one to choose really depends on your needs. The best moving image gallery I've found is Slick (bit.ly/slick383). It's easy to integrate, comes with loads of options and layouts, and is fully mobile responsive. If, instead of scrolling through a handful of images, you want to lay out a lot of images in a flexible grid, you may want to look into something like Masonry JS (masonry.desandro.com) which is an effective way of showing lots of differently sized elements in a smooth, seamless layout.

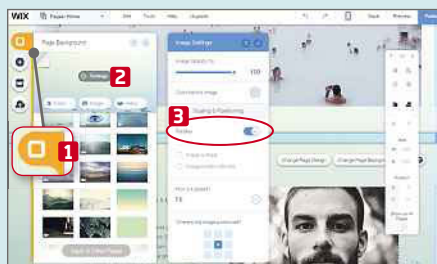


MINI WORKSHOP | Give your website background effects with Wix's site-building tool
Wix: www.wix.com |  10 mins | Any browser

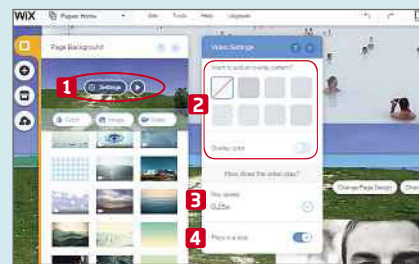
Wix's free web-building tool is a simple way to make a HTML5 website. Version 3.0 of the browser-based software includes some great new tools to help you build modern-looking, vertically-scrolling sites



1 Your site can easily be designed using the latest trend for horizontal panels, which are organised using the blue bars on the right. **1** When designing, drop new elements to existing strips or create new ones by dropping them between existing bars. Drag and drop the bars to zoom out and rearrange your site.



2 These panels can be set to do a parallax scroll, which is when foreground items scroll faster than the background, to give an impression of depth. To switch this on click Background **1** and make sure you have a still image selected. Click the Settings button **2** in the preview area and flick the Parallax switch to 'on'. **3**



3 You can now also have a video as a background, using either one of Wix's free videos or uploading your own (must be less than 50MB). You can access the Settings from the button on the preview, **1** add an overlay pattern or colour **2** to push the video into the background, adjust the play speed, **3** or loop the video if necessary. **4**



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Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

Smartwatches

Is it time you got a smartwatch? **Andy Shaw** looks at the latest wearable technology to find a watch that's worth wrapping around your wrist

We still haven't made up our minds about smartwatches. Are they just expensive and superfluous phone accessories; or indispensable gadgets offering an at-a-glance view of your digital world, with vital health-monitoring tools to keep track of everything from your movement to your heartbeat? They certainly put an end to the frantic search through your bag and pockets when you receive a phone call. In this issue, we've rounded up 10 of the best available models and provided full reviews of our top six.

HOW WE TESTED

We paired each watch with an appropriate phone and used it as we worked and played, performing activities to test their fitness-tracking, local-search, navigation and communication tools. We also monitored the battery life using a standard test,

setting each watch up to receive regular notifications, analysing how much charge was used over a five-hour period, then extrapolating the battery life from there. We also tested screen brightness using a colorimeter.

LG Watch Urbane | **£224** | www.amazon.co.uk

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

Given that Apple's watch has a square face, it's a pleasant surprise that so many Android Wear manufacturers have gone for a more traditional round face. This LG model is a good example and, although it's thicker and heavier than most normal watches, it still manages to look like the kind of thing that someone might actually wear on their wrist.

The 1.3in screen has a resolution of 320 x 320 pixels and is very sharp. Its colours are rich and blacks look suitably black, though it's hard to read in direct sunlight. Otherwise, browsing notifications, swiping through Google Now cards and navigating maps is a pleasure.

Inside, it contains a decent photoplethysmographic (PPG) heart-rate monitor which, in conjunction with LG's Pulse app, gives decent results. It's good at counting steps but you wouldn't want to go swimming in it, so if you're serious about fitness monitoring, look elsewhere. In all other respects, it's the best Android Wear device we've seen, and brilliantly showcases its wearable operating system's tools. After using it for a day or so, the flicks and taps to view and dismiss notifications, launch apps and flick through Google Now cards had become second nature.

You can top up the built-in app selection with

your own fitness apps or must-haves, such as Wunderlist and ViewRanger, to make it an ideal companion to your smartphone. You can respond to texts and emails using your voice, ready-made replies and hand-drawn emoji, and LG's microphone handles voice recognition flawlessly. New actions let you scroll through notifications with a flick of your wrist, and these work reliably when you haven't got a free hand.

The Watch Urbane's Snapdragon 400 processor and 512MB of memory make its performance impeccable, and it is well-equipped to cope with future Android Wear updates. Even its battery life is excellent: we couldn't quibble with the predicted battery life of 60 hours, which is about as good as Android Wear devices get.



VERDICT

★★★★★

This is our favourite Android smartwatch. It looks good, is simple to operate and has a good screen (as long as you stay out of direct sunlight). It doesn't have the full range of fitness tools, which might put you off if you specifically want to track your heartbeat or wear it while you're swimming, for example. But as a smartphone companion, we found it ideal. However, it won't pair with Apple devices, so iPhone users will still need to plump for the Apple Watch instead.

Apple Watch Sport | £299 | www.apple.com/uk

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



The Sport may be the cheapest of Apple's smartwatch range, with the smaller 38mm model priced at £299 and the larger 42mm at £339, but that's still more expensive than all the alternatives we've reviewed here. Not only that but its battery life is disappointing (lasting 33 hours, the second-lowest result in our tests), it doesn't have built-in GPS and it isn't as accurate at measuring heart-rate or steps.

However, it still wins our Silver Award thanks to its hardware design, which is extremely light and comfortable to wear, and features the best physical feedback – a simple tap to get your attention rather than the buzzing of the other devices.

The software is also brilliant, with more apps available than the Android devices and a wonderful interface that's easier to use and much better than Android's.

VERDICT

★★★★☆

Whether you get an Apple Watch depends on whether you have an iPhone to connect it to. It falls short on some key aspects, such as battery life, but it makes up for this with great design, and the best hardware and software by far.

Sony SmartWatch 3 | £113 | www.amazon.co.uk

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



The Sony SmartWatch isn't the classiest-looking device we tested, but it's far and away the best value and provides an affordable route to jumping on the smartwatch bandwagon.

Some features have been sacrificed to keep the cost low. It still has GPS, which is great for navigating with Google's maps, but it doesn't have heart-rate monitoring, so isn't as useful for fitness enthusiasts. The 320 x 320 pixels, 1.6in touchscreen is adequate and works well in bright light, but it doesn't have the colour quality of its more expensive rivals.

However, the watch is slick and snappy to use, and works well with Android Wear. The battery life isn't bad, either, lasting 52 hours in our tests, which means you can use it for a couple of days before you need to charge it.

VERDICT

★★★★☆

Sony's SmartWatch compromises some features, but if you're not in it for the fitness, we think it's worth the sacrifice. The screen isn't as bright but it works perfectly well, and it's superb value for money if you want a budget option.

Asus ZenWatch | £175 | www.pcworld.co.uk | ★★★★★

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



This watch's leather strap and silvery case give it a classic design that's slim and comfortable to wear. The screen is bright and clear, and has a built-in heart rate monitor, though it's not an ideal sports watch. However, it's let down by its battery life, which lasted only 30 hours in our test, so you'll need to charge it every day.

VERDICT

A good-looking watch with lots of features that's let down by scoring lowest in our battery-life test.

Garmin Vivoactive | £163 | www.amazon.co.uk | ★★★★★

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



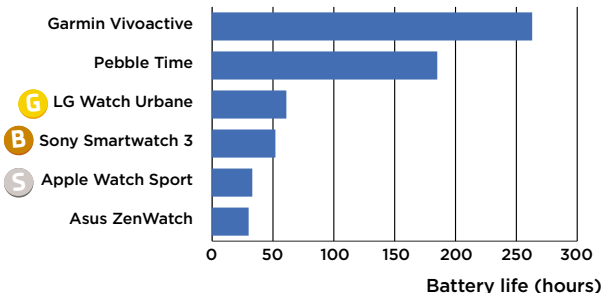
The Vivoactive is more a fitness accessory than a smartwatch, but if that's what you're looking for, it's second to none. Its battery lasted for 10 days in our tests, which is the best in this group by far. It tracks your route and measures your steps, speed and calories burned, but you need an optional chest strap to record heart rate. Smart functions are limited to notifications, so you still need to take out your phone to respond to emails.

VERDICT

A so-so smartwatch with great battery life and top fitness tools for sports enthusiasts.

TEST-RESULTS CHARTS

Battery life (hours)



Pebble Time | £180 | www.firebox.com | ★★★★★

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



This solid but inelegant watch isn't the most stylish in our test but it works like a dream. There's no touchscreen but its three buttons perform all its functions, and its own range of Pebble apps work with both Android and iOS phones. The battery lasted 185 hours (over a week) in our tests, so while it doesn't have the sophistication of Apple and Android watches, at least it doesn't need charging every night.

VERDICT

This isn't the most elegant smartwatch, but it's fun and the battery life is superb.



Group Test Smartwatches



	LG Watch Urbane	Apple Watch Sport	Sony SmartWatch 3	Asus ZenWatch	Garmin Vivoactive	Pebble Time
WEBSITE	www.lg.com/uk	www.apple.com/uk	www.sonymobile.com	www.asus.com	www.garmin.com/en-GB	www.getpebble.com
PRICE	£224	£299	£113	£175	£163	£180
BUY FROM	www.amazon.co.uk	www.apple.com/uk	www.amazon.co.uk	www.pcworld.co.uk	www.amazon.co.uk	www.firebox.com
DISPLAY SIZE	1.3in (round)	1.5in (square)	1.6in (square)	1.63in (square)	1.13in (square)	1.25in (square)
DISPLAY RESOLUTION (PIXELS) / PANEL TYPE	320 x 320 P-OLED	340 x 272 AMOLED	320 x 320 transfective TFT	320 x 320 AMOLED	205 x 148 transfective TFT	168 x 144 LTPS
GLASS TYPE	Gorilla Glass 3	Ion-X	Hardened	Gorilla Glass 3	Hardened	Gorilla Glass 3
OS	Android Wear 5.1	watchOS 1.0.1	Android Wear 5.1	Android Wear 5.1	Proprietary	PebbleOS 3
RAM/STORAGE	512MB/4GB	512MB/8GB	512MB/4GB	512MB/4GB	Not specified	256KB/1MB
WI-FI/BLUETOOTH	✗ / 4.1	802.11n/4	802.11n/4	✗ / 4	✗ / 4	✗ / 4
CHARGING PORT	Cradle	Magnetic USB	micro-USB	Cradle	Cradle	Magnetic cable
WATER RESISTANCE (IP RATING)	IP67	IPX7	IP68	IP55	5ATM	No (30m)
COMPATIBILITY	Android 4.3+	iOS 8.2+	Android 4.3+	Android 4.3+	iOS 8+; Android 4.3+	iOS 8+; Android 4+
HEART-RATE SENSOR	PPG	PPG and infrared	✗	Biosensor	✗	✗
GPS/COMPASS	✗ / ✗	✗ / ✗	✓ / ✓	✗ / ✗	✓ / ✓	✗ / ✗
ACCELEROMETER	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MESSAGE/EVENT NOTIFICATIONS	✓ / ✓	✓ / ✓	✓ / ✓	✓ / ✓	✓ / ✓	✓ / ✓
CALL SCREENING/VOICE CALLS	✓ / ✓	✓ / ✓	✓ / ✓	✓ / ✓	✗ / ✗	✓ / ✗
VOICE CONTROLS/MESSAGE DICTATION	✓ / ✓	✓ / ✓	✓ / ✓	✓ / ✓	✗ / ✗	✗ / ✓
TURN-BY-TURN NAVIGATION	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
DIMENSIONS	52 x 46 x 11mm	39 x 33 x 10.5mm	51 x 36 x 10mm	51 x 40 x 9.4mm	44 x 39 x 8mm	41 x 38 x 9.5mm
WEIGHT	67g	25g (without strap)	74g	75g	38g	43g
WARRANTY	1 year RTB	1 year RTB	1 year RTB	1 year RTB	1 year RTB	1 year RTB

ALSO TESTED

Acer Liquid Leap ★★☆☆☆ (£65, www.acer.co.uk) | Fitbit Surge ★★☆☆☆ (£174, www.fitbit.com) | Microsoft Band ★★☆☆☆ (£160, www.microsoft.com) | Motorola Moto 360 ★★☆☆☆ (£250, www.motorola.co.uk)

OUR VERDICT

Which of our top three smartwatches you plump for is partially dependent on your phone. If you own an Apple device, you'll have to go for our Silver Award-winner, whereas Android users have a couple of choices depending on how much they're prepared to pay.

Our Gold Award goes to the LG Watch Urbane, which is the best Android Wear watch we've seen to date, matching plenty of health and fitness tools with the full range

of options for smartphone assistance.

Apple users who can ignore the eye-watering price will be impressed with the Silver Award-winning Apple Watch, though having to charge it daily is a big drawback.

Sony's SmartWatch wins our Bronze Award. It's not the most stylish of smartwatches, and it lacks some of the fitness-tracking features, but it offers superb value for money. ■



WebUser
GOLD
AWARD

Google Chromecast Audio

Google's new audio streamer gives music lovers a touch of Chromecast magic. **Jonathan Bray** has a listen



We love Google's Chromecast, but while it's great for streaming video through a TV, it's not the best for audio, because it needs a screen to operate and lacks key services such as Spotify. The new Chromecast Audio aims to rectify this by wirelessly connecting your phone, tablet or laptop to your speakers. The cherry on top is – at last – official Spotify support on iOS and Android devices.

The Chromecast Audio is an unassuming plastic puck, measuring 52mm and weighing next to nothing. It's powered via micro-USB, and comes with a power supply and cable. The difference between this and a standard Chromecast is that instead of an HDMI output, it uses a 3.5mm jack to connect directly to active speakers, or via an amplifier to your passive speakers using a 3.5mm-to-RCA converter cable. The 3.5mm jack can also emit an optical signal, for use with a good quality DAC (Digital to Analogue Converter) or a home-theatre receiver.

Setup and streaming

Setting it up is a doddle. Point any browser at the Chromecast setup URL,

download the app, and you'll be walked through the process, step by step. The only fiddly part is entering your Wi-Fi details but, after this, you're returned to the main screen of the Chromecast app (available on both iOS and Android) and can stream audio from any cast-compatible device directly to your speakers.

As with the standard Chromecast, the dongle doesn't stream music from your phone, but directly from an associated music service. Your mobile device is used primarily as a remote control, so listening quality is maximised and battery life doesn't suffer. It works beautifully with Spotify, although BBC iPlayer Radio doesn't yet have built-in cast

support, which is "coming soon". However, there is a workaround: on Android devices, you can stream the audio from any app, video player or website by mirroring the sound from your device.

It coped beautifully with everything we threw at it, from Mozart's *Requiem* through Aphex Twin's *Drukqs* and Go Go Penguin's effervescent jazz electronica. You can't ask for much better than this for £30.

Wi-Fi connectivity

The Wi-Fi performance (which supports dual-band 802.11ac) was also excellent. We set up the Chromecast Audio in a particularly tricky spot in our test house, where laptops and phones often struggle for Wi-Fi

connectivity, and had no problem at all connecting.

The only critical thing missing from the Chromecast Audio's arsenal is a multiroom facility, which Google is promising to add via a firmware update later this year. Once that's sorted, this £30 plastic puck will be hard to beat.

PRODUCT INFO

Chromecast Audio

bit.ly/audio383

Price: £30

SPECIFICATIONS

- 3.5mm jack with analogue and optical digital-audio output
- Micro-USB port for power
- 802.11ac Wi-Fi (2.4GHz or 5GHz)
- 52 x 52 x 13.5mm
- 146mm audio cable
- 1.75m power cable
- 31g
- Supports Android 4.1+, iOS 7.0+, Windows 7+, Mac OS 10.7+, Chrome OS (on a Chromebook running Chrome 28+)

FOR

- ✓ Easy to set up and use
- ✓ Better sound and easier on battery-life than Bluetooth
- ✓ Great price

AGAINST

- ✗ Some content (such as BBC radio) isn't supported

OUR VERDICT



There are plenty of devices around that let you stream music to your existing speakers, but the new Chromecast Audio is one of the best. It's easy to use and offers superb sound quality, letting you use your phone as a remote control and providing a direct connection to streaming services via Wi-Fi.

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

For just £30, we think it's an essential device for music lovers who want to play their music library through their best speakers.



Web User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE

SMARTWATCH

LG Watch Urbane

£224 from www.amazon.co.uk

Date tested: November 2015



The LG Watch Urbane looks good, is simple to operate and has a great screen (if you stay out of direct sunlight). It doesn't have the full range of fitness tools, but it's ideal as a smartphone companion. It won't pair with an iPhone, though.

KEY SPECS

Android Wear 5.1 ■ Gorilla Glass 3 ■ 1.3in circular display ■ 320 x 320-pixels resolution ■ 512MB memory ■ 4GB storage ■ Bluetooth ■ 52 x 46 x 11mm ■ 67g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

MULTI-DEVICE CHARGER

Griffin PowerDock 5

£79.95 from www.johnlewis.com

Date tested: September 2015



Griffin's PowerDock 5 lets you charge a whole household's worth of mobile devices at one time, supplying plenty of power across all five of its USB ports. It doesn't matter whether you've got five tablets or five phones, they'll all sit nicely in this dock, although you'll need to make sure that the cables don't get tangled.

KEY SPECS

Supports five USB devices ■ 2.1A output on each port ■ 200 x 130 x 80mm ■ 340g

WINDOWS 10 PC

PC Specialist Evora

£559 from www.pcspecialist.co.uk

Date tested: September 2015



This is more of a workaday PC than an all-out powerhouse, but it's cheaper than other Windows 10 PCs and its impressive gaming performance gives it lots of potential as an all-round family computer.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 3.2GHz Intel Core i5-4460 processor ■ 8GB of memory ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 120GB SSD ■ 2 x USB 3, 6 x USB 2 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet ■ 477 x 450 x 190mm ■ Three-years return-to-base warranty including one-year parts

WI-FI EXTENDER

Netgear Nighthawk AC1900 Extender

£130 from www.broadbandbuyer.co.uk

Date tested: July 2015



The Netgear Nighthawk is pricey, but it's also fast, powerful and built to last. Its advanced tools will be compatible with future Wi-Fi standards and it provides excellent performance.

KEY SPECS

AC1900 Wi-Fi ■ Dual-band ■ 5 x Gigabit Ethernet ports ■ USB 3 ■ WPA and WPA2 security ■ DLNA server ■ 252 x 174 x 31mm ■ Two-years return-to-base warranty

NETWORK CAMERA

Y-cam HomeMonitor HD

£150 from www.homemonitor.me

Date tested: June 2015



The Y-cam HomeMonitor HD will save you money in the long run if you want to save captured motion-detected footage online. Its free online storage option supports a wide range of devices.

KEY SPECS

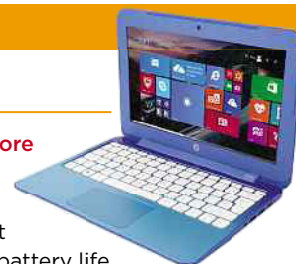
Apps for Android, iOS, Windows Phone, Roku ■ 1/4in CMOS sensor ■ Viewing angle: horizontal 80°, vertical 45°, diagonal 87° ■ 1,280 x 720 pixels resolution ■ 15fps frame rate ■ Ethernet and 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 85 x 85 x 30mm ■ 1150g

BUDGET LAPTOP

HP Stream 11

£179.99 from 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

SOFTWARE & SERVICES

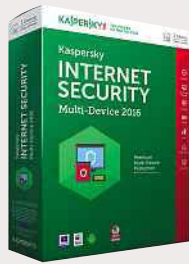
INTERNET SECURITY

Kaspersky Internet Security 2016

£19.99 from bit.ly/kaspoffer2016

Date tested: June 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 £19.99 (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 ■ Compatible with Windows 10

PHOTO EDITING

Adobe Photoshop Elements 13

£81.08 from

www.adobe.com/uk

Date tested: December 2014

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

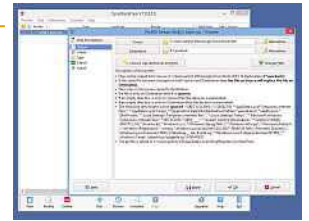
BACKUP AND SYNC

SyncBackFree

Free from 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

VIDEO EDITING

Adobe Premiere Elements 13

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk

Date tested: December 2014

Premiere Elements 13's superb interface makes its many features neat but accessible. You won't find better 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 ■ Motion tracking ■ Musical scores and sound effects ■ Upload to YouTube and Vimeo

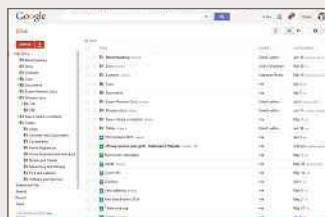
ONLINE STORAGE

Google Drive

From free from drive.google.com

Date tested: August 2014

Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software 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

ONLINE SITE BUILDER

Weebly

From free from www.weebly.com

Date tested: May 2014

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



KEY FEATURES

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

↓ Best Free Software

SYSTEM CLEANER

WinUtilities Free 12

but.ly/win383

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 6.1MB

WinUtilities is a comprehensive all-in-one system-cleaning and optimisation suite that offers 26 powerful free tools to boost the performance of your PC. These include a disk cleaner, Registry cleaner, shortcuts fixer and uninstaller, as well as drive and Registry defragmenters, a memory optimiser and a startup cleaner. The various modules are sorted into categories including Clean Up & Repair, Optimise & Improve and Privacy & Security. Launching any tool opens it in a separate window but, if you prefer, you can see all the modules on a single screen by clicking the Full Mode link at the bottom.

As well as various individual tools, WinUtilities offers a 1-Click Maintenance section that lets you choose which areas to target and what actions to take after the cleaning has finished, such as turning off or restarting your PC. You can also schedule a 1-Click Maintenance session to take place when you're not using your PC, and schedule other tasks to run, too, including Disk Cleaner,



History Cleaner, Registry Cleaner and Disk Defrag. Each can be set to run at a different time, date and frequency.

The latest version of the program keeps the same interface as the previous release, with improvements focusing mainly on the software's cleaning ability. It can now clean up the cache, session and internet history for

both Microsoft Edge and Google Chrome, and delete Windows event reports. The Process Security database has been updated and various bugs have been fixed to make it work more smoothly.

You can currently upgrade to the paid-for Pro version for \$20 (£14.67) to get enhanced versions of some tools.



MINI WORKSHOP | Speed up your PC using WinUtilities Free



1 The Modules tab **1** in WinUtilities provides instant access to all its main tools. Disk Cleaner can remove junk files and invalid entries, and uses a wizard-based interface. Click the Scan Now button, **2** then select the drives to target. Once the scan has completed (it only takes a few seconds), you can view the results and select the cleaning options.

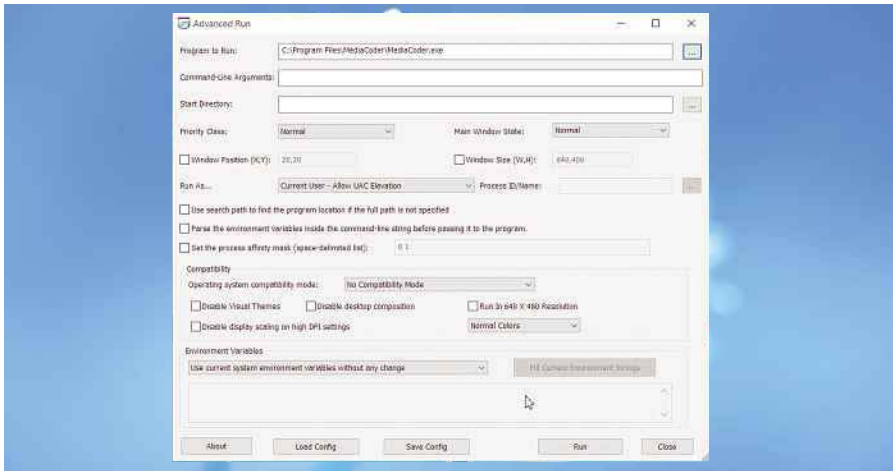


2 Optimise & Improve **1** is home to the Registry and disk-defrag tools (these should only be used occasionally) as well as the memory optimiser. The BHO Remover **2** gets rid of unwanted browser add-ons but, disappointingly, only from Internet Explorer. You can prevent unwanted programs from loading alongside Windows using the Startup Cleaner. **3**



3 The 1-Click Maintenance section **1** lets you choose which areas to target. The default selection is very thorough, but you can remove any maintenance to areas you don't require, and also add the options for disk and Registry defrag. **2** Click the orange Run 1-Click Maintenance button **3** to begin the cleaning process.

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



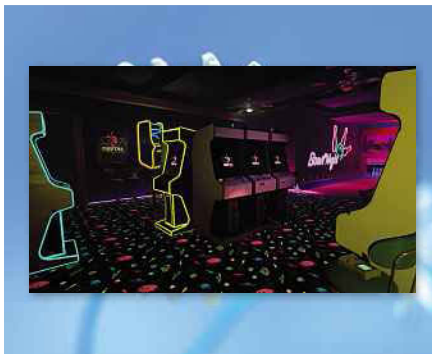
SYSTEM TOOL

Advanced Run

nirsoft.net

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 65.4KB

NirSoft's latest free tool lets you manage how a program runs. Specify the priority (low or high), start directory and main window state (minimised or maximised), and set user permissions, Windows compatibility settings, environment variables and more. Then save your preferences as a configuration file to run the customised program automatically from the command line. Advanced Run looks complicated, but you just choose the settings you require and ignore everything else.



