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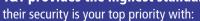
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Download without damnation

itTorrent has a bad reputation - some would say deservedly so. It's been used to spread malware, led to umpteen copyright-infringement lawsuits and caused many a poor Hollywood exec to rage into their quinoa, so you may wonder why we're devoting this issue's cover feature to this fiend?

It's a fair question, and the answer is simply that BitTorrent isn't intrinsically evil – it has many safe, legal and useful purposes. Sharing the latest films and TV shows may get you in trouble, but downloading movie trailers, viral videos and officially licensed

content won't. Indeed, BitTorrent itself says that "if you're using it for piracy, you're doing it wrong". In our feature on page 38, we round up the best torrenting tools, tricks and tactics to keep you on the right side of the law when expanding your viewing.

Elsewhere in this issue, with the EU Referendum almost upon us, on page 46 we explain how to keep the web speaking British English, whatever the Brexit result.

Robert Irvine

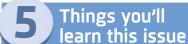
robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk #webuser



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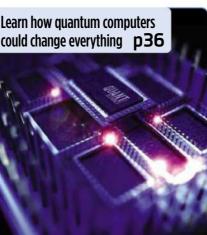
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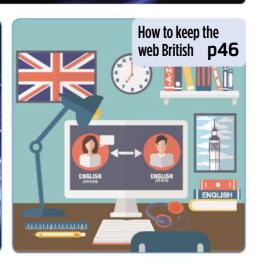
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Find out how to use BitTorrent legally and without infecting your PC with malware







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Our favourite new phone and tablet apps



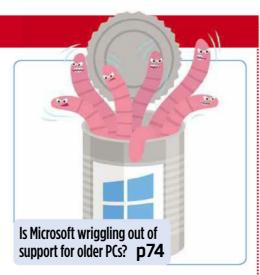






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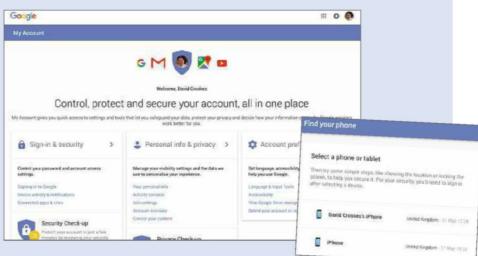


What's New Online

Locate a lost phone with Google

iven the huge emphasis we place on online security and privacy, the launch of Google's My Account hub last year was welcomed with open arms. It pulled the search giant's most important accountmanagement tools together in one place, making it easier to control your passwords, set account preferences and keep an eye on your account activity and personal information.

Now Google has improved the service further with the addition of a new Find Your Phone feature, which allows you to track your smartphone or tablet if it's lost or stolen. It works with Android and iOS devices, and gives you the option to call your handset, sign out of your Google account and lock the device altogether to stop anyone accessing your personal information. You can also use the service to get in touch with your mobile phone operator or seek help locally.



It's a great improvement over the previous phone-location tool in Android Device Manager and looks set to become even better in the future. Google promises that you'll soon be able to access Find Your Phone simply by typing I lost my phone into the search engine.

Google has made the My Account hub itself easier to find, too. You can now open it through the Google app by saying: "Ok Google, show me my Google account", which saves a lot of tapping and swiping.

myaccount.google.com

Find cheap flights using Skyscanner's bot

m.me/skyscanner

Skyscanner's new flight-booking tool could really take off. It works within Facebook Messenger - you just tell it where and when you want to go, as if you were messaging a person. The only difference is that the 'person' on the other end is an automated bot that listens and reacts to your messages. The bot asks you questions about your travel

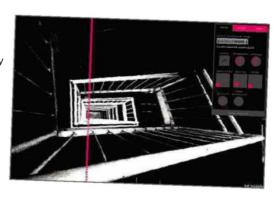


plans, such as "where will you fly from?" and "what's the start date of your trip", and your answers allow it to build a picture of your requirements. Once the app has performed its search, it will let you view the details of the 10 cheapest flight options for your holiday.

Create music from your own images

bit.ly/pixel399

When it comes to playing musical instruments, many of us never advanced much further than the triangle, so we're very greateful for websites like Pixelsynth, which lets you create music from



uploaded images. The site provides lots of pictures to get you started, and it works by running a cursor across them and playing notes when it comes into contact with lightcoloured pixels. For this to work effectively, the images whether built-in or uploaded - are converted to monochrome. Experimenting with Pixelsynth is great fun, especially in the Draw mode, where you can sketch freehand to create music on the fly. There are lots of controls to play with, ranging from rotating or repeating the image to adding space or changing the brightness and contrast, so you have plenty of scope to create a masterpiece (of sorts).

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

Explore a map of world history

This stunning site plots 20,000 historical events, pulled from Wikipedia and DBpedia, on a global map. Pop a couple of years into its search engine and see what the world was talking about during that period. You can zoom in and out of the map, and every entry is accompanied by short but fascinating historical overviews.



Let Netflix test your net speed

fast.com

The last thing Netflix wants you to have to put up with when you're watching the latest season of House of



Cards is frequent buffering. So, to check that you're getting the internet speed you pay for (and to deflect blame for a

poor connection), the company has launched its own speed tester. This simple tool only measures download speeds but it does so quickly and without any onscreen clutter to distract you. It calculates the speed by performing a series of downloads from its servers, and the test works on computers, mobiles and smart TVs.

evolution

www.mountimprobable.com

Twenty years ago, evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins published a book called Climbing Mount Improbable, which looked at how probability applies to the theory of evolution. To develop his ideas, he wrote a program that allowed people to generate offspring from a single virtual creature by selecting their most desirable features. Programmers at Penguin have now produced an online version that lets you tweak your creature's DNA, explore genes and mutations, and selectively breed it.



Play around with

Visit Rio in Street View

bit.ly/rio399

Explore Rio ahead of this summer's Olympic Games by touring its iconic sights and Olympic locations using Street View. Google's cameras take you right inside the Olympic Park.

Tour Grand Central Station

bit.lv/central399

This stunning film of commuters going about their day in New York's Grand Central Terminal was shot using Facebook's 360-degree camera. Pan around using your mouse while the action continues, for a dynamic snapshot of life.

Try Amazon's Alexa in your browser

echosim.io

If you want to know what the weather's like, you could either look out of the window or do as Amazon suggests and ask its voice-powered virtual assistant Alexa to tell you. The AI bot is built into Amazon's Echo hands-free speaker, and is now available to try in your browser. Log in using your Amazon account, then click and hold the microphone button to ask Alexa your most pressing questions.



Explore NASA's public

bit.ly/nasa399

patents

NASA has put 56 expired patents in the public domain, including details of plasma thrusters and high-quality carbon nanotubes. You can search the patents by name or category and click through to the US Patent and Trademark Office website.

TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@DarthPutinKGB

This parody account for Russian president Vladimir Putin is savage

@audisport

The official Twitter channel of Audi Sport is motoring under a new name

@myscotrail

ScotRail has launched a new official travel feed for news and promotions

@DaveAndShirley

The popular couple from Channel 4's Gogglebox are now tweeting

@ukraine

Discover the cultural and culinary highlights of the East European country

Need to Know

Social networks suffer massive security breaches

What happened?

First it was LinkedIn, then MySpace and TumbIr. All three social networks were the victims of massive hacks, with criminals leaking hundreds of millions of account logins over a series of days.

LinkedIn saw 117 million emails and passwords leaked, apparently from a theft dating back to 2012. MySpace said 360 million credentials were stolen and shared, while Tumblr admitted that 65 million credentials had been leaked.

The passwords were all either posted online or sold by the hackers, and some of the data was at least a few years

old, with the LinkedIn hack dating back to before 2012, MySpace to 2013 and TumbIr also to 2013. It's unclear why the data is being leaked online now. The companies have started to alert users to the breaches, disabling some of the affected accounts.

In other security-breach news, the web-based remote-help tool TeamViewer has denied it was hacked, after users said their PCs were hijacked and money drained from accounts.

How will it affect you?

Although millions of people will be affected by these hacks, it's worth remembering that these sites have billions of users between them, and



Have I Been Pwned tells you if your online accounts have been compromised



many of the affected accounts are no longer active.

While the hacks feature big headline figures, it's not necessarily a reason to panic. The MySpace hack leaked 360 million passwords and usernames, but the data was several years old, so much of it will be out of date.

If you're worried that your account

may have been breached, head to the website Have I Been Pwned (haveibeenpwned.com). Started by a well-known security expert, it lets you enter your email address, then checks it against data leaked via breaches, so you can find out whether your details have been "owned" – or, in web-speak, "pwned". You'll then know whether you need to change your login details.

That said, the websites have after some delays – and we're looking at you, LinkedIn – taken action to secure the accounts. That means that if your old MySpace account was indeed hacked, your account login has been disabled, so you'll need to prove it's you again to get access.

Of course, if you reuse passwords across sites, you may be in trouble. Hackers could take your email address and password from any of the leaks and try it across different services such as Gmail or Amazon, and gain access if the credentials are reused. If your details have been leaked and you reuse your passwords, you need to create a new one on every site where it's been used.

This is key, because hackers are already using leaked logins to access other accounts, such as email and social media. In one frightening example, the hackers read through emails and messages looking for secrets, and threaten to make them public unless the victim pays a ransom in Bitcoin.

What do we think?

While users really must stop reusing passwords across accounts, it's the social networks that were hacked who should do better. Look at LinkedIn: the details were stolen back in 2012, but the company is only resetting passwords now. Arguably it didn't know which passwords were breached until they were posted online, but that means four years have gone by without the site taking any action to protect users. That's simply not good enough.

It's clear that some sites and services aren't holding up their end of the bargain to protect us, so we need to do all we can. Don't reuse passwords, choose strong ones, and turn on two-factor authentication where it's available. And, perhaps most importantly, help friends and family who aren't web savvy do the same.

It's easy to get tired of hearing about these hacks, and lately they seem to be happening every day, but it's important not to get security fatigue. Make sure you take the time to read alert emails from any web companies you use when they land in your inbox, and check that they are legitimate and not a phishing attempt. It's tiresome, but it's the only way to stay safe online in 2016.

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

Microsoft bans easyto-guess passwords

What happened?

Whenever a list of passwords is leaked by hackers (see our main story, left), it's made clear that many people are alarmingly slack about their security – with "password" and "12345" topping the rankings. To fight that, Microsoft is banning its users from logging in with easy-to-guess passwords.

The company has looked at lists of leaked passwords, particularly the LinkedIn data, noting the most frequently used ones - because hackers will do the same. Those passwords are now banned, to stop hackers simply guessing passwords by trying the most commonly used ones.

How will it affect you?

If you are choosing a new password for a Microsoft account, and the credential you pick is on that list or otherwise not deemed secure enough, the company will ask you to "choose a password that's harder for people to guess". You'll need to try again with a password that's tougher to crack.

If you currently use an

easy-to-guess password, now is a good time to change to a new one, and thanks to Microsoft more carefully assessing your choice, you can feel more secure about its safety.

What do we think?

This is a smart move from Microsoft. Many online services have already banned weak passwords, but this move takes the idea a step further. We already know these credentials are in the hands of hackers, so we should stop using them. Hopefully, other websites and services will do the same.

Of course, remembering new passwords can be a pain. It's worth trying a password manager if you think you'll struggle to master new login details. Alternatively, pick a strong password, use a fresh one across all websites and consider turning on two-factor authentication, which adds an extra laver of security by making you enter a code to verify your identity. Microsoft should be applauded for boosting its protection, and we should follow its lead.



Facebook now tracks every web user



What happened?

Not everyone is on Facebook, but the social network still has ambitions to target every person on the planet with advertisements. It will do this by tracking everyone who visits sites or uses apps that are part of its Audience Network advertising system, displaying ads to individual web users, regardless of whether they are members of the social network.

That's a change from the current system, which only targets Facebook users. To start showing ads to everyone else, Facebook's network will start tracking all vistors, using code tucked away in 'like' buttons or cookies that sit on pages to gather information about their interests.

How will it affect you?

If you're a Facebook user, there's no change. But if you're not, it means the social network is now striving to discover your interests so that advertisers can use the information to target you with marketing.

Like existing web

tracking, it will attempt to build up a profile of your behaviour, noting that you visited a football website or were shopping for new shoes, and using that to inform advertising.

It's very similar to what Google and other advertisers already do and, as with those systems, there's no way to opt out, though you can install blocking tools or set your browser to "do not track".

What do we think?

Don't think of this as
Facebook tracking you, but
as yet another advertising
firm following you around
the web. That's less sinister,
but it's still annoying, so it's
no wonder there's been a
rise in anti-tracking tools
and ad blockers.

If you're not a Facebook user, the company doesn't know who you are, so it's less a privacy issue and more about having yet another advertising system building a profile based on your browsing. If you are a Facebook user, this is a timely reminder that the site knows exactly who you are, and is able to put a face and name to your browsing habits.

.....

New text service to stamp out nuisance calls

What happened?

The Telephone Preference Service (TPS) and Ofcom have announced a text-to-register service that automatically opts phone users out of nuisance and marketing calls.

Anyone who wants to stamp out annoying calls from marketers can text TPS and their email address to 78070 to stop unsolicited salespeople calling them on their mobile number.

"Rogue callers operate illegally and against the interests of ordinary people," John Mitchison, head of the TPS, said. "Texting will make it easier for people to register their mobile numbers on the TPS, which is the only official no-call list, and help us stamp out rogue callers once and for all by giving the Information Commissioner more ammunition to prosecute these cases."

The news comes following research by Ofcom, which revealed that only half of people who have heard of the Telephone Preference Service were aware that mobile phone numbers could be registered with the service. However, 88% of those surveyed knew that landline numbers could be registered.

Lindsey Fussell, Ofcom Consumer



Group Director, added: "Many millions of landline customers already take advantage of the protection the TPS gives against nuisance calls, and we want to ensure it's as easy as possible for mobile users to do the same. "We encourage anyone who wants to reduce the number of frustrating and unwanted calls to their mobile phone to register with the TPS today."

How will it affect you?

The new service will take up to 28 days to take effect, although those who sign up should notice a gradual decrease in nuisance calls from a few days after registering. "Nuisance calls are incredibly intrusive and can cause significant distress, particularly to elderly and vulnerable members of society," Baroness Neville Rolfe, the minister responsible for data protection, said.

"Government is committed to tackling this problem, and we have introduced a series of measures that have already seen record fines handed out to combat these roque callers. This new service from the TPS and Ofcom will help protect people with mobile phones, making it easier for them to register via text and opt out of the call list."

What do we think?

We're delighted that steps are finally being taken to combat these nuisance calls. Our main concern is that the more persistent marketing companies, particularly those based overseas, will ignore the official list and continue to pester us on our mobiles, just as they do on our landlines.

FIRST LOOK

Skullcandy XTfree bit.ly/xtfree399

As far as in-ear headphones go, the Skullcandy XTfree (RRP £79.99) are by far the most comfortable and secure fitness-oriented headphones we've ever worn. This supremely snug fit is down to Skullcandy's so-called 'FitFin' design, which uses a flexible, rubberised wing-tip that conforms to the curvature of your outer ear to lock it in place. The edges of these tips are ridged, making them almost impossible to dislodge even when your ears are sweaty from exercising.

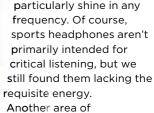
Below the left earbud, you'll find an inline remote and microphone for controlling media playback. The microphone does a good job for hands-free calls, but the buttons didn't give much tactile feedback, so

we weren't always sure we had pressed them correctly.

Unfortunately, this wasn't the only flaw we found with the XTfree. The Bluetooth was noticeably less reliable than other Bluetooth sports headphones,

and we experienced regular hiccups and interruptions when using them around other devices.

Sound quality, too, was disappointing. The bass wasn't emphatic, and the mids and trebles were often a little thin and underwhelming. While many headphones can skew the sound one way or the other, the XTfree didn't



disappointment was battery life, which is rated at around six hours. In reality, it's a little shy of this. All in all, the Skullcandy XTfree is a mixed bag and we reckon you'd be better off with either the Plantronics BackBeat FIT (£56.80; bit.ly/ plantronics399) or BlueAnt Pump HD Sportsbuds (£29.98; bit.ly/blueant399),

both of which have been

reduced recently.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is Microsoft giving up on smartphones?

Microsoft has signed an agreement with Chinese electronics company Xiaomi to pre-install several of its apps on "millions" of Android devices, suggesting that it has conceded defeat in the mobile operating system market. As part of the deal, Xiaomi will include Microsoft Office and Skype on its Android-powered phones and tablets, which will predominantly be sold in China, India and other countries in the Far East and South America.

Microsoft said that "tens of millions of consumers and business customers" in these regions will now have greater access to its collaboration and communication software, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. This deal follows Microsoft's announcement last month that it would be pulling out of the consumer mobile market and cutting 1,850 jobs in the process.

Versions of popular Office applications, such as Word and OneNote, have been available for iOS and Android for several years. But Microsoft's push to get its apps preinstalled on handsets demonstrates that it's not backing away from mobile entirely, despite reducing efforts with its failed Windows Phone platform.

"People want their favourite apps and experiences to work seamlessly on the device of their choice, and that's exactly what this partnership offers," said Peggy Johnson, executive vice president of business development at Microsoft.



Recently, Google came under fire from the European Commission which concluded that the Android maker's collection of pre-installed apps has restricted competition from other app developers and service providers in Europe.

LIKELIHOOD RATING 1111

Although many Windows Phone users are perfectly happy with their devices, Microsoft could never hope to compete with the twin behemoths of Android and iOS, so we're not surprised that the company has switched to a different tactic. Whether it will start pre-installing its apps on Android phones in the UK remains to be seen.

What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

PhoneCatcher

bit.ly/phonecatcher399 | From £6

Clumsy and forgetful people who are forever dropping or losing their phones can save themselves a lot of hassle and money by investing



in a PhoneCatcher. This securely fastens your handset to a clip on your pocket using a retractable cord, so if you knock it off the table or let it slip through your fingers, the PhoneCatcher will catch it and prevent loss or damage. The cord is gently weighted so it doesn't make your phone heavier and only needs to be pulled lightly to retract. The team hopes to raise £30,000 by 30 June.

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Web companies tackle hate speech

Facebook, Twitter, Google and Microsoft have pledged a crackdown on hate speech after



agreeing to EU rules that require them to delete the majority of offending comments within 24 hours.

Apple to drop 16GB iPhone

The iPhone 7 will reportedly come with a minimum of 32GB of storage, which will please users who complain that 16GB is not enough.



WE DON'T LIKE...

Instagram ditches chronological feed

Over the coming weeks, Instagram will start showing users 'the moments you care about first' instead of displaying posts in chronological order. Many users are worried this will mean their

Mitsubishi car alarms hacked

photos will no longer be seen.

The alarm on Mitsubishi's Outlander car can be turned off by exploiting security bugs in its on-board



Wi-Fi, according to researchers, making it easier to break into the vehicle and steal it. Owners are advised to turn off the Wi-Fi while Mitsubishi investigates the problem.

Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Outlook and Hotmail hit by spam attack

Microsoft has fixed a problem with its Hotmail and Outlook spam filters that meant its users were flooded with



junk emails. The company admitted on its support page that it had uncovered a problem, saying: "Some users may be receiving excessive spam mail," although it would not reveal exactly what went wrong.

Shortly after posting this statement on its service page, Microsoft rolled out updates to Hotmail and Outlook that fixed the spam filters and should prevent the problem happening again. "One will provide short-term relief preventing spam reaching your inbox," revealed Microsoft. "The

second will be a longer-term fix which should stop spam reaching our infrastructure," the company explained. bit.ly/outlook399

Security flaw found in phone charging points

Kaspersky has discovered that smartphones and devices can be hacked when they're charged at public charging points such as airports, cafes and shopping centres. The company tested devices running different versions of iOS and Android to see what data is transferred while connected to a Mac or PC for charging.

A large amount of data is sent to the computer when it's first plugged in, including the device name, device manufacturer, serial number, firmware information and electronic chip ID. Although the extent of the data that moves to the computer during this 'handshake' varies according to

manufacturer and operating system, the device name, manufacturer and serial number were transferred in every case. This isn't a security risk in itself, but if only a few of the details were intercepted by hackers, this could allow the device to be targeted with a specific exploit.

In 2014, a proof of concept showed that researchers could infect devices with malware using commands from fake charging stations in public places, and it appears as though the method still works. "It is strange to see that nearly two years after the publication of a proof-of-concept demonstrating how a smartphone can be infected through the USB, the concept still works," Alexey Komarov, researcher at Kaspersky Lab, said.

bit.lv/smartphone399



Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Mark James, Security Specialist at ESET (www.eset.co.uk)



Is Microsoft right to ban people from using easy-to-guess passwords (see story on page 9)?

Ben Gallagher, Twitter



99% of the time. we have a choice about how

complex we want our passwords to be, but when things go wrong it's the company that takes the brunt of the damage. I think it's a great idea that companies make it clear to you that your password is weak. The user should understand the reasons why their password is being blocked and be given some examples of how to make it better.

Is internet security software, such as ESET's, strong enough to prevent all ransomware infections? Reece Gould, Facebook

ESET, along with many other companies, takes your security very seriously.

We use a multi-layered approach to offer the best means of protection to keep your private data safe. Ransomware generally comprises two aspects: infection and encryption. The former can be and is protected against by using ESET but, sadly, the latter can only be countered by a proper backup regime.

Funding criminals or hoping the attacker will supply a magic decryption key should, however, be avoided at all costs.

