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Issue 398

1 - 14 June 2016

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Just because you're paranoid...

One thing I've learned in the last few years is that just because something seems too terrible to happen doesn't mean it won't happen (I've mentally filed this next to "never rest your arm on an electric hob"). Such increased wariness means I no longer dismiss ransomware as a moustache-twirling villain trying to tie my files to the railway tracks in the style of a silent movie, but recognise it as a real and current threat that could strike at any time.

As we explain in this issue's cover feature (page 38), ransomware is now more devious and dangerous than ever, and no longer solely targets individual users' PCs, but also locks Macs, phones, tablets and entire business networks.

Fortunately, there are ways to avoid, detect and remove ransomware without coughing up the cash, and we hope that our advice will make this malicious malware less of a menace to your machine. Forewarned is forearmed, after all (not sore-armed, unless you lean on an electric hob).

Robert Irvine
robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk
#webuser

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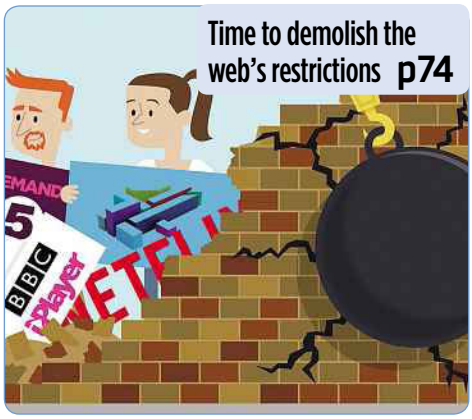

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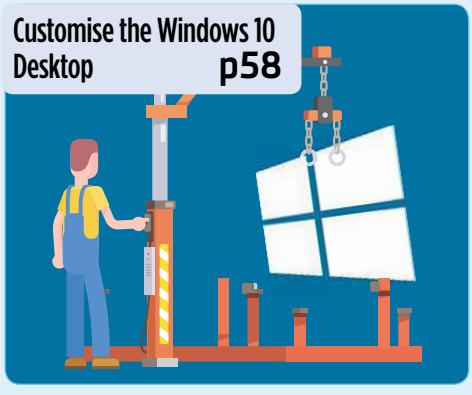

EDITORIAL
Group Editor Daniel Booth
Deputy Editor Robert Irvine
Technical & Reviews Editor Andy Shaw
Staff Writer Edward Munn
Art Editor Laurence Hallam
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Editorial Tel: 020 7907 6000
Visit forum.webuser.co.uk for technical and buying advice

ADVERTISING
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MANAGEMENT
Tel: 020 7907 6000
Group Managing Director Ian Westwood
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MD of Advertising Julian Lloyd-Evans
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Group Finance Director Ian Leggett
Chief Executive James Tye
Company Founder Felix Dennis

SYNDICATION AND USE OF LOGOS
Syndication Senior Manager Anj Dosaj-Halai
Tel: +44 (0)20 7907 6132
Email: anj_dosaj-halai@dennis.co.uk

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Licensing & Syndication Assistant Nicole Adams
Tel: +44 (0)20 7907 6134
Email: nicole_adams@dennis.co.uk

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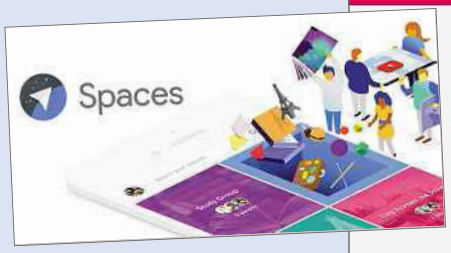
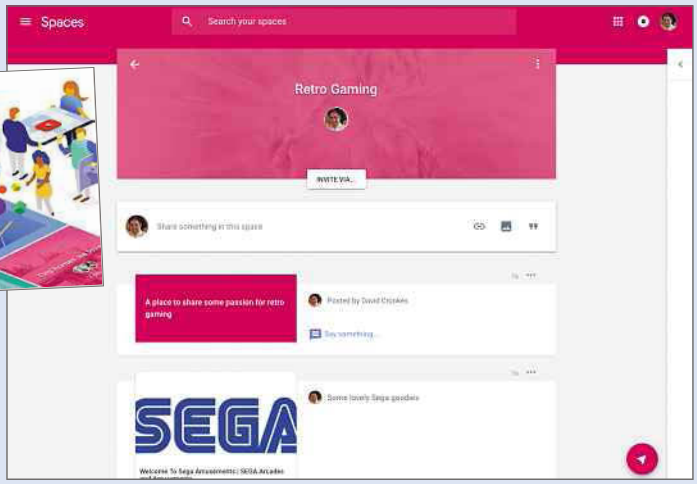
What's New Online

Discuss topics with groups using Google Spaces





With Google+ still failing to capture people's imagination, Google is having another stab at social media with Spaces, a new mobile app and web service that lets you share information on topics within small groups. The idea is that you hook people together around a common theme, be it a trip that you're planning or an interest common to you and your friends. Members can post URLs and images, and write comments, with everything saved for future viewing.

It's especially good on mobile, with Google Search, Chrome and YouTube built in. This makes it wonderfully easy to share and discuss topics, helping to eliminate those frustrating "hang on a minute" moments that occur in other messaging tools when someone goes away to find something to copy and paste.

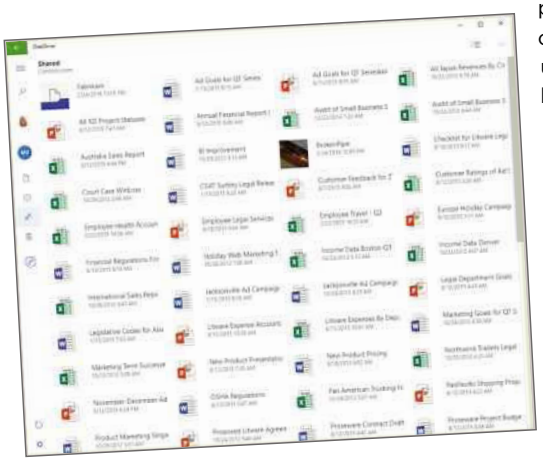
However, it's tricky to know whether Spaces will catch on where other similar tools from Google, such as the underwhelming Wave, have failed. Yes, Spaces works well for creating and sharing – you can invite collaborators via Facebook, by email or by copying your URL – and there's a Chrome extension. But there's a nagging sense that Spaces lacks a real sense of purpose. Still, it's early days and it's sure to find its feet. Or its space, at the very least.

get.google.com/spaces

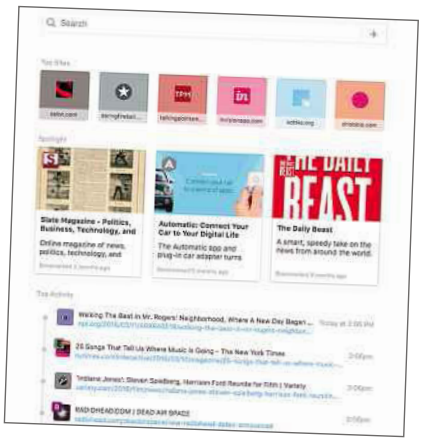
Edit online OneDrive files without syncing

https://onedrive.live.com

Microsoft's OneDrive always had a major flaw: you couldn't search and organise your documents without synchronising them or visiting the website. Happily, that's no longer the case. The new OneDrive app for Windows 10 lets you access all your uploaded files without them being stored on your machine. Using the app, you can open your files in an Office program (see screengrab), and look for files shared by other people. You can also upload files by dragging and dropping them, and restore files from the Recycle Bin. Read the OneDrive blog for more details: bit.ly/drive398.



Try experimental Firefox tools



https://testpilot.firefox.com

For a while, critics have been suggesting that Firefox is close to death, but in May it overtook Internet Explorer and Edge for the first time (see the figures at bit.ly/firefox398). To help keep this revival going, Mozilla has launched a Test Pilot program that lets you check out a host of experimental features and provide feedback to Firefox's development team. Currently, you can check whether you like tabs along the side or top; try an 'activity stream' that displays your favourite sites (see screengrab); and see if there is any benefit to universal search – a feature that combines your browsing history with the Firefox Search drop-down box to make smarter, more detailed recommendations. The features can be turned on and off, just in case the tests clash with other parts of the browser.

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

Explore Argentina's National Parks

bit.ly/tina398

Breathtaking scenery awaits when you visit Argentina's national parks in Street View. Check out the spectacular waterfalls of Iguazú National Park – one of the new seven wonders of nature (bit.ly/wonders398) – and the gigantic

Perito Moreno Glacier in the Los Glaciares National Park (pictured) – a stunning sight that Google describes as just "the tip of the iceberg".

Play games in your browser using your phone

www.airconsole.com

There are games you can play in your browser and games you can play on your phone but with AirConsole, you can do both. After syncing your phone with a browser on your computer – as simple a task as typing the number shown on screen – you can play a host of free games or sing along to karaoke, using your handset as the controller (or mic). You can also connect more than one smartphone for some lively multiplayer action.

See the Solar System in Bing

www.bing.com

In its battle with Google, Bing continues to – quite literally - reach for the stars. When you search for 'Solar System', Bing now displays a smart interactive graphic giving the vital stats for each planet and their order from the Sun. Play around with the speed of their orbits, and see how their positions change over time (click the bottom-right date). A similar graphic appears when you type 'periodic table'. Microsoft explains more in its Bing blog: bit.ly/bing398.

See artworks in ultra-high resolution

bit.ly/camera398

When you visit a real art gallery, standing too close to a painting can get you into trouble. But not in Google's online Cultural Institute, which has added a thousand paintings in 'gigapixel' detail – that's an astonishing 1 billion pixels. Zoom in and you'll see the daubs of paint left by the

likes of Rembrandt, Monet and Van Gogh (pictured).

5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@GCHQ
If GCHQ's new account follows you, then you'll know your tweets are being eyed by the spies

@si_olympics
***Sports Illustrated* has set up a new account for the Rio Olympics**

@nocontextlouis
Quotes from TV presenter Louis Theroux taken entirely (and amusingly) out of context

@ID_AA_Carmack
Insights into the future of virtual reality from John Carmack, the CTO of Oculus VR

@thestoneroses
Updates from the legendary Manchester band

Chreck whether your password is future-proof

bit.ly/pass398

This website tells you how long it would take to crack your password right now, with the bonus of letting you slide and check all the way up to the year 2020.

Find the visual centre of your images

javier.xyz/visual-center

The visual centre of an image is different to the actual centre, as graphic designers will tell you. You can locate it by uploading a photo to this site, then using its recommendations to make the necessary adjustments.

Write more in tweets

www.twitter.com

It looks like Twitter will soon stop counting URLs and photos as part of its 140-character limit, letting you write more in your tweets. The news was leaked in the US, but Twitter has yet to confirm it.

Need to Know

Google launches apps that don't need to be installed

What happened?

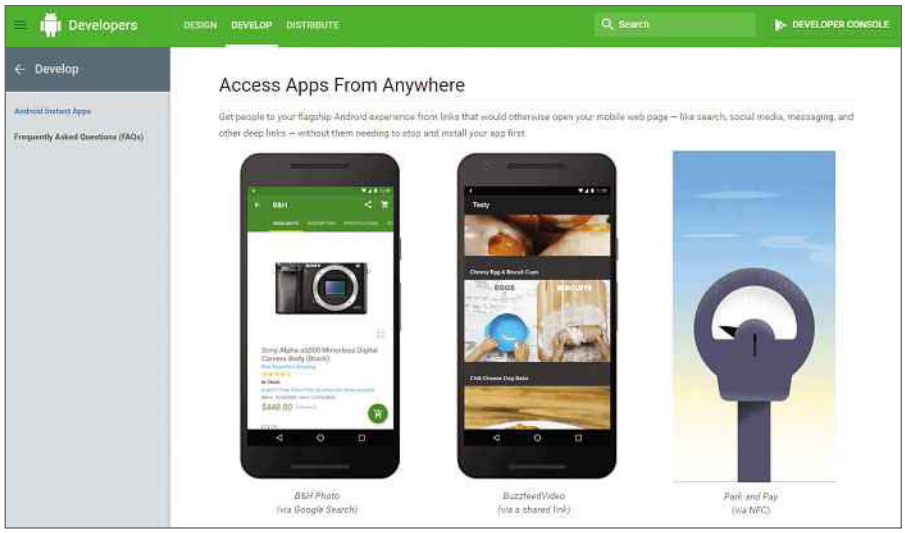
Mobile devices are designed for convenience, but they can sometimes be the opposite. How many times have you clicked a link, only to be told that you have to download an app to access the content – which can take several minutes, involve handing over personal data to register and occupy valuable space on your smartphone?

Google's ingenious solution – Instant Apps – was unveiled at the company's annual I/O conference (events.google.com/io2016). The service lets you tap a link to temporarily use an app for the task at hand, without having to download and install the entire app from the Play Store. Once you close the app, the download will disappear, unless you choose to install the full version.

So, if a friend sends you a link to a video that's hosted via a specific app, you'll no longer need to install that application to view it. Instead, tapping the link will download only the part of the app you need to view the video, requiring no registration on your part. The app's files will disappear after use, so you won't have to rummage through your app listings to remove it if storage is tight on your device.

Google is also working on another change to make apps more convenient. A new feature called Family Library will let up to six Android users share apps across multiple devices without paying for additional downloads. It's similar to Apple's Family Sharing system, introduced two years ago. Google has started telling developers about the change, suggesting the feature will be enabled for all users' apps – including past purchases – by 2 July, but it has yet to publicly confirm the feature.

You can watch Google's I/O conference announcements on its website



Alongside the app improvements, Google made a host of other announcements at its annual conference, unveiling a virtual-reality platform called Daydream with an accompanying headset, a new messaging app called Allo, a video-chat tool called Duo and a smart assistant for your home, similar to Amazon's Echo. Additionally, Google revealed more details of the next version of its mobile OS, code-named Android N. The company will be crowdsourcing its full name, which should be a sweet-themed treat starting with that letter. Nougat? Nutella? Or even the sour candy Nerds?

How will it affect you?

Google believes Instant Apps can replace many single-use applications, such as those for museum guides, parking meters and shopping, although developers will have to modify their apps before they can be used with the service. Google predicts that we will start seeing Instant Apps this year.

You may still prefer to install full versions of your frequently used apps. However, Google promises that Instant Apps downloads will be light – about the size of a mobile web page – so they shouldn't be much of a burden on your mobile-data package.

Instant Apps will work on any handset running Android 4.4 (KitKat) or newer, which accounts for most phones currently in use – about 75%, according to Google's own statistics.

Family Library will make parents rejoice – no longer will they need to shell out multiple times for the same game or app. Instead, they can pay once and everyone in the house can benefit.

It's not clear exactly how the system will work, but it's likely to see one family member in charge of the account, with purchases from their credit card shared out to other devices. More details will become available as the release date approaches.

What do we think?

Google uses its I/O conference as a platform to show off its top-end tech, such as virtual reality and chatbots, but we're glad it has also found time to promote less flashy innovations, such as Instant Apps. This shows that Google is still in touch with its users and aware of the everyday tech problems most people face. Anything that makes smartphone use easier – saving time and frustration for millions of users – is a feat of true innovation.

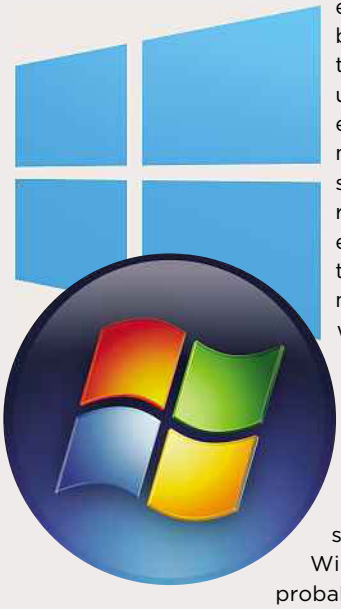
What we think of this fortnight's top tech news stories and rumours, and how they affect you

Windows 7 and 8 updates go monthly

What happened?

Microsoft is simplifying its patching process for PC users who haven't upgraded to Windows 10. Those still using Windows 7 and 8.1 will now get monthly "rollup" bundles of updates, rather than receiving them as and when they are ready.

The move doesn't apply to security patches, which are already released monthly on the second Tuesday of each month, known as Patch Tuesday. Microsoft is also offering a "convenience rollup" of all updates for Windows 7 Service Pack 1 (SP1). If you reinstall Windows 7 SP1 or install it on a new PC, you'd normally have to wait for hundreds of updates to be installed – every update since the service pack was released in 2011. Now, you can simply install the single "convenience rollup" of updates, and you'll be up to date to April 2016, making the process faster and easier.



How will it affect you?

If you've kept on top of your updates, this shouldn't affect you; if you haven't kept your PC patched, it's about time that you did. This isn't about security, but reliability. Keeping your PC up to date should make it more stable.

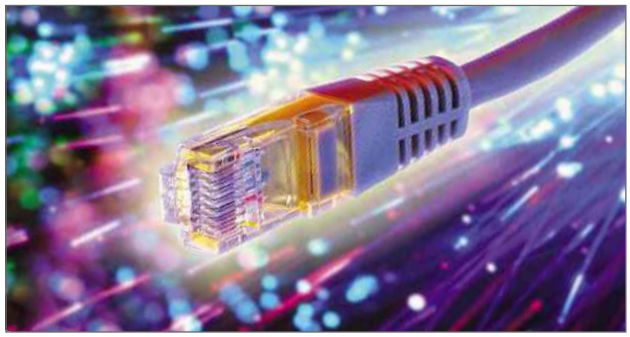
If you let Microsoft deliver patches via Windows Update, you need do nothing to receive the updates in the new monthly format. They'll arrive automatically as usual. To get the "convenience rollup", head to Microsoft's download pages (bit.ly/download398).

What do we think?

We can only applaud any effort made by Microsoft to make updates easier to manage and smoother to run. That's especially true for the many users who have chosen to remain on older versions of Windows.

If you're sticking with Windows 7, it's probably because you want to keep your computer running smoothly and not face the disruption that comes with the newer operating systems. People love Windows 7 because it's reliable, so anything that helps keep it that way is welcome news.

Government promises minimum of 10Mbps broadband



What happened?

The government has introduced measures promising faster broadband for everyone in the UK. In the Queen's Speech, the government set out plans for a universal service obligation (USO) of 10Mbps by 2020, in line with previous suggestions from regulator Ofcom.

That's higher than existing plans to ensure everyone in the UK can access at least 2Mbps broadband, but less than half the speed that most Britons will get under a goal to bring superfast broadband to more than 95% of homes and businesses. The USO merely means that those in rural and other poorly served areas have the right to request a connection – such users may have to help pay the costs of delivering it.

How will it affect you?

The vast majority of homes and businesses in the UK will already be receiving connections of 10Mbps by 2020. If you're on a slower line now, that may not change in the next few years, but a USO means we all have a right to better broadband. You'll be able to demand that an ISP steps in with better service, but you might also have to contribute costs. What those charges will be remains to be seen, but poor service in many areas is mainly due to price, so don't expect the costs to be low.

What do we think?

As ever, the government needs to do better on broadband and put its money where its mouth is. While we agree that broadband should be considered a right – it's on a par with a telephone number to most of us these days, and required for accessing many government services – words alone won't achieve that right to access. The government needs to stump up the cash or demand more of a contribution from ISPs making a profit from broadband. Otherwise the USO is an empty gesture and a waste of time.

Missing patches leave Android at risk from security flaw

What happened?

Around 60% of Android devices are at risk from a security flaw in Qualcomm's mobile chips, according to security experts at Duo Labs. Researcher Gal Beniamini disclosed that a problem in Qualcomm's Secure Execution Environment (QSEE) could allow hackers to take control of a device through a series of linked exploits.

There are caveats that should limit the threat: the offensive code must be delivered via a malicious app, and the flaw itself was patched in a January 2016 security update. However, Duo Labs revealed that a majority of Android users are still vulnerable to the flaw because they haven't updated their handsets. Duo Labs looked at data from 500,000 Android phones, of which 80% use Qualcomm components, finding only a quarter have applied the relevant security patch.

This is due to the many problems surrounding patch distribution, the firm said. While Google's Nexus devices receive patches as soon as they're released, updates for other phones have to go through multiple layers of approval first. Once they're built by Google, they have to be applied by the individual OEM and then sent out to mobile providers, who then have to approve it and distribute it to their customers. This process can take months.

How will it affect you?

If you've performed a software update within the last few weeks, there's a good chance that your device will have been patched. If not, you should be especially vigilant when downloading apps from outside the Google Play Store, because they place you at a significantly increased risk of security exploits. Only install apps from companies you trust and scan them with an antivirus app such as AVG (see page 33) to check that they're safe before installing.

What do we think?

Threats such as this one demonstrate the importance of installing operating system updates as soon as they become available. The delay in receiving Android software updates understandably remains a point of frustration for many users because it not only leaves you without the latest interface and features, but can also expose you to security risks.

It's worth remembering, though, that many headlines about Android security appear to be worse than they are, because you can significantly reduce your risk by simply avoiding apps from unknown sources.

FIRST LOOK

Moto G4

bit.ly/motog398

The 3rd Gen Moto G was an excellent budget smartphone, but the Moto G4 (there's no confusing 4th Gen prefix this time) takes yet another axe to our preconceptions about budget smartphones. It's a beast of a phone, and not just in terms of its specs. With a massive 5.5in, 1,920 x 1,080 resolution display, the Moto G4 dwarfs the 3rd Gen model, putting it firmly in phablet territory.

Although it's much bigger, the Moto G4 is only £10 more expensive at launch than the 3rd Gen Moto was this time last year, costing just £169. Indeed, the Moto G4 looks set to be an absolute bargain, because it not only has a fantastic looking display, but its octa-core 1.5GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 617 processor and 2GB of RAM will also provide a significant step up in speed and performance.

The only thing that hasn't really changed is the camera resolution, because the Moto G4 still has a 13-megapixel rear sensor. It does, however, have new software, including a Professional mode that lets you tweak the white balance, ISO, focus and exposure levels via an onscreen slider.

The Moto G4 isn't the only Moto G phone you'll be able to buy this year, because Motorola has also launched the Moto G4 Plus. Don't be deceived by the name, though – it's practically identical to the regular Moto G4 in almost every way, including its size. In fact, the only significant difference is its rear-facing camera, which has a larger 16-megapixel sensor as well as laser, and phase-detect autofocus, allowing it to snap on to targets much quicker than the regular Moto G4. It'll be available a few weeks after the Moto G for £199.

WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will the BBC launch a Netflix rival?

The BBC is reportedly planning a subscription-based streaming service as a rival to the likes of Netflix and Amazon Prime, after getting the go-ahead in a Government white paper on the future of the BBC.

According to *The Telegraph*, the project (which is understood to have the working title 'Britflix') is believed to be a collaboration between the BBC and its commercial rival ITV. The newspaper claimed that the service is "still in the early stages of development", and would be distributed through the iPlayer. The white paper – published on 12 May – called on the BBC to introduce "some form of additional subscription services" over the next few years, which would inevitably lead to the corporation adopting a new hybrid funding model (taking money from licence fee payers and those who sign up for additional subscription content).

The Telegraph said that the proposal has been widely interpreted as "an assault" on the licence fee, and could mark "the beginning of the end" for how the BBC is currently funded. However, culture secretary John Whittingdale and "senior BBC sources" said it was the corporation itself that had requested permission to create subscription-based models.

LIKELIHOOD RATING

✓✓✓✓✓

The BBC has always relied heavily on the licence fee to generate income (it makes £5.7bn of its £7.75bn revenue in this way) so we think it'll be reluctant to change its model drastically. Furthermore, we're not confident that the service could offer a broad enough range of programming (even with the inclusion of ITV) to rival the likes of Amazon and Netflix. The subscription-based Global iPlayer pilot was scrapped only last year, so don't expect to see Britflix any time soon.

What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Rebuild Eric

bit.ly/eric398 | From £5

The UK's first ever robot, Eric, went missing some time after his creation in 1928. Made from aluminium and weighing 45kg, Eric was everything you'd expect a robot to be – a talking, moving mechanical person – but at some point he disappeared without trace. By backing the Science Museum's Rebuild Eric Kickstarter campaign, you can help bring Eric back to life. Expert-roboticist Giles Walker has been commissioned to rebuild Eric so that he can star in the museum's major Robots exhibition in 2017. The museum needs to raise £35,000 by 16 June.

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Internet use on the rise in over-75s

Figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that the number of over-75s using the net has doubled since 2011, although almost two-thirds of people in this age group have still never been online.

Siri to feature on OS X 10.12

Screenshots acquired by MacRumours appear to confirm that the forthcoming version of OS X will feature digital personal assistant Siri, letting users browse the web using voice commands. The new feature is not thought to be enabled by default.

WE DON'T LIKE...

Fitbit's heart-rate tracking is highly inaccurate

A recent study has shown that the heart rate recorded by Fitbit devices can vary by as many as 23 beats per minute compared to an ECG. Results are particularly inaccurate during moderate to intense exercise.

Facebook hit by 'Madhu Shah' scam

More than 30 profiles using the name Madhu Shah and featuring a photo of the same woman appeared on the social network. It is not clear why, but it has been suggested that the profiles could be used in

Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Stolen LinkedIn account details for sale

LeakedSource, the search engine that reveals whether your account details have ever been leaked, has discovered that the usernames and passwords of up to 117 million LinkedIn users are available to buy from the hacker who stole them. The hacker, who uses the moniker 'Peace', is selling the data for just five Bitcoin (around £1,500) on the dark web's illegal market place, The Real Deal.

LeakedSource explained that a total 167 million entries are up for sale, although 50 million of them don't include sensitive information such as passwords. "LinkedIn has had an awful record of securing its service, and this appears to be another confirmation that they operate without due care for the valuable information they curate," added Simon Crosby, CTO and co-founder at security firm Bromium. "I recommend that users be very cautious of using the service because attackers will use compromised accounts to launch other attacks. Change your password now."

It's thought that the data was stolen during a security breach in 2012 when 6.5 million LinkedIn passwords were posted online. At the time, the extent of the data loss wasn't revealed.

bit.ly/linkedin398

Illegal Game of Thrones streams used to infect PCs

Security researchers have warned that *Game of Thrones* fans may be at risk of malware when searching for pirate copies of the hit HBO series. Research carried out by RiskIQ identified more than 450 pirate-content sites serving malware to people trying to download or stream illegal versions of *Game of Thrones*. In a recent study, the security firm also found that six out of 10 consumers access pirated content, and that 75% of such content is used as bait to spread malware.

The methods used by RiskIQ to carry out its research involved operating its virtual user technology to simulate the actions of real web users, running Google searches for Game of Thrones download and streaming content across five countries.

bit.ly/gameot398

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Liviu Itoafa, security researcher at Kaspersky Lab (www.kaspersky.co.uk)

Q How worried should LinkedIn users be about their account details being compromised (see story, above)?
Ethan Harrison, Facebook

A The reports of LinkedIn users' passwords being sold online, following a hack four years ago, demonstrates the need for internet companies to consider security procedures before a data breach forces them to – prevention is always better than cure. Customers entrusting their private information to an online provider should be able to rest safe in the knowledge that it is kept in a secure manner; all companies who handle private data have a duty to secure it.

In this particular case, the leaked data contained email addresses and associated 'unsalted' password hashes (meaning they were not disguised), which cybercriminals could use to steal personal identities.

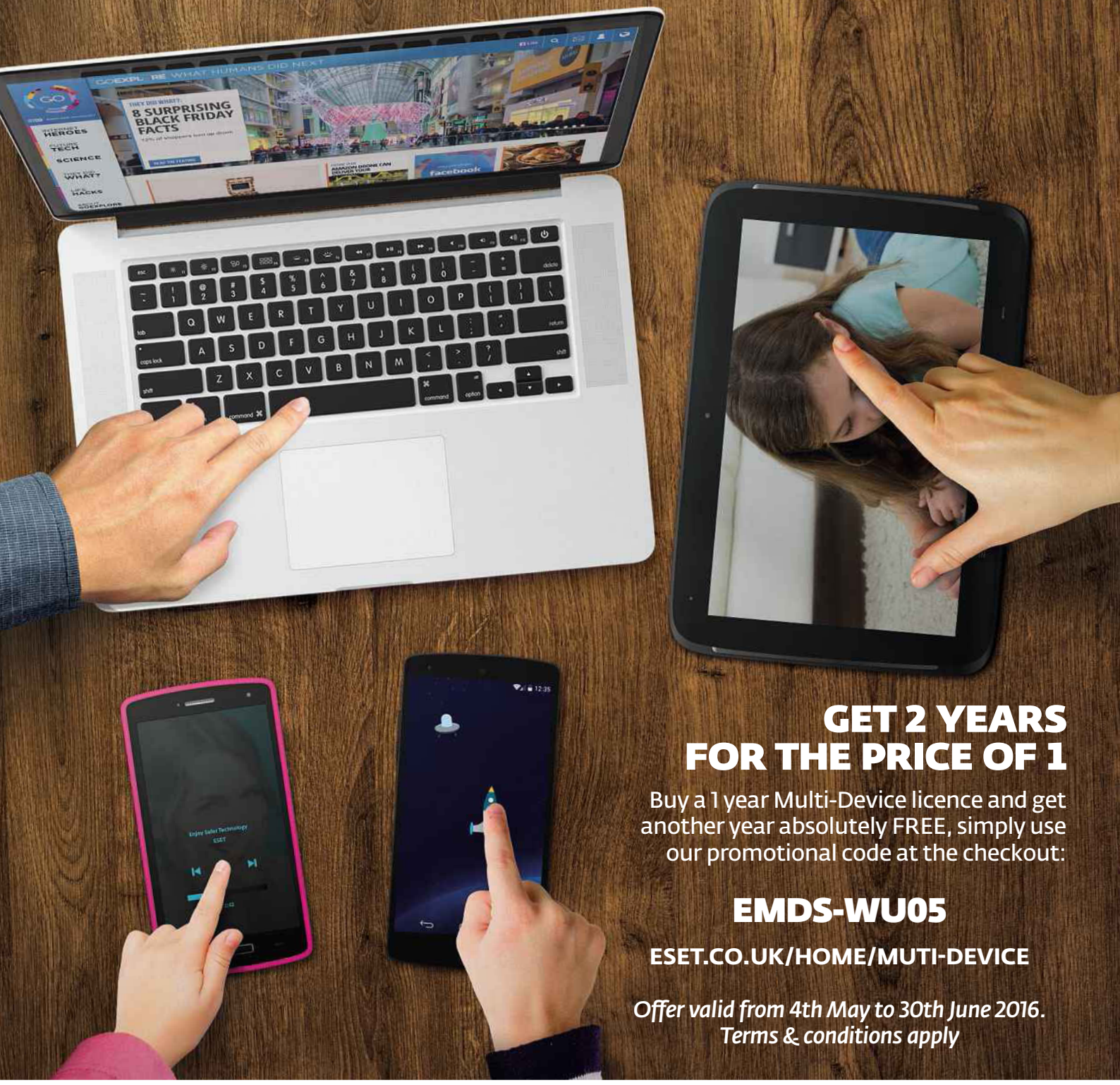
Unfortunately, once a breach of this nature has occurred, not much can be done about the leaked data. LinkedIn has taken the precaution of invalidating passwords of the affected accounts and contacting those members to reset their passwords, but it's likely that many of them used the same password across multiple online accounts. It's therefore vital that LinkedIn users take steps to change the password for any online accounts that use the same login.

> "It's vital that LinkedIn users change their password for other online accounts where they have used the same login"

While security software significantly mitigates the risk of a successful attack, there are other measures that companies can take in order to protect their customer's information, including obscuring (hashing and salting) customer passwords – a measure that LinkedIn did not appear to have in place. Ultimately, the best way for organisations to combat cyber-attacks is to have an effective cybersecurity strategy in place *before* the company becomes a target.

WWW.ESET.CO.UK/HOME/MUTI-DEVICE

ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE!



