DO THIS AND YOU'LL NEVER BE HACKED p54

opennic-fvz-rec-gb-lan-01 in London

WHAT YOU MUST BLOCK ONLINE

p38

Not just annoying adverts but also…

…**unsafe downloads,** auto-playing videos, Flash, Facebook pests, **website hacks,** mobile pop-ups, online pop-unders, crooked cookies, **tools that spy on you,** stupid GIFs, Twitter trolls, website clutter, inane comments, **hidden malware** and more — how to BLOCK THEM ALL **p38**

only £2.10

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Wipe out the worst of the web

I'm not an aggressive type, as you can probably tell from my photo, but if I ever get to shake hands with the person who invented pop-up adverts… well, I won't be kind to their fingers. It's a sad fact that the bigger and more popular the web has become, the more ways people have found to spoil it – from spamming and scamming to trolling and Rickrolling. In this issue's cover feature (page 38), we explain how to block everything that annoys, obstructs and endangers you online, so you can keep using the web unimpeded and untroubled.

Hopefully, the same applies to this magazine, which – as you may have noticed – now costs £2.10. It's our first price rise since Issue 212, nearly seven and a half years ago, when the iPad had yet to be launched and Firefox had just overtaken IE7 as the UK's favourite browser.

We hope that *Web User* still offers the same great value, and we're always happy to hear what you'd like to see more or less of in the magazine.

Robert Irvine
robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk
#webuser

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DO THIS AND YOU'LL NEVER BE HACKED p54

GREAT £2.10 VALUE   issue 405

WebUser

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WHAT YOU MUST BLOCK ONLINE

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PLUS

WHY YOU SHOULD STOP USING PASSWORDS Alternatives that are safer and easier p46

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abc **Average sales, Jan-Dec 2015, 29,463 copies per issue**

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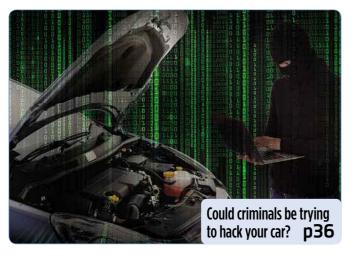Never miss another issue — subscribe at subscribe.webuser .co.uk

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Ditch passwords for an easier, more secure life **p46**

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Practical WebUser
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Create your own Windows 10 AU boot drive **p58**
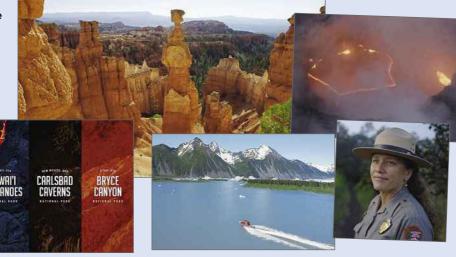
Take tours of US National Parks

The US National Parks Service recently turned 100 years old, and to mark the occasion Google has created an inspiring set of five 360-degree tours. Covering the Kenai Fjords in Alaska, the Dry Tortugas in Florida, Bryce Canyon in Utah, Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico and the Hawaii Volcanoes, the tours give you the chance to explore each location while listening to commentary from park rangers.

Each section begins with a sweeping birds-eye view of your chosen park before introducing you to the area and your tour guide. You can then use your mouse to navigate as you swim through coral reefs, kayak through icebergs, watch glaciers melt and explore active volcanoes.

If you set the resolution to 1080p at the bottom of the screen, you can enjoy the images in high definition, but the real pleasure is in exploring environments that you may otherwise never get to see so close. To get a better sense of the geography, click the view changer in the bottom-left of the screen to bring up a map of the various locations and descriptions of what you'll find there.
bit.ly/national405

Help create a rival to Google Street View

openstreetview.org/map

Google Maps may be streets ahead of the competition but the race isn't over yet. You can now help to build an open-source alternative to Street View by capturing images on your phone and uploading them to OpenStreetMap's OpenStreetView project. The idea is to create a more personal and up-to-date street-level view of the world, as well as providing lots of free images for others to use. In the future, OpenStreetMap plans to gather information about traffic lanes and driving restrictions, too, although currently OpenStreetView is still in its infancy, and there are many thousands of miles left to document. To encourage you to get involved, the site includes a leaderboard that ranks users according to the number of kilometres they've captured so far.

See film locations plotted on a map

www.movietrip.me/map

Many directors venture into the real world to shoot their films, immortalising the locations and leaving behind a little movie magic once the cameras have stopped rolling. If you want to experience some of that wonder, visit the MovieTrip website, which plots hundreds of filming locations on a global map. While it's far from complete – we were surprised by a lack of pins in Malta, considering that films including *Troy*, *Gladiator* and *Popeye* were shot there – you should find more than enough to reel you in. Coloured markers show how many films were created in each region, and you can zoom in to see the exact spots for filming, as well as the type of location – whether it's a train station, hotel, square or street. What's more, when you click the pins, you can see photos of the locations in real life and from the films, while the Trips section suggests tours for specific movies.

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

Add a Twitter DM button to your site

publish.twitter.com

Encourage people to send you private messages through your own website by embedding a Twitter button. First, make sure your Twitter settings allow you to receive direct messages from anyone, then go to this site and click Twitter Buttons. Choose the Message Button and enter your username and ID to receive code that you can copy into your site.

Fly through space with Lego

bit.ly/legospace405

Lego has already taken over the world, so it might as well try to conquer space, too. However, the plastic-brick maker needs your help. This fun, interactive website, made in partnership with NASA, allows you (or indeed a child) to fly a Lego spacecraft and learn lots of fascinating facts in the process. The idea is that you break up the journey to watch videos, listen to audio and play games while learning more about the Solar System and our place within it.

Play Solitaire in Google
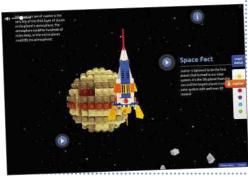
www.google.co.uk

Solitaire was the ultimate office timewaster until Windows 8 dumped it. If you miss having it in the corner of your screen while you "work", you can now Google `solitaire` to play it in the search engine. You have a choice of two difficultly levels and can play with sound effects on or off. There's also tic-tac-toe (otherwise known as noughts and crosses) – again, type the term into Google to play. Compete against a friend or choose the 'impossible' difficulty setting if you fancy a particularly demanding game.

Make everything stranger

makeitstranger.com

Netflix's supernatural horror series *Stranger Things* has become a cult hit thanks to its impeccable acting, strong script and nods to Eighties movies. As with all such phenomena, the internet soon created its own tributes, but this is arguably the most fun. The site replicates the font used in the programme's titles, allowing you to 'strangify' anything and download it or share it on social media.