Following the MySpace and Tumblr hacks (see story on page 8), why can't social networks

better protect their users' data?

Nigel Ross, Facebook



The huge amount of data held by large social-

networking services means they are - like law enforcement and health organisations - a desirable target for hackers. Keeping that data safe is an ongoing job that involves a lot of responsibility, and while companies continue to develop and improve their defences to keep the criminals out, individuals are faced with deciding if they are willing to put their faith in someone else







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Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

RELAUNCH

Tate

www.tate.org.uk

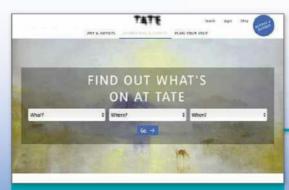
The Tate is revamping its website one section at a time, so it's currently a mix of old and new, but its cleaner, smarter design puts the art and artists centre stage. There's much more content to browse, with explanations of art terms, spotlights on particular artists and even a game called Street Art. Finding out what's on at the Tate galleries is simpler, and the improved search feature lets you search the site as well as the thousands of artworks in the Tate's collection. It also makes planning your visit easier with a section that highlights the collections, events and free displays at each venue. The site is almost a work of art itself.

Our rating



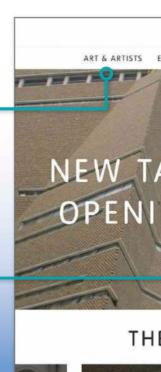


IN DEPTH Easily find interesting overviews related to the artworks on display



WHAT'S ON

With the excellent exhibition finder, there's no need to mess around with filters





If you have more room at home than you need, this new self-storage service lets you hire out your cupboards, loft or garage to people who are desperate for space. Stashbee makes it easy for hosts to list their storage location, dimensions, security arrangements and desired access times and for renters to specify how many small, medium and large items they need to store. All the spaces (most of which are in London) are plotted on a map, and renters can name two choices. This part is a little fiddly, and the host profiles are rather basic, but it's a great idea and cheap, too, at £5 per month for each small box. Hopefully, it will spread beyond the capital soon.

Our rating





TELEVISION

Carling Pay Per Inch

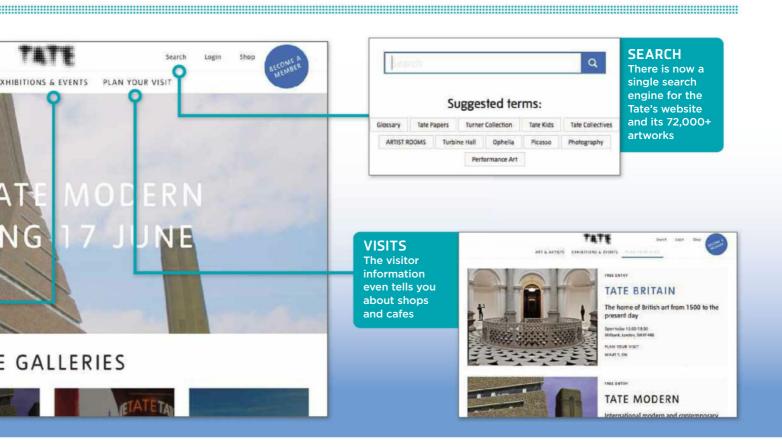
www.payperinchtv.com

Euro 2016 sponsor Carling is promoting the football tournament by making a limited number of Samsung televisions available to buy at bargain prices. You can get 40in sets for £40, 48in sets for £48, 65in sets for £65 and so on. A total of 925 TVs are on offer, with sales every Sunday until 3 July and a final sale on Wednesday 6 July. They will be sold in order of size from small to large, and you get one 'shot' per sale, so you have to pick the right moment to shoot your order in. The site explains the whole process, and lets you set a reminder and add the dates to your calendar.

Our rating



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





RELAUNCH

Canon

global.canon

PHOTOGRAPHY

At first glance, Canon's relaunched site - complete with '.canon' domain - looks like a standard corporate hub for one of the world's largest electronics manufacturers. But scroll further and you get to the fun stuff, such as the virtual Canon Camera Museum, which delves deep into the company's archives to deliver shots of its past cameras and lenses. There's also a section devoted to Canon's achievements, and arty wallpapers to download. Throw in lots of photography tutorials and some stunning videos and images, and it's a site that'll capture your attention for hours.







WORLD

UNHCR

www.unhcr.org

To highlight the ongoing refugee crisis, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has made its website not only more hardhitting but more accessible, too. Less wordy and with greater visual impact, it makes better use of the agency's stark, eye-opening photography and places greater focus on social media and video. The changes make it more suitable for casual visitors, as it seeks to gain support and persuade people to get involved. Perhaps most importantly, the intuitive and attractive site also makes it easier to donate to the UNHCR through a prominent option on the homepage.

Our rating





SOCIAL

Recl@im the Internet

www.reclaimtheinternet.com

Misogyny, online harassment, bullying, racism and homophobia are still sadly rife online, so this site is tackling the problem head-on. It collates evidence of abuse and wants your ideas on how the police, employers, social networks and individuals can work together to "reclaim the internet". You can make suggestions and discuss the issues online, although it can be hard at first to get your head around all the different strands. Yet, despite the sense of information overload and muddled navigation, there is no doubt that this is an important topic that urgently needs addressing.

Our rating







WebUser

How can I overclock my PC to make it run faster than it's supposed to?

A Page 58, Issue 374



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You can still buy our 2014 Back Issues Disc from bit.ly/webusercd





RELAUNCH



PETS

wellcome.ac.uk

Our rating

The Wellcome Trust is the world's second-largest private funder of medical research, and its relaunched site is a great way to learn about its work. We were most interested in the excellent list of events taking place at its museum and library in London (complete with a simple booking system) but there's a iam-packed news section, too, Illustrated articles are posted almost daily, and the filter system lets you narrow them down by topic. Some sections - notably the dozens of reports - won't be for everyone, but there's plenty of information about Wellcome's history, and the site is obviously in good health.

Wellcome Trust

tiga.org

GAMES

TIGA

This site from the British industry body for video games focuses on the serious side of gaming. But although it's aimed primarily at people who work in the industry (there are comprehensive jobs and events sections), any gamers who are interested in the business end of their hobby will find it fascinating. As well as a packed news feed and lots of information about the TIGA Games Industry Awards, the site provides a solid, if not quite exhaustive, list of university courses for anyone considering a career in games. The site is let down slightly by its scrolling, however, which is too fast and oversensitive, marring the experience.

Our rating

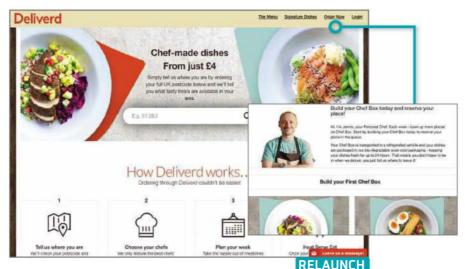
Pawshake

www.pawshake.co.uk

If you fancy a break, but you're chasing your tail trying to find someone to look after your cat or dog, Pawshake could be the answer. Just enter your postcode and holiday dates to see a list of insured pet services that offer anything from boarding to home visits. The results are plotted on a map and can be filtered according to a host of criteria, from the type of service to distance, property type and the amount of outdoor space your pet could enjoy. We love the way it shows each pet sitter's average response time and the number of repeat guests. The detailed individual listings and user reviews are also very useful.

Our rating





RETAIL

Deliverd

deliverd.com

Once confined to filling the hungry stomachs of foodies in Sheffield, Deliverd - the service that sends restaurant-prepared dishes to homes and offices for reheating has now expanded to the whole of Britain. Its Chef Box option lets you select up to eight meals at £5.50 each from a menu of 29 delicious-looking dishes. Each meal is described in detail, including allergen and nutritional information, and you can add them with a single click. The meals are prepared in professional kitchens and sent by overnight delivery in 'wool-cool' packaging, but there is a waiting list and you have to wait for an email telling you when you've reached the top.

Our rating





FOOTBALL

IFAB

www.theifab.com

Before Euro 2016 kicked off. The International Football Association Board introduced a revised set of Laws of the Game, implementing 95 new rules that attempt to remove long-standing inconsistencies. This site explains the laws, breaking them down into 17 sections, each containing its own set of rules. IFAB looks rather dry, but you can download each law as a PDF or share it online, and it should help to solve a few pub arguments this summer. Best of all, there's a fascinating and wellpresented look at the history of soccer's rules - although there seems to be an open goal between 1902 and 1970!

Our rating



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Enhance vour site in Google's search results

Google is introducing new 'rich cards' in its mobile results when people search for recipes or movies on a



phone or tablet. To get your pages included in this system, you have to use special mark-up code on your site so Google can fit your information into its card

If you have a recipe or movie site, it's well worth investigating further. For more information and links to videos and instructions, go to the Google Webmaster Central Blog at bit.ly/goog399.

Make better typeface choices

Choosing a typeface for your website from the vast range of available options can be a dilemma. Should you stick to one or mix two or more typefaces together? Should they be serif or sans serif? Plain or fancy? Tim Brown, Adobe's Head of Typography for Adobe Typekit & Adobe Type, has made his book Combining Typefaces free to download as a PDF. It provides an expert view on choosing the right font for your site, and mixing fonts that complement each other. You can read more at bit.ly/ type399 or download the PDF at bit.ly/comb399.

Deal of the Fortnight

iPage (www.ipage.com) is currently offering 83% off its hosting package, at just £1.80 per month.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Paul Nesbitt, Director, **PAC Web Hosting**

(www.pacwebhosting.co.uk)



I want to start a second website but I still have loads of space on my existing hosting. Are there problems (SEO or otherwise) to having two sites on the same domain?

Mark Davies, via email

There shouldn't be any SEO problems as long as you add the second domain so its files aren't available to the first. For example, with cPanel, your main domain's files start in

the public_html folder. When you add your second domain, it will suggest public_html/ seconddomain.com as the file location. This is also available to the original site, which search engines will see as duplicated. To avoid this, set the add-on domain path as /seconddomain.com, so its files are above the public html directory.

MINI WORKSHOP | Make a scrolling website in Adobe Spark

🤁 Adobe Spark: spark.adobe.com | 🕛 15 mins | Any browser

Adobe Spark is a new web-based tool that turns your photos and videos into an attractive, vertically scrolling website. Adobe looks after the hosting - you just drop in your content to share it with friends and family



Go to spark.adobe.com and sign in or create an Adobe account if you don't already have one. Click the yellow plus button and, from the following page, click the blue plus button 11 to create a one-page website. You can also use Spark to add text to your images 2 and create simple animations.



Click 'Add a Title' and 'Add a Subtitle' 1 to add text to the site. Click the plus button and choose Photo 2 to bring up a sidebar where you can load an image to sit behind your text. At any time, you can Preview or Share your site, 3 or click Themes 4 to change the style.



Scroll down for the option to add another element to your page by clicking the Plus button. You can add a photo, text, link, video, photo grid or slideshow. 1 Keep scrolling down to add more elements. Changes are saved as you go. Click the menu button in the top-left corner and choose My Projects to go back to your main page.





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We test and compare the latest products

Asus Transformer Book Flip TP200SA

Richard Easton tests an affordable Windows 10 device that opens like a laptop, but can flip all the way over to convert

into a tablet

ablets are great for when you're out and about, but you can't beat a laptop when you need to get some proper work done. Enter the Asus Transformer Book Flip TP200SA, a laptop-tablet hybrid with the option to flip the screen to whatever position you see fit.

External design

The Flip TP200SA is the latest in a long line of Transformer Books, but this one has a particularly lightweight and compact design that puts it firmly at the tablet end of the hybrid-device spectrum. Weighing in at just 1.2kg and only 18.4mm thick with the lid closed, this A4-sized slab of brushed plastic can comfortably be carried around in a backpack, while the 360-degree reversible screen hinge means you can easily fold over the keyboard for protection when you're not using it.

The hinge itself is robust and should be able to endure plenty of twists and turns. However, we found that the Flip's screen had a tendency to bounce back and forth

while being used as a laptop, so it may not be ideal for heavy-handed typists.

Sadly, the screen can't be detached from the keyboard. However, the Flip's built-in sensors automatically detect when the screen goes beyond 180 degrees, at which point it automatically switches to Windows 10's tablet mode and locks the keyboard, so it doesn't matter if you accidentally hit the keys when you're holding the device. You don't necessarily have to fold it flat, either, because it can be propped up like a tent, which makes it perfect for watching films and video.

Because the Flip is relatively compact, the keyboard is too. Its keys are less than fullsized, and we often found ourselves accidentally hitting the wrong ones when typing quickly, though it's something you'll no doubt get used to over time. On the positive

ff Its built-in sensors detect when the screen goes beyond 180 degrees, at which point it automatically switches to tablet mode

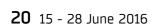
side, the keys feel robust and responsive.

Thankfully, the touchpad is on the large side, providing plenty of space to move your fingers around. Its integrated buttons have a satsfying amount of click, too, so it's

not too fiddly to use if you don't have a dedicated mouse to plug in.

Performance and

Sadly, the Flip's overall performance is where the



Asus Transformer Book Flip TP200SA Product Test 🗐





f If your daily PC routine consists of browsing the web and writing the odd document, then it's perfectly sufficient

TP200SA falls short. With just a dual-core Intel Celeron N3050 processor and 2GB of memory, it's not built for heavy-duty tasks.

For this reason, we ran our slightly less demanding 1,080p benchmarks, rather than our usual 4K tests. Its overall score of 31 is pretty good, considering its low price, but we experienced significant slowdown even when using it for basic word processing and web browsing. This shows that the Flip definitely isn't intended for multi-tasking, but if your daily PC routine normally only consists of browsing the web and writing the odd document, then it should be perfectly sufficient.

Another downside is the device's limited storage. You only have a 32GB SSD to work with, which fills up rapidly if you want to store files locally. However, this is becoming a common trend among affordable laptops - the Dell Inspiron 11 3000 (reviewed in Issue 397 - bit.ly/issue397) has the same problem.

Thankfully, there's a microSD slot here to expand the TP200SA's storage, but the manufacturer's intention is that you store most of your files in the cloud.

With no dedicated graphics hardware, the TP2000SA relies on the Celeron's N3050 integrated Intel HD Graphics chips for playing games. This isn't powerful enough to run proper 3D games, so it's no gaming juggernaut, but simpler titles from the Windows Store, such as Jetpack Joyride and Crossy Road, worked absolutely fine, so you should still be able to get a bit of light gaming in if you feel so inclined.

Battery life, speakers and screen

The device's battery life is impressive, lasting 9 hours and 13 minutes during our continuous video-playback test with the screen brightness set to our standard measurement of 170cd/m². This should let you get a good day's work out of the

TP200SA before you need to plug it into the mains.

It's surprisingly wellequipped when it comes to ports, too. With USB2, USB3 and USB3.1 Type-C ports, it can support multiple peripherals at the same time, and its micro HDMI port means you can also connect it to an external display.

Its speakers aren't great, with tinny-

sounding audio that distorts at high volumes,

but this is no surprise and we wouldn't expect highperformance speakers from a device of this price. Just don't expect to use it as your main music-playing system.

Luckily, the 11.6in 1,366 x 768 pixels IPS display hasn't suffered from a similar compromise. While its resolution seems a bit feeble compared to the 1,280 x 800 pixels, 10.1in screen of the comparatively priced HP Pavilion x2, the Flip managed to display a reasonably sharp picture, and the 1,245:1 contrast ratio we measured is an excellent result for such a cheap laptop.

The same can't be said of its colour palette. Our colour calibrator showed it was only capable of displaying 64.1% of the colours in the standard sRGB colour range. We didn't find this to be a problem when browsing photos, though, because blacks still looked reasonably deep despite its measurement of 0.20cd/m² - and colours still had a good amount of depth and richness to them. This is helped in no small part by the screen's maximum brightness levels, which we measured at 268.9cd/m².

PRODUCT INFO

Asus Transformer Book Flip TP200SA

www.asus.com Price: £189 Buy from: www .debenhamsplus.com

SPECIFICATIONS

- Intel Celeron N3050 dual-core 1.6GHz processor
- 2GB of memory
- 11.6in 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution screen
- Intel HD Graphics
- 32GB total storage
- 297 x 201.3 x 18.4mm
- 1.2kg

FOR

- ✓ Small and lightweight
- ✓ Operates as a laptop or a tablet

AGAINST

- X Limited built-in storage
- Cramped keyboard
- X Tinny-sounding speakers

SLIGHTLY CHEAPER LAPTOP

Dell Inspiron 11 3000 Series, £179 Reviewed Issue 397 (bit.ly/issue397)



LARGER SIZED

Acer Aspire One Cloudbook 14, £149.99 **Reviewed Issue 395** (bit.lv/webuser395)



OUR VERDICT

The Asus Transformer Book Flip TP200SA has its flaws, but you can't expect perfection from such an affordable hybrid device. It provides a decent middle ground between laptop and tablet, and is a great option if you're on the fence about which to buy.

It's a bit small, and this particularly affects the keyboard, but if you're looking for something petite that's easy to carry around and stash, the Transformer

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

Book Flip TP200SA is a fine choice for £200.

DVBLogic TVButler

Andy Shaw tests a USB dongle that lets you record Freeview TV programmes and watch them anywhere, on any device

here are all sorts of devices for recording TV programmes, from Sky Plus to Freeview boxes with hard drives. The problem is that you still need to sit in front of your TV when you want to watch what you've recorded. Wouldn't it be far more convenient to be able to stream your recorded programmes, and even watch live TV, wherever you are and on whatever device you have to hand?

This is the promise of the DVBLink TVButler - a USB dongle that plugs into myriad devices, records Freeview TV

PRODUCT INFO

DVBLogic TVButler

dvblogic.com Price: £79.99 Buy from www.amazon.co.uk

SPECIFICATIONS

- Digital DVB-T/T2 and DVB-C receiver
- Supports Freeview in standard and high definition
- USB 2 interface
- Fully compliant to DVB-C standard (EN 300 429), DVB-T standard (EN 300 744) and DVB-T2 standard (EN 302 755)

FOR

- ✓ Watch live TV even when you're away from home
- Record programs to a hard drive and stream them later

AGAINST

Watching programs requires internet connection and always-on

Horrible software

programmes to them, then helps you stream the recordings to all sorts of other devices, so you can watch live and recorded TV even when you're away from home.

Fiddly setup

While this all sounds fantastic. the TVButler is far from easy to set up. To work properly, it must be connected to an always-on device. You have the option of using it with a NAS, a PC or a Raspberry Pi, but it only comes with printed instructions for connecting it to a NAS.

We experimented with it on a PC but this isn't ideal particularly if you want 24-hour access - and the configuration is tricky and largely unsupported.

We were more successful setting it up on a Synology DS414j NAS because the drive was already connected to our network and accessible from the web. The TVButler is compatible with many Synology, Western Digital, Qnap, Netgear and Asustor NAS drives, which have the necessary software available in their app stores. You still have to use DVBLogic's clunky server software but the available options were preconfigured more sensibly than in Windows.

Interface and recording

Once it's set up, you can access it from the web or your mobile devices. You'll initially see a blank programme guide. Wait a while, and this is eventually populated with Freeview's listing information for the week ahead. From here, you can search the



schedule and simply tap your device to make a recording. It works as easily, if not better, than most of the systems you find on set-top boxes.

We initially thought our test recordings hadn't been successful, but we eventually found them in a different view to the default. We weren't keen on how the iOS software, which we used to test the device, needs to launch a separate app to

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watch programs, but once you've accepted the software's foibles, it actually works rather well.

The main drawback to the TVButler is the clunky software, and it's been a while since we came across a service that's so fiddly to configure. While it works well and does what it promises, the applications for recording and viewing programs could be so much easier to use.

OUR VERDICT

The TVButler fulfils its claim to let you watch and record live TV, wherever you are. In this respect, it's an incredibly useful device for TV addicts. But while the technology is great, the interface is an absolute mess - difficult to configure, unintuitive to use and reliant on you having the correct hardware in place.



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

If you've got a working NAS drive with a USB port, from a compatible manufacturer, then you're halfway there, though it's still no walk in the park to set up the TVButler.

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HARDWARE

MULTIFUNCTION PRINTER

Canon Pixma MG5750

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



The MG5750 is an excellent all-rounder, producing topquality 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 = 455 x 369 x 148mm

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.ebuver.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





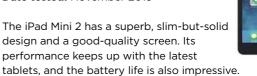
The Netgear Nighthawk X4S will boost your network, no matter what type of web connection you have. It's expensive but built to last, and should make further upgrades unnecessary until the next 802.11 standards are launched.

Dual-band 2.4GHz, 5GHz ■ 802.11ac ■ 2.53Gbps theoretical max speed **a** ADSL2+ and VDSL **b** 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



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

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

Antivirus 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.



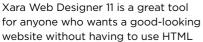
KEY FEATURES

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



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.



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 backup files easily ■ Email logs ■ Schedule backups ■ Simple and Advanced mode ■ Runs on Windows XP, Vista, 7. 8 and 10 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

SECURITY TOOL

Privacy Fence

bit.ly/privfence399

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10

File size: 8.2MB

As we explained in last issue's cover feature, ransomware is one of the nastiest forms of malware there is, encrypting your files and demanding a fee to unlock them. Although our feature provided a complete guide to avoiding, detecting, removing and recovering from ransomware, if you're looking for yet another program that can protect your PC against this threat (and data theft), then Privacy Fence is definitely worth a look.