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Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

GAMES

RELAUNCH

Minecraft

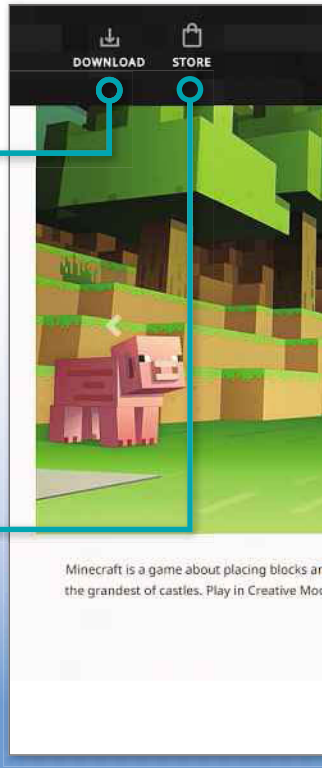
minecraft.net

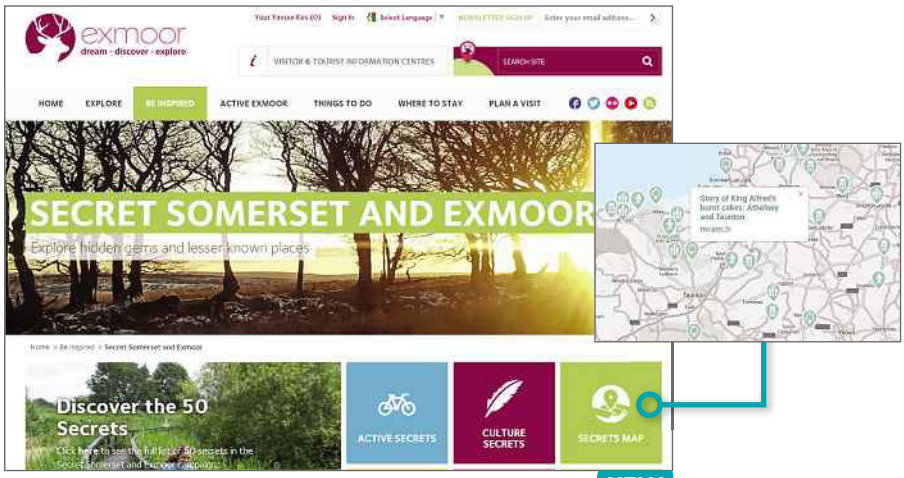
Minecraft's ugly old site hardly conveyed the creativity of the world-conquering game, so we're delighted by this long-overdue makeover. Its bolder, cleaner design works much better on phones and tablets, and makes it easier to find the correct download for your device. If you're new to Minecraft, there's a big Buy button in the centre of the homepage, while existing players can access their profiles, and both official and unofficial help resources. Although the site doesn't go into detail about the game, there are sections devoted to online version Minecraft Realms and Story Mode. It's a great place to start Minecrafting.

Our rating ★★★★★

DOWNLOAD
Once you've downloaded Minecraft, you can team up with friends

STORE
Buy Minecraft clothes, books, toys and accessories from the store





NEW

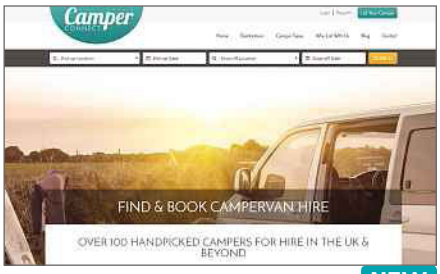
TOURISM

Secret Somerset & Exmoor

www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/secrets

If you're planning a 'staycation' in Britain this year, this excellent site could entice you down Somerset way. It rounds up 50 lesser-known attractions and activities in the county, compiled via a social-media campaign, and presents them in an attractive, easy-to-browse manner. The 'secrets' are organised into four categories – Active, Culture, Heritage and Nature – and include such delights as Cadbury Castle (reputed site of Camelot), Exmoor, hidden waterfalls and abandoned villages. There are also handy, interactive maps, including one that's optimised for phones, and you can plan your visit and arrange accommodation through the site. Proper job, as they say.

Our rating ★★★★★



NEW

TRAVEL

Camper Connect

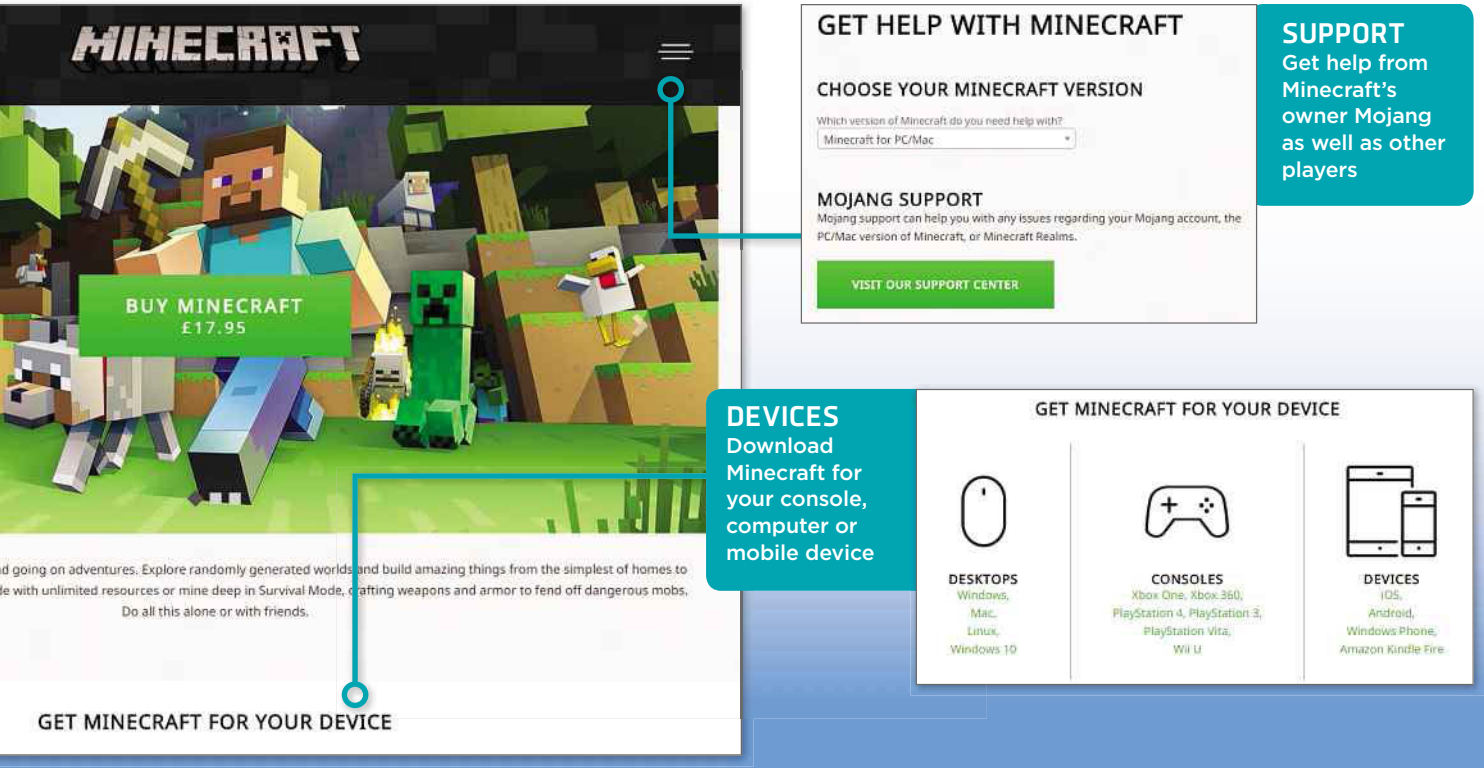
www.camperconnect.com

If you fancy forsaking expensive hotels for the freedom of the open road, why not hire a campervan through this site? Camper Connect lets you rent a small but varied selection of vehicles in the UK, Spain and Portugal with one apiece in the US and New Zealand. Just enter your pick-up and drop-off dates and locations to view available vans, or else browse by type – budget, classic or motorhome. Each named campervan (Mrs Robinson looks snazzy!) is accompanied by good quality photos, a full features list and price info, and the site also provides travel guides and helpful advice.

Our rating ★★★★☆

Reviews by Robert Irvine

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



NEW

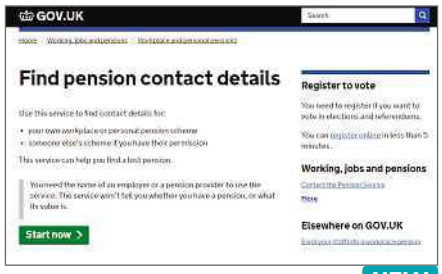
ACCESSIBLITY

Apple Accessibility

bit.ly/accessibility398

Apple has expanded the Accessories section of its online store to sell products for disabled OS X and iOS users. Although there are only 16 items available across three categories – Learning & Literacy, Physical & Motor Skills and Vision – they cover an impressive variety of tasks, and include hands-free controllers, a trackball mouse and a keyboard cover for the visually impaired. Large photos, concise descriptions and a streamlined design make the site suitably accessible itself (if pretty similar to the rest of the store), although this being Apple, products aren't particularly cheap.

Our rating ★★★☆☆



NEW

MONEY

Find Pension Contact Details

bit.ly/pension398

The Department for Work & Pensions has launched this site (well, section of Gov.uk) to help people track down their lost pension savings, from the £400m-plus pot that's unclaimed in the UK. It couldn't be simpler to use: just select the type of pension (workplace, personal, civil service) and enter the name of the employer or scheme to view contact details including an email address and phone number, and a summary of what info you'll need, such as your National Insurance number. That's all there is to it, but it saves a bit of Googling.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

NEW

SHOPPING

Amazon Prime Now

primenow.amazon.co.uk

It's unusual for an Amazon service to have a separate website, but the store is clearly very keen to promote Prime Now, which delivers your orders in less than an hour. Provided, that is, you live in one of the few postcodes currently covered, spend at least £20 and pay an impatience fee of £6.99. What's doubly strange is that you can't actually buy anything through the site – not even featured items such as games and fruit – but need to install the mobile app. Still, you can read tweets from happy customers and get £10 off your first order, as long as you spend more than £30.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

Tell us about your website via webuser@dennis.co.uk

WebUser

Q How can I perform a clean install of Windows 10 without losing any files?

A Page 58, Issue 378

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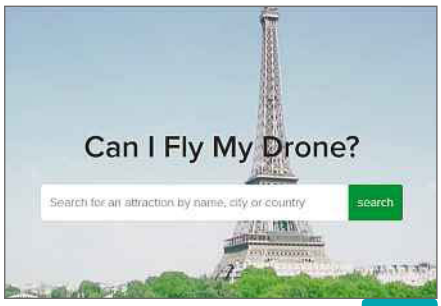


NEW

TECHNOLOGY

Can I Fly My Drone?

caniflymydrone.com

As drones continue to swarm the skies and scare the birds, it's worth knowing exactly where these flying machines are forbidden and permitted, which is where this site comes in. Search for a public attraction by name, city or country to view an instant one-word answer as to whether drones can be flown there, and which body needs to be asked for permission. For example, drones aren't accepted near Buckingham Palace or Alcatraz but are fine around the Eiffel Tower and Auschwitz. It's a simple, well illustrated site that's useful for both drone owners and concerned citizens who don't want to be crashed into.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

NEW

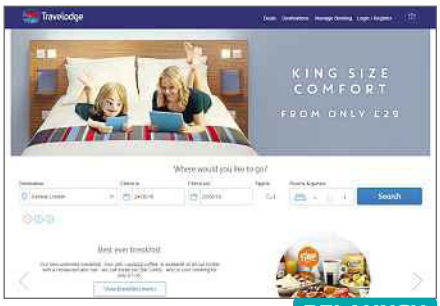
FOOD

WeFiFo

www.wefifo.com

WeFiFo (which stands for We Find Food) lets aspiring chefs earn money and culinary kudos by inviting hungry diners to sample their cooking. Set up an event at your home, in a local park or at a hired venue, and use WeFiFo to promote it and attract guests. Alternatively, if you prefer eating food to preparing it, you can find an event in your area and pay as little as £5 to attend, with some cooks offering meals for free. We love the site's colourful design, clear presentation of menus and event details, and reward scheme for both hosts and guests. It's like *Come Dine With Me* without the competition and sarky voiceover.

Our rating ★★★★☆



RELAUNCH

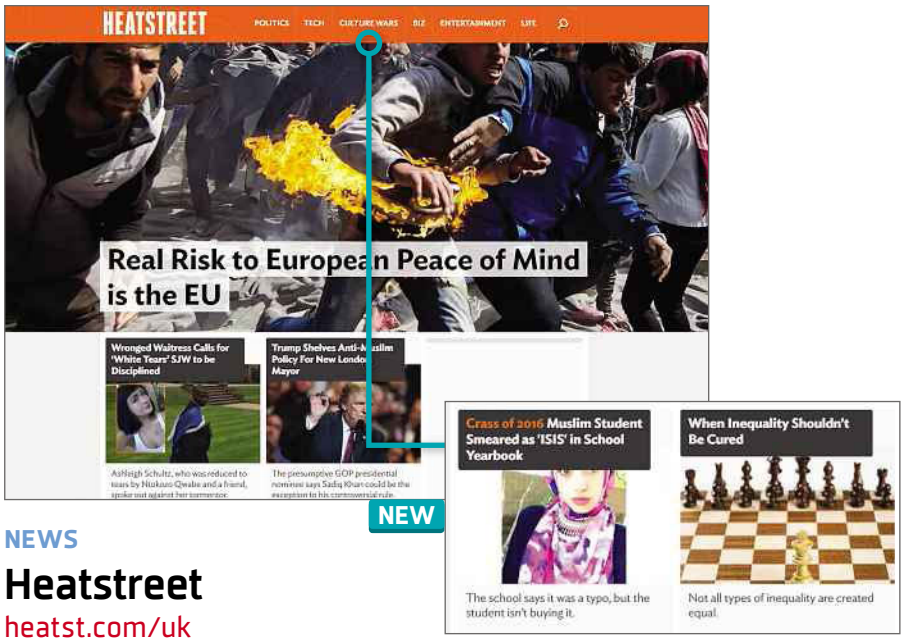
HOTELS

Travelodge

www.travelodge.co.uk

Although the revamped Travelodge site ticks all the right boxes for 2016 – from the muted colours and sparse layout to the responsive design that resizes for any screen – it also feels as sterile as the hotel chain's rooms, despite featuring the puppet characters from the TV ads. Still, we like the larger search boxes and speedy results, which help you quickly find a Travelodge that meets your requirements, add any extras for your stay and book your room. It's also easy to manage your booking online, and browse the breakfast and dinner menus. We like that you can pay using PayPal, but not that it costs £2 extra to do so.

Our rating ★★★☆☆



NEW

NEWS

Heatstreet

heatst.com/uk

Clearly the web doesn't have enough gossipy news and shameless clickbait, so Heatstreet has arrived to fill the gap. Its uncluttered design makes effective use of photos, short videos and tweets, but is marred by an unpleasant tone. Categories include News, Tech and Entertainment, along with a deliberately provocative one called Culture Wars, which has article titles such as: 'When Inequality Shouldn't Be Cured'. Despite having separate US and UK editions, the latter is still full of Trump praising and Hillary bashing, and there's very little original reporting or research. However, as with Mail Online, you inevitably find yourself getting drawn in.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

NEW

FUN

Bizarre Blighty

royallondon.telegraph.co.uk

This fun site from the *Telegraph* and Royal London celebrates quirky British pastimes and traditions, in the form of an interactive map and calendar. Choose a country from the menu bar, browse the calendar or click one of the figures in the map to discover an eccentric event or custom. For example, on 18 June, Marshwood in Dorset hosts the World Stinging Nettle Eating Championships; while August Bank Holiday brings Rossendale World Gravy Wrestling. With links to further info to assure you it isn't making this stuff up, the site holds up a mirror to our proud nation and then pelts it with warm ale and food.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

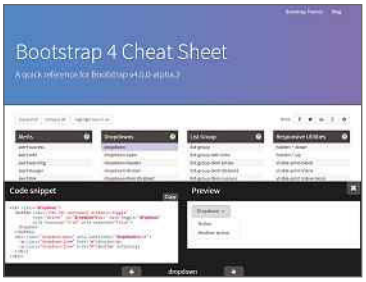
Animate your site

Lots of sites use animation to make them more dynamic and interesting. If you don't know where to start with this kind of thing, Incomedia's WebAnimator Go can help. It creates simple animations from your existing graphics and images, and uses templates to help you animate them.

The software costs £19.99 but you can download a 14-day trial from bit.ly/wago398.

Bootstrap cheatsheet

Website-building tools such as Bootstrap (getbootstrap.com) can help you create mobile-friendly websites using HTML, CSS and JavaScript. They save you having to start from a blank sheet where you have to design basic elements such as column widths, buttons and navigation systems, but they're not easy to



get your head around, especially if you're not a confident coder. We've found the HackerThemes Bootstrap Cheatsheet (bit.ly/boot398) to be a brilliant resource. Just click an item and it will show you what it does. It's already been updated to work with the forthcoming Bootstrap 4.

Deal of the Fortnight

Tsohost (www.tsohost.com) is offering '.tech' domains for £2.99 for the first year, down from the usual price of £34.95.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Richard Stevenson, Head of Corporate Communications, ePages (www.ePages.co.uk)

Q I want to sell a few homemade bits and bobs from my website. How do I accept payments?
Michael Turnbull, via email

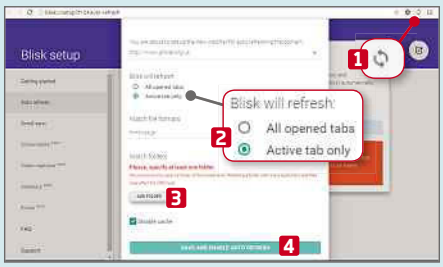
A It's never been easier to sell online. As well as marketplaces, there are convenient plugins for WordPress and cloud-based eShop packages that are powerful, attractive and easy to use. Your budget and time constraints will affect your choice, but make sure that the essentials are included. For example, an eShop package from a hosting provider can be added to your website for around £5 per month, and will include the latest design, payment methods and apps needed to market, communicate and sell. Importantly, these are continually updated by the provider, so they will always be modern and legally compliant.

MINI WORKSHOP | Use a browser designed to help you build your site

Blisk: blisk.io | 10 mins | 7, 8, 10

If you regularly tweak your website, why not use a browser that's designed to make this easy? Blisk is a new browser, based on Chrome, which lets you view your site in both mobile and desktop sizes simultaneously

1 Load your page from the address bar. The screen is split into mobile 1 and Desktop 2 views. Choose which mobile device you'd like to emulate. 3 When you scroll in one of the views, the other will scroll with it. Similarly, if you click a link, both pages will transfer to the new page.



2 You can set Blisk to watch the folder on your hard drive where you keep your site. This means that as you work on your site, the browser will automatically load any updates you save. Click the 'Enable auto refresh' button in the top-right corner, 1 choose the tabs to refresh 2 and add the folder to watch. 3 Click 'Save and enable auto refresh'. 4

3 Right-click the site and choose 'Inspect element' 1 to open the development tools. Here, you can view which bit of code affects the particular view you're looking at. Select an area of the site and it will highlight the code that governs it in the Developer Tools window. 2 You can have windows open for both mobile and desktop views. 3

+ Email us your website building questions at webuser@dennis.co.uk

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Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

Multifunction printers

Whether you want to print, scan or make copies of pictures, photos and documents, a multifunction printer can do the lot. **Andy Shaw** tests seven models that cost less than £100

Printers have become incredibly good value over the last few years. You can now buy a high-quality multifunction device that combines a printer, scanner and copier for less than £100. Not only are these all-in-one models affordable, but you also won't get stung on the price of replacement cartridges, because these have become much better value for money, too.

We've taken a look at seven of the latest multifunction printers, all of which fall well below our £100 threshold, and run them through a series of tests, comparing the output from each one.

HOW WE TESTED

We set each device to print a standard set of documents, timing them to check how quickly they performed the task, and comparing the output to decide which printers produced the best results. We also calculated the running costs, based on the price and page capacity of each printer's cartridges.

Canon Pixma MG5750 | £65.59 | www.photospecialist.co.uk

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

WebUser GOLD AWARD

Canon's Pixma MG5750 has plenty of extras that you wouldn't necessarily expect in a model that's so reasonably priced, such as automatically printing on both sides of a sheet of paper (known as duplex printing). As well as connecting via USB, it has its own wireless network, so you can easily print from all your devices.

One thing we don't like is that it uses a basic four-way directional button to navigate around its menus, which makes the printer's controls feel clunky and old fashioned. The Bronze Award-winning Brother MFC-J5320DW comes equipped with a touchscreen, which is much easier to use. However, you only really need to use the Canon's button when you're making copies, or if there's a printing problem, because scanning and printing can both be controlled from your PC.

The speed of the Pixma MG5750 was average for this group, while its printing costs came in third cheapest on both monochrome and colour prints.

What marks out the Pixma MG5750 as our Gold Award winner is the all-round quality of its printed pages. Text and graphics printed on plain paper look bold and crisp, while its photo prints are as good as you'll get from a printer of this price: free from grain and impressively sharp. Photocopies were faithful to the original, while scans were also sharp, with accurate colours.

Cartridges for the device are available in both normal and XL capacity. Stick to the XL ones and the printer can produce pages of mixed text and graphics for around 6.3p a pop. You need five cartridges to fill the device because as well as the usual cyan, magenta and yellow, it uses two blacks: a dye-based black for printing images, and a larger pigment black tank that's specifically designed to make text look sharper and clearer.

VERDICT ★★★★★

Although we aren't keen on the Pixma MG5750's cumbersome directional button, this one downside is vastly outweighed by the printer's many positive features. It's affordable to buy and run, and uses multiple cartridges – even a special one for black text – which reduces waste and keeps running costs low. It's reasonably fast and, most importantly, delivers great-quality results. The Pixma MG5750 is a fine all-rounder for home use and fully deserves our Gold Award.

Epson Expression Premium XP-530 | £59.99

www.currys.co.uk

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

WebUser SILVER AWARD

The XP-530 is the cheapest model in Epson's Expression Premium range of multifunction printers. Like the Gold Award-winning Canon, its downside is an outdated directional button for navigating its menus, which appear on an annoyingly tiny screen. However, it was quick at printing mixed colour and black prints, with only the Bronze Award-winning Brother MFC-J5320DW beating it. Print quality is also impressive, with crisp black and vivid colour produced on plain paper, which compares well with our Gold Award winner.

Although this printer is a bit fiddly to reload, more so than the Canon MG5750, it does have an SD memory card slot, which you can print from directly.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

There isn't much to choose between the Epson and the Gold Award winner. Both produce excellent-quality prints, but this model is slightly more fiddly to use and a bit more expensive to run, even though it's £5 cheaper to buy.

Brother MFC-J5320DW | £80.40

www.printerbase.co.uk

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

WebUser BRONZE AWARD

Our Gold and Silver Award winners are ideal for general home use, but if you're after something a bit more business-like, this sophisticated model from Brother is worth the extra expense. It can print on A3 paper, it has a document feeder for automatically copying multi-page documents, it can be wired into your network using its Ethernet port, and it can send and receive faxes (should you need to).

It's quick at printing both black and colour documents, coming in the top two across all our speed tests, and is very cheap to run, offering the best-value replacement inks of all the printers we reviewed. Unfortunately, this wasn't coupled with the best quality printing and although its prints are reasonably sharp and bright, it doesn't match the top-notch output of the Canon and Epson Gold and Silver Award winners.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

This Brother printer is well suited to a home office and its range of extra features include A3 printing and a document feeder. If you're more interested in the quality of your prints, however, the other Award winners are a better bet.

BEST OF THE REST

Canon Pixma MX495 | £44.99

www.staples.co.uk | ★★★★☆

The MX495 is cheap to buy but expensive to run: it produces the most expensive colour prints and second-most expensive black prints, which is a shame, because the quality is excellent

HP DeskJet 3630 | £34.99

www.ryman.co.uk | ★★★☆☆

This may be cheapest multifunction printer we reviewed but it's also the best-looking one. We didn't like its software, though, and it has the highest cost per page of this group when printing in black.

Brother MFC-J680DW | £86.39

www.viking-direct.co.uk | ★★★☆☆

This is a more compact printer than its Bronze Award-winning stablemate, with a maximum paper size of A4. Its text and image prints are better quality, but it's surpassed by the Award-winning Canon and Epson models.

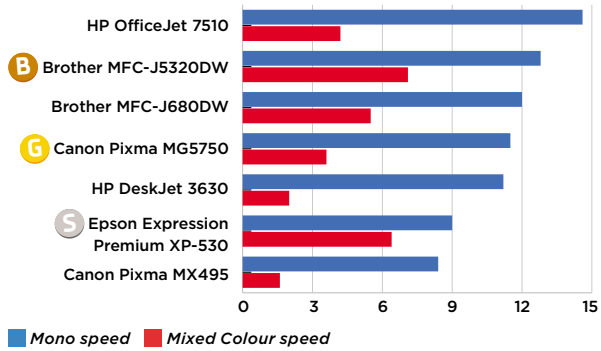
HP OfficeJet 7510 | £89.95

www.johnlewis.com | ★★★☆☆

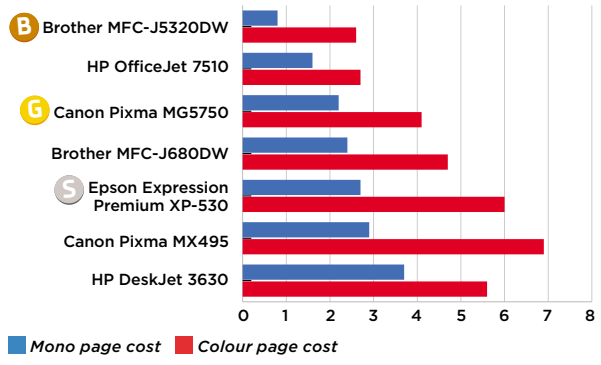
This HP model is slow at colour printing but fastest in the group for black. It also prints A3 copies and is cheap to run, but it doesn't handle double-sided printing.

TEST-RESULTS CHARTS

Speed in pages per minute (ppm)



Page cost in pence



	Canon Pixma MG5750	Epson Expression Premium XP-530	Brother MFC-J5320DW	Canon Pixma MX495	HP DeskJet 3630
WEBSITE	www.canon.co.uk	www.epson.co.uk	www.brother.co.uk	www.canon.co.uk	www.hp.com
PRICE	£65.59	£59.99	£80.40	£44.99	£34.99
BUY FROM	www.photospecialist.co.uk	www.currys.co.uk	www.printerbase.co.uk	www.staples.co.uk	www.ryman.co.uk
TECHNOLOGY	Thermal inkjet	Peizo inkjet	Peizo inkjet	Thermal inkjet	Thermal inkjet
MAXIMUM PRINT RESOLUTION	4,800 x 1,200dpi	5,760 x 1,440dpi	6,000 x 1,200dpi	4,800 x 1,200dpi	4,800 x 1,200dpi
MAXIMUM OPTICAL-SCAN RESOLUTION	2,400 x 1,200dpi (24-bit)	2,400 x 1,200dpi (24-bit)	2,400 x 1,200dpi (24-bit)	1,200 x 600dpi	1,200 x 1,200dpi
NUMBER OF CARTRIDGES	5	5	4	4	2
INTERFACES	USB, 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi	USB, 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi	USB, USB host, Ethernet, 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi	USB, 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi	USB, 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi
MAXIMUM PAPER SIZE	A4	A4	A3	A4	A4
MAXIMUM PAPER WEIGHT	300gsm	Not stated	220gsm	300gsm	300gsm
PAPER TRAYS (CAPACITY)	1 (100 sheets)	1 (100 sheets)	2 (251 sheets)	2 (100)	1 (60)
DUPLEX	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
BORDERLESS PRINTING	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DIRECT PRINTING	✗	SD memory card	USB	✗	✗
DISPLAY	Colour LCD	Colour LCD	Colour touchscreen	Mono LCD	Mono LCD
DIMENSIONS	455 x 369 x 148mm	390 x 341 x 138mm	490 x 290 x 240mm	435 x 295 x 189mm	438 x 310 x 158mm
WEIGHT	6.3kg	6.2kg	10.8kg	5.9kg	4.2kg

OUR VERDICT

The Canon Pixma MG5750 is truly deserving of our Gold Award. While some corners have been cut to get to its bargain £65.59 price, this hasn't involved any compromise on print quality. You don't get the convenience of a touchscreen, and it's missing some of the advanced office features of the Brother MFC-J5320DW, but it's still a fantastic printer.

We gave our Silver Award to the Epson Expression Premium XP-530. This gave the Canon model a very close run for its money, particularly in the quality of its printing. While it's slightly cheaper at £59.99, it's more fiddly to use and more expensive to run.

The Brother MFC-J5320DW wins our Bronze Award. It's best suited for use in a home office and boasts a selection of enhancements that include A3 printing and a document feeder for the copier, but it doesn't print as well as the other Award winners. ■

TP-LINK®

YOUR UNIVERSE

POWERED BY *Archer*

AC3200 Wireless Tri-Band Gigabit Router

Archer C3200

Tri-Band technology creates three separate Wi-Fi bands for connecting more devices to your network without a drop in performance

Connect a device to the Archer C3200 and **Smart Connect** will automatically identify the best available channel and assign the device to it

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Web User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE

MULTIFUNCTION PRINTER

NEW!

Canon Pixma MG5750

£65.59 from www.photospecialist.co.uk
Date tested: June 2016

The MG5750 is an excellent all-rounder, producing top-quality prints at a great price and a reasonable speed. It uses multiple cartridges – including a special one for black text – to reduce waste and keep running costs low.

KEY SPECS

Thermal inkjet multifunction printer with scanner/copier ■ 4,800 x 1,200dpi maximum print ■ 1,200 x 2,400dpi (24-bit) optical scan resolution ■ 5 cartridges ■ USB and 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi ■ 100 sheet tray ■ Duplex printing ■ 148 x 369 x 455mm

WINDOWS 10 LAPTOP

Acer Aspire One Cloudbook 14

£149.99 from www.currys.co.uk
Date tested: April 2016

The Cloudbook 14 is as good a laptop as you'll get for less than £200. It's not particularly fast and doesn't have a brilliant display, but it's fantastic value, especially because it includes a year's subscription to Office 365 Personal.

KEY SPECS

Dual-core 1.6GHz Intel Celeron N3050 processor ■ 2GB of memory ■ 32GB SSD ■ 14.1in non-touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 1 x USB 3, 1 x USB 2 port ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 339 x 235 x 17.9mm ■ 1.6kg ■ One-year return-to-base

SMARTPHONE

Samsung Galaxy S7

£569 from www.samsung.com/uk
Date tested: March 2016

The Samsung Galaxy S7 is a better phone than the S6 – its camera and performance are improved and it adds storage expansion and disaster-proofing. Fast, sleek and capable – it's a beautiful handset that's a delight to own.

KEY SPECS

5.1in screen ■ Octa-core 2.3GHz processor ■ Quad HD resolution ■ 32GB of storage ■ microSD slot for up to 200GB expansion ■ Android 6.01 Marshmallow ■ 12-megapixel rear camera ■ 3,000mAh battery ■ Dust- and water-resistant

COMPACT PC

Acer Revo One RL85

£269.99 from www.ebuyer.com
Date tested: January 2016

The Acer Revo One RL85 has plenty of storage capacity and provides room for easy expansion at a later date. Performance is respectable and the compact PC's unorthodox design is attractive and clever.

KEY SPECS

Dual-core 1.7GHz Intel Core i3-400SU processor ■ 4GB of memory ■ 500GB hard drive ■ 2 x USB 2 ports, 2 x USB 3 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet, dual-band 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ Windows 8.1 ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

WIRELESS ROUTER

Netgear Nighthawk X4S

£259.99 from www.currys.co.uk
Date tested: December 2015

The Netgear Nighthawk X4S will boost your network, no matter what type of web connection you have. It's expensive, but built to last, and should make further upgrades unnecessary until the next 802.11 standards are launched.