VIRTUAL ARCADE

NewRetroArcade 4

www.digitalcybercherries.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 217MB

Relive your youth with this virtual arcade that lets you play classic games on your PC. Setting it up isn't particular easy, and you'll need to browse the read-me files to work out what you need to do. When you first run the game, you'll be prompted to download a game pack, which makes the games in your arcade playable. The arcade also works in virtual-reality devices such as Oculus VR, if you can afford to buy one!



VIDEO TOOL

SmoothVideo Project (SVP) 4

www.svp-team.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 or Mac OS X

File size: 9.5MB

SVP improves video playback on your PC by using frame interpolation - a technology used by high-end TVs and projectors. It works by generating intermediate frames between existing ones to increase the frame rate, and is compatible with any media player. SVP automatically selects the best correct video-profile settings; you then adjust the results for performance and quality.

New Windows Apps

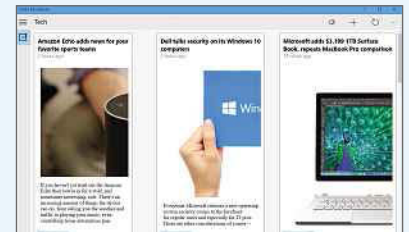
Smart RSS Reader

bit.ly/smartrss383

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 21.7MB

This news-reader app has been designed specifically for Windows 10 and instantly alerts you to the latest stories. You can add feeds, categorise them and share content with friends.



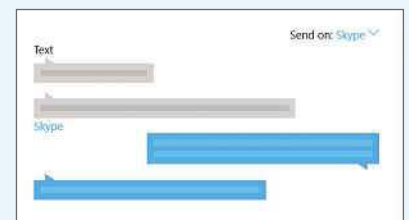
Microsoft Messaging

bit.ly/msmessage383

Min requirements: Windows 8+/10

File size: 48.3MB

This basic messaging tool from Microsoft looks a bit unfinished. It aims to bring all your text messages together in the one place and requires a Skype account to use.



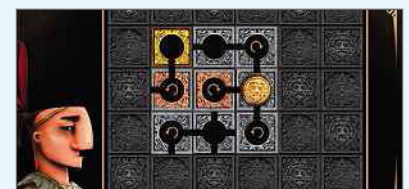
IQ Mission 2

bit.ly/iq383

Min requirements: Windows 8+/10

File size: 30.5MB

In this fun puzzle game, there are three cities to visit - Tokyo, Barcelona, and the Mayan city of Tikal - with different puzzles to solve in each. The game offers in-app purchases.



MEDIA PLAYER

Zoom Player 11

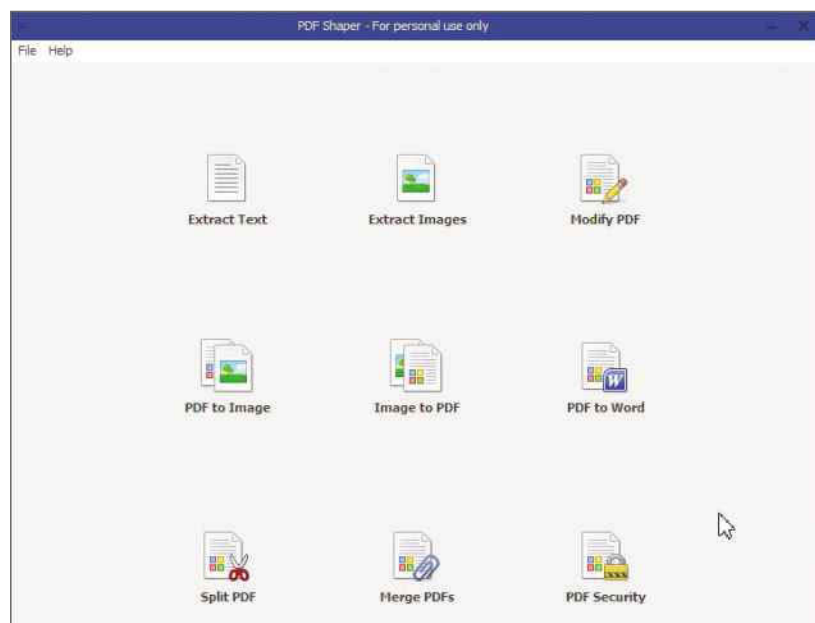
www.inmatrix.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 19.2MB

If you're after an alternative media player, this free program can handle most common audio and video formats and DVDs, and includes a file browser, playlist editor, audio equaliser, bookmarks, play history and colour controls. The latest version starts up much faster and the default skins have been tweaked to make it easier to use. The media library has been redesigned with a new default thumbnail view, and the program is now better at grabbing media information from the web.

Once Zoom Player is installed, you can tailor the player for use on different devices, with options including PC, Home Theatre PC (HTPC) and Tablet.



PDF TOOLKIT

PDF Shaper 4

www.glorylogic.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 8.5MB

PDF Shaper is a free collection of tools that lets you perform various actions with PDF files, including splitting, merging and encrypting or decrypting them; extracting text and pictures; and converting images to the format. The latest version has a new user interface and menus to make it even easier to use, and there's support for additional image formats including EMF, WMF and TIFF. The program's performance and its compatibility with Windows 10 have been improved, and new options for image alignments have been added.

Make sure you pay careful attention while you're installing the program to decline any unwanted bundled extras.

FIREFOX CUSTOMISER

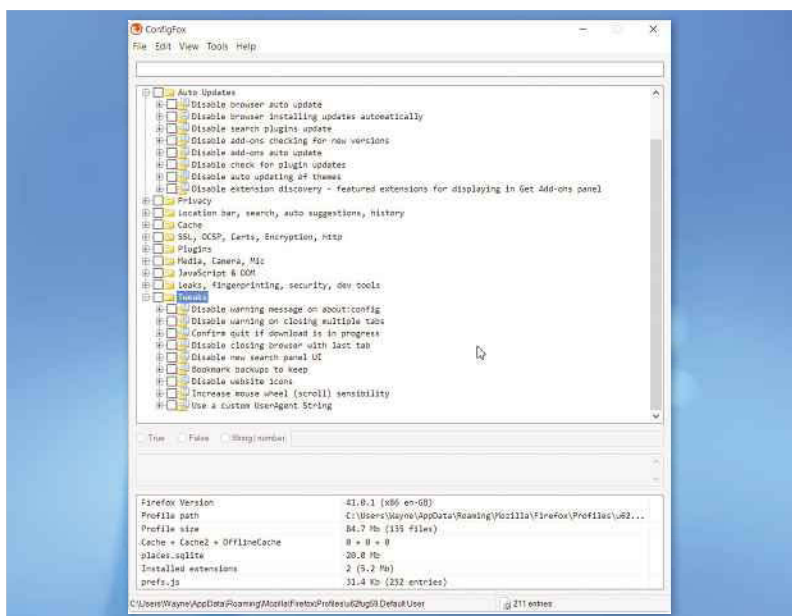
ConfigFox

bit.ly/configfox383

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 1.3MB

Firefox gives you lots of configuration options to control how it looks and behaves, but not all these settings are easy to find, and that's where ConfigFox comes in. This free program (it's a portable standalone tool rather than a traditional browser add-on) displays a range of privacy and security-related settings, which are sorted into categories such as Startup, Auto Updates, Privacy, Cache, Plug-ins and Tweaks. Although it's obvious what some settings do, others may not make much sense; however, you should always make sure you know what a tweak does before applying it. Fortunately, this is very easy to do – just right-click the setting to look it up online.



Don't install...

Jet Screenshot

www.jetscreenshot.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 2.9MB

Although it's described as a screen-capture tool, Jet Screenshot is closely tied to an online storage service. To really make the most of the program, you need to subscribe to one of the paid-for options rather than sticking with the free one, which doesn't offer many features and superimposes the Jet Screenshot logo on your screen grabs.



...Install this instead

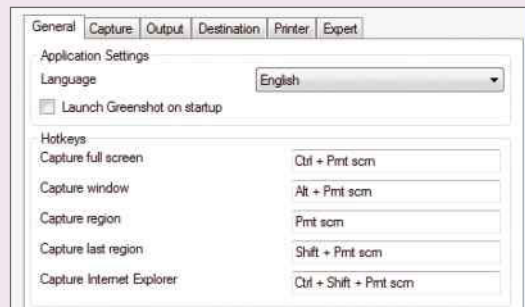
Greenshot

getgreenshot.org

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

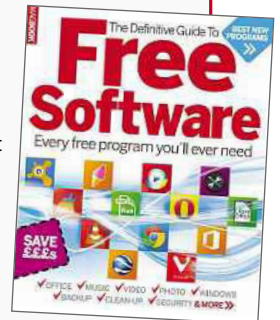
File size: 1.3MB

This lightweight, free tool makes capturing your screen (or a section of it) very straightforward, and even lets you grab entire web pages. Simply press the relevant keyboard shortcut – for example, Alt+Print Screen – to capture and save the image file. Greenshot also offers useful tools to annotate, highlight and blur parts of your screenshots, and lets you export grabs in various ways, such as sending files as email attachments, printing them directly from the program and uploading the images to cloud-storage services including Flickr and Dropbox.



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- Download free office tools that save you £££s
- Clean your PC to make it run as fast as new
- Tweak your browser to unlock hidden features
- Record free music and video from any website

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UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



SYSTEM TOOL

Windows Repair 3.6.1

www.tweaking.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 19.7MB

Windows Repair is one of our favourite free programs for fixing problems with a misbehaving PC, and the latest version speeds up tab control and lets you scroll through tabs with your mouse. An annoying domain-name bug has been fixed, and there are numerous other tweaks.



VIDEO CONVERTER

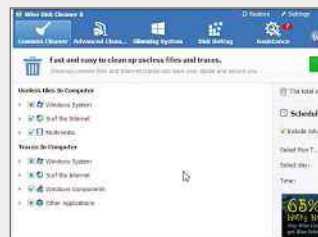
MediaCoder 0.8.38.5782

www.mediacoderhq.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 62.6MB

This powerful converter supports most video and audio formats and lets you set lots of different parameters. Changes in this version include fixes and improvements for Windows XP (which is thoughtful of the developers), as well as general performance tweaks.



SYSTEM CLEANER

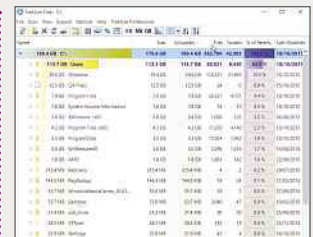
Wise Disk Cleaner Free 8.84

www.wisecleaner.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 2.8MB

Wise Disk Cleaner deletes junk files; cleans up after Windows and internet usage; and can remove unwanted Windows features. It also offers a disk defragmenter. The latest update improves cleaning in Microsoft Edge and Google Chrome, and has an updated language pack.



SPACE MONITOR

TreeSize Free 3.4

www.jam-software.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 5.6MB

If you've ever wondered where all that free space on your hard drive has disappeared to, TreeSize Free can tell you. The new release supports scanning smartphones and mobile devices, and one-click scans of local Dropbox, Google Drive and Microsoft OneDrive folders.

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



Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

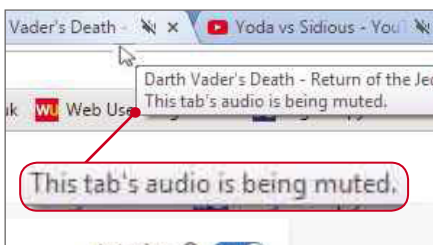
Copy and translate text from pics and videos

Everyone knows that you can copy text from a web page by highlighting it and pressing Ctrl+C, but if the words you want are in an image or a YouTube video, then you will have to retype them manually. The amazing new extension Copyfish (bit.ly/copyfish383) offers a better solution by letting you extract text from online media simply by clicking its toolbar button and selecting the desired words. These then appear in a window in the bottom of your browser, from where you can copy them to your clipboard to use wherever you want. What's more, Copyfish even translates text from 20 foreign languages into English. We admit we were sceptical at first, but we tested it on a video with Japanese subtitles and the results were very impressive. You can only select sections of text of between 40 and 2,600 pixels in height and width, but that should be enough for most copying tasks. The add-on can also extract text from PDF files.



Mute browser tabs using keyboard shortcuts

One of Chrome's most useful features is the ability to silence a noisy browser tab with a single click, until you're ready to listen to the audio. Mute Tab Shortcuts (bit.ly/mute383) makes switching sound on and off even easier by using keyboard shortcuts. First, however, you'll need to apply a simple tweak to the browser: type `chrome:flags` into the address bar, press Enter and find the entry 'Enable tab audio muting UI control'. Click Enable, restart Chrome and install the extension. Once this is done, you'll be able to mute the current tab simply by pressing Alt+Shift+M, and mute all tabs using Alt+Shift+, [comma]. To restore the sound, press Alt+Shift+, [full stop], or click the individual speaker icons.



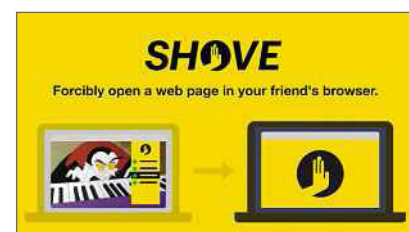
View animated GIFs in Google Images

Google Images (images.google.co.uk) is a brilliant tool for finding pictures on the web, but browsing its never-ending page of results to find the photo you want can also be rather tedious. GoogleGIFs (bit.ly/googlegifs383) makes things more interesting by automatically activating any animated GIFs that appear in the results as you scroll down the page, usually sourced from sites such as Giphy and Reddit. This brings at least some of the images to life, often to amusing effect, and will only briefly distract you from the task at hand. You may even decide that you'd prefer a moving image to a boring old static one!

Open tabs in other people's browsers

Sending someone a link to click in an email means they can easily ignore it if they're busy or not interested; wouldn't it be better if you could forcibly open the web page, video or photo in a browser tab on their PC? Thanks to a Chrome add-on called Shove (bit.ly/shove383), you can, but it isn't as dubious as it initially sounds.

To open content in a tab remotely, the recipient also needs to have Shove installed and you both need to appear on each other's contacts lists. When you find something you want to share, select your friend in your Shove list and the page will open instantly in their browser. You can sign out of Shove to stop friends opening things in your tabs.



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



FIREFOX

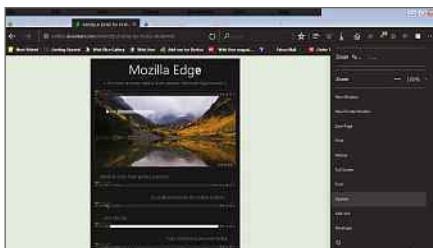
Show your passwords when logging into websites

Login boxes on websites prevent people from spying on your password by concealing it behind asterisks, but if you're the only person in the room, it can seem like an unnecessary precaution. Indeed, if you have a complex password, not being able to see exactly what you're typing can be more of a hindrance than a help because you're more likely to make a mistake. See My Passwords (bit.ly/passwords383) solves this problem by letting you click its toolbar button and select 'Show all my Passwords' to view your passwords on all websites. It doesn't have direct access to your login details, but merely shows the plain-text passwords behind the asterisks. To conceal them if someone is looking at your screen, click the toolbar button again and choose 'Hide all my Passwords'.



Make Firefox look like Microsoft Edge

They say a change is as good as a holiday, so if you fancy a brief break from Firefox without leaving the browser (a 'staycation, if you will), why not transform it temporarily into Microsoft Edge? This will give you the minimalist look of the Windows 10-only browser, while retaining your favourite Firefox features and add-ons. To do this, first install Stylish (bit.ly/stylish383), which lets you customise Firefox using themes from outside the official Mozilla Add-ons store. You can also install Buttons Back (bit.ly/buttons383) to get Edge's button layout, but this isn't essential.

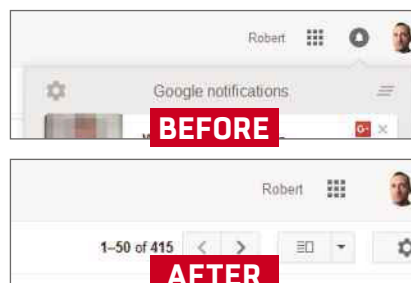


Next, download the 'Microsoft Edge for Firefox' theme from bit.ly/edgetheme383, extract the RAR file and open the Main File folder. Double-click the Mozilla Edge TXT file to open it and press Ctrl+A then Ctrl+C to select and copy its contents. Back in Firefox, go to Tools, Add-ons, User Styles, click Write New Style and press Ctrl+V to paste the contents of the theme file. Give the style

a name (Edge Theme, for example), then click Save. The Edge theme will be applied instantly. If you don't like it, return to User Styles and disable or remove it.

Remove Google+ from other Google services

Despite rumours that Google+ is on the way out, the unloved social network is still tightly integrated with many other Google tools, including Gmail, Google Drive and YouTube. Look in the top-right corner of any of these services and you'll see a bell symbol that displays notifications from Google+, whether you like it or not. If you don't want this bell, you can hide it using the Firefox add-on Google+ Notifications Remover (bit.ly/remover383). Once installed, this banishes bell notifications from every Google service except Google+, which is where they belong, so you'll never be bothered by what's happening in your 'circles' again.



OTHER BROWSERS

Download videos from across the web

Nine out of 10 tools for downloading videos from the web are designed specifically for YouTube, but All in One Downloader (bit.ly/downloader383) bucks this trend by letting you grab videos from other sites. It doesn't support YouTube "because it's forbidden by Google", but you can easily download lots of great short films and high-quality clips from sources such as Vimeo, Dailymotion and Metacafe. The add-on supports all popular video formats including MP4, FLV and AVI, and lets you play back your downloads by clicking its toolbar button.



Strip clutter from pages before printing

When you print an article from the web, you invariably get a lot more than you bargained for in the form of adverts, photos, links and other unwanted content, which uses up valuable ink. Help is at hand from the brilliantly named add-on The Printliminator (bit.ly/print383), which lets you strip all the clutter from a page before you print it. Just click the toolbar button to activate the extension, then click any elements you don't want to print and they'll be removed instantly. Alternatively, select Remove Graphics to clear all images in one fell swoop. The Printliminator also offers various keyboard shortcuts to save you from too much clicking.





Best Free Apps



App of the Fortnight

COMMUNICATION

Swytch

bit.ly/swytch383

Min requirements: Android 4.0, iOS 8.1

Size: 27MB

Have you ever wanted a second phone number, but been put off by the thought of buying a dual-SIM smartphone and a second SIM card? Swytch fixes this problem by letting you set up an additional free number within seconds

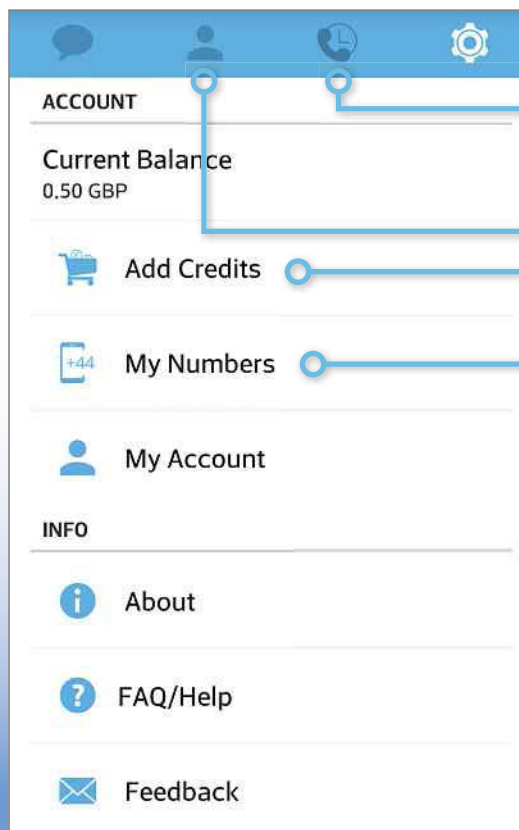
without any further accessories. The app is free to download and you can create up to five alternative mobile numbers (although only the first is free on a six-month trial), which can then be used to make calls and send text messages. You might wonder why you'd need a second phone number, unless you're planning on having an extramarital affair, but using a virtual number can be very useful when setting up accounts on the web and selling things online. Indeed, because the app

NEW

lets you create, change or delete your numbers at any time, you can ensure that you're never plagued by nuisance calls again. The app currently only generates UK phone numbers, but this is handy if you're living abroad and want to supply your friends and family with a UK number. Receiving calls and messages with the app is free but, as with Skype, you need to pay typical local rates for all outgoing communications. Once you've set up the app, your account is automatically credited with 50p, so you can use it to start making calls right away.



Our rating



CALLS

View recent calls or dial a new number



PEOPLE

Search your phone's contacts list

ADD CREDITS

Add funds to make calls and send messages



Add Credits

MY NUMBERS

Add, delete or change your virtual numbers



My Numbers

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

VPN

Betternet

bit.ly/betternet383

Min requirements:

Android 4.0, iOS 7

Size: 23MB

Unusually for a VPN, Betternet gives you unlimited access to its services for free, which means you can surf the web anonymously for as long as you want. There are no adverts and you don't need to set up an account – simply open the app, tap Connect and you can start browsing websites without geographical restrictions. When you use Betternet's VPN, you'll be asked to confirm that you trust the application before it connects, but otherwise it's as easy as flicking a switch on or off. You can also access Betternet's VPN on your PC by installing its Chrome extension from bit.ly/vpn383.



Our rating



TOOL

VideoPocket

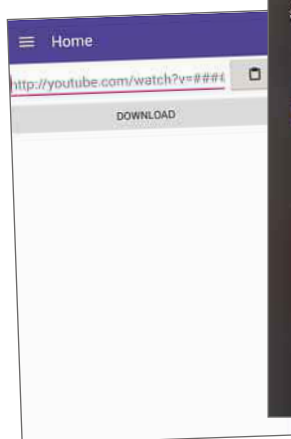
bit.ly/video-pocket383

Min requirements:

Android 4.1

Size: 3.4MB

VideoPocket is a handy tool for ripping your favourite videos from the web. By simply entering a video's URL on its home screen and tapping Download, the video is saved straight to your Downloads folder. Alternatively, with apps such as YouTube, you can use the built-in share option to download the file even more effortlessly. Unfortunately, there's a bit of a catch in the sense that VideoPocket only lets you download videos up to two minutes long unless you upgrade to the Premium version, which costs 78p a year. Upgrading also unlocks the option to download a video's audio track. The tool is still in beta but it works with most popular sites and you can test all its features fully by activating its seven-day free trial.



Our rating



MUSIC

Earbits Music Discovery Radio

bit.ly/earbits383

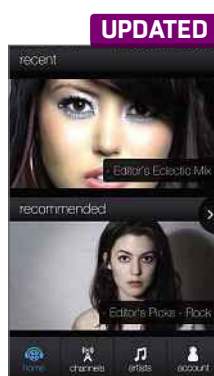
Min requirements:

Android 4.0.3,

iOS 8.4

Size: 6.6MB

Earbits is a free music discovery tool that, unlike competitors such as Spotify and Pandora, has no adverts whatsoever. Most of the music is from independent artists, which won't appeal to everyone, but means you have a good chance of discovering up-and-coming acts before they've had mainstream success. The app lets you choose from hundreds of different channels, and you don't need to set up an account, but by logging in you'll also be able to save your favourite tracks. To listen on your PC, visit www.earbits.com and install the Chrome extension.



Our rating



ROUND UP | Quick bites

SkyScanner

bit.ly/skyscanner383

Min requirements:

Android (varies with device), iOS 7

Size: Varies with device

SkyScanner lets you search flights from hundreds of airlines to help you find the best deal. The app has had a major overhaul and now includes a colour-coded calendar that makes it possible to see the cheapest days to fly.



BBC Sport

bit.ly/bbc-sport383

Min requirements:

Android (varies with device), iOS 7

Size: Varies with device

The BBC Sport app has just been updated to provide a more personalised experience. Its new My Sport page can be customised to show the news, fixtures and results for the sports that you care about most, and can be synced across all your devices.



IceCream

bit.ly/icecream383

Min requirements:

iOS 8

Size: 26MB

If you don't fancy paying 79p a month for extra iCloud storage, this handy app helps you free up space on your iPhone by backing up your photos to the cloud while keeping low-resolution versions on your device.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Albelli Photo Books

bit.ly/albelli383

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 45.7MB

Albelli Photo Books makes designing and ordering a photo book from your iPad incredibly straightforward. After choosing from a range of different sizes, formats and page layouts, the app lets you import images from your computer, camera roll or social media before dragging and dropping them straight on to the blank pages. You can create books of up to 120 pages, adding text, backgrounds and clip art as necessary, and there are options to further personalise your publication by upgrading to glossy pages or a premium binding. If you're concerned that it might take a few days (or even weeks!) to put your book together, you'll be pleased to learn that the app saves your progress so that you can continue working on your project at any time.



Our rating



WALLPAPER

Meter

bit.ly/meter383

Min requirements: Android 4.3

Size: 1.1MB

This experimental app from Google Creative Lab replaces your usual wallpaper with changeable, live visualisations that display data including your battery level, wireless signal and number of unread notifications. Each time you unlock your device, the app displays the next visualisation and you can animate them by tilting and moving your device. When you consider that all the information displayed by Meter is visible in your status bar, the app doesn't serve any practical benefit, but we enjoyed using it nonetheless. To display all three visualisations, you must give Meter notification access once it's installed. If you'd prefer it didn't have access to this info, you can still enjoy the Wi-Fi and battery-level wallpapers.