5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

FIVE TO FOLLOW

@unchartedatlas
See a randomly generated map of a fantasy world every hour

@paralympics
This official feed delivers the latest news from the Paralympic Games

@OSIRISREx
Follow NASA's OSIRIS-REx mission on its journey to asteroid Bennu

@Britishbakeoff
Use the hashtag #GBBO and the Bake Off tent emoji will appear

@adambanksdotcom
Receive news about the latest iPhones from tech journalist Adam Banks

See how costs have changed
bit.ly/old405
Tell this site when you were born and where you grew up, and it will show you how much things used to cost back in the day. It covers house prices, salaries, cars, fuel and groceries, and shows the best and worst years to spend your money.

Stream PlayStation games
bit.ly/play405
For £12.99 per month, you can now stream hundreds of PlayStation 3 games to your PC. You'll need to download the Windows app and get hold of a controller, but the library includes such blockbusters as Uncharted and The Last of Us.

Ditch Evernote for OneNote
bit.ly/onenote405
Microsoft is so keen to encourage people to switch from the online organiser Evernote to its own OneNote that it's converted its PC importing tool for use on the Mac, making it easier to switch.

WhatsApp lets Facebook target its users with ads

What happened?

Messaging service WhatsApp is to target its users with ads via its parent company Facebook – a move that's caught the attention of the UK data watchdog, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

When Facebook bought WhatsApp in 2014 for $19bn, the popular messaging service pledged that it wouldn't hand over data or start selling advertising to pay its bills. It previously charged users $1 (then 79p) annually, but dropped the charge earlier this year.

There are two aspects to the changes: first, WhatsApp will let businesses contact users directly, in much the same way that companies already send text messages to customers about discounts and security breaches; second, WhatsApp is handing over data on users to Facebook to "coordinate more and improve experiences" across its own services and the social network.

That means companies will be able to advertise to you through WhatsApp, but only if you've handed over your phone number to the business in question. It also means Facebook will use your WhatsApp account info to recommend friends and personalise advertising.

The ICO says it will keep a close eye on the move, but new commissioner Elizabeth Denham noted that neither organisation needs to ask permission from the data watchdog before rolling out such changes.

How will it affect you?

If you're one of WhatsApp's 1.7 billion

The ICO is keeping an eye on WhatsApp sharing its users' data with Facebook

users, you'll get a notification about a change to the app's privacy policy. Your phone number will still be shared with Facebook to fight spam, abuse and copyright infringement, as well as for security, but it won't be made public on the social network. The content of your messages won't be shared because they'll continue to be encrypted. You have 30 days from 25 August to opt out of the targeted advertising.

Sadly, WhatsApp hasn't made the opt-out process very clear. On the 'terms of service' notification, don't click Agree – just click the blue 'Read' link and untick 'Share my WhatsApp account information with Facebook'. If you've already hit Agree, you can still backtrack – go to Settings, Account, and untick 'Share my Account Info'. Just make sure to do so before the end of September.

The change doesn't necessarily mean the social network will connect your WhatsApp account and Facebook profile, especially if your phone number isn't listed on the latter, but the extra piece of data will certainly make it easier for the company to find out more about you.

WhatsApp has stressed that the aim isn't to show banner ads inside the messaging app or let businesses spam users. Instead, it wants to let companies send practical messages to their customers, such as banks highlighting potentially fraudulent transactions or

airlines alerting you to late flights – information we normally get via text message or phone calls.

Also, Facebook will use the data for targeted ads on its own site, and for making 'friend' recommendations. All the plans being suggested by both firms are currently only trials.

What do we think?

If a company says it won't share user data with another service, it should keep that promise. WhatsApp is getting away with this move by letting users opt out, but what happens when you get a new phone number and reinstall the app – will you still get a choice or will you automatically be opted into Facebook? If that's the case, it's a mighty shame Facebook was allowed to buy WhatsApp in the first place. Hopefully regulators will see how it's hoovering up WhatsApp user data and keep that in mind with its next acquisition.

Of course, such services and sites need to make money and ads are a valid source of revenue. But WhatsApp already had a model that its users were happy with – charging $1 annually. That's a whopping $1.7bn if everyone pays (it was always free in the first year), which is surely enough to keep the app viable. It's a shame the privacy-friendly model of funding apps by actually paying for them – with cash rather than data – continues to be ignored.

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

Windows 10 update breaks webcams

What happened?

An update to Windows 10 reportedly breaks some webcams. The fault struck following an update to the operating system in early August, Windows Update 1607, and affects webcams built into laptops as well as those connected via USB.

Users reported that the video stream froze mid-use or simply didn't work at all, particularly in Microsoft's own apps, Skype and Lync, with experts suggesting the problem lies in the encoding systems used by Windows 10. The update that caused the fault ended support for a system that allowed multiple applications to access a webcam at once.

How will it affect you?

If you're keeping your Windows device up to date with automatic updates, you've probably already installed the problematic code. The bug affects webcams that use the MJPEG or H264 formats, both of which are common.

Microsoft says it is working on a fix with a patch due in September. If that's too long to wait, you can head to the Updates section in Windows 10 and roll back to a previous version.

What do we think?

This is a poor show from Microsoft. Keeping your PC or laptop up to date is always wise, to protect against the latest security threats. But when Microsoft rolls out buggy code that breaks our computers, it's harder to encourage users to leave the automatic update system turned on.

Microsoft needs to do a better job, not only of combing through its code to avoid such problems but also of telling users when such bugs occur, rather than letting them find out the hard way. People who use Skype for work and keeping in touch with family will be stuck without access; the least the company could do is let us know when there is a problem rather than leave us stranded without an explanation when important calls fail.

Android Nougat is here — but not for all

What happened?

The seventh version of Google's mobile OS, Android Nougat, has been officially released, although most users won't have received it yet. So far, it's limited to devices including the Nexus 6, 5X, 6P and 9, as well as the Pixel C laptop, with older devices set to receive the latest update later in the year. Nougat includes an expanded range of emoji, customisable 'quick' settings, the ability to run two apps side by side and a feature called Direct Reply, which lets you reply directly to notifications without opening the relevant messaging app. Android 7 also offers smarter battery management, so you should get more use between charges.

How will it affect you?