KEY SPECS

Dual-band 2.4GHz, 5GHz ■ 802.11ac ■ 2.53Gbps theoretical max speed ■ ADSL2+ and VDSL ■ 5 x 10/100/1,000Mbps Gigabit Ethernet ports ■ Dual-core 1.4GHz processor ■ 285 x 185 x 50mm ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

BUDGET TABLET

Apple iPad Mini 2

£219 from www.apple.com/uk
Date tested: November 2015

The iPad Mini 2 has a superb, slim-but-solid design and a good-quality screen. Its performance keeps up with the latest tablets, and the battery life is also impressive.

KEY SPECS

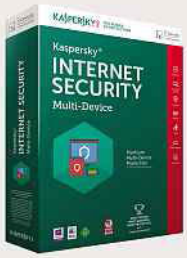
7.9in screen ■ 2,048 x 1,536 pixels resolution ■ 1.3GHz Apple A7 processor ■ 16GB storage ■ 5-megapixel rear camera, 1.2-megapixel front camera ■ 802.11n dual-band Wi-Fi ■ iOS 9 ■ 200 x 135 x 7.5mm ■ 331g

All prices correct at time of review

SOFTWARE & SERVICES

INTERNET SECURITY

Kaspersky Internet Security 2016



£19.95 from bit.ly/shop389
Date tested: January 2016

Kaspersky is rock solid at protecting your PC from the worst of the web, and has come top in seven of our most recent tests, blocking all viruses and malware with its robust defences. Click the link above to save £20 on the software (normal price £39.99).

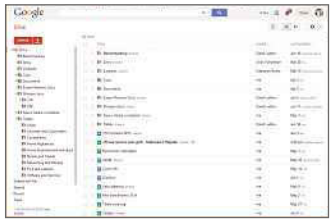
KEY FEATURES

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

ONLINE STORAGE

Google Drive

From free from drive.google.com
Date tested: January 2016



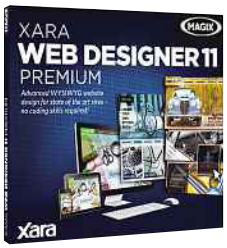
Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software integrates with Explorer, so saving and syncing files is like keeping them in any other PC folder.

KEY FEATURES

16GB free storage ■ Web-based office software ■ Works with XP, Vista, 7, 8+ and 10 ■ Chrome browser add-on ■ Android and iOS apps ■ 100GB extra storage for £1.36 per month; 1TB for £6.01 per month; 10TB for £60.16 per month

WEB DESIGN

Xara Web Designer 11 Premium



£69.99 from www.xara.com
Date tested: November 2015

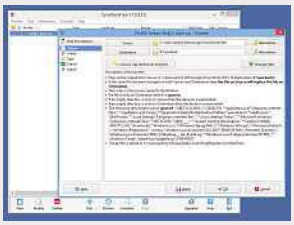
Xara Web Designer 11 is a great tool for anyone who wants a good-looking website without having to use HTML or CSS code. The interface is easy to use and the software includes all the tools you need to create flexible sites that change depending on the size of the screen.

KEY FEATURES

90+ templates ■ WYSIWYG design ■ Create responsive websites ■ Embed codes ■ Add HTML ■ Online editing ■ FTP uploader ■ Hosting (requires registration) ■ Browser preview (Chrome, Firefox, IE, Opera)

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 10, 8, 7, Vista, and XP ■ Extensive Help documentation and support

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.

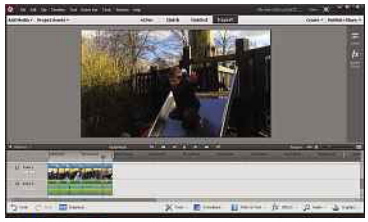
KEY FEATURES

Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8+ and 10 (32- and 64-bit) ■ Bundled photo organiser ■ Content-aware edits ■ Guided edits ■ People-beautifier tools ■ RAW support

VIDEO EDITING

Adobe Premiere Elements 13

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



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

Best Free Software

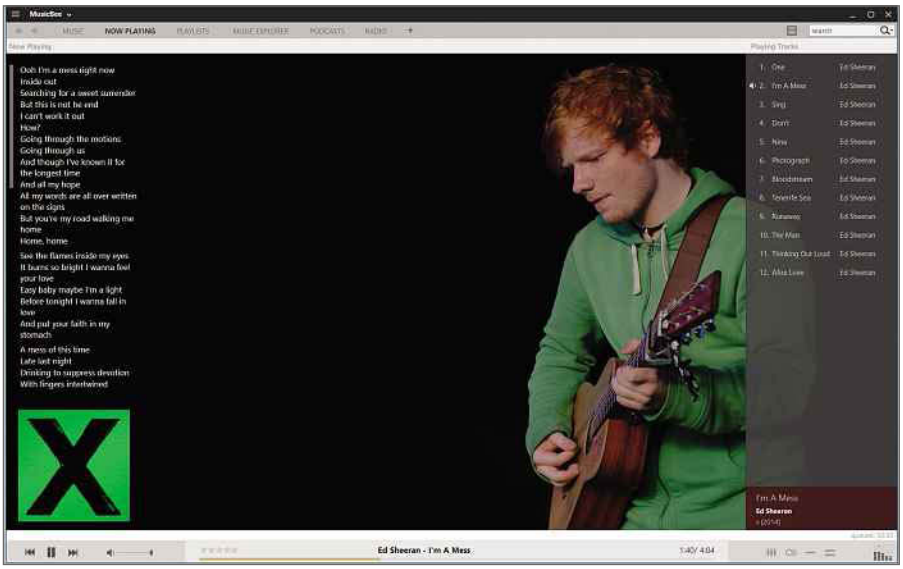
MUSIC MANAGER

MusicBee 3

getmusicbee.com

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

File size: 11.2MB



If you have an extensive music collection, MusicBee can help you get the most from it. The software makes it easy to organise, find and play songs on your computer, and it can import tracks from Windows Media Library and iTunes, or your choice of music folders. You can also set MusicBee to watch specific folders, so any new tracks you add are imported automatically to your library.

The software offers a wide selection of tagging options – automatic (pulling details from the internet) or manual – to keep your collection in order. You'll probably want to use a mix of both.

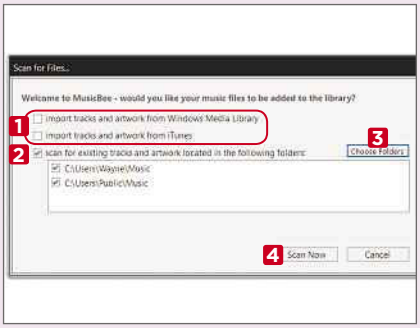
MusicBee can stream songs from popular web-radio stations, create party playlists, rip and burn CDs, remove duplicates, and convert tracks from one format to another. You can also add many more tools using plugins.

There are installed and portable versions available. The latter lets you load the software onto a USB memory stick, so you can take your music with you.

MusicBee's interface has been refreshed in this latest version. The biggest change is the introduction of a tabbed menu bar that lets you switch between Music, Now Playing, Playlists, Music Explorer and more. The software is much more customisable and lets you choose what to include in the header bar. You can also enable or disable various interface panels.

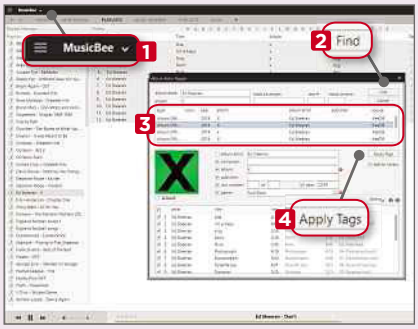
Performance has been enhanced, too, particularly when handling large music libraries. Also, MusicBee's integrated web browser has been removed in this version, so links now open in your default browser instead.

MINI WORKSHOP | Manage your music collection with MusicBee



1 When you first launch the program, it provides you with some choices for importing music and artwork. You can import content from Windows Media Library or iTunes, 1 or from specific folders. 2 Click Choose Folders 3 to add some additional locations. Click the Scan Now button 4 to import the music.

2 Your tracks will be added, and you can use the menu bar at the top 1 to jump to any of the sections in the software, such as Playlists. Clicking the New Tab button 2 lets you create a new section – Radio or History, for example. To bring up the equaliser, 3 click its button in the bottom-right corner of the interface. 4



3 To fix missing or incorrect tags, click the MusicBee down arrow, 1 and go to Tools, Tagging Tools. You can choose to 'Auto-Tag by Album' or 'Auto-Tag by Track'. With the former, click the Find button, 2 select an option from the list 3 and click Apply Tags. 4

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

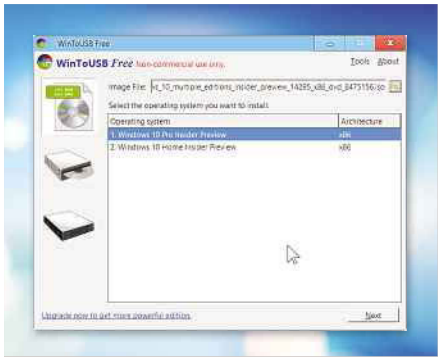
POWER-SAVING TOOL

Mpowersaver 3

mpowersaver.in

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 103KB

Flat-screen monitors don't consume anywhere near as much power as the old CRT (cathode ray tubes) models did, but they can still waste electricity. Mpowersaver automatically turns off your monitor when you lock your PC, when a screensaver starts or if your PC has been idle for a while. It doesn't require installation – just run it and then double-click the icon in the notification area to access the options. You can also turn off your screen using a simple keyboard shortcut.



PORTABLE WINDOWS CREATOR

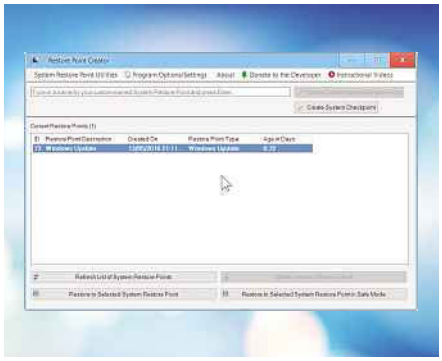
WinToUSB 3

bit.ly/wintousb398

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10

File size: 5.2MB

WinToUSB lets you boot into and run Windows from a USB memory stick. You'll need a fast USB device and your Windows-installation media (an ISO, WIM, ESD or SWM image file, or a CD or DVD), then just allow the wizard to guide you through creating a bootable Windows To Go installation. The latest version adds support for creating a drive directly from a Virtual Hard Disk (VHD or VHDX) or encrypted ESD image file.



SYSTEM TOOL

Restore Point Creator 4

bit.ly/rpcreator398

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 608KB

Creating system restore points in Windows can be tedious but this tiny program aims to simplify the process. Just run it and click the Create button to make a new restore point whenever you need one. You can pin it to the taskbar for quick access. The latest version gives Windows 8 and 10 users greater control over restore points, and stops the operating system automatically deleting them when they're over a certain age.

New Windows Apps

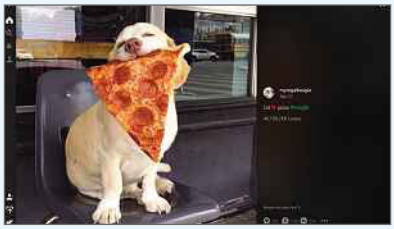
Vine for Windows 10

bit.ly/vine398

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 8.3MB

The official Vine app for Windows 10 lets you watch popular clips, and upload and share 'vines' (six-second looping videos) with friends via social networks. You'll need a free account to unlock most of its tools.



Bloom Music Player

bit.ly/bloom398

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 19.85MB

This is a free music player for Windows 10 devices. You can create your own playlists or set criteria for automatic ones, and browse and buy music from the integrated music store.

Newsflow

bit.ly/newsflow398

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 19.17MB

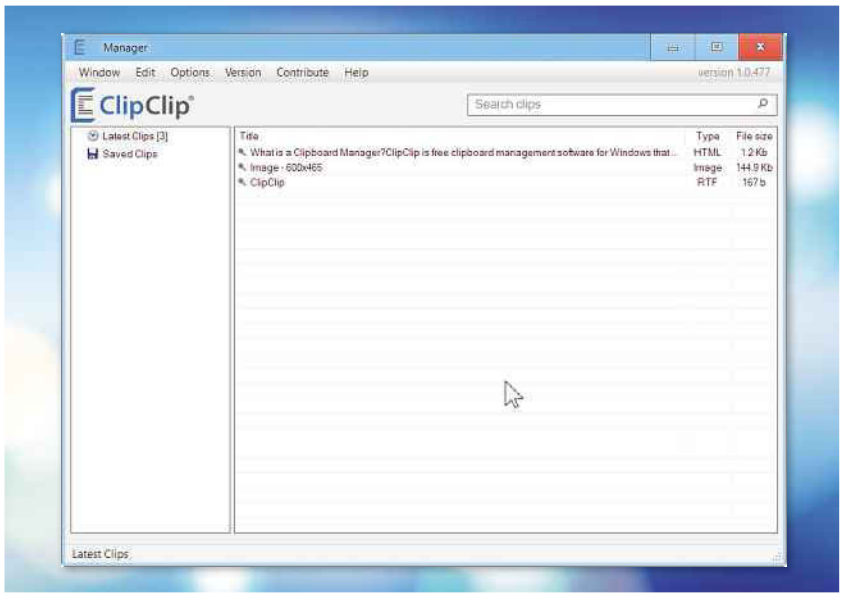
Newsflow is an attractive RSS feed reader for Windows 10. You can set it to deliver notifications, share news with friends and bookmark favourite stories. Live-tile support shows the latest headlines.

CLIPBOARD MANAGER

ClipClip

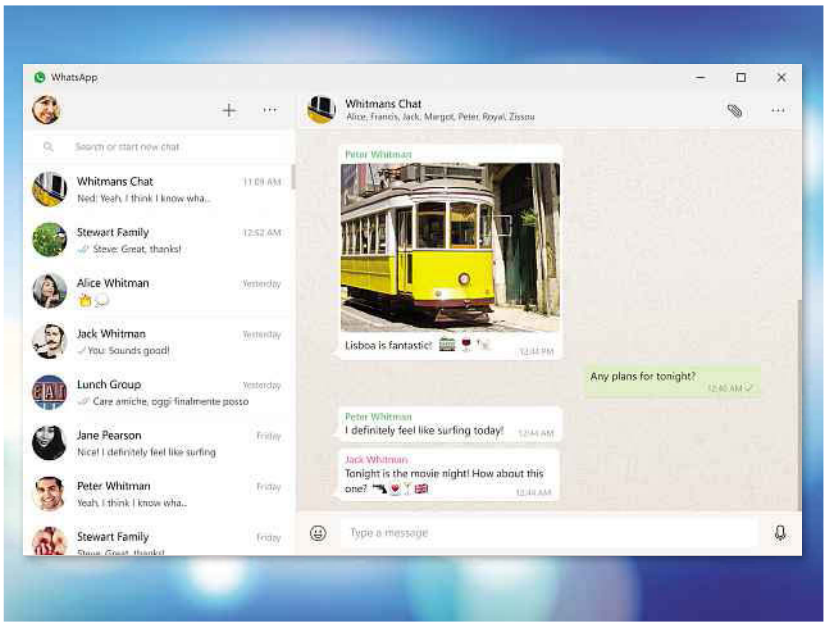
clipclip.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 1.8MB



The standard Windows clipboard limits you to copying and pasting just one item, but ClipClip lets you copy multiple snippets of text, photos or files to your clipboard. You can browse through them, paste any you require and save items to reuse another time. The clips are saved on your hard drive and can be kept in cloud-storage services such as OneDrive, Google Drive and Dropbox.

You can create unlimited folders and subfolders for the various items, and organise them via drag and drop. There's a built-in editor, too, so you can tweak any copied text before pasting.



CHAT TOOL

WhatsApp Desktop

www.whatsapp.com

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

File size: 61.5MB

WhatsApp has released a PC version of its popular mobile messaging app. Like WhatsApp Web (web.whatsapp.com), it works with your phone and mirrors conversations and messages from there. The program syncs with WhatsApp on your mobile device but provides Desktop notifications, a range of keyboard shortcuts and more.

Once you've installed it, scan the QR code using WhatsApp on your phone to link the two, and it will automatically sync your contacts and settings. It offers all the features you'd expect, including one-to-one and group chats, photo and video sharing, and location sharing.

PHOTO EDITOR

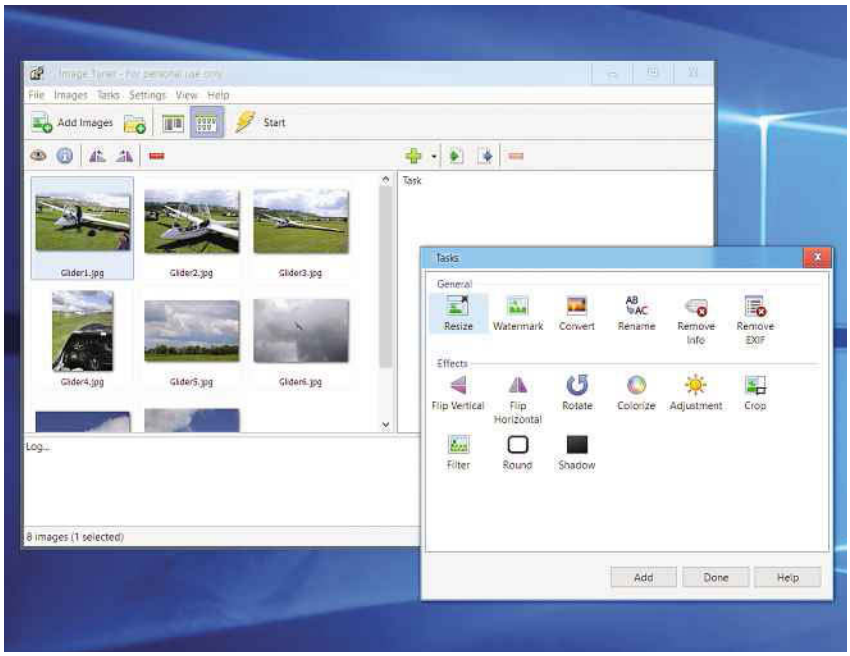
Image Tuner 6

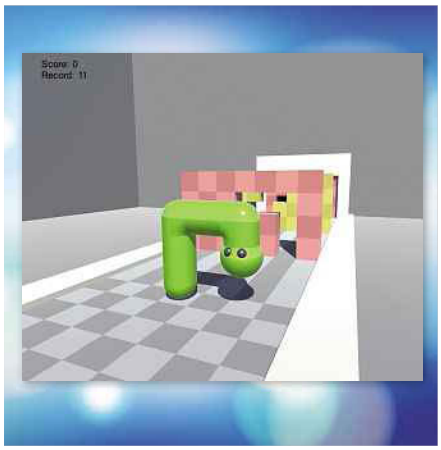
www.glorylogic.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 2.9MB

Image Tuner can make changes to whole batches of photos at the same time, including resizing, renaming, stripping out or updating information, and converting formats. It can also apply effects and actions, such as flip, rotate, colourise, crop, filter and add borders. Add some photos, choose the tasks to apply, then let the program get on with the job.

The latest version gains support for high DPI monitors and DPI scaling, and adds a right-click menu to the Tasks window. Conversion and image processing have been improved and it's been optimised for Windows 10. Just be sure to decline the bundled junk during installation.





GAME

BlobWall

bit.ly/blobwall398

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10, Mac OS X or Linux
File size: 44MB

Remember the BBC gameshow *Hole in the Wall*? Well, this game is essentially the same concept, but uses a shape-shifting blob instead of flailing human beings. As the wall gets nearer, you have to change the form of the blob so it fits perfectly through the hole in the brickwork. Hold down the spacebar and use the arrow keys to form the shape.

✗ Don't install...

Windows Movie Maker

bit.ly/movie398

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 1.2MB

Microsoft's video-editing software hasn't been updated for several years and is starting to show its age. Its tools are mostly one-click effects that offer little control over the results, and you can only install it through the Windows Live Essentials bundle, which requires you to deselect other, unwanted programs, and forces Windows Photo Gallery on you.

...Install this instead ✓

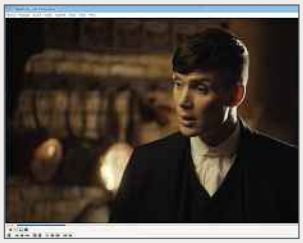
VSDC Free Video Editor

bit.ly/vsdc398

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 32.6MB

VSDC Free Video Editor is a fully comprehensive video editor that is updated regularly, so it's never unsafe or unstable to use. Its wizard-based interface makes adding scenes and transitions to your timeline quick and easy, and it offers a good selection of audio and video effects, including Auto Contrast, Temperature, Sharpen, Blur and Old Film. VSDC supports all popular codecs and video formats, as well as most audio and image formats, and also lets you convert file formats.

UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



MEDIA PLAYER

VLC Media Player 2.2.3

www.videolan.org

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 29.1MB

The third stable release of the "WeatherWax" branch of the hugely popular media player squashes more than 30 important bugs found in the previous version. It also includes updated codecs and fixes security problems caused by add-ons.

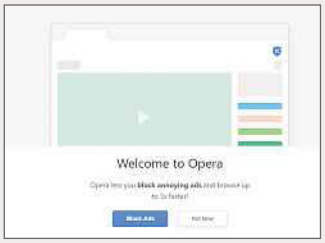
SYSTEM TOOL

Glary Utilities 5.50

www.glarysoft.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 15.5MB

Glary Utilities is a collection of tools for fixing PC problems, optimising Windows and protecting your privacy. The new version optimises the Disk Cleaner, Tracks Eraser, Quick Search and Registry Repair modules. It also fixes some minor bugs and tweaks the user interface.



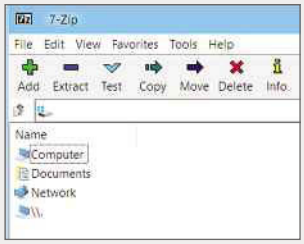
WEB BROWSER

Opera 37

www.opera.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 708KB (installer only)

The latest version of the popular web browser comes with a built-in adblocker. This is turned off by default, but can be enabled from the opening screen. There's now support for pop-out video which lets you watch video in a separate window outside the browser.



FILE COMPRESSOR

7-Zip 16

www.7-zip.org

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 1.3MB

7-Zip was forced to update its file-compression software after serious security flaws were discovered in it. If you use 7-Zip, make sure that you have version 16.0 installed. It also lets you extract files from Zip archives that have been spanned across several files. ■

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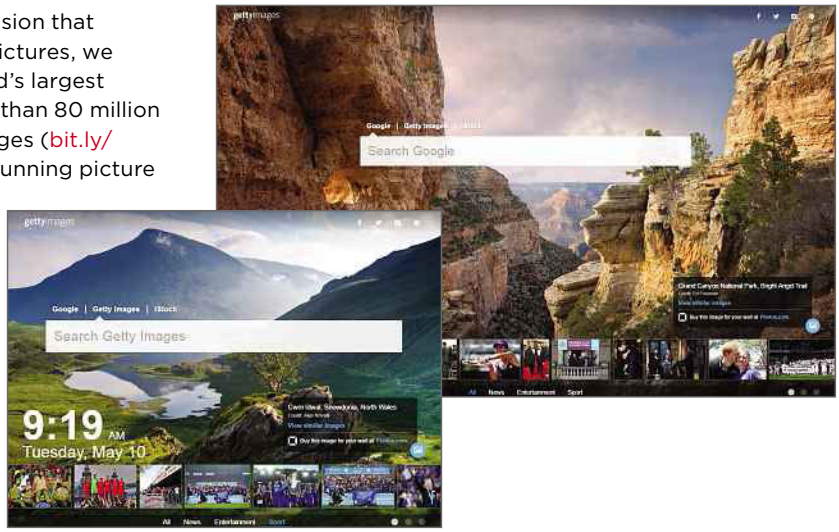
Best New Browser Tools

CHROME

View Getty Images on your New Tab page

Before you roll your eyes at yet another extension that embellishes your New Tab page with pretty pictures, we should mention that Getty Images is the world's largest photography agency with an archive of more than 80 million shots. This means that New Tab by Getty Images (bit.ly/getty398) guarantees you'll see a different, stunning picture every time you click the 'New tab' button or press Ctrl+T. As well as turning Chrome into a photo frame, this add-on also provides the time and date for your location, and a thumbnail strip of the latest images from Getty photographers, so you can keep up with the latest news, sport and entertainment stories visually. There's also a big search box for Google, Getty Images and its stock-photo service iStock. So, stop rolling your eyes and feast them instead on this gorgeous extension.

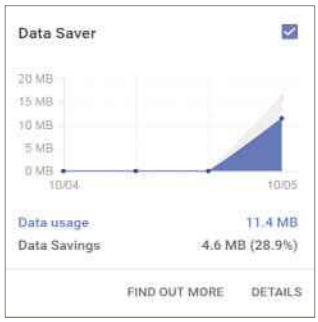


Accelerate online videos like a Mini

Car manufacturer Mini has come up with an ingenious way to promote its Mini Cooper S model: a Chrome extension that lets you fast-forward online videos "just like you accelerate a Mini". Install Mini Fast Forward (bit.ly/mini398) and the next time you want to skip through a boring bit while watching something on YouTube, Facebook or Netflix, press the 'S' key on your keyboard. This will play one minute of video in just over seven seconds; in other words, 0 to 60 in 7.15 seconds – just like a Mini Cooper S. Well, we thought it was clever and even if it doesn't make you rush out to buy a Mini, you'll still be able to fast-forward other, less inventive car adverts.

Reduce the amount of data web pages use

The less data a web page uses, the faster it loads in your browser, which is why Google's Data Saver extension for Chrome (bit.ly/datasaver370) is such a great idea. It uses Google's servers to compress content such as photos, animations and design elements without affecting the layout of pages, and has now been updated to make it even more efficient at streamlining the web. You can click Data Saver's toolbar button to see how much data you've used and how much you've saved since you installed the add-on, then click Details for a site-by-site breakdown of usage and savings.

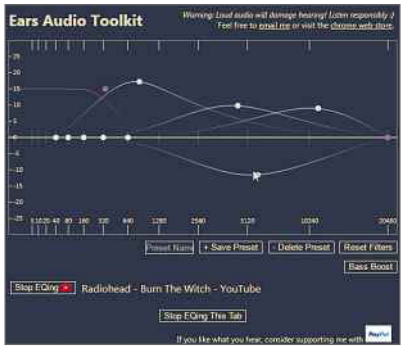


Sadly, Data Saver still doesn't work on secure https pages or when you're browsing in incognito mode, but you'll definitely notice a speed boost on content-heavy sites such as Mail Online, where it reduced our data usage by a whopping 59%.

Data Saver is also available in the Chrome app for Android, where it is turned on by default (mobile data being even more precious). You can check how much data you've saved in Chrome on your phone or tablet by going to Settings, Advanced and tapping Data Saver.

Adjust the audio on any website

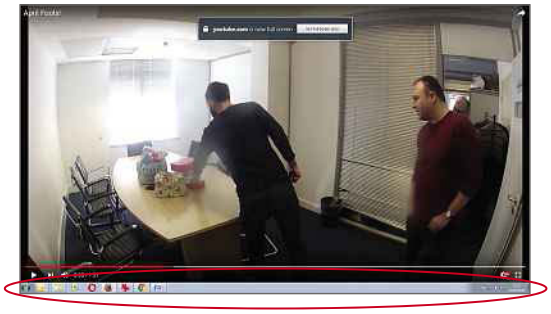
Don't put up with tinny YouTube videos and shoddy sound on other sites – use Ears Audio Toolkit (bit.ly/ears398) to tweak the music and improve your aural experience. When you're visiting a page that features audio, click the toolbar button and choose EQ This Tab. You can then boost the bass, reduce the treble and play around with the vocals, by dragging points on the equaliser graph into different positions. It's surprisingly effective and very addictive.



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

FIREFOX

Retain your taskbar in full-screen mode



Pressing F11 to make your browser full-screen is one of the oldest keyboard shortcuts in the book, and a great way to view more of a web page without scrolling, but it means you lose access to your taskbar.

A new add-on called Semi-Full Screen (bit.ly/semi398) solves this problem by retaining the taskbar and everything on it when you press F11, so you can easily access your Start menu, System Tray and other programs. It's particularly useful when you're watching a video on YouTube or Netflix – switch to semi-full screen (which is actually a lot more than half the screen), then click the video's full-screen button to view a maximised playback window that doesn't hide your taskbar. You can still switch to 'full' full-screen by pressing Shift+F11.

Preview Reddit comments without clicking

Part of Reddit's charm is its basic design, which eschews gimmicks in favour of a bulletin-board style layout that has barely changed in 11 years. One of the downsides to this is that you need to click a link to view the comments below a post, and they're often too inane to be worth the bother. You can

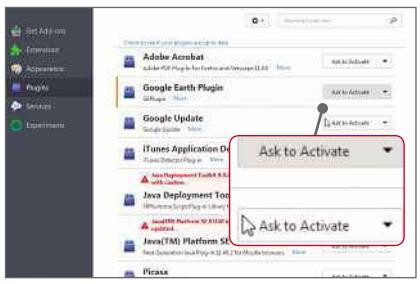
save yourself time – and exposure to idiocy – by installing Reddit Comment Hover (bit.ly/reddit398), which lets you hover your mouse over a comments link to view the discussion in a pop-up window. It works both on the Reddit front page and subreddit pages, but not on the 'load more comments' links within posts. It also serves as a speedy means of previewing photos and videos without opening the post first.

Activate plugins manually

With their outdated and often unsafe technology, plugins such as Silverlight, QuickTime and especially Adobe Flash are on the way out, which is why Mozilla is disabling them by default from Firefox 47 onwards. However, there are still times when you might need to run a plugin to view content on a web page, so it's worth knowing how to turn them on if required.

When you visit a page that contains plugin content, you should now see a pop-up message asking whether you want to let the site run the relevant plugin. Click Allow Now to activate it for the current site only, or 'Allow and Remember' to activate it on all sites. If you'd prefer not to see these prompts but would rather allow plugins to run automatically, go to Tools, Add-ons, Plugins and choose Always Activate from each drop-down menu.

Firefox highlights vulnerable plugins that shouldn't be activated, and will ditch Flash permanently from version 53 next year.



OTHER BROWSERS

Improve your YouTube experience

YouTube is a splendid website, but it isn't without its annoyances: for example, adverts and annotations that obstruct your view, a cluttered design and a video player that's either too small or too large (when you switch to full screen). The Opera add-on Enhancer for YouTube (bit.ly/enhancer398) solves all these problems and more, so you can make the site work exactly how you want it to. It places a small toolbar at the bottom of the browser with one-click buttons to remove ads, activate Cinema mode (which blacks out everything except the video) and resize the player, plus further customisation via the add-on's Options page.

Block ads in Microsoft Edge

We expected Adblock Plus to be the first ad blocker available for Edge, but a less well-known tool called CatBlock (catblock.tk) has beaten it to the punch. Already available for Chrome and Opera, CatBlock replaces adverts with pictures of – you guessed it – cats. It's based on the code used for AdBlock, so it's not just a novelty tool. As with other Edge extensions, you currently need to be a Windows Insider to try CatBlock, but once the Windows 10 Anniversary Update is released, you'll be able to install it from the Windows Store.

Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight

PRIVACY

Opera VPN

bit.ly/opera398

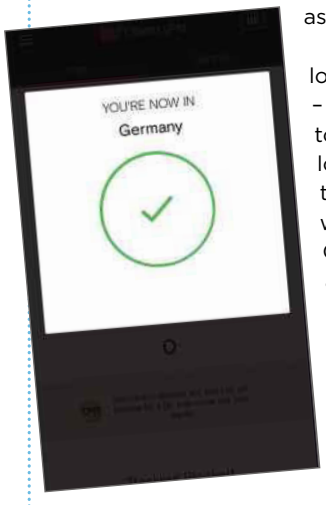
Min requirements: iOS 8

Size: 24MB

The team behind lightweight browser Opera has been busy of late. It recently launched the Opera Mini browser for Android, iOS and Windows Phone (www.opera.com/mobile), a security-conscious browser app that boasts advert-blocking and minimal data usage. Opera Mini also includes an optional VPN (virtual private network) feature that lets you hide your IP address, thereby disguising your location.