Our rating



5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

PHOTOGRAPHY

Adobe Photoshop Fix

bit.ly/photoshop383

Min requirements: iOS 8.1

Size: 88.3M

Price: Free (requires Creative Cloud subscription)

Last issue, we awarded the updated Lightroom for iPad 'App of the Fortnight' and now Adobe has released Photoshop Fix, a retouching app for its Creative Cloud subscribers.



Price: £3.99

Minecraft: Story Mode is a five-part series in which you embark on a dangerous adventure, making decisions that affect your course of action. Episode 1 is included in the price of the app, while 2-5 will cost a further £10.99.

BROWSERS

Speedafari

bit.ly/speedafari383

Min requirements: iOS 9

Size: 2.9MB

Price: £1.49

Speedafari takes advantage of iOS 9's content-blocking functionality to load web pages faster and preserve your battery life. The app can block not only ads, but tracking scripts, external fonts and videos.



BOOKS

Book Creator for iPad

bit.ly/bookcreator383

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 58.2MB

Price: £3.99

If you want to produce your own ebook, Book Creator makes it possible, optimising it for publication in the iBooks Store. Books are created using the ePub standard or with Apple's fixed layout format.



HEALTH

Pause

bit.ly/pause383

Min requirements: iOS6

Size: 54.4MB

Price: £1.49

Pause offers a novel digital approach to the ancient meditation practices of Tai Chi, helping you regain focus and release stress by slowly and continuously moving your fingertips across your iPhone's screen.



GAMES

Minecraft: Story Mode

bit.ly/minecraft383

Min requirements: iOS 7.1 (and iPhone 5 onwards)

Size: 685MB



Adobe Photoshop Fix



Speedafari



Minecraft: Story Mode



Book Creator for iPad



Pause





Best New TV Apps

MUSIC

Spotify Music

bit.ly/spotify383**Min requirements:** Android (varies with device), iOS 7**Size:** 87.7MB

Music lovers rejoice: you can now listen to your favourite songs through your television, because Spotify has finally added support for Google's Chromecast. This doesn't just mean the new Chromecast Audio (see our review on page 23), but the original £30 streaming stick, which previously supported mostly video and photo apps. You can play, skip, browse and search for tracks via the Spotify app on your phone or tablet, and then 'cast' music to your telly over your Wi-Fi connection, with nary a cable in sight. As usual, there are occasional ads between songs unless you upgrade to Spotify Premium.



FILM & TV

JustWatch

bit.ly/justwatch383**Min requirements:** Android 4, iOS 6**Size:** 17.6MB

There are so many streaming services these days that by the time you've been through them all to find something good to watch, you're probably ready for bed. JustWatch offers a helping hand by letting you browse and search for new films and TV shows on all the main streaming providers in one place, so you don't need to keep switching from app to app. It covers Netflix, iTunes, Now TV, iPlayer, Amazon and basically any other services you can think of, with the option to save your favourites to make searching even faster. You can also view price drops to find the best deals on movies to buy and rent.

FILM & TV

Freeview Play

bit.ly/freeview383**Min requirements:** Freeview Play TV or recorder**Size:** N/A

Freeview's long-awaited catch-up service has now officially launched, but sadly you won't be able to download it as an app for your current smart TV (unless it's a Panasonic Viera model). Instead you'll need to buy one of the new Freeview Play TVs or recorders, and connect it to your aerial and Wi-Fi network. Once this is done, you'll be able to enjoy TV-on-demand from BBC iPlayer, ITV Player, All 4 and Demand 5 by scrolling back in your TV guide to watch shows from the last seven days. This is in addition to the 60 standard TV channels and 12 HD ones that you get from Freeview, plus other on-demand apps.

**X** Don't install...

Pill Reminder

bit.ly/pill383

We love the idea of having your phone or tablet remind you when it's time to take your medication, but this app doesn't do it very



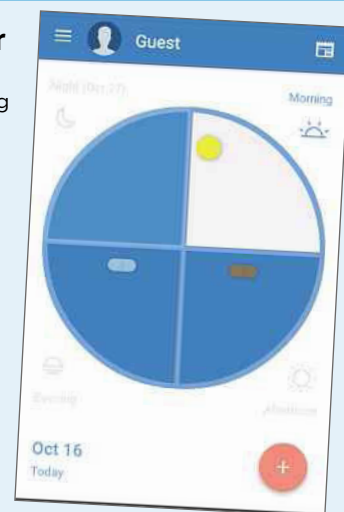
well. You can only set alarms for every six, eight, 12 or 24 hours; you can't specify which pill you're supposed to neck, which isn't helpful if you're on more than one type of medication; and the shoddy interface frequently crashes, so you could easily miss your dose.

...Install this instead

MediSafe Meds & Pills Reminder

www.medisafe.com**Min requirements:** Android 4 (including Kindle Fire), iOS 7**Size:** 61.2MB

Make sure you never forget to swallow a pill, administer a shot or apply some cream using this brilliant free app, which alerts you when it's time to take your medication. Usefully, you can sync your whole family's pillboxes to be notified if a loved one misses a dose, and schedule reminders to stop after a certain time, such as for courses of antibiotics. MediSafe lets you specify the shape and colour of medication; see a chart of all the pills you need to take today; and even generate a progress report to send to your doctor. It could literally save your life. ■



? FAQ

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

Our guide to Black Friday

On your marks, get set, click! Black Friday is coming at the end of this month and you'll need to be quick to bag the best bargains, as **David Crookes** explains

What is Black Friday?

Black Friday is traditionally the day after Thanksgiving in the United States and it has come to be seen as the start of the Christmas shopping season. It's a fairly recent trend that only began in the early 2000s, but it has rapidly become one of the busiest days of the year for retailers, thanks to the huge discounts on offer and the large number of people who take advantage of the bargains.



Amazon has led the way in bringing Black Friday to the UK

Why should this interest us Brits?

Well, like Halloween, which has arguably become even more popular than Bonfire Night in the UK, this is another tradition that has crossed the Atlantic. It was imported by Amazon in 2010 following complaints by internet shoppers that customers in the States were benefitting from better deals. Since then, other retailers have jumped on the bandwagon and it's now firmly established as part of the British shopping calendar.

What's so black about it?

The origin of the phrase is unclear. Some believe the term Black Friday was created by police in Philadelphia, who were overburdened by the sheer number of people visiting the city on that day. Others think it signifies the big profits made by shops, which lifted them out of debt and "into the black". Today, it may mark the dark days of people fighting over cheap televisions in Asda!

Ah, yes, the mad scramble: will that happen again?

Most likely. Black Friday will take place on 27 November this year and all indications are that high-street stores are gearing up for yet another mad rush. If you want to avoid receiving or inflicting injuries in the name of discounts, it's a lot wiser to spend your Black Friday online. Indeed, as soon as last year's Black Friday had finished, Amazon invited people to come back this November (bit.ly/blackamazon383). It's no doubt looking for another healthy slice of the £810m spent during last year's frenzy - £200m of which was spent online.

Wow. What sort of bargains can I expect?

At this stage, we can only guess what the potential goodies on offer might be, but past bargains have included Apple

knocking £20 off iPads and £80 off Macs; the price of Amazon Fire tablets being slashed by a third; and Motorola offering £100 off its Moto X smartphone. Last year, John Lewis had loads of technology and electrical discounts, and supermarkets were shifting 130 cheap tellies every second, according to figures. You can expect around 20 per cent or more off cameras, headphones, laptops and smartwatches, among other items.



John Lewis gets into the Black Friday spirit with lots of tech discounts

Are the bargains genuine?

As with any sale, some items are good value and some are not. Both high-street and online shops will be shifting stock they need to get rid of and selling inexpensive yet attractive items just to get people interested. For example, last year, people went mad for £249 Blaupunkt televisions, which it's fair to say were not of the highest quality. More to the point, the non-sale price of the TVs

wasn't much more expensive than that anyway. So the best advice is to stick to items that you would have been tempted to buy at full price.

Which companies will be involved?

After last year's record-breaking sales, we can expect more retailers than ever to offer cut-price goods. But the stalwarts will include PC World, Argos, Boots, Game, Amazon, John Lewis, Marks & Spencer, Tesco, Asda and Debenhams. We expect to see discounts from Selfridges, B&Q, Next and House of Fraser, too. But you should start planning now if you want to save some cash. It's going to be busy!



Tesco is ready and waiting for this year's Black Friday bonanza

Will the websites be able to cope?

Last year, quite a number didn't, even though they had systems in place to ease congestion. The web traffic of some retailers tripled in comparison to Black Friday in 2013, which was unprecedented and caught retailers by surprise.

Amazon fared well by offering Lightning Deals that were advertised for just 90 minutes, but Argos repeatedly warned of a "very high volume of visitors" and Curry's apologised for long waits, even though both stores had tried to implement a queuing system. Topshop, Net-a-Porter, Very and Game also suffered website outages and Twitter was ablaze with angry people who had been denied their 'right to shop'.



Curry's customers experienced long waits during last year's Black Friday

It's all just a bit of fun, though, isn't it?

Of course. It's just that the high-street scuffles can get a bit out of hand. Last

year, police were called, shoppers were injured and some people refused to believe the items they wanted were sold out and staged in-store protests. This time around, Andy Street, the managing director of John Lewis, has called on retailers to use common sense – he wants them to concentrate on electrical goods so that people who are only after fashion and homeware bargains don't swamp websites and stores. We're likely to see some squabbles, though.

Could Black Friday ever be banned?

That will depend on how chaotic things become. The police are not entirely happy that Black Friday is back this year and some MPs have actually gone as far

Black Friday: Police called as sales turn ugly

© 28 November 2014 - UK



Shoppers shove and punch each other to get £20 off a coffee machine

as calling for a ban. Greg Mulholland, the Liberal Democrat MP for Leeds North West, said the police had enough to do as it was. But some feel the main problem was retailers offering on-the-hoof discounts on items for fear of losing custom, which made the potential for savings even more significant and whipped up the frenzy.

Will I get my Black Friday stuff in time for Christmas?

You shouldn't have any problems.

Delivery companies are already making plans, and Yodel has announced that it's taking on 7,000 more people ahead of the Christmas period. That said, the executive chairman of Yodel, Dick Stead, forecasts four times as many people going online this year to buy items, while digital consultancy Salmon predicts an online growth of 17.6 per cent. Black Friday 2015 looks set to break the £1bn sales barrier for the first time.



Yodel is taking on thousands more staff to cope with Black Friday orders

OTHER DISCOUNT SHOPPING DAYS



Small Business Saturday

This event (www.smallbusinessaturdayuk.com) takes place two days after Thanksgiving. It was set up by American Express in 2010 and arrived on British shores in 2013. As the name suggests, the idea is that people are encouraged to buy their wares from local businesses rather than large chains. In doing so,

it is hoped shoppers spread some pre-Christmas joy to smaller traders.

Cyber Monday

Cyber Monday was created in America in 2005 and refers to the Monday after Thanksgiving. Although there are many discounts online for Black Friday, this extra day gives internet retailers yet another boost – and it

appears to work. Some stores deliberately hold back further special offers, so Cyber Monday has become the busiest online shopping day of the year.

Green Tuesday

On and on it goes. Even the organisers behind Green Tuesday (www.greentuesday.org) admit that shoppers may well roll their eyes at yet another retail holiday, but this day – which falls the day after Cyber Monday – also encourages people to spend money in the local community. It emphasises organic and environmentally-friendly items, but this day hasn't quite made it to the UK – not yet, at least.



Best New Apps

For a...

FASTER PHONE & TABLET

COVER
FEATURE

If your mobile device has become sluggish, there are plenty of apps that can give it a boost. **Robert Irvine** picks 15 essential tools to make your phone and tablet run as quickly as when you got it

Like PCs – and people! – phones and tablets get noticeably slower over time, as they fill up with junk and start creaking under the strain of day-to-day activities. Fortunately, it's much easier to give your mobile device a new lease of life than it is to revitalise your computer or find the fountain of youth.

Visit Google Play or Apple's App Store and you'll find tens of thousands of free tools that claim to speed up your phone and tablet by clearing out rubbish, boosting your battery and optimising your internet connection. The trouble is that many of them are – quite frankly – useless,

despite the plethora of 'reviews' that try to convince you they're anything but snake oil. Ironically, the more of these apps you download, the more cluttered and confused your device becomes, so they end up achieving the opposite effect.

Here, we've opted for quality over quantity, testing 1,496 apps to bring you 15 free Android and iOS apps that really will speed up your phone and tablet. From reclaiming processing power to removing duplicate videos and reducing data usage by web pages, these essential tools are guaranteed to make your device work faster and last longer.

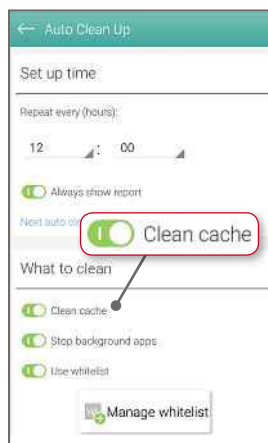


REMOVE JUNK FROM YOUR DEVICE

Delete space-hogging junk files automatically



Regularly removing unused apps, old downloads and cached files from your phone or tablet frees up space and keeps it running smoothly, but few of us have the time to perform thorough clean-ups manually. Fortunately, help is at hand from Ashampoo's fantastic free Droid Optimizer app (bit.ly/droid383), which keeps your Android devices in tip-top condition without you needing to lift (or tap) a finger. Among its many handy optimisation tools is an Auto Clean Up option, which you can set to run at



Droid Optimizer clears junk from your Android device at regular intervals

regular intervals to automatically empty your cache – the temporary files

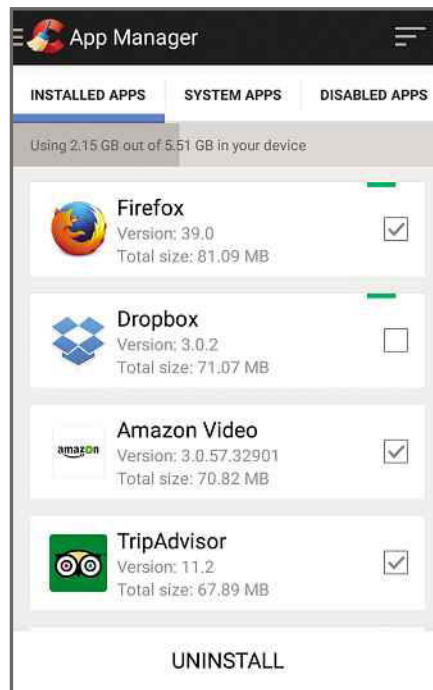
accumulated by apps that can make them slow and unstable. Auto Clean Up also stops apps running in the background, and lets you add specific

tools to a whitelist to prevent their caches from being cleared. Additionally, Droid Optimizer offers a dedicated Junk Finder that quickly identifies the largest files on your device so you can delete them to free up space and boost speed. The Junk Finder also provides options to clear your cache and stop apps with a single tap, rather than on a schedule.

Remove unwanted apps from your device



It's relatively easy to uninstall apps from your phone or tablet: just long-press them and drag them to Uninstall (Android) or tap the 'X' in the corner (iOS), but it's still a bit of a hassle if you have lots of apps to get rid of. A much better option is to use the dedicated uninstaller in CCleaner for Android (bit.ly/ccleaner383), which lets you remove multiple apps in one fell swoop. To use this tool, tap the main menu in the top-left corner of the CCleaner app, choose App Manager and tap Installed



You can remove lots of unwanted apps in one go using CCleaner

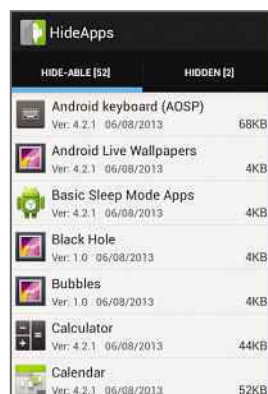
Apps to see a full list of apps and details of how much room they are taking up on your device. Tap the menu in the top-right corner and choose 'Sort by package size' to identify the biggest space hogs, then select all the apps you no longer want and tap Uninstall.

CCleaner also lets you remove certain system apps, including live wallpaper, your camera and even your Settings app, but these will be difficult to restore if you change your mind later, so use the feature with caution.

Delete pre-installed apps without rooting



Most Android phones and tablets come with apps that have been pre-installed by Google, the manufacturer or your mobile network, some of which can't be removed in the usual manner. There are tools available that will forcibly uninstall these unwanted apps, but they usually require you



Use Hide Apps to clear unwanted apps from your Android device

Disable built-in app?

If you disable a built-in app, other apps may function incorrectly.

Cancel

OK

If you can't uninstall apps, you might be able to disable them

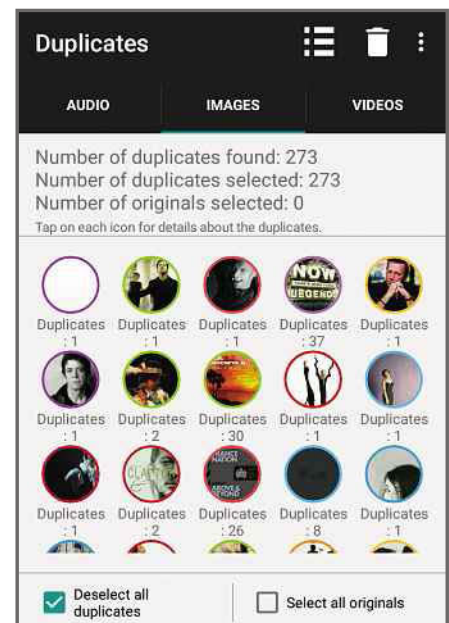
to 'root' your device, which will invalidate its warranty and potentially affect its stability and security.

One workaround that doesn't involve rooting is to use Disable Bloatware – Hide Apps (bit.ly/disable383), which removes pre-installed apps from your app drawer and home screens by hiding rather than uninstalling them. Scroll through its list of 'hide-able' apps, select the ones you want to get rid of and choose Disable. Click OK to bypass the warning and OK again, if prompted, to replace an app with the factory version. The apps will then disappear from your screen, although you can easily restore them by tapping their name in the Hidden list and choosing Enable.

Remove duplicate photos and videos



It's easy to end up with more than one instance of a photo, video or song on your phone or tablet, which not only takes up valuable space, but increases the time it takes to swipe to other files on your



Speed up your device by deleting surplus copies of photos and videos



device. There are lots of free tools that remove these unnecessary duplicates, while leaving the original files intact, of which our current favourite for Android is Duplicate Media Remover (bit.ly/duplicate383). This lets you scan every folder on your device and memory card, or just selected folders, to find duplicate files and then delete them all in go by tapping the dustbin icon. The app automatically deselects original files to stop you accidentally deleting them and lets you switch easily between Audio, Images (where most duplicates are likely to be located) and Videos.

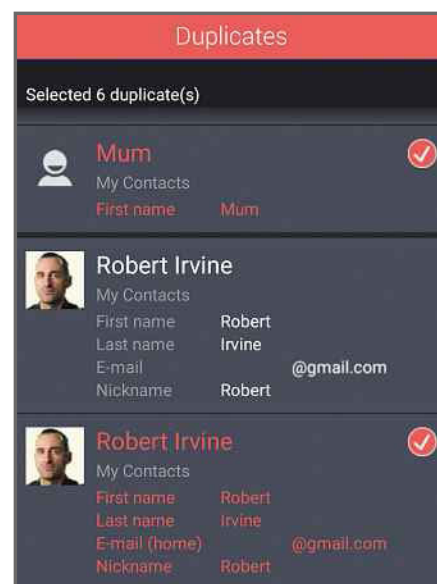


To remove duplicate pictures from iOS, we'd recommend the splendid free app Duplicate Photos Fixer (bit.ly/dupphotos383), which detects and deletes both matching and very similar shots. If you want to remove copies of audio and video files, you're best off doing so through iTunes.

Delete duplicate contacts from your phone



Although contacts take up very little space on your phone, they're now drawn from so many sources (Google, iCloud, Facebook, SIM card, internal storage) that it's easy to accumulate a long list of repeated names and numbers. You can save yourself the time and hassle of swiping through multiple entries for one person by using Contacts Optimizer (bit.ly/contacts383) to delete and clean up duplicate contacts. This Android and iOS app not only finds and deletes entries that are exactly alike (name, number and/or email address), but also similar contacts that "could be duplicates". It also lets you merge contacts into one entry, fill in missing information and optimise multiple accounts on your phone. Some of its features require you to upgrade to the Pro version for £1.54, but you can try them first for free in its Toolbox section.



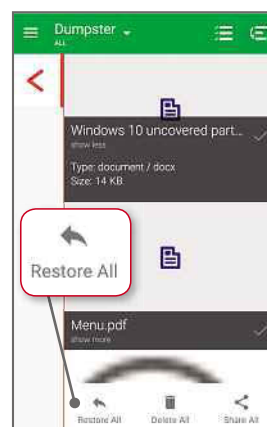
Find and delete duplicate entries in the contacts list on your phone

Recover deleted files in a single tap



Most of us have experienced that heart-rending moment when we've accidentally deleted a cherished video, photo or audio file from our phone or tablet. Keeping files backed up to the cloud reduces the chance of this disaster, but an even better and faster way to safeguard against accidental deletions is to install Dumpster for Android (bit.ly/dumpster383).

This excellent free app works in the same way as the Recycle Bin in Windows, allowing you to 'undelete' lost files of virtually any type without needing to root your device. Simply browse Dumpster's list of deleted content to find the missing item and tap



Dumpster lets you instantly undo accidental file deletions

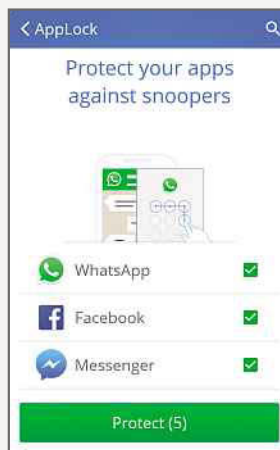
Restore to get it back. Usefully, you can preview media files before you restore them; set up a PIN code so that no-one else can undelete sensitive files; and sort deleted items by date, size, type and name.

Anything you delete from your phone or tablet will automatically appear in Dumpster, but this process will only begin once you've installed the app and can't recover anything you deleted before.

STOP OTHER PEOPLE SLOWING YOUR DEVICE



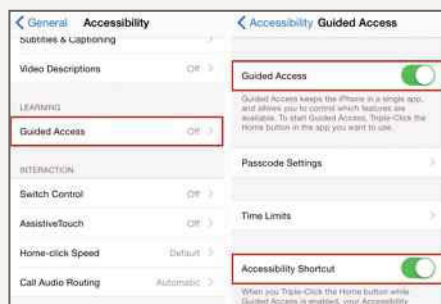
Although you can lock the screen of your Android phone or tablet when you're not using it, this only offers limited protection from nosy parkers, pranksters and thieves, who can change the settings, download large files and install unwanted apps, which will make your device much slower. A more effective way to safeguard against unauthorised fiddling is to lock specific apps such as messaging tools, photo galleries, social networks, browsers and app stores using CM Security Antivirus AppLock (bit.ly/applock383). This locks your apps, so that no-one can open them without entering a password, and even lets you catch prying eyes in the act by taking a photo of them when they enter the wrong password twice.



Restrict access to your personal data by locking specific apps



To lock apps on an iPhone or iPad, you can install the free tool iAppLock (bit.ly/iapplock383), but this requires your device to be jailbroken. Alternatively, you can restrict access to your iOS device using a built-in feature called Guided Access, which limits other people to using only apps you've specifically approved. Go to Settings, General, turn on the Guided Access feature and select the option Accessibility Shortcut - this will allow you to enter Guided Access mode by tapping your Home button three times. Enter a password to log you into and out of Guided Access, then tap Start at the top of the screen and select the app that you want to allow guests to use.



Use Guided Access in iOS to stop people nosing through your iPhone

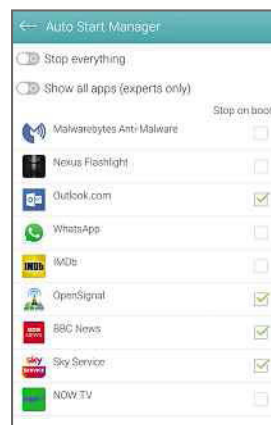


STOP SNEAKY APPS SLOWING YOU DOWN

Prevent apps from running when your device boots



Some apps start automatically when you boot your device, but you might not want to remove them for good in case they come in useful one day. Ashampoo Droid Optimizer (see first tip) offers a powerful start-up manager that prevents specific apps from running



Prevent infrequently used apps from loading when your device boots

automatically when your phone or tablet boots. Just go to Clean Up, Utilities, Auto Start Manager and select the apps you want to disable next time you restart your phone or tablet. For optimum speed, choose 'Stop everything' at the top of the screen to prevent all auto-starting apps from running until you launch them manually from your app drawer. It's best not to use the 'Show all apps (expert only)' option unless you know what you're doing, or you could mess up your device.

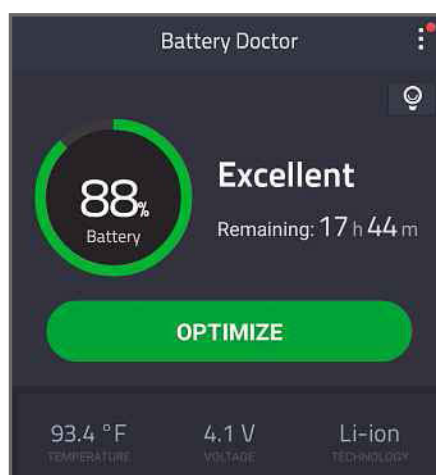
Stop greedy background apps draining your battery



Poor battery life is a perennial problem with smartphones and tablets, which means they generally need to be charged at least

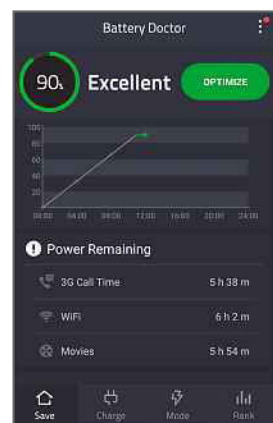
once a day. If your device runs low on power when you're unable to recharge it, the brilliant Battery Doctor (bit.ly/battery383) for Android and iOS will help you squeeze every last drop of juice from the battery. When you run the app, it displays your remaining battery and usage time, and tells you how different actions can affect this estimate, for example, playing music and making phone calls over 3G.