While some security programs can be difficult to set up and use, Privacy Fence is very straightforward, and offers a two-step wizard that automatically identifies files to protect, alongside trusted applications. Once it's up and





running, the software will keep an eye on your files for any unusual access attempts, and alert you should anything suspicious occur.

Initially, you have to deal with a lot of prompts – every time you open a new file type, or Windows performs a new task in the background, you'll be asked to trust that application, or allow or block its behaviour. But as the software learns what's safe and what isn't, things quieten down and the program just gets

on with protecting your PC in the background.

You can rerun the setup wizard at any time, automatically trust signed applications (which should be safe), view the activity log, explore distrusted applications and save any changes.

Privacy Fence was created as a weekend project by programmers at Fortres Grand, and uses technology from two of the security company's paid-for programs.

*

MINI WORKSHOP | Combat ransomware using Privacy Fence



The first time you run Privacy
Fence, the setup wizard will launch
automatically. Click the Start Scan
button and the program will sweep
your system, discovering safe files
stored in common folders on your hard
drive. The process will only take a few
seconds to complete, if that.



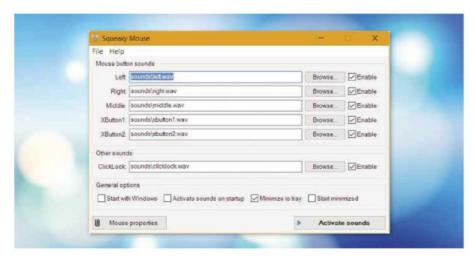
Once Privacy Fence has finished scanning your system, click Accept to add the discovered file types to the program's configuration. It will now show you the type of files that have been protected, along with a list of trusted applications. Protected file types can only be opened by these applications.



You can add more file types to protect (and more trusted applications) by clicking the green plus symbol and selecting items from the list that appears. You can also remove the protection from anything.

Click a trusted application to choose which file types are associated with it.

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



MOUSE TOOL

Squeaky Mouse

bit.ly/squeaky399

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 538KB

Squeaky Mouse is a tiny program that lets you assign sounds, in WAV format, to mouse buttons (yours or someone else's). You can do this as a practical joke or to get audible feedback on your actions. Squeaky Mouse supports left, right, middle, and XButton1 and XButton2 actions, and comes with supplied speech samples speaking aloud actions such as "left" and "right". Turning off the audio off is easily done if it starts to get annoying.



MEDIA PLAYER Zoom Player 12

www.inmatrix.com

Min requirements: Windows Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 20.6MB

Zoom Player is a lightweight media player that can handle most common audio and video formats, and play CDs and DVDs. During installation, you'll be able to tailor the player for different devices - PC, Home Theatre PC or Tablet. The latest version of the program automatically downloads images for movies and TV shows in the background, enhances the full-screen interface and introduces lots of new settings.



SYSTEM TOOL

BootRacer 6

greatis.com/bootracer

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 6.8MB

BootRacer tells you exactly how long your computer takes to boot into Windows. Make any changes, and you can compare the speed to your previous setup. The software lets you undo up to 1,000 steps, so you can manage Windows startup without fear of accidentally disabling something important. You can also change the order of startup programs and launch i only those you require at the time.

New Windows Apps

LightReader

bit.ly/lightread399

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 9.9MB

LightReader is an ebook reader for Windows 10 that lets you manage and read books in ePub format (which is the only format it supports). You can adjust the font size and type to suit your eyes.



DI.FM unofficial client

bit.ly/difm399

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 26.55MB

This unofficial app lets you tune into DIFM, an internet radio station offering electronic music. There are over 60 free channels to listen to, with styles including trance, house, techno and ambient.



Ludo Blitz!

bit.ly/ludo399

Min requirements: Windows 8+/10

File size: 32.4MB

This app is a free-to-play reimagining of the classic board game Ludo. You can take on other players over the internet, and special fields add a degree of randomness to the gameplay.



Best Free Software

EMAIL CLIENT

Thunderbird powered by SoftMaker

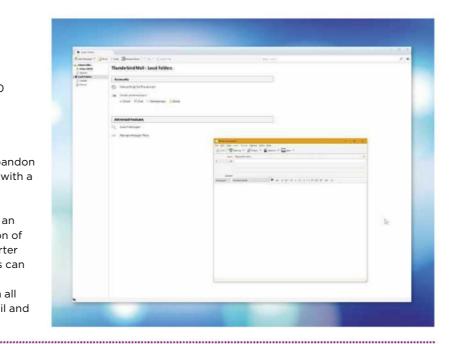
bit.ly/thunder399

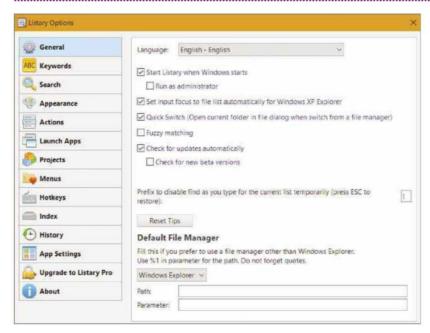
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 33.2MB

SoftMaker, best known for its Office suite, has contributed to the continuing development of Thunderbird, following Mozilla's decision to abandon the popular email program. This 'Thunderbird with a difference' comes with a selection of optional add-ons that can expand the program's functionality. These include a different theme, an improved user interface, faster auto completion of email addresses and Software eM Client Importer (for users of SoftMaker Office). The extensions can be added through the Tools, Add-ons menu.

Thunderbird is a great client that works with all types of mail, including webmail services Gmail and Outlook.com.





WINDOWS SEARCH Listary 5

www.listary.com

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

File size: 3.3MB

Listary is an advanced, sophisticated search tool that can find almost anything on your hard drive(s). Launch it using a keyboard shortcut (tap Ctrl twice by default), then type the name of the program or file you're looking for. The application will display a list of matching results and refine them as you type. So-called 'Fuzzy Navigation' allows Listary to find items even if the name you've entered isn't completely correct.

The latest version adds lots of new features and improvements including a redesigned interface, 17 new themes, custom actions, a web-search tool and support for launching Windows 8/10 apps.

WEB BROWSER

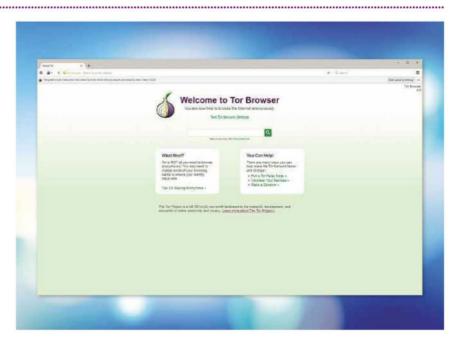
Tor Browser 6

bit.ly/tor399

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10, Mac OS X or Linux File size: 48.8MB

Tor Browser is designed to safeguard your privacy when you're browsing the web. It's based on the same engine as Firefox, but uses the Tor network to disguise where you're browsing from. The latest version of the browser updates the Firefox engine, which introduces better support for HTML5 when playing YouTube videos, and adds code signing for OS X – avoiding potential Gatekeeper annoyances.

Additional privacy enhancements and bug fixes have been made throughout, and the updater gains an extra security layer. The browser now uses DuckDuckGo as its default search engine.





GAME The Shortest Journey

bit.ly/shortest399

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 12.3MB

This is a short point-and-click adventure game in which you help a character called Manu find the hidden treasure. It's entirely free of dialogue, so you won't find yourself getting bogged down in long, boring conversations. The solutions to some of the puzzles are far from obvious, but it's worth persevering.

Don't install...

USB Safeguard

usbsafeguard.altervista. org

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 536KB

USB Safeguard password protects data on memory sticks using AES 256-bit encryption so, if the drive is lost or stolen, your files remain secure. However, it needs to format your drive before it can work, and the free edition of the program is limited to drives of 2GB. which isn't much use these days. The paid-for version costs £14.50.



...Install this instead

VeraCrypt

veracrypt.codeplex.com

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

Mac OS X or Linux File size: 13.3MB

VeraCrypt is the replacement for TrueCrypt, the popular open-source encryption program discontinued in 2014. This superb free tool can secure any hard drive (including system drives) and transform a spare USB stick into a portable, private vault for sensitive data. VeraCrypt offers eight algorithm options for encrypting your files, including AES, Twofish and Serpent, and - unlike USB Safeguard - there's no limit on the size of the drive it protects. See our Workshop on VeraCrypt in Issue 392 (bit.ly/webuser392).





UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



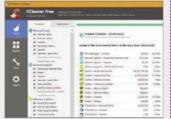
SYSTEM TOOL Glary Utilities 5.52

www.glarysoft.com

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

File size: 15.5MB

Glary Utilities is a collection of tools for fixing PC problems, optimising Windows and protecting your privacy. The latest version adds a delete function to the scan history of Glary's Disk Cleaner tool, and introduces support for cleaning up after additional programs.



SYSTEM CLEANER CCleaner 5.18

www.piriform.com/ccleaner

Min requirements: Windows

File size: 6.6MB

Piriform's hugely popular system-cleaning tool gets updated on a monthly basis. This time around, CCleaner improves its Microsoft Edge cache and history cleaning, and Firefox 46 session cleaning. Detection and cleaning of portable browsers has been optimised, too.



DISC-BURNING SOFTWARE BurnAware Free 9.2

www.burnaware.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 9.4MB

BurnAware Free can write to all types of optical disc, including Blu-rays. The latest version adds a new method of file sorting and ordering under Span Disc, and improves the program's write-speed detection method. Make sure you decline the bundled junk during installation.



SYSTEM TOOL WinUtilities Free 12.5

hi.ylcomputing.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 6.1MB

WinUtilities is a powerful free all-in-one system cleaning and optimisation suite with a collection of powerful tools. The new version improves the Registry Cleaner, Disk Cleaner and Duplicate File Finder modules, and fixes numerous bugs, too.

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



Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

Automatically hide pages from your history

Chrome's incognito mode stops the browser storing details of the websites you visit, but you need to remember to switch to it in the first place - and to switch back when you've finished your furtive activities. Wouldn't it be easier if you could just tell Chrome not to record your visits to specific sites? Well, now you can, thanks to a new extension called Cuffing Season (bit.ly/ cuffing399), which lets you prevent entire websites, individual

pages and title keywords from appearing in your browsing history. Simply add any URLs and keywords that you want to hide to the add-on's History Blocking list, and nosey parkers will be none the wiser. You can also exclude the current page or site from your history by clicking Cuffing Season's toolbar button and choosing the relevant option. Private tabs can be set to close automatically once they've been idle for 15 minutes, and you can 'stash' videos and pages without needing to bookmark them.



Get back Chrome's Backspace shortcut

As of Chrome 52, you'll no longer be able to press the Backspace key on your keyboard to return to the previous web page. Google says this change is to prevent the loss of form data when you



touch the key accidentally, and that only 0.04% of all page views come from Backspace navigation, but if you ask us, it's peripheral correctness gone mad!

Happily, you can continue using Backspace in Chrome after the update by installing Back To Back (bit.ly/ back399), which restores full functionality to the key. This add-on also places an unnecessary icon on your toolbar, but you can easily hide this by right-clicking it and choosing 'Hide in Chrome menu'.

Alternatively, if you'd prefer not to install an extension, you can go back to the previous page when browsing the web by pressing Alt+[left arrow] on your keyboard.

Track product price drops on Amazon

The price of items on Amazon is constantly changing, which means you may pay more today than you would have done yesterday. The brilliant Chrome (and Firefox) tool Keepa (bit.ly/keepa399) ensures you never again miss a bargain by tracking the price of products over the last week, month, three months or year, so you can see whether they are getting cheaper or dearer.

Once installed, Keepa displays a price-history graph on a product's Amazon page, along with a table that shows the highest, lowest and average cost of the item. You can opt to receive



when the price drops to a specific amount, and find out how much the item is selling for - new and used - on Amazon Marketplace. Keepa is very easy to use, although you may need to add https://keepa.com to your browser's cookies-exceptions list, for it to work.

Play Duck Hunt in your browser

Possibly the most popular firstperson-shooter of all time, Nintendo's Duck Hunt is now available as a Chrome extension (bit.ly/duck399). Use your mouse to aim and shoot at the duck before it flies away, and your faithful dog will either retrieve the bird for you or snigger if you miss. The add-on also includes a two-duck version and one that uses dogs as the target.





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



FIREFOX

Control how images display on web pages

A web without any pictures would be a very dull place indeed, but sometimes images make pages slow to load and can distract you from the article you're trying to read. You can solve both these annoyances by installing Easy Image Blocker (bit.ly/image399), which gives you total control over how pictures on web pages are displayed. By default, the add-on strips all the images from the current page but, unlike similar tools, it doesn't take an all-or-nothing approach. If you decide you want to see a particular photo or illustration, right-click its gap and choose Load Image. Likewise, to restore every picture to the page, choose Load All Images. You can toggle Easy Image Blocker on and off by clicking its toolbar button, but you'll also need to refresh the page.





Expose hidden Google trackers in websites

Millions of websites use Google's Analytics and AdSense tools to get

Google Not Present

more information about their visitors and target them with ads. Although this data is collected and shared with Google anonymously, you may still feel uneasy about the search giant having so much

access to details of your online activities, not to mention your location (via your IP address), which is where Googley Eyes (bit.ly/googley399) comes in. This add-on tells you when Google is lurking on a web page, lists every site you visit that contains a Google tracker and tells you what percentage of those pages the total amounts to. Googley Eyes doesn't let you block these sites - for that you'll need a tool such as Privacy Badger (bit .ly/badger393) or uBlock Origin (bit.ly/ ublock393) - but it certainly reveals the extent of Google's web dominance.

Prevent Firefox from closing the last tab

Both Firefox and Chrome automatically

exit when you close their last open tabs, which makes it easy to shut them down accidentally. You can stop this happening in Firefox by installing a new tool called Don't Close Last Tab (bit.ly/last399), which overrides the browser's usual behaviour to keep it open when the last remaining tab is closed. It works by locking the New Tab page in place, although you can still exit Firefox by clicking the 'X' in the top-right corner. For Chrome, there's a similar tool called Last Tab (bit.ly/lasttab399).

Scan your bookmarks for bad lińks

How many of your Firefox bookmarks link to pages that no longer exist? Find out by installing Bookmarks Checker (bit.ly/bookmarks399), which has been around for years and has now been updated with a more modern interface. It scans your

Bookmarks folder for broken links and duplicate entries, and lets you remove or edit them with a single click.



OTHER BROWSERS

Check the weight of favourite sites Could BBC News do with losing a bit of fat? Can Mail Online pinch more than an inch? Find out using the fascinating new Opera add-on Browser Calories (bit.ly/browser399), which measures the 'weight' of websites to determine if they're heavier than their peers. It calculates the amount of data

they use for HTML, images,

fonts and other design elements, compares the results to the 100 most popular

videos.



sites to produce individual and total performance ratings. Although the add-on is designed for web developers, it's useful for finding out which of your bookmarks need to go on a diet.

Stop your system going to sleep When you've left your computer performing an important task such as downloading a large file or backing up a load of photos, the last think you want is for it to go to sleep halfway through. You can prevent this from happening by installing Sleepless in System (bit.ly/sleep399), which lets you keep Windows awake directly from Opera or Chrome. Just click the toolbar button to activate 'sleepless' mode until the task is complete - after which you can click it again to



return to normal.



Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight

PHOTOS & DESIGN

Adobe Spark Post

bit.ly/sparkpost399

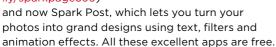
Min requirements: iOS 8 Size: 82.7MB

Anyone who's shelled out for Adobe's PC programs could be forgiven for envying iPad owners. First there were the free iOS versions of Photoshop (bit.ly/photo399) and its video-editing

(bit.ly/prem399). Then came the Adobe Spark family, including Spark Video (bit.ly/sparkvid399), Spark Page for web

cousin Premiere

design (bit .ly/sparkpage399)



Spark Post includes an in-app purchase for extra storage space (£1.49), but that's small fry compared with, say, £80 for Photoshop Elements for PC. So should you ditch your PC for an iPad or iPhone? Not if you're serious about photo editing. Adobe's apps are great companions for the full programs, but they're no substitute. Your iPad or iPhone

would crash constantly under the weight of the full PC program - and even Spark Post crashed our iPad when we tried scrolling through our Camera Roll. We knocked a star off for that, because it's a basic function.

If you limit your Photoshopsized expectations and let your imagination run riot, however, you'll love Spark Post. You can import your own photos (including any you saved from your PC under your Adobe ID) or use Spark's wealth of preset photos to create

fabulous designs, which the app saves automatically as works in progress. Share them online or even print them to create wall art and personalised greetings cards.





NEW

MINI WORKSHOP

Create an animated birthday card using Adobe Spark Post

Launch Spark Post and log in with Facebook or Google, or create a free Adobe ID. Swipe through the introductory screens or tap the 'X' to go straight to the home screen, where you'll find your Remix Feed. 11 To 'remix' an existing design. tap one you like 2 to open it, then tap the green Remix button. Tap 'X' to close it. Your creations are all saved automatically under My Posts.



To create an animation using a photo on your device, tap the green '+', then tap Photo Library and choose a folder. Tap to select a photo and wait a moment for it to load in Spark Post. 11 Now use the swipeable row along the bottom to choose a photo size. Tap Original for best quality if you want to print a static design later. 2 Tap an option under Social Post to share online. 3 Tap Next.



Text appears automatically, saying 'Double tap to edit text' (which we've already done). 1 Ingeniously, Spark Post selects a font and colour to match your photo. Now tap Animation and choose from the animation styles. 2 Tap one to see it in action. When you've settled on the style you want, tap the tick. **3** Upload your animated card to the web from My Posts.









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

QUICK NOTES

Renotify **Notification** Maker

bit.ly/renotify399

Min

requirements:

Android 4 Size: Varies with device

Do you create a lot of quick notes

to yourself on your Android device? We tend to give up and resort to pen and paper instead, because it's frequently quicker than using most note-making apps. This app aims to make the process as quick as writing on the back of your hand, but without the risk of getting ink all over your clothes. Simply launch it, type your note and tap Create. The app automatically closes and posts your note as a notification, so your memo (or memos) won't



GAMING

Unofficial Steam Authenticator

bit.ly/steam399 Min requirements:

Windows Phone 8.1. Windows 10

Size: 2.98MB

Mobile

Steam is a wildly popular service

for multiplayer gaming. For security, it uses Steam Guard - a two-factor authentication tool that works on every platform except Windows Phone/ Mobile. Unofficial Steam Authenticator was created by members of the Windows developer community to let users unlock Steam safely from their Windows phone or tablet. The creators have even posted the app's code online to reassure users that it's safe to enter their

APPLICATION

Steam login details (see the project's GitHub page: bit.ly/steamcode399).

Our rating



NEW

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0 0 0

VIDEO

NEW

Add authenticator

Beme

bit.ly/ bemedroid399 bit.ly/

bemeios399

requirements: Android 4.1,

iOS 8 Size: 13MB (Android), 23.5MB (iOS)



Capture a video of what you're doing right now, and post it online using this new app, to give users around the world an insight into life in your back yard, so to speak. Beme's unique selling point - compared with Vine, say - is that you can't see your video until you've posted it. The idea is that you're giving a, quote, 'honest', unedited, real-time picture of your life. You have to sign up

before you can post videos or browse those of other users.

Our rating



Our rating

SECURITY

AppLock Face/Voice Recognition

fade from your memory.

bit.ly/applock399

Min requirements:

Android 4.0.3 Size: 45MB

Your face and voice are harder to forget or steal than a PIN, so this app lets you use them to lock and unlock certain apps.

AppLock launched earlier this year, but version 2.0 makes it really worth using, with improved accuracy, a better design and the option

to set different levels of security for different apps.

You can use a simple voice command to lock your Facebook app, for example, but lock your banking app with the new 'TrulySecure' mode, while allowing other apps, such as the camera, to launch instantly.

You have to 'enrol' your face, voice and choice of command before you can use the app. We got into a bit of a pickle with this, so our tips are: first, get really close to the camera; then state your command three times to register it. Otherwise the app will keep sending you back to the beginning.



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 vour device
- Remove hidden junk so it never comes back
- Switch from iOS without

Order it now from Amazon at bit.ly/defguidetoandroid



CUSTOMISATION

GO Darling Alarm

bit.ly/darling399

Min requirements: Android 4

Size: 3.2MB

Just what you always wanted: another alarm clock app. That's what we thought, too, at first, but the latest addition to the GO family of Android customisation apps is in fact a beautiful multitasking tool. It impressed us straight away by automatically creating wallpaper using the best photo of our cat in our

gallery. Then it annoyed us a bit with its healthy-living reminders, such as going to bed at 10.30pm (no thanks, we've tried that). These are easy to bend to your preferences, though, and you can add birthday reminders, use it as a stopwatch or

timer and tweak its appearance to suit you.





Our rating



CLEANER

AVG Cleaner & Booster for Android

bit.ly/avgclean399

Min requirements: Android (varies with device) Size: Varies with device

This updated system-cleaning tool follows the launch of AVG AntiVirus Free for Android (reviewed in Issue 398) and, like that app, it works well. Tap the Analyze button to scan and boost your Android device's

memory, and save space with features such as the Smart Photo Cleaner, which assesses your Android Gallery and picks out fuzzy and duplicate photos for you to delete. So why only three stars? Every screen displays

adverts and Upgrade buttons designed to lure you into an in-app purchase without revealing how much you'll have to pay, so be careful.