Now, Opera has souped up this VPN feature and created an iOS app that lets you mask your location when using other browsers, including Safari and Chrome, and apps such as Netflix. The biggest benefit is that sites can't "see" you as you make your merry way around the web. Opera VPN's tracker blocker is enabled by default, encrypting all your local web traffic, and blocking snoopers and hackers when you use Wi-Fi on trains, in cafes and in other public places.

IP-hiding also unlocks a whole world of content by letting you use the web and apps as if you were somewhere else in the world. Currently, the app lets you switch to an IP address in one of five locations: the US, Canada, Germany, Singapore and the Netherlands. So you could watch US-only shows on Netflix, buy products from German Amazon and watch live streaming Canadian TV. It also means you can use sites such as Facebook in workplaces, libraries and other places where Wi-Fi has been set to block them. The VPN automatically blocks adverts in sites if you're using Safari or Chrome, as well as in many other apps.



It took a few goes to switch our location, but it worked in the end – perhaps our home Wi-Fi was to blame. And be aware that location-switching doesn't apply to all apps (Google Maps still knew we were in London, for example). Quibbles aside, this is an excellent app – it's easy to use and provides a quick, effective way to protect your privacy and improve browsing. For a full guide, watch Opera VPN's video on YouTube: bit.ly/operavid398.

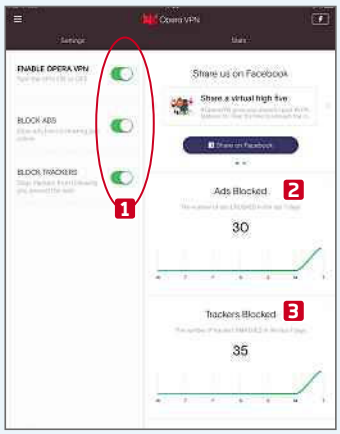
Our rating ★★★★★

MINI WORKSHOP

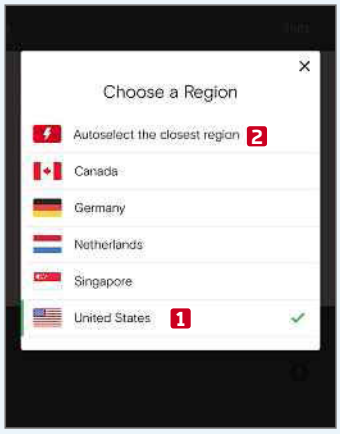
Beat the web's location restrictions using Opera VPN

1 Download and launch Opera VPN, tap Continue and swipe through the introductory screens. When you reach the screen with 'Step 1/2' displayed in the middle, tap Continue, then OK to allow notifications. On the 'Step 2/2' screen, tap Continue 1 and then Allow 2 to enable the VPN.

2 Swipe through the tip screens and tap Turn On. Now you'll see a home screen with on/off sliders for the VPN, ad-blocking and tracker-blocking. 1 Once you start to browse and use apps with the VPN enabled, this page will chart the number of adverts 2 and trackers 3 it has blocked.



3 To access content that's only available abroad, tap the lightning-bolt icon in the top-right corner. In the box that opens, tap a country, such as United States, 1 whose content you want to access via your browsers and apps. Alternatively, tap 'Autoselect the closest region' 2 to switch to an anonymous IP nearby. This won't let you access US content but it's a quicker way to hide your location.



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

EATING OUT

NEW

ChariTable Bookings

bit.ly/charitable398

Min requirements: iOS 8.1

Size: 22.9MB

This app lets you raise money for good causes while booking a meal out. It's the restaurant that stumps up - it gives £1 to a charity of your choice, and ChariTable is the middleman. So you get a booking, the restaurant gets your custom and your chosen charity gets much-needed funds. Even taking away the charitable element, the app works well as a restaurant-booking service, with search filters including location and cuisine, and details including menus and even other users' photos of their meals.

Our rating ★★★★★

VIDEO

UPDATED

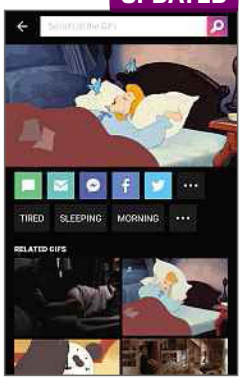
Giphy

bit.ly/giphydroid398

bit.ly/giphyios398

Min requirements: Android 4.0.3, iOS 8

Size: 7.1MB (Android), 15.4 (iOS)



I say "gif", you say "jif", let's call the whole thing off. These silent little looping videos are all over the internet, wordlessly expressing emotions from "argh" to "zip-a-dee-doo-dah", often using clips from classic films and TV. Use keywords to search this app's huge database of clips, then tap the buttons for easy sharing on Facebook, Twitter, email and more. New features include the option to copy a GIF to your clipboard with a long-press.

Our rating ★★★★☆

PUBLIC MESSAGING

NEW

Talkshow

bit.ly/talkshow398

Min requirements: iOS 8.2

Size: 25.6MB

To offset all our good advice about browsing anonymously (see App Of The Fortnight) and securing your device (see AVG's app below), here's the latest web fad: texting complete strangers. Talkshow describes itself as your own text-based radio show but it's more a cross between Twitter – without the pesky word-limit – and WhatsApp's group chat, except that your audience doesn't need to install the app, too. Invite friends to tune into your 'show' or post your witterings on Facebook and other sites.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

SECURITY

UPDATED

AVG AntiVirus Free for Android

bit.ly/avgdroid398

Min requirements: Varies by device

Size: Varies by device

AVG's antivirus app targets the security needs of phone and tablet users. Malware protection is included as part of the app's toolkit. It also includes a powerful scanner that scours your installed apps for security vulnerabilities and phishing, a growing threat to Android users. It'll tell you which device settings and app permissions may be putting you at risk, and then offer advice on fixing them.

If your device is lost or stolen, AVG can help you find it but only if you've installed the app beforehand. You can wipe your lost phone or tablet and its SD card by signing into AVG on your PC; lock it; display a message; make it ring (even if it's on silent mode); and track it using Google Maps. The new version lets you manually update the app should the automatic update fail.

Our rating ★★★★★

GET THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID

Our updated Android MagBook is packed with 148 pages of apps, workshops and advice to unlock the full potential of your tablet and phone.

Discover how to:

- Master new tools in Lollipop and Marshmallow
- Stop apps leaking your personal data
- Record anything on your phone and tablet
- Prevent updates from wrecking your device
- Remove hidden junk so it never comes back
- Switch from iOS without losing data

Order it now from Amazon at bit.ly/defguidetoandroid

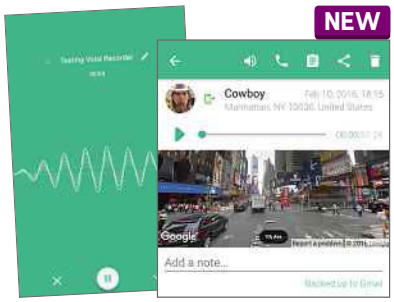
AUDIO RECORDER

Voisi Recorder & Transcriber

bit.ly/voisi398

Min requirements: Android 4.4
Size: 5.4MB

NEW



Who can resist an app with a name that rhymes with Boycie from *Only Fools and Horses*? Happily, it's also rather good at its main function: recording your dictated notes in MP3 format. You can then share them by, for example, embedding them in Evernote notes and Gmail emails, or storing them in Dropbox. Alternatively, you can import recordings and then use Voisi to improve their sound quality, add text notes and insert bookmarks at key points. Sadly, the best feature – automatic transcription that turns your voice notes into written words – requires an in-app subscription of £2.39 per month or £23.99 per year.

Our rating ★★★★☆

TV & BOOKS

Map for Game of Thrones

bit.ly/thrones398

Min requirements: Android 4.1
Size: 47MB

NEW

This fantastic new app finally liberates *Game of Thrones* fans from reaching for the Pause button during those wonderful opening credits by giving Westeros the Google Maps treatment. Travel around by swiping, and zoom in and out by pinching. The map uses vector graphics for high-quality detail that matches your current zoom level, just as in Google. Visit an area to read character biographies relevant to that region, information on points of interest and read a synopsis or even full transcripts of scenes that took place there. There's also a 'Recap mode' that lets you choose an episode from a previous season and see its scenes plotted on the map.

Our rating ★★★★★

5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

CAMERA

Cortex Camera

bit.ly/cortexdroid398
bit.ly/cortexios398

Min requirements: Android 5, iOS 9
Size: 3.7MB (Android), 1.7MB (iOS)
Price: £2.49 (Android), £2.29 (iOS)

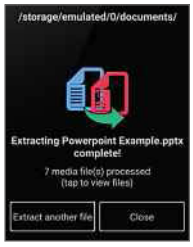
Cortex Camera, updated for iOS and new to Android, gets around low-light, blurry or 'noisy' (speckled) images by combining dozens of individual frames to create a single high-resolution photo. You need to keep your device still for a few seconds but it means you can dispense with a tripod.

DOCUMENTS

Media Extractor

bit.ly/mediaex

Min requirements: Android 4
Size: 2MB **Price:** 60p



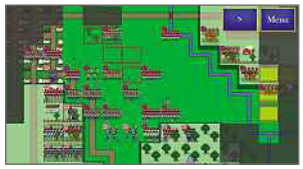
Extract photos, fonts and other media from PowerPoint (.pptx) and Word (.docx) documents, with this easy-to-use app that supports many file formats and doesn't compromise the quality of extracted files.

GAME

Pixel Soldiers: Gettysburg

bit.ly/pixel398

Min requirements: Android 2.2
Size: 14MB **Price:** £1.49



This wonderful strategy game recalls the days of 8-bit graphics, with colourful blocky soldiers obeying your orders. You can choose to command either the Southern or Union armies to victory in the farmlands of 19th century Pennsylvania. Easy to play but difficult to master, like all the most involving games.

PHOTOS

SuperPano

bit.ly/super398

Min requirements: Android 4.1
Size: Varies by device **Price:** £1.64

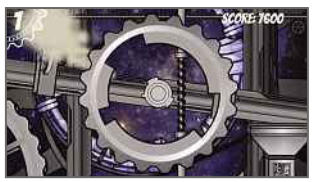
Combine multiple full-resolution photos into one wide-angle image, rectangular panorama or 'sphere' panorama. Either capture photos using any of your installed camera apps, or import photos from your gallery and use SuperPano to align and stitch them automatically.

GAME

Circular Logic

bit.ly/circular398

Min requirements: Android 4
Size: 45MB **Price:** 82p



The object of this puzzle game is simple – rotate the gears by tapping and holding, then align them before the time runs out. Once you've got the hang of it and aligned the gears, you're swept off to distant galaxies for more beautifully designed puzzle fun.

Cortex Camera | Media Extractor | Pixel Soldiers: Gettysburg | SuperPano | Circular Logic

Best New TV Apps

HOME SCREEN

Scarlett for Chromecast

bit.ly/scarlett398

Min requirements: Android 4.1 with Chromecast, Nexus Player or Android TV **Size:** 6.1MB

Scarlett unlocks the full potential of your Chromecast by turning your TV into a personalised home screen. It streams the latest photos, videos and other content from apps including YouTube, Reddit and Twitter from your phone to your TV, so you can browse using your handset. Scarlett's 'dashboard' shows the weather forecast and time for your locations, and lets you bring up news stories by saying: "Show me news". You can watch your YouTube playlists and set videos to play automatically, so that Scarlett essentially serves as your own TV channel. It also displays photos from 500px.com, whereas the Chromecast usually takes images from Google Photos.

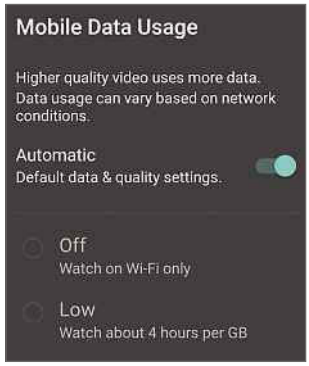
TV & FILM

Netflix

bit.ly/netflix398

bit.ly/netflixios398

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 8 **Size:** 38.8MB



It's easy to forget how much mobile data you're using when you're watching Netflix on your phone, which can cause you to exceed your monthly data allowance. So hats off to Netflix for updating its Android and iOS apps with a new feature that lets you control the amount of data your viewing consumes. To access this, select App Settings from the main menu then tap Mobile Data Usage. On the next screen, slide the Automatic slider to the left and choose one of the options below, including Low (which lets you watch four hours of Netflix per gigabyte of data used), High (one hour) and Off (watch over Wi-Fi only). Playback quality obviously won't be as good on lower settings.

MUSIC

Vevo for Android

bit.ly/vevo398

Min requirements: Android (varies with device)

Size: Varies with device

The popular music-video service has updated its Android app so you can import your favourite artists from Spotify, YouTube and Twitter. Link your accounts on these services with the Vevo app so it can see which artists you 'like' and deliver better recommendations. The option will be added to the iOS version in due course. When we wrote about the Vevo app in Issue 393 (bit.ly/webuser393), we mentioned its new Spotlight feature, which asks you to choose at least three of your favourite artists to get a personalised feed of videos and playlists. Spotlight has now been improved to make it easier to select multiple artists across different genres.

✗ Don't install...

Photo Editor Pro 2015

bit.ly/photo398

There are hundreds of free image-editing apps on the Play store, so there's really no reason to pay £3.16 for this one, especially when it's not much cop. It offers few editing tools, effects and filters for the money, despite its claim to be "the most powerful photo editor app yet". In the words of one disappointed user: "When you pick a picture, it makes it look weird. I'm so glad I was able to get a refund."

...Install this instead ✓

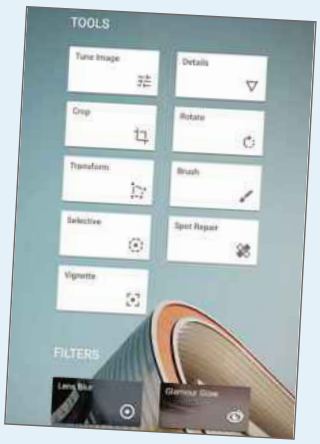
Snapseed

bit.ly/snapseeddroid398

bit.ly/snapseedios398

Min requirements: Min requirements: Android 4.1, iOS 8

Size: 46MB



Snapseed's powerful tools, ad-free interface and simple controls make it perfect for your mobile photo-editing needs. It couldn't be easier to use: just open a picture and tap 'Tune Image' to access settings such as brightness, contrast and saturation, or use the app's auto-enhance option. As well as tools for cropping, straightening and rotating, Snapseed offers advanced features for making precise changes to photos, and an impressive set of filters to help you achieve the perfect shot. Best of all, you can compare each edit you make with how the image looked before, so you don't accidentally overwrite the original photo.

FAQ

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

Mobile roaming charges

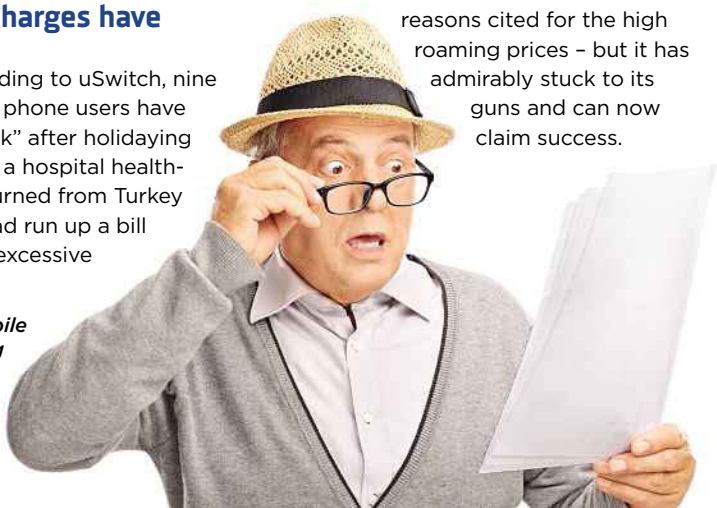
Returning home from holiday to a massive mobile-phone bill could soon be a thing of the past, as **David Crookes** explains

What are they?

Roaming charges are incurred whenever you make or receive a call, send a text, listen to a voicemail message or use the internet while you're abroad. This is because your phone is connecting to an operator based in an area outside of your network provider's geographical coverage and the new network is asking for a fee in addition to the cost of providing the service. This means that if you use your phone to log into Facebook, check the news, upload photos and perform other web tasks while on holiday, the resulting charges could cost you dear.

What sort of charges have people faced?

Huge ones. According to uSwitch, nine million UK mobile phone users have suffered "bill shock" after holidaying abroad. Last year, a hospital health-care assistant returned from Turkey to find that she had run up a bill of £21,819 due to excessive data usage, while a 52-year-old who left her iPhone roaming function on while enjoying a fortnight in Lanzarote was hit by a £3,200 bill. For a long time, telecom companies have been accused of levying charges far in excess of the actual cost of providing their services and there have been efforts to call a halt to them.



Millions of us have received huge mobile bills after returning from holiday

What action has been taken?

The European Commission has been negotiating with mobile providers across the continent since 2007, trying to push roaming charges down. It has been a difficult task given there are more than 70 networks – one of the reasons cited for the high roaming prices – but it has admirably stuck to its guns and can now claim success.

Not content with introducing a cap on 1 July 2014 that meant the roaming surcharge for a minute of outgoing voice calls would cost no more than €0.19 (15p), incoming calls €0.05 (4p), a text €0.06 (5p) and a megabyte of data €0.20 (16p) – all exclusive of VAT – it has pushed for an extra drop.

So what's happened to charges now?

As of 30 April 2016, the roaming surcharge has become even cheaper. Thanks to a regulation passed in Brussels that applies everywhere in the EU, you will now pay no more than €0.05 (4p) extra per minute of outgoing calls, €0.01 (1p) for incoming, €0.02 (2p) extra for a text and €0.05 (4p) extra per MB of data. Of course, you're still charged for the actual domestic call, which works out at around 4.4p a minute and roughly 4.3p per MB, but given that the costs before the changes were 16p and 17.4p (inc VAT) respectively, it's a significant drop.

The European Commission has set new limits on how much you'll be charged

Does it count towards my monthly allowance?

Yes, and that's another welcome change. Before 30 April, it didn't matter how many minutes or gigabytes of data you had on your domestic contract; when you made a call or consumed data abroad, you always paid additional costs and your allowance would not be reduced. But following the European Commission's ruling, your data and call consumption is reduced by however much you use abroad. This should mean that you only

pay the surcharge when you are making calls, sending texts and using data beyond your allowance. If you're on pay-as-you-go, though, you'll pay your normal rate plus the surcharge.

What if I've almost used my allowance?

You'll need to be careful. Once you have used up whatever you have, you'll be paying the non-allowance rates. With EE, for example, the cost of a call to a UK mobile made outside of your allowance is 40p per minute. But it's worth checking with your provider to see if they have any policies of their own. Some have begun to go above and beyond the new rules by introducing some very consumer-friendly deals.

Let's hope this woman stranded in the sea is within her monthly allowance

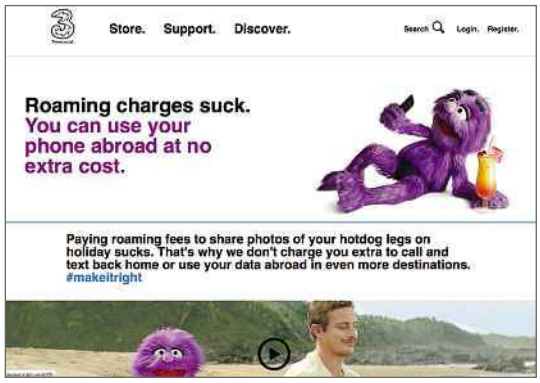
What are UK network providers doing?

Tesco Mobile has scrapped charges in 31 European countries but only from 23 May to 3 September – making it akin to a summer promotion – while Vodafone has scrapped roaming charges across 40 European countries, including Portugal, France, Germany, Ireland, Sweden and Turkey. Customers used to pay £3 a day for roaming calls, texts and data but the deal allows for up to 4GB of data and unlimited calls, texts and picture messaging. However, to benefit from this you have to be a new or upgrading Vodafone Red customer. Meanwhile, Three's Feel At Home feature (bit.ly/feel398) offers free roaming in 11 EU countries.

Vodafone has ditched roaming charges for new customers in 40 EU countries

Are any more changes planned?

Absolutely. The really big news is that from 15 June 2017, there will be no roaming fees at all and the cost of a call will be the same as the domestic price. The only exception will be if you end up using your SIM card in another country permanently, at which point charges will start to be applied. Otherwise, whether you're calling a friend at home or in an EU country, the cost will be the same.



Three's Feel At Home feature lets you roam for free in countries outside Europe

Will I see changes immediately?

Most users will. The cost of calls should fall by more than half but the big savings won't be seen until next year. That said, some providers, including EE and Three, say they have been absorbing roaming charges within certain packages for a while, which means their customers shouldn't notice any difference.

What if I travel outside the EU?

The roaming charges will apply at whatever rate they are set – the new official EU rules that have come into effect only apply to countries in the European Union along with three non-EU members in the European Economic Area: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Switzerland is not among them and Turkey is not yet a member of either. But some companies are scrapping charges in non-EU countries. Three's Feel At Home lets you roam without extra fees in Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Macau, the US, Israel, New Zealand and Sri Lanka. Carphone Warehouse's iD Mobile network (www.idmobile.co.uk) has a Takeaway plan that lets you roam in 29 countries including the USA and Australia.

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR MOBILE BILL ABROAD

As well as checking if your network provider has a good deal for overseas phone use, there are other ways you can cut your calling and data costs on holiday

Turn off data roaming

Phone functions such as automatically updating apps use data in the background, so if you're still worried, you should always turn off data roaming abroad when you don't need it. On an iPhone, go to Settings, Mobile Data, Mobile Data Options. On Android, go to Settings, Wireless & Networks, tap More, choose Mobile Networks and navigate the data options.

Use free Wi-Fi in public areas

Now, we say this with caution. Yes, use public Wi-Fi because it will allow you to use your smartphone without guzzling your network data but do be careful what you use it for. Public Wi-Fi is not 100% secure so look out for 'https' in the address bar to ensure any data connection is encrypted, don't check your bank account and be careful with your sensitive information. It's wisest to stick to Wi-Fi provided by hotels and cafés.

Be careful on cruises and ferries

When you're out at sea, your phone may look for a satellite connection rather than a mobile. In this case, data limits and the EU tariffs will not apply and you could be hit with a sky-high bill. Call your provider or check their website to see what the potential charges are but it may be best to turn your phone off and relax instead.

STOP HACKERS LOCKI

COVER FEATURE

The criminals behind ransomware are finding ever more devious
protect your devices from the latest threats, and recover from an

Ransomware first hit the headlines a few years ago as one of the nastiest types of malware yet, taking control of a victim's computer, encrypting their files and extorting money to remove it. Sadly, in recent months, the threat of ransomware has grown worse – much worse, in fact. Not only has it spread from PCs to phones, tablets and Macs, but there has been a massive increase in the number of instances of ransomware detected. Moreover, the methods that hackers use have become more devious and more difficult to deal with.

In this feature, we provide a complete guide to avoiding, detecting, removing and recovering from ransomware.

Over the following six pages, we explain exactly what ransomware is and what it does, and we take a look at the worst new examples of 2016. Our Ransomware Survival Guide explains how you can avoid infection, and how best to recover from a ransomware attack. Should you pay the ransom? We cover the pros and cons of that, too.

YOUR RANSOMWARE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What is it?

Ransomware is a particularly virulent form of malware that locks your computer and encrypts your files so that you can't access them. The exact details vary, but it may stop you using Windows or certain programs such as your web browser. Once your files are encrypted, the ransomware will ask for payment to unlock them, usually in the untraceable virtual currency Bitcoin. Although removing ransomware is actually quite easy, your files will remain encrypted. There's also another spiteful trick the malware uses to get you to pay up: if the money is not paid on time, the ransom is doubled.

Ransomware usually demands payment in the virtual currency Bitcoin

How do I get infected?

As with most forms of malware, the primary source of infection is an email attachment or malicious link. The senders use con tricks to get you to open the attachment, such as pretending that it's an invoice for something you've bought from a reputable company. This tactic preys on your fear of being charged for an item you didn't buy, so that you'll open the invoice without thinking about it.

Where does ransomware come from?

Ransomware originated in Russia and Eastern Europe. Thanks to decentralised digital currencies such as Bitcoin, which make it easy for attackers to demand a ransom and be paid without leaving a trace, ransomware is now so lucrative that it's become the primary revenue stream for some cybercriminals.

It doesn't even take much skill to create your own ransomware. Last year, a Turkish security researcher called Utku Sen created a strain of ransomware called Hidden Tear and published the source code online. It was described as being "for educational purposes only" (as were some early viruses) and ostensibly designed to teach security professionals how to defend against such threats. However, it provided a quick way for anyone with average computer skills to get into the ransomware business.

What does it look like?

Once your PC has been infected and your personal files encrypted, a message appears telling you what's happened and provides info about how – and how much – to pay. The look of this message will vary depending on which ransomware family is behind the attack.

Designed as an educational tool for security programmers, Hidden Tear inadvertently provided would-be ransomware developers with helpful tips for coding

NG YOUR PC & PHONE

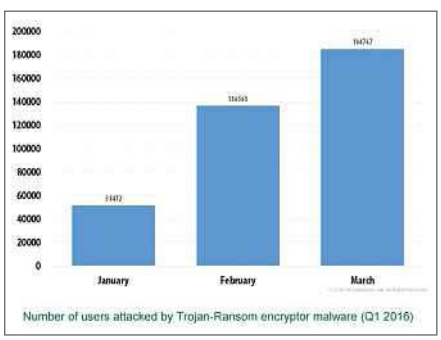
ways to lock your files. **Wayne Williams** explains how to attack

Is it really that common?

Sadly, yes. According to the latest IT Threat Evolution report from Kaspersky (bit.ly/itevolution398), in the first three months of 2016, ransomware attempts were recorded in 114 countries around the world and 372,602 people were targeted, with around 17% in the corporate sector (banks and other businesses). That might not sound like a huge number of victims when you consider that there are probably around a billion or so Windows users, but the figures showed 30% more attacks than recorded in the previous quarter, and this growth is showing no signs of slowing. In March 2016, there were 184,767 recorded attacks, way ahead of the 136,363 attacks in February and the 51,472 in January.

However, Kaspersky warns that "the real number of incidents is several times higher", because it can't always distinguish ransomware from other forms of malware.

There have been several high-profile victims, including Lincolnshire County Council which was hit by an unnamed ransomware infection in January that resulted in its computer systems being shut down for four days (bit.ly/lincsransom398).



Kaspersky reports a significant rise in ransomware attacks this year

Paying the ransom is no guarantee that you'll get the key to unlock your files

Are only Windows PCs at risk?

Not anymore. Ransomware developers have started targeting Linux, too, because a lot of web servers use that operating system. There have also been attacks on Macs and Android devices.

Why don't the police stop it?

It's very difficult for law-enforcement agencies to track down the source of ransomware because the criminals use state-of-the-art encryption and routing tricks to make their location impossible to identify.

What happens if I pay the ransom?

If everything goes to plan, once the ransom has been handed over, a key will be generated that you can use to decrypt your files. But first, you should turn to page 43 to see what we think about paying up.

How can I be sure I'll receive this key?

You can't. Some ransomware, such as KeRanger and CTB-Locker, lets you decrypt one or two files to prove that the key exists and works, but there's no guarantee that once you've paid a ransom all your files will be unlocked.

What happens if I don't pay?

Your files will remain locked and unusable, unless the encryption has been cracked and there is a program you can use to unlock the files for free. Such tools are rare but they do exist, so you might get lucky.

WORST NEW RANSOMWARE OF 2016

It's been a terrible year for ransomware so far. Here, we round up some of the nastiest new threats – starting with one that thankfully won't bother us anymore

TeslaCrypt

Believed to be a derivative of the original CryptoLocker ransomware, TeslaCrypt uses super-strong, "uncrackable" encryption to lock a user's files. According to Kaspersky's report, it is by far the number one ransomware family, responsible for 58% of infections. It tends to be spread via phishing and spam emails.

However, there's some great news for anyone infected by it. In a highly unusual move, the creators behind it have shut down their operations and released a free decryption key on the website that was previously used to accept the ransom in Bitcoin. You can use this key to unlock encrypted files, or download the recently updated TeslaDecoder (bit.ly/teslacrypt398).

TeslaCrypt was deadly but it has now shut down

CTB-Locker pays the people who help to spread it

CTB-Locker

CTB-Locker – aka Onion Ransomware – is, according to Kaspersky, the second-worst ransomware family in existence and responsible for 23.5% of infections. It uses the Tor Project's anonymous network to evade detection and even offers an affiliate programme, which lets anyone spreading it take a cut of the profits. A new variant specifically targets web servers.

CryptoWall

This ransomware family is the third most prevalent according to Kaspersky, and is typically spread through spam messages. It encrypts files using AES-265 and RSA encryption, which makes it impossible to crack, and it is regularly updated to add new features that make it harder to circumvent. The latest version, CryptoWall 4, renames files as it encrypts them, while another variant encrypts files over several weeks to prevent recovery from backups.

CryptoWall may target outdated versions of Flash Player, so make sure you keep Adobe's plugin up to date on your PC.

MINI WORKSHOP | Protect your PC using Malwarebytes Anti-Ransomware

1 Download and install the latest version from bit.ly/mbransom398. It's still in beta but very stable, and starts alongside Windows for added protection. Launch the program to protect your system from the likes of CryptoWall 4, CryptoLocker, TeslaCrypt and CTB-Locker. Your system is shown as fully protected. 1

2 You'll see protection is enabled. 1 You can turn it off at any time, 2 if the software prevents a safe program from running as intended. Make sure it's definitely safe before you disable the protection, and re-enable it immediately afterwards. The banner at the top will warn you that your system is at risk when protection is turned off.

3 The Quarantine area 1 contains any threats found and disinfected by the program (thankfully, none in this instance). Quarantined files pose no threat but you can restore or delete them. The Exclusions 2 tab lets you add files that you want excluded from detection as ransomware.

CryptoWall locks your files then welcomes you to its "community"

Locky

Arguably the most aggressive type of ransomware, Locky encrypts files across any drive, including Bitcoin wallets, and attacks Windows, Mac OS X and Linux. It spreads through macros in Word documents that purport to be invoices, by persuading users to enable the edit function. While Kaspersky only ranks it at number seven in its latest report, Locky has been spreading like wildfire and, in March, infected the IT systems of at least one of three US hospitals hit by ransomware (bit.ly/hospitals398).

Malwarebytes and Bitdefender both offer free anti-ransomware tools that can protect against Locky. See the Mini Workshop on page 42 for details.

Dogspectus

This recently detected ransomware attacks Android phones and is installed via a malicious advert that the victim encounters on the web. It requires no user interaction to install and, once infected, the phone is locked and a ransom request displayed. This is payable not in Bitcoin, but iTunes cards. To remove it, you will need to perform a factory reset of your phone. The process will vary depending on the device type and version of Android that it's running.