If you have a Nexus device and can't wait a few weeks to get Android Nougat, you can get it now by enrolling in the Android Beta program (www .google.com/android/ beta). You'll be sent a notification on your device when the update is ready to install. Once you're up and running, if you don't want to continue with the beta system, which will see new features tested on your handset, you can opt out again but keep the new OS. Simply head back to the Beta site and click 'Unenroll device'.

As ever, it's a wise move to back up your data before installing a new operating system, although Google says the update won't overwrite any existing data.

What do we think?

It would be handy if users who are keen to enjoy the latest version didn't have to jump through so many hoops to get it. There are so many different versions of Android floating around on handsets that Google should encourage everyone to get the latest OS as soon as it's available, rather than make it tougher to do so – leaving those of us that don't own Nexus devices out in the cold.

We'll be taking a closer look at Android Nougat's best new features in next issue's Top Tips.

Amazon launches unlimited storage plan

What happened?

Amazon is now offering its UK customers unlimited cloud storage for a flat annual fee. The plan, which lets you store an unlimited quantity of files at full resolution, is part of the company's Amazon Drive service (bit.ly/drive405), rather than Amazon Prime, and costs £55 per year. Amazon is offering a three-month free trial of the service to let people try before they buy.

"Most people have a lifetime of photos from birthdays, holidays and everyday moments stored across numerous devices – and a lot of those people don't know how many gigabytes they need to back all those memories up, or what it's going to cost," said David Nenke, director of Amazon Drive.

"With our new Unlimited Storage plan, that's no longer something customers need to worry about. They now have an affordable, secure solution to store unlimited amounts of photos, videos, movies, music and other files in one place – with no tiered storage options or rising fees to worry about."

The announcement marks the latest in Amazon's efforts to take on cloud-storage providers such as Google Drive, OneDrive and Dropbox. Prime members already get unlimited space for their photos and 5GB of free cloud storage for other files, compared to the 15GB offered by Google Drive for free.

How will it affect you?

The chances are that you already use at least one online-storage service, such as Google Drive or OneDrive, so the question is: how much space in the cloud do you really need? Unlimited storage might sound appealing, but it'll cost you – albeit less than a fiver a month – and you don't get anything extra such as office tools. On the plus side, you'll be able to access all your photos, videos and other files from any device – either through your browser or the Amazon Drive app – but you probably do that already.

What do we think?

Amazon's new plan may be unlimited, but it isn't free and, in an already crowded marketplace, the company needs to offer something special to lure people away from other online-storage providers. Rival services are already so generous that we doubt many people are really worrying about how many gigabytes of storage they have left when they upload files. It's fair enough to give Prime members free storage as one of the perks of their subscriptions, but we can't see many people forking out £55 per year.

FIRST LOOK

Honor 8
bit.ly/honor405

Like most smartphone manufacturers, Honor updates its flagship phone once a year, and that time is now. Its latest top-end offering is the Honor 8, and it's the firm's most attractive and desirable handset to date.

Moving on from the curved brushed-metal rear panel of last year's Honor 7, the 5.2in Honor 8's glass-clad front and rear are reminiscent of the Samsung Galaxy S7. As with all the latest Honor handsets, there's a fingerprint reader in the centre of the phone's rear but it now gets a speed boost, so fingerprints are recognised in a claimed 0.4 seconds, and you can also assign app shortcuts to a single and double click, and a long press.

The Honor 8 offers dual-SIM

support and, like its close cousin, the Huawei P9, it comes with a dual-camera setup: one camera is dedicated to full colour photos while the other captures black-and-white images, both at a 12-megapixel resolution.

In many ways, the Honor 8 seems like a repackaged Huawei P9, but there are just enough subtle differences to set the two apart from each other. The Honor 8's processor is less powerful, for example, but it has the advantage of an infrared transmitter that lets you use the phone as a universal remote control for your TV and set-top box. The Honor 8 is also much faster at charging, reaching full capacity in around an hour, and comes with a Fast Charge-compatible charger to make the process even quicker.

The Honor 8 costs £370, which sounds reasonable compared to Android phones from Samsung and Sony, but it's quite a step up in price from the Honor 7, which sold for £250 at launch. This makes the Honor 8 a difficult sell as a budget handset, although its dual-camera function is unarguably impressive and may be enough to justify the extra cost.
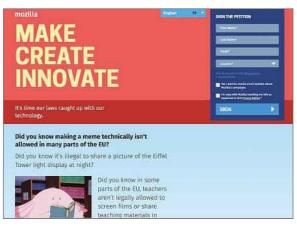
❓ WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is Mozilla changing web copyright law?

Firefox maker Mozilla is getting hot under the collar about online copyright and has now decided to breathe fire down the neck of European Union officials. It wants a reform of EU copyright law, which it says is outdated and holding back creativity. To back up its claims and to gather support, it has set up a new explanatory website with the slogan Make, Create, Innovate (mozillafoundation.nationbuilder.com), and it wants you to sign a petition in support of its proposals.

The petition is pushing for a new, open set of flexible, future-proofed copyright laws as well as an end to numerous attempts by EU countries to create online restrictions, licensing fees, monitoring and filtering. Over the coming weeks, you'll be able to watch videos from Mozilla explaining copyright issues further.

The company has taken action because the copyright framework is set to be reformed by the EU this autumn, 15 years after the current directive became law. Campaigners are keen to see the concept of "fair use" being widely accepted across the continent. As it stands, Mozilla says it is flabbergasted that tourists sharing

a photo of the Eiffel Tower light show are technically breaking the law because the artist hasn't given permission for its use. It is also aghast that creating memes from screen grabs of videos and other web images is illegal in some EU countries.

LIKELIHOOD RATING
✓✓✓✓✓

We think this is a brilliant idea from Mozilla, but we predict that many copyright holders will oppose it and appeal to the EU to limit any changes to how their work is used online. On the other hand, we welcome Mozilla's clearly explained challenge to the current, archaic legislation and wish it the best of luck.

🅚 What's new on Kickstarter
Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Gary
bit.ly/gary405 | From £6

One of the mysteries of the modern is world is how on Earth earphone cables manage to get so tangled when you've done nothing but stick them in your pocket. Gary provides a simple solution to this annoying problem in the form of earphone wires that retract into a compact case when they're not in use. This case measures just 6 x 2cm, so it easily slips into your pocket rather than leaving you with a knotted cable. The Gary team (no, we don't know why it's called Gary) hopes to raise £10,000 for the project by 22 October.
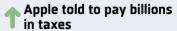
⬆ WEBOMETER ⬇

WE LIKE...