Tap the Optimise button and Battery Doctor will scan your phone's current settings and running processes, then let you quickly turn off apps that are guzzling battery power in the background (Facebook is a notorious offender). It also temporarily disables



Battery Doctor optimises your battery by turning off power-draining apps

built-in features that drain battery, such as Wi-Fi, Vibration, GPS and screen-brightness settings. Battery Doctor claims it will double your battery life – “seriously!” – although you do need to



Battery Doctor tells you how different tasks affect your device's power

Discover which apps drain the most power



The size of an app isn't necessarily proportionate to the amount of processor power it consumes – sometimes big apps use very little, while tiny ones can be much more demanding. You can find out which apps place the most strain on your processor and battery using Trepn Profiler (bit.ly/trepn383), which lets you run six performance tests on your Android device to get a better understanding of what's going on in the background. These include a CPU Usage Monitor test that ranks apps based on the

percentage of processor power they use – you can view this as a current figure or as an average. On our Moto G, Trepn found that Google+ (which we barely use) was placing excess strain on our CPU, so we disabled it immediately.

Trepn Profiler is a brilliant, lightweight tool, which we named our 'App of the Fortnight' in Issue 370 (bit.ly/webuser370) and it's since been updated to make it even more thorough and accurate.

APPLICATION	CPU%
com.qualcomm.atfwd	4.5
Google+	4.2
Phone/messaging storage	0.4
Email	0.3
System UI	0.3
Exchange Services	0.1
Google Contacts Sync	0.1
MotoCare	0.1
Emergency alerts	0.0

Trepn Profiler shows you which apps use the most processor power

TOP 10 BATTERY-GUZZLING APPS

Here are the 10 worst apps for slowing down your phone and tablet, when they start alongside your device

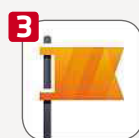
Source: AVG
now.avg.com



Facebook



Google Play Services



Facebook Pages Manager



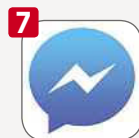
BBM



Words With Friends



Instagram



Messenger



ooVoo Video Call Text & Voice



ChatON Voice & Video Chat



The Weather Channel



Check the current speed of your mobile connection using Speedtest.net

and has an attractive speedometer interface with a large, one-tap button that makes it extremely easy to use. The only catch is that you need to pay 61p to remove the ads.

loads web pages. This helps you to determine whether to blame your Wi-Fi or mobile connection, or your default browser (meaning Safari in iOS) for sluggish internet speeds.

Block EU cookie banners on websites

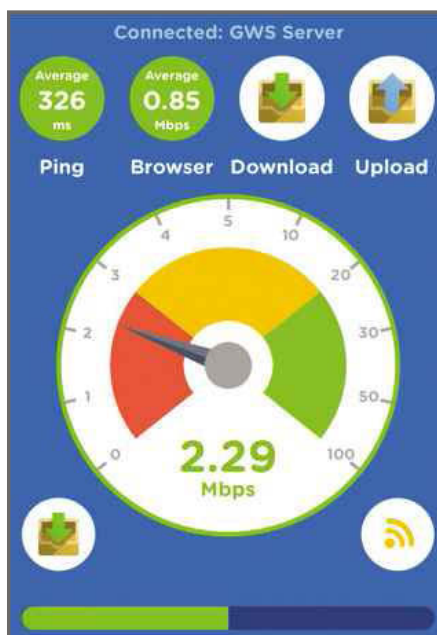


Since the EU introduced its e-Privacy Directive in 2012, we've all got used to tedious warnings on websites about how they use cookies. On smaller screens, these alerts are particularly annoying and obstructive. If these cookie banners are significantly slowing down your mobile browsing experience, you can block them using the new iOS app Mr Crumble (bit.ly/mrcrumble383). This works in the background to automatically hide cookie notices, although you'll need to be using Safari and iOS 9. To activate the app, go to Settings, Safari, Content Blockers and enable Mr Crumble.



Alternatively, you could try GWS Speed App for Android (bit.ly/gwsandroid383) and iOS (bit.ly/gwsspeed383),

which has the advantage of being ad-free, and offers an extra tool that measures how quickly your browser



Use GWS Speed App to identify problems with your connection speed



Mr Crumble automatically hides annoying cookie notices on websites

Operate your phone faster using one hand



It's a blight of modern life that when someone calls, texts or emails you while you're in the middle of something, you need to

stop whatever you're doing – washing the dishes, playing the piano, juggling



Omni Swipe lets you access your favourite apps using one hand

with flaming chainsaws – to free up both hands to answer them. The amazing Android app Omni Swipe (bit.ly/omni383) provides a nifty solution to this first-world problem by letting you operate your phone effortlessly using only one hand.

Once installed, it automatically detects your most recently and frequently used apps and places them in a simple menu that appears when you swipe from one of the bottom corners of your screen. This means you can view notifications and launch apps including Facebook, Email, WhatsApp, Messaging and Phone using the same finger or thumb, thus leaving your other hand free. Omni Swipe also has a handy (pardon the pun) Toolbox shortcut that gives you instant access to device settings including volume, brightness and Wi-Fi. It's a smarter, speedier way to use your phone, which is ideal for people with accessibility problems. ■

NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 18 November 2015

WINDOWS 10 The first big update

We reveal how to use its best new tools, discover which bugs have been fixed (and which haven't) and see what's still missing from the controversial OS

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Best mobile messaging apps

With so many mobile messaging apps available, there's scarcely a need to send text messages any more, but which is the best tool to use? **Edward Munn** finds out



Google Hangouts | bit.ly/hangouts383 | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

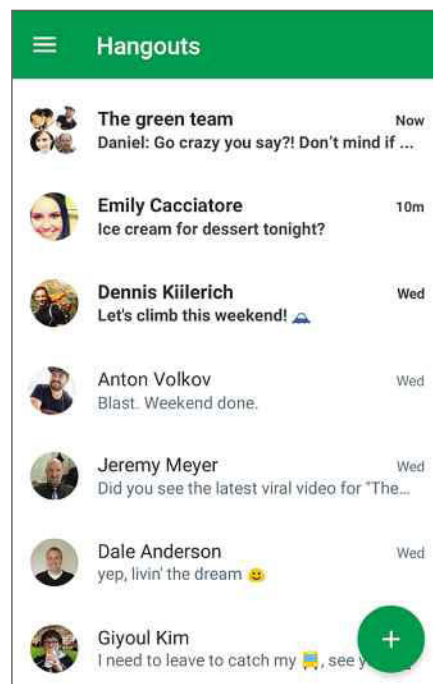
WebUser
GOLD
AWARD

What we liked:

Google Hangouts makes staying in touch with your friends easier than ever by letting you send messages, conduct video and voice calls, and join group chats from your phone, tablet or PC. The service is free to use and comes pre-installed on most Android devices, so setting it up is as simple as opening the app and signing in with your existing Google account. Once you've launched Hangouts, you can browse your full contacts list to see which of your friends already uses it, or invite those who don't with a text message.

Because your chats are saved to Google's servers, Hangouts lets you pick up your text-based communications wherever you've left off by opening the app on another device or by visiting hangouts.google.com in your browser. If you're worried about your private messages getting into the wrong hands, it has a handy option that lets you stop storing your chat history at any time, as well as letting you archive and delete your conversations.

Unlike some of the apps we tested, Google Hangouts lets you make both



video and voice calls from your mobile device, and it's the only service we've seen that lets you participate in group video calls using a phone or tablet. All of these options are also available via the Hangouts website without having to download any software or install any drivers. Like Skype, you can use the service to call landline and mobile

phone numbers at Google's incredibly low rates (most calls to the US are free), but you'll need to download the separate Hangouts Dialer app (bit.ly/dialer383) to do this on an Android device.

Because most of your friends probably have a Google account, starting a Hangouts conversation should only ever be a couple of taps away. Indeed, if you use Gmail, you can easily access Hangouts from its Chats sidebar at any time.

How it can be improved:

Unlike our Silver and Bronze award winners, Google Hangouts only lets you send photos and locations, so you'll need to stick to Google Drive for sending videos, audio and other files. We'd also like it to notify you when your messages have been read.

OUR VERDICT

Google Hangouts is versatile and easy to use, offering a range of features that aren't available from many of its competitors. If you want to send messages and make voice and video calls from all your devices, Hangouts is the best.

WhatsApp Messenger | bit.ly/whatsapp383 | ★★★★★

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

WebUser
SILVER
AWARD

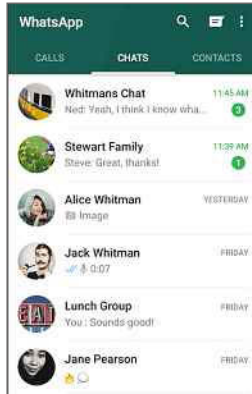
What we liked:

WhatsApp is the most popular mobile messaging app and it's also one of the best.

There's no need to set up an account, because it uses your mobile number as an ID, so you can use your contacts list to find any friends who use the service.

As well as sending messages and joining group conversations, WhatsApp lets you share photos, video and audio, and make voice calls via a mobile or Wi-Fi connection. Like all the other services we tested, the main benefit of this is that you can communicate with your friends and family even when one of you doesn't have a phone signal, which is great if you're abroad and don't want to pay expensive roaming charges, for example.

Unlike many of its competitors, WhatsApp tells you when your message has been read and you can also see



when your friends were last online. With people getting bombarded with messages all the time, it's good to know that your messages have got through.

How it can be improved:

Although its web portal lets you respond to your messages in a browser, WhatsApp fundamentally only works on your mobile phone, which isn't great

when the battery runs out. It's also only free for the first year, after which you need to pay a 69p annual subscription to keep using it.

OUR VERDICT

WhatsApp is incredibly simple to set up and use, and it's one of the best apps for sharing files using nothing more than a phone number. However, it misses out on the Gold Award because it can only be used on one device.

Facebook Messenger | bit.ly/messenger383 | ★★★★★

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

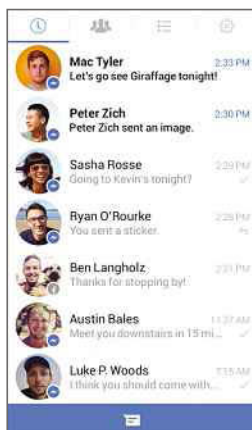
WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD

What we liked:

Until a few months ago, you could only use Facebook Messenger if you had an

account with the social network. Now, you can set up the app using only your mobile number. If you already use Facebook, Messenger provides an excellent way of getting in touch with anybody on your friends list, and you can sync the app with your phone contacts to find people who might not have added you on the social network.

Like WhatsApp, Facebook's app lets you share all manner of files and make audio and video calls, but its key advantage is that you can continue your conversation elsewhere by logging into Facebook in a browser, visiting www.messenger.com or opening the app on another device. This means that you're only ever a few clicks away from your



correspondence should you break your phone or lose it. Whichever way you access Facebook Messenger, it tells you when your messages have been read.

How it can be improved:

If you sign up to Messenger with your mobile number, you can only use it on your phone and will only find friends who have disclosed their mobile numbers to the social network. Unlike Hangouts, there's no option

to call landlines and mobiles.

OUR VERDICT

Facebook Messenger has some excellent features but you have to join the social network to use all of them. The option to set up an account using only your mobile number is handy, but WhatsApp does this better.

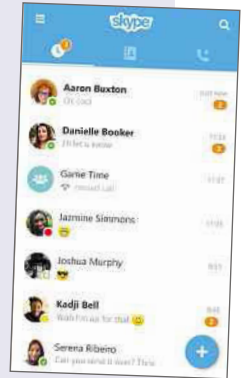
BEST OF THE REST

Skype

bit.ly/skypeapp383

Skype was very unlucky not to make our top three. It's great for sending messages and making voice and video calls, and you can sign up easily using your Microsoft account.

Unfortunately, it isn't as good for file transfers as WhatsApp and its web interface is still in beta, meaning both our other award winners are a better bet if you want to use the full range of features on any device.



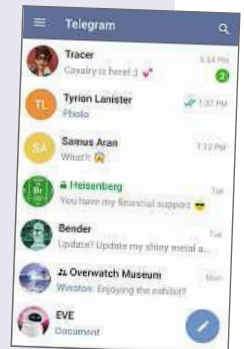
Telegram

bit.ly/telegram383

Telegram doesn't have all the bells and whistles of some apps we tested, and chooses instead to focus on simplicity, security and speed.

The app saves all your conversations to the cloud, so you can access them on any device, but it securely encrypts everything to keep your discussions safe from prying eyes.

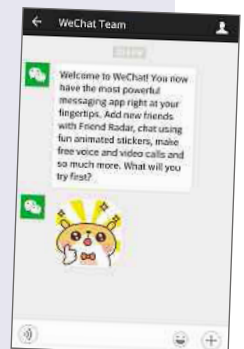
You can use Telegram to send all types of files and its Secret Chats feature even lets you send self-destructing messages and files.



WeChat

bit.ly/wechat383

WeChat is a full-featured, free messaging app that claims to offer the highest level of control over your privacy. Rather contradictorily, it's also the only app we tested that helps you meet new friends with its 'Shake' and 'People Nearby' features. Despite having a whopping 600 million active users, it doesn't appear to have taken off in the UK yet, so you might struggle to find people to talk to!



A collage featuring a large analog clock face with a red arrow pointing downwards, a green Android robot, and the Google Chrome logo, illustrating the concept of software downgrade.

You don't have to put up with unwanted changes to your favourite programs. **Wayne Williams** explains how to reverse forced updates and go back to the previous versions you preferred

Install old software versions

If you don't like the changes introduced in the latest version of a program you use all the time, you might be able to go back to an older edition. Some developers offer previous builds of their software for free, so it's always worth checking their websites if you don't like what they've done in the new release.

If you have no joy there, check out the excellent [OldVersion.com \(www.oldversion.com\)](http://www.oldversion.com), which has the slogan “because newer is not always better”. It offers more than 17,762 versions of 690 programs and plugins, ranging from system and security tools to media players, image editors, instant messengers and much, much more. If you can’t find what you want there, Old Apps (www.oldapps.com) is a similar service that’s also worth a look. Both sites have applications for Windows, Mac and Linux.



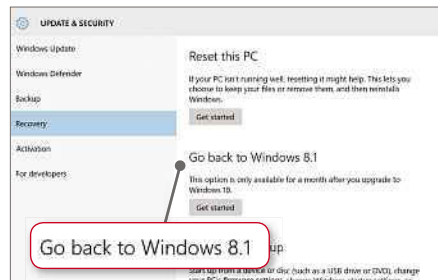
Download previous editions of your favourite software from OldVersion.com

Go back to Windows 7 or 8.1 from 10

Microsoft has made it very easy for Windows 7 and 8.1 users to upgrade to Windows 10, and has even – rather controversially – downloaded the required files to your hard drive, ready for when you want to install the new OS. The good news is that if you try Windows 10 and decide you don't like it, you can easily roll back the upgrade.

Just go to Start, Settings, click Update & Security and choose Recovery. You'll see a 'Go back to Windows 7' or 'Go back to Windows 8.1' entry. Click 'Get started' and follow the instructions.

Note that you only have 30 days from the date of the upgrade to roll back to a previous version of Windows. If you've been using Windows 10 for longer than that, the only option is to back up all your files and reinstall the older version of Windows, which will wipe everything.



It's easy to downgrade from Windows 10, provided you do so within 30 days

Download an older version of Firefox

In recent years, Mozilla has made several ‘improvements’ to Firefox that have annoyed devoted users and prompted them to seek alternative browsers such as Pale Moon (which is based on the same code). If you’re not happy with changes

You can download a previous version of Firefox from Mozilla's site

Type	Name	Size	Last Modified
Dir			
Dir	linux-686		
Dir	linux-686_64		
Dir	mips		
Dir	mips64		
Dir	mips64r2		
Dir	mips64r2-FPUv2		
Dir	mips64r2-FPUv3		
File	KEY	4K	13-Oct-2012 19:14
File	MD5SUM	276B	13-Oct-2012 19:14
File	MD5SUM.asc	136	13-Oct-2012 19:14
File	SHA1SUM	2608B	13-Oct-2012 19:14
File	SHA1SUM.asc	136	13-Oct-2012 19:14
File	SHA256SUM	1662B	13-Oct-2012 19:14
File	SHA256SUM.asc	136	13-Oct-2012 19:14

You can download a previous version of Firefox from Mozilla's site

made to the browser, but you don't want to give up Firefox, you can easily install an older version. Mozilla helpfully stores all previous builds of Firefox – dating back to 2004 – at bit.ly/ffreleases383, so just download the version you want and uninstall the current release through the Control Panel in Windows.

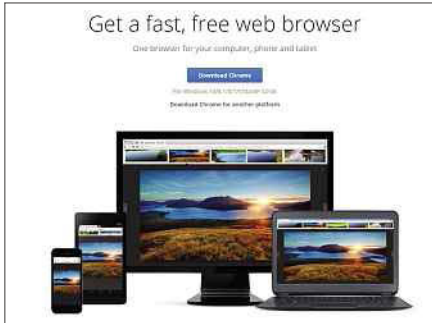
Switch back to stable versions of browsers

It's fun to try out early beta and developer versions of Chrome and Firefox, because you get to try new features in advance, but if you decide you'd prefer a browser without any teething problems, you can switch back to the stable build. For Chrome, back up your profile data – beta and dev

channels are found under:

C:\Users\[username]\AppData\Local\Google\Chrome\User Data\Default

Then uninstall Chrome and download the stable version from bit.ly/chrome383. Once it's installed, you can restore your profile data. For Firefox, back up your profile (see bit.ly/firefoxprofile383) and download and install the latest stable version from getfirefox.com



If don't want the teething problems in beta versions, go back to the stable build

Undo updates to Android apps

If you don't like the latest version of an Android app, or it causes problems with your device, you can go back to a



App Backup lets you save and restore favourite versions of Android apps

previous release by installing the APK (Android application package) of the app you want. You can often find these through Google, but be very careful where you download the file from because some APKs come bundled with malware.

It's better to plan ahead and back up the APK files of your favourite apps using the free tool App Backup & Restore (bit.ly/appbackup383). This will allow you to restore the version you like if it's upgraded automatically to one you don't.

To install an APK, you will need to configure your device to allow sideloading. Open Settings and tick the Unknown Sources option under either Applications or Security.

Undo updates to the Android operating system

Rolling back an Android OS update is far from simple, because it's not always clear whether the update has come from Google or your device manufacturer, such as Samsung or HTC. In the latter case, the changes may involve modifications specific to your phone and updates to bundled apps, which makes rolling back the OS a nightmare.

If you have a phone or tablet with a standard factory image and unlockable bootloader (a Nexus device, for example), then you should be able to find an older factory version of Android to install. You'll find factory images and instructions for Nexus devices at bit.ly/nexus383. As always, make sure you back up your device before proceeding.

In other cases, performing a factory reset will undo the latest update and restore the version of Android that was originally installed on your device.



Nexus devices can be rolled back to an older version of Android

However, this will also clear all the apps and data that you've installed.

Downgrade newer versions of iOS

Unfortunately, if you've installed iOS 9 and you don't like it, you're stuck with it. Apple 'signs' its iOS releases and when it stops signing a version, you won't be able to reinstall it. You can roll back the very latest releases – so when Apple pushes out iOS 9.1, you'll probably be able to downgrade to iOS 9.0.2 – but you'll need to act quickly. Once Apple stops signing iOS 9.0.2, that downgrade path will be gone.

The best option is to back up your iPhone or iPad before you upgrade (get into the habit of doing this every time), by making a copy of the IPSW (iPhone Software) file on your computer. Windows users need to go to:

C:\Users\[username]\AppData\Roaming\Apple Computer\iTunes

Look inside either iPad Software Updates or iPhone Software Updates. If you can't find it, search Google for "download IPSW" to find one. When you're ready to roll back, plug your Apple device into your PC or Mac, and open iTunes. Click the device to get to the Summary screen. Hold down Shift (on a PC) or Alt/Option (on a Mac), then click the Restore button. You'll need to disable the Find My feature on your device if it's enabled. Navigate to the saved IPSW file, click Open and iTunes will install the older version of iOS on your iPhone or iPad.

iOS 9.0.2

Your iPhone software is up to date. iTunes will automatically check for an update again on 27/10/2015.

Check for Update

Restore iPhone...

Avoid iOS update problems by backing up your current version

IS IT SAFE TO GO BACK?

The latest versions of programs tend to offer new and improved features and, occasionally, a fresh new look, but they may also fix bugs, including ones that could compromise your PC's security. Adobe Reader and Flash, for example, are both plagued by security problems, and even the most recent patched releases aren't that secure. Running an older version of these programs is a huge risk.

New versions of web browsers also block potentially dangerous vulnerabilities, and new releases of



security software – such as antivirus – protect against the very latest threats (although if the virus

definitions are up to date, it doesn't matter too much which version of the program you're running).

It's worth checking a program's 'change log' on the developer's website to see what has been updated before you roll back to an older version. This should list any major bugs that have been squashed, which may still exist in a previous build. Also make sure you're running a reliable security program to protect you from threats that target older and unpatched software.

Is your hardware about to die?

Spot the warning signs that your PC, phone or tablet is struggling and take action before it's too late. **Wayne Williams** reveals what you shouldn't ignore

PC fans are working overtime

Symptom:

The fans inside your computer are constantly spinning and making a loud 'revving' noise. Your PC may also occasionally shut down without warning.

Cause:

If your PC is generating too much heat, the internal fans will kick in to try to cool things down. If the fans are being forced to work harder than normal, it's a clear sign that something isn't right.

What to do:

First, identify the cause of the heat. It could be down to poor ventilation, components overheating or dust clogging up the inside of your PC. Try moving your computer to a location with better ventilation and clear away any dust, preferably using a mini-vacuum cleaner (don't use an air spray duster – it will just move the muck around and may make things worse). If it's a desktop computer, temporarily remove the side of the casing to see if that helps.



Noisy, constantly spinning fans suggest your PC is struggling

Hard drive is making strange noises

Symptom:

Your hard drive shouldn't make any noise aside from the gentle whirring you hear when data is being accessed. If the drive is clicking, grinding or whistling, it's very likely that it's beginning to fail.



If your hard drive is noisy, check its health status using CrystalDiskInfo

Cause:

Impending failure is the number one suspect when it comes to noisy hard drives. Mechanical drives are much more reliable than they used to be, but they still won't last forever.

What to do:

Check the S.M.A.R.T. (Self-Monitoring, Analysis, and Reporting Technology) status for the noisy drive using the free program CrystalDiskInfo (bit.ly/crystal383). If the health status says Bad or Caution, this suggests that the drive is failing, so you will need to save your data and get a replacement. If the status says everything is fine, make sure the drive is tightly screwed into the chassis. If the screws have come loose, due to vibration, that could be the source of the noise.

Blue screen errors keep appearing

Symptom:

Blue screen errors, also known as the Blue Screen of Death (or BSOD) are the most feared of all errors and require you to reboot your PC to resume using it. Unfortunately, once you've had one blue screen, they may become a regular occurrence.

Cause:

Blue screen errors have many causes, including a change of hardware, software problems and driver



The built-in Resource & Performance Monitor pinpoints errors in Windows

incompatibility. They can also be caused by failing hardware – processor, memory and motherboard problems being the most common causes.

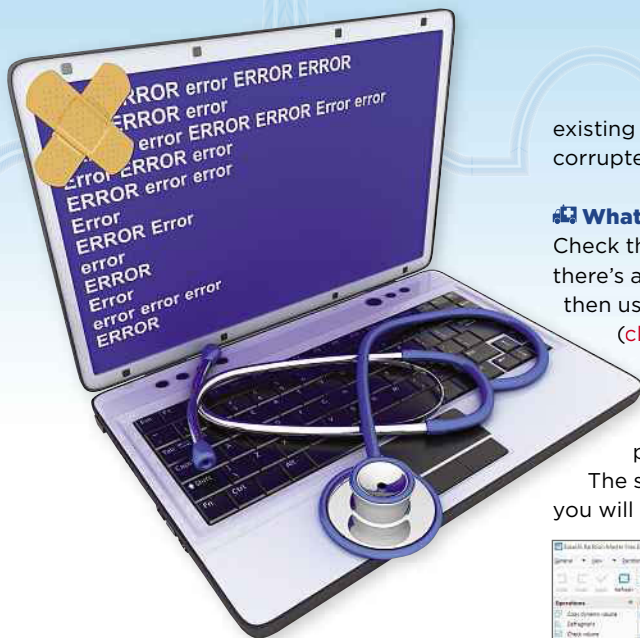
What to do:

You need to identify the root cause. If the blue screens started after you installed a program or a new piece of hardware, try removing the likely culprit. If the blue screens started for no obvious reason, you can try using the built-in Resource & Performance Monitor to identify the source of the problem. Press Windows+R, type `perfmon /report`, then click OK to see where errors have occurred recently.

It's also worth using the Windows Memory Diagnostic tool to check for faulty memory. Go to Start, Administrative Tools, Windows Memory Diagnostic. If it finds a problem with your RAM, you will need to replace it.