Dogspectus targets Android phones and demands iTunes credit

The terrifying Locky isn't fussy about which computers it infects

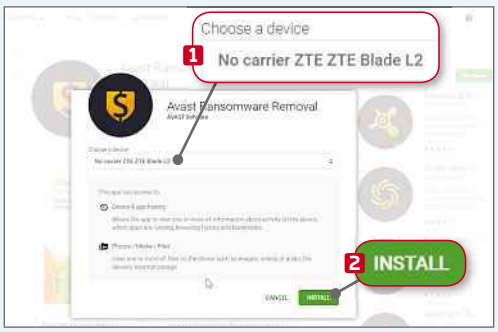
Chimera

This ransomware mostly targets small companies (primarily in Germany, so far, although it has spread beyond) through fake business offers and job applications. Once it has encrypted the files, it requests a ransom in Bitcoin and, for an extra kicker, threatens to publish the victim's data online

Chimera has the cheek to invite its victims to join its affiliate programme

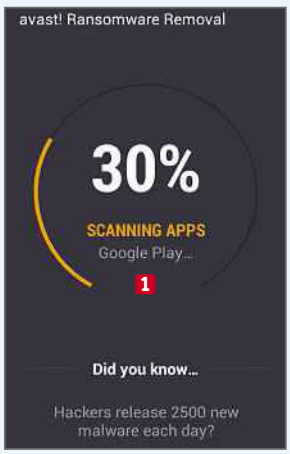
MINI WORKSHOP

Protect your Android phone using Avast Ransomware Removal

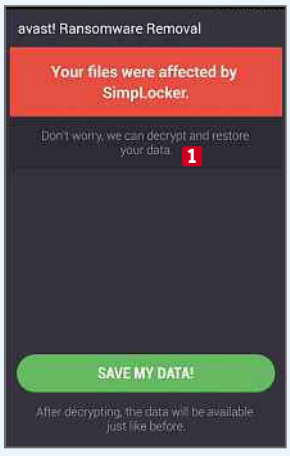


1 If your phone has been infected and locked, installing an anti-ransomware app on it might seem impossible, but there is a simple solution. On your PC, go to the Avast Ransomware Removal page on Google Play (bit.ly/avastransom398) and click Install. Select your device in the drop-down menu 1 and, again, click Install. 2

2 When the app arrives on your phone, it appears in the notifications bar at the top of the screen. Tap the message, then tap the app name. Avast Ransomware Removal will scan your system for apps and then files. 1 You'll need to wait for this process to complete.



3 If ransomware is detected, you'll see a message telling you that your device is infected, and you'll be able to use the app to remove the infection and restore access to your data. 1 If your device is reported as being clean, you'll need to uninstall the app before you can use your phone again.



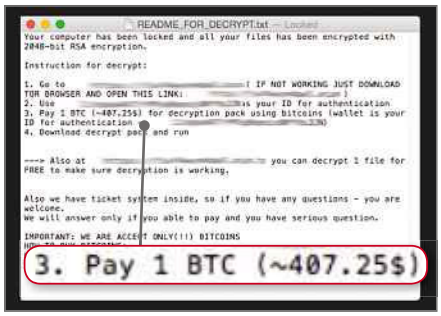
if the demand is not met (there's no proof it can do this, however). To add insult to injury, the ransom note also invites Chimera's victims to sign up for its affiliate programme.

At the time of writing, it looks as if Chimera has died out, although a new ransomware threat called Rokku shares similarities with it, suggesting it may come from the same developers.

KeRanger

What sets KeRanger apart from other ransomware is that it targets Apple Macs rather than Windows PCs. It encrypts files on a Mac three days after infecting it and was initially spread via the Transmission BitTorrent client installer for OS X.

Transmission removed the infected files and Apple revoked the certificate that allowed the malware to bypass its Gatekeeper protection, so Mac users should hopefully now be safe from the KeRanger threat, provided they are using the most up-to-date version of the software.

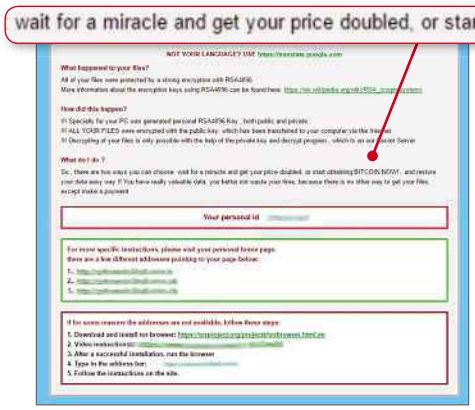


Mac users thought they were safe from ransomware until KeRanger

CryptXXX

This ransomware not only demands a fee to unlock encrypted files, but also attempts to copy personal data and steal any Bitcoins stored on a user's hard drive. It targets both local and connected drives, and to avoid detection, waits a brief while after infection before going to work.

Kaspersky managed to crack CryptXXX very quickly and released a tool that allowed victims to decrypt their files for free. Unfortunately, the ransomware developers have since updated CryptXXX, rendering Kaspersky's decryption tool useless.



CryptXXX steals Bitcoins as well as extorting them as ransom money

Alpha

Alpha is a new strain of ransomware that uses AES-256 encryption to lock all the files stored on fixed drives. Oddly, on your system drive (the one with Windows installed), it will only encrypt files on the Desktop and in the My Pictures and Cookies folders. Like Dogspectus, Alpha requests its ransom in iTunes gift cards. A decryptor for Alpha has been developed that you can use to free your files. You can download it from bit.ly/alpha398 using the password 'false-positive'.

You can free your files from Alpha using a dedicated decryptor

TorrentLocker

Despite the name, this ransomware has nothing whatsoever to do with BitTorrent and is simply named after a Registry key generated by the earliest versions. TorrentLocker is spread through spam emails and, as well as encrypting files, it attempts to steal email addresses from your system so it can spread. To safeguard your system against TorrentLocker, avoid opening emails from unknown sources, and use an anti-ransomware program.

TorrentLocker steals email address to infect your friends

RANSOMWARE SURVIVAL GUIDE

Although the threats in the previous section sound scary, there are simple steps you can take to avoid and defeat them. Read on to find out how

Lock your PC against ransomware

The best way to steer clear of ransomware is to use common sense; don't open email attachments from senders you don't recognise, even if they look very convincing, avoid clicking links on dubious-looking websites, and install security software that can prevent an infection from encrypting files on your PC.

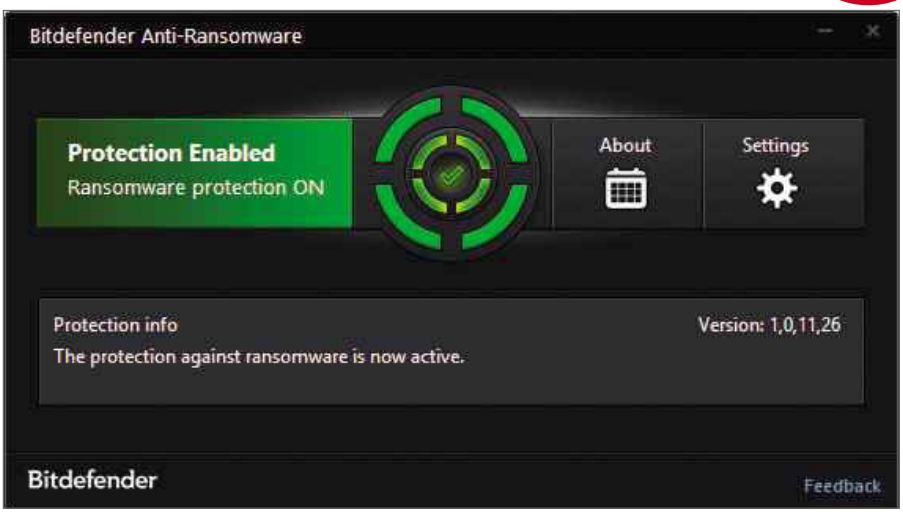
You should also make sure that all your software, including installed plugins, is up to date, because hackers use these vulnerabilities to attack your PC. If you receive a document from an unknown source, don't open it, or at the very least, don't enable editing in Word as this will allow macros to run, which can be used to download the ransomware.

Most importantly of all, make sure you regularly back up all your personal files to the cloud and/or another drive not connected to your PC or on the network. The best advice is to follow the 3-2-1 rule – have at least three copies of your personal files stored in two different formats, with one copy stored "off-site" (so, not on your PC or hard drive). Creating regular images of your drive that you can install in the event of an attack is also worth doing. Beware of using a backup that's too recent though, in case it contains a copy of the ransomware that attacked the system in the first place.

Install anti-ransomware software

There are several free programs from major software security firms that can protect your device from the most common type of ransomware. Bear in mind that they need to be run manually because they don't safeguard your system in real time.

CryptoPrevent is frequently updated to combat the latest ransomware threats



Bitdefender Anti-Ransomware protects your PC from three of the worst threats

The following programs target different types of malware, so it's worth installing at least one:

- Bitdefender Anti-Ransomware (bit.ly/bdransom398)
- Malwarebytes Anti-Ransomware (bit.ly/mbransom398)
- Trend Micro Anti-Ransomware Tool (bit.ly/trendransom398)
- CryptoPrevent (bit.ly/crypto398)
- Avast Ransomware Removal for Android (bit.ly/avastransom398)

If your PC has been infected

First and foremost, don't panic. Being hit by ransomware is a frightening experience, but you *can* survive it. Disconnect the locked PC from your network to prevent the ransomware from spreading. You should probably do the same with your other devices, in case they are already infected.

Next, find out what type of ransomware you've picked up. You might be able to discover this from the message on screen, or by searching for the exact message contents on Google.

You can also upload a ransom note or encrypted file to ID Ransomware (bit.ly/idransom398).

Once you know what's hit you, you can search the web for possible solutions. You'll find some answers from Malwarebytes (bit.ly/mbforum398) and MalwareTips (bit.ly/mwtips398).

Should I pay the ransom?

The short answer – and the answer given by every security firm (even the FBI) – is no. The theory is, if people don't pay, ransomware will become unprofitable and the attackers will move on to something else.

ID Ransomware detects and identifies ransom notes from 78 types of threat

That said, even if only a very small proportion of infected users end up paying, it still makes it worthwhile for the cybercriminals to continue their endeavours.

If you've got your personal files backed up online, you don't need to pay. If, however, the ransomware has encrypted the only versions of your files that you have, you may feel that there's no alternative but to give in to the criminals' demands.

A word of warning

Although the files locked by ransomware can sometimes be decrypted, there is no guarantee that in future versions, the attackers won't fix the flaw that allows this. Just as software gets patched, so does ransomware, because the cybercriminals are always looking for ways to make their malware harder to defeat. One example of this is CryptXXX, which was recently updated to prevent a decryption tool from working. This reiterates the need to remain vigilant about opening emails, clicking links on the web and keeping your security software up to date. ■

NEXT ISSUE on sale Wednesday 15 June 2016

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Download everything in HIGHER QUALITY

Don't put up with substandard quality in videos, music and photos. **Robert Irvine** reveals how and where to download the optimum versions of digital files

Download all BBC shows in HD

Nearly all television shows are now filmed in high definition (HD) – even *Bargain Hunt* – which means they are available online at a resolution of at least 1,280 x 720 pixels or 720p. So unless you have a very tight data cap, there's no reason to put up with standard definition (SD) when you download your favourite programmes. For example, when you click the Download button below a show on the iPlayer website, you'll be given the option to download it in SD or HD.

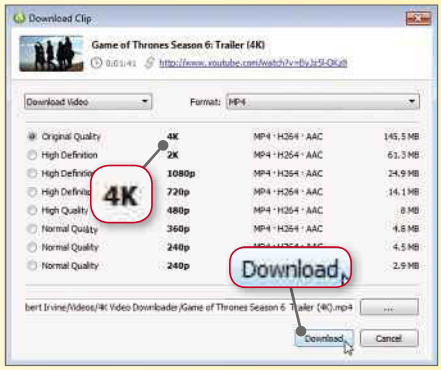
By default, programmes you download using the iPlayer mobile app are in standard quality (800kbps), but you can easily change this to high quality (1,500kbps). On Android, go to Settings and select the option Higher Quality Downloads. On iOS, you can change the setting on the More tab.

If you use Get iPlayer (bit.ly/iplayer398), which we recommended in Issue 396, to keep BBC programmes for longer than the allotted 30 days, there's a tweak you can apply to always download at the highest quality. Launch the Get iPlayer's Web PRV Manager from the Start menu and click the Recording heading on the main Search tab. In the Recording Modes field, type `best`, then click Save As Default.

If you're happy using Get iPlayer's command-line interface, type the following and press Enter: `get_iplayer --prefs-add --tvmode=best`. This will automatically download all shows in HD.

Download YouTube videos at top quality

When watching YouTube videos, you can instantly improve the quality by clicking the Settings cog and choosing a higher resolution from the Quality menu. If you want to preserve that improvement when downloading videos, install the brilliant free 4K Video Downloader (bit.ly/4kvideo395). Copy and paste the link of the clip you want

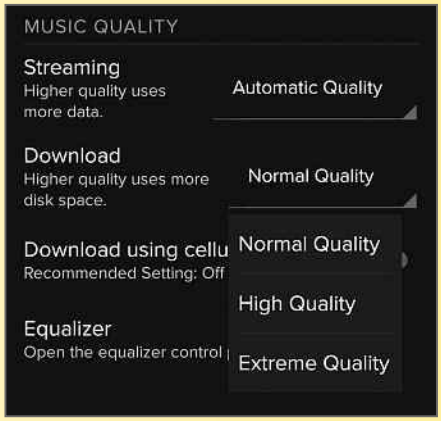


to download and a box will open automatically, letting you specify the video quality. Select the top option – this is usually High Definition 1080p or 720p, but may go up to 2K or even 4K – and click Download.

4K Video Downloader also lets you rip songs from YouTube videos as high-quality MP3s, by choosing Extract Audio from the drop-down menu and then selecting 320k. Videos are usually saved in MP4 format, but you can change this to MKV if you prefer. And, as if that wasn't enough, the program works with Vimeo, SoundCloud, Facebook and Dailymotion, too.

Save Spotify music at the highest quality

If you're a Spotify Premium subscriber, you can download 3,333 songs per month to listen to offline on up to three different devices. By default, the Spotify mobile app is set to download at Normal quality (96kbps) to prevent it gobbling up your data allowance and hogging space on your phone or tablet.



But if you're downloading over Wi-Fi and have room to spare on your device, you can increase the audio quality to listen to tracks as they were intended to be heard.

In the Android app, tap the menu button, then the Settings cog and swipe down to Music Quality. Tap the menu next to Download and choose either High Quality (160Kbps) or Extreme Quality (320Kbps). On iOS, tap Settings from within Your Library, choose Streaming Quality and then, under Download Quality, select High or Extreme. In the Windows Phone app, you can find these options in Settings, Music Quality. Note that the Spotify Desktop app automatically uses the highest possible quality for songs you download to listen to offline.

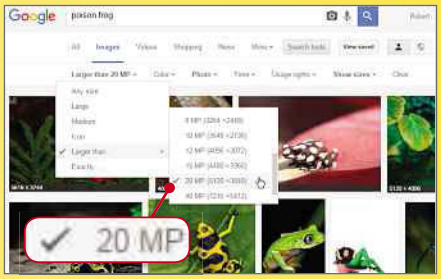
Download higher quality iTunes videos

Any song you buy from iTunes will have a bit rate of 256Kbps, with no option to increase the quality of the AAC file unless you use a third-party tool. You can, however, get the maximum bit rate of tracks you rip from CD by going to Preferences, General, Import Settings, choosing Custom from the Setting menu and selecting 320kbps.

Apple is slightly more flexible about downloading higher quality videos from the iTunes store. Click the Store tab in the Preferences box, then click the menu next to 'When downloading High Definition videos, prefer' and choose 1080p.

Find better photos on Google Images

When you search for something in Google Images, the results tend to be a jumble of different shots, sizes and sources, which it isn't ideal when you're looking for a high-quality picture in a hurry. To only see the best photos, first click 'Search tools', then Size. From the drop-down menu, either choose Large to view only the high-resolution images or click 'Larger than' and select 2MP, 4MP or greater (depending on how large you want the photo to be).



It's also worth clicking the 'More tools' menu and choosing 'Show sizes' to see the exact specifications of each result, and Photo from the Type menu to filter out animations and artwork (unless that's what you're looking for). Once you've found a high-quality picture, click it, then right-click and choose 'Save image as'.

Download original images from Flickr

One benefit to Flickr giving its users one terabyte of free online storage is that the site is packed with high-resolution photos for other users to download (provided you don't reuse them for commercial gain, of course). To grab a superior image from Flickr, click it then

click the 'Download this photo' arrow in the bottom-right corner and choose 'View all sizes'. This will give you a choice of sizes including the maximum-quality original, which you can then click to download.

Note that many Flickr photographers disable the downloading of their original images, understandably, but you'll still get a few sizes to choose from.

Save original images from Google Photos

Google Photos lets you upload photos from your phone at their original size, but if you right-click them on its website to save them to your PC, they'll be downloaded at significantly reduced quality. To avoid this, you should click the three-dot button in the top-right corner and choose 'Download original'. It's worth remembering that Google Photos only retains the full resolution of your uploaded pictures if they are smaller than 16MB or if you upgrade to one of its paid-for plans. ■

GET THE BEST QUALITY MUSIC DOWNLOADS

If you prefer to buy and download music rather than stream it, there are still plenty of options – including Amazon, Google Play Music and, of course, iTunes – but the maximum bit rate for tracks is generally 320Kbps. This quality will be more than adequate for most people, but audiophiles will tell you that it's simply not good enough, because the compression removes elements from the original recording. If you prefer your digital music to be analogue quality, or at least not far off, there

are several download stores you can try. One of the best is Linn Records (linnrecords.com), which sells classical, jazz and opera albums in its own Studio Master format, described as "the highest quality music file available anywhere". There's also HDtracks (www.hdtracks.co.uk), which has music by many popular artists in lossless audio formats such as FLAC and ALAC, and offers a free hi-res sampler; and the music industry-backed Tidal (www.tidal.com), which offers streaming and offline downloads in FLAC format for a subscription of £19.99 per month.

Beat 30-day trial restrictions

Sometimes a 30-day trial just isn't long enough. **Edward Munn** tells you how to get more free use from well-known paid-for software and services

Unlock 180 days of free Office 365

There's a very clever way of extending your 30-day free trial of Office 365 to 180 days. Press Windows+R and type `%ProgramFiles%` before pressing Enter. Next, click Common Files, Microsoft Shared and then OfficeSharedSoftwarePlatform. From this folder, press and hold the Shift key and right-click a blank space to select 'Open command window here'. In the command window, type `OSPPREARM.exe` and press Enter (see screen grab, below). Running this file extends your trial by 30 days, providing it hasn't already expired, and you can do it as many as five times.

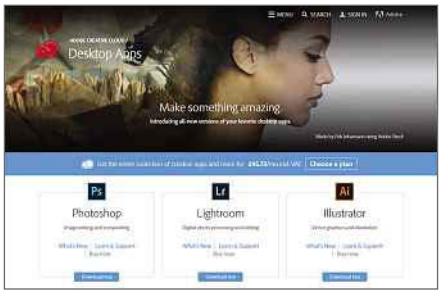
There's a command prompt you can use to extend your free trial of Office 365

This trick exploits a loophole built into Microsoft Office, enabling you to reactivate your free trial. If you have any problems with this method, or you feel uneasy exploiting it, you could try asking Microsoft to extend your trial via the Office 365 forums (it worked for this happy user: bit.ly/microsoft398).

If you urgently need to edit a document or spreadsheet, you can access the free Word and Excel web apps from Outlook.com. There are also excellent free office suites you can download and use offline such as LibreOffice (www.libreoffice.org) and Open Office (www.openoffice.org).

Add 14 days to free Adobe trials

Adobe offers 30-day free trials for all its Creative Cloud programs, including



Use Adobe's cooling-off period to get an extra couple of weeks' free use

Photoshop, Illustrator and Lightroom. If you want a couple more weeks of free use, just sign up for a subscription to the service you want, then cancel your membership within 14 days to receive a full refund. This works with both monthly and annual subscriptions, and you can cancel at any time by visiting the Manage Account Page or by contacting Adobe Customer Care (bit.ly/customer398).

If you think you might want to keep your subscription, Adobe's annual plans represent the best value, and can be paid upfront or monthly. Note that if you forget to cancel an annual plan within 14 days, you'll be charged 50% of your remaining subscription, but will only have access to the service until the end of that month's billing period.

Use Ice Cream Screen Recorder to capture movies playing on your PC screen

Finish watching every movie rental

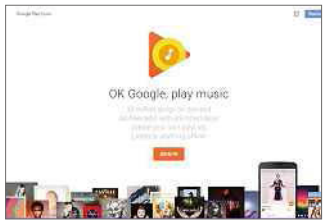
When you rent a film from iTunes, you have 30 days to start watching it. Then, once you press play, it will expire in 48 hours. This should normally give you enough time to finish a film you began the previous evening, but what if you know you won't be able to watch it all before the deadline expires?

In this situation, you could try recording the section you haven't seen using screen-capturing software such as Ice Cream Screen Recorder (bit.ly/icecream398). It's a good idea to turn your screensaver off so that your recording isn't interrupted.

Of course, recording films can contravene copyright, so we'd always recommend obeying Apple's terms and conditions where possible. Should you choose to record part of a film or programme in this way, make sure that

GET SIX MONTHS' FREE MUSIC STREAMING

If you're not worried where you stream music from, why not try signing up for free trials with the many popular music-streaming services, including Apple Music, Google Play Music, Tidal and Deezer? With each one offering a month's free trial (except Apple Music which gives you three months), you can stream music to all your devices for up to six months if you try them all.



you delete the file as soon as you've watched it and never share it.

Watch downloaded BBC shows after 30 days

Get iPlayer (bit.ly/iplayer395) is a *Web User* favourite that lets you download BBC programmes and keep them for longer than the 30-day limit. It's been around for a while but still works well, and you can use it to download entire series as well as individual episodes. For help using the program, see our Mini Workshop in Issue 395 (page 39).

Keep Spotify Premium for longer

Spotify currently offers three months of its Premium service for 99p, after which you'll be charged £9.99 a month. If you turn off auto-renewal (see the 'Escape Unwanted Subscriptions' feature in Issue 397), your account will revert to the free plan when your trial has finished. However, there's a simple way to keep using Spotify Premium if you've not made your mind up about buying a subscription. To do this, log out of your account, then click the link to sign up for a new account and start a new free trial (or take advantage of any promotional offers).

You'll need to create a new username and enter new payment details to set up your new account. However, if you use Gmail, you can trick Spotify into thinking you're using a new email address by simply adding one or more full stops anywhere – for example, edwardm.unn@gmail.com or edwar.dmunn@gmail.com – and the confirmation email will arrive in your inbox. This isn't the fastest fix, and Spotify certainly won't approve, but it will unlock at least 30 days more free, unlimited music streaming.

Tweak your email address to fool Spotify into thinking you're a new subscriber

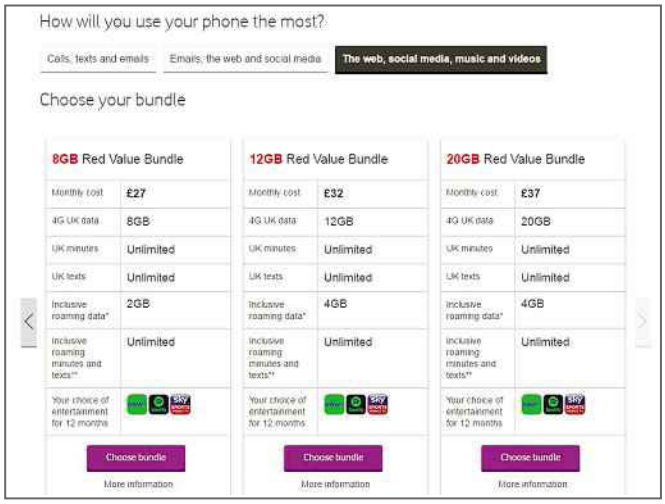
Get Netflix free forever

Netflix represents excellent value if you watch a lot of films and TV series, but what if you don't want to pay £5.99 or more a month to carry on using the service once your trial is up? If you're half way through your favourite TV series, you can extend your free trial using the same method described above for Spotify. You'll need to enter new card details every time you set up a new account (try getcreditcardnumbers.com if you haven't got another card), but no payments will be processed providing you cancel within the free trial period. It means you could invite your friends and family to sign up to a free trial of the two- or four-screen plans and watch different programmes.

Watch Now TV Entertainment for a year

If you've bought a Now TV box with a free Entertainment pass, you'll be charged £6.99 a month once it expires. To get a further year's free access to the service, simply take out a new phone contract on one of Vodafone's Red Value Bundles or sign up to one of its 4G SIM-only Red Value Bundles (see screen grab, top-right). The SIM-only deals start at £27 a month for unlimited minutes, texts and 8GB of mobile data.

If you prefer, you can opt for a year's membership to Spotify or Sky Sports Mobile TV instead of Now TV.



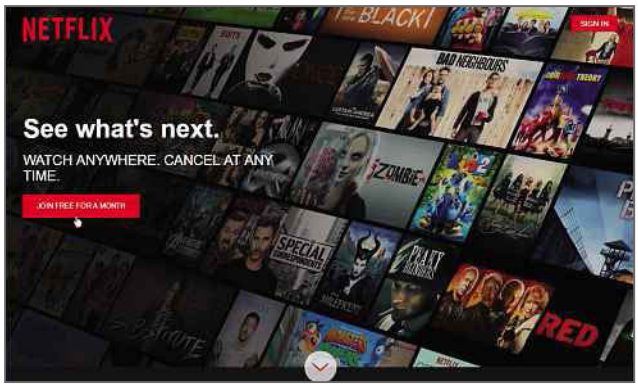
Get a year's free access to Now TV by signing up to a Vodafone Red Value Bundle

Dodge paywalls to read more articles

Some websites, such as the Telegraph's (www.telegraph.co.uk), let you load only a set number of pages each month before a paywall appears asking you to subscribe. These types of paywall normally use cookies to count the number of pages you've viewed, so if you want to carry on reading articles, you can do so by simply deleting the appropriate cookies in your browser.

To do this in Chrome, click Settings, then the 'Show advanced settings' link at the bottom. In the Privacy section that appears, click 'Content settings', then the 'All cookies and site data' button. Next, in the 'Search cookies' box, enter the name of the site you want to delete cookies for (see screen grab below), then click the X to 'Delete this item'.

For an even quicker fix, copy the URL of the article you want to view to an incognito tab and it'll load instantly. If you find yourself doing this regularly, we'd suggest subscribing to the site in question, because digital publishers only impose such restrictions to generate essential revenue. ■



Stay one step ahead of Netflix by creating a new account

Clear cookies from your browser to bypass paywalls

Best free podcast managers

Podcast software can be simple and lightweight, or feature-packed and comprehensive. **Edward Munn** looks at six programs that let you find, organise and listen to your favourite podcasts

Grover Podcast | bit.ly/grover398 | ★★★★★

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

WebUser GOLD AWARD

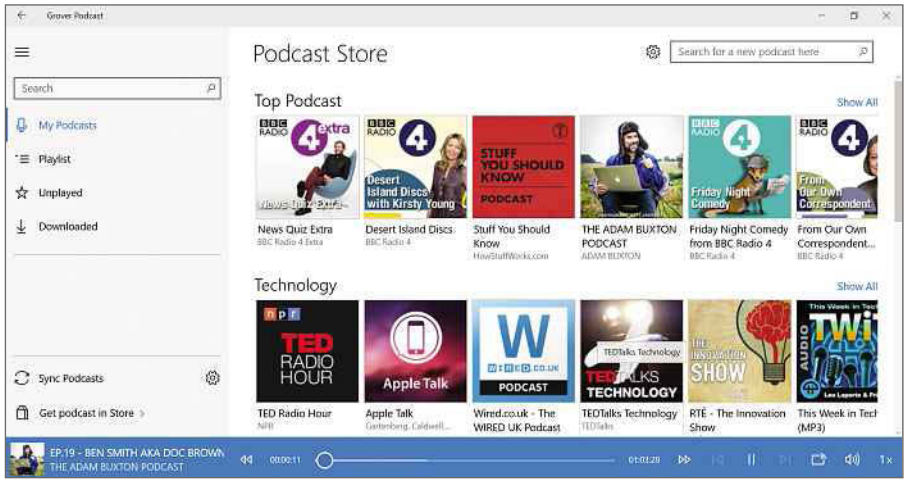
What we liked:

Grover Podcast is a free podcast app for Windows 10 that offers the perfect combination of features, usability and performance. At only 7MB, it's very lightweight and, unlike the other award winners, it benefits from being designed solely for discovering and managing podcasts.

When you first launch the app, the simplicity of its interface is striking compared with other podcast software – you can add new podcasts quickly and easily by clicking Feed and pasting the appropriate RSS feed URL (if you know it), or you can use the search bar to find and subscribe to your favourites.

The app's search tool is powered by iTunes, so it returns similar results to Apple's software and works very well. If you can't think of something to search for, Grover also has a store view to help you browse a range of excellent podcasts by categories including News, Technology, Comedy, Arts and Sport.

When you find a podcast you like, subscribing is simply a matter of clicking it and selecting Subscribe. Your subscriptions can then be found by clicking My Podcasts, where each one can be selected to browse a summary of its episodes. You can play episodes from this page or right-click them to 'Add to playlist', 'Mark as unplayed' or Download.



Subscriptions are synced automatically when you start the app, and unplayed episodes are clearly indicated in the My Podcasts view. You can also use the Unplayed filter to find all your new episodes in one place.

Grover's settings menu lets you automatically download new episodes and delete played episodes, but we especially like the option to show system notifications when new podcasts are available.

How it can be improved:

Our main criticism of Grover Podcast is that it's not available for older versions of Windows. We'd also like the option to see and play podcasts without subscribing first.

OUR VERDICT

If you use Windows 10, Grover Podcast is the only podcast software you should ever need. It's fast, easy to use and makes browsing and subscribing to podcasts a pleasure.

iTunes | bit.ly/itunes398 | ★★★★☆

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

What we liked:

iTunes has more features than all the other podcast software we tested, with by far the best tools for searching and browsing podcasts, thanks to the excellent iTunes Store. Categories including 'New and Noteworthy' and 'What's Hot' help you find the very best programmes available, and you can also use its Top Podcasts and Top Episodes lists to see what's popular. If you know a podcast's RSS feed, you can subscribe to it manually by clicking File, then 'Subscribe to Podcast'.

Unlike our Gold winner, iTunes lets you play podcasts without subscribing to them first and you can also save individual episodes to your podcast list. Selecting Subscribe downloads a podcast's most recent episode to your library along with new ones as they become available. The program's My Stations feature is excellent if you subscribe to several podcasts and want to group similar content together. iTunes can be used as your podcast manager without an Apple ID, but you'll have to sign in if you want to sync podcasts to iOS devices.

How it can be improved:

Because it's a comprehensive media player and store, iTunes is much larger than other podcast software and it can feel bloated and slow. Its organising tools also take a bit of getting used to.

OUR VERDICT

If you already use iTunes, it's the best choice as a podcast manager. It has excellent tools for finding content and makes syncing podcasts between Apple devices easy.

VLC | bit.ly/vlc398 | ★★★★☆

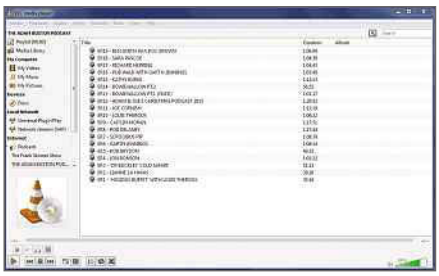
FEATURES ★★★☆☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★☆

What we liked:

VLC doesn't have any tools for searching and browsing new podcasts, but this makes it one of the simplest and fastest programs in this test. From its Playlist view (press Ctrl+L to turn this on and off), simply hover your cursor over Podcasts in the Internet section. A plus icon will appear, letting you paste the RSS feeds of podcasts you want to subscribe to. Once you've added a podcast, it loads directly below for you to browse and stream the full range of episodes.

The interface is incredibly simple and by default shows only the episodes' names and durations, but you can right-click each one to view more information including publication date. This context menu also lets you add episodes to a playlist, which is handy if you want to queue several episodes at once.

Unlike other programs, VLC streams each episode, so it doesn't take up valuable space by downloading it to your hard drive. You can still record streams to your hard drive by clicking the program's Record button.



How it can be improved:

We'd like VLC to add a simple option for downloading podcasts, so that you can listen offline. It also lacks any tools for finding and organising content.