⬆ **Domino's delivers pizzas using drones**
Pizza chain Domino's has completed a successful trial of using drones to deliver pizzas in New Zealand. This makes it the first company in the world to offer a drone-delivery service to the public, beating Amazon's Prime Air.

⬆ **Apple told to pay billions in taxes**
The European Commission has ordered Apple to pay Ireland €13bn (£11bn) in back taxes. After a three-year investigation, the Commission ruled that Apple's tax benefits amount to illegal state aid, allowing it to pay far less than other companies.

WE DON'T LIKE...
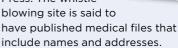
⬇ **Pokémon Go players break the law**
Police in England and Wales have reported hundreds of incidents involving Pokémon Go. Players of the augmented-reality game have committed robberies, assaults and dangerous driving, among other offences.

⬇ **WikiLeaks discloses medical data**
WikiLeaks has exposed sensitive data belonging to hundreds of innocent citizens, including rape victims and sick children, according to the Associated Press. The whistle-blowing site is said to have published medical files that include names and addresses.

Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Trident malware targets iPhone users

A new zero-day exploit is doing some pretty nasty things to iPhones. It involves a piece of malware, dubbed Trident, which uses three previously undiscovered vulnerabilities in iOS to give attackers remote access to an iPhone, which they 'jailbreak' before installing software that's hidden from the phone's owner.

Trident is triggered merely by visiting a web page, without you needing to download anything. The hacker can then use your phone's camera and microphone to record anything at any time, and monitor chat software such as WhatsApp.

So far, the malware appears to have been specifically targeted at Ahmed Mansour, a human rights activist in the UAE. Mansour received text messages on his phone that claimed to link to details of human rights abuses. However, he became suspicious of the messages and passed them on to research group Citizen Lab (citizenlab .org), which dissected the malware and linked it to an Israeli company that makes spyware for use by governments.

If you're concerned about Trident, the good news is that it's already been patched – for iOS 9, at least. Go to Settings, General, Software Update and download iOS 9.3.5. This patches the exploits used by the malware and also includes other security fixes.

Ransomware threats increase by 176%

Ransomware is the fastest growing security threat to businesses, according to a report by security-software firm Trend Micro (bit.ly/trend405). Not only did the occurrence of ransomware attacks nearly double between the first half of 2015 and first half of 2016, but many new ransomware 'families' appeared in the first six months of this year, including Crysam, Zcrypt, Crypjoker, Crypradam and Powerware.

These incidents caused huge losses for US businesses – $209m to be precise – but many could have been avoided if the companies had taken precautions, including educating staff about the risk of ransomware and the damage it can cause, Trend Micro said.

More than half (58%) of the attacks originated from attachments in emails, although Trend Micro explained that cybercriminals are becoming increasingly intelligent in the methods they use to spread ransomware. For example, Jigsaw ransomware threatens to delete a number of files for every hour a ransom isn't paid, while Surprise ransomware increases the ransom amount if the victim does not meet the payment deadline set out by the criminal.

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Robert Capps, VP of business development at NuData Security (www.nudatasecurity .com)

Q How worried should we be about scammers using text messages to 'phish' our bank details?
Colin Smart, Twitter

A The lack of security in text messages, coupled with the way they are now used in online transactions, has led to a lot of confusion and opened a new channel for fraudsters to 'socially engineer' people into disclosing their personal data.

However, SMS banking scams are not a unique form of attack. Cybercriminals have used other forms of communication such as email and phone calls to similar effect in the past, so perhaps it's no surprise to see the same old trick being used with texts.

At the root of this problem is the continued reliance on traditional (but tired) usernames and passwords. This is still the sole way that banks verify a customer's identity when carrying out non-face-to-face transactions. Authentication schemes such as SMS challenges and secret questions and answers are often tacked on, but it's a weak system at its core so it's no wonder that the security of consumers' accounts is being put at risk.

Traditionally, online authentication has come down to a choice between making logins as effective as possible or easy to use.

> " The root of this problem is the continued reliance on traditional (but tired) usernames and passwords "

However, increased awareness of customer experience, along with advances in behavioural techniques and evaluation of the way people use the internet, has injected new life into these tired techniques.

The best thing about the latest behavioural authentication is that it provides genuine security without negatively impacting the customer experience.

✚ Email us your security questions at webuser@dennis.co.uk
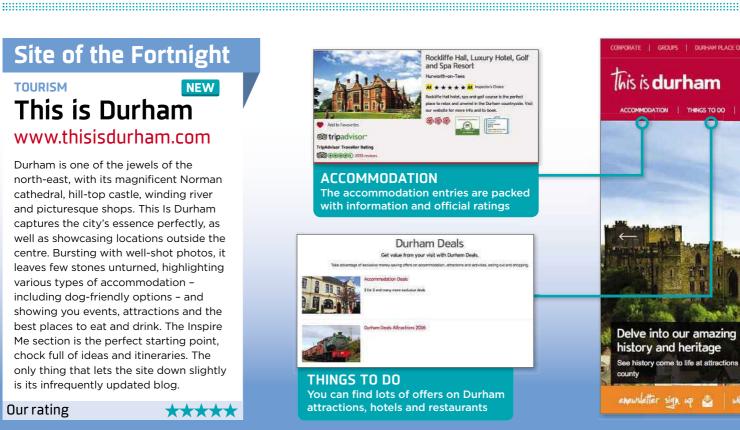
Best New Websites

TOURISM   NEW

This is Durham
www.thisisdurham.com

Durham is one of the jewels of the north-east, with its magnificent Norman cathedral, hill-top castle, winding river and picturesque shops. This Is Durham captures the city's essence perfectly, as well as showcasing locations outside the centre. Bursting with well-shot photos, it leaves few stones unturned, highlighting various types of accommodation – including dog-friendly options – and showing you events, attractions and the best places to eat and drink. The Inspire Me section is the perfect starting point, chock full of ideas and itineraries. The only thing that lets the site down slightly is its infrequently updated blog.

Our rating ★★★★★

ACCOMMODATION
The accommodation entries are packed with information and official ratings

THINGS TO DO
You can find lots of offers on Durham attractions, hotels and restaurants

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FILM   NEW

Where's The Jump?
wheresthejump.com

Whether you're a fan of horror movies or they send you cowering behind the sofa, Where's the Jump? lets you know in advance if you're likely to need a change of underwear. This site lists hundreds of scary flicks, giving each a rating for the number and level of frights it contains. A quick click reveals exactly when those moments take place so you can either psych yourself up or cover your eyes. By downloading the SRT files to the same directory as a movie, you can get on-screen warnings of impending terrors. You can also search for films that contain lots of jumps or not so many, and see a range of forthcoming horror releases. It's a boo-tiful idea!