UPDATED

AVG Cleaner FREE

Our rating



NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

GARDENING

LikeThat Garden

bit.ly/likedroid399 bit.ly/likeios399

Min requirements: Android 4, iOS 8 Size: 24MB (Android), 41MB (iOS) Price: £2.49 (Android), £2.29 (iOS) Take a photo of a plant, flower or tree while you're out gardening or rambling, and LikeThat will tell you what it is,

along with extra information including a Wikipedia link.



AUDIO

Noisli

bit.ly/noisli399

Min requirements: Android 4 Size: 206MB Price: £1.49 Silence may be golden, but a little background noise can help you concentrate or sleep. Mix your own ambient sounds using this wonderful Android app, which has been available on iOS for a while (bit.ly/noisios399).



KIDS

Robot Party

bit.ly/robot399

Min requirements: Android

4.0.3

Size: 75MB Price: £2.49



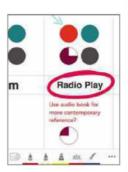
Introduce the youngest members of your family to robotic engineering and cupcake making with this wonderful new app from toy company Sago Mini. It's aimed at ages 2-5, and is free of ads and in-app purchases.

PDF EDITOR

iAnnotate 4

bit.ly/iannotate399

Min requirements: iOS 8 Size: 14MB Price: £7.99 Now available for iPhone as well as iPad, iAnnotate is a pricey but very sophisticated tool that lets you annotate PDFs, Word documents and other files. and then share them easily.



FITNESS

Yoga Studio

bit.ly/yogadroid399 bit.ly/yogaios399

Min requirements: Android 4.1, iOS 8 Size: 89MB (Android), 123MB (iOS) Price: £1.64 (Android), £2.99 (iOS) Watch dozens of yoga and meditation classes in HD video on this new Android app, which is already available on iOS. It includes a large gallery of poses and instructions for all levels.



Noisli

Robot Party

iAnnotate

Yoga Studio











Best New TV Apps

BBC iPlayer

bit.ly/ipandroid399 bit.ly/ipios399

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 7 Size: 9.6MB

Summer is here, which means the BBC will be screening lots of music festivals and sporting events, and you don't need a TV to enjoy them. Indeed, if you install the latest update to the iPlayer app, you'll be able to catch more live action than you would at home or even at the events themselves. Look out for the new 'Live' label to stream broadcasts direct from festival stages and sports venues. Many are exclusive to iPlayer, and you can watch them on catch-up if you miss the original broadcast. The Live label joins existing Exclusive, New Series and Last Chance tags.



TV & FILM

Now TV

www.nowtv.com

Min requirements: Android, iOS, PlayStation 3 or 4, Xbox One, smart TV, Roku or Now TV box Size: 20MB



Something incredible has happened to Now TV, Sky's contract-free streaming service. Make sure you're sitting down before you read this, because it may come as a surprise: yes, Now TV has changed its logo - just in time for summer! Previously, it consisted of blue text on a green background, but now there are all manner of colourful variations, including pink on orange, yellow on red and orange on purple with a crown of thorns (or something) in the middle. What's more, the Android app has been updated to fix bugs and improve stability. Sky is also enhancing the audio and video quality of its streamed content, starting with its most popular shows.

FILM & TV

JustWatch

bit.ly/justwatch399

Min requirements: Android 4.0.3, iOS 6 **Size:** 13.2MB

These days it's not unusual to use four or five different streaming services to satisfy our entertainment needs, which can make deciding what to watch tricky. Help is at hand from the brilliant JustWatch, which lets you browse and search for films and TV shows from all the main streaming providers, so you don't need to keep switching from app to app. It covers Netflix, iTunes, Now TV, iPlayer, Amazon and ITV Hub, among other services, and you can save your favourites to make searching even faster. JustWatch has now been updated to let you look for suitable viewing by actor or director, as well as by genre and year of release. Fantastic!



X Don't install...

DiskDigger Pro

bit.ly/digger399

An app that can restore photos, videos and other files that you've accidentally deleted from your phone can be very useful, but this one ticks all the wrong boxes. For a start, it



only works properly with rooted devices, so it isn't much use if you haven't hacked your phone. Second, it charges you £2.30 to recover your own files. And third. according to many of the reviews, it often fails to restore anything.

...Install this instead

Dumpster Image & Video Restore bit.lv/dumpster399

Min requirements: Android (varies with device) Size: Varies with device

Keeping your photos and videos backed up in the cloud safeguards them against accidental deletion, but an even better way to protect them is to install Dumpster. This excellent free app works like the Recycle Bin in Windows, allowing you to 'undelete' lost files without needing to root your device. Simply browse Dumpster's list of deleted content to find the missing item

and tap Restore to get it back. Usefully, you can preview media files before restoring them and sort deleted items by date, size, type and name. Anything you delete from your phone or tablet automatically appears in Dumpster.



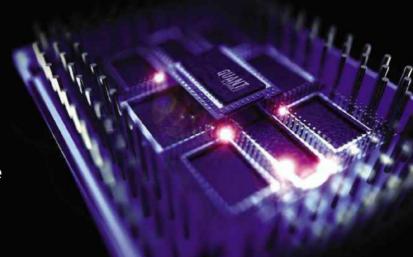




? JFAO Everything you need to know about the most interesting new technology trends and events interesting new technology trends and events

Quantum computing

Can particle physics really make our PCs faster or is it just science fiction? David Crookes takes a quantum leap to explain



What is quantum computing?

Good question, tricky answer. In a nutshell, 'normal' computing uses a binary system of bits that have a value of either one or zero, whereas quantum computing uses qubits (or quantum bits) which can be both one and zero at the same time. It's a concept that was introduced in the early Eighties by physicist Richard Feynman and has gathered pace in recent years, with Wired magazine calling it "civilisation's next big revolution".

How can it be a one and zero at the same time?

Well, this is the tricky bit, because it draws on quantum theory and the idea of 'superposition'. In the simplest of terms, quantum physics states that it is possible for a particle to have two different properties at once. So it can be either a particle or a wave, or - and this is the crucial part - a particle and a wave at the same time. As you can imagine, it's an incredibly complex concept, which delves into the bizarre realm of quantum mechanics, but it certainly has the potential to transform our lives.



Eighties TV series Quantum Leap had nothing to do with quantum computing

How does quantum computing work?

With a standard computer, all the possibilities of ones and zeros need to be checked during a calculation. But because qubits are subatomic particles (such as photons, electrons and ions) with a capacity to carry out two equations at once, multiple solutions can be considered at breakneck speeds and the wrong ones quickly discarded. When the gubits are entangled, they are able to interact with each other and represent large numbers of values simultaneously. Bringing lots of qubits together in this way gives computers amazing processing power so they can perform trillions of calculations every second.

Why is quantum computing important?

The binary options in normal computers rely on power switches called transistors and while some cutting-edge



Quantum computing could revolutionise the microprocessors used in our PCs

microprocessors contain more than five billion of them, there's a limit to how small they can be. To be able to solve complex computing problems, you need more transistors, otherwise you reach a point where the most difficult computing issues cannot be tackled as effectively as you'd like. Looking for a new, more powerful method of computing has therefore become important.

QUANTUM THEORY KILLED THE CAT

Superposition - the complex principle of quantum theory - was demonstrated in a neat analogy by Erwin Schrödinger in 1935. He said that you could place a living cat into a sealed chamber along with a Geiger counter, a vial of hydrocyanic acid and a radioactive

substance that has a

half-life of one hour.

.....

If the Geiger counter detects any decay of the radioactive atom, a hammer smashes the vial and the cat is killed. But because there is a 50/50 chance of a single atom decaying, the cat can be supposed to be alive and

> dead simultaneously. Only by checking can you see if it's one or the other. Read more about Schrödinger's Cat at bit.ly/schro399.

Quantum computing (1)

How are gubits generated?

One of the challenges of quantum computing is that qubits need to be trapped and manipulated. Usually, this is done by exploiting the structural atomic defects in diamonds, but David Schuster.

Assistant Professor of Physics at the University of Chicago, has found a method using electrons from the tungsten filament of a miniature toy light bulb.

Are quantum computers actually being developed?

Yes. The cutting-edge D-Wave quantum computer (www.dwavesys.com) contains 1,000 qubits, but its development hasn't been easy and it's also rather cumbersome because the processor needs to be cooled to -273° Celsius and researchers need to create the conditions for quantum superposition. A special algorithm is required to generate the required ones and zeros that lead to near-infinite possibilities. Suffice to say, we're still in the early days of quantum computing.

So quantum computers won't be on sale for Christmas?

Well, you'd be looking to pay around \$10m (around £6.8m) and, even then, it's all very theoretical. For example, the D-Wave Two, which has a 512-qubit processor, isn't designed to be a generalpurpose machine so you won't be playing games on it anytime soon.

In 2014, Time magazine featured the D-Wave on its cover, dubbing it 'The Infinity Machine' and saying that: "It promises to solve some of humanity's most complex problems... and nobody knows how it actually works".

Surely somebody knows how it works?

Not entirely. That's what makes the whole thing mind-blowing. There is still a lot of scepticism about quantum computing and uncertainty about whether the D-Wave is actually a quantum machine at all. But the latest figures and developments are certainly encouraging, and increasingly fast speeds are being achieved. It's even said that a 300-qubit quantum computer could have more possible states than there are atoms in the universe.

The D-Wave quantum computer is significantly faster and larger than your average PC

Just how much faster is quantum computing?

According to research by Google (bit.ly/google399), a quantum machine is able to solve a set of problems 100 million times faster

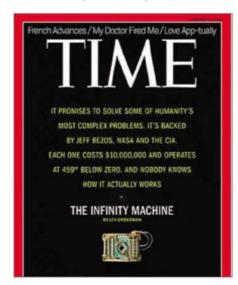
than a PC with a single-core processor. These results were based on tests using the D-Wave 2X computer, which the search giant operates with NASA. This is stored at NASA's Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California, and comprises a single chip made of loops of niobium wire, in a 10-ft high box that's cooled to an incredibly cold temperature.

Will quantum computing be used in the cloud?

Probably, yes. D-Wave says that providing access to quantum computers through the cloud is very much on its agenda. Indeed, IBM Research scientists have built a quantum processor that you can access online. The IBM Quantum Experience (www.research.ibm.com/ quantum) lets you run algorithms and experiments, work with individual qubits and take advantage of a host of tutorials. It's made up of five superconducting qubits and it is said to be exponentially faster than a normal computer.

Are tech giants doing anything special with the technology?

Microsoft began investing in quantum



Time magazine described the quantum computer D-Wave as 'The Infinity Machine'



IBM's online Quantum Experience lets you sample the future of computing today

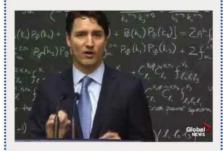
computing two years ago, looking at ways to make it a reality in order to produce the fastest and most powerful machines known to humankind. It started looking for particles called 'anyons' in the hope that they could be used to generate qubits (even though no-one was sure that anyons existed). Since then, scientists and engineers have looked to develop quantum software, leading to the Microsoft Quantum Challenge, a software simulator that encouraged students to sample the technology.

A QUANTUM LEAP FOR POLITICS

Some of the biggest brains in computing struggle with the concept behind quantum computing, but it seems the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, has a handle on the technology.

"I was going to ask you to explain quantum computing," asked a journalist at a recent news conference, before launching into his actual question. To which Trudeau answered: "Normal computers work, either there's power going through a wire or not. It's one or a zero, it's binary systems. What quantum states allow for is much more complex information to be encoded into a single bit."

Trudeau was applauded by the media for his tech knowledge. You can watch his full explanation at bit.ly/trudeau399



Canadian PM Justin Trudeau is the man to ask about quantum computing

DOMNLOAD FROM THE WEB

COVER FEATURE

Torrents aren't all dubious, dangerous downloads – they have many legal uses, too. **Wayne Williams** explains everything you need to know about downloading videos using BitTorrent

oday there are more ways than ever to stream and download videos from the internet, but BitTorrent is still one of the easiest no-cost options. The peer-to-peer file-sharing protocol has been helping web users grab films, TV programmes and other large files since 2001. Despite court orders making torrent sites harder to access, ISPs throttling download speeds and some BitTorrent software bundling nasty extras (uTorrent once included a sneaky Bitcoin-mining tool), torrenting is still incredibly popular, with an estimated 250 million users worldwide.

In this feature, we tell you everything you need to know about BitTorrent, including how to find and download any video you want. We explain how it works and how to get the most from it, and reveal some of the best (and more unusual) BitTorrent clients.

We also look at the risks you might be taking by downloading copyrighted content. Remember that, despite its reputation, BitTorrent itself isn't illegal, and neither is using the platform. It's what you do with it that could potentially land you in hot water.



Download any video from the web



YOUR TORRENTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

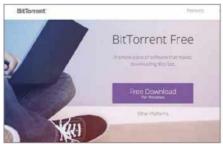
What is BitTorrent?

BitTorrent is a peer-to-peer file-sharing method that you can use to download pretty much anything, from music and videos to software and games. It was originally created by a programmer called Bram Cohen.

What software do I need to download torrents?

All you need is a BitTorrent client. You can use either the official program (from www.bittorrent.com) or one of the many alternatives that are available. We list our favourites on page 40.

Before you can begin downloading a file, you need to find and download the torrent file or magnet link for it. A torrent is a small data file, with the extension '.torrent', which contains information about the item you want, including the name of the content, its length and how many parts it comes in. The torrent also contains the URL of the tracker - this is the host computer that coordinates the file sharing.



The official BitTorrent client is to torrenting what a Hoover is to hoovering

How does it work?

When you download a file from a normal website, you grab the whole thing from that one location. BitTorrent works in a different way, and instead downloads separate pieces from all over the place. The file you want is divided into tiny data fragments, typically around 256KB each, and then shared among everyone who is downloading it.

The BitTorrent client reads the tiny torrent file or magnet link, connects to the relevant tracker and then, in turn, is connected to the 'swarm'. That's the name given to the group of computers that are sharing the file. The swarm is made up of 'seeds' (computers that have the complete download to share) and 'peers' (computers that have some of the file but are still downloading the rest). The larger the swarm, the faster the download will be.

BitTorrent only trades pieces with users who have something to give in return, much like swapping football stickers. You give a fellow sharer a piece of the data they want, and in return they give you some of the data you want. If they stop sharing the pieces with you, you stop sharing the pieces with them.

Rather than just downloading random bits here and there, the software prioritises the rarest parts of the file to

avoid a situation where everyone's downloads end up stuck at 99%. Most BitTorrent clients let you tweak the priority, so you can download the files you want most first.

The speed of your downloads is linked to the speed of your uploads, so if you throttle your upload rate, your downloads will also be slower. Oddly, using your full upload capacity also slows your downloads a little - we'll explain why later.

What is a 'magnet link'?

When BitTorrent first appeared, you needed a '.torrent' file to get the download you required, but magnet links have become more popular in recent years. These do the same thing as '.torrent' files, but you don't need to download anything. Just click the magnet link and your BitTorrent client should spring into life and start downloading.

Is torrenting legal?

As we mentioned in the introduction to this feature, using BitTorrent is perfectly legal. It's nothing more than a system for downloading and sharing large files over the internet. It's what you choose to download with the software that could potentially break the law. If you



The Mother of Dragons won't be happy if she catches you downloading new episodes of Game of Thrones



As with football stickers, if you don't give with BitTorrent, you don't get

download copyright-free files, including classic and independent films, open-source programs and game demos, or files that are intended to be shared, such as movie trailers, TV promos and amusing videos, you won't be breaking any laws. However, if you download a new blockbuster movie or the latest episode of

Game of Thrones or The Walking Dead, that's a different matter entirely.

Will I get caught by the fuzz?

It's highly unlikely. Millions of people download content over torrents without ever running into problems with the law. Occasionally, copyright holders clamp down on illegal downloaders, requesting your details from your ISP and threatening you (and your internet provider) with big fines. Shady legal firms have also been known to send out threatening letters designed to intimidate you into paying a fine for a file you may or may not have downloaded, so the risk - however slight - is a real one.

But is it safe?

If you use common sense and stick to downloading torrent files only from major torrent sites, you should be safe enough. Comments and ratings from other users should help steer you away from bad torrents, but that may not always be the case, so it pays to exercise caution.

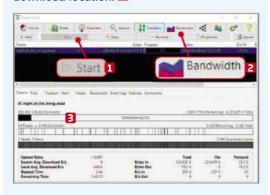
There are certainly plenty of files on the internet that pretend to be something they're not. If you download a video file that won't play because it claims you don't have the right codecs

> (the software that encodes and decodes a media file), for example, the file is probably not the movie you were hoping for but a large fake file designed to trick you into downloading malware. Certain BitTorrent clients allow you to stream videos as they download, which should help you avoid fully downloading a fake movie file. Be sure to scan the finished item with a reliable, up-to-date antivirus program before you open it, just to be safe.

MINI WORKSHOP Download torrents using Tixati



Double-clicking a torrent file adds it to Tixati, as long as the client is set as your default. Alternatively, you can drag the file to the window or click the Add button. 11 The Load Transfer window lets you choose which files to download and set the download location. 4



Click the Start button 🚺 and, after a short wait, the download will begin. To get the best speeds, set the outgoing bandwidth throttle to 75%. Do this by clicking the Bandwidth button at the top 2 and making the change there. Click the torrent listing to see the progress bar for your download.



The top toolbar provides access to all the main features. 🚺 You can change the toolbar layout by right-clicking it and selecting Layout, Optional Features. 2 You can add tools for RSS, an IP filter (for removing bad IP addresses) and a Scheduler. You can also change the toolbar style.

BEST FREE TORRENTING TOOLS

Don't just install the first torrenting tool you find on Goog one of these safe and reliable recommendations

Tixati

www.tixati.com

Lightweight but packed with features and very easy to use, Tixati is one of the best free torrent tools around. It offers all the features you'll find in better-known programs such as uTorrent but without any of the bundled junk that plagues that particular client. Tixati can handle torrent files and magnet links, and provides a detailed view of your downloads that includes peers, pieces, files and trackers. It also lets you stream files while you're downloading them, share large files of your own as quickly as possible and even chat with other users. Find out how to use Tixati in our Mini Workshop (left).



Tixati has everything you need from a torrent client, without the junk

Torrents MultiSearch

bit.ly/torrentms399

Torrents MultiSearch, or TMS for short, is a handy extension for Chrome (as well as Firefox and Opera) that lets you search for torrents across multiple sites.

The extension comes with 40 torrent trackers (sites) built in, and you can add plenty more. Launch the app and click any of the suggested choices to start downloading the file, or search for a particular video by name.

Torch Browser

www.torchbrowser.com

This Chromium-based web browser comes with a handy BitTorrent client built in, so you can browse for torrents and download them directly without needing to install any extensions. To manage your downloads in the browser, simply click the Torrent button at the top of the interface. Torch Browser also comes with a built-in media grabber that allows you to download video and audio content from sites as you browse the web.

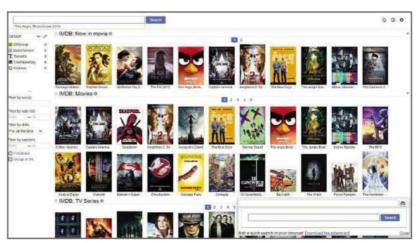


Torch is the perfect browser for those who regularly download torrents

WebTorrent Desktop

webtorrent io

WebTorrent Desktop is a torrent client for Windows. Mac OS X and Linux that lets you stream videos



TMS lets you search multiple sites for torrents directly from your browser

Download any video from the web



gle, because it may be riddled with malware. Instead, try



Impatient types will appreciate WebTorrent Desktop's instant playback

while they're downloading. You can start streaming a torrent immediately (although there's a brief pause while it downloads the parts of the file it needs), and a meter shows you how the download is progressing. If the video is downloading too slowly for smooth streaming, you can pause playback while it fetches more of the file.

TorrentRover

www.torrentrover.com

Finding good, reliable torrents to download can be tricky, because some of the better sites have been banned by the UK courts for copyright infringement (see our 'Beat Internet Censorship' cover feature in Issue 390, bit.ly/ webuser390) and not all torrents are what they claim to be. TorrentRover helps you find the downloads you're after by running your query through all the major BitTorrent sites, including The Pirate Bay, KickAss Torrents, IsoHunt, BitSnoop and Extra Torrent. The best matches appear at the top of the results, but they may not all be available in the UK. You can get round this problem by using a VPN.



Find the best-quality video downloads easily using TorrentRover

See our Mini Workshop (right) to find out how to use TorrentRover.

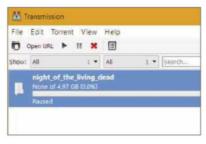
Transmission

www.transmissionbt.com

Originally available only for Mac OS X and Linux computers, the popular Transmission client now has an official Windows version. Unlike many torrent tools, this free, full-featured software is supplied without any annoying bundled extras or adverts.

At the time of writing, the Windows download was tucked away on the Files page at bit.ly/tran396, but it should be available on the main Transmission website soon. Scroll to the bottom of the list and locate the relevant version for your PC. If you have a 64-bit computer, you'll need the file with the suffix 'x64.msi'. For 32-bit systems, grab the x86.msi version. We featured a Workshop about the new Windows version of Transmission in Issue 396 of Web User (bit.ly/webuser396).