OUR VERDICT

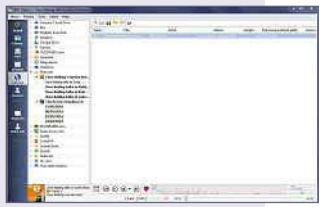
If you know which podcasts you like and you just want a tool to stream them, VLC is perfect for the job. It's fast, lightweight and doubles as an excellent media player.

BEST OF THE REST

Clementine

www.clementine-player.org

Clementine is a fast, lightweight media player that only just missed out on one of our awards. Like Grover and iTunes, it offers tools to help you search and browse for podcasts, as well as letting you add them using RSS feeds. Once you've subscribed to a podcast, you can easily browse its episodes and download them by right-clicking and choosing the appropriate option. If you prefer, you can also set Clementine to automatically download new episodes and remove any you've already listened to.



Miro

www.getmiro.com

By default, media player Miro comes with subscriptions to Ted Talks and Lifehacker, and you can easily add your own podcasts using RSS feeds. It lets you set the number of episodes to download from each podcast for offline listening, and you can also determine when episodes you've played expire. Unfortunately, Miro was slower and more bloated than our Award winners.

Banshee

banshee.fm

Banshee is an open-source media player that lets you subscribe to podcasts using RSS feeds. We like that you can set options for each subscription when it's added, such as choosing whether to download all new episodes. However, it has no option to search or browse for content, and we found it no faster or easier to use than VLC. Also, it hasn't been updated in more than two years.

Broadband Deals

Call FREE on 0800 083 2357 to switch your broadband

	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1	TalkTalk	TalkTalk: Broadband	£7.50 (FREE for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	CHEAPEST £0.00
2	plusnet	Plusnet: Broadband	£9.99 (FREE for 12 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£0.00
3	sky	Sky: Broadband	£10.00 (FREE for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£0.00
4	EE	EE: Broadband & Calls	£9.95 (£1 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	£12.00

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 18 May 2016.

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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Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your computer by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you unravel our technology-chief word search and guess our album-title emoji?

WEB USER WORD SEARCH

Can you find the following tech-company bigwigs in the grid on the right? Names may appear vertically, horizontally or diagonally, and forwards or backwards

BILL GATES
ELON MUSK
ERIC SCHMIDT
JEFF BEZOS
JIMMY WALES
JONATHAN IVE
LARRY PAGE
SERGEY BRIN
STEVE JOBS
TIM COOK

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

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE CLASSIC ALBUMS FROM THE EMOJI?

1

2

3

4

Get the answers online at bit.ly/quiz398

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 5
VideoStudio Pro X9 software

WORTH £59.99 EACH

With more than 1,500 effects and new FastFlick templates, Corel's VideoStudio Pro X9 has everything you need to make your videos look their best. For a chance to win a copy, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'X9' in the subject line. VideoStudio Pro X9 is available to buy priced £59.99 from www.corel.com/gb. For the latest info on Corel products, follow @corelsoftware on Twitter and 'like' www.facebook.com/Corel.

WIN 1 OF 2
Synology RT1900ac routers

WORTH £108 EACH

Everything that's good about Synology's networked storage devices has been successfully transferred to its new router, the RT1900ac, which we awarded the maximum five stars in Issue 382. It's very fast and has an interface that's wonderfully easy to use. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'Synology' in the subject line. For more information, visit synology.com and follow @synologyuk on Twitter.

Pin your favourite sites to 'panels' on your Desktop | bit.ly/pan398

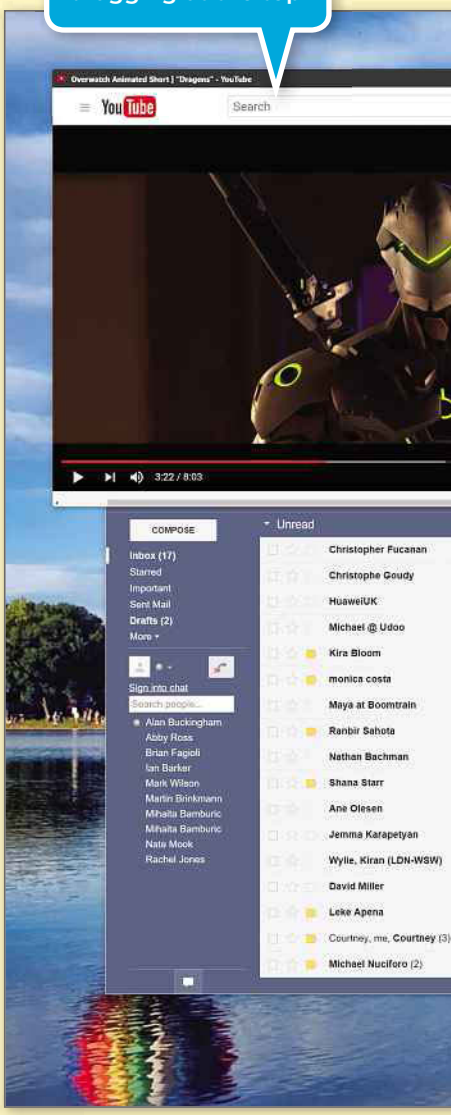
Panel Tabs is a Chrome add-on that lets you pop out web pages to a separate window and move them around your Desktop. Here's how to use it

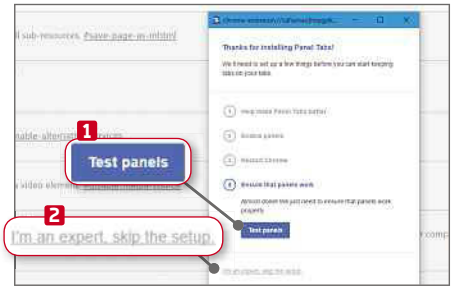
Picture-in-picture (PiP), a feature that's found on some televisions, lets you watch more than one programme at a time. While your TV shows one channel full-screen, it simultaneously displays a smaller inset window playing another channel. Panel Tabs for Chrome works in a similar way, in that it pops out web pages to a new window. By default, this panel is docked to the bottom-right corner of your screen, but you can drag it around and move it somewhere else, or click the minimise button to hide it for a while. It's useful for watching videos in picture-in-picture mode while doing other stuff, and researching things online while writing a document. We've found it especially good for keeping an eye on email or chat services such as WhatsApp.

1 Install Panel Tabs and click its button. A wizard opens and steps you through the setup process. You can choose if you want to share data (which won't identify you personally) with the developer to help improve the add-on. **1** To enable panels in Chrome, **2** click the 'Open the Flags page' button. **3**

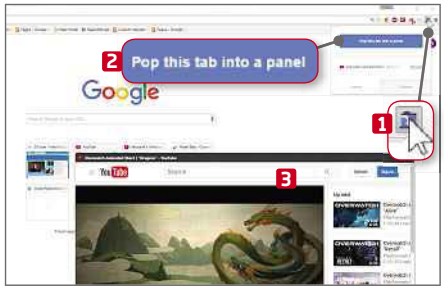
2 Locate the Panels entry in the Chrome Flags page, then click the box and change the setting to Enabled. **1** It's off by default because it's viewed as an experimental feature. To make the change, click the Relaunch Now button. **2** The set up process will continue once the browser reopens.

RESIZE
You can change the size of a panel by clicking and dragging at the top





3 To complete the setup, you need to make sure that everything works as intended. In the wizard, click the 'Test panels' button. **1** In future, if you need to set up Panel Tabs again (on another PC, for example), you can bypass the wizard by clicking the 'I'm an expert, skip the setup' link. **2**

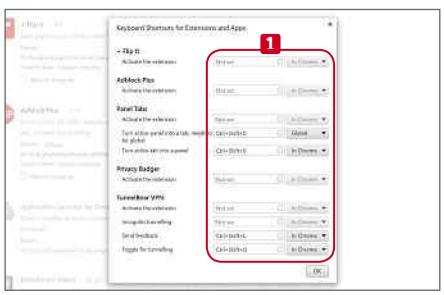


4 Browse the web as normal. When you find a page, video or service you want to pop out into a separate window, click the Panel Tabs button in Chrome, **1** then click 'Pop this tab into a panel'. **2** A new window appears containing your chosen page. **3** Drag this to any position on your Desktop.

5 Any new panels you open will snap into position. **1** Click the Panel Tabs taskbar button **2** to open a thumbnail view **3** that lets you switch between panels. Right-click the button to close all panels. You can also close or minimise a window. **4** If you click a link in a panel, it will open as a tab in Chrome.

6 A quick way to send a site to a panel is to right-click it and select 'Toggle panel'. 1 Clicking the Panel Tabs button in your browser will display all your panels as a list and let you return them to Chrome. 2 Click the Options button 3 to configure the add-on.

7 Customisation options include changing the behaviour of panels, such as only showing the one you have selected, 1 and displaying the 'Toggle panel' option in the right-click ('context') menu. 2 You can also choose whether you want to help Panel Tab improve its app by sharing your usage data. 3



8 You can use keyboard shortcuts to quickly turn a Chrome tab into a panel, or a panel into a tab. Go to chrome://extensions/configureCommands to see a list of shortcuts for all your installed extensions and apps and make a note of the shortcuts for Panel Tabs, or change them if you wish. 1

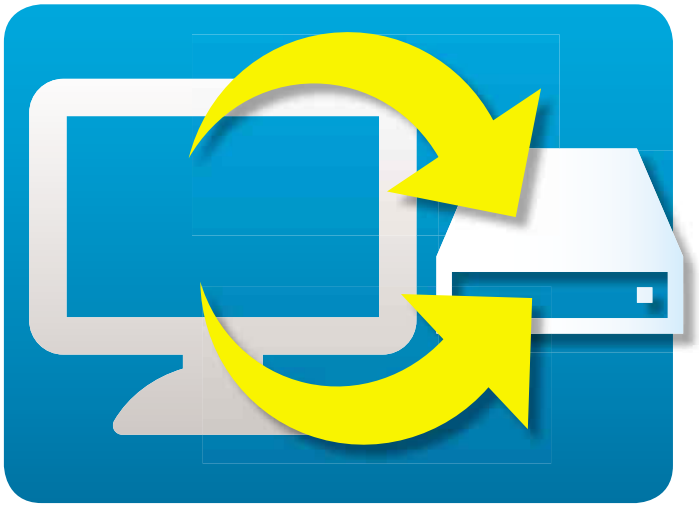
Automate backups and file organisation

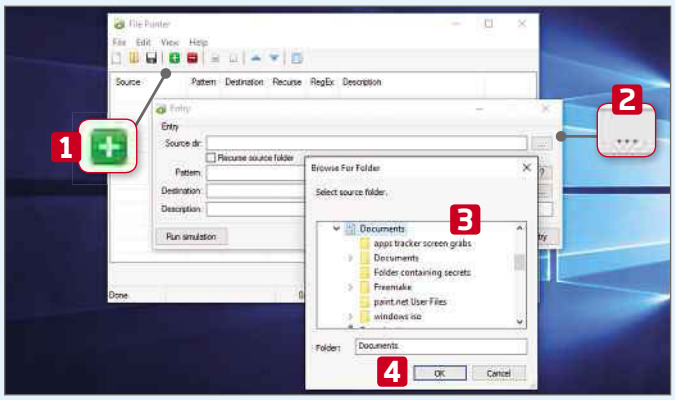
File Punter: bit.ly/punt398 | 10 mins | XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10

File Punter is a handy tool that can automatically organise your files, using rules you create yourself. The software remembers the rules you set up, so you can run them again at any time. This means you can automate a variety of boring file-related chores, such as backing up your files to an external hard drive, so you don't have to do it manually. Unlike many tools, however, you can take total control over what goes where and when it happens, giving you unprecedented power over your backups.

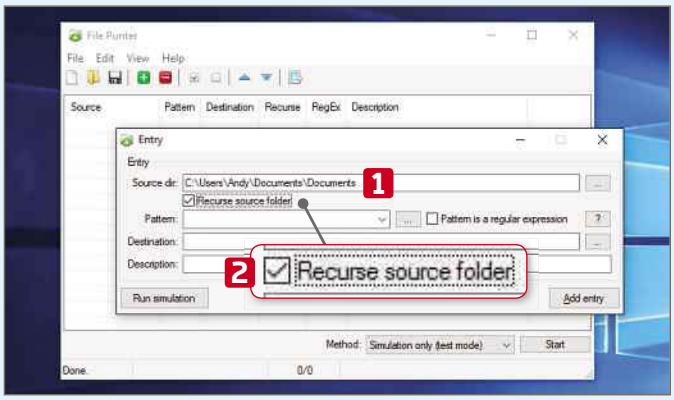
The software is set to run a simulation of the file transfer by default, so you won't make any changes to your files before you're sure it will work. This pops up as a text file that tells you which files the program has found and where it's planning to put them.

File Punter is a portable program that doesn't need installing, so simply download it, unzip its contents to a folder on your PC, and run the FilePunter.exe file from there.

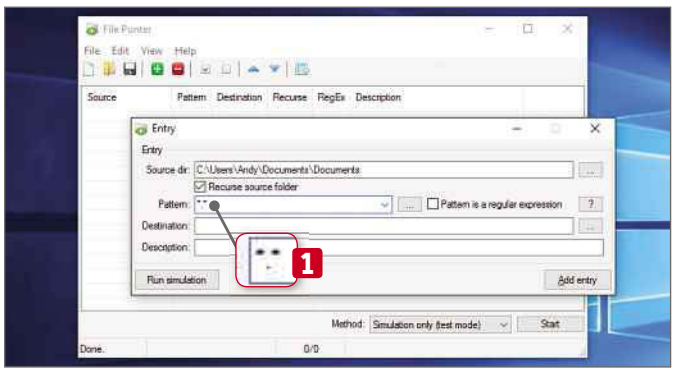




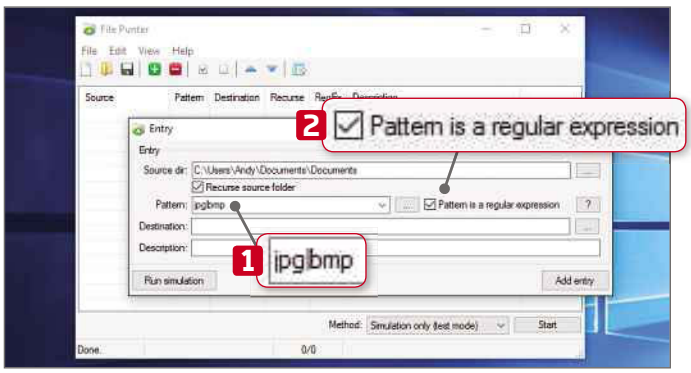
1 To set up a rule, click the 'Add entry' button. **1** Click the 'Browse for folder' button **2** and use the folder tree to locate the primary folder you'd like to back up files from. **3** Click to select it and click OK. **4**



2 By default, the rule will only apply to files located in the folder you've just selected. **1** If you also want to apply the rule to subfolders within that folder, tick the 'Recurse source folder' box. **2** This will apply the rule to the current folder's contents and any other folders you've created within it.



3 The easiest way to select files is to use wild cards, just as you do when searching for files in Windows. So, to include all the files in a folder, type `*.*` into the Pattern box. **1** To choose a particular type of file, you can use `*.jpg`, for example, to select all JPEG images.

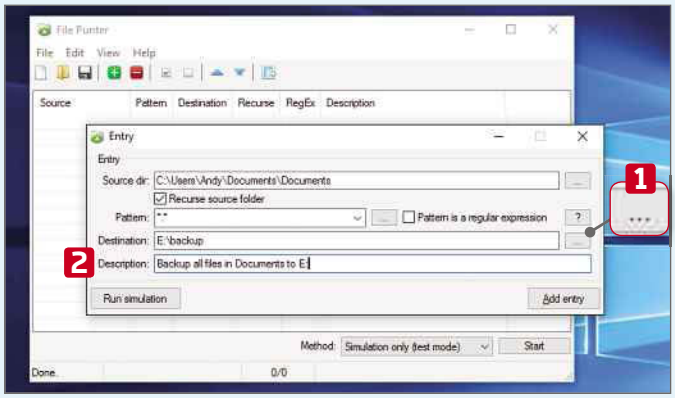


4 The * replaces a number of characters. Use a ? to replace individual characters. If you tick the 'Pattern is a regular expression' box, **1** you can use plain text, so typing `jpg` would find all files with that word in. Also, '|' is 'and', so `jpg|bmp` **2** would return both types of image file.

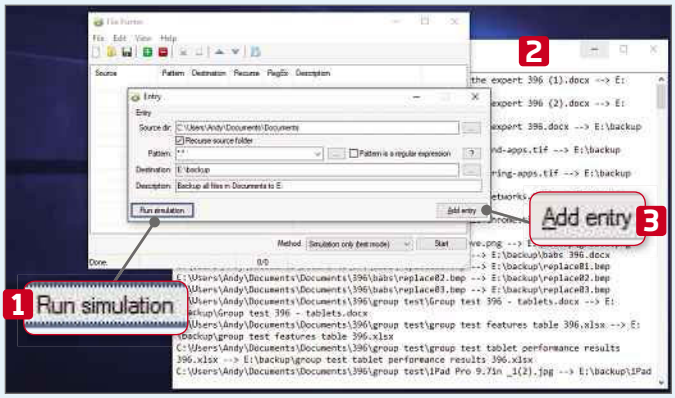
EXPERT TIP

Andy Shaw says

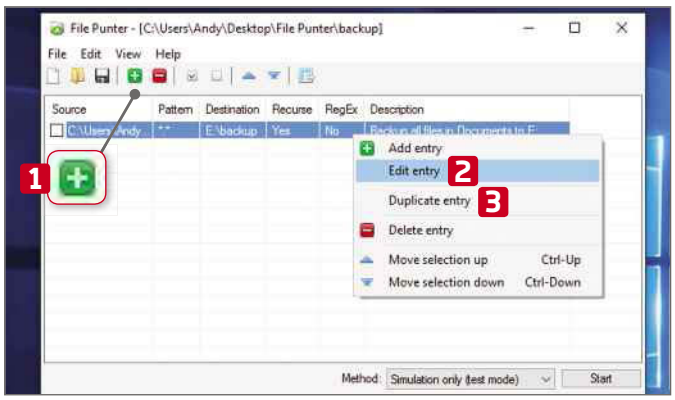
File Punter uses two ways to filter files: basic DOS wildcards and 'regular expressions', which are used in many programming languages. With regular expressions, you can set the software to create folders as well as copy or move files to them. If you want to find out how, use the software's (limited) help information and find out more about it at www.pcre.org.



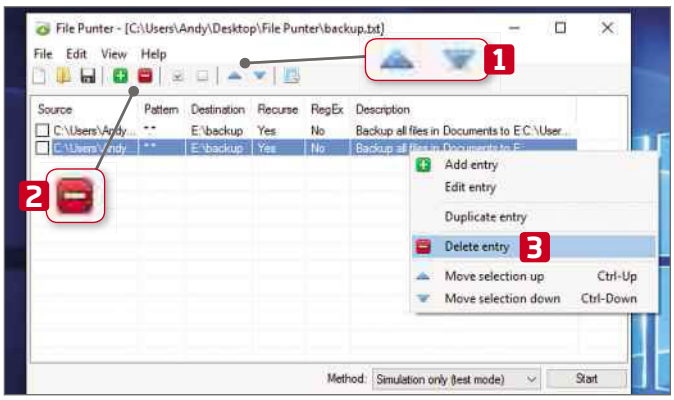
5 Finally, choose the folder to transfer the files to by clicking the 'Browse for folder' button next to the Destination box 1 and selecting the folder you require. Give the rule a description 2 to remind you what it does.



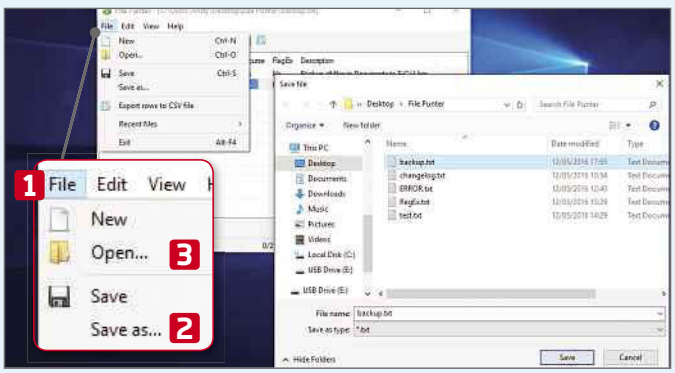
6 Click the 'Run simulation' button 1 to check the rule works as you want it to. The software generates a text file 2 that lists all the files it has found and where it would move them to, without actually doing it, so you can check it works. When you're happy, click the 'Add entry' button. 3



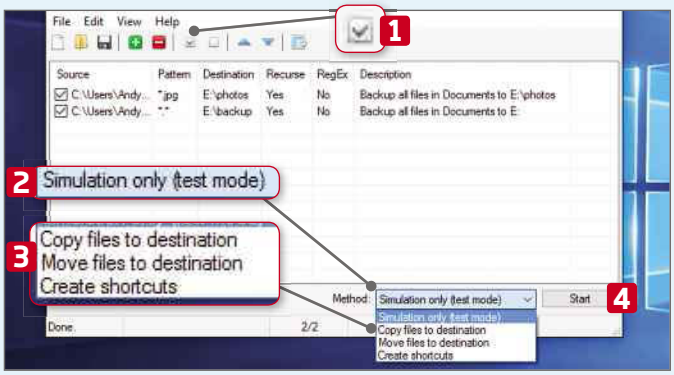
7 You can add as many rules as you like. Add any extra rules in the same way as above, by clicking the 'Add entry' button. 1 If you need to change a rule, right-click it and select 'Edit entry'. 2 Choosing 'Duplicate entry' 3 then 'Edit entry' is a good way of creating similar rules.



8 You can also reorder rules. 1 This could be useful if you want to pull out certain files to a separate folder, before backing up everything else. To remove a rule, highlight it and click the 'Delete entry' button, 2 or right-click and choose the option from the menu. 3



9 You need to save your rules so you can open them again another time. Go to the File menu 1 and choose 'Save as'. 2 Use the Open option 3 to reload them when you need them again. You can make more than one set of rules to use for different occasions.

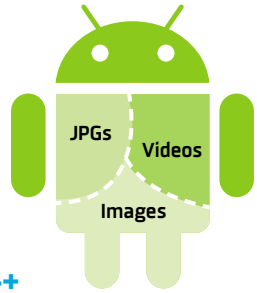


10 To run your rules, tick the ones you want or click the 'Check all' button. 1 The Method box is set to 'Simulation only', 2 which will produce a text file, as in Step 6, but with all the rules applied. Then choose from Copy, Move or 'Create shortcuts', 3 and click Start. 4

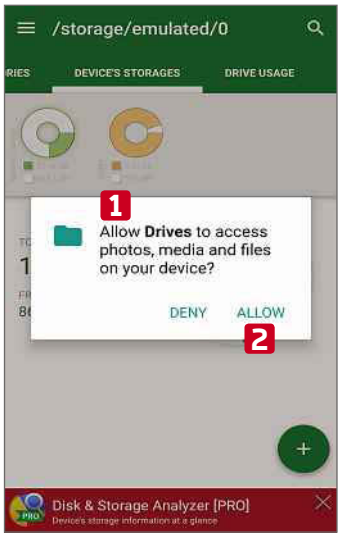
See what's hogging your Android storage

There are plenty of Android file managers that let you browse and organise the folders and files on your device, but it's not always easy to see which ones are taking up the most space.

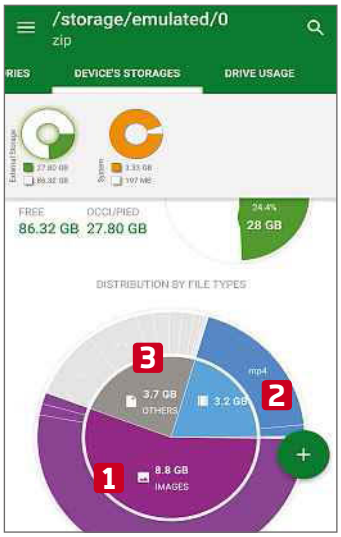
Storage Analyzer & Disk Usage is a free Android app that scans your device's storage and shows you exactly which files can be deleted to free up the most space.



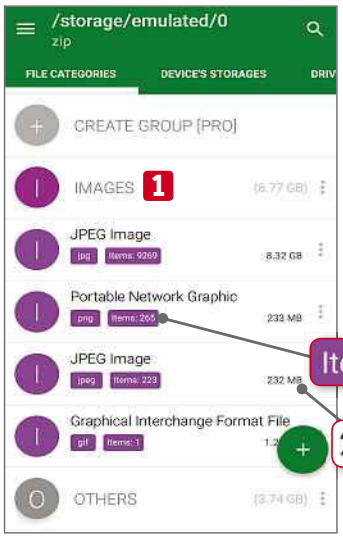
Storage Analyzer & Disk Usage: bit.ly/sadu398 | **10 mins** | **Android 4+**



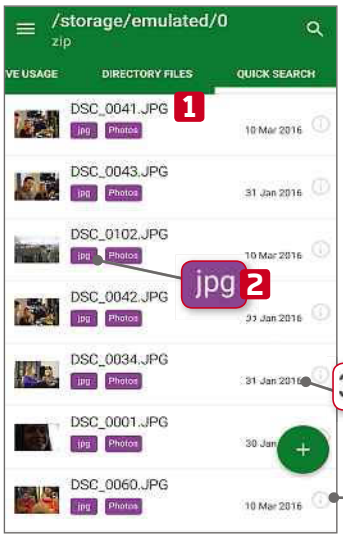
1 Install and run the app. You'll be asked to give it access to 'photos, media and files on your device'. 1 You have to permit access to everything so that it can see all your files. Tap Allow 2 and the app scans your device. A pie chart appears displaying your total, free and occupied drive space.



2 Scroll down to see another pie chart summarising the space used by different file types including images, 1 video 2 and others. 3 Swipe right and the app displays a more detailed list of the space occupied by each type of file.

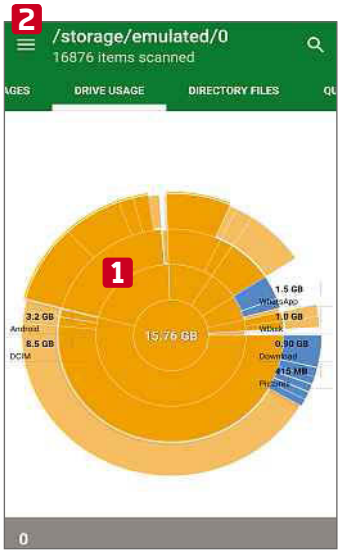


3 Tap a category, such as Images, to show all the file formats related to it, such as JPEG, PNG and GIF. 1 The app lists the number of items on your drive 2 and the disk space occupied 3 for each format. Tapping a format lets you browse those files, sorted from largest to smallest.



4 Each file's name, 1 format 2 and creation date 3 is shown. Tap the info button 4 to see a file's size and filepath, or to preview it (where applicable). From this view, select the three-dot menu button to open the file or delete it.

5 Swiping right from Quick Search loads the Directory Files view, 1 which lists the folders, in size order, where your files are saved. This will show you which folders are taking up the most space. Tap the green plus sign (which will rotate into a cross) and select Sort 2 if you want to view the folders in name or date order. To delete multiple folders or files, long-press to select each one, then tap Delete.



6 Swiping right once more opens the Drive Usage view, which is a multi-layered pie chart that lets you browse the folders occupying the most space on your device. 1 For quick access to a list of the 10 biggest files on your device, open the app's sidebar 2 and tap Biggest Files and Top 10.

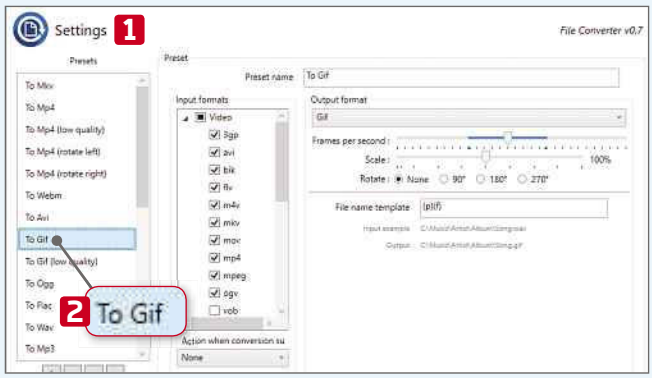
Convert photos and videos in two clicks

Converting files is usually a tedious task that involves repeatedly rotating, resizing and switching from one file format to another. File Converter makes this process much more efficient by adding a convert option to the Windows right-click menu. The software provides lots of handy tools, with presets you can configure to ensure you always get the results you need.

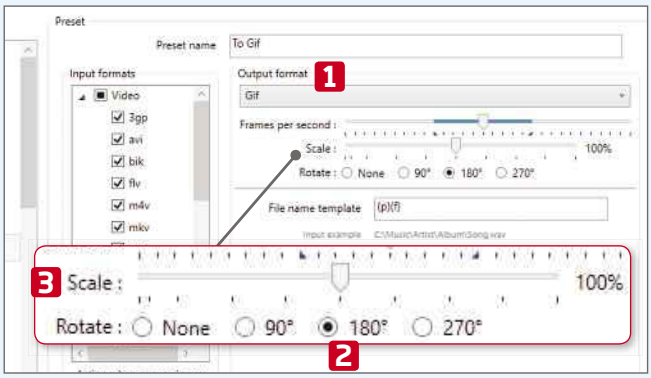
File Converter: file-converter.org | **20 mins** | **XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10**

1 When you install the software, it adds a File Converter option to your right-click menu. Right-click an image, video or sound file, and select File Converter **1** to bring up a list of alternative file formats. **2** The options will depend on the type of file you've chosen.

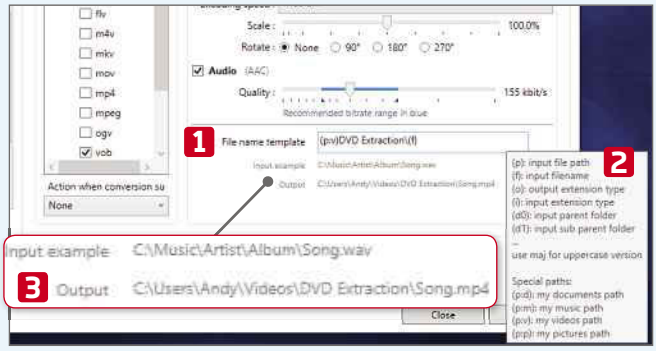
2 Click any of the listed formats to instantly convert a file using the default settings. A progress window **1** appears that shows you how the conversion is going. Click the Stop button **2** to cancel it. When it's done, the new file will appear in the same folder as the original. **3**



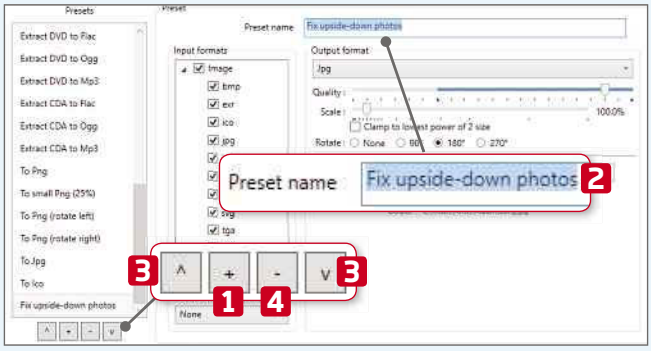
3 In the previous step, you can see that the photos was converted upside down. This is easy to fix from the Settings. Right-click a file and choose File Converter, 'Configure presets'. In the Settings window, **1** find the type of file you're trying to create in the Presets column. **2**



4 You can make changes to the settings in the 'Output format' section. **1** In this case, we want to change the Rotate setting to 180°. **2** The options vary depending on the type of file. You can also change the scale, **3** to create smaller or larger files.