Our rating ★★★★★

BOXING   RELAUNCH

Frank Bruno
www.frankbruno.co.uk

Frank Bruno's revamped site packs a punch, but falls short of delivering a knockout blow. That's because for all the info about his sporting achievements, his full 45-fight history, video highlights from his time in the ring and some great photos, the site's main aims are to flog the former boxing champion's new range of merchandise and promote his public speaking. For fans, though, that's no bad thing. Whether you want to buy a T-shirt, a hoodie or some signed memorabilia, the store is very well designed, with good product images, clear pricing and a simple route to the checkout.

Our rating ★★★★☆

Reviews by David Crookes

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

VISITOR INFORMATION
Download or view various guides online, including maps of Durham

Durham Pocket Guide 2016

Durham Food & Drink Guide 2016

Walking & Cycling Guide

Maps of Durham

INSPIRE ME
Need inspiration? This is Durham offers itineraries to suit most tastes

48 Hours in Durham City
Voted the 'best city in the UK' by Condé Nast magazine, Durham City is a pleasure to explore. The quintessential English...

Food & Drink Itinerary
The secret ingredient to the perfect break is enjoying great food and drink, and you'll be spoilt for choice with what's on the menu...

SHOPPING   RELAUNCH

Mothercare
www.mothercare.com

Following a 15% increase in online sales, Mothercare has decided to revamp its ageing website so that it works better on mobile devices. Some of the changes are only skin deep – the categories and promotional boxes are still the same – but the overall look is much fresher. Making a purchase is also easier thanks to clearer product pages and a three-step checkout process, and there's a live chat facility if you get stuck and need help. The new store locator, which can find branches with specific facilities such as parking and automatic doors, is another great addition.

Our rating ★★★★☆

MAPS   NEW

National Geographic Maps
bit.ly/natgeo405

If you're an avid cartophile, you won't mind too much that all the maps on this National Geographic site are of America. The sheer fact that you can download *every* topographic map created by the US Geological Survey for free will surely be enticing. Simply search the homepage map for a printable quad and click it to get a high-quality, five-page PDF. The first page shows the overall quad in context, while the other four split your chosen section into quarters so you can view it in greater detail. If only there were something equally slick for the UK.

Our rating ★★★★☆

CHARITY   RELAUNCH

Mencap
www.mencap.org.uk

The leading UK charity for people with learning difficulties has given its website a mobile-friendly redesign, so it's now easier for people to access information on the go. Improvements include speedy drop-down menus and reorganisation of content according to its importance. We love the inspirational and enlightening stories and blogs, and that the donation button is prominent but not intrusive. However, while the advice is relevant and never overwhelming, you may have to tap more times than you'd like to access specific sections. Still, it's an excellent resource.

Our rating ★★★★☆ ➡

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

GARDENING

Garden Club Listings

www.gardenclublistings.co.uk

This green-fingered hub should make digging around for gardening clubs a thing of the past. Just enter your location into its reasonably quick search engine and the site will list nearby clubs and societies, and let you add any you already belong to. The listings provide all the information you need to get in touch, including a map and email address, and there are details of horticultural speakers and judges who gardening clubs can book for future meetings. It's great to see a larger community being fostered here, and we especially like the useful advice the site provides about running your own gardening club.

Our rating ★★★★☆

MAPS

Cute Maps

www.cutemaps.co.uk

Google Maps are great for getting you from A to B, but sticking a printout of one in a wedding invitation to show guests how to get to the venue isn't very classy. Cute Maps offers a much better way by creating fun, bespoke maps for weddings and other events, as well as invitations, table plans, gifts and more. You can browse a selection of its past projects to get a feel for the products, but the site is crying out for a simpler explanation of how everything works – it's far too wordy in places and the order forms are needlessly complex. That's a shame because the maps themselves look fantastic.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

TOURISM

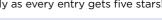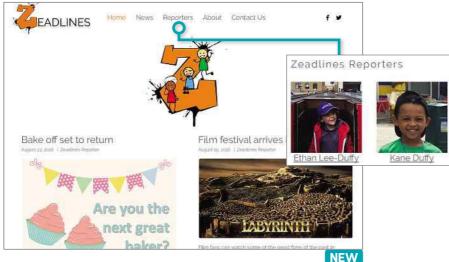## Windermere App

windermereapp.com

William Wordsworth didn't have to look far for inspiration in the tranquil surroundings of the Lake District, so we wonder why it feels as if this site makes you go the extra mile. Although it points you in the right direction for activities, accommodation, restaurants, pubs, cafes and shops, the lack of a search facility means you have to wade through a series of cards containing the information, including a photo, location, description and contact details. This is easy to do in your browser but laborious on a mobile device, and it doesn't help that you can't bookmark listings or leave comments – especially as every entry gets five stars!

Our rating ★★★☆☆

NEWS

Zeadlines

www.zeadlines.com

Zeadlines promotes itself as a news site written by and for children. It wants budding young journalists to contribute stories, poems, drawings and videos, and offers a prize for the best contributions each month. As a new launch, it's still in the process of building up its content, and so far there are profiles of just three reporters and the editor. But while some of the articles have obviously been penned by a professional journalist (including one, bizarrely, about a car salesman coming to a grandmother's rescue), each story can be shared and commented on, which should encourage interaction. The layout is a bit boring, but it's uncluttered and easy to navigate.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

TOURISM

Make It Bournemouth

makeitbournemouth.co.uk

Bournemouth's location on the sunny south coast of England has made it a popular tourist destination, with more than five million visitors each year. This site can help you make the most of your stay, with hotel suggestions, a handy list of shops, offers from local businesses and information about things to do and places to eat. Although there's nothing particularly innovative here (you can't share pages and the parking section doesn't even include a map), the images are inviting, and informative tweets are dotted around the homepage. Oddly, though, there's no mention of the town's Premier League football club.

Our rating ★★★★☆

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

Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Try TinyMCE Advanced

You should have upgraded by now to WordPress 4.6. Many of the best plugins are compatible with this latest version, and this includes TinyMCE Advanced, which has more than one million installs and is definitely worth checking out. It's available for free from www.wordpress.org and lets you add or remove toolbar buttons in WordPress' text editor. You can have up to four rows of toolbar buttons and there's now a new button that lets you add or reset the line breaks.