Use the Windows Memory Diagnostic tool to identify RAM problems



Rescue your hardware

existing files on the drive may become corrupted.

What to do:

Check the S.M.A.R.T. status to confirm there's a problem with your hard drive, then use a program such as Clonezilla (clonezilla.org) or EaseUS

Partition Master Free (www.partition-tool.com) to clone

as much of the drive as possible to a replacement drive.

The sooner you act, the more data you will be able to save.



Clone your hard drive to rescue data before it's too late

Graphics are not displaying properly

Symptom:

3D graphics aren't displaying as they should, your Desktop occasionally has

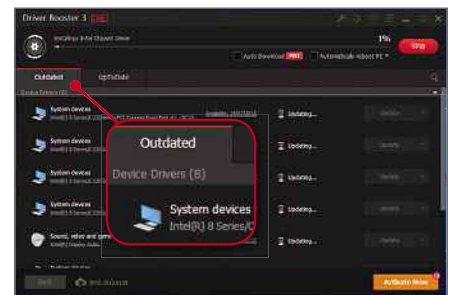
glitches and your PC freezes when you're playing games or editing video.

Cause:

This indicates a problem with your video card (or onboard graphics). It's likely that the card is overheating, so you need to find out why.

What to do:

First, remove and reinsert the graphics card (if it's a separate board). Make sure any power connectors are firmly in place. You can use Driver Booster (bit.ly/driver381) to make sure you have the latest graphics drivers installed. Finally, make sure there's enough ventilation in your PC and that any fans on the graphics card are spinning as they should.



Check for outdated drivers and update them using Driver Booster

Opening and saving files takes ages

Symptom:

When you open a file – such as a document, photo or video – or try to save one, the process takes a very long time and doesn't always work. Windows occasional fails to boot properly, too.

Cause:

This is likely to be a problem with your hard drive failing. You won't be able to read or write to bad sectors, and

PREVENT PHONE & TABLET TRAUMA

Mobile phone keeps shutting down

Symptom:

Your phone keeps turning itself off, even though there appears to be plenty of life left in the battery.

Cause:

If you have a removable battery, it could be inserted incorrectly. If you don't have a removable battery, it's likely that the device itself is faulty.

What to do:

If you have a removable battery, take the back off the phone and pull out the battery. Make sure there's no dust



Find out if your phone's battery is functioning properly

or dirt getting in the way, then reinsert the battery, replace the back of the phone and restart your device. While the battery is out, check that it's not damaged.

Android phones have an option that lets you test the battery for problems. Open the Phone app and dial *##*4636*##*. This will open Android's hidden test menu. Select Battery Information to see the battery charging status, charge level, scale and – most importantly – the battery health.

Tablet or phone is overheating

Symptom:

Tablets and smartphones often get hot when they're working hard, but if your device is getting very warm even when it's not being used, that could indicate problems.

Cause:

Processor-intensive tasks – such as playing 3D games – can generate a lot of heat, and using the tablet or phone in a warm room or outside on a sunny day can make things worse. Battery

problems are often the cause of continual overheating, especially if the device gets very hot when charging.

What to do:





Check to see which apps are running in the background, and disable any you don't need. If you have an Android or iOS device, go to Settings, Battery and see if you can spot any apps that are consuming more resources than they perhaps should. In iOS 9, there's a Low Power Mode you can switch to. If the overheating device is an Android phone, try the free app EaseUS Coolphone-Cool Battery (bit.ly/coolphone383), which is designed to instantly cool things down by disabling apps and features that can cause overheating.

EaseUS Coolphone stops your phone overheating



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	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
							CHEAPEST
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2		Sky: Broadband & Calls	£10.00 (12 months for FREE)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£0.00
3		EE: Broadband & Calls	£9.95 (£1.00 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	£12.00
4		Plusnet: Broadband & Calls	£9.99 (£2.50 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£30.00

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. Correct as of 20 October 2015.

Ofcom

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

In the next issue of our sister title Computeractive...

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PREVIEW!**

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• **GIVE YOUR PC THE ULTIMATE HEALTH CHECK** - How to examine every part of your computer

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• What to tick and untick in CCleaner

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Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your browser by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you unravel our streaming-themed word search and guess our movie-title emoji?

WEB USER WORD SEARCH

Can you find the following streaming services in the grid on the right? Names may appear vertically, horizontally or diagonally, and forwards or backwards

BLINKBOX
DEEZER
IPLAYER
NAPSTER
NETFLIX
SPOTIFY
TIDAL
TVCATCHUP
WUAKI
YOUTUBE

S	Y	N	M	O	X	D	W	T	W	J	I
X	U	O	L	T	E	R	V	C	E	X	K
L	M	G	U	E	I	C	J	A	R	C	A
R	H	Y	Z	T	A	L	A	D	I	T	U
R	E	E	E	T	U	Y	Q	L	M	X	W
E	R	Y	C	X	O	B	K	N	I	L	B
T	B	H	A	S	A	K	E	L	U	K	U
S	U	U	R	L	R	I	F	H	Z	T	P
P	L	A	H	A	P	T	D	F	B	C	H
A	Z	L	A	O	E	I	F	R	Q	T	T
N	C	R	Z	N	S	P	O	T	I	F	Y
F	N	F	K	F	B	H	D	L	H	Y	I

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE FILM TITLES FROM THE EMOJI?

1



2



3



4



Get the answers online at www.webuser.co.uk/quiz383

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 5 Penclic Mouse R2 Wireless

The Penclic Mouse is an ergonomic device that places less strain on your hand, arms, shoulders and neck during daily computer use. It looks, feels and moves like a pen, and creates a relaxed posture for your hand, allowing your forearm to rest on the work surface.

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WORTH
£59.99
EACH

WIN 1 OF 5 Griffin PowerDock 5 charger

Gold winner of our Multi-device chargers Group Test in Issue 381, the Griffin PowerDock 5 charges up to five devices, accommodating phones and tablets neatly in its dock. It's optimised for iOS devices, though it will also charge

most Kindle and Android devices, too. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'griffin' in the subject line. Griffin ranges are available from John Lewis, and you can follow @griffintech on Twitter.



WORTH
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Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Wirelessly control your Android phone from your PC

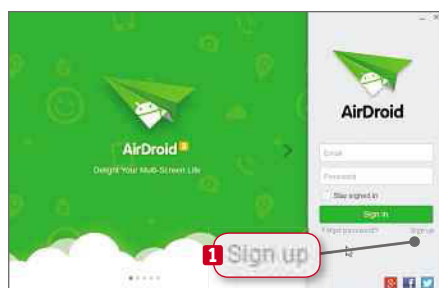
www.airdroid.com

AirDroid lets you transfer files between your phone and PC, and use your PC to text and manage phone calls. Here's how it works

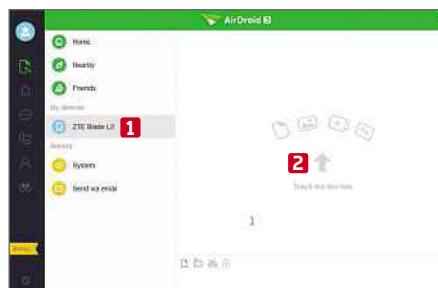
Rather than copying files from your phone to your computer via a USB cable, AirDroid lets you set up a wireless link to drag and drop them from one to another. You can also use the app to view and reply to text messages from your PC (using the full-size keyboard instead of the tiny one on your phone)

and respond to incoming calls without needing to pick up your handset.

To use AirDroid, you need to install the free Android app on your phone and the Desktop software on your Windows or Mac OS X computer. There's also a web-based tool available, so you can manage your phone from any browser.

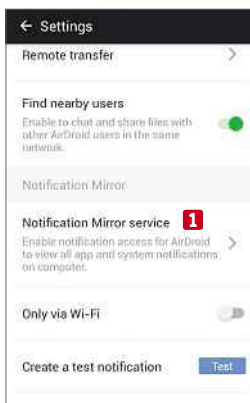


1 To get started, install the AirDroid app (bit.ly/airdroid383) on your phone and the software on your PC or Mac. You'll need to create an account, so click the 'Sign up' link **1** and enter your email address, a password and a nickname. Click Sign Up. You'll need to verify your email address.



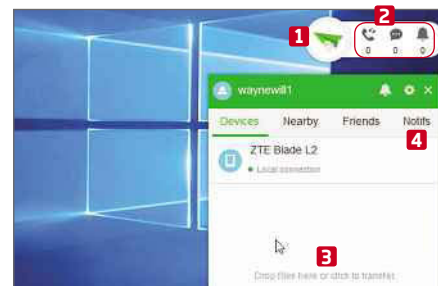
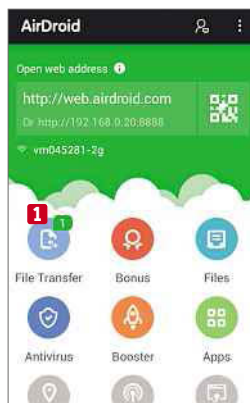
2 On your Android phone, sign in using the email address and password you signed up with. The connection will be made and your phone will appear under My Devices in the AirDroid software on your computer. **1** You can now drag and drop files from your computer to your Android phone. **2**

3 Before you do anything, enable Notification Mirror on your phone. Tap the three dots in the top-right corner and select Settings. Scroll down to 'Notification Mirror service', **1** and tap it.

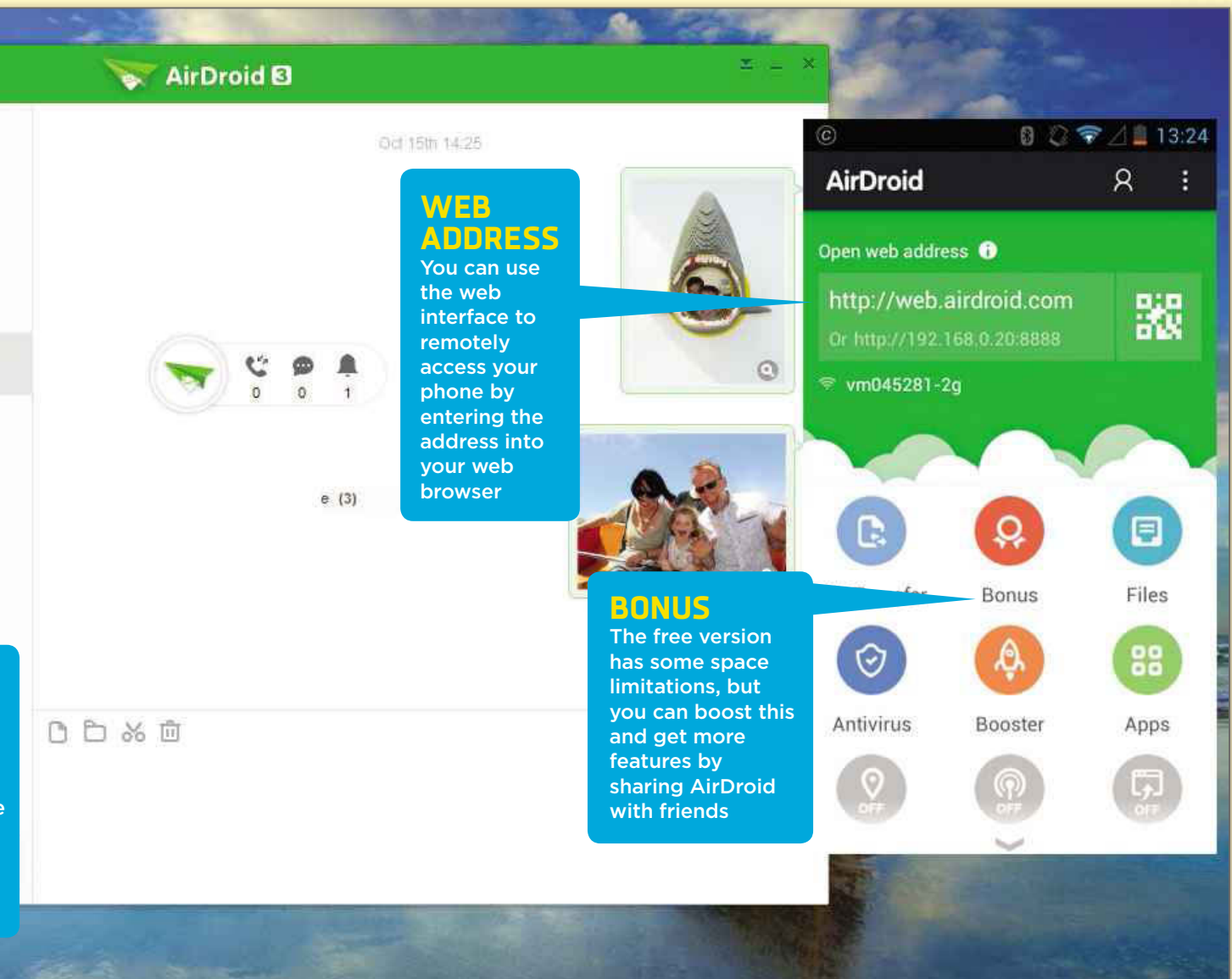


Tap 'AirDroid Notification Mirror service' on the next screen and flick the switch to On. Read what data AirDroid can collect, and tap OK if you're happy.

4 To transfer photos to your phone, drag them to the main window. Once the transfer is complete, you'll see a number on the File Transfer button. **1** Tap the button, then click the AirDroid Desktop entry to view the files. These can be shared elsewhere via AirDroid, Bluetooth, Google Drive, Email, Facebook and other services.



5 Instead of having the full AirDroid software open on your computer, you can use a floating widget **1** to access all the main features. Click it to see any received calls, texts and notifications. **2** You can also transfer files **3** to connected and nearby devices and friends, and view notifications. **4**

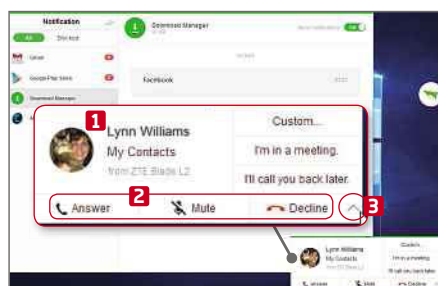


WEB ADDRESS

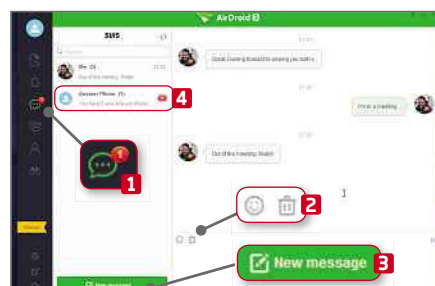
You can use the web interface to remotely access your phone by entering the address into your web browser

BONUS

The free version has some space limitations, but you can boost this and get more features by sharing AirDroid with friends



6 When a phone call comes through, you'll see (and hear) a notification. If it's someone in your contacts, you'll be shown who it is. **1** You can choose to answer the call on your phone, mute it or reject the call. **2** Clicking the small arrow in the bottom-right corner lets you send a response by text message. **3**



7 When you receive a text message, click the messenger tab **1** to view it. You can type a response here, add an emoticon or delete a message. **2** You can also create a new message. **3** Answer Phone messages are also shown on this screen. **4**



8 The web interface is designed to look like a PC Desktop. It displays information about your phone, **1** including the remaining storage space. There's a toolbox for sharing content **2** and a collection of apps **3** that give you access to tools such as Messages, Photos, Contacts and Camera.

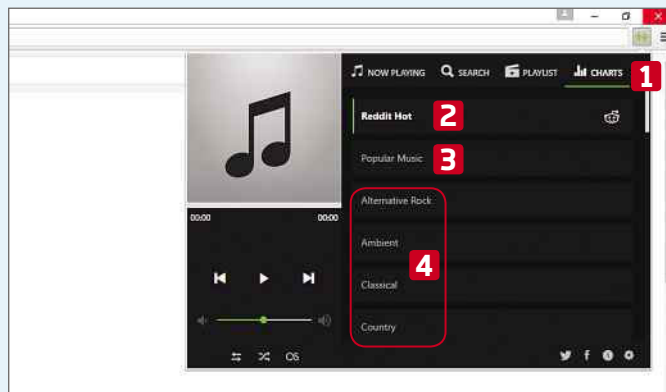


Turn YouTube into your best ever music player

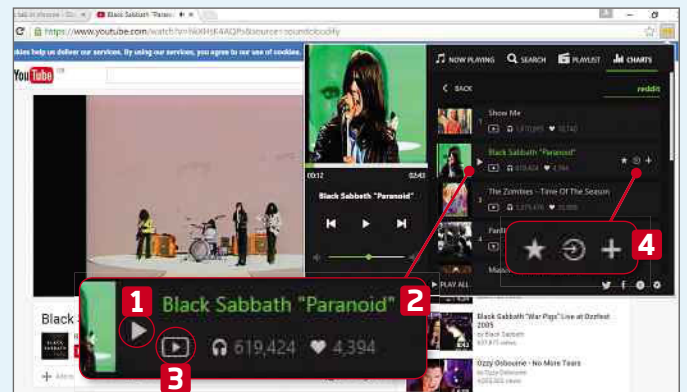
YouTube: www.youtube.com | ⌚ 10 mins | 🌐 Chrome

The way we listen to music has changed beyond all recognition in the last few years; CDs and digital downloads are still popular, but more and more people are now streaming their music. A service such as Spotify is great if you don't mind listening to ads or paying a subscription fee, but there are other ways to create playlists of your favourite songs that are completely free.

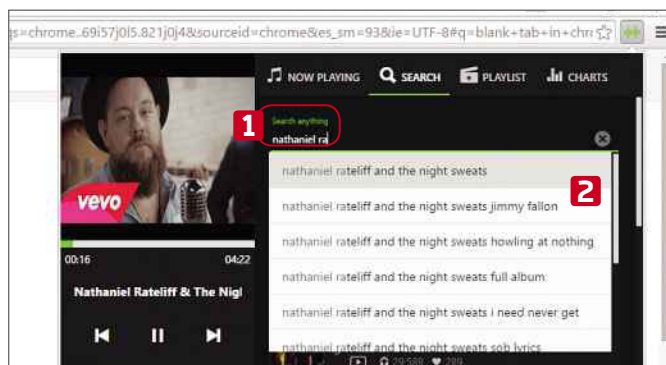
YouTube has a vast collection of music, from the latest chart-toppers to rare and obscure recordings, but the site was never designed to replace music software. To make it more useful for music lovers, we've found a couple of Chrome add-ons that provide YouTube with the tools you find in music-playing software and services. UpNext (bit.ly/upnext383) brings a software-like interface to your browser to line up tracks (it also works with SoundCloud), while the PlayTube add-on (bit.ly/play383) also plays the video in the background and has some interesting sharing options.



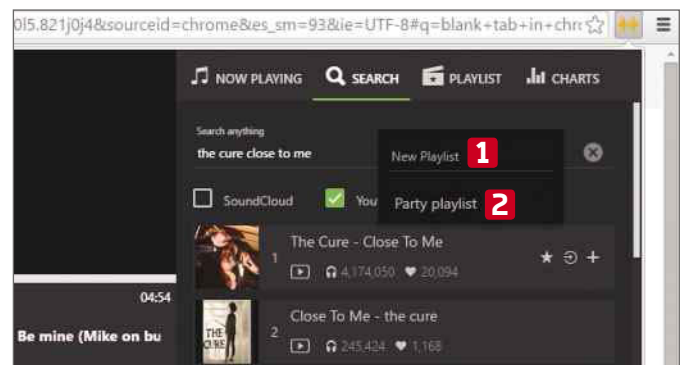
1 Install the UpNext add-on from the Chrome Store and open it from its icon. There's no music pre-loaded but you can explore music that other people like in its Charts tab.
1 Try the Reddit Hot chart, **2** the Popular Music chart **3** or select your favourite genre from the list below. **4**



2 To play a song, hover over the Play symbol **1** or click the title. **2** Clicking the Play symbol in a rectangle **3** takes you to the originating site (either YouTube or Soundcloud). The three icons **4** that appear on the right of the track let you Star, Play Next or Add it to a playlist.



3 To search for a track, start typing the artist or song name into the search box. **1** Suggestions will be shown as you type. **2** SoundCloud and YouTube are both searched but you can untick one or the other to exclude it. You'll probably find more official tracks through YouTube.



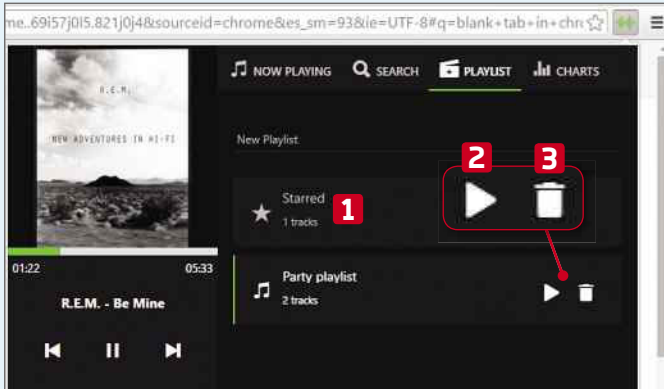
4 Click the '+' icon to add a track to a playlist. You can create a new one by clicking New Playlist **1** and typing over it; or select one you've already made from the list below. **2** If you already have YouTube or SoundCloud playlists, click the Import button to add them.



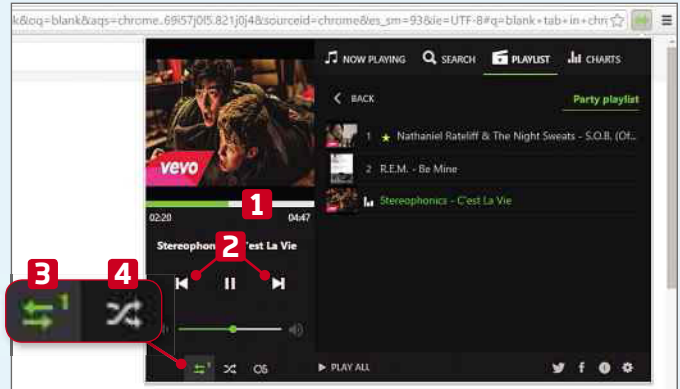
EXPERT TIP

Andy Shaw says

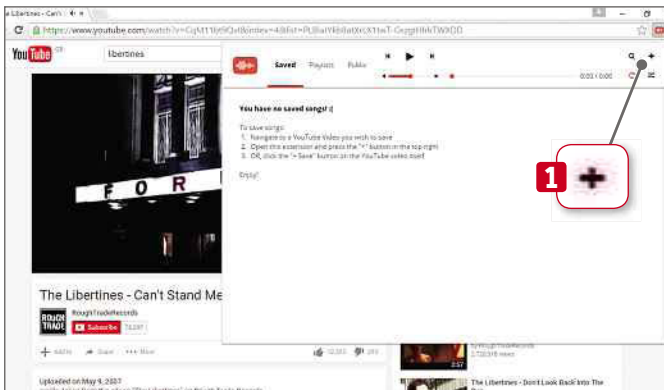
You can use YouTube's own apps (bit.ly/ytand383 on Android and bit.ly/ytios383 on iOS) to listen to YouTube's extensive music catalogue on a mobile device, but they use YouTube's playlist system, so you're likely to get ads between tracks. Independent apps are a better bet and let you make playlists within the apps. Try MyTube (bit.ly/mytube383) on Android and Musi (bit.ly/musi383) on iOS.



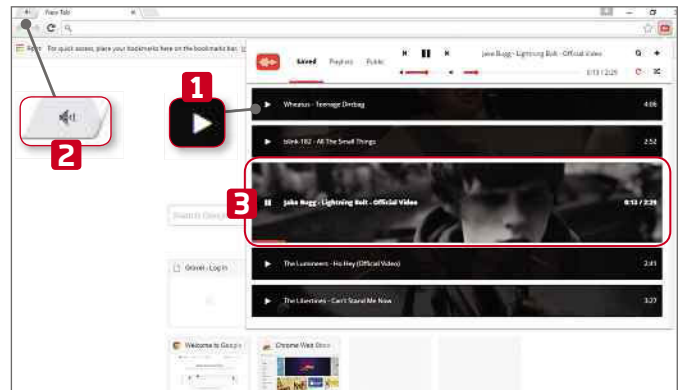
5 Click the Playlist tab to access your starred music **1** and other playlists. Hover over a playlist and click the Play button **2** to play all its tracks, or the bin **3** to remove it. Click its name to see its tracks. To rearrange the tracks, create a new playlist and add them in the order you want.



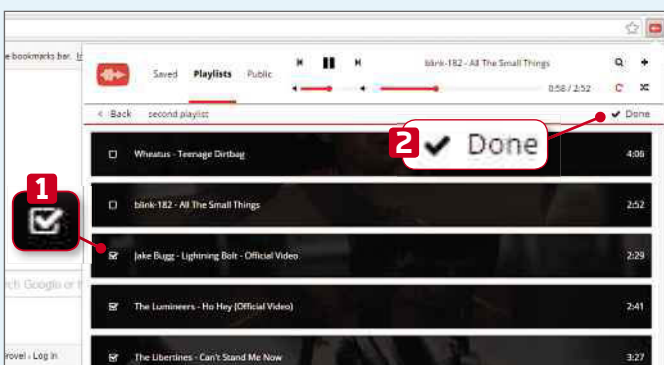
6 Playback is controlled from the panel on the left. You can skip ahead within a track by clicking the time bar **1** or use the buttons **2** to skip to the next or previous track. At the bottom, you can repeat all; **3** press it again to repeat the individual song you're playing; or set Shuffle mode. **4**



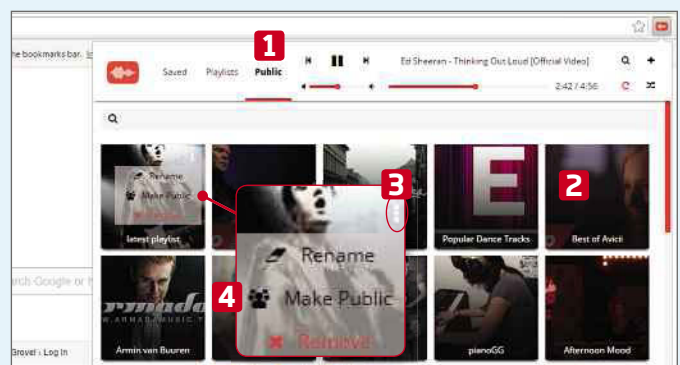
7 If you'd like to watch the videos as well as play the music, the PlayTube add-on (bit.ly/play383) integrates more directly with the website and plays the video every time. Go to YouTube and find a video you want to save, then click the '+' button **1** to save it.