5 The 'File name template' box **1** lets you change the name of the file and the folder you're saving it to. Leave it set to '(p)(f)' to keep the same folder and name, or use special codes to change them. Hover over the box for a pop-up guide **2** and see below how the changes will work. **3**



6 To create your own presets, click the plus button. **1** This lets you keep the default setting and add a further preset to perform a secondary function. Give it a title in the 'Preset name' box. **2** Use the arrows to move Presets up and down the list **3** and the minus button **4** to remove them.

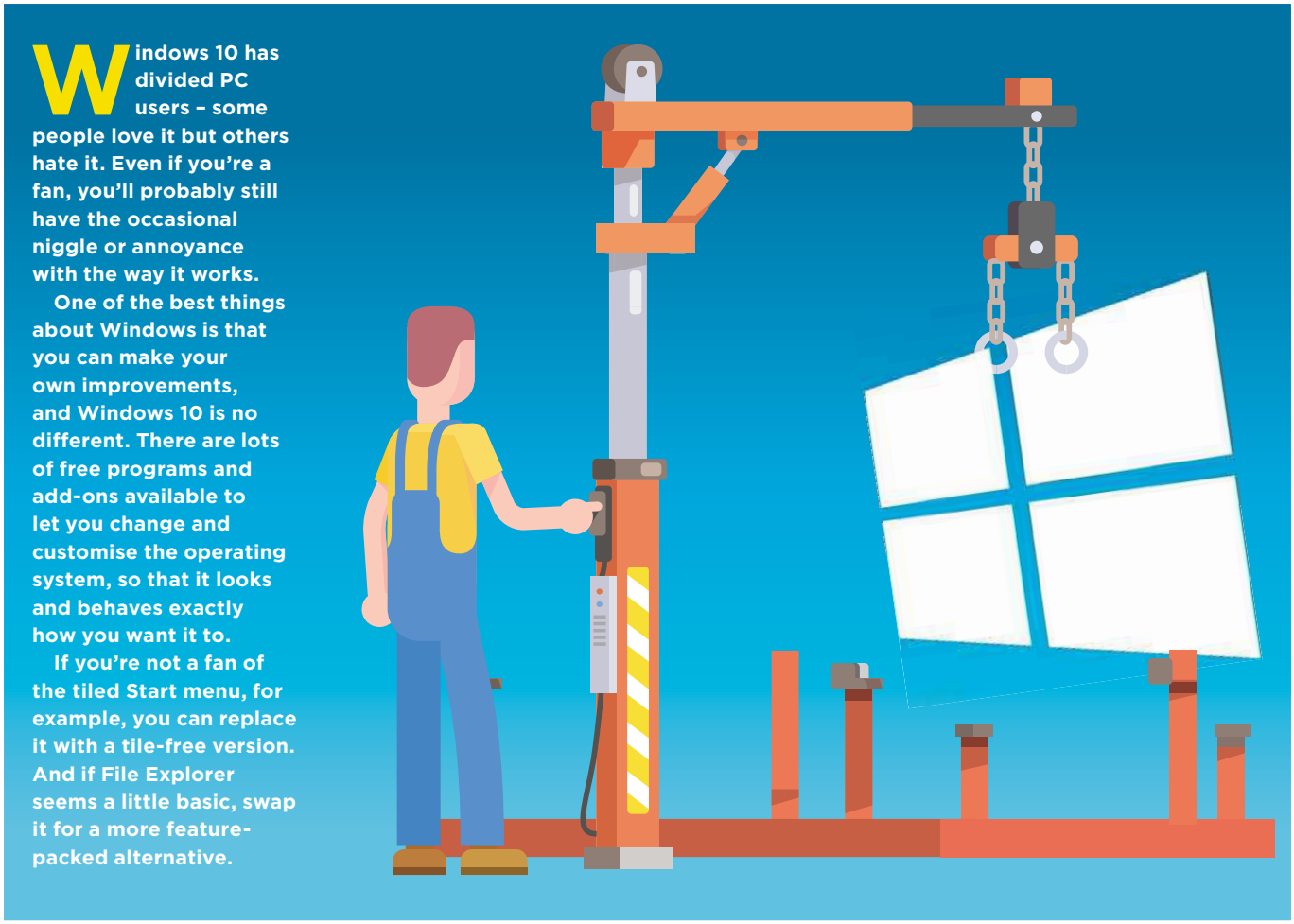
Weekend Project

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

How to...

Overhaul the Windows 10 Desktop

Love it or loathe it, you have the option of customising Windows 10 to suit your preferences. **Wayne Williams** explains how



Windows 10 has divided PC users – some people love it but others hate it. Even if you're a fan, you'll probably still have the occasional niggle or annoyance with the way it works.

One of the best things about Windows is that you can make your own improvements, and Windows 10 is no different. There are lots of free programs and add-ons available to let you change and customise the operating system, so that it looks and behaves exactly how you want it to.

If you're not a fan of the tiled Start menu, for example, you can replace it with a tile-free version. And if File Explorer seems a little basic, swap it for a more feature-packed alternative.

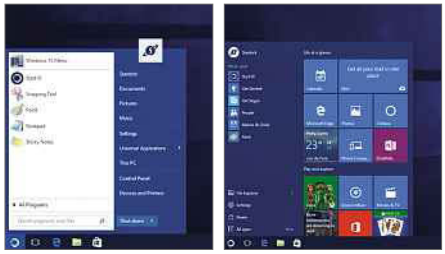
Change the Start menu

After the massive outcry that followed Microsoft's decision to remove the Start menu from Windows 8, Microsoft back-tracked to avoid the same criticisms in Windows 10. The new Start menu is an interesting mix of the old and new, blending Windows 7's Start menu with the Start screen from Windows 8. It's not to everyone's taste, however, and the inclusion of live tiles is a little odd – you have to open the Start menu and then wait for them to update.

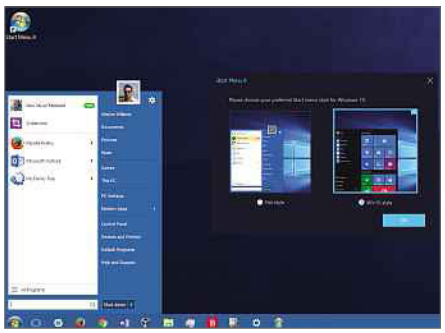
If you'd prefer a different Start menu, there are plenty to choose from, including IObit Start Menu 8 (bit.ly/iobit398) which, despite its name, works absolutely fine with Windows 10 (though you need to skip the bundled junk during installation), and Stardock's Start10 (bit.ly/dock398). The latter program isn't free, but it only costs $4.99 (around £3.44) and there's a 30-day trial available. It offers a good choice of menus, including one with tiles.

Our personal favourite is Classic Shell (www.classicshell.net), which offers a choice of three different menu styles – Classic, Two Columns and Windows 7 – all of which can be tweaked with different colours and designs to suit your tastes.

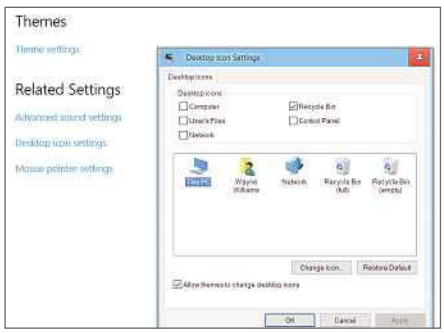
The program comes packed with extra



Stardock's Start menu replacement lets you choose from a range of different styles



IObit's Start menu is free but make sure you deselect its extras during installation



Choose which shortcut icons you want to keep on your Desktop

options, including a dedicated shutdown button, the ability to pin programs directly from Explorer and an enhanced Windows Search tool. The latest version improves compatibility with the most recent build of Windows 10, adds transparency settings for skins and also lets you uninstall Windows Store apps directly from the Start menu.

We show you how to use Classic Shell in our Mini Workshop, below.

Customise the taskbar

You can make various changes to the taskbar setup from within Windows. If you have a widescreen monitor, moving the taskbar from the bottom of the screen to the left (or right) will free up a bit of vertical space. To do this, right-click the taskbar and untick 'Lock the taskbar'. Click a blank area of the taskbar and drag it to its new location. You can then lock it into position. This also removes the search box that usually sits at the left-hand side.

If you don't want to move the position of the taskbar but would like to get rid of the search box, right-click the taskbar, click the Search link and choose either Hidden or Show Search Icon. If Microsoft's personal assistant is active, go into the Cortana menu instead and tick Hidden.

You can make further customisations by right-clicking the taskbar and selecting Properties. There are options to auto-hide the taskbar, switch to smaller buttons, tweak their behaviour and customise the notification area. If you are using more than one screen, you can choose which one to display taskbars on. You can also add different toolbars to the taskbar, including Address, Links, iTunes and Desktop.

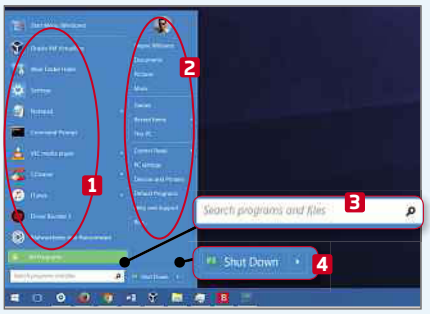
Decide where you want to position the taskbar on your screen

If you want even greater control over the Windows taskbar, give 7+ Taskbar Tweaker (bit.ly/tweak398) a try. This was originally designed for Windows 7 but will work fine with Windows 8 and 10. It lets you make changes to the taskbar items (altering the mouse's clicking, dropping and hovering behaviour), and how it groups and combines programs. There are plenty of other taskbar options and they are all available through a single-screen interface. We show you how to use it in our Mini Workshop on page 60.

Choose which icons to include on the Desktop

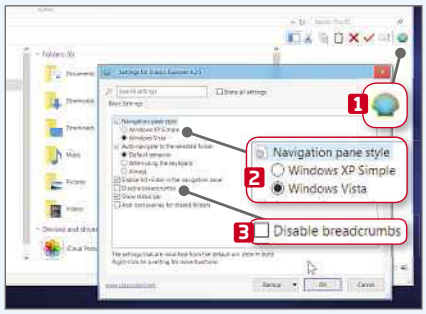
Some people are happy to have only the Recycle Bin on their Desktop, while others prefer to display a variety of shortcuts, including Computer, User Files and Control Panel. You can quickly decide which shortcuts you want by clicking Start and going to Settings,

MINI WORKSHOP | Replace the Windows 10 Start menu with Classic Shell



1 Install Classic Shell and click the Start button. You will now have a new Windows 7-style Start menu – no more tiles, just a list of regularly used programs **1** and a sidebar containing important file locations and Windows settings. **2** You can search for programs and files **3** and quickly shut down your PC. **4**

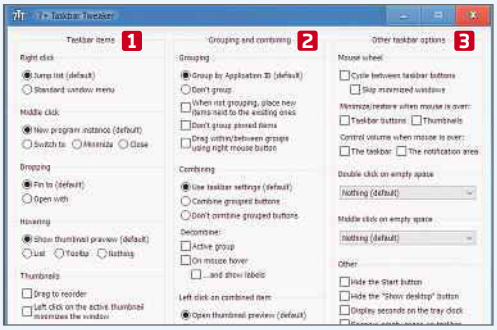
2 To customise the menu, right-click the Start button and select Settings. Classic Shell offers a choice of Start menu styles **1** and you can also replace the default Start button. **2** Customise the menu behaviour under Basic Settings and tweak its look under Skin. **3** Choose which menu items to show under Customize Start Menu. **4**



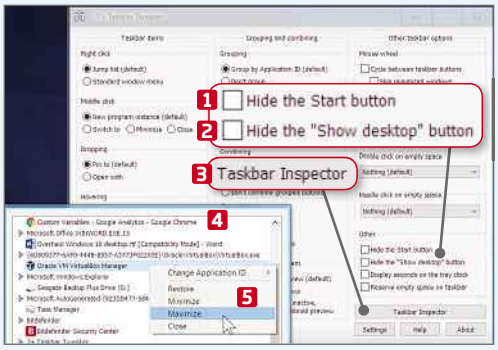
3 Classic Shell is more than just a Start menu replacement – it also makes changes to File Explorer. You can customise this by clicking the Shell button. **1** Options include changing the navigation pane style (XP or Vista) **2** and enabling or disabling the breadcrumbs feature, **3** which shows the path of your navigation.

MINI WORKSHOP

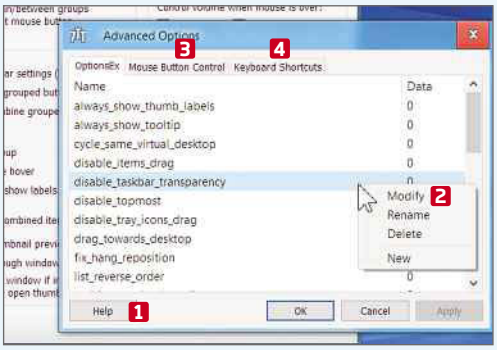
Customise the taskbar with 7+ Taskbar Tweaker



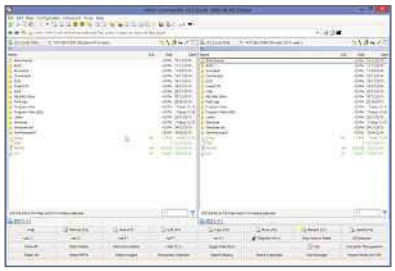
1 7+ Taskbar Tweaker is very easy to use because everything you need is presented on a single menu screen and sorted into three main categories: 'Taskbar items', 1 'Grouping and combining' 2 and 'Other taskbar options'. 3 Just click a taskbar setting to change it. Changes are made immediately.



2 If you don't want the Start button on the taskbar, you can hide it. 1 Pressing the Windows key will still open the menu. You can also hide the 'Show desktop' button. 2 The Taskbar Inspector button 3 shows you all items currently open on the taskbar. 4 Right-clicking an item will let you interact with it. 5



3 7+ Taskbar Tweaker also includes some hidden extras. Right-click the top of the window and select 'Advanced options'. These are less easy to use, so you should click the Help button if you need guidance. 1 Right-click an option to modify it. 2 There are tabs for Mouse Button Control 3 and Keyboard Shortcuts 4 too.



Multi Commander gives File Explorer a dual-pane view of your files

Seer lets you preview files in a floating window

Personalisation, Themes. Click the 'Desktop icon settings' link and tick or untick the options in the window that opens. You can also change the icon for each one.

Get greater control over the colours

Windows 10 Color Control (bit.ly/control398) gives you greater control over the colours used in borders, the taskbar and the Start menu. It doesn't require installation – just pick your colour and apply it. You can go back to the original palette by ticking the 'New auto-colour accent algorithm' box.

Replace or enhance File Explorer

The Windows file manager has seen many improvements over the years, but while File Explorer in Windows 10 is a decent tool, there are better programs available that can complement or replace it. Multi Commander 6 (multicommander.com) has a dual-panel layout, making it much easier to copy files between locations. It also supports tabs, so you can have multiple folders open and within easy reach at all times. It comes with a quick-launch bar and a command field for entering commands, and has lots of options for customising the software.

XYplorerFree (bit.ly/xy398) is a cut-down but fully featured version of the paid-for XYplorer. Like Multi Commander, it has a dual-pane interface and tabs that make it easier to navigate and copy content between locations. You can also save your favourite folders for easy access in the future.

Seer (bit.ly/seer398) is another excellent option, which provides instant previews of files on your Desktop or in File Explorer. Once it's been installed, you just select (single-click) a file and press the spacebar. A preview appears in a floating window.

Change the colours of Windows using Color Control

Replace the Task Manager

The Windows 10 Task Manager, which can be summoned by right-clicking the taskbar and selecting Task Manager or by pressing Ctrl+Shift+Esc, is a very powerful tool, packed with features. There are even better replacements

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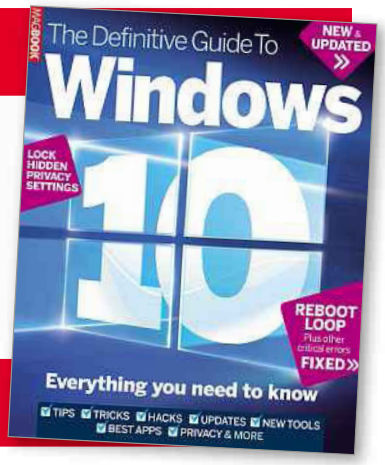
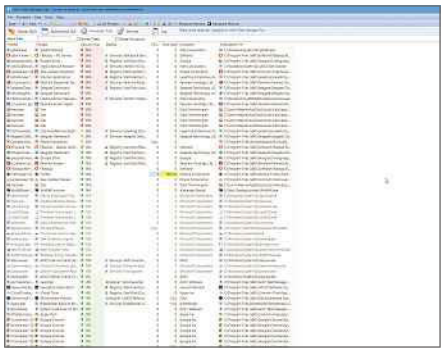
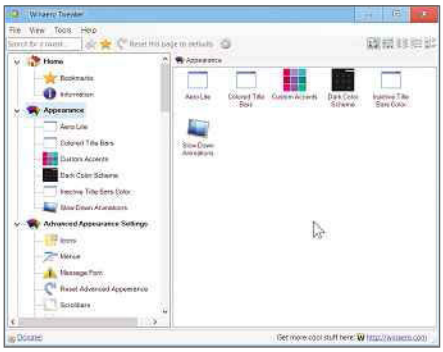




AnVir Task Manager is more detailed and thorough than the Windows version



Winaero Tweaker can change a lot of different settings in one go

Ultimate Windows Tweaker provides one-stop access to more than 200 settings

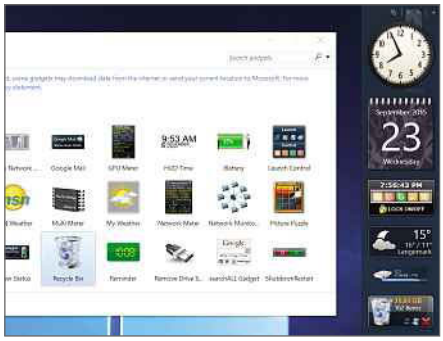
available, though, including AnVir Task Manager Free (www.anvir.com), which displays all running applications, processes and services in tabs across the top of its window. You can use it to disable or delay any unimportant items that start alongside Windows, and also monitor your hardware.

Process Explorer 16 (bit.ly/procex398) is also very good. It doesn't require installation and displays a list of colour-coded running processes. You can end suspicious items or scan them using the online virus checker at VirusTotal (www.virustotal.com). Process Explorer can be set as the default task manager by going into Options and selecting Replace Task Manager.

Make loads of quick changes to Windows 10

If you want a one-stop shop, Winaero Tweaker (winaero.com) is ideal. It works with various versions of Windows, including Windows 10, and can make numerous changes, including enabling the Aero Lite theme, changing the look of icons and menus, and tweaking the Desktop and taskbar. We show you how to use it in our Mini Workshop, below.

Another tool to try is the modestly named Ultimate Windows Tweaker (bit.ly/tweaker398), which offers more than 200 tweaks, all of which have been sorted into straightforward categories, such as Customisation, Performance, Security & Privacy and Context Menu.



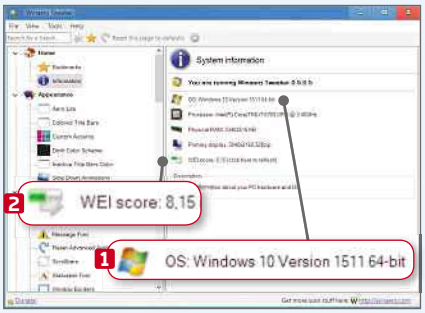
Bring gadgets back to Windows with 8GadgetPack

Restore Desktop Gadgets

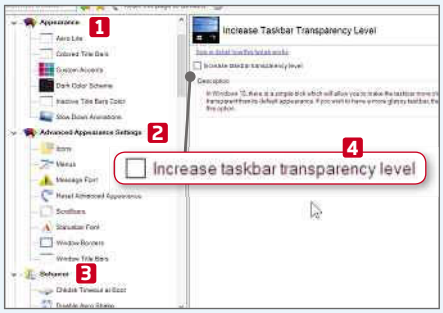
Gadgets are floating mini-apps that you can arrange on the Desktop and store in a handy sidebar. They were introduced in Vista and removed from Windows 8, but you can restore them by installing Gadgets Revived (gadgetsrevived.com). Download the sidebar from the site and pick the gadgets you want to run, then right-click the Desktop and select Gadgets. You'll find a Control Panel option under 'Appearance and Personalisation', Desktop Gadgets.

Another option is 8GadgetPack (8gadgetpack.net), which has more than 50 gadgets to choose from and a sidebar to store everything in. Microsoft removed the gadget tools from Windows for security reasons but the ones that come with these programs are safe. ■

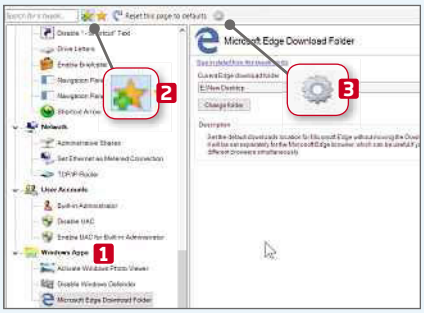
MINI WORKSHOP | Tweak Windows 10 with Winaero Tweaker



1 Winaero's tweaking tool provides useful information about your PC, including the version of Windows 10 you're running 1 and its Windows Experience Index (WEI) score. 2 WEI was a benchmarking feature introduced in Vista but removed in Windows 8. The higher the number, the better your overall Windows performance will be.



2 All the available tweaks are sorted into categories down the left-hand side. These include Appearance, 1 Advanced Appearance Settings, 2 Behavior, 3 'Boot and Logon', 'Desktop and Taskbar' and Context Menu. Select a tweak and the options for it will appear on the right. 4 Most can be actioned by ticking a box or using a slider.



3 The Windows Apps section 1 lets you activate the Windows Photo Viewer, disable Windows Defender (although not in all versions of Windows 10), and change the default Microsoft Edge download folder. Save your favourite tweaks by clicking the Bookmark button. 2 Click the gear icon 3 to access settings.

NEXT ISSUE **How To...** Create a portable PC on a USB memory stick

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Web User's Top Tips

Work smarter and faster on your mobile device. Our experts present their top tips for iOS and Android

TOP TIPS FOR PHONE AND TABLET SHORTCUTS

Uninstall unwanted apps

The usual way to uninstall apps on Android is to open the Settings app, find the Application Manager among the settings, search the long list of apps to locate the one you want to remove and then, finally, tap the Uninstall button. Thankfully, there is a quicker way to remove apps.

It depends which device and version of Android you have, but on some models you can long-press an app to bring up a trash icon labelled Uninstall at the top of the screen. You then just drag the app to the bin to remove it. Another method is to go to Apps drawer (the A-Z list of apps) and press the Edit button at the top of the screen. Each app icon has a minus sign you can tap to uninstall.

Long-press apps and drag them to the Uninstall trash can in Android

Lock screen shortcuts

Some Android devices allow apps to be added to the lock screen to provide fast access. This means you don't need to swipe through multiple screens looking for apps – they're there as soon as you switch on the screen.

On some devices, pull down from the top and tap the gear icon to open Settings. Press 'Lock screen and security', 'Info and app shortcuts', then 'App shortcuts'. Two apps can be added to the lock screen, one in each corner at the bottom. Press 'Left shortcut' and select an app, such as Phone; then press 'Right shortcut' and select another app, such as Camera. You can now wake the device and press and slide the Camera icon to quickly take a photo.

Different models have different shortcuts, so here are some alternatives to try. Double-press the power or volume buttons when the screen is off to activate the camera. Flick the device to the left twice to access the camera. On some, you can go to Settings, 'Advanced features' and turn on 'Quick launch camera'. You can then double-tap the Home button to activate the camera.

Set up icons on the lock screen of your Android phone for fast access

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.

Flick, twist and shake

Some devices respond to flicks, twists and shakes. If your Android model doesn't, install Twisty Launcher (bit.ly/twist398). The actions include chop twice (like an axe); turn it face up then down twice; and twist twice. For each action you can choose which app to run, such as the phone app, messaging, Facebook or the camera.

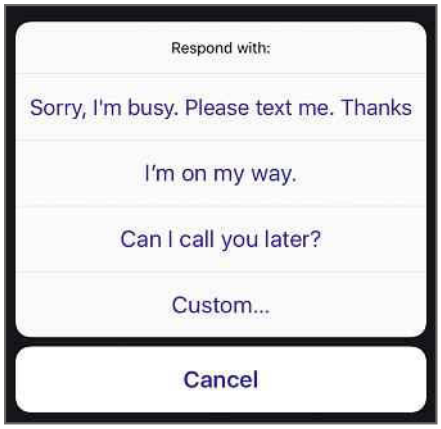
Create website shortcuts

You can create home-screen icons to instantly open your favourite websites. In Safari on iOS devices, press the Share button and select 'Add to Home Screen'.

In Chrome on Android, press the three-dots menu button and select 'Add to Home Screen'.

Text replies on iOS

When you get a phone call at an inconvenient time and cannot speak to the person, instead of sliding the phone icon to the right to take the call, tap the Message button just above it. There are three ready-made responses, including "Can I call you later?". Just tap a response to send it as a text message. You can customise the responses by going to Settings, Phone, 'Respond with Text'. Tap each of the three responses and type in your own messages. You can use them the next time someone calls when you are busy.



Respond to phone calls on your iPhone with a text when you are busy

Quick access to music

When music is playing on your iOS device and you switch to another app, you don't need to switch back to the Music app to access the play controls. Swipe up from the bottom of the screen in any app and the music controls are there, along with the title of the currently playing track. If not, go to Settings, Control Centre and turn on Access Within Apps to enable it.

Search for apps

Many people have more than 100 apps on their phones and finding the one you want – if it isn't on the home screen – takes time and effort. A quick way to find apps on iOS is to swipe right on the home screen, tap in the search box and type a letter. All apps starting with that letter are listed and you can then tap the one you want. Typing more letters narrows down the results further.

In Android, go to the apps drawer (the A-Z apps listing) to get a Search button at the top of the screen. On some Android devices, you can long-press the Apps drawer icon on the home screen to bring up a search box.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

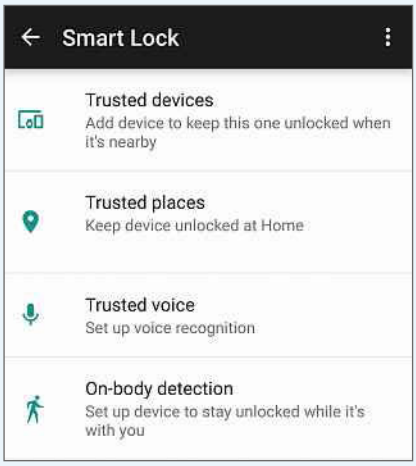
More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Unlock by location

Wouldn't it be useful if your phone was locked only when you were out, but was unlocked at home or in any other safe place? This is possible with recent versions of Android. Go to Settings, Security and use the Screen Lock option to set a PIN or password. Return to Settings, Security and press Smart Lock. Several options are available, such as 'Trusted devices' (unlock when near another device, such as your computer), 'Trusted face' (unlock by looking at the device), 'Trusted voice' (unlock it by saying something), and 'Trusted places'.

Select 'Trusted places' and press 'Add trusted place'. A Google map appears with your current location. Add the location or find a place on the map, such as your home, and tap to drop a pin. You'll never need to unlock your phone at that location, but will be prompted for the PIN or password everywhere else.

Different devices and versions of Android have slightly different menus. Try this: Go to Settings, 'Lock screen and security', 'Screen lock type' and set a PIN, then Settings, 'Lock screen and security', 'Secure lock settings', Smart Lock, 'Trusted places'.



Use Smart Lock to automatically unlock you phone when you are in a safe place

Try keyboard tricks

If you are typing on iOS and want to enter a symbol or number, you press the 123 button to switch keyboards, tap the number or symbol, and tap the ABC button to switch back to the normal keyboard. But there is a quicker way to do this. Press and hold on the 123 button and the number/symbols keyboard appears. Slide your finger to the one you want and lift it off. The symbol is entered and the keyboard returns to ABC automatically.

Android devices have shortcuts too, although these vary depending on the model. Instead of pressing Sym to get symbols, press and hold the full-stop key. A small panel with common symbols is displayed and you can choose the one you want (some devices you will need to tap, others you must slide to the symbol and lift). Press the full-stop key to close the panel. If you want to type emoticons, long-press the smiley button in the bottom right corner to display a pop-up panel of symbols.

When typing a website URL, a '.com' button is often displayed, which you can tap to save typing .com. Press and hold the '.com' button to see a panel of alternatives, including '.net', .'co.uk', '.org' and '.gov.uk'. Tap the one you want or slide your finger to it and lift. If you don't see a '.com' button, press and hold the full-stop button. This sometimes shows the pop-up panel for domains.

One last keyboard tip for iPhone users: shake your phone to undo your typing.

Home screen contacts

You can place your most-used contacts on the home screen of your Android phone for one tap access. Long-press on an empty space on the home screen and press Widgets. Go to Contacts and select Contact (to show a contact), Direct Dial (to call them) or Direct Message (to text them). Press and drag one of these to the home screen and the Contacts app appears. Select someone and the shortcut icon is created. You can now repeat the process for other contacts you frequently call or text.

Use voice actions

On Samsung phones, go to Settings, 'Lock screen and security', 'Info and app shortcuts', then 'App shortcuts'. Select S Voice for the left or right icon. Now, from the lock screen, you can simply slide S Voice and perform any action by speaking.

Ask the Expert

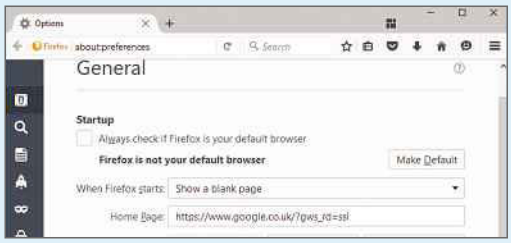
Roland Waddilove, computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at webuser@dennis.co.uk

BROWSERS

Overwhelmed by Firefox tabs

Q I downloaded Autoruns (bit.ly/auto398) in Firefox, which immediately opened lots of new tabs and would not stop until I closed it. Firefox then immediately restarted and reopened lots of tabs until I closed it again. This happened several times, so I shut down the computer and left it for 30 seconds before restarting. When I restarted Firefox, it still had lots of open tabs but this time I was able to close them manually. After that, the program ran normally. Am I doing anything wrong?

Rob Bates, via email



Choose 'Show a blank page' if you don't want your previous session's Firefox tabs to open

A There are a couple of possible causes of this problem. When you click a download link in Firefox, it asks whether it should automatically open the file or save it. You should always save it so it can be scanned with antivirus software. The Autoruns software is safe but it's still a good idea to save downloads rather than open them, just in case you are mistakenly downloading from a dodgy site instead of the official one.

All web browsers can be configured to continue browsing with the tabs from your last session. However, if a website crashes the browser, it will reopen with the same tabs and may crash again, getting stuck in a loop. This is probably what happened.

Go to the menu and click Options. Select the General tab and, next to 'When Firefox starts', select 'Show my home page' or 'Show a blank page'. The problem could be caused by a corrupted web page, a toolbar or add-on, or a bug in the browser itself. Go to the menu, then Add-ons, Extensions and disable them all if you have any more trouble.

SECURITY

Mystery night-time searches

Q Reading through Issue 396 (bit.ly/webuser396), I found the 'Stop the Web Stalking You' cover feature very interesting and followed the 'Stop Google stalking you everywhere' Mini Workshop. After following the steps, one entry for my searches popped up stating that I had been on the web using Google to search at 2.38am. This can't be true because I was in bed at that time and the devices I use were all switched off, password protected and locked away, so no one else could have used them. When I clicked the entry, nothing showed up to indicate the search criteria. I found this rather odd and was wondering if you have any idea what has happened?

T Ansel, via email

A At history.google.com/history, you'll find Web & App Activity, which is a complete list of everything you have done in Chrome and other apps when signed in to your Google account. Under each item recorded you'll see the computer or device that was used. This could give a useful insight into what might have happened.