Create images using Pablo

Every web post should include an arresting image to grab a visitor's attention, but what software should you use? Pablo from Buffer (pablo.buffer.com) is an online tool that runs in your browser and lets you create impressive artwork. There are 600,000 free images and a search tool for tracking down the one you want. You can apply image filters, add some text and share the image directly to Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and others, or save it to your PC's hard drive. From there, you can insert the image into your web page.

Deal of the Fortnight

If you're not sure about this web-building lark, try it for free! One.com (www.one.com) is offering its Starter package for one year completely free of charge.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Kate Moir, Marketing Manager, Xara.com
(www.xara.com)

Q I want to install and run a forum that lets you change the templates and themes. I have a domain and hosting, and used to use MyBB, but it isn't well supported by tutorials. Do you have any suggestions?
mrfuzzynuts, via Web User Forums

A VBulletin (vbulletin.com) is a good business choice. You can host it yourself or in the cloud, and change templates and themes, plus it has a good set of movie tutorials. If you're on a small budget and want free open-source software like MyBB, try phpBB. It's been in active development since 2000, can be self-hosted and has lots of themes and plugins and a large, enthusiastic community-support forum. Simple Machines Forum is another popular open-source solution. There are lots of tutorials and wikis for all these forums.

MINI WORKSHOP | Add a clever Google widget
AdSense: www.google.com/adsense | 🕐 15 mins | Any browser

If you use Google AdSense to place adverts, you can now add a new type of advert – Matched Content. It displays a 4x2 grid of thumbnails with links to related articles on your site that will keep visitors hooked

1 Go to www.google.com/adsense and log in. If the message about matched content doesn't appear, click the gear icon, Settings, My Sites and Matched Content. It will tell you whether you are eligible. Select the 'My ads' tab **1** and click 'New ad unit'. Set the size to Responsive **2** and the Ad type to Matched Content. **3**

2 A free plugin for WordPress called Ad Inserter, **1** which lets you insert adverts or any other type of code into the posts on your website, is available from wordpress.org. Copy the code provided by AdSense and paste it in. Scroll down and choose where to insert it. **2** It's best located after an article.

3 A block of thumbnails is displayed with links to related articles. **1** We set Ad Inserter to insert the code after one paragraph counting up from the bottom, to place it after the content. Google does the rest. If you check your AdSense performance, you'll see that visitors are clicking and reading more and staying longer.

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

Now TV Smart Box

Ian Betteridge looks at the latest Now TV streaming device, which offers Sky's premium TV services for less

If you've always wanted Sky TV but were put off by the high prices and the need to install a satellite dish and Sky+ box in your home, then Sky's Now TV service may be just the thing you've been waiting for. It offers a way into Sky's range of services without the need to tie yourself down, and provides access to Sky's sport and entertainment channels, plus a selection of streaming services for those with older, non-smart TVs.

In fact, you don't even need to pay for a Now TV subscription to use the Now TV Smart Box, although you will need to create a Now TV account (if you have subscribed to Sky in the past, your Sky account will work, too).

For £40, you get a good quality smart TV box that gives you access to Freeview channels via a standard antenna, plus a plethora of apps, including Now TV, YouTube and most of the major catch-up TV channels including iPlayer, ITV Hub, All 4 and Demand 5 (but not Amazon Video or Netflix), streamed to your TV over the internet.

You also get a well-designed TV guide that splits content into Freeview channels, Now TV live channels (streamed via the internet) and radio. If your TV has a rubbish guide, then it's worth buying the Now TV Smart Box for this alone. You also get the ability to pause and rewind live television, watch catch-up and stream movies and box sets, although there's no hard drive so you can't record programmes to watch later.

The interface isn't quite the same as on the premium Sky Q service, but it's organised in a similar fashion, with a vertical list of categories down the left-hand side and programme information displayed on the right. It's intuitive and speedy to use.

No modern TV streaming box would be complete without apps, and the Now TV Smart Box is no exception. It's based on Roku's platform, so the selection is pretty broad and includes popular apps such as Facebook, Spotify and Flickr.

Prices and content

Now TV's range of subscriptions (or 'passes' as Sky calls them) effectively offers most of Sky's exclusive content – movies, Sky Sports and channels such as Sky Atlantic and, for the cultural viewer, Sky Arts – without needing a Sky dish or contract. Instead, it's all
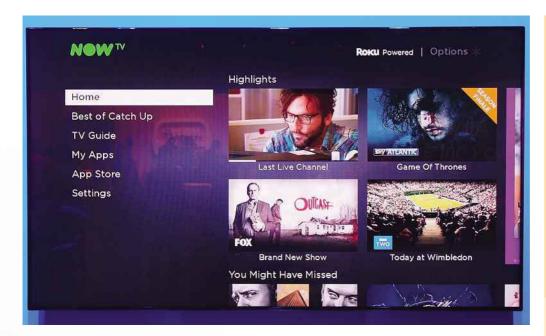
> **"** Now TV Smart Box gives you the ability to pause and rewind live TV, watch catch-up and stream movies and box sets **"**

SPECIFICATIONS

- 1,920 x 1,080 maximum resolution (content in 720p)
- HDMI video output
- 802.11n Wi-Fi
- Ethernet port
- microSD slot (not enabled)
- USB port (not enabled)
- coaxial antenna connection
- infrared remote control
- 165 x 165 x 21mm

FOR

✓ Cheap upfront cost
✓ Contract free – no need to tie yourself in for a year or longer

AGAINST

✗ Some channels still show only in standard definition

BETTER SPECS, MORE EXPENSIVE

BT TV with YouView – £57 upfront cost, plus a 12-month contract at £38 pcm (includes broadband and BT Sport pack)
www.bt.com

CREAM OF THE CROP

Sky Q – £49 upfront cost, plus a 12-month contract at £32 pcm (no broadband)
www.sky.com

streamed over the internet to either a computer, smartphone or tablet, or an app-enabled box or TV.

It's the pricing strategy that's key here. Want entertainment channels? That's £6.99 per month. Sky Cinema (formerly known as Sky Movies)? £10 per month. Sky Kids will set you back £3 per month and Sky Sports is anything from £7 for a day to £37 per month.

Everything together will cost you £57 a month, which is around the same as Sky TV with movies, sport and a heck of a lot more channels. On the surface, this doesn't look like great value because you're effectively paying more for less, but the key point is that you're not tied into a 12-month contract with any of Sky's 'passes'; each one (aside from the Sports day and week passes) locks you in for only a month. After that, you can chop and change at will and it's possible to watch all this content on up to four devices, and on two simultaneously. Plus, you're still getting a lot of TV for your money.