As mentioned in last issue's cover feature, the OS X version of Transmission was hacked in March and, for a brief period, started



Transmission is a brilliant torrent tool for OS X, Linux and Windows

MINI WORKSHOP Find the best torrents using TorrentRover



Before you can use TorrentRover, you'll need to install a BitTorrent client such as Tixati (see opposite page), because the search tool only finds torrents and can't download files. Once you've done that, run TorrentRover and close the 'Get Prepared' window. Type what you're looking for in the quick-search box. 1 You can also choose a category 2 to narrow the results. Hit the Go button.



TorrentRover searches all the popular torrent sites and displays the results in the panel at the bottom of the screen.
It automatically orders its findings by popularity, so those at the top are the best options. To find out more about a torrent, click the View Torrent(s) button.



You can reorder the results by other categories, including site, age, size, number of seeders, number of leechers, ratio, and rating. Select a result and click the blue arrow to download the torrent file. Once a torrent file has downloaded, your torrent client will spring into life and begin downloading the content.

spreading KeRanger ransomware. It's now clean, and the Windows version was never affected.

Tribler

www.tribler.org

Although Tribler can't protect you from every prying eye, this open-source program offers a greater degree of anonymity than other, similar tools when you're browsing and downloading torrents. This means you can stop your ISP and other nosy parkers seeing what you're up to. It's still a work in progress but is updated regularly, with useful features including built-in torrent search and video streaming.

Tribler gives you greater privacy when downloading videos

Status

8 No peers



BEST LEGAL USES FOR BITTORRENT

Torrents are best-known (and mostly used) for sharing TV shows and films, but they also let you download videos without breaching copyright and potentially getting yourself in trouble. Here are our favourite legal uses

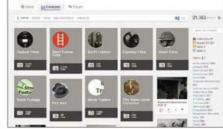
Add Folder

Downloads

Sync

Share large files using BitTorrent Sync

BitTorrent Sync (getsync.com) is a peer-to-peer file-synchronisation tool for Windows, Mac OS X and Linux that's based on the official BitTorrent client but has a more innocuous purpose. It's designed to make it easy for users to share and sync large files between devices on a local network, and to send them securely between remote computers over the internet. Unlike cloud services such as Dropbox, it establishes a direct connection between devices, with no limits on file sizes and transfer speeds. As we were going to press, it was announced that BitTorrent has sold Sync to a company called Resilio, which will rebrand it Connect. Aside from the name change, the program remains the same, with free and paid-for versions.



Download millions of free and legal videos from the Internet Archive

.info) and get indie movies from Vodo (vodo.net).

Download films from the Internet **Archive**

The Internet Archive has an extensive torrents section (bit.ly/archivebt399), which is home to nearly 16 million items from its collection. These include more than 2.5 million items from the Moving Image Archive and over 21,000 films including full-length feature films,

shorts, concerts, movie trailers and home movies. Even if you only ever download torrents from here, you'll never be short of something interesting to watch.

You can also download free classic films and B-movies from Public Domain Torrents (www. publicdomaintorrents

Download legal 'bundles' of videos

In a bid to be seen as more than just a means of downloading illegal content, BitTorrent has started offering original and legal content in the form of bundles (bundles.bittorrent.com). These are



BitTorrent Bundles offer original and legal content to download without the risk of reprisals

a mixed selection of music and video. Radiohead's Thom Yorke released a new album as a paid-for BitTorrent Bundle, for example, and the BBC offers an official digital Doctor Who box set called A Decade of the Doctor (bit.ly/ docwho399). The file-sharing firm's first original TV series, Children of the Machine, was supposed to have been released last year (as a free, ad-supported BitTorrent Bundle or a paid-for ad-free version), but it has gone quiet on that front.

Q

Peers online

0 of 0

BitTorrent Sync is handy for sharing large files with friends over a network

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Chat privately with BitTorrent Bleep

Bleep (www.bleep.pm) is a peerto-peer chat tool that allows you to communicate securely with friends

by text or voice. Unlike some 'secure' chat services, Bleep messages are fully encrypted from end to end and are only ever stored directly on your PC, Mac, Android or iOS device. You don't have to provide any



Use BitTorrent technology to conduct private conversations

personal identification to use it, and BitTorrent doesn't know who is calling who, or even when communications take place.

Download any video from the web



ESSENTIAL TORRENTING TIPS

Whatever you're using BitTorrent to do, there are always ways you can download files more quickly and safely. Here are five of the most useful torrent tricks

Unblock banned torrent sites

Downloading torrents from the web used to be very easy, but in recent years the courts have been clamping down on sites that link to them, and the likes of The Pirate Bay, KickassTorrents and TorrentBytes are now blocked in the UK. Of course, there are plenty of other torrent sites you can track down using Google, but they may not be safe to use. If you prefer to stick with a well-known site such as The Pirate Bay, you can get around the block either by using the secure HTTPS address (currently



You can use TunnelBear to access torrent sites that are banned in the UK

thepiratebay.org, although it may change), or a VPN tool such as TunnelBear (www .tunnelbear.com). Just remember that the free versions of VPNs limit the amount of data you can download in a month, and video files can be massive.

Speed up your torrent downloads

The golden rule when using BitTorrent is 'the more you upload, the more you can download'. That's only true up to a point, however. If your uploads reach their maximum speed, your download speeds will suffer due to the way TCP (Transmission Control Protocol) works. Use your BitTorrent client to limit your maximum upload speed to

around 75%. Disguising your downloads so that your ISP doesn't know you're using BitTorrent can help, too.

Conceal your torrent traffic

They might deny it, but many ISPs automatically throttle BitTorrent downloads, which prevents you from getting the speeds you should. BitTorrent clients such as uTorrent (www.utorrent.com) can disguise BitTorrent traffic, making it less obvious to your ISP. To turn the feature on, go to Options, BitTorrent and select Enabled in the Outgoing box under Protocol Encryption. It's also worth changing the default port, which you can do in Options, Connection.

Other BitTorrent clients offer similar options for disguising your traffic, so it's worth hunting around in their settings.



You can stop you ISP seeing that you're downloading torrents

Avoid being a 'leech'

BitTorrent is about file 'sharing'. However, for every person who shares a file, there are multiple users who don't share anything. Referred to as leeches, these users search for the item they want, download it and then move it elsewhere so no-one can download it from them. This, understandably, is bad form. What's supposed to happen is that once you've finished

downloading something, you become a seeder (a

process that occurs automatically). Seeders upload pieces of the finished file to peers with fast upload speeds, who can distribute them more effectively to other users. Although the BitTorrent system can function with only peers (provided all those peers have the full data set between them), seeders are essential to ensure any gaps that appear are quickly filled and essentially keep everything going. You should try to seed an item you've downloaded for at least a couple of days.

Schedule your downloads

It's a good idea to control when your downloads happen, because you can choose a time when your internet connection is at its least congested such as in the middle of the night. Most popular download tools offer scheduling options. Tixati, in particular, has some very advanced scheduling settings. You should find the scheduling options under Settings or Preferences in your BitTorrent client.



Schedule your BitTorrent downloads to take place at less busy times



Best free iOS keyboards

Google, Microsoft and others are muscling in on Apple's iOS devices with keyboard apps that offer more tools than the standard one.

Andy Shaw finds out whether they're good enough to justify



Gboard | bit.ly/gboard399 (US App Store) | ★★★★

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

WebUser GOLD AWARD

What we liked:

making the switch

Google has launched its own keyboard for iOS devices but it's only available in the

US App Store at the moment. You can wait for it to come to the UK, or you can sneak into the US store if you set up a US iTunes account first – you'll find a step-by-step guide for this on the Alphr website at bit.ly/ iosus399. It's a bit of a pain but it's worth it if you'd like to try this or the Bronze Award-winning Microsoft Word

Flow keyboard before they're released over here. You can flip back to your UK account once you've downloaded the US apps, and both your US and UK apps will remain perfectly usable.

The Google keyboard adds two main features that the standard Apple keyboard lacks. The first is 'swipe to type', which enables you to enter text without having to lift your finger from the keyboard. This makes typing quick and easy, especially if you're using your device one-handed.



The other new tool is the Google button. Tap this and a search box appears. Type your search, then press Enter, and the keyboard is replaced by a series of cards that show your search results. You can scroll through these by swiping from the right, and you have a choice of standard search results, image search or GIFs. Tap a card to paste the information it contains into whichever app you're working in. This is particularly useful when you're using chat tools, because you can search

and paste information into your chat without having to leave the app and open a browser.

How it can be improved:

Well, for starters, Google could hurry up and bring Gboard to the UK App Store, so we don't have to muck about with US accounts. We didn't like its use of Google grey rather than Apple grey, either, because the keyboard clashes with the standard Apple toolbar. It doesn't come with any additional colour schemes,

so you're basically stuck with it.

OUR VERDICT

Google has brought search to the keyboard and it works really well, especially as you can transfer your results easily to whichever app you're typing in. If you're not prepared to download it from the US store, we're confident it will come to the UK store soon.

Best free iOS keyboards

SwiftKey Keyboard | bit.ly/swift399 | ★★★★

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

What we liked:

SwiftKey is currently our favourite Android keyboard replacement, and all its most prominent features have been copied by its rivals. Microsoft even went so far as to buy the

company. The keyboard hasn't changed much since it was launched but it was so far ahead of the competition in the first place that it's simply taken a while for other keyboards to draw level.

SwiftKey's main enhancements are the ability to swipe around the letter keys to 'type' words instead of tapping on them, and the addition of a wordpredicting toolbar. Both features now appear in most add-on keyboards. However, SwiftKey does a lot of work behind the scenes, learning the words you use to improve predictions. We like this a lot, and it's well worth giving it a go. If you sign in to the service, it will learn from all the keyboards you have installed on your device.

How it can be improved:

A selection of themes are available,



so you don't have to stick with the default black keyboard. Only three of them are free, although most of the others cost less than £1. Of the three free themes, however, one is horrible and the other two don't look as classy as Apple's own keyboard.

OUR VERDICT

We love SwiftKey on Android, and it's just as good on iOS. Its rivals have stolen most of its innovations, but it's still brilliant at predicting what you want to type based on your typing history. It's available from the UK App Store.

Word Flow Keyboard | bit.ly/word399 | ★★★★☆

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

WebUse BRONZE AWARD

What we liked:

Microsoft's Word Flow is only available in the US for now (so you'll have to use the store-switching trick mentioned in the Gboard review) and is designed for iPhones. It works on the iPad,

but you need to choose 'iPhone only' from the drop-down menu in the App Store to find it.

This keyboard's main innovation is the one-handed typing option, which you access with a swipe. This turns the keyboard into a quarter-circle that lets you access any letter using the thumb of the hand you're holding the phone in. You can tap the letters or swipe between them if that's quicker.

If you don't like the default colour scheme, you can choose from a number of alternatives or drop in a photo of your own and change the colours of the letters to ensure they stand out from the background.

How it can be improved:

Microsoft's keyboard doesn't have



separate keys for each letter, leaving no obvious differentiation. Instead, you just aim for the letter itself. That may not sound too difficult but we found that it took some getting used to.

OUR VERDICT

This Microsoft keyboard is a leap forward for one-handed phone typists, and it brings the predictive text and swipe-to-type options we've come to expect from add-on keyboards. Like Gboard, it's only available in the US store for now, but we expect it to arrive here soon.

BEST OF THE REST

UltimateKey Keyboard

bit.ly/ult399

UltimateKey Keyboard (or 'Brilliant Keyboard for iOS 8' as it's known in the App Store) is a swipe-to-type

option that actually comes in an Applefriendly grey theme, making it a reasonable replacement for Apple



Quick Type if you want to swipe. It comes with four free themes, and you can add many more if you upgrade it for £1.49.

Apple Quick Type

Pre-installed

You could always stick with the default iOS keyboard. It lacks some of the best features available in the other keyboards but it looks good,

and Apple is slowly introducina new features. The most recent addition was the



wasn't particularly exciting, but the keyboard also has a reasonable text prediction system for those who struggle to type quickly enough.

Fleksy

bit.ly/fleks399

Fleksy is a larger keyboard, which means it's best used in portrait orientation on the iPhone - in landscape mode, it takes up more than half the screen. Its benefits

are largely aesthetic, with a range of themes to choose from and an animated GIF tool that will be popular



with the kids. It doesn't even offer swipe-to-type, though, so it isn't much of a step up from Apple's basic Quick Type keyboard in terms of usefulness.

Keep the web BRITISH

Whatever the result of the EU Referendum, make sure the web keeps speaking your language. Robert Irvine explains how to make your favourite tools use UK English



VOICE ASSISTANTS

Google Now

When you use one of Google Now's voice commands on your Android phone or tablet - by saying "OK Google, sort my life out" or similar - the virtual assistant should detect that you're speaking UK English and respond to you accordingly. Disappointingly, although Google Now recognises most English, Scottish and Welsh accents (some better than others), it always responds in a female, Estuary English voice, so you can't make your device a Brummie, Cockney or Glaswegian. If it sounds American, Australian or Indian, it's likely that your language settings are incorrect, which will affect the relevance of your results. To fix this problem, go to Settings, 'Language & input' and set Language to 'English (United Kingdom)'. Swipe down to Voice, tap Languages

Languages English (Ireland) English (New Zealand) English (Philippines) English (South Africa) English (UK) CANCEL SAVE

Make OK Google understand that you're speaking UK not US English

and ensure 'English (UK)' is selected. You can choose up to four other variations, including 'English (Ireland)' and 'English (South Africa)'.

Siri

As with Android devices, the default language of any iPhone or iPad bought in the UK should be homegrown English, but if you got yours secondhand or someone has fiddled with your settings then you might find that Siri sounds American - namely like New Yorker Susan Bennett, who has provided Siri's default US voice since Apple launched the feature in 2011.

To make Siri speak proper English again, go to Settings, General, Siri and set the Language to 'English (United Kingdom)'. You can also change the voice gender to male, if you fancy a change. Alternatively, you may prefer 'English (Canadian)', which doesn't sound as stuffy as the British version, or keep 'English (United Kingdom)' as the default language but apply an American or Australian accent via the Siri Voice menu.



more Gordon Bennett than Susan Bennett

Cortana

When Windows 10 launched last year, many British users found that Cortana, its built-in voice assistant,



If Cortana won't listen to English, download the language and speech packs

didn't work but instead displayed the message: "Cortana isn't available in the region and language you've selected". Although Microsoft has since fixed this problem, you may still need to perform a few tweaks to get Cortana up and running in good old UK English.

First, go to Start, Settings, 'Time & language', then click the 'Region & Language' tab and make sure that 'United Kingdom' is selected in the 'Country and region' menu. If the 'English (United Kingdom)' language pack isn't displayed, click 'Add a language' to find and download it, then set that language as your default. You should also download the 'English (United Kingdom)' Speech pack from the same list of files. Go back to the 'Time and Language' screen, click the Speech tab and, under Speech Language, you should now be able to select 'English (United Kingdom)' from the drop-down menu.

Remember, like other, similar assistants, the more you use Cortana, the more attuned she will become to the timbre of your voice, so don't be offended if she initially has trouble getting to grips with your strong Geordie accent!

SEARCH ENGINES

DuckDuckGo

Unlike nosey parkers Google and Bing, DuckDuckGo (duckduckgo.com) doesn't store your searches or track your online activities, so it's a shame that its search results are so US-centric and it doesn't offer a dedicated UK version. Fortunately, there is a way to make the privacy-themed search engine more useful for Brits. Click the threeline Settings button in the top-right corner of the DuckDuckGo homepage and select 'Advanced settings'. Choose



You can tweak DuckDuckGo to display UK results rather than US ones

United Kingdom from the drop-down Country menu, then scroll down to the bottom of the page and click 'Save and Exit'. You can make search results even more UK-specific by only including sites that end in '.uk'. To do this, type site:uk either before or after your search query.

Google

Although Google detects where you are and directs you to www.google. co.uk, its search results still include plenty of sites from other global locations. If you'd rather restrict your results to the UK, click the 'Search tools' button between the search box and the results and choose 'Country: the UK' from the menu.

The main drawback with this method is that you can only filter results after you've run a search, so you'll still be briefly exposed to pages from outside the UK. To prevent this from happening,



Filter your Google search results to show only web pages from the UK

click the Settings link in the bottomright corner of the Google homepage and choose 'Advanced search'. Type your search query into one of the boxes in the top half of the page, then click the Region drop-down menu in the lower half and select United Kingdom. Click Advanced Search to view the UKspecific results.

Bing

As with Google, Bing spots that you're browsing from Britain to prioritise UK sites, but it also goes a step further by letting you focus on local results. To view these, click the cog in the top-right corner of the Bing homepage (www. bing.com) and choose Settings. In the Search section, type your town or postcode into the Location field (entering a county doesn't seem to work) and either press Enter or click Save. You may not notice a great deal of difference for most searches, but when you're looking for news stories, sports results, nearby businesses, community events and other info close to home, this secret setting can prove very useful.



Bing lets you prioritise search results that are relevant to your local area

BROWSERS

Chrome

If Chrome's built-in spellchecker keeps questioning the way you write 'favourite', 'colour' and 'realise', then it's probably set to use US English. To change this, click the three-line menu button, choose Settings and click 'Show advanced settings'. Scroll down to Languages, click 'Language and input settings' and select 'English (United Kingdom)' from the list (if the option isn't there, click Add to find it). Click 'Display Google Chrome in this language', tick the 'Use this language for spell checking' box and click Finished.

There's also a handy Chrome extension called Briticism (bit.ly/ brit399), which automatically converts Americanised words and phrases to





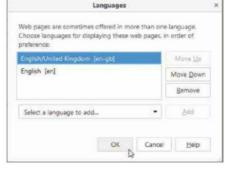
Change Chrome's spellchecker settings to use the UK English dictionary

their correct English spellings. Just install it and no-one online will ever ask you to "do me a favor" again.

Firefox

By default, Firefox should always display web pages in UK English (where the option is available) and check your spelling using a British dictionary. If it doesn't, you should first go to Tools, Options, Content and click the Choose button next to Languages. Select 'English/United Kingdom', move it to the top of the list and click OK.

To fix the spellchecker, right-click in any text box, choose Add Dictionaries and install the English (British) dictionary and language packs. Firefox lists its installed language packs under Tools, Add-ons, Languages.



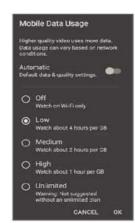
Ensure Firefox displays websites in British English when given the option



Use less data when watching Netflix

Thanks to a recent update to Netflix's mobile apps, you can now choose the quality of the streams you watch and therefore how much data you use. By default, the app will use the best quality available based on your current connection speed, but you can easily change this. From Netflix's side menu, choose App Settings and Mobile Data

Usage, then change the Automatic setting to off. The app automatically switches to the Low quality setting, which will use 1GB of data for every four hours of video you watch (compared with 1GB for



every hour of video at High quality). Of course, if your data allowance is very small, it's better to limit your Netflix use to when you're connected over Wi-Fi.

Check the quality of your Spotify stream

Like Netflix, Spotify provides you with the highest-quality stream available based on your network conditions. Streaming music in this way is great if

you have an unlimited data allowance, but if you don't, you can quickly reach your data limit. An easy way to avoid excess data charges is to reduce the streaming quality. Open Spotify's

settings, go to

the Streaming drop-down menu and choose Normal Quality instead of High Quality or Extreme Quality.

Spotify Premium users can avoid using any mobile data at all simply by downloading music over Wi-Fi so that it's available to play offline. To do this, open Your Library and Albums, tap the options button next to an album you'd like to save and choose Download. By default, Spotify only downloads music over a Wi-Fi connection, so it will download your choice of songs in the background when you next connect to a wireless network.

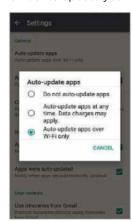
Prevent apps from updating automatically

If your Android device is set to download app updates automatically, this can quickly use up your free mobile data allowance and start costing you money. To turn off automatic updates,

open the Google Play Store app, tap its menu button and select Settings. Next, choose the 'Auto-update apps' option and select either 'Do not auto-update apps' or 'Auto-update apps over Wi-Fi only'. If you select the former option, you'll need to remember to update your

apps manually so you're not left vulnerable to security exploits. To do this, select 'My apps & games' from the menu, then choose Update All to install all the available updates. You can also

update apps



individually by selecting them from the Updates list and tapping Update.

Stop WhatsApp downloading media files

Setting WhatsApp to download photos and videos automatically will soon fill your device's storage and can also rack up mobile data charges. To make sure the messaging app only downloads media files with your approval, tap its three-dot menu button and select Settings. From here, choose 'Data usage' and select 'When using mobile data'. Make sure the boxes for Images, Audio, Videos and Documents are all

Stop apps wasting your data

unchecked, then tap OK. You can do the same for the 'When connected on Wi-Fi' option if you like. The next time someone sends you a photo or video, you'll see a thumbnail and details of the file's size, so you can decide whether or not to download it. In the 'Data usage' menu, there's also a 'Low data usage' option that reduces the amount of data you use when making calls through WhatsApp.

Turn on Chrome's data saver

Google Chrome has a built-in tool that reduces the amount of data you use when you visit web pages. It works by loading the pages on Google's servers



first and then presenting a compressed version of the same content Note that this means it won't work with secure pages (which have URLs starting with 'https') or any pages you

visit while using incognito tabs. However, it has the added benefit of activating Chrome's Safe Browsing system, which protects you from phishing websites and other malware. To switch on data saving, tap the three-dot menu button and choose Settings. Under Advanced, select 'Data saver' and slide the switch to the 'on' position. If you have any trouble loading websites in this mode, you can turn it off from the same menu.