8 You can then play the list of saved tracks by clicking Play on the one you want. **1** The YouTube page will move to a mini tab, **2** which you can view if you want to, but doesn't take up much room if you don't. You can also see a letterbox view of what's playing directly from the add-on. **3**



9 To make a playlist from your saved songs, click the Playlists tab. Click the big '+' button to add a new playlist and type in a name. Click the Edit link in the top-right corner and tick the selection boxes of the songs you want to include. **1** Click Done **2** to create the playlist.



10 Click the Public tab **1** to see playlists made by other people. Click a playlist **2** to see its tracks and play through it. You can make your own playlists public by clicking the three-dot menu button in the top-right of a playlist, **3** then clicking Make Public. **4**

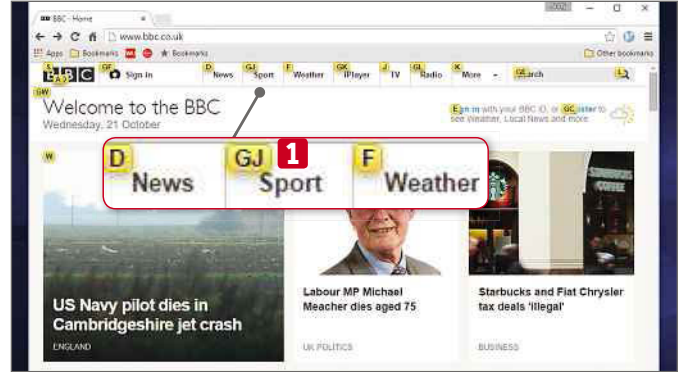
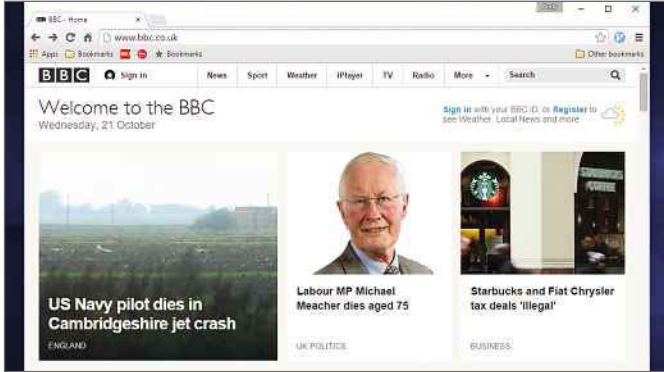
Browse the web using keyboard shortcuts

Browsing the web on a PC requires both a keyboard and a mouse, because you need to type in web addresses and click links. But swapping your hands from mouse to keyboard and back again isn't particularly efficient, especially if

you're a quick typist. Vimium is a Chrome add-on that lets you surf using just your keyboard, so you don't have to keep switching between your devices.

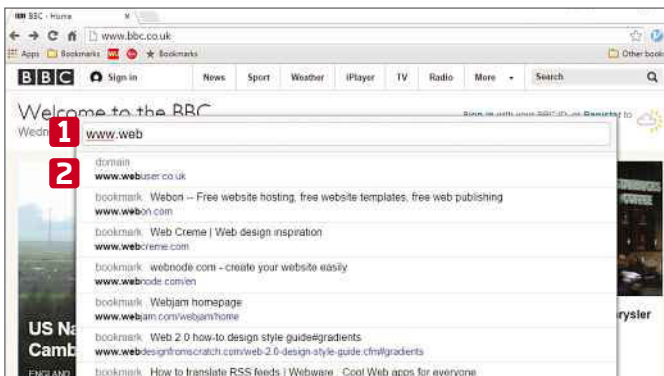


Vimium: bit.ly/vim383 | 10 mins | Chrome



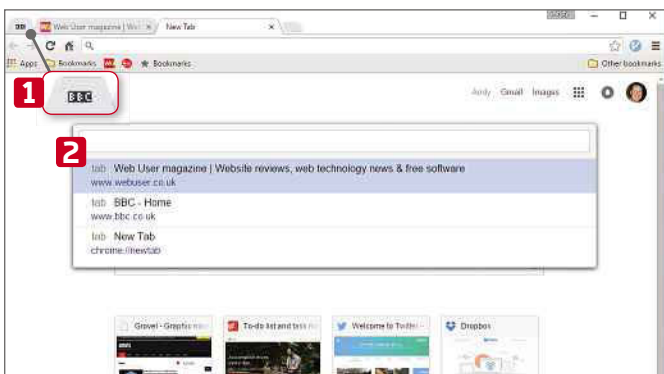
1 Vimium lets you scroll up and down a website with the 'u' and 'd' keys. If you want a shorter scroll, use 'j' and 'k'. Holding down these keys will make the site scroll smoothly. 'G' (Shift+g) will take you to the bottom of the page, while 'gg' returns you to the top.

2 The best thing about this tool is the way it lets you browse links. Press the 'f' key and every visible link will be assigned a code, shown as a yellow icon. **1** Type the letters and the link will open in the same tab. If you want to open a link in a new tab, use 'F' instead of 'f'.



3 To open a new page from a URL, bookmark or history entry, press 'o' (or 'O' to open it in a new tab) and start typing into the box (the Vomnibar). **1** Pressing Tab will highlight the first option listed below **2** and you can keep pressing Tab to highlight the next. Press Enter to select it.

4 To find text on the page, press '/' and type your query into the box, **1** followed by Enter. You can skip forwards and backwards through found matches with 'n' and 'N'. 'H' and 'L' skip backwards and forwards through the tab's history, much like the browser's Back and Forward buttons.



5 The letter 't' opens a new tab. Flip from tab to tab with 'K' and 'J'. You can pin a tab with Alt+p **1** and close a tab with 'x'. Capital 'X' will reopen the last tab you closed. Pressing 'T' opens the Tab box. **2** Start typing in it or use the Tab key to select one of your open tabs to switch to it.

6 To temporarily turn off the shortcuts, perhaps because you're filling in a form and don't want to trigger any actions, press 'i'. To start it again, press Escape. Vimium has many other functions and you can find more shortcuts **1** by pressing '?' and using the wiki at bit.ly/vimwik383. **2**

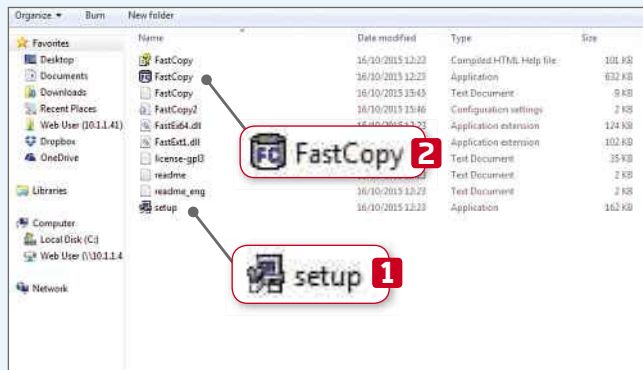


Copy large files quickly and efficiently

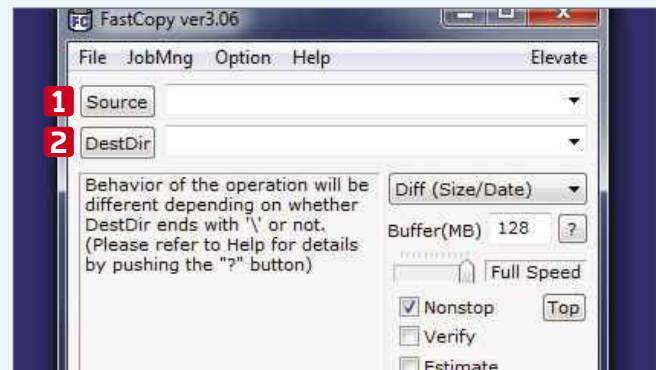
Making backups of files and folders can be a time-consuming and resource-hungry process, especially if you're regularly moving large files, such as videos. FastCopy is a free Windows tool that speeds up the transfer

of big files and manages your computer's internal resources to minimise the slowdown your PC suffers while it's carrying out the task.

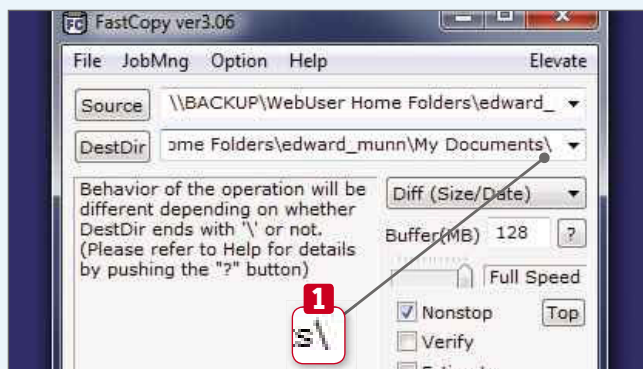
FastCopy: bit.ly/fast383 | 10 mins | XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10



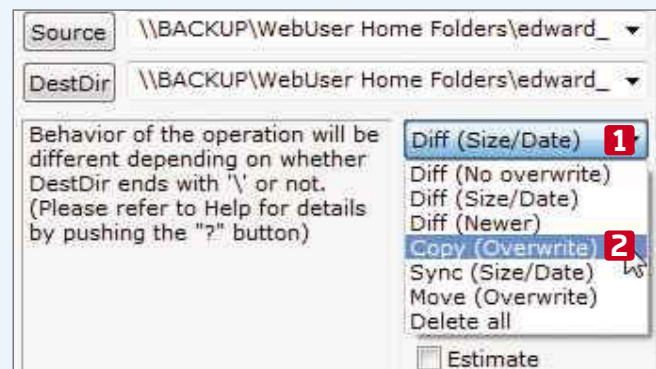
1 Download FastCopy from one of the links at bit.ly/fast383 and unzip the folder's contents. Run 'setup' **1** to install the program or double-click FastCopy **2** to use the portable version. If you move the portable version, make sure you keep it with the accompanying Compiled HTML file.



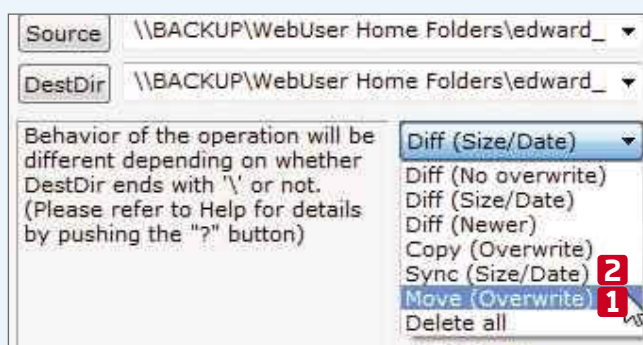
2 Click Source **1** to choose source files and click DestDir **2** to choose the directory to copy them to. You can also add source files or folders by holding Ctrl and dragging and dropping them to the appropriate box. To add multiple source directories, use a semicolon (;) as a separator.



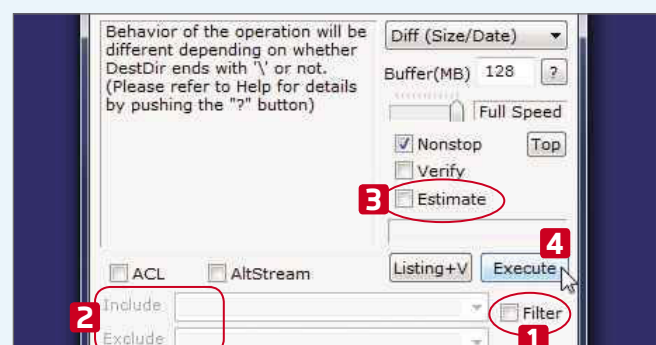
3 If DestDir's last character is a backslash (\), **1** both the source folder and its contents are moved; delete '\ ' to only copy the folder's contents. You can't do this when copying files to a drive's top directory (for example, D:\). Instead, add an asterisk (*) to the end of the Source filepath.



4 Click 'Diff (Size/Date)' to choose the operation mode. **1** The default mode copies your files if they don't exist in the destination or if they have different sizes or dates. Select 'Copy (Overwrite)' **2** if you want to overwrite any duplicates that exist in the destination.



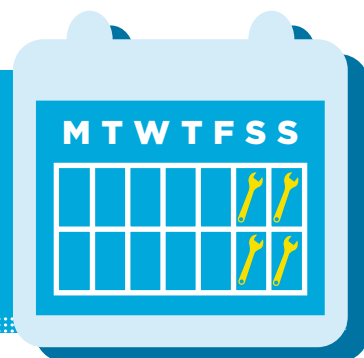
5 'Move (Overwrite)' **1** deletes duplicate files in the destination and the originals from the source directory. 'Sync (Size/Date)' **2** copies files that aren't in the destination (or have different sizes or dates) and deletes files in the destination folder that aren't in the source directory.



6 Once you've selected the appropriate mode, tick the Filter box **1** to add an Include or Exclude filter. **2** Ticking Estimate **3** makes FastCopy show the estimated completion time of the transfer. Finally, click the Execute button **4** to start copying.

Weekend Project

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

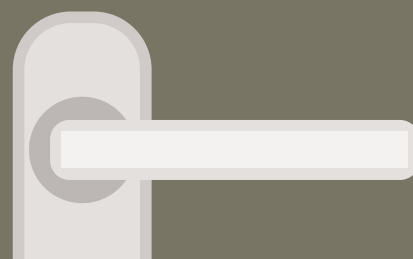
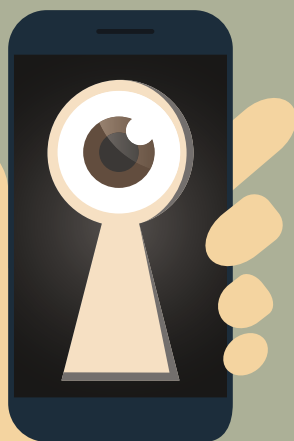


How to...

Hack your doorbell to avoid unwanted callers

Wayne Williams shows you how to find out who's at your front door without answering it, even if you're away from home

Not everyone who comes to your front door is someone you want to see. While you might happily open the door to friends, family and certain neighbours, you'll no doubt be less keen to greet sales people, political campaigners and religious doorsteppers. The problem is that, in most cases, you probably don't know who's calling until you've opened the door, by which time it's too late to pretend to be out. Fortunately, there is a modern, effective solution, and that's to replace your existing doorbell with one that lets you see who's calling without you needing to go anywhere near the door.



New doorbell options

There are lots of ready-made doorbells and intercom systems that let you see who is at the front door or loitering outside your home. DoorBird (www.doorbird.com), which was originally only sold in mainland Europe but is now available internationally, is one of the better products. It requires a mains connection to work (there's no battery option) – you just connect it with the

supplied mains adapter or to any existing doorbell wiring.

The device connects to your internet router, so you can be alerted to callers wherever you are in the world, and you have the choice of either an Ethernet or Wi-Fi connection. The former is the recommended option, because it's more stable, but the latter is easier and frankly less messy – after all, you're probably not keen on having a cable trailing from

your doorbell to your router.

You receive a push notification on your smartphone whenever someone rings the bell or motion is detected outside, which is handy if you're in the garden, round at a neighbour's or somewhere else beyond the audible reach of your standard doorbell chime. You can use the app to see who is calling and talk to them. If it's a courier, and you're away from home, you can ask them to leave the package



The DoorBird puts a camera on your doorbell and links it to your smartphone

somewhere safe or with a neighbour, which means you won't have to take a day off work or advertise your absence by sticking up a sign.

DoorBird can connect to an existing door chime and also to an electronic lock, gate or garage-door opener. This will let you remotely open the door using the app whenever you see someone outside that you want to let in. The device comes in a weather-proof and tamper-resistant stainless steel case but it's rather large (157 x 75 x 35mm) so it won't be suitable for every home. DoorBird costs from €349 (approximately £257) and the free app is available for both iOS and Android. We show you how

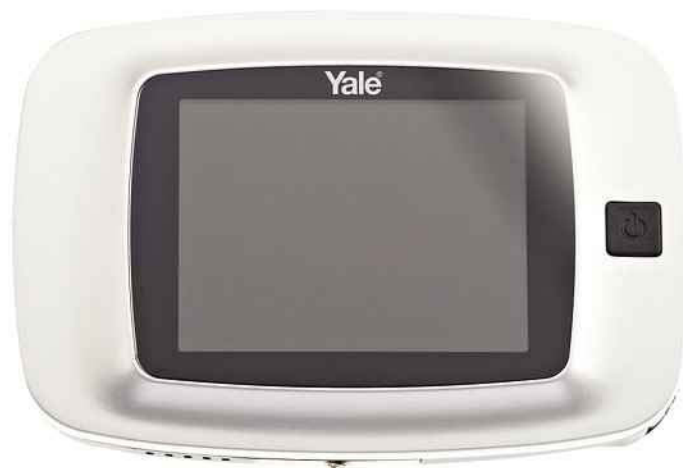


If the DoorBird is too big for your door, Ring is smaller and might fit better

to install one in our Mini Workshop below.

Ring (ring.com) is a similar product that offers wide-angle HD video, smart motion detection and cloud recording. It sends an alert to your smartphone whenever someone rings the bell or motion is detected outside the door.

Ring is an American product, priced at \$199 (£129), and the company will deliver to the UK for an extra £13 to cover postage. The cloud-recording feature costs \$3 (around £2) a month or \$30 (£20) a year, but there is a free 30-day trial available so you can try it for free before committing to a subscription. If you like the idea of DoorBird but find it's too large for your home, Ring might be a preferable alternative because it's slightly smaller at 127 x 62 x 22mm. It also has a built-in battery, so you don't need to



The Yale system doesn't use a smartphone app but comes with its own screen

connect it to the mains if it's not practical to do so.

If you want something a little cheaper and don't need the smartphone element, there's the Yale Digital Recording Door Viewer, which costs £74 from Ebuyer (bit.ly/yale383), or the Swann Doorphone Video Intercom, which costs £129.99 from Maplin (bit.ly/swannmap383). Both display video on a supplied screen, so you can see who's calling, but you need to be at the door to view it. That's not going to be much use if your front door has a glass panel in it because any callers will be able to see you peering at the screen on the other side of the door.

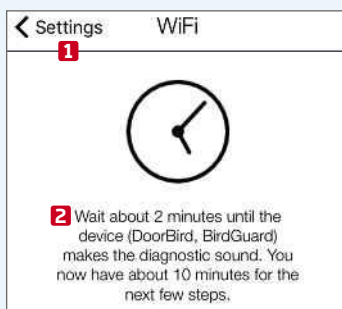
Finally, the Kickstarter funded I-Bell (www.i-bell.co.uk) looks promising, but despite claims it would be launching in June 2014, there's still no word on when (or more likely if) it will ever be available. Keep an eye on the Kickstarter page for updates, but don't hold your breath.



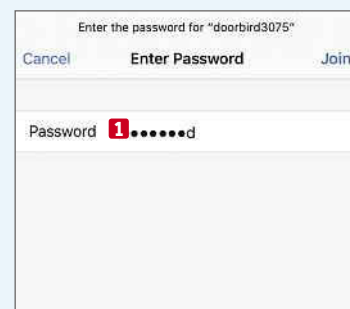
MINI WORKSHOP | Install a DoorBird doorbell



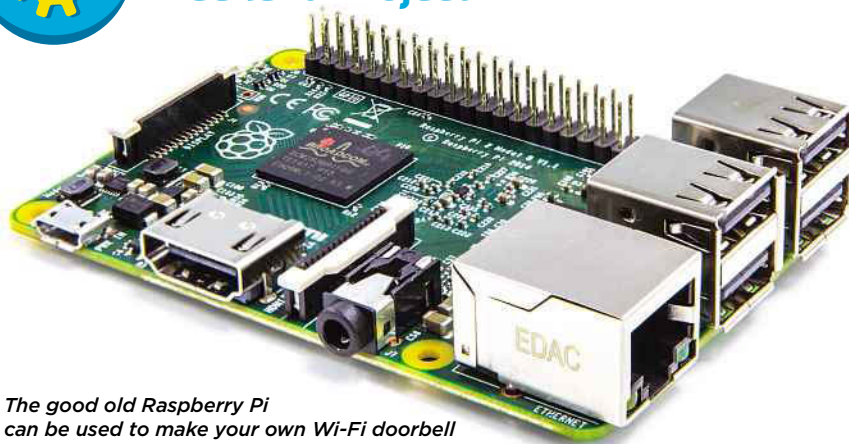
1 Most of the things you need (except the tools) come supplied with the DoorBird. Begin by mounting the plate on the outside of your home, near to your front door, and drilling a hole (if needed) into the house for the power cables to be fed through. Use the crimp connectors **1** to secure the wires to the mains adapter.



2 Mount the video doorbell on the plate, then plug it into the mains. Download the app from iTunes (bit.ly/doorbirdios383) or Google Play (bit.ly/doorbirdandroid383) and launch it. On your phone, go to Settings, **1** Wi-Fi Setup and follow the instructions. You need to turn off the DoorBird, reconnect it and wait for around two minutes. **2**



3 When you hear the diagnostic sound, press and hold the doorbell button for 10 seconds. DoorBird will create a Wi-Fi network for you to connect your phone to. Go into your device's wireless settings and connect to it using the SSID and password **1** supplied in the app. Return to the app to complete the setup process.



The good old Raspberry Pi can be used to make your own Wi-Fi doorbell

Make your own doorbell

If you prefer the DIY approach, you can create your own smart doorbell. There are several options available but our favourite solution is to use a Raspberry Pi (www.raspberrypi.org). You'll find some good guides on how to do this on the web – there are plenty of examples at bit.ly/adafruit383. There's a particularly good guide you can follow at Expert Reviews (bit.ly/pibell383) that shows how to make a wireless smart doorbell using the Pi, a PC speaker, an Adafruit Pushbutton switch (which functions as the doorbell itself) and a Pushover account. Pushover (pushover.net) is a service that can send any kind of alert to your iPhone or Android device, including – in this case – notifying you whenever someone presses the doorbell. Both the Android and iOS Pushover apps include a free seven-day trial, and will set you back £3.99 if you wish to keep using them.

This is a one-time payment, you don't need to sign up to a rolling subscription. The project requires some soldering and programming, but nothing that most people won't be able to handle if they follow the guide carefully.

A student called Ahmad Khattab has built his own a Pi-powered internet doorbell that can call a phone, send a text



Pushover will send any kind of notification to your smartphone for a one-off £3.99 fee

Make a Raspberry Pi smart doorbell

It might sound silly, but connecting your doorbell to the internet is a great idea. At a basic level, it means that whenever someone presses your doorbell, your smartphone or tablet will chime so you'll never miss a delivery or visitor, whether you're down the bottom of the garden or listening to loud music in your study. You'll also be able to log doorbell presses, so you can prove that the courier you've waited for all day really did just stick the "sorry you were out" card through the letterbox without even trying the bell.

To connect your doorbell to your network (and the internet beyond), you'll need a Raspberry Pi and a Class 4 (or faster) 4GB SD card [with the latest version of Raspbian installed](#). You'll also need a power supply and an internet connection for the Pi, as well as all the doorbell-specific hardware we've listed below.



Looking for a DIY option? Expert Reviews has a great step-by-step guide

and stream video of your front-door view directly to a linked smartphone whenever someone comes calling. The bits and pieces for the project will set you back around £17, plus the cost of the Pi itself (approximately £30). There's a video you can follow at bit.ly/doorbellvid383 and some written instructions to accompany it at bit.ly/doorbellguide383.

Finally, Instructables has a guide to building a motion-detecting, video-streaming doorbell (bit.ly/motion383) using an Intel Edison and Arduino expansion board (bit.ly/edison383). It requires a webcam for the motion detection. ■

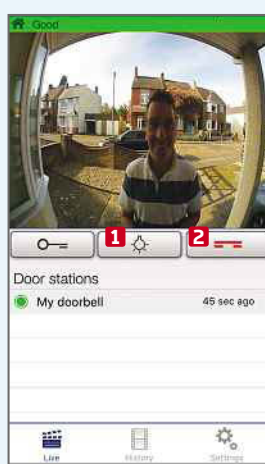


MINI WORKSHOP | How to use the DoorBird app

1 Connect the device to the app by tapping Add and using the QR scanner to scan the supplied code. Give it a name (such as 'My doorbell') – it's now set up and ready to use. Tap the device name to access the settings (you can delete the device here, too) and then tap on the Live button **1** to see the view through the camera. **2**



2 When someone comes to the door and rings the bell, your smartphone will make a tweeting sound (it's a DoorBird, after all). If it's dark outside, you can tap the lightbulb button **1** to switch to night vision (and back again). To speak to someone, use the talk button. **2** You will need to grant the app permission to use the microphone.