The only downside is that while most streamed services are shown in 720p resolution and the box itself is capable of putting out 1080p, the Freeview TV services and Sky Sports are limited to standard definition across most compatible devices. So it's not the best box if you've got a very large TV.

Now TV Combo

That's not the end of the new Now TV offering, however. You can also buy a 'Now TV Combo', which is where things begin to get a bit more complicated. The Combo is composed of Sky Broadband, a Smart Box, a Sky Hub router and your choice of subscriptions to the various packages.

There are three different unlimited broadband packages to choose from – 17Mbps standard or 38Mbps and 76Mbps fibre-optic; three phone packages; and you then pay £18-per-month line rental on top.

This is competitive with BT, the main difference being that the upfront setup costs are lower with Now TV – free, if you don't mind being tied to a contract. BT, on the other hand, only provides its services if you commit to a contract and it will charge you upfront as well. Overall, Now TV provides a tempting alternative.

The wider question is whether you should be buying a Sky broadband package with the Now TV Smart Box at all when you could just as easily just buy the box for £40 and simply add your own choice of broadband. We'd advise shopping around first.

OUR VERDICT

★★★★☆

So, should you buy a Now TV Smart Box? If you have an old TV with a clunky EPG – or no programme guide at all – want access to apps and would like the flexibility of not having to pay for premium channels for 12 months per year, then the answer is yes.

The Now TV Smart Box is well designed and simple to use, giving access to catch-up TV and Sky Sports without the strings, a well-designed user interface and the ability to pause and rewind live TV. For £40 (plus ongoing subscription costs), that's a bargain.

The merits of the Now TV Combo are less clear. Its prices are competitive, and there's a small discount for existing Now TV subscribers and a free Smart Box, but that's not enough to dictate your choice of broadband supplier. If you shop around, you may be able to find cheaper broadband packages – and if you want the Now TV Smart Box, add that at a later date.

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

Amazon Kindle (2016)

Jonathan Bray tests Amazon's newest and cheapest e-reader

Amazon's range of Kindles dominates the e-reader market. While its Oasis model will set you back £269.99, the latest Kindle is its cheapest, costing a mere £60 (or £70 if you want to avoid being confronted with adverts on the lock screen).

As a bottom-of-the-range budget option, it's nowhere near as slender or as well made as its higher-spec siblings and, frankly, feels a bit low-rent. Tap the rear of the device and it sounds hollow; apply pressure and it bends disconcertingly; and the plastic power button on the bottom edge feels flimsy.

Still, once you've switched it on, there's every chance you'll completely forget about these cost-cutting compromises, and that's mainly down to its excellent E-Ink Pearl screen and slick performance.

Sure, the 600 x 800, 167ppi resolution display isn't as sharp as on its pricier rivals – which all have more modern, 300ppi E Ink Carta screens – but you have to look hard to tell the difference. And the contrast between page background and text is excellent. Turn down the light on the Oasis and sit it next to the Kindle, and you'll be hard pushed to separate the two.

What's missing

What's likely to cause more annoyance is that the Amazon Kindle 2016 doesn't have a light for reading in the dark and you can only turn pages using the touchscreen. There's also no 3G version of the basic Kindle, although with Wi-Fi hotspots so prevalent these days that's not a major concern. Also, 4GB is plenty of storage for thousands of books – just make sure you plan ahead and you'll never be short of books to read.

Excellent screen

Elsewhere, the basic Kindle is all but identical to Amazon's more expensive models. The touchscreen uses infrared rather than capacitive sensors, so although the screen surround is slightly raised, it works perfectly. The new Kindle feels just as responsive, and battery life is a claimed "up to four weeks" – although this is with wireless turned off and reading limited to 30 minutes a day.

As for the user interface, the new Kindle benefits from the same overhaul that Amazon recently gave its more expensive e-readers. That means improvements to Page Flip, which gains a thumbnail view, making it easier to flip back and forth visually through your ebooks; plus social-network integration and family sharing.

There's even Bluetooth audio connectivity, so those with sight problems can navigate the Kindle interface by touch and have their ebooks read aloud to them through headphones.

> ❝ Once it's switched on, you'll forget about the cost-cutting compromises ❞

Web User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE

E-READER

Amazon Kindle (2016)

NEW!

£69.99 from www.amazon.co.uk
Date tested: August 2016

The highly capable Kindle is lightweight, great for reading and matches its rivals for usability and content. Despite the lack of a front light, it remains the best e-reader you can buy for less than £100.

KEY SPECS

6in E Ink Pearl screen ■ 800 x 600 pixels resolution, 167 ppi ■ Optical touchscreen ■ 4GB storage ■ 160 x 115 x 9.1mm ■ 161g ■ No front light ■ £10 less with Amazon Special Offers ■ Up to four weeks battery life (if used 30 minutes per day)

BUDGET SMARTPHONE

Motorola Moto G4

£159 from www.amazon.co.uk
Date tested: August 2016

This fantastic smartphone offers better features and performance than any other phone of this price. Its screen is sharp and bright, and its cameras are excellent. Battery life is well above average, too.
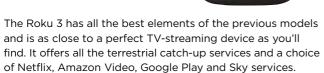
KEY SPECS

5.5in screen ■ Octa-core 1.5GHz processor ■ 16GB of storage, expandable by 128GB ■ Android 6.0.1 Marshmallow ■ 13-megapixel rear camera, 5-megapixel front camera ■ 1,980 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 3,000mAh battery ■ 155g

MEDIA STREAMER

Roku 3

£83.98 from www.very.co.uk
Date tested: August 2016

The Roku 3 has all the best elements of the previous models and is as close to a perfect TV-streaming device as you'll find. It offers all the terrestrial catch-up services and a choice of Netflix, Amazon Video, Google Play and Sky services.

KEY SPECS

HDMI video output ■ 1 X USB 3 port ■ 512MB internal storage with microSD slot ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi and Ethernet connectivity ■ Plex and UPnP streaming servers ■ 89 x 89 x 25mm ■ 142g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

WINDOWS 10 PC

Palicomp AMD Avenger

£500 from www.palicomp.co.uk
Date tested: June 2016

The Palicomp AMD Avenger's medium-sized case still provides plenty of room to upgrade. Its carefully chosen components provide good performance, especially when playing games.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 4.5GHz AMD Athlon X4 880K processor ■ 8GB of memory ■ 1TB hard drive, 240GB SSD ■ 2 X USB 2 ports, 3 x USB 3 ports ■ Ethernet ■ 485 x 420 x 235mm ■ Three-years return-to-base warranty

MULTIFUNCTION PRINTER

Canon Pixma MG5750

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

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

KEY SPECS

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

All prices correct at time of review

SOFTWARE & SERVICES

INTERNET SECURITY

Kaspersky Internet Security 2016

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

Kaspersky is rock solid at protecting your PC from the worst of the web, and has come top in seven of our most recent tests, blocking all viruses and malware with its robust defences. Click the link above to save £30 on the software (normal price £49.99).