Use Opera's data-saving

Opera for Android also provides some tools to help you use less data, including a video compression feature. From the browser's Settings menu, choose 'Data savings' and tick the box next to Enabled. You can then tick the box for 'Video compression' and also change the image quality using the slider. After



you've loaded a few web pages, tap the Opera button to find out how much data the browser has saved vou. From this view. vou can also toggle data savings on and off without changing your custom settings.



Ditch the official Facebook app

Facebook is notorious for using huge amounts of mobile data and draining your battery, so why not uninstall it and access the social network from your browser instead? You can place a Facebook shortcut on your home screen by tapping Chrome's menu button and selecting 'Add to Home Screen'. One downside is that this opens Facebook in a new tab each time you use the shortcut. To get round this problem, install Tinfoil for Facebook (bit.ly/ tinfoil399) which simply loads Facebook Mobile in its own separate app, keeping you logged in at all times.

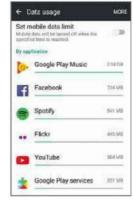
Receive warnings about your data usage

You can easily check how much data you've used, and which apps consume the most data, by checking Android's built-in 'data usage' feature. Open Settings and tap 'Data usage' to see the total amount of data you've used during the current period. To change the monthly period so that it matches your mobile billing cycle, select the down-arrow and choose 'Change cycle'.

Scrolling further down the page reveals the amount of data your apps have used, ranked in order from highest to lowest. Selecting an app gives you the option to limit how much background data it uses. From the 'Data usage' screen, you can also set a

data warning by adjusting the horizontal marker on the graph, or set a mobile data limit, which will stop you exceeding your data allowance.

There's a simple feature for checking your mobile



data in iOS, too. To use it, open Settings and tap Mobile Data. From here, you can check your data usage for the current period (which runs until you reset it manually). Swipe down the page and toggle the appropriate switches to control which apps can use mobile data.

If you want to receive alerts about your data usage, you'll need a thirdparty app such as My Data Manager (bit.ly/data399). This excellent tool alerts you when you exceed your daily quota (based on your total monthly allowance); when you're projected to exceed your allowance before the end of the month; and when you've used 90% of your total allowance.

Prevent apps from using data in the background

Controlling mobile data use in Android isn't as easy as it is in iOS, but it's still possible if you install Opera's datasaving app, Opera Max (bit.ly/ operamax399). This also optimises data usage in Chrome, YouTube, Netflix and Instagram, and unlike the native data-saving features in some of those

apps, Opera Max keeps a record of how much data it has saved you. It also sends vou an alert when it detects that an app is using a lot of data in the background, so you can block it before it costs you money.



TOP 10 DATA-**GUZZLING APPS**

The following apps are responsible for using the most data, according to security firm AVG

APPS THAT RUN IN THE BACKGROUND

- Facebook
- Google Play Services
- 🕮 ввм
- 📵 Instagram
- Facebook Messenger

USER-ACTIVATED APPS

- Snapchat
- Amazon Shopping
- Spotify Music
- LINE
- Clean Master



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	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
	TalkTalk	TalkTalk: Broadband	£7.50 (FREE for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	CHEAPEST
1							£0.00
2	c) plusnet	Plusnet: Broadband	£9.99 (FREE for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	onlimited	20.03
20.00							
4	E	EE: Broadband & Calls	£9.95 (£1 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	unlimited	C10.00
							£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 2 June 2016.



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

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

computer ACTIVE

• WHAT YOU MUST NEVER DO IN WINDOWS: The biggest mistakes that could mess up your PC

PLUS

· Reveal hidden malware on your PC

- Make your passwords impossible to hack
- Fix every PC problem with one program

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Take a Screen Break

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

WEB USER WORD SEARCH

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

ACER APPLE ASUS BENQ DELL PANASONIC PHILIPS SAMSUNG SONY **TOSHIBA**

C	R	L	G	0	U	Z	P	I	J	A	D
Q	J	Q	G	P	U	R	Н	C	P	P	N
В	C	Y	N	T	Q	Q	I	P	M	0	T
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Q	N	X	M	S	M	В	P	G	P	D	N
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K	A	C	U	G	S	E	D	Q	N	K	A
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N	A	A	J	L	I	E	D	T	V	P	G
R	P	T	0	P	K	Y	L	0	X	P	C

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE FILM TITLES FROM THE EMOJI?









Get the answers online at bit.ly/quiz399

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 2

Pinnacle Studio Ultimate 19.5

The new 19.5 version of Pinnacle Studio Ultimate now includes all-new Stop Motion animation capabilities, plus multi-camera editing for up to six cameras. With 64-bit speed, the software is optimised for Intel's

EACH

WORTH £99.95

6th-generation processor and supports editing in 4K, HD and 3D. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@ dennis.co.uk with 'pinnacle' in the subject line. For more info, visit www.pinnaclesys.com and 'like' Pinnacle Studio's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pinnaclesys.

WIN 1 OF 3

Revell Control Quadcopter Steady Quad

Revell Control's new drone, the Steady Quad Cam, has an automatic height-setting function, letting you focus entirely on your flying skills. There's also an on-board camera for capturing high-definition images and videos. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis. co.uk with 'quad' in the subject line. You can buy the Steady Quad from Argos and all good toy and model

retailers. For more info, visit www.revell.de/en.



Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Chat to friends on any messaging app or device, from your PC

meetfranz.com

Franz rolls multiple chat and messaging services into one PC-based communication tool. Here's how to use it

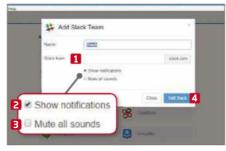
hat services are a quick and convenient way to communicate, but if your friends use Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp, while certain family members insist on using Skype and work colleagues communicate through Slack, you'll have to sign up for an awful lot of services and apps.

Franz (meetfranz.com) is a chat client

that lets you sign into and use 14 popular messaging services simultaneously. Unlike other similar tools, it only supports modern platforms - there's no Google Talk, Yahoo, AIM or ICQ here. This also makes it a great way to discover new chat services you've never heard of, such as Grape and Gitter. Franz is available for Windows, Mac OS X and Linux.



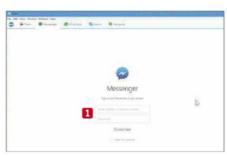
Launch Franz and you're greeted with a single screen filled with the 14 different services that the program currently supports. These include Slack, WhatsApp, Skype, Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts and HipChat. 11 To get started, just click the first chat service you want to add.



The process for adding a service will vary slightly depending on what it is. Slack, for example, lets you add your team name. 11 You can choose whether Franz should display notifications, 2 and whether or not you want all sounds muted. 3 Click the Add button 4 to switch on the service.



Repeat the process to add as many different services as you want. If you're adding Skype, be aware that Franz doesn't currently support Skype calls, just text messaging. When you've finished, you'll see a list of 'Enabled services' 1 and a tab bar containing each one along the top of the screen. 2



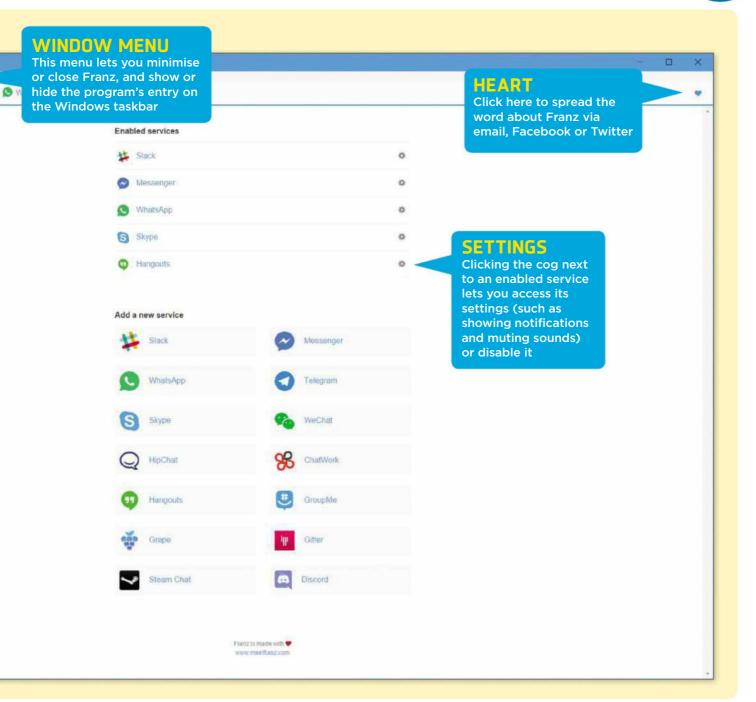
To use a service, you'll first need to sign into it. Pick one of the choices from the tab bar and type your credentials on the sign-in page. 1 Some of Franz's listed chat services let you create a new account within the program, but for others you'll have to do this on the service's website or app.



You can see at a glance if you have any messages waiting for you in a service (provided you haven't turned off notifications)



Conce you've logged into a service, you can access it by clicking the relevant tab. Franz offers the full messaging app for each service, so it will be no different to using the normal standalone version. In Facebook Messenger, you can type a message 11 or place an audio or video call. 2





Click the Franz button 11 from anywhere to open the home screen. The View menu 2 lets you reload the connected services and toggle full screen on or off. 13 You can also jump between services 4 and zoom in and out of the screen. 5 There are keyboard shortcuts for each menu option to speed things up.



The Services menu 11 provides another way to access the chat services you're signed into. 2 Each one is automatically assigned a keyboard shortcut based on its position on the tab bar, so Home is Ctrl+0, the first item on the bar is Ctrl+1 and so on. Use them to quickly jump between chat accounts.



You can reorder the services by clicking and dragging them around the tab bar. The keyboard shortcuts will change accordingly. The File menu lets you check for program updates or quit Franz. 11 The Help menu 22 lets you view the changelog and see improvements made in each program revision.

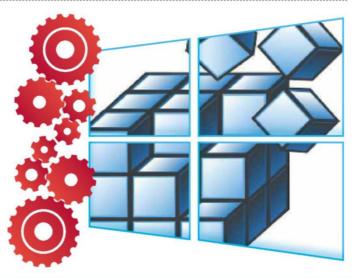


Hack Windows 10's Registry in only a few clicks

Win10 Wizard: bit.ly/wizard399 | 4 15 mins | 4 Windows 10

indows 10 is an excellent operating system, but it has some irritating qualities, particularly with regard to privacy and advertising. Some of these can easily be resolved from the Settings menu, but others are more complex and require you to make tweaks to the Registry. If you're not comfortable doing this, Win10 Wizard lets you tweak many of Windows 10's Registry settings from one, user-friendly interface, with only a few clicks.

It has separate menus for privacy, security and location services, from which you can disable various features including targeted advertising, feedback notifications and app reminders. You can also control how much information you share with Microsoft and make changes to the OS's appearance by disabling tools such as the Battery Indicator and Action Center. It also includes useful tools for scanning your PC for hardware-compatibility problems and reclaiming any precious drive space lost during the upgrade.



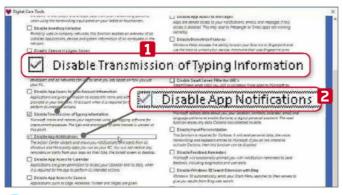


On launch, Win10 Wizard shows any compatibility problems that have cropped up since you upgraded. Click Device & App Compatibility 1 to review them. Drivers that have not successfully installed are listed under Drivers and removed applications are shown in the Applications drop-down menu.



Click Done to return to Win10 Wizard's main menu, then click Privacy to browse Windows 10's privacy settings.

To stop Windows 10 showing you targeted ads, tick the box to 'Disable and reset Advertising ID and Info'.



You can stop Microsoft tracking your keystrokes by ticking the box for 'Disable Transmission of Typing Information'. 1 If you find the Action Center's notifications irritating, you can stop them by ticking the box for Disable App Notifications. 2



The SmartScreen tool tracks the URLs you click in Windows apps (along with some files you download) to make sure that they are safe. To disable it, tick the box to Disable Smart Screen Filter for URLs.

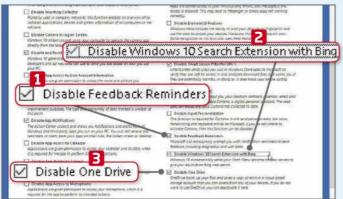




EXPERT TIP

Edward Munn savs

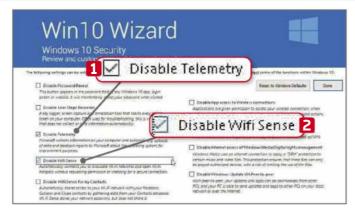
If you change your mind about any of the tweaks you've made to Windows 10, you can undo them by simply unticking the boxes you've selected. If you've made a lot of changes that you now want to undo, there's a 'Reset to Windows Defaults' button in each section that you can use to make the process even quicker.



To stop Windows 10 asking for feedback with diagnostics and user data, tick Disable Feedback Reminders. 11 You can also disable Bing in the Start Menu 2 and turn off OneDrive. 3 Click Done and No (for the time being) when asked if you want to restart your PC now to implement the changes.



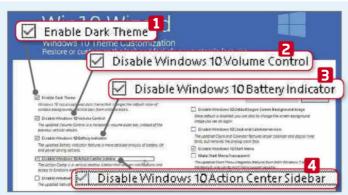
Click the Location Services button. To stop Windows 10 and its apps using your location, tick all the appropriate boxes, 11 then select Done. 2 Bear in mind that disabling these settings can affect some of Windows 10's functionality. If you find something isn't working, just switch it back on.



Windows 10 automatically shares information with Microsoft about how it is functioning. To disable this, open Win10 Wizard's Security menu and tick Disable Telemetry. 1 While you're here, you can also turn off Wifi Sense 2 - a tool that automatically connects you to available Wi-Fi networks.



Windows 10 is set to share Windows Updates with other PCs on your local network (and over the internet). To deactivate this feature so you can only download updates directly from Microsoft's servers, tick the box for 'Disable Windows Update via Peer-to-Peer'. 11



In Win10 Wizard's Themes menu, you can enable the dark theme 1 and deactivate features such as the Volume Control 2 and Battery Indicator. 2 You can also remove the Action Center. 4 To implement your changes, click Done and select Yes when prompted to restart the computer.



To reclaim hard-drive space lost by upgrading to Windows 10, click Reclamation. 🚺 Selecting 'Clean my System now' performs a clean-up scan that removes the option to roll back to Windows 7 or 8, so make sure you're happy with Windows 10 before activating it.



Store and edit documents online for free

pen365 is a new, free service from LibreOffice that lets you edit documents, spreadsheets and presentations online via your web browser.

You can use the web apps as soon as you set up an account,

Open365: open365.io | 🕒 20 mins | 🎥 Vista, 7, 8, 10

but if you also install the Open365 Desktop software, you can upload 20GB of files, so you can access them instantly, wherever you go.

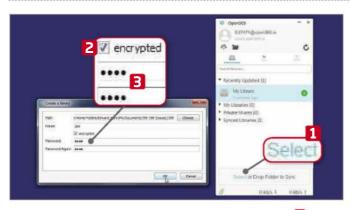




Go to open365.io and follow the onscreen instructions to set up an account. Run the setup file to install the Desktop uploader (after it downloads automatically), then click Open365 from the Start menu. You'll be asked to sign in 11 before you can start syncing your files.



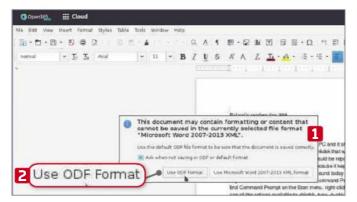
Click Yes to download the default library and create a virtual drive when prompted. Next, click Open to view the 🛮 default library. You'll see a My Library shortcut 🚺 listed below Computer. Drag and drop your files here, or to the Open365 software, 2 to upload them to the cloud.



Existing folders can be synced by clicking Select 11 and choosing the folder you want to upload, or by dragging and dropping them to this area. To password-protect a folder you're syncing, click 'encrypted', 2 enter a password you want to use in the two boxes 3 and click OK.



A green tick indicates that a folder has been successfully synced to the cloud. Visit open365.io from any PC and log in to browse your uploaded files. Hovering your cursor over a document gives you the option to share, 11 download 22 or delete it, **B** or you can click it to open with Open365 Writer.



Writer offers all the features you'd find in a Desktop word processor. When you try to save changes to a DOCX file, a message appears, warning that 'formatting or content' might not be saved if you keep the current format. 11 To avoid this, save the document as an ODF file. 2



To stop a folder on your PC syncing, open the Open365 Desktop tool, right-click the folder and select Unsync. 1 The last synced version of the files in the folder will remain stored in the cloud until you delete them. You can do this from the web or by clicking 'Open cloud file browser'. 2



Don't let your mouse get hijacked

esearchers at Bastille (www.bastille.net) have found a vulnerability in some wireless mice and the dongles they use to connect to your PC, that could let other users within range of your mouse take over the device.

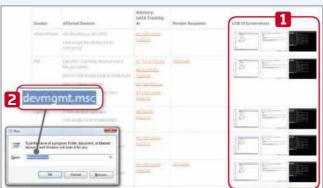
In this Workshop, we show you how to check whether your make and model of wireless mouse is affected and, if it is, how to fix the vulnerability.



Bastille: www.mousejack.com | 🕒 10 mins | ಶ XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10



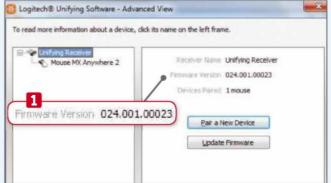
Check if your mouse is vulnerable by visiting bit.ly/ mice399. Devices known to be affected are listed. 1 The Vendor Response column 2 shows you whether the manufacturer has issued a fix or a response to the problem.



If you think you have one of the devices listed, you can double-check if this is the case. In the USB ID Screenshots section, 1 click the middle screenshot to open it. To compare this information to your own, press Windows+R, type devmgmt.msc 2 and press Enter.



Find your wireless device in the list, right-click it and choose Properties. Click the Details tab 🗓 and click the drop-down Property menu. Select Hardware Ids. 2 If the information in the Value section matches the screenshots, your mouse is definitely at risk.



Logitech and Microsoft have issued updates for their hardware. Logitech's can be downloaded from its site at bit.ly/logifix399 - follow instructions to check which Firmware Version 1 you have. Microsoft's updates have already been issued through Windows Update.



For a Lenovo or Dell device, you need to contact their customer service departments. Lenovo has updated its firmware and is offering to swap devices - the link in Vendor Response column shows how to find your version. Dell is discussing options on a case-by-case basis.



If your mouse isn't listed, it isn't necessarily safe, but attackers need to be able to see your screen while you're absent in order to exploit it. The best defence is to lock your screen whenever you're away. Choose the option from the Start menu 1 or use the Windows+L shortcut.

Weekend Project

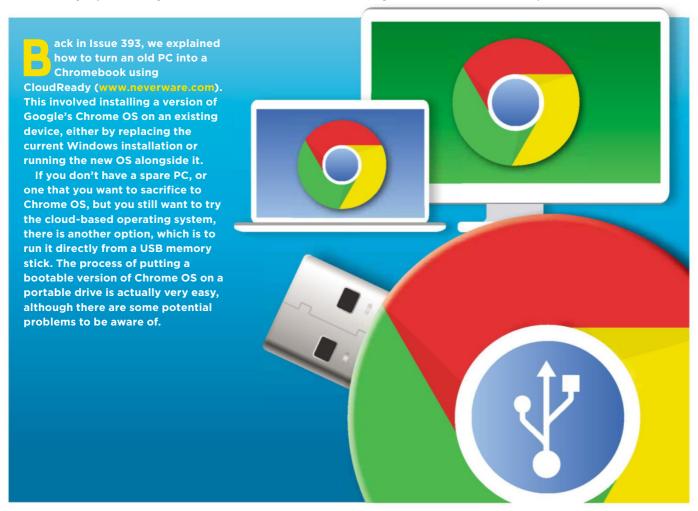
Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance





Run Chrome OS from a portable USB drive

A portable operating system you can plug into any PC is ideal for security, privacy and convenience. Wayne Williams explains how



What you'll need

The trick to running an operating system directly from a USB flash drive – whether it's Windows, Ubuntu or Chrome OS – is to use a fast drive. While you can pick up a memory stick for just a few pounds these days, anything less than a USB 3.0 device plugged into a USB 3.0 port will be slow to load and is likely to provide sluggish performance.

USB memory sticks come in different

speeds and spending a little extra will pay dividends, so it's worth choosing a well-known brand, such as SanDisk, Crucial or Kingston. An 8GB drive should suffice but bigger is usually better.

Having said that, Chrome OS is lighter and less resource hungry than most operating systems, so you can still give it a go on a standard USB drive if you have one spare. It will still need to be at least 4GB in size, though, to fit the OS. Just be aware that it might not perform at its best, or even work at all, if your hardware isn't up to it.

You will also need a copy of Chrome OS. Unfortunately, you can't download it directly from Google but you can get Chromium OS - the open-source operating system that Chrome OS is based on - from the amusingly named ArnoldTheBats World of Whimsy (arnoldthebat.co.uk). The site offers a



Up-to-date versions of the OS are maintained on the whimsical ArnoldTheBats website

large selection of downloads, including daily, weekly and special builds, which you can get from chromium.arnoldthebat .co.uk. There are three different types of build: CARMOS, which is for devices powered by ARM processors; Camd64OS, for 64-bit PCs; and Cx86OS, for 32-bit PCs. If you have a 64-bit PC, choose a 64-bit build. If you don't (or if you're not

sure), then stick with a 32-bit version instead.