3 The live stream disconnects automatically after 60 seconds when it's connected via the internet. The History button **1** shows the last 20 visitors at your door. This can be people who have rung the bell or have just been detected outside (such as a postman). The Settings button **2** gives you access to all the app's configuration options.





DoorBird
Quality for a safer home.

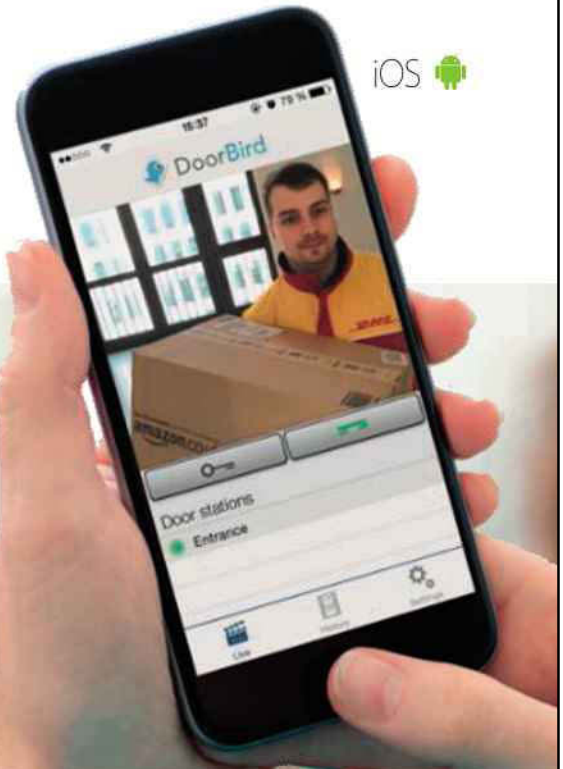
www.doorbird.com

At home when you are far away. With DoorBird you never miss a visitor.

With the new DoorBird, homeowners never miss a visitor. They are at home even when they are far away. Via smartphone they can talk to their visitors immediately. From anywhere in the world.



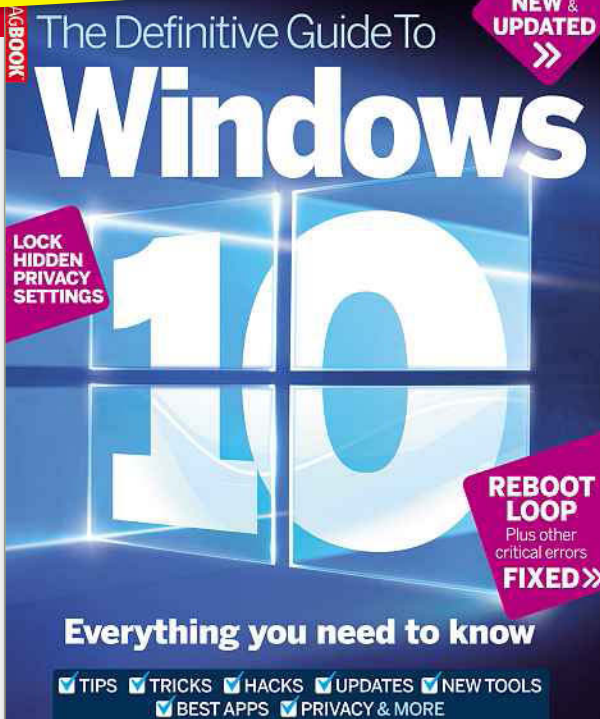
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- PoE and RFID integrated
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- Open doors and garages via App



iOS 

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This 148-page book is the only guide you need to use Microsoft's new operating system. You'll learn how to master all the new tools, lock Microsoft's weak privacy settings and stop future updates wrecking your PC. It includes fixes for all the problems and bugs that have appeared in Windows 10 since it launched. Plus, you'll discover how to make Cortana understand you, remove the apps you hate, fix the dreaded Reboot Loop problem, master the new Edge browser, and stop Microsoft sharing your personal info. Don't use Windows 10 without this book by your side!

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Web User's Top Tips

Our experts show you how to tweak the Windows 10 Start menu to make it faster and smarter

TOP TIPS FOR THE WINDOWS 10 START MENU

Choose between live and static tiles

The tiles on the Windows 10 Start menu can be either live or static. A static tile is a coloured box displaying an icon in the centre. If the tile is large enough, the name of the app or program is also displayed. Static tiles do the job required of them, but they're a bit boring.

Live tiles, as their name suggests, are more interesting. They can display specific information, but you don't have to run the tile's app to see this. The Weather app is a good example; when the large tile is set to show live information, it displays today's weather along with a mini forecast for the next four days.

Right-click each tile on the Start menu and select 'Turn live tile on'. If you find a live tile too distracting, right-click it and select 'Turn live tile off'.

Live tiles show information from apps without you having to run them



Resize the tiles

Start menu tiles can be set to a variety of different sizes. Not all apps support every possible size, but they all offer at least two. Some tiles – including Word, Excel and Edge – work well at the smallest size because they have instantly recognisable icons. If an icon is less easy to identify, it's better to use a medium tile because the app's name will also be displayed. Live tiles work best when they are sized wide and large. To change the size of a tile, right-click it, then select **Resize** and choose a size from the options.

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.

Resize the menu

The width and height of the Start menu are adjustable, so if you want to display more tiles, to provide fast access to more of your favourite software, you can make the menu bigger. Hover your mouse over the right or top edges of the Start menu and, when the pointer becomes a double-headed arrow, click and drag the edge to the size you want.

Rearrange the tiles

The tiles on the Start menu are



Drag and drop a tile outside an existing group to start a new one

shortcuts to apps. When you add a new app, it's placed at the bottom of the menu, rather than grouped in a logical order, so it can become hard to find the app you want as the menu fills up. However, you can click and drag tiles to organise them. Drag your favourites to the top-left corner or wherever you find them convenient to access, and drag those you rarely use down to the bottom of the Start menu, off the screen.

Rename groups of tiles

Start menu tiles are organised into groups and each group has a title. 'Life at a glance' and 'Play and explore' are provided, but you can rename them. Just click the title and type a new name.

To create a new group, click and drag a tile to the very bottom of the Start menu until a horizontal blue bar appears. Drop the tile under the bar to create a new group. Click the group



title or the space where the title should be to name it.

Rearrange groups

You can also rearrange the groups. When your mouse is over the group title, a two-line icon appears at the right. Click and drag it to move the whole group. Other groups move out of the way to fit wherever you drop it.

Configure your Start menu's settings

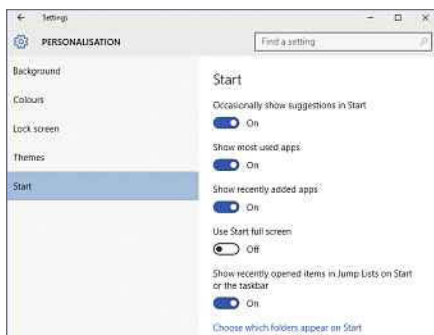
Click Start, Settings, Personalisation, Start to customise the menu. For example, you can show or hide the list of most-used apps that appears on the left. When software is installed, it is highlighted on the Start menu to make it easy to find, but if you don't need this, then turn it off. In the unlikely event that you miss the Windows 8 Start screen, there is an option to enable it instead of using the Start menu.

Jump lists, which provide access to recent actions in applications on the 'Most used' list, can be switched on and off. For example, if Notepad is on the Start menu's 'Most used' list and jump lists are turned on, an arrow appears on the right. Clicking it displays recent actions, which in Notepad's case will be the files you've recently opened. Just click a file to open it again.

Click 'Choose which folders appear on Start' to pick from the 10 available options. These include Documents, Pictures, Videos, Downloads and others. They provide quick access to common folders without you having to open File Explorer first.

Pin and unpin apps

You can remove tiles from the Start menu that you don't use. This doesn't delete the app, which will still be available through the 'All apps' list, but it will make your Start menu less cluttered. Right-click a tile and select 'Unpin from Start'. If there is an app you use that doesn't have a Start menu tile, go to 'All apps' and find it, then right-click it and select 'Pin to Start'.



Customise the Start menu in Settings and turn features on or off

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Run as administrator

Even if you are logged into Windows with an administrator account, most software is run in non-administrator mode by default. This improves security by preventing certain actions from happening, such as those that change system settings and the Registry. Sometimes, programs can only function properly if they are run in administrator mode. To do this, right-click a Start menu tile or program on the 'All apps' list, then select 'Run as administrator' on the menu that pops up.

Hide programs from the 'Most used' list

The top-left side of the Start menu shows a list of your most-used apps. It's designed so you can easily run your favourite programs without having to hunt for their tiles on the Start menu or in the 'All apps' list. However, it's not always the most convenient way to run software. For example, a program pinned to the taskbar can be launched in just one click, rather than the two clicks it takes to open the Start menu and then click a relevant tile.

For this reason, you might want to remove items from the 'Most used' list. Right-click any item and select 'Don't show this in list' to remove it.

Add a Run tile

If you've upgraded from Windows XP and miss the link to the Run tool on the Start menu, you can easily add it. Open Start, click 'All apps', scroll down the list to Windows System and expand the section. Right-click Run and select 'Pin to Start'. Find the tile on the Start menu and drag into your preferred position, then right-click it to set its size.

Pick your own colours

Windows selects the colour of the tiles on your Start menu depending on the Desktop image used, which doesn't always look good. And if the

Desktop image changes, then the tile colour changes, too. In most cases, it's better to set a fixed colour.

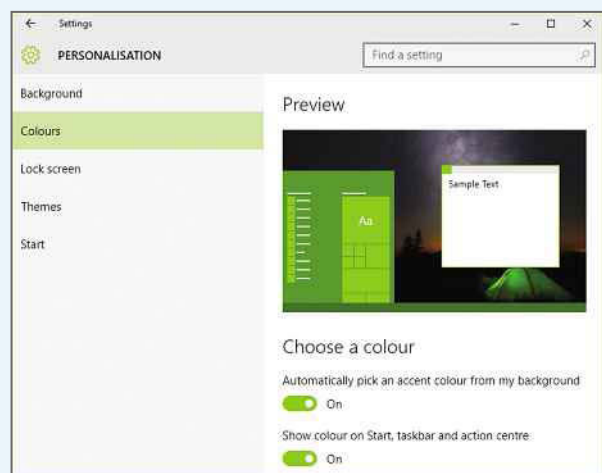
Right-click the Desktop and select Personalise. Select Colours on the left, and turn off the option to automatically pick a colour, then select a colour from the palette. Scroll down below the colour palette to see a switch to 'Show colour on Start, taskbar and action centre'. Switch this off to use black. The Start menu is slightly transparent and you can set a switch to turn this off if you prefer a solid background.

Uninstall software more quickly

The obvious way to uninstall software is to find the Control Panel in the Start menu (which isn't easy in Windows 10) and then open 'Programs and Features'. A quicker way is to right-click a tile or an item on the 'All apps' list and select Uninstall. If the item is a Windows Store app, it will be uninstalled directly, but with regular software, the 'Programs and Features' tool in the Control Panel will open. It's less effort and takes fewer mouse clicks.

Add advanced tools to your menu

Open Start, click 'All apps' and scroll down to Windows Administrative Tools. Expand the category and you'll find useful tools such as 'Defragment and Optimise Drives', Disk Cleanup and more. To make them easier to access, right-click and pin them to the Start menu.



Use the switches to stop Windows picking colours you don't like for your Start menu

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



WINDOWS 10

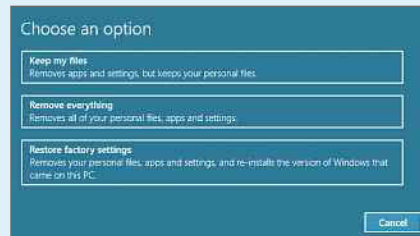
Roll back update problems

Q I downloaded Windows 10 and all was working fine until Windows Update downloaded and installed something that clearly wasn't compatible with my PC. I have since lost my Start menu and all the tiles, and Edge doesn't work at all. I'm tempted to reload Windows 7 and forget about Windows 10.

Ray Dalchow, via email

A System Restore might cure the problem by undoing recent Windows changes. Type **system restore** in the taskbar's search box. Click it in the search results, then click the System Restore button in the window that appears. Select a restore point from when the computer was working without any problems.

If this doesn't help, click Start, Settings, 'Update & recovery', then Recovery. Click the 'Get started'



Problems with Windows 10 can be fixed by resetting it using Recovery options

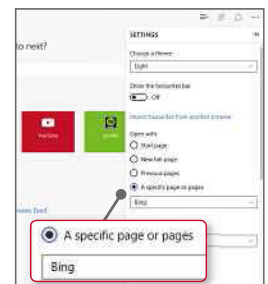
button under 'Reset this PC'. There are various options available to reset Windows that allow you to keep your files, remove everything or restore your PC to its factory settings. Try each of these options in the order given. Hopefully, the first will do the trick, but if not, make sure to back up your files before trying the others or you'll lose everything.

If Windows won't start, hold down Shift at the login screen and click the power button to bring up a menu with options for System Restore, Refresh or Reset the PC. If you're in Windows, you can hold down Shift while clicking Restart to get to the same menu.

uninstall them. Open Internet Options in the Control Panel and, on the Advanced tab, click 'Restore advanced settings', then Reset. Open Chrome, go to the menu and select 'More tools', Extensions. Delete all the extensions you don't need or recognise. Open Firefox, go to the menu and select Add-ons. Select Extensions and remove any you don't need.

Start Edge, click the three-dots menu in the top-right corner and select Settings. Try opening a new tab with the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+T. If you can't do this, go to the menu's 'Open with' section and select 'A specific page or pages'. Choose Bing from the drop-down menu. Set 'Open new tabs with' to a blank page. Click the 'View advanced settings'

button and, under 'Search in the address bar with', select Bing. Finally, open an Explorer window, open the View menu, tick 'Hidden items' and go to:



Malware can infect your browser's settings

C:\Users\Yourname\AppData\Local\Packages\Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_xxxxxx\AC\MicrosoftEdge\User\Default\Recovery\Active

Delete all the files in the Active folder.

MOBILE

How safe are other Android app stores?

Q I recently downloaded a couple of office apps from Amazon called Chaos Control and Groovy Notes. However, after reading that I should only ever download apps from the Google Play Store, I deleted the Amazon App Store, and now the two office apps won't work. They display an error saying that the Amazon app is not present. Why do they need Amazon to work? Is buying apps from Amazon as secure as from Google? Does Amazon apply

SECURITY

Remove suspicious messages from your browsers

Q Recently, when banking online, this message popped up on my screen: "Kaspersky Internet Security is not providing complete protection of your data: extension is disabled." However, when I checked my settings I saw Kaspersky is enabled. When banking online, I also see a message in the bottom-right of the screen telling me that an update is available for AdBlock Plus. Needless to say, I don't respond.

Also, Chrome and Firefox are now painfully slow. In Edge, this message appears: "This site says.....Wait!! xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx attention plusnet+ technologies personal photos, Facebook and other personal passwords, as well as credit card information could be at risk! This requires immediate attention! Contact tech support

immediately: 020-3514-[XXXX] (toll free)." Obviously I do not respond to this either, but I have to reboot to remove the message from the screen.

Brian Holland, via email

A Some sort of adware or malware on your PC is displaying bogus messages and slowing down your browsers. You are right not to respond to any of the messages because they could lead to more trouble. There are two good clean-up tools you should try: Malwarebytes Anti-Malware (www.malwarebytes.org) and AdwCleaner (bit.ly/adwc383).

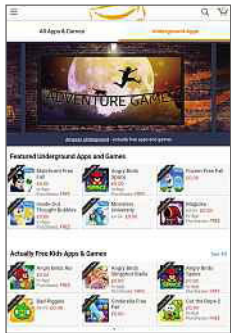
If that doesn't get rid of the messages and fix your slow browsers, you'll have to do it manually. Open 'Programs and Features' in the Control Panel (use the search box in the taskbar to find it). Look for suspicious programs, such as toolbars and search assistants, and



security checks to the apps they sell, like Google does?

John Beattie, via email

A Google's Play Store is the biggest and best known Android app store, but it isn't the only one. Amazon and Samsung are two examples of alternative Android app stores, and both are safe. It's not impossible for malware to get into them, but it is rare. The apps have been tested, approved and must abide by certain rules and regulations.



Amazon's App Store is one of many Google Play alternatives

However, some other app stores aren't so well regulated and sometimes contain malware. They should be avoided.

Apps may rely on components in the app store to function, such as to check for updates, provide in-app-purchases and so on. This is why the apps you downloaded from Amazon no longer work after you removed the App Store.

VIDEO

Create special tracking effects

Q I'd like to publish a video online, but I need to blur or conceal part of the content. I have found video editors that will allow this, but they are fixed to a specific area of the video so, if the subject moves, it leaves the wrong part of the scene concealed. This means it's a massive job, almost frame by frame, to edit a moving video. Is there a free (or very cheap) editing tool that allows for a specified object to be blurred and followed as it moves across the scene?

Bob, via email

A Corel Video Studio X8 will do the job, and there is a tutorial on Corel's website to guide you through the process (bit.ly/track383). The latest version costs £69.95 and there is a 30-day free trial, so you can try it to check that it does what you want.

Hitfilm 3 Express (hitfilm.com/express) is a very powerful free video editor that can track objects in videos in order to apply special effects such as explosions, gunfire, light sabres and so on. That might do what you want, although it's a complicated tool with a steep learning curve.

EMAIL

Block spam messages

Q Virgin Media's email service used to use Google's servers, but it's recently changed and I'm now inundated with spam emails. Is there a way I can block these?

Rob Newton, via email

A The move away from Google's servers did not go as smoothly as planned, but we've heard that Virgin is working on the problem and that some people have already reported a reduction in the amount of spam they're getting, so the problem may have been fixed by the time you read this.

If not, you could simply use an alternative program, with better filters, to collect your email. We'd recommend Thunderbird (bit.ly/thunder383), which you can train by marking unwanted messages as junk. It then learns what you want to see and what you don't, and spam will fade away.

Alternatively, you could reverse the Google-Virgin switch. Create a Gmail account and add your Virgin Media email account by clicking Settings,



Use Thunderbird's spam filters to remove the junk messages from your inbox

SECURITY

Microsoft Store security questions

Q I recently decided to download a Windows 10 weather app, and was directed to log into the Microsoft Store. I was then asked for a lot of personal information, including full name, birth date, contacts, Xbox live card number and credit card details. I was planning to download a free app! Is this some kind of joke?

Paul Riley, via email

A Microsoft doesn't ask for such information in its store and you don't need a credit card to download a free app. We presume the store was a fake designed to trick you into

Accounts, Import. Gmail will then collect your Virgin Media mail and apply its own filters. You then access your Virgin email in the Gmail interface, and there's an option to send email as if it came from the Virgin mail account too. The Virgin Media email settings can be found at bit.ly/virgin383, which has information on the incoming and outgoing server addresses and ports that Gmail needs to know.

HARDWARE

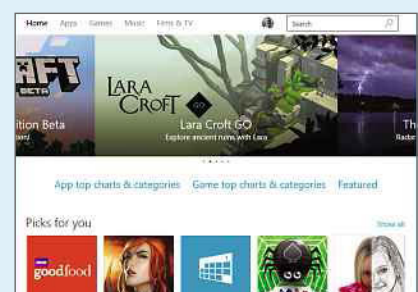
Open a DVD drive that doesn't work in Windows 10

Q I recently upgraded my laptop to Windows 10, but now I can't open my DVD drive, and it isn't listed in This PC. I've checked for new drivers and Windows tells me I have the latest. In Device Manager, it says the drive is 'not migrated'. I've searched the web for help, but the potential solutions offered by Microsoft haven't solved the problem.

Dennis Simmons, via email

A Toshiba has a DriverAssist Utility (bit.ly/tosh383) compatible with all versions of Windows from XP onwards, which will scan your hardware and downloads and installs the right drivers. If this doesn't work, you might need a new DVD drive. Budget models are only £20, so it is not a big expense.

You could also try uninstalling the DVD/CD software, then uninstalling the drive in Device Manager by right-clicking it. When Windows is restarted, it will detect the device as if it was new and install a fresh driver.



This is the genuine Windows 10 Store app - beware of fakes that steal info

revealing your personal details. If you revealed anything at all, you should change your passwords and credit card. To avoid such scams, don't click links in emails or accept invitations to download software. Open the Store app from within Windows and use the search tool to find the app you want.



This fortnight Roland has upgraded his Mac to El Capitan and reckons it's almost as good as Windows 10

Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others, visit forum.webuser.co.uk



TOP TIP

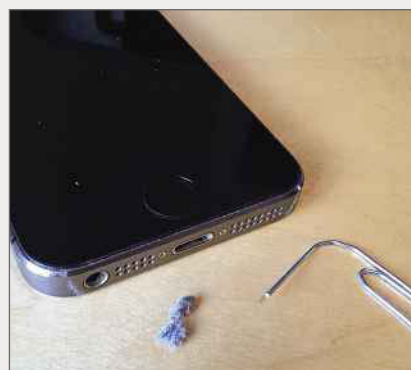
MOBILE

Solve an iPhone charging problem

Last week, when I plugged my iPhone into its mains charger, it felt as though the Lightning adapter had not engaged properly and the device did not begin charging. Since my partner has an iPad Air, I tried using his charger to see if it was my cable that had failed but, unfortunately, it still wouldn't charge. Because it looked like the problem was with the iPhone itself, which is out of warranty, I was ready to contact my insurance company to make a claim when I thought to look online to see if anyone else had experienced the same trouble.

It turns out that this is actually quite a common complaint and the most frequently cited cause is a build up of lint in the Lightning port. The obstacle can be removed by carefully picking it out with a drawing pin or needle.

After about 10 minutes of struggling,



You'll be surprised how much fluff collects in the iPhone's Lightning port

using a pin and a can of compressed air to get every small bit of fluff out of the port, I tried the charger again and, unbelievably, it worked! Because the battery was completely dead, it took a while before I could turn my phone on again, but I was so grateful not to have to go through all the hassle of making an insurance claim and fork out for a £50 excess.

Lucy Collins, via email

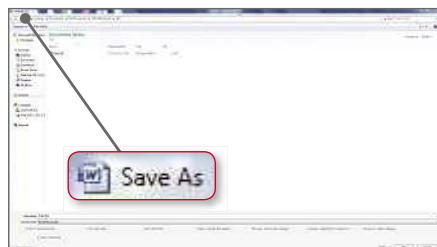
Mug winner



GENERAL PC

Restore the 'Save as' box to its usual size

Recently, I was saving an image on my hard drive when I accidentally clicked or pressed something that made the 'Save as' box fill my whole screen. It remained this size the next time I tried to save a file, and there seemed to be no way to get it back to normal. Dragging the box didn't work and there was no 'Restore'



Double-clicking an enlarged Save As title bar restores it to its normal size

icon to click in the top-right corner, as you usually find in folder windows. The problem was starting to drive me mad until I stumbled across the simple solution: double-clicking the title bar of the 'Save as' box instantly restored it to its usual size.

Jack Goodwin, via email

SOFTWARE

Shift tips for Paint.NET

I have a couple of tips for the fabulous free photo editor and paint program Paint.NET (www.getpaint.net). It can be difficult to draw lines that are perfectly vertical or horizontal but, if you hold down Shift while dragging out a line, it snaps to set angles. I think these must be around every 15 degrees, so if you are anywhere near vertical or horizontal, the line snaps to it.

When working on an image that is

larger than the window (or an image that you've zoomed in on), you can use the mouse wheel to scroll the image up and down. Hold down Shift and the wheel scrolls the image left and right. This is useful for quickly moving around the image. I discovered that if I drag up and down with two fingers on my laptop's trackpad, the image also scrolls up and down, and holding down Shift makes it scroll sideways.

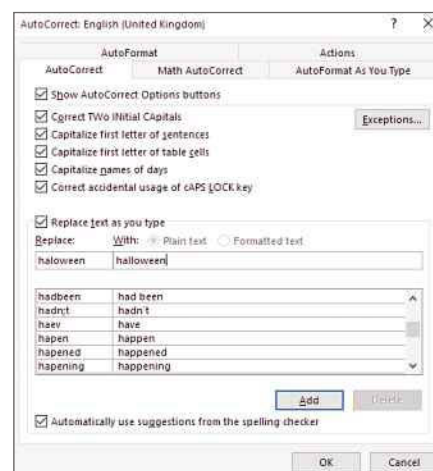
Karen Fox, via email

SOFTWARE

Auto-correct Office typos

It's easy to make slips when you're typing quickly, and Microsoft Word has some useful tools that can automatically correct them. If you regularly make the same mistake, such as reversing two letters ('teh', instead of 'the', for example) or missing one out, you can tell Word to look for the mistake and automatically correct it.

In Word, go to the File menu and select Options. Select Proofing on the left and click the AutoCorrect Options button. Select the AutoCorrect tab in the window that opens. Tick the box 'Replace text as you type' and find the



Build up a list of regularly mistyped words and their correct versions in Word



two boxes below labelled Replace and With. Enter your frequently mistyped word in the Replace box and the corrected word in the With box. Word will now replace the wrong word with the correct one as you type.

Liam Jones, via email

WEBSITES

Get email reminders

If, like me, you're a bit forgetful, it's handy to have a tool that can send you reminders. Remindeo (www.remindoo.com) is a free service that does just that, letting you set up free email reminders that are sent at a time and date of your choice. You can choose how far in advance of an event the reminders are sent, and there's an option to repeat the reminder daily, weekly, monthly or annually. I use the web version of Remindeo on my PC, so there's no need to download any software; the site has also been optimised for use with smartphones and tablets.

If you want to scribble something down but don't need to set up a reminder, the website lets you save normal notes, too. You can also use the site to send text-message reminders, but you need to buy credits to do this.