Computers, phones and tablets are often put into sleep mode these days rather than being fully powered off. They can automatically wake up in the middle of the night, perform some action, such as downloading software or operating system updates, or backing up, then go back into sleep mode. This is probably what has happened, but as a precaution, you should change your Google account password.

GENERAL PC

Force updates on a reluctant laptop

Q I have a Toshiba laptop with Windows 7 installed. I avoided upgrading to Windows 10 because of all the problems I read about during its first few months, and have decided to wait until I buy a new laptop, later next year, with a more stable pre-installed operating system.

I'm a pensioner and not very computer savvy, so I'm concerned about my recent inability to gain updates for Windows 7. My last successful update was installed on 12 April but, since then, the only message I see is 'Check for Updates'. On clicking this, I get no response. I've never known such a time gap (nearly three weeks) between updates, so I am worried that I've been blocked and have missed some.

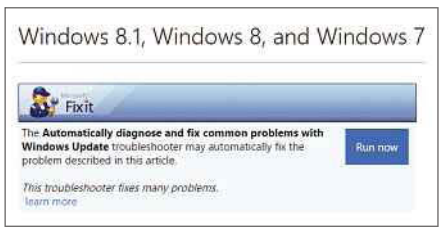
The only action I've recently taken, which I thought might have had an impact, was to hide the infamous KB3035583 Windows 10 update and, before that, the KB2952664 update. Since then, five other regular updates were successfully installed.

I'm concerned as I don't know what I've done to cause this problem.

Alan Possee, via email

A Three weeks isn't that long and it may be that there haven't been any updates, or that any that have come through have required a particular type of PC. A list of Windows updates can be found at bit.ly/updates398. If you follow the links you can often manually download them. However, it's best to leave it to Windows Update and not try to download them yourself.

Go to bit.ly/reset398 and run the



Microsoft's 'Fix it' tool can be used to solve Windows Update problems

Windows Update Troubleshooter to fix any problems and reset the update components if they're faulty.

SOFTWARE

Is open source safe?

Q I read with interest Issue 395's Weekend Project 'Run Windows software without Microsoft spying' (bit.ly/webuser395).

I know very little about the open-source concept on which the likes of the ReactOS operating system (www.reactos.org) is based, but your article states that open source means that no one owns it and all source code is available to anyone. If that is the case, does this not compromise the operating system's security?

Ron O'Brien, via email

A If the code for an application or operating system is kept private and only the developer has access, it makes it harder for hackers to gain access. However, they can still find ways to compromise the security in popular programs and get into the software. And in private code, you've got to trust the developer to fix problems with their older software, which doesn't always have the priority that developing new products might have.

If the code is made public, as it is with open-source software, a hacker can indeed look at it and could try to find security flaws. However, it also means that other programmers and security experts can look at the code and fix any security flaws they find. In theory, this often results in fewer security flaws and faster fixes than you get with traditional software.

BROWSERS

Remove formatting from Chrome's clipboard

Q I run several websites containing information that often comes from people contributing via email. I usually use Chrome, but when I cut and paste from an email into my website, I have to first highlight, then cut and paste the text into Word to remove the annoying background that comes attached to it.

This only happens in Chrome (and Brave, which I downloaded on your advice today). Why is this? It doesn't happen when I'm using Internet Explorer, Edge or Firefox.

Mike Kemble, via email

A Chrome is copying the exact text, which means the selected text

Use this Chrome add-on to copy text without unwanted formatting

along with the font, size, colour and other formatting information.

Other programs, including Microsoft Word, also do this, but Word's Paste button has an arrow underneath that displays a menu of options that let you paste either the exact text or just plain text, which gets rid of the formatting information.

Notepad is a better program to use because it automatically strips out all the formatting when you paste text. You can then just copy the plain text and paste it wherever you need it.

Chrome can't strip the formatting from text, but you can add this option to the browser by using an add-on called 'Copy as plain text' (bit.ly/plain398). Select some text in Chrome, right-click it and you'll see the usual Copy menu option along with a new 'Copy as plain text' option. This copies only the text and not the formatting style.

PRINTERS

Choose the best scanning tool for your printer

Q I own an HP Pavilion laptop and an HP Envy printer. There are three ways to scan a document: use Windows 10's Scan app; press the printer's Scan button; or use the HP Scan tool in my printer's software. I used the latter method with my old Touchsmart laptop and would like to use it on my new Pavilion. I was told I can use the Settings app in Windows 10 to set up the printer and install the software needed. I've got as far as going to Settings, Devices, 'Printers and scanners', 'Add printers & scanners', Printers, HP E9365C (HP Envy 5530 Series). It then tells me there is an 'App available for this device'. Do I click this or could I use the HP Lounge?

Darren, via email

A You can follow the method you describe to install drivers for devices such as printers and scanners in Windows 10, but it's better to go direct to the manufacturer because their drivers may offer additional software, fun tools and extra features in a special software bundle. This is the case with the HP Envy 5530. Go to bit.ly/envy398 and click the blue 'Software and Drivers' button. Scroll down to Option 2 and click the Go button, which will take you to the software's download page. Download it and run it.

GENERAL PC

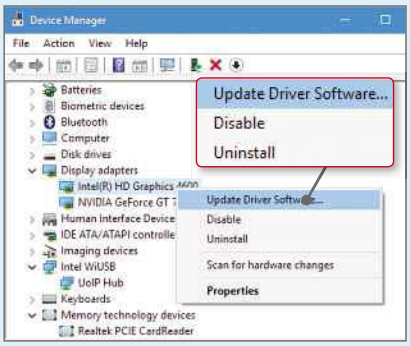
Speed up your shutdown

Q I downloaded Autoruns, which you included in your 'Speed up your startup' feature in Issue 395 (bit.ly/webuser395) and have found it very useful. Is there a similar program to speed up my shutdown?

Joe Pester, via email

A There is no tool to manage or speed up shutdown. Any problems with shutdown are caused by drivers or programs that run in the background. These background programs are mostly the same items that are found using startup managers so reducing auto-starting programs to speed up your startup should improve shutdown times, too.

Make sure you have the latest drivers installed because bugs and



Update the driver for all hardware components using Device Manager

incompatibilities with outdated drivers affect your PC's stability and prevent a clean and quick shutdown. Click Start (in Windows 7) or click in the taskbar search box (in Windows 10) and type `device manager`. Click it when it appears in the search results. Once it's opened, expand every section down to but not including 'System devices'. Right-click each item and select 'Update Driver Software'.

This fortnight Roland has been trying to get organised with OneNote, Wunderlist and Trello

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

Mug winner

SOFTWARE

Integrate Keep into Windows

I am a big fan of Google Keep (keep.google.com) and have been using it from the start. It's handy for keeping notes as I browse the web. When you open Keep, it runs in a browser tab or as an app in its own window, but there is now a new Chrome add-on that means you don't need to have an extra tab or window open. Install 'Google Keep – notes and lists' (bit.ly/keep398) to add a button to the taskbar, which you just click to create a new note. It adds the current web-page title and you simply type your note.

Select text on a web page and click the Keep icon to save it in a note

The most useful tool is the right-click menu. Simply right-click an image or selected text on a web page and you can add it to a new note. It's exactly what us Keep users need!

Jon Levey, via email

EMAIL

Clear your Gmail inbox

If you've let hundreds or even thousands of emails accumulate in your Gmail inbox, deleting them all manually can be a tedious and time-consuming exercise. A quick way to get rid of them is to type `in:inbox is:read` in Gmail's search bar, then press Enter. This shows all the read messages in your inbox. Click the tickbox to select them all and a link will appear at the top of the list saying 'Select all messages that match this search'. Click it and you can then click either the Archive or Delete buttons to remove the read messages from your primary inbox.

I mainly use my Gmail account for notifications from the Web User forums (forum.webuser.co.uk) which had been left there for a very long time. But thanks to this trick, they're gone!

To delete all messages older than a particular date, simply type `in:inbox before:YYYY/MM/DD` (choose any date you like) and press Enter.

Madeline, Web User forums

Select multiple emails by clicking 'Select all messages that match this search'

SOFTWARE

Uninstall stubborn programs

I recently found myself locked in a battle with a program that I couldn't uninstall. I didn't fancy attempting a system restore so I tried Revo Uninstaller (bit.ly/revo398), but the free version isn't compatible with 64-bit software. I then realised CCleaner also has an uninstaller but that didn't work either.

Finally, I went to MajorGeeks (www.majorgeeks.com) and found a very small, free program called Geek Uninstaller (bit.ly/geek398). It works for all versions of Windows, both 32- and 64-bit, and it easily removed my stubborn software (a flight simulator).

The program downloads as a Zip file and, once extracted, is a small, portable application. It's very handy to have it around in situations where the Windows uninstaller doesn't do the job.

Dave_1, Web User forums

EMAIL

Run automatic filters in Outlook.com

Outlook.com (www.outlook.com) displays a list of categories such as Unread, Photos, Documents and Newsletters in the left-hand panel, which filter and organise the emails you receive. A few are provided to start you off but you can add more by right-clicking any item in the list and selecting 'Manage categories'. Tick all the boxes in the 'Show in folder pane' column and go back to your inbox. Down at the bottom are all the unread emails in the categories. Select a category to see only messages that match, such as newsletters.

The filters make it easier to manage a busy inbox and you can select a whole category – for example, Shopping or Travel – and clear all the messages in one go if you don't want to read them.

Paul Evans, via email

Turn on all the mail-sorting categories in Outlook.com by ticking the boxes

WINDOWS 10

Quickly open apps and sites

If you use Windows 10, you no longer need to use the Start menu. You can just

ask Cortana to open applications instead. To set this up, click in the search box to open the Cortana panel and click the Notebook icon followed by Settings. Next, turn on 'Hey, Cortana'.

Now you can say "Hey, Cortana. Open..." followed by the name of the app, such as WordPad, Word, Excel, Facebook, Mail, Photos and so on. It even opens some websites. Say "Hey, Cortana. Open YouTube" and a browser opens and navigates to the YouTube website.

Simon Aspell, via email

BROWSERS

Restore Chrome's old 'New Tab' page

If you don't like Google Chrome's current New Tab page (the one with a Google logo and search bar), I've discovered a handy browser extension called New Tab Reloaded (bit.ly/tabr398) that lets you restore it to its previous version.

Install the add-on and open its options page from `chrome://extensions`. Make sure you activate the apps page and the options for 'recently closed tabs' and 'other device' pages. It requires a few permissions to work but it gives you several useful extra options for your New Tab page.

Jack Gold, Web User Forums

New Tab Reloaded restores the traditional New Tab page to Google Chrome

GENERAL PC

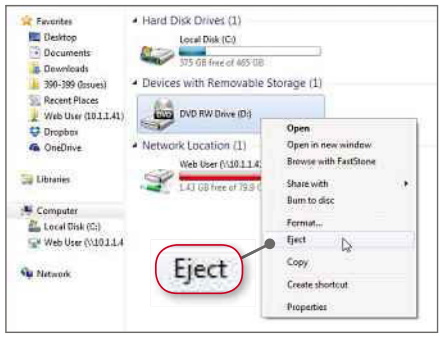
Open your CD/DVD drive more easily

The DVD tray on my computer is a little sticky. I sometimes need to press the button on the front a number of times to make it open. I don't believe it's faulty but, even so, it's annoying.

After some research, I identified a small program that automates the task. Once installed, it appears in the notification area, and you can either click it or set up a keyboard shortcut (I chose Ctrl+E) to open the DVD tray.

To download the program, visit www.digola.com and scroll down until you see Door Control. It's very useful if you have a desktop computer and your DVD tray is below your desk or if, like me, your button is sticky.

If you'd prefer not to download any additional software, you can open the drive by right-clicking it in Explorer and then selecting Eject. In Windows 7, right-click the Start icon, choose Properties, Start Menu, Customize, then choose the 'Display as menu' option under Computer to perform the task even more quickly.



Open the DVD drive by right-clicking it in My Computer and selecting Eject

FratPark, Peru and Madeline, Web User forums

WINDOWS 10

Personalise your Start screen

There are a number of actions you can take to personalise the Windows 10 Start menu. First, if you have added a number of tiles, you can name the group by left-clicking the top of it and entering a name in the text box. The two default groups, Play and Lifestyle, can both be renamed by left-clicking the title text and editing it. If you find the titles unnecessary, as I do, deleting the text removes them altogether. As you may already know, right-clicking tiles lets you resize them.

If you preferred the full Start screen as it appeared in Windows 8, you can restore it from Windows 10's Personalise settings. Simply right-click the Desktop, select Personalise and, under Start, choose 'Use Start full screen'. If you find the Start screen is slightly transparent and you can see the Wallpaper behind, you can change this by selecting Colours and turning off the option to make the start screen, taskbar and Action Centre transparent.

FratPark, Web User forums

***Web User* says:** We've got more tips for customising your Windows 10 Desktop in our Weekend Project on page 58.

HARDWARE

Open new tabs with the middle mouse button

Most mice have a scroll wheel, located between the two buttons. I use this a lot while browsing the web, to scroll up and down web pages. However, it's easy to forget that it also works as a third button, that you can press to activate.

In Chrome and Firefox, if you point at a link and click the mouse wheel, it opens in a new tab in the background for reading later but keeps you on the current page. If you hold down the Shift key while pressing the scroll wheel, the link opens as a new tab on top of the current page, so you can start reading it straight away.

N Crouch, via email

APPS

Organise Google Keep notes

I've always added labels to my notes in Google Keep (keep.google.com) by tapping the necessary combination of buttons when editing them. However, I've now discovered there's a much quicker way of adding labels to your entries, even if you want to create a new one. Simply enter a hash (#) symbol anywhere in the note and a list of your existing labels appears for you to select. If you want to add a new tag, type it to get the option to add it as a new label. To view all notes that use a specific label, tap the hashtag in a note and choose 'Go to label'.

Ed Wright, via email

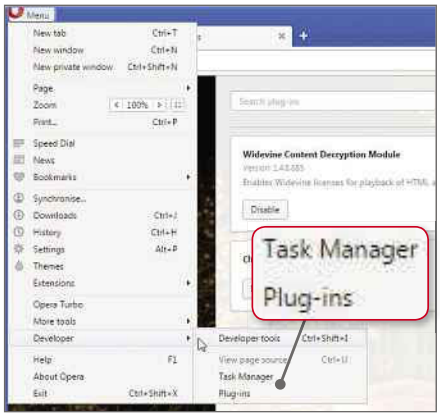
BROWSERS

Activate Opera's developer menu

Opera's developer menu has a couple of useful features. To activate it, click the Opera button, scroll down to 'More tools' and then choose 'Show developer menu' from the side menu. Once you've done that, choose Developer from the main menu and click Plug-ins to see a list of your add-ons. It's quicker than going to the Location Bar and typing `opera:plugins`.

The other useful feature is Task Manager, which lets you see how much memory the browser and its various components are using. As with the Windows Task Manager, you can highlight a process or processes and click 'End Task' if you need to.

Madeline, Web User forums



Opera's Developer menu lets you manage your add-ons and run its Task Manager

WebUser Bookstore

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID

If you use an Android tablet or phone, our new 148-page book will tell you how to get the most out of your device. It explains everything you need to know about the latest versions of Android (Lollipop and Marshmallow), so you'll feel confident that you won't get left behind. We also reveal the best apps for everything you'll ever want to do, and expose the dodgy apps that make your device slow and drain the battery. And as hackers continue to switch from PCs to phones and tablets, we'll show you how to stay safe.

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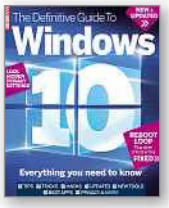
at bit.ly/defguidetoandroid

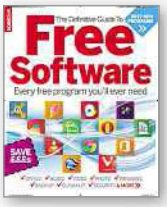
THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WINDOWS 10



This 148-page book is the only guide you need to Microsoft's fantastic new operating system. You'll learn how to master all the new tools and software, and how to upgrade without losing anything. It has been updated to include fixes for problems that have appeared since Windows 10 launched.

BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON
at bit.ly/guidetowindows10

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO FREE SOFTWARE



Free software can be a worry. Is it as good as a paid-for package? Will it sneak junk on to your PC? Does it nag you to update to a premium version? In our new 148-page book *The Definitive Guide to Free Software*, we recommend only the best free programs that deliver high-quality features and no nasty surprises.

BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON
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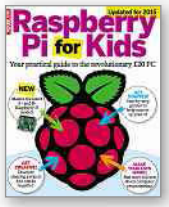
RASPBERRY PI FOR KIDS



The Raspberry Pi is the incredible £20 British computer that's taking the world by storm. It's ideal for children of all ages to experiment with, play games and learn valuable skills. We've updated this 148-page book to include instructions on mastering the new Pi models (A+ and B+).

BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON
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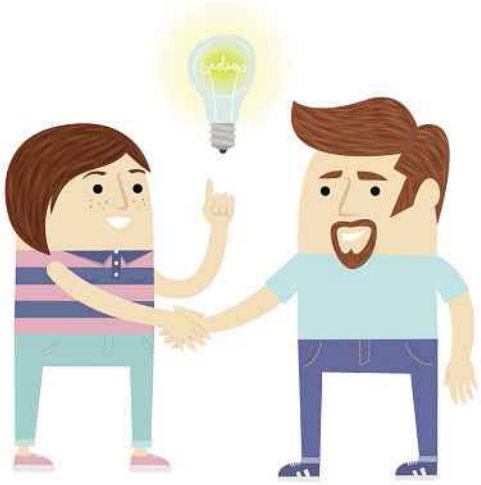


Readers' Helpdesk

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

HARDWARE

Why are my icons so big on an external screen?

Q I have my laptop connected to an LG TV, which works fine as a monitor, but when I first switch it on, the icons and text are sometimes far too large. If I turn the PC off and then on again, this normally fixes the problem. Can anyone suggest a more practical solution?

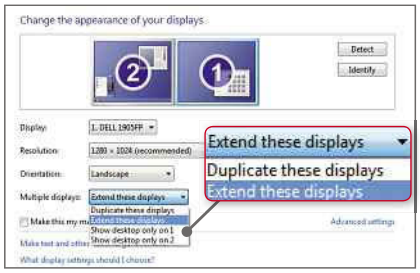
billy 1104, Web User forum

A First, check that you have the correct settings when using your external screen. Open the Control Panel, click 'Hardware and Sound', select Display, then 'Change display settings'. Next to 'Multiple displays', choose to 'Extend these displays' if you want to use both the TV and laptop screen; or 'Show Desktop only on 2' (where 2 is the number of the external display) if you only want to use the external monitor. Click Apply and OK, then go to the display graphic and select the second monitor. In the resolution drop-down menu, make sure its native resolution, which should have '(Recommended)' beside it, is selected.

If the TV's resolution is higher than the laptop's display, the graphic changes to show monitor 2 larger than 1. If this is the case, and your PC is set to 'Duplicate these displays', the onscreen items will look bigger, as you describe.

The hardware profiles are set when you switch on your laptop, so if you unplug the external monitor or haven't switched it on yet, it may use the laptop profile instead of the one for your monitor. You should turn your monitor on first and off last to avoid these problems.

Helmut, Web User forum



Make sure that you choose the correct settings for your external display

GENERAL PC

Why doesn't my keyboard work?

Q I've recently upgraded to Windows 10 but have now spotted a glitch with my Lenovo Black Silk USB Keyboard. When I type @ I get " and vice versa. Likewise, the £ sign has completely disappeared – in its place is a hash symbol (#), and when I press the hash key, I get a backslash. It's only five or six keys that are affected, but it's still very frustrating. I've tried to find the answer in Settings with no luck. Can anyone help please?

trevorW, Web User forum

A When you upgraded, you may have selected the US English option, so your keyboard is now operating as a US keyboard. To restore it back to UK English, go to the Control Panel (which you can select from the Windows+X menu) and under the 'Clock, Language and Region' setting, select 'Change input methods'. If English (United Kingdom) is already in the list, you can make it your primary language by selecting it and clicking 'Move up'. If it's not there, click 'Add a language', search for it in the list and click Add. Move it to the top of the list, then select Options and 'Download and install language pack', if the option is there.

Change your keyboard layout by selecting a different primary language

If you have both languages installed, you can easily switch between the two by pressing Alt+Shift from any screen. But pressing these keys accidentally will also make the keys change.

If you don't need the US language, go back to the Control Panel, select it in the list and click Remove. It can easily be added back if you need it.

Stewart40 and Moonshine, Web User forum

GENERAL PC

Why doesn't Windows' Backup work?

Q I had my PC restored to factory settings and everything works, but when I try to create a system image using Windows' Backup and Restore tool, I get the following error message: "service execution failed due to an internal error... ref 0x80080005." Would I be better off using a different free backup program?

Petrosky, Web User forum

A You should check your hard drive for errors because any bad sectors may be stopping you from creating a backup. Open Computer, right-click the drive you want to check and select Properties. Click the Tools tab, then under 'Error checking', click Check. You may be asked for an administrator password.

To automatically repair any problems with files and folders detected by the scan, tick 'Automatically fix file system errors' and click Start. Otherwise, the check will report problems but not fix them. To perform a more thorough check, you can also tick 'Scan for and attempt recovery of bad sectors'. This scan attempts to find and repair physical errors on the drive itself but it can take much longer to complete. Other causes for your problems may be malware or out-of-date driver software, but it's worth using the disk check first to narrow the possibilities.

If you can't find a cause for the problem, Macrium Reflect Free (bit.ly/reflect398) is popular with other forum users for making full system images, so give that a try instead.

Dave_1 and tornado, Web User forum

Inbox

Star Email

Upgrade for free or shut up about it

At the risk of adding yet another Windows 10 letter to your already crowded Inbox page, I wanted to share my tuppence worth on the topic.

For all the complaints against Microsoft from publications such as *Web User* and *Computeractive*, the company has never been less than honest about its plans for Windows 10. Before the new operating system was released last summer, Microsoft made clear that it would only be free for a year, after which users who hadn't upgraded would have to pay £100. So I don't understand why people are now complaining about the free upgrade period ending in July and not being extended past that point. By then, you'll have had 12 months to make up your mind, so you can hardly expect Microsoft to put its business at stake by waiting indefinitely for you to upgrade.

Don't get me wrong, I don't think Microsoft has been beyond reproach in its efforts to 'encourage' Windows 7 and 8+ users to upgrade. Downloading large installation files to people's PCs and then constantly nagging them to install the files is the very definition of pushiness. Microsoft should respect that many users are still happy with Windows 7 (I can't imagine anyone being happy with Windows 8+), and leave them be.

However, those same Windows 7 and 8+ users shouldn't grumble that they've "only" had a year to upgrade for free. You knew the score, you know what to expect from Windows 10 (there's certainly been enough written about it) and you knew that eventually the free upgrade would become a paid-for one, just like every other version of Windows before it.

So either upgrade now for free, while there's still two months to do so, or stop moaning about it and give the rest of us some peace!

Brian Lowe, via email

Thanks for Windows 10 boot advice

I recently acquired a Windows 10 Dell Inspiron PC, which I have backed up using Macrium Reflect. However, I couldn't get Windows 10 to boot from the program's USB 'restore' drive, which I wanted to do as a test. I was therefore pleasantly surprised when I saw the 'Restore Safe Mode to Windows 10's boot menu' instructions in Issue 395. The workshop was easy to follow and I now have all the options that you mentioned, one of which, of course, allows me to reboot from a USB drive. Thanks for a really useful article.

As an aside, everything works fine from a reboot except that the menu options don't appear on a restart; it carries on okay if you wait or hit Return, but is it is a bit disconcerting the first time it happens.

Paul Thomas, via email

Hello *Web User*, goodbye Flickr

I don't normally buy any Windows or web magazines nowadays, not when the greedy publishers demand up to £15 per copy. Not a chance! But when I saw Issue 394 of your magazine and picked it up, it looked interesting. Then I saw the bargain price and said: "Yes, this is for me". I like it because it has no frills and no gimmicks; just honest-to-goodness information, tips, and dos and don'ts.

After reading Bertie White's tip about moving your photos from Flickr after it started charging users a premium subscription to use its automatic uploader, I took his advice and downloaded all my images back to my PC. Now I have nothing stored in Flickr and I won't again.

Mike Kemble, Sutton

You can't hide anything from eBay

There was a lot of good advice in your article in Issue 396 about how to stop the web stalking you, but in the 'What you last bought online' section, you tell people they can stop eBay displaying the last things you looked at. Sadly, eBay disabled the 'Do not show the My Recently Viewed Items box' option a long time ago, even though the button is still in the settings to turn off your last viewed items.

I fell afoul of this change two Christmases ago when my wife saw what I had been looking at on eBay, which totally ruined the surprise. There was quite a stink about it on the eBay forums at the time. It could be embarrassing if you don't want someone else to see what you have been thinking of buying. Items in your purchase list can be hidden but just as easily unhidden. I love eBay, but if I was looking for birthday or Christmas presents, or anything risqué, I would give it a miss.

Steve, via email

How I stop the web from stalking *me*

I was very interested to read the 'Stop the Web Stalking You' feature in Issue 396 (bi.ly/webuser396). However, on page 6 of the same issue, you tell us to manage our lives in Google Calendar. I already do this as far as reminders go, but does that not defeat the object because Google is one of the worst

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

companies for stalking you.

Fortunately, being an old but cynical fool, I'm not much of a target for stalking. Yes, I send emails to newspapers and magazines, but I am not on any social-media sites. Only Amazon knows what I bought online, and they try to recommend stuff to me, but I always have the browsing history feature turned off – mainly because Amazon irritates me with the rubbish it thinks I want to buy. My location is turned off on all my devices and although Google might know what I search for, I now use Oscobo (www.oscobo.co.uk).

My wife is disabled and not on the council tax list, but will be on the electoral roll. Some sites I buy from have my phone number, but I only store my credit card details on one site and I am not so lazy that I cannot enter the details manually when I buy something. This may sound like a bore, but I am happy that so little of my personal information is stored on my computer.

Martin Fletcher, Thorpe Hesley

Rejoice in the choice of communication

I agree with Barry Collins that email isn't dead (Page 404, Issue 396), despite there now being many other methods of communication. Just because a new one comes along doesn't mean we should abandon our old one. We didn't stop sending letters when Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, after all.

Instead of saying that one thing is better than another, we should be glad that we live in an era that offers so much choice. I send text messages and emails, make mobile and landline calls, and still use the Royal Mail when it's someone's birthday or Christmas. I'd even be willing to use a carrier pigeon, as long as it didn't crap in my shed.

Nigel Glover, via email

What you say...

HAS THE GOVERNMENT MADE THE RIGHT DECISION IN CLOSING THE BBC iPLAYER LOOPHOLE?

Yes. The iPlayer is a BBC service, and the licence fee is to pay towards the cost of all BBC services.

Rich Grove *@Rich_Grove*

I agree. I pay for my TV licence, so why should others be allowed to watch the BBC for free?

Jedi

A more interesting debate is whether the licence fee is an outmoded method of funding the BBC. I suggest it should be funded by subscription, like Sky.

NikoBold

You should have to sign into the iPlayer with your licence number to access content. I don't see why those who pay the licence fee should subsidise the BBC for those who don't.

Keith Pearson

SHOULD MICROSOFT EXTEND THE 'FREE UPGRADE' PERIOD FOR WINDOWS 10 BEYOND 29 JULY?

I think it should run for another six months. Lots of people uninstalled Windows 10 due to bugs. Now they have been fixed, it would give people time to try it again.

Simon Mellor *@Simon9Hops*

Pointless trying to charge for it. I can't see why anyone would buy it after not taking it up during the free period.

Steve Ellis *@gb022621*

Given that there are so many people who refuse to upgrade, or haven't yet done so, they should at least extend it. Another year, at least.

Gary Olsen *@Gary_Olsen*

DOES SPACE INVADERS DESERVE ITS PLACE IN THE WORLD VIDEO GAME HALL OF FAME (bit.ly/space398)?

It was the game that kick-started the gaming that we all enjoy today, whether it's the latest blockbuster console game or the newest colour-matching rubbish on Facebook. So yes, to leave it out would have been criminally negligent.

Lee Dodgson

Yes, it's the first arcade game that I remember playing.

Susan Wishart

I did a paper round when I was wee. The last paper I delivered was in a pub with Space Invaders – I blew all my tip money on it. That was nearly 40 years ago. It definitely deserves a place in the hall of fame.

Kenny Hutchison

Yes. I played it built into tables in pubs. Beer and Space Invaders – what more could any man ask for?

Edward Taylor

THE GOVERNMENT SAYS THAT AUTOMATICALLY PROVIDING BROADBAND TO RURAL AREAS ISN'T 'VALUE FOR MONEY'. DO YOU AGREE?

I guess providing phones, electricity and running water to these worthless peasants is not value for money, also.

Veronica *@veronicafrance*

There's probably not enough people for the Government to spy on to make it worth their while contributing to faster broadband in these areas.

Gill Hodson

It *is* value for money, far more so than wars or money spent on MPs' self-portraits.

Stephen Parry *@StephenParry80*

Page 404

The days of blocking web content based on location are ending, says **Barry Collins**

Let's demolish the web's borders

Here we stand, potentially on the brink of Brexit, and some pesky Scandinavians are smashing past our border controls and letting José Foreigner come over here and raid our benefits. The Yanks, the Poles, the bally French – all coming over here and making off with our iPlayer programmes, without putting a penny in the television licence pot. Nigel Farage must need a sit-down.

This is all possible because of Opera, the first of the well-known browser makers to build a VPN into its software. Indeed, it's not only PC users who can benefit from the Norwegian firm's boundary-busting software – the newly launched Opera VPN app for iOS lets iPad and iPhone users pretend they're in another country, too, smashing through regional borders (see page 32).

There's nothing new about VPNs, of course. Originally intended as a way of letting remote workers access their company's secure private network from outside the office, VPNs have become a popular means of pretending you live in, say, Kansas, so that you can watch the full library of content available to US Netflix viewers, rather than the more scant selection available to UK subscribers.

But if Opera's decision to build a VPN into the browser proves even remotely popular – and I'm pretty sure it will – then you can bet your bottom Euro that at least some of the bigger players will follow. We're all in Kansas now, Toto.

> "Netflix is, absurdly, forced to drive paying customers away by using (largely ineffective) blocks against VPNs"

Why do regional content borders exist? Largely due to the television and movie industries. Still clinging desperately to 1985's business models, companies such as HBO, Fox and even our own dear BBC think it's still possible to withhold content from viewers depending on where they live. As I've mentioned before in this column, despite the fact that we already pay for all the BBC's programmes via the licence fee, the BBC offers US Netflix subscribers programmes before they arrive on Netflix UK, because the Beeb wants us to pay for DVDs and downloads while we're waiting. Hence you can watch shows such as *The Fall* and *Happy Valley* if you tell the VPN you're in the US, but you can't access them through a standard UK connection.

To be fair to Netflix, it thinks regional restrictions are as ridiculous as the rest of us do. Netflix makes all its in-house shows available simultaneously in every region, and it has publicly called for its partners in the movie and TV industry to do likewise, rightly arguing that blocks simply drive people towards piracy. But to appease the rights holders, Netflix is, absurdly, forced to drive paying customers away by using (largely ineffective) blocks against VPNs, sending them back towards the file-sharing sites from which nobody benefits. Genius.

The film and TV industries need to wake up and smell the Nescafé. The fact that respectable software firms are now releasing tools specifically designed to circumvent region blocks should be all the notice they need that the game is up. Forcing paying subscribers to bear the digital equivalent of a false passport makes them feel like criminals, not customers. Unlike the looming referendum, this is one battle over borders that the separatists definitely won't win.

Illustration: Andrew Torrens

Do you agree? Let us know at webuser@dennis.co.uk

WebUser

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER
FOR MORE INFO SEE PAGE 62

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Thank you for reading this issue of *Web User* – we hope you found the tips and advice useful. The good news is that you don't have to wait too long for the next issue. If you subscribe to *Web User* by Monday 6 June (8pm)*, you'll receive it through your letterbox before it's available in the shops!

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