If you are downloading one of the daily or weekly builds, it makes sense to go for the latest version, but if you run into any problems, try an older build. The special builds include extra drivers, which means they should run on a wider range of devices.

The download will come in at under 400MB, which is actually quite small for an operating system (Windows 10

downloads are around 3GB). However, it will expand considerably when installed on the USB drive.

We show you how to install it to a USB in our Mini Workshop, below.

Potential uses

It's very useful to have a portable operating system on a USB memory stick that you can boot into from anywhere, particularly if you regularly have to use a computer that isn't yours. By

launching Chromium OS, rather than the PC's installed operating system, you avoid leaving behind any traces of your activity, such as web browsing and downloading. That's

great for both privacy and security. Chromium OS, like the

Chrome web browser, can be customised to suit your preferences, with all your settings, add-ons and bookmarks ready to access. If you usually sign into Chrome with your Google account, your existing Chrome settings will be transferred across to the Chrome OS version.

Chromium OS fails to write to USB

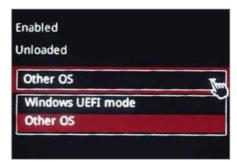
Win32 Image Writer is a simple program that's easy to use, but you may find that the process of writing Chromium OS to the USB memory stick occasionally fails and displays the message:

"An error occurred when attempting to write data to handle. Error 2: The system cannot find the file specified."

This seems a bit obscure but the problem is easy to overcome – just make sure the USB stick is plugged into a USB port on your computer, not a hub, then try again. It should work this time.

Disable Secure Boot

If you try to boot from your USB drive and are shown a red warning notice instead of the Chromium start screen, you will need to disable Secure Boot. This



You may have to switch off the Secure Boot option to boot from your USB stick

*

The better your USB memory

stick, the better your OS will run

MINI WORKSHOP | Install Chromium OS on a USB memory stick



Download the OS and unzip the IMG (image) file to your Desktop.

Download Win32 Image Writer (bit.ly/img399) and run it. This program hasn't been updated in a couple of years but still works perfectly. Install and run it as an administrator. In Windows 10, right-click it 1 and go to More, 'Run as Administrator'. 2



Click the blue folder icon next to the Image File box and select the IMG file you extracted earlier. Insert your USB drive into a spare port on your PC and select the correct drive letter in the Device drop-down box. Click the Write button and wait for the file to transfer.



Restart your system and boot into the USB stick. Your PC should be set to boot from USB. If it isn't, go into settings (press F2 or Del while your computer is booting up) and look for the boot menu. Change the order of devices. 1 Press F10 to action the changes and restart your computer.

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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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.

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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

at bit.ly/raspbook

feature, often found on newer PCs, stops malicious software and "unauthorised" operating systems from loading during bootup. To disable it, restart your PC and press the required button to go into the setup. Locate the boot menu and look for a Secure Boot option. The exact process for disabling it will vary, but you may see an 'OS Type' entry. Change this from 'Windows UEFI mode' to 'Other OS', then press F10 to save the changes and restart. Chromium OS should now boot without any problems.

Master Chromium OS

Chromium OS, like Chrome OS, is built around a launcher through which you access your apps. Web browsing is carried out via Chromium, an opensource version of Chrome.

If you already use Google's browser in Windows, you'll feel right at home, because everything is synced through your Google account, so all your apps,



Chromium is the open-source version of Chrome and is compatible with your Google account



Configure the OS and install add-ons such as Flash from the Settings menu

settings, auto-fill details, passwords, bookmarks, history and even open tabs will be carried over from (and to) Chrome. You can choose which details are synced from the Settings menu, if you'd prefer to keep your Chromium OS device entirely separate.

We show you the basics of getting started in our Mini Workshop, below.

The All Apps screen gives

you access to all the apps included in the operating system, such as Gmail Offline, Files, Google Docs and Google Sheets. Additional apps, games, extensions and themes can be installed through the Web Store.

You can use the system tray icon to switch Google accounts, manage your internet connection, adjust the volume, access Settings, and shut down and lock Chromium OS.

The Settings screen lets you manage your internet connection, and install and update add-ons such as Flash. You can further configure the OS through the Advanced Settings menu.

Right-clicking a blank area of the Desktop brings up a context menu that lets you change the position of the "shelf" (the Chromium OS equivalent of the Windows taskbar) or hide it automatically. You can also change your wallpaper here. Images for wallpaper can be imported from Google Drive.

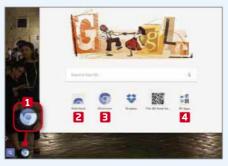


New themes can be downloaded from Google's Chrome Web Store

MINI WORKSHOP | Get started with Chromium OS



When Chromium starts, you may be given a choice of images to boot. The default - 'local image A' - is fine for now, and will load automatically after a brief wait. You'll then see the Chromium OS configuration screen where you can set up your keyboard, language and so on. Next, sign into your Google account. 11



Choose a picture to use for your account. You'll be offered the chance to take a tour of the operating system. All the apps can be accessed through the launcher in the bottom-left corner. 1 Click this to get access to the Web Store, 2 open the Chromium browser 3 or view All Apps. 4



Chromium OS comes with a good selection of web-based apps to get you started. You can browse through them on the All Apps screen. If you want more apps, launch and browse the Web Store. 1 The system tray 2 in the bottom-right corner provides access to various settings, and lets you customise the OS.

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Web User's Top Tips

Our experts show how to install and run userscripts in Firefox, to add extra features to your Android phone

TOP TIPS FOR ANDROID USERSCRIPTS

Set up Firefox for userscripts

ost mobile browsers can't run add-ons and extensions, but Firefox is an exception. If you don't already have the browser on your Android phone or tablet, go to the Google Play Store and search for Firefox. Install the free app, then go to the home screen and tap the Firefox icon to open it. Skip the introductory screens.

With Firefox on the screen, press the three-dot menu button in the top-right corner and select Tools. Press Add-ons on the next menu, then 'Browse all Firefox add-ons' on the next screen. Tap inside the search box and type usi. Press 'usi' in the search results. Tap 'Add to Firefox', then Install. You can now install and run userscripts on your Android device.

Install USI (User\Unified Script Injector) to run userscripts on Android devices



Best userscript sources

Userscripts are similar to browser extensions in that they add features that aren't available in the original browser. Some are very useful. There are three sources of userscripts and Greasy Fork (greasyfork.org) is the best one. It contains thousands of userscripts and tapping the Scripts link on the homepage lets you browse them.

The page isn't optimised for mobile phones, so you will have to zoom in (by spreading two fingers on the screen) and drag the screen around to see the

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

content. Use the 'Sorting by' panel at the top to list the userscripts by installs, ratings, date and other attributes. The search tool in the top-right corner is the best way to find a specific script.

OpenUserJS (openuserjs.org) is another good source of userscripts and this site works well on mobile phones, which makes it easier to browse. However, the search box, which is at the top of the page when you visit the site on a desktop PC, ends up at the bottom of the page on mobile screens, so you have to keep swiping up until you reach it if you want to search for a specific userscript.

Userscripts.org (userscripts-mirror .org) also has a large number of scripts, but it is said to have some scam and spam scripts, so we would recommend taking great care and perhaps avoiding this source altogether.

Most userscripts are designed for desktop computers and add-ons, such

as Tampermonkey for Chrome, which we covered in Issue 396 (bit.ly/webuser396). Many userscripts do not work on mobile phones, but there are a few useful ones that do.

Switch to desktop view

Many websites automatically detect whether you are using a computer, a phone or a tablet, and provide different web pages for each one. Many userscripts are designed to be used on desktop computers and they require web pages to contain specific elements and be formatted in a particular way. When faced with a web page optimised for mobile devices, the script may fail to work.

The solution is to press the threedot menu button in the top-right corner of Firefox and select Request Desktop Site. This fetches the exact same web page that would appear on a desktop computer. A script that will not work in mobile mode often works in this view. Try both views if you have problems getting a script to work.

Some services, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Google search, can be accessed using an app instead of a browser. Scripts don't work in apps, and they may not be able to run even in the mobile version of the website. However, they may work if you request the desktop site in a browser. Remember this when looking at userscripts on websites such as Greasy Fork and OpenUserJS.

Install a userscript

Installing a userscript on the mobile version of Firefox is much the same as on a PC browser. For example, there is a Reddit script that makes it easier to spot the latest posts on its forum. To install it, open Firefox and go to greasyfork.org. Type reddit, into the home screen's search box, then scroll down the list of results to find 'Reddit highlight new comments'. Tap this and, on the userscript information screen, press the green 'Install the script' button. When you are asked if USI should load and activate, press OK. The script is now loaded and running.

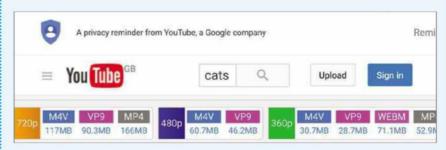
Visit www.reddit.com and browse as usual. When you view a discussion, you'll see an option near the top to highlight 'comments posted since' and a box to enter a time. Tap the box and type a value. For example, you could enter 02:00 to highlight all comments added in the last two hours. Recent comments appear highlighted with a blue background, so it's easy to see what's been added since you last visited.



Find useful userscripts on Greasy Fork and install them in Firefox on your phone

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave



The YouTube Links userscript lets you save videos to watch later

Download YouTube videos

Watching videos on your mobile phone can consume a lot of data, and exceeding your allocation could leave you with a hefty bill. The YouTube Links script (available on Greasy Fork) lets you download videos via Wi-Fi so you can watch them later offline, thus saving your data. The script adds a toolbar just above the video on a YouTube page. This is organised into sections by video resolution, with buttons to download and save the video in different file formats. So, for example, you could press the MP4 button in the 720p section to save the YouTube video as an MP4 file.

Downloading a video triggers a pop-up asking which app you want to use. Select Firefox. When asked if it has permission to access your photos, tap OK or Yes. The YouTube video will be saved in the same place as any films you've taken with the phone's camera. To view a saved YouTube video, open the phone's Gallery app, find the video and tap it. Select the phone's video player to play it. YouTube videos can be deleted in the same way you would delete a video shot using the phone's camera.

This extension needs the desktop version of the website, not the mobile one. After opening YouTube, go to the menu and select Request Desktop Site. Don't worry if you cannot then play the video - just save it and it will play from the phone's storage.

Disable/enable userscripts

Some Userscripts are specific to one particular website, such as the Reddit comment highlighter (see 'Install a userscript', left). If you're not using that website or you don't want to use the script on a particular occasion, it can be disabled quite easily.

In Firefox, press the three-dot menu button and select USI Options at the bottom. Swipe up if your screen

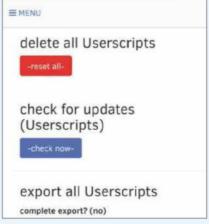
doesn't display the whole menu. Press the Menu button on the left and select 'All userscripts'. When pressed, the button below 'activated' changes to 'deactivated' and the script will stop running.

Delete a userscript

If you no longer want a userscript in Firefox, go to the menu and select USI Options, Menu, then 'All userscripts'. Swipe up until you see the Delete button and press it. It's not far from the activate/deactivate option. To remove all userscripts from Firefox, go to the menu and press USI Options. Press Menu on the left, then Options. At the top is an option to 'delete all Userscripts'. Press the 'reset all' button.

Update userscripts

Userscripts are sometimes updated to fix problems or bugs, and you should regularly check for new versions. This is straightforward and takes only a minute. To update all userscripts installed in Firefox, go to the menu and tap USI Options. Press Menu on the left, then Options. Find 'check for updates' on the Options screen, and press the 'check now' button.



The USI Options menu lets you delete userscripts and check for updates

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



SECURITY

Alternative ways to renew Kaspersky

I tried four times to renew my Kaspersky Internet Security licence, but the renewal website keeps crashing. I emailed the company several times to complain but received no help. I reluctantly decided to dump the program as I'm sick and tired of the hassle. The software may be brilliant but everything else about it is a waste of time.

John C Kent, via email

If your version of Kaspersky Internet Security is reasonably up to date, you can renew it from within the program. Find and click the licence link on the home screen to display the current licence status (active or expired). There are two buttons: one to enter an activation code manually; the other to buy one. Click the Purchase button and follow



Renew your internet security software online and get a new licence key

the instructions to update it from within the program. You may have to try a different browser if you're having trouble seeing this.

If that doesn't work, you can buy an activation code at the website and enter it manually. Go to bit.ly/kasp399 and enter your licence number, then click Validate Licence to display the appropriate licence-renewal page. Once you get an activation code, return to the licence page in Kaspersky, click the button to Enter Activation Code and type it in the box to authorise another year of updates.

haven't used it for two years, but everything works perfectly except Windows updates. It just keeps searching and, even after letting it search for six hours, it never shows any available updates. The laptop is set to automatically update and I've checked that Windows Update is switched on in services.msg.

I've tried everything the internet advises: downloading the latest Windows Update client; downloading a PC repair program; and installing Windows 10 via the Windows 10 Media Tool process. It gets to the end, then fails and reverts back to Windows 7. How do I fix Windows updates so they work normally?

Larry Herber, via email

Windows Update can become corrupted or have bad data, and missing or incorrect Windows system files can make matters worse. Since you don't know where the problem lies, you should complete all the following steps.

First, check your hard drive for errors. Open an Explorer window, then right-click the hard drive and select Properties. Select the Tools tab and click 'Check now' in the 'Error-checking' section. The computer will restart, check the hard drive for problems and fix any it finds.

When the Desktop reappears, try repairing Windows Update, because it sometimes gets in a muddle. Open a browser, go to bit.ly/shoot399 and run the Windows Update Toubleshooter for Windows 7. The file is saved to the Downloads folder, so open that, then double-click the file to run it.

Now check Windows for missing files and other problems. Go to Start, All Programs, Accessories. Right-click Command Prompt and select 'Run as administrator'. Type sfc /scannow and, when it has finished, type dism.exe /Online /Cleanupimage /Restorehealth and uninstall any security software.

Now try Windows Update again and upgrade to Windows 10. This procedure may take an hour or two, but it should solve the problems.

MUSIC

iTunes alternatives on Apple devices

You recently said that you did not recommend using iTunes. I have an

It's Friday afternoon

These days, you can connect Apple devices to other music services iPod Classic 160GB. What alternative should I use? **Bob Stewart.** via email

iTunes has become big and bloated, and bugs have occasionally been known to mess with your music library, although it's

very good at managing podcasts - see last issue for our review.

The first iPods had to be plugged into a computer via a USB cable to sync with iTunes and transfer music. Your iPod Classic is from that early generation of music player, so you don't have any alternatives.

The iPod Touch and iPhone are not tied to iTunes in this way. You can stream music directly through Google Play Music, Groove Music, Deezer, Spotify and more. You can continue using your iPod Classic with iTunes but when the time comes to replace it, you will have many more options and the opportunity to switch to an alternative source of music, if you wish.

GENERAL PC

Unblock Windows 7 updates

I have an old MSI laptop running Windows 7 Home Premium SP1 that I am trying to update to Windows 10. I

Ask the Expert

GENERAL PC

Fix updates that won't complete

Every time I switch on my computer, I get a message about configuring updates. After some time, the computer shuts down and I get a message stating that the PC has failed to configure updates and is reverting back to its previous state. After another long wait, it shuts down again. How do I stop this happening?

Joe Pester, via email

It depends where this problem is. If you leave it to configure, fail and restart, does it eventually get to the Desktop? If you are running Windows 7 or 8, then follow the advice given to Larry Herber (opposite) about fixing Windows Update.

If you're running Windows 7 and it will not boot to the Desktop, no matter how many times it tries, keep tapping F8 just after switching on, to access the boot menu. Choose the option to start in safe mode with networking, then follow the instructions.

If Windows 8 or 10 won't boot to the Desktop but you can reach the login screen, click the onscreen power button and hold down Shift while clicking Restart, After restarting, a menu appears. Click the Troubleshoot tile, then click 'Refresh your PC' on the next screen. This fixes Windows problems without losing any of your files.

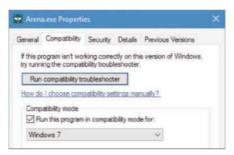
If nothing works and Windows is stuck in an update-fail-restart loop, you should reinstall Windows over the top of itself, as if you were doing an upgrade. This keeps your files but fixes missing files and problems. Use a second PC to download Windows 7 (bit.ly/7iso399), Windows 8.1 (bit.ly/8iso399) or Windows 10 (bit.ly/10iso399). The ISO images can be burned to DVD-R with CD/DVD-writing software. Boot your computer from the disc to reinstall it.

WINDOWS 10

Install incompatible hardware

Once again, new technology brings trouble. I have a digital USB microscope, which I acquired when using Windows 7. I now have a Windows 10 laptop and the microscope's hardware is not compatible, according to a "terribly sorry" manufacturer who can't (or won't) do anything about it.

I don't want to resort to dual-booting my laptop, which seems an excessive step to solve a small problem with a



If old software won't run, try tweaking compatibility settings in Properties

single accessory. Can you recommend an alternative and easier solution?

Richard Sanders, via email

There are a few options you can try. For example, if the software can be installed but doesn't run, there are compatibility settings that can fix problems with software designed for older versions of Windows.

Open an Explorer window and find the microscope's program in C:\Program Files. Right-click the executable file and select Properties on the menu. Select the Compatibility tab, then click 'Run compatibility troubleshooter'. If that doesn't get the software working, use the manual controls below. Tick 'Run this program in compatibility mode for' and select Windows 7. Tick the box at the bottom, 'Run this program as an administrator'.

Unlike Windows 7, Windows 10 only lets you install 'signed' drivers (ones that have a digital signature). This may be what's stopping your software from installing. Click Start, Power, then hold down Shift while clicking Restart. Windows restarts and presents several option screens. Select Troubleshoot, Advanced Options, Startup Settings, then Restart, which takes you to a screen with a list of options. Press the number next to 'Disable driver signature enforcement'. Windows restarts and you can install 'unsigned' software that would not previously install.

Another option is to use a virtual machine. For this, you need a copy of VirtualBox (www.virtualbox.org) and a Windows 7 DVD. Install VirtualBox and the extension pack, then create a new virtual machine and select Windows 7 as the operating system.

Before starting the Windows 7 virtual machine, go to Settings and select USB. Select 'USB 2.0' and enable the USB controller, then click the top button on the right to add a new USB device. Close Settings, insert the Windows DVD and cancel any program that runs. Start the Windows 7 virtual machine and install Windows. Skip the bit that asks for a licence code - you can run it for 30 days without one, which is plenty of time to test whether the microscope works.

After starting Windows 7 for the first time, go to the Devices menu at the top of the window and select Insert Guest Editions CD Image, Open Explorer and run VBoxWindowsAdditions.exe. Now you can install the microscope software and plug the device into a USB socket. It should work.

WINDOWS 10

My Start menu is empty

I switched on my Windows 10 PC this morning and found that the Start menu was empty. There are no tiles and no 'Most used' list. The Start menu has shrunk and is now very narrow, and the taskbar icons are gone, too. However, I can still click Start, 'All apps' to run programs. What has caused this?

Simon Hutchinson, via email

A few people have reported this problem but the cause is unknown. It may be caused by a glitch in a Windows update that resets and empties the Start menu.

Provided all the apps and programs are on the Start, 'All apps' menu, you



Pin items to the Start menu or taskbar by right-clicking in the 'All apps' menu

can add them back manually. Rightclick any item in 'All apps' and use the 'Pin to Start' option to add a Start tile. If your Start menu is too narrow, just click and drag the right edge to resize it. To replace the missing icons on the taskbar, right-click items in the 'All apps' menu and select More. 'Pin to taskbar'.



This fortnight Roland has been relaxing on his sofa, using his Chromecast to mirror his computer screen on his TV

Your Top Tips

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

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TOP TIP

ANDROID

Google's secret weather app

My Samsung Galaxy S6 lets me check the weather forecast in my current

location by simply typing weather into the Google app's search bar. The interface offers a much more detailed summary than if you make the same search from Chrome. Indeed, by tapping the button to expand the web app, you can see details of the humidity, pressure, UV index and visibility, as well as charts for wind and sunset times. In addition to the

London W1T May 25 11:02

there are pages for Tomorrow and 10 Days, making it a truly comprehensive

> weather app. My only criticism is that you need to type weather into Google each time you want to use the app, but the option to include a shortcut on your home screen was recently added. After you expand the web app, simply tap the menu button and select 'Add to home screen'. You can also change the units from Celsius to Fahrenheit.

Ed Wright, via email

Google's weather tool is powered by Weather.com

was often used to fix problems that couldn't be solved when Windows was running normally. You just pressed one of the function keys (the 'F' keys above the number keys) a few seconds after switching on the power and a menu would appear from which you could choose safe mode.

This doesn't work in Windows 10 but there is another way to restart your PC in safe mode. Press Windows+R to open the Run box, type msconfig and press Enter. Select the Boot tab, then tick 'Safe boot'. Underneath, select Minimal. Click OK and you are asked if you want to reboot now or later. Do it now and Windows 10 restarts in safe mode.

Rachel Heath, via email

GENERAL PC

default Today tab,

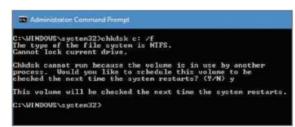
Check your hard drive the old way

A long time ago, when I first got a PC and it still used MS-DOS as the operating system, there was a command called 'chkdsk' that was used to check that the hard drive was OK. If any errors were detected, they would be

repaired. It was a tool that everyone ran every week (or at least every month) to keep the PC's hard drive working.