Graham, via email



Remindeo lets you set up email reminders for work and personal events

IOS

Show or hide keyboard prediction bar

The other day, I discovered that the bar that lists predicted words on my iPad's keyboard had disappeared. I mentioned this to my grandson who advised me to press the long, thin button above the Y key and then slide it up slowly. I did so, and the predictive bar reappeared! To hide the bar, simply long-press one of the predicted words and drag it downwards.

Reena, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

Redo what you undid

There are lots of keyboard shortcuts and

some are well known. For example, Ctrl+Z is used by almost every application to undo something. But did you know that Ctrl+Y redoes whatever you undid? Suppose you delete a file in Explorer, then realise you wanted it after all, Ctrl+Z undoes the delete and the file comes back again. No, wait, you really did want to delete it? Instead of re-deleting it, press Ctrl+Y. It basically undoes the undo and deletes the file again.

Les Jewel, via email

WINDOWS 10

Add folders to the Start menu

Unfortunately, you can't drag and drop a folder to the Start menu in Windows 10, but that doesn't mean there's no way to add a shortcut. In fact, the solution is much simpler than you'd expect. Just right-click the folder you want to add, select 'Pin to Start' and it appears with '- Shortcut' at the end of its name in the Start menu.

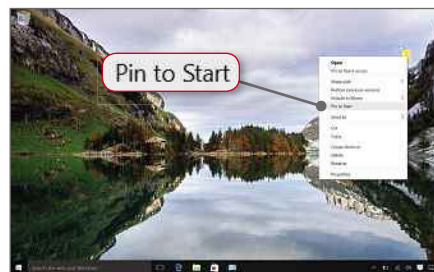
To remove the folder, right-click it in either location and click 'Unpin from Start'. If you'd prefer the shortcut to be hidden within the All Apps folder, this is also possible, although it's a little trickier. First, you'll need to create a shortcut manually by right-clicking the folder and selecting 'Create shortcut'. Next, cut and paste the folder to:

`C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs`

It will appear in the All Apps list in alphabetical order.

Tom Pugh, via email

Web User says: For more Windows 10 Start menu tips, turn to page 64.

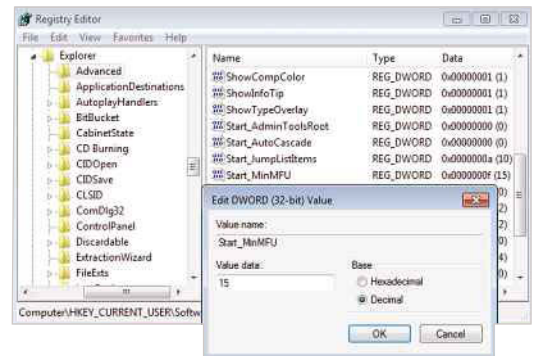


Windows 10 lets you pin folders to the Start menu

GENERAL PC

Add more programs to the Start menu

I run Windows 7 on my PC and have increased the number of my most-used programs on the left side of the Start menu from 10 to 15. This makes it easier to find and run programs. This can be done with a simple Registry tweak; just click Start and type regedit, then press



Increase the number of most-used programs in your Windows 7 Start menu

Enter. On the left side, go to:

`HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced`

On the right, look for Start_MinMFU. Double-click it and select Decimal for the Base. Now you can enter the number of programs you want to see on the Start menu's most-used list, such as 15. Close the Registry Editor, log out and log back into Windows, or restart. You will now see several more programs in the Start menu.

I don't have Windows 10, but a friend who does found this tweak no longer works. I think I'll stick with Windows 7 for a bit longer.

Robert Egan, via email

BROWSERS

Beat some online paywalls

I didn't realise that the Telegraph website (www.telegraph.co.uk) had a paywall until I had a pop up notification saying that I'd reached my free article limit and I would need to pay £6 a month to enjoy unlimited access. It's not a paper that I normally read, but I've loved its coverage of the Rugby World Cup, so I was disappointed not to be able to read the latest articles.

Since I hadn't logged into the site, I wondered how it was even able to identify that I'd visited so often. I was about to clear my cookies and cache and try the site again, but before that I tried the URL in Chrome's incognito mode and the page loaded straight away with no problems. Of course, if you read the paper daily, it's important that you pay the subscription fee, but if you're only an occasional visitor, you could get around any restrictions using this trick.

Ed Wright, via email



Chrome's incognito window lets you avoid some online restrictions



Readers' Helpdesk

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

SECURITY

Am I the victim of an attempted scam?

Q I received a phone call from a chap at Microsoft today saying hackers had accessed my online account. He said that it could be sorted out and advised me to log onto my computer. I declined, saying we were about to go out.

We have recently changed our phone number, so how would he know our new number? Also, why would Microsoft call me? Does this sound like a scam?

Bald Eagle, Web User Forums

A It certainly does and you did the right thing by ending the call. Microsoft will never call you unless you've actively arranged it with one of their technicians. Because you told the caller you were going out, you should be prepared for a call back, so make sure you alert anyone else you live with not to turn on your computer if you happen to be out at the time of the call.

There are a lot of scams around these days, as reported in the BBC article at bit.ly/scams383, so if you're suspicious that something might be dodgy, it probably is!

Madeline, Cantrel and Peru, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

Do I need a cooling mat for my laptop?

Q While awaiting the arrival of my new Dell laptop, I was browsing the shelves in Asda for accessories and noticed something called a laptop chill mat. I've never heard mention of these before and had never even thought of protecting my laptop from overheating.

There's a similar product on the Argos website (bit.ly/chill383) that claims to make typing easier, too, because it tilts the angle of the keyboard. Is this something I need or is it just a waste of money?

George, Web User Forums

WINDOWS 10

Why does my Wi-Fi keep dropping?

Q Since upgrading from Windows 8.1 to Windows 10, my Wi-Fi connection drops every 10 minutes. I have tried restarting my BT Home Hub 3 router a few times but it doesn't rectify the problem. My wireless network adapter in Device Manager is listed as a Qualcomm Atheros AR5B97.

ubainio, Web User Forums

A You should definitely check your drivers first, although I would have expected Microsoft to provide an update for them via Windows Updates. Qualcomm Atheros wireless drivers can be problematic to install, because the only download site I've ever seen them on is based in the Czech Republic (bit.ly/atheros383) and it doesn't provide an EXE file you can run.

Instead, try going into Device Manager (type it into the search box) and expanding the 'Network adapters' section. Right-click the Qualcomm Atheros adapter and select Uninstall, but don't tick the box to include the software. Then either reboot your PC or click the Action menu, choose 'Scan for hardware changes' and wait for Windows to reinstall the driver.

You could also try going to the support site for your computer, where



Click Action then 'Scan for hardware changes' to reinstall uninstalled hardware

there should be an Atheros driver to download. This could be older than the one you already have installed or there may be one that's compatible with Windows 10.

Cantrel, Web User Forums

A Since I started computing in 1995, I have had three laptops and not once has there been a problem with overheating in any of them. My Toshiba fan speed (as shown by its Health



Monitor) usually runs at 45% of the maximum so there is more speed in reserve if required.

More important than buying a chill mat would be just to make sure that the fan intake and exhaust aren't blocked when you place the PC on your lap. If you tend to use it in this way a lot, placing it on any hard flat surface can help ensure that it doesn't get too hot.

rogerman40 and Peru, Web User Forums

Chill mats keep your laptop cool and create a better working angle for your keyboard



Star Email

Turn off your hardware to be safe not sorry

One thing you didn't mention in your interesting 'Leave it on or switch it off' feature in Issue 382 (bit.ly/webuser382) is the risk of a power surge causing electrical equipment to catch fire if you leave your devices plugged in and switched on all the time.

Now, I know what you're thinking: a power surge is just as likely to happen when you're sat at your PC as it is when you pop to the supermarket or go to, say, Cleethorpes for the weekend. After all, electricity is not like a burglar, waiting in the bushes outside your house until it sees you leave so it can make its move, and power surges can happen at any time. But the fact is that you're more likely to sense something is wrong while you're at home, which means you can



take precautions, namely unplugging at least some of your appliances, to avoid a surge causing a fire.

For example, there may be a storm outside that could result in lightning striking a nearby power line. Or, more

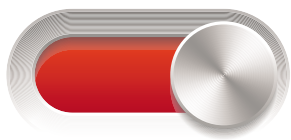
commonly, a local power cut that leaves you without electricity for a while could lead to all your electrical equipment turning back on at once. This could create a massive power surge that causes components in your hardware to fry and result in an electrical fire breaking out. If you're not at home, how can you predict if such disasters are likely to happen?

It's true that you can buy surge protectors to safeguard against power strikes but, in my opinion, nothing beats common sense in such highly charged (pardon the pun) situations.

So, in conclusion, if you want to be safe rather than sorry, turn that hardware off if you're likely to be out for more than an hour or so.

Leon Winter, via email

Why it pays to turn some gadgets off



Regarding your 'Leave it on or switch it off?' feature, I agree that a £20 saving per year for turning off your PC overnight is not much, but it does make a difference.

I also turn my computer off at night to prevent

hackers from accessing my data.

However, I leave my router on because, as you said, turning it off means it takes a long time to reset and I have also found that it causes other problems.

I have gas central heating, but everything else is electric. Apart from heating controls, everything is turned off at the wall switch: my cooker, microwave, coffee machine, toaster and other appliances.

I leave my TV and set-top box on standby. Why? Try recording something with them turned off! Anyone who says they turn their TV and Sky+ or Virgin Media box fully off is telling porkies,

unless they never record anything.

Of course, your wireless home phone needs to be plugged in, but my mobiles are never turned on unless I need to use them. Not for me surfing on a 3in or 5in screen when I have a perfectly good desktop PC and a 12in tablet. That tablet is only left on if I need to install a monthly update. A phone is a phone, and it and the tablet are only useful to me when I'm on holiday, or using it for music, communication, games and ordering a takeaway.

Martin Fletcher, Thorpe Hesley

Google's Capital poses a threat to our lives

In your cover feature in Issue 381, you mention Google Capital, which

has become one of the companies under the Alphabet banner. If Capital starts swallowing smaller companies, as you mention, then we should be worried - very worried indeed. In the UK, we have a company that has been doing just that since 1984, the similarly named Capita.



If you Google 'Capita' and start investigating this company, you will find that it has invaded our lives to a huge extent, from running army recruitment to taking over pensions, our NHS, libraries and more. Capita says it has 2,500 government contracts and this number is growing, while much of its software expertise has come from a multitude of smaller companies that it has swallowed.

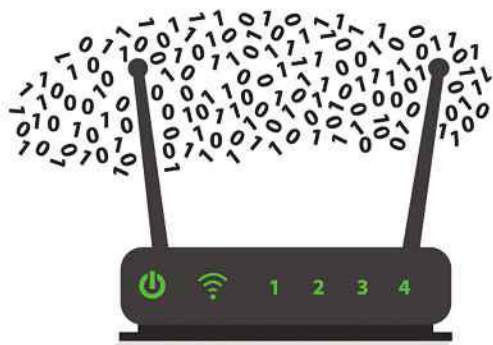
Cyril Bonnett, via email

Windows 10 could be stealing Pam's bandwidth

I read with interest Pam Woolgar's letter, 'Keep tabs on your bandwidth', in Issue 381's Ask the Expert section. I'd like to add to Roland's response. Like Pam, I didn't request the upgrade to Windows 10, but when I investigated a sudden increase in the space used on my hard drive (6GB worth), I found that Windows 10 had been downloaded automatically.

I would guess that, like me, Pam installed an innocent looking, supposedly routine Windows update - KB3035583. As soon as it's installed, this update triggers the automatic download of Windows 10 to a hidden file on your C: drive - \$Windows.-BT. This file can be

You can let us know your views and opinions via:
webuser@dennis.co.uk, www.facebook.com/webusermagazine,
www.twitter.com/webusermagazine and forum.webuser.co.uk



deleted but, unless she uninstalls KB3035583, it will download it again and then hide it, and Windows 10 will download again and again.

This may account for some of Pam's excessive broadband usage. If, as Roland suspects, her Wi-Fi is not protected, then her neighbours could indeed have been "borrowing" her hub. They might even have been subjected to the same hidden download, but I have no sympathy for them if that is the case.

I'm afraid I'm beginning to agree with the pundits who are of the opinion that such aggressive and underhand tactics are not winning any new friends for Microsoft – or Windows 10.

Tom Moore, Cambridge

Stop shoving Windows 10 down our throats

Many, many years ago, in the early days of *Web User*, when I and many other people were still on dial-up, I well remember writing to say how frustrating it was to be constantly having broadband thrust down my neck at every available opportunity.

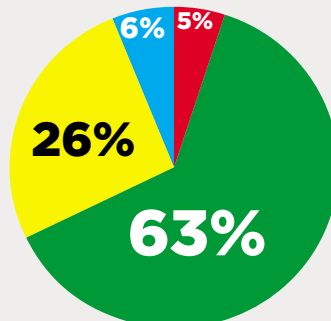
Now, here we are, still reading *Web User*, and what is it now that is incurring



Your Shout

On Webuser.co.uk this fortnight we asked...

Is Google getting too big for its boots?



- No, it's good to see it branching out
- Only time will tell!
- Yes, it should stick to what it does best
- Google outgrew its boots long ago

NEXT FORTNIGHT Should all ad blockers be banned?
 Vote online at www.webuser.co.uk

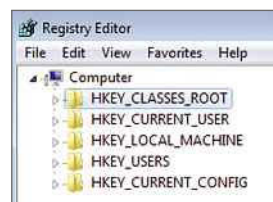
my wrath? It is the constant references to Windows 10 on almost every page. One minute I form the opinion that it's the best thing since sliced bread, then you come along and give the impression that "it ain't all that good anyway".

I wonder if I am the only one on this planet who isn't the slightest bit interested in Windows 10, and whether it is any good or not.

kingfisher171, Web User Forums

Let's hear it for Old Reg

Thanks you for your round-up of the best Registry hacks in Issue 382. It's good to know that however Windows changes over the years, the Registry is essentially the same. Old Reg, as I call it, might not be the most exciting looking part of Windows – certainly it can't compare to



the cuddly Control Panel or the slinky Start menu, but at least it's consistent.

I still have no

idea what HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT means, or what I'm doing if I create a DWORD (32-bit) Value in a Hexadecimal base, but at least I know that the process changes very little from one version of Windows to another. So thank you Microsoft, for leaving the Registry relatively untouched, and thanks to Old Reg for keeping our operating systems running for all these years!

Edward Murray, via email

Spies are creating an unsociable society

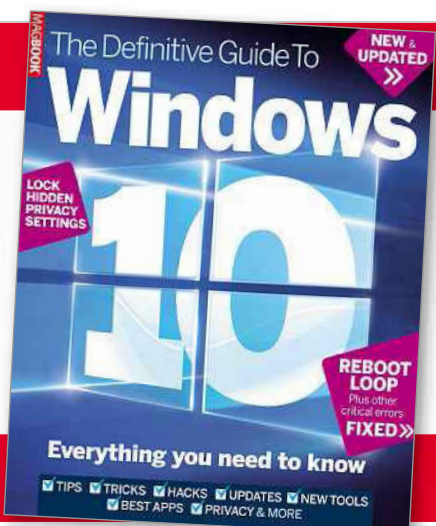
In the last few months, the *Web User* letters pages have shown that there is very little confidence or trust in the new programs that are coming out. Today's world is full of spies and eavesdroppers, and we are the victims, but who are the perpetrators?

To the spies, we are just people who buy from them and use their products, but are we actually being used by them, too? Our society is slowly being changed, but people cannot see this because most things appear as normal. Not only are we being spied on, but we are being manipulated to become faceless drones who get rewarded for obeying the rules, are prodded in the right direction and

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get laid off work if we don't obey. I believe the government is a part of this.

Although many people are now friends with each other on Facebook, we are not the social people that we used to be. We are becoming more unsociable, using the same websites and doing work that in the long run does not really mean much. This means that the young are becoming a brainless society, with little chance of becoming the elite. I would say more of them are turning into Neanderthals, because we are going backwards instead of forwards.

Terry Bradley, Milton Keynes

Ad blocking is a murky business

Now that ad blockers are back in the news and in *Web User* again, it's worth remembering that they are not necessarily tools you should feel smug about using. I'm not just talking about them starving websites of ad revenue, but about blockers such as Adblock Plus operating protection rackets, whereby they take backhanders from companies such as Microsoft and Google to allow their adverts through.

Remember that next time you wonder why you can see certain adverts and not others.



Asif Patel, Bolton

Two reader errors corrected

I noticed two errors in the Inbox section in Issue 381. Firstly, in P Bailey's Star Email about Amazon, he suggests there is a £20 minimum spend to qualify for free delivery when using Amazon Prime. In fact, there is not any minimum – I have had a £2 DVD delivered the next day.

Secondly, contrary to the letter from Joel Ingram, Google has not removed ad blockers from the Chrome web store – there are still many available.

FratPark, Web User Forums

What you say...

DO YOU THINK INTERNET ADDICTION SHOULD BE TREATED ON THE NHS?

Depends on each individual case. The patient's condition may be connected to another issue which would come under the requirements for treatment.

Martin Phillip

I think it's a waste of NHS resources, but there's no denying that Internet addiction exists. It appears to be an escalating "problem" that was once associated with teenagers, but now older folk have also been hooked.

Tornado

It's an appalling waste of NHS resources. I've received life-saving healthcare from the NHS and would hate to see anyone else being denied that kind of care because people can't take responsibility for their actions.

Madeline

The money would be better spent giving people some hope of a 'real' job, a sense of security and a feeling of purpose.

Izzit

WOULD YOU WEAR AN APPLE I RING (bit.ly/ring383)?

Not for anything would I wear one!

Robert Slater @MistyRobert

Certainly not. It's utterly desperate.

Chris Cole

I mean, seriously? Are they doing weddings next? Imagine the vows you would have to take.

Anthony Blanchard @antblanchard

It will have a 10-minute battery life and cost £600. I hate Apple more

than I hate Justin Bieber. Their products are overpriced.

David Ewles

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF FACEBOOK'S NEW 'REACTIONS' BUTTONS?

A 'dislike' button would be open to some trolling/abuse, so I think these may be better.

Peter Fitzsimmons

It could incite bullying, especially among teenagers. Facebook will test it, but it won't last. Watch this space!

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

It would be good to have an "I don't need to see this" button for photos of abused animals and corpses posted by terrorists.

Suzy Blue

I don't see why we need them. If you dislike something, you either ignore it, or make your thoughts known and move on.

Karen Llewellyn

AT £79 A YEAR, IS AMAZON PRIME GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY?

We find it pays for itself when you consider the shipping charges saved.

Peru

With Prime, I get one free Kindle ebook and one on loan every month. This saves at least £5. I recently urgently needed an item. Ordered it 6pm one day, and it was delivered free at 1pm the next day.

FratPack

I save some money with free delivery charges, but my main reason for using Prime is the streaming video and music services.

David Newton

I've made 43 purchases from Amazon this year, so I think I'm getting my money's worth from Prime.

Evilmonkeyzz

! Page 404



Barry Collins finds there's nothing to get excited about in Office 365

Why has Office become so boring?

I'm 99% sure that if the next issue of *Web User* had exactly the same content as this one, just printed on a different coloured background, the editor's phone would be besieged by irate subscribers. I've got a few choice words of my own if I ever get the phone number of Microsoft boss Satya Nadella, having just downloaded Office 2016.

I'm one of the millions of poor saps who subscribe to Office 365. My £8 per month lets my family install Office on up to five PCs, gives me access to the Office mobile apps, hands me a terabyte of free online storage space and – this was the clincher for me – provides rolling updates. Whenever Microsoft releases a new version of Word, Excel and so forth, the Office 365 subscribers are entitled to install the latest version. No more lump-sum payments every time a new Office is released.

I've been an Office 365 subscriber for the past couple of years and have been impatiently drumming my fingers on the desk ever since, waiting for something

vaguely resembling an upgrade to arrive. Lo and behold, Office 2016 finally dropped a couple of weeks ago and having spent the past fortnight fiddling with the various apps, I can only assume it's called 2016 because that's when all the new features will arrive.

Now, I've been around the block a bit. When I first started out in tech journalism, an update to Microsoft Office arrived on a dozen floppy disks, so I've seen some pretty flimsy "upgrades" in my time. However, nothing compares to how little Microsoft has to show for three whole years of development on this latest Office suite. It's the world's most boring spot-the-difference competition.

You can now edit a Word document at the same time as someone else, a feature Google Docs has offered since

shortly before Edward VIII abdicated. Smart Lookup lets you highlight a phrase in a Word document and get a quick definition of what it means, saving you the 0.8 seconds it would otherwise take to Google it. Outlook has a grand total of precisely one useful new feature: the option to instantly attach a recently

edited document to an email. Be still my beating heart.

Indeed, if Microsoft hadn't have given each of the Office apps a new colour scheme, I'd swear I was still using Office

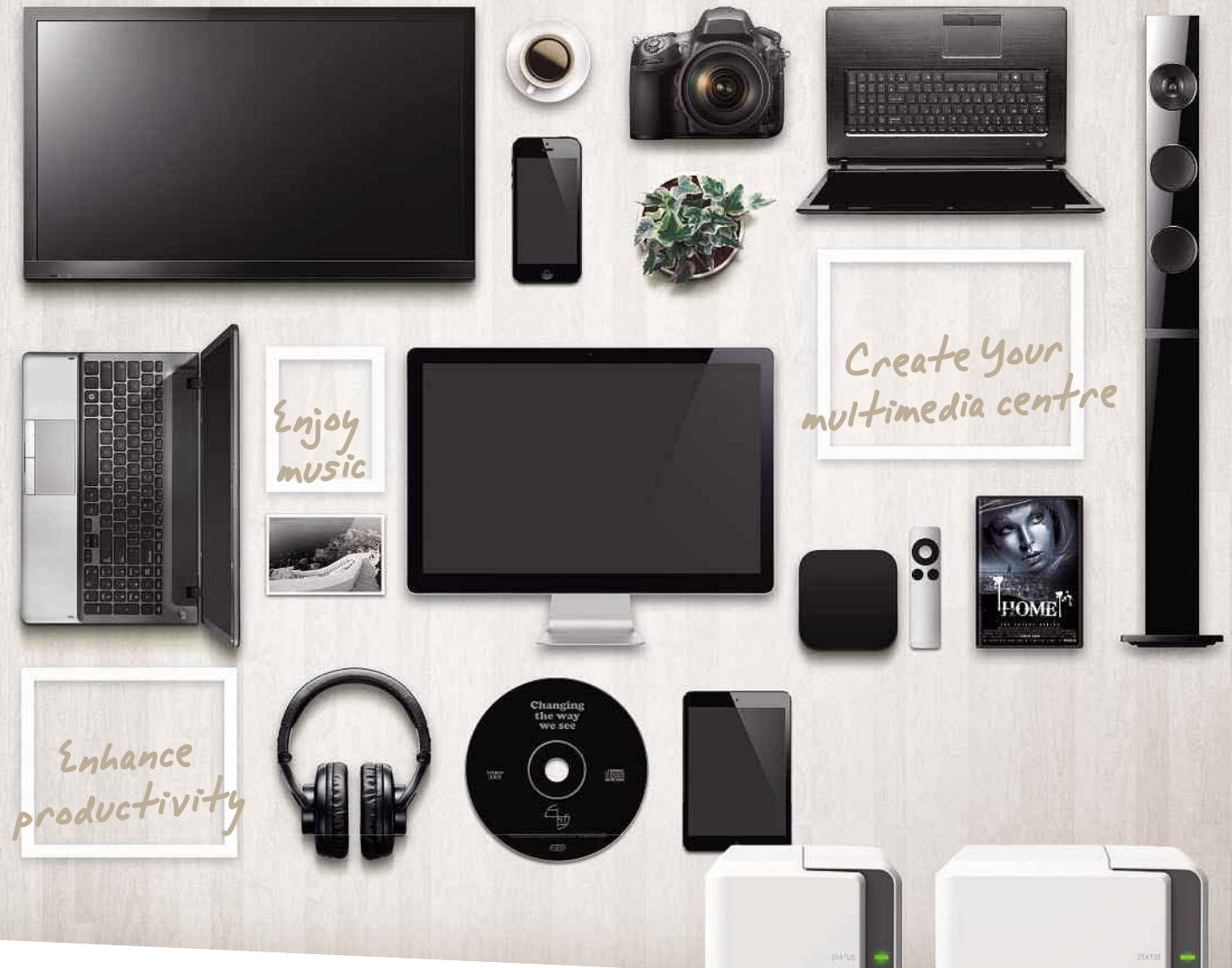
“Office 2013 and 2016 are virtually indistinguishable – the Jedward of software, and only slightly less annoying”

2013. There's not a single new feature that's made a blind bit of difference to the way I work, and I have Word, Excel and Outlook running constantly. Office 2013 and 2016 are virtually indistinguishable – the Jedward of software, and only slightly less annoying. Even the stupid bug that keeps changing the spellcheck language

of the document you're working on hasn't been fixed.

I don't like change for change's sake, and I've yet to find any free option that even holds a candle to Microsoft Office when it comes to getting stuff done. But if you're going to take £8 a month from people with the promise of regular upgrades, I expect something more than a bit of colouring-in every three years. I wouldn't pay to upgrade to Office 2016 – and I'm annoyed that I already have.





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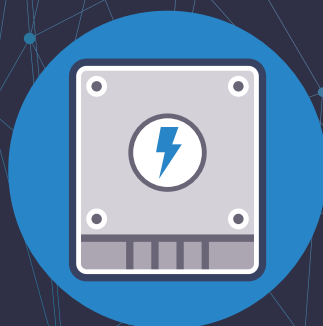


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