That command from the Nineties is still around today and it continues to work, even in Windows 10. Right-click the Start button and select Command Prompt (Admin). Windows 7 users should find Command Prompt on the Start menu. right-click it and select 'Run as administrator'. To see all the options available to chkdsk, type chkdsk /? and they will be listed in the command prompt window.

To check and fix the hard drive, you use the original command we used



Check the hard drive for errors and repair them using the chkdsk utility

20-odd years ago: chkdsk c: /f for a quick fix; or the more thorough chkdsk c: /f /r. Be warned, however, that the thorough fix can take several hours to complete because it tests the drive sector by sector.

Chkdsk doesn't run while Windows is in use; it starts working the next time the PC is restarted. Restart Windows now to check the drive immediately.

Anthony Joyce, via email

WINDOWS 10

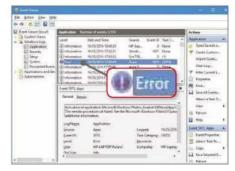
A way to start safe mode

Anyone that has used Windows XP or 7 will be familiar with safe mode, which

GENERAL PC Check theWindows logs

Windows logs everything it does, recording when everything is running smoothly and also when problems are encountered. You can view these logs to see if and when Windows encountered errors, which might help if you are having problems with the operating system or any other software.

Click Start or click the search box in Windows 10 and type event viewer. Double-click to launch it when it appears. Expand the Windows Logs section on the left and click Application. There will be thousands of events recorded but you



Use the Event Viewer to see if Windows has had any problems recently



can quickly scroll down the list and spot any problems because they have a red icon and the word Error next to them.

Select an error in the event list to see more information about it displayed below. Much of it is meaningless but you can see the date and time, and the program name. If the same program keeps cropping up in error reports, it's a sign that there's something wrong and it might need updating or replacing.

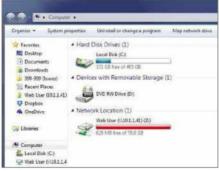
Andrew Pratt, via email

GENERAL PC

Useful keyboard shortcuts

There are a number of shortcuts that can speed up your use of Windows 10. Here are four I have been using for the last 10 days, which have proved useful: pressing the Windows key opens and closes the Start menu; Windows+D hides everything so you can see the Desktop (press it again to do the reverse); Windows+E opens File Explorer; and you can press Windows+i to open the Settings menu. Some of these shortcuts work in Windows 7 and 8, too.

FratPark, Web User Forums



Press Windows+E to quickly open File Explorer in Windows 7 onwards

WINDOWS 10

Hide Action Centre notifications

I've read a lot of tips about hiding the Action Centre in Windows 10 and many of them require a Registry hack. However, this is not necessary. If you would like to hide notifications from appearing in the bottom right-hand corner of the taskbar, open Settings then go to System, 'Notifications & actions' and, on the right, under 'Quick Actions', click 'Turn system icons on or off'. Change the Action Center switch to Off. Now, if you do not use the Action Center, you will no longer see its icon.

FratPark, Web User Forums

BROWSERS

Watch YouTube while browsing the web

If you want to watch YouTube videos in the corner of your screen while continuing to browse the web, there's a s Chrome extension called Sideplayer (bit.ly/side399) that lets you do this. The videos are easily resizable and the extension even block ads.

If you want to use it with Opera, you can do so by first installing 'Download Chrome Extension' (bit.ly/chrome399). Alternatively, the Opera addon YouTube Anywhere (bit.lv/ voutube399) works in much the same way.

If you don't want to install any new add-ons, you can open a new Chrome window, load YouTube and simply resize the window to make it smaller.

Madeline and Peru, Web User Forums

Reduce eye strain at night

Did you know that you can reduce the brightness of your iPhone even further than Apple normally lets you, without downloading an app? To do this, you first need to activate the built-in Zoom feature by opening Settings, General and Accessiblity, then selecting Zoom and switching it to on.

When the Zoom window loads, tripletap three of your fingers anywhere on screen to bring up the Zoom menu. From here, choose Full Screen Zoom, then drag the slider to the far left to zoom out. You can now select 'Choose Filter' to pick from a range of filters that include Inverted, Greyscale, Greyscale Inverted and Low Light.

I find the Low Light option particularly useful when reading in bed, along with the new Night Shift mode, which can be activated from the Display & Brightness settings and makes your display use warmer colours in the evening. To turn off the filter, simply triple-tap with three fingers again, select Choose Filter and None. If you want to switch the Zoom



You can turn on the new Night Shift mode from iOS' Display & Brightness settings



Sideplayer lets you watch YouTube videos in the corner of your screen

feature off altogether, follow the same instructions that you used to turn it on.

Tom A, via email

EMAIL

Windows Live Mail to stop working with Outlook.com

I've used Microsoft's Live Mail 2012 on Windows 7. 8 and now 10. but I recently had a problem with my calendar not syncing, which resulted in the program crashing. I've overcome this by simply stopping Live Mail from syncing with the calendar.

During my search for a solution to this problem, it was brought to my attention that Microsoft is making major changes to its email later this month. This will stop Live Mail 2012 syncing email with Outlook.com and all related email accounts, including Hotmail and Live.com. If you are a Live Mail user, you can find more information about the changes at: bit.ly/live399. Microsoft recommends replacing Live Mail with the Mail app, if you have Windows 8 or 10.

John-228, Web User Forums

SECURITY

Block malicious spam emails

I keep reading about people picking up ransomware from spam emails and then wondering how they received the malicious emails in the first place. I have been using a program called Mailwasher Pro for years, which checks all my emails on the server before I download them to my laptop, so I can see what's safe and what's not. It lets me preview emails, reply, bounce back, delete and blacklist messages. It even checks my email against DNS Blacklist severs to see if they are generated by known spammers.

The free version of the program is available at mailwasher.net and performs many of the same functions as the premium software. The occasional dodgy email might still get through but if you use email software, installing Mailwasher will definitely make it safer.

Rex. via email



Readers' Helpdesk

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

GENERAL PC

Can I restore a system image to another PC?

I am getting a new Windows 10 PC tomorrow and I want to transfer as much as possible from my old Windows 7 PC over to it, including most of my programs and applications. Would I be able to do this using a system image from the old computer? If so, should I upgrade it to Windows 10 first?

I don't have discs for some of the software on my old PC, so if I can't use the system-image option, I'm not sure how I will transfer the programs to my new computer. Is there any other software that might help me do this?

Dagwood00, Web User Forums

A system image transferred from one computer to another is unlikely to work well, even if you upgrade to Windows 10, because the two machines will have different hardware and drivers. System images should only be used to make back-ups of an operating system and its installed applications for restoring to the same PC. You'll also need to create bootable recovery discs, in case you ever need to use the system image.

Most programs need a proper installation to work properly, so I tend not to trust application transfer tools - in my experience, they work sporadically at best. You'll probably have to carry out fresh installations of the software, so try using a key finder such as Belarc Advisor (bit.ly/belarc399) or Magical Jelly Bean KeyFinder (bit.ly/keyfinder399) to find the license keys for any software you've



Magical Jelly Bean KeyFinder locates license keys for more than 300 programs

GENERAL PC

Why won't my PC boot?

When I try to boot my desktop PC, a screen loads stating that it's 'diagnosing' the problem and 'attempting repair'. Then another screen appears saying that it couldn't perform the repair, and gives the option to either shut down or access advanced options.

Not long before the problem materialised, my Avast software had updated and requested a reboot, so it might be related to this. Can anyone suggest how I might fix it?

grumpy old man, Web User Forums

If you have a Windows 10 disc that you can boot from, try using that. There's a good article at Winaero (bit.ly/repair399) that should help you escape the automatic-repair loop that it sounds like you're stuck in. If you haven't got a Windows 10 disc, there



System Restore lets you undo changes that you've made to your PC

are links to help you get one using another PC.

If you can see an option to restart your PC, try holding down the Shift key while you click it. Windows should then load its 'Choose an Option' screen. From here, select Troubleshoot, then 'System Restore'. By following the prompts on screen, you should be able to revert back to a restore point prior to the Avast update.

> Cantrel and kevinf80, **Web User Forums**

paid for, or try contacting the developer. You should then be able to download the appropriate setup files and just enter your license key when prompted.

For your personal files, simply drag and drop the data to an external hard drive, USB stick or DVD.

Peru, Web User Forums

SOFTWARE

Do I need to pay for backup software?

I pay for an inernet security package that includes both antivirus and cloud backup. I wondered whether I could save money with a free backup tool that doesn't involve copying files?

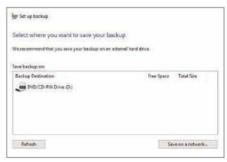
um_please, Web User Forums

I use Norton Security (uk.norton .com) but decided to opt for the Deluxe plan rather than the one that includes cloud backup cover, because I already use Windows' built-in software to create backups. The problem with

cloud backup software is that it becomes redundant during periods when you have no internet connection.

You will need a good sized external hard drive to use Windows Backup. To activate it, type back up into the Start menu and select 'Back up and Restore' and 'Set up back-up'. You can also try Macrium Reflect Free (bit.ly/ macrium399) if you don't want to use the Windows tool.

Cantrel and Madeline, Web User Forums



Windows has its own backup tool that you can use to safeguard your files





Star Email

Mug

Life goes on with or without Windows 10

've been reading Web User for many years, but I've never seen anything polarise readers' views as much as Windows 10. Recently, I sense increasing intolerance from both the 'for' and 'against' camps. I've just read Kevin Scholey's letter 'Get a grip about Windows 10' in Issue 397 (bit.ly/ issue397) in which he berates a previous correspondent who had problems with the Windows 10 upgrade and felt that the only way forward was to buy two new machines.

Well, actually, that's okay. It's a solution and, on older PCs, there certainly can be problems upgrading to Windows 10. I've got four old-ish desktop PCs at home - two running Windows 8.1 and two running



Windows 7. I've tried to upgrade each one of them to Windows 10 and they have all given me difficulties.

The biggest problem was that the PCs would freeze after being left inactive for a while. Yes, I know that's probably a driver issue but my drivers are up to date. A more likely underlying cause is

.....

that some hardware components are too old. I recovered every time by rolling back to a recovery image, and no damage was done.

So, why all the fuss? I tried Windows 10 and it didn't work, but life goes on. Microsoft will continue to support Windows 7 and Windows 8.1 for the remaining life of my PCs, so I will happily carry on using them.

I don't want to rant and rail against Microsoft for their software, but I don't expect to be cast as a technical Luddite either. When I buy a new PC, it will have Windows 10 installed on it. But until then, I am perfectly happy to keep running Windows 7 and 8.1. We always have that choice.

Geoff Stone. Derby

My personal disaster with Windows 10

•

I would like to thank Trevor Bunce (Inbox, Issue 397) for taking the time to share his experiences of upgrading to Windows 10, following my letter in Issue 395. I take his point regarding the installing and running of Driver Booster. Before upgrading, I had done this and updated 23 drivers on both my computers before attempting the Windows 10 upgrade. I also ensured that all my software had been upgraded.

Following my upgrade to Windows 10 from Windows 7, I experienced up to 400 Windows Update errors per day and I was even receiving update errors for software that was not included in the Windows 10 upgrade!

Prior to attempting the restoration to

Windows 7, I uninstalled all Microsoft apps that I did not want. This proved to be a huge mistake because software that had worked previously in Windows 7 now refused to do so. All attempts to aet

working again were met with failure.

Subsequently, neither of my computers would boot up. Following a full diagnostic check, I received the following error message: "No operating system found". I submitted both computers to full and independent checks. The outcome of these checks revealed that the hard drive on both computers had suffered a catastrophic failure and nothing was recoverable from them. The recovery partition had also failed.

I spent six months expending every effort on both computers to get the

upgrade to work successfully. Sadly. it was not to be. However, I am prepared to accept that my ordeal may be unusual, perhaps even unique. Has anyone else out there suffered a similar experience?

Rodney Coleman, via email

Other operating systems are available

I keep reading in Web User about people moaning on and on about Windows 10 spying on them and carrying out automatic updates and so on.

The answer is very simple, folks: you do



these apps



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

not have to use Windows. There are other operating systems available, such as Linux and Mac OS X. I can't understand why people keep using Windows if they do not like it. If you don't like Apple phones, then you use Android or

then you use Android or Windows Phone, so why then if you don't like Windows 10 do you use it?

Stan Elliott, Bangor

PUPs are damaging Freemake's reputation

Freemake must really not care about its reputation these days. I recently removed the company's Audio Converter tool because its Video Converter – which I also have – performs the same tasks. However, when I did so, both programs uninstalled.

When I attempted to download Freemake Video Converter to reinstall the software, my security software would not allow it – quite rightly, because it's

packed with potentially



unwanted programs
(PUPs). Even when my
protection allowed me
to download Video
Converter from another
site, it would not allow
the installation and
deleted the installer.

I finally managed to download a torrent of the program, but Freemake does not allow you to refuse at least two of the PUPs! In order to install its otherwise excellent program, I had to accept these pests, then locate and delete them, reset my browser homepage and delete unwanted and default search engines.

Freemake should realise that the excellence of a program – whether free or not – does not justify such scumbaggery in its distribution.

John Lockett, via email

If you don't like Amazon, don't shop there

I agree with most of Barry's arguments about Amazon in his column in Issue 397, and I have been an Amazon customer for 14 years.

However, no one is forced to use Amazon or to buy from them.

I cancelled Amazon Prime when I was told that it was going up from £49 to £79 because I was not interested in the Prime Video streaming service.

I still use Amazon for a lot of shopping, but I am circumspect about what I buy and also how much I buy if I have to pay postage. It's not difficult. If I can buy something for a similar price elsewhere

for less postage or by waiting until I go to a shopping centre, then I will.

I do not use Amazon unilaterally anymore. For clothes and electrics and coffee pods

(pictured), I'm prepared to spend more than £20 and get free delivery.

Amazon cannot force anyone to get Prime just to buy certain things which you can usually get elsewhere. If Barry feels threatened, then he should man up and go elsewhere.

Martin Fletcher, Thorpe Hesley

Who needs a Kindle when you have the app?

Barry complains about the price of Kindle devices. Why bother buying one? I have the free Kindle app (bit.ly/kindleapp399) installed on two PCs, two tablets and my phone. I can buy, download and read Kindle books on any one of these devices.

I just hope that Amazon doesn't stop supporting the app!

Mike de Jong, via email

Google Photos is arrogant and annoying

Having just read the letter from Dennis Ellis in Issue 395 (bit.ly/ webuser395),

'Google Photos should spare a thought for pre-millennials', I couldn't agree more





about the way that Google Photos handles files. Dennis was spot on in pointing out that it cannot cope properly with photos scanned from old prints since they have no EXIF dates.

There's a similar problem if, like me, you forget to check that the date is set correctly on your digital camera, which means the uploaded data is wrong. However, as Dennis says, the most annoying thing is that Google removes all your own carefully created folder titles and filenames. It then attempts to re-categorise everything according to its own rules – how arrogant is that?

I have to put up with another annoying problem because I store some family photos on two laptops, my phone and my tablet. These images ended up on Google Photos in duplicate or even triplicate, without the application appearing to realise.

It became such a nuisance that in the end I removed it from all my devices. Why would anyone want someone else organising their photos for them in this way? I just don't get it, and I really don't understand why your magazine, and others, are so enthusiastic about it.

John Perkins, via email

We should help over-75s get online

It's hardly surprising to read that internet usage is on the rise among the over-75s

Our 2015 Back Issues Disc is on sale now from Amazon, visit bit.ly/webusercd15











(Webometer, Issue 398). Getting online is no longer the confusing and expensive ordeal that it was 10 years ago, and the popularity of iPads and smart TVs means us oldies don't have to bother with PCs and all their inherent problems if we don't want to.

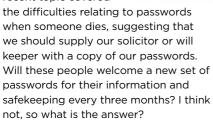
What does worry me is the statement "two thirds of people in this age group have never been online". Many services now insist you have an email address, and communicate digitally rather than via paper letters, which could potentially leave many older people high and dry. You only have to look at how the government has abolished physical driving licences and tax discs in the last few years to see how things are going.

In my opinion, the government should be doing more to help the over-75s get on the web, rather that cutting off their options so they can no longer access services that they've relied on throughout their lives. In lieu of this lack of state help, I'd encourage your readers to use their own skills to educate their elderly friends and relatives about the web.

Peter Clements, via email

Passing on passwords when you pass on

Your news story about the stolen webmail logins in Issue 397 reminded us to change our passwords regularly. Another recent topic covered



Eric Gendle, via email



HAT DO YOU THINK **ABOUT MICROSOFT** SAYING THAT THE UK SHOULD STAY IN THE EU?

As the EU appears to benefit big business and politicians, is it any surprise? They don't have to suffer the problems of no school places, long waits on the NHS and unaffordable housing due to excess demand.

Keith Pearson

They are right. It makes much more sense to stay in than accept the offer of free unicorns for all proposed by Project Fib.

Martin James

They are entitled to their view, but I hope they refrain from influencing their employees to vote a certain way.

Stephen Parry @StephenParry80

I say: what's it got to do with them? Gill Hodson

RE YOU HAPPY THAT CHROME IS PHASING OUT FLASH?

Yep. It's outdated, resource hungry and was the main cause of Chrome

Justin Lawes

I am a weather nerd with a particular interest in severe weather. When I want to watch a US news channel's live stream, I find that it requires Flash. So the sooner the large media companies ditch Flash, the better!

Garry Gazzadp Povey

Fine, as long as BBC also stops using Flash. My kids will complain if games on the CBeebies website stop

Chris Armstrong

Yes. It's always been a security nightmare so let's spend the effort on future tech.

.....

Mark Taylor @wellrandom

ATEST FIGURES SAY THAT 10% OF PEOPLE HAVE NEVER **BEEN ONLINE. DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO NEVER HAS?**

My nan. She only uses her laptop for Microsoft Word.

David Robinson

I'm only 10 miles north of London, and it's not unusual in some of the local villages here.

Andrew @ataccounting

I know people who get others to use the internet for them because they believe it is beyond their abilities.

Jenny Jacks @JenJacks3

My mum. She can send a text message (after hours of instruction from my sisters), but she wouldn't know where to start with a computer.

.....

Steve Hamilton

N EX-GOVERNMENT ADVISOR SAYS UNDER-16s SHOULD BE BANNED FROM USING PHONES AND TABLETS (bit.ly/phoneban399). DO YOU **AGREE?**

A ban is definitely a step too far! Totally unenforceable, too. Kids need to learn to use them responsibly while they are young, with advice from teachers and parents.

Richard Foster

A sledgehammer to crack a nut! Why not make ISPs block porn by default and make subscribers request access?

Dave McAlister @dpmcalister

Yes. Today's children are robbed of the innocence of a time when technology didn't ruin kids' lives.

David Locke

Yep, and TV remote controls.

Richard Morgan

A Page 404

Microsoft's OS updates could render your PC obsolete, warns **Barry Collins**

Windows 10's big can of nematodes

ave you installed your free
Windows 10 upgrade, yet?
The number of people who have
told me their PC was upgraded
without their knowledge has now
reached double figures, so I suspect
you've got the upgrade even if you didn't
want it. Thanks a bunch, Microsoft.

That 'free' upgrade might yet come with a rather expensive rider, however. To celebrate a year since the launch of Windows 10, Microsoft is releasing what's being labelled the Anniversary Update in July – a batch of new features rolled into a mandatory update, none of which, truth be told, is anything to email home about.

However, sneaked in with those new features is a new set of minimum hardware requirements. Microsoft has quietly doubled the minimum amount of RAM required to run Windows 10 from 1GB to 2GB on older, 32-bit systems. If your PC is of a certain vintage – more David Attenborough than David Beckham (and given the way celebrities are expiring this year, that's the riskiest one-liner I've written in a long while) – then it's possible it no longer meets the requirements

for the OS you were (some say, forcibly) upgraded to.

Microsoft says that only new devices with 1GB of RAM will be refused the upgrade, while older

PCs will continue to receive updates, albeit at the expense of performance. Let's be honest, though: if you're running Windows 10 on a PC with only 1GB of RAM, things are probably already pretty sluggish. But this edging up of the minimum hardware requirements does open a massive can of nematodes.



To be fair to Microsoft, it hasn't pushed up the hardware specs in an awfully long time. The minimum system requirements for Windows 10 were no more demanding than those for Vista, which was launched almost a decade ago.

By comparison, Apple squeezes the minimum requirements for OS X with

Microsoft has quietly doubled the minimum amount of RAM required to run Windows 10 on older, 32-bit systems

almost every iteration: although the latest version of the Mac operating

system can technically run on Apple devices bought as far back as 2007, you'll need a machine bought from 2012 onwards to take advantage of its most desirable features.

Yet, having tempted, cajoled and browbeaten people into upgrading to Windows 10, Microsoft is going to brass off an awful lot of users if it suddenly starts making the operating system too sophisticated for their PCs to run it. Windows 7 might be coming to the end of its useful life, but the operating system will never outstrip the capabilities of the PC it's running on because Microsoft stopped adding new features to it years ago. The same cannot be said for those who upgraded their Windows 7 systems to Windows 10: at some point, Microsoft is going to tip them over the edge.

The pace at which Microsoft increases the minimum hardware requirements is critical. How long will it be before any PC bought during the Windows 7 era is incapable of running Windows 10 smoothly? My hunch is that it will be some time yet.

But make no mistake: Windows 10's incremental updates are a ticking time bomb for older hardware. That 'free' upgrade might one day cost you the price of a new PC.



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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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