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.
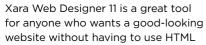
KEY FEATURES

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

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

KEY FEATURES

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

BACKUP AND SYNC

SyncBackFree

Free from bit.ly/syncback366
Date tested: March 2015

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

KEY FEATURES

Synchronise: Copy files in both directions ■ Restore 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

£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

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

Premiere Elements' 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

UNINSTALLER

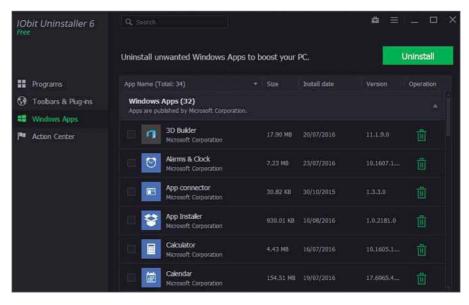## IObit Uninstaller 6

bit.ly/uninstaller405

Min requirements: Windows XP/
Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 12.5MB

The Windows uninstaller does a reasonable job of removing unwanted programs from your PC but it's slow, can only uninstall one program at a time and tends to leave behind a lot of junk files. IObit's free and portable Uninstaller is a superior alternative that can batch-uninstall multiple programs and completely remove all leftover traces, such as temporary and installer files, and Registry entries.

To save you time and hassle, IObit Uninstaller 6 lets you filter the list of installed software by All Programs, Recently Installed, Large Programs, Infrequently Used and Windows Update, and also reorder the list by Name,

Size, Install date or Version. Or you can search for specific items you want to get rid of. There are additional sections for Windows Apps and Toolbars and Plugins.

The latest version of Uninstaller has a redesigned interface that makes it easier to find and remove unwanted software. The most notable new addition to the program is the ability to detect and delete malicious and ad-based plugins and extensions from Microsoft Edge, and it can also uninstall more programs and browser plugins.

The handy Force Uninstall function can remove broken files and applications, as well as hidden and unlisted programs; while the improved Powerful Scan automatically detects and removes all leftover files and Registry entries, including those left behind by other uninstallers.

Additionally, if you're a Windows 10 user, you'll appreciate the ease with which the software can securely uninstall most pre-installed Windows apps, and outdated, failed or troublesome updates.
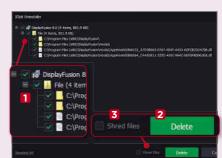
⚙ MINI WORKSHOP | Remove unwanted programs using IObit Uninstaller 6

1 Uninstaller lets you find the program(s) you want to remove either by filtering the choices in the sidebar **1** or searching for the software by name. **2** You can uninstall multiple items by ticking the box by each program. **3** The number of programs selected and their total size is shown at the top. **4** Click Uninstall **5** to begin the removal process.

2 You'll be shown which programs are being uninstalled. **1** IObit Uninstaller can create a restore point, so you can easily roll things back if problems occur – just tick the box **2** to select this option. Click the Uninstall button **3** and the selected software will be removed using the standard uninstall process. Click any further boxes that appear.

3 Once the software has been removed, click the Powerful Scan button to search for any leftover elements. You can set this feature to start automatically every time you uninstall something. Select the items you want to remove, **1** then click Delete. **2** You can opt to shred the files **3** if you want all trace of them gone for good.

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

SLIDESHOW CREATOR
Icecream Slideshow Maker 2
icecreamapps.com
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 30.4MB

Slideshow Maker lets you create a video slideshow of photos with transitions and background audio. Simply drag photos to the program window or add a folder of images, choose the duration for each image, set a transition and add audio, then preview the results and click Create to save the slideshow. The new version is much faster and lets you shuffle photos and upload slideshows to Dropbox and Google Drive. You can now change the output video format and loop the background audio.

MULTI-MONITOR MANAGER
DisplayFusion 8
www.displayfusion.com
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 20.1MB

If you use two or more screens with your PC, DisplayFusion lets you manage and fine-tune them using precise monitor controls, window snapping and the ability to add wallpaper from the web. Version 8 adds support for Windows 10 Anniversary Update and a Triggers feature that automates window-management tasks. It comes with a free 30-day trial of the Pro edition, which includes some useful extra features.

BROWSER CLEANER
AdwCleaner 6
bit.ly/adwc405
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 3.6MB

AdwCleaner can remove toolbars, adware, hijackers and potentially unwanted programs (PUPs) from your browsers. Just click the Scan button and it will present you with its findings across various tabs including Services, Folders, Registry, Firefox and Chrome. Click Clean to remove any found junk. The latest version has been rewritten and includes support for additional browsers and a new Log manager.

New Windows Apps

Spinster
bit.ly/spinster405
Min requirements: Windows 10
File size: 23.5MB
Spinster is a media browser that can play images and videos at the same time. It's optimised for both touchscreens and mouse-and-keyboard setup, and runs on all screen sizes.

Pixel Art Studio
bit.ly/pixel405
Min requirements: Windows 10
File size: 18MB
If you're a fan of 8-bit art, this app makes it easy to produce your own creations. It supports images and animations, and offers a selection of brush types, custom canvases and other tools and features.

TraceRT Ping
bit.ly/trace405
Min requirements: Windows 10
File size: 7MB
If you want to know where your web traffic is routed through, TraceRT Ping can show you on a map. Launch it and type the URI (Uniform Resource Identifier) or IP address to follow.

✚ Recommend free downloads at www.facebook.com/webusermagazine

⬇ Best Free Software

ANTIVIRUS TOOL
Panda Free Antivirus
bit.ly/panda405
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 2.2MB

Panda Security has updated its entire range of antivirus programs, including the free edition. The software is now fully compatible with the latest build of Windows 10 and sports a refreshed interface with new icons and a green colour scheme, replacing last year's blue theme. The software offers real-time and on-demand protection, with all the heavy lifting done in the cloud, so it shouldn't hog resources and overpower lower-spec PCs.

During installation, make sure you reject the bundled Panda Safe Web protection, which will change your browser's homepage and search provider. The software comes with a 30-day trial of the paid Pro edition, but you can skip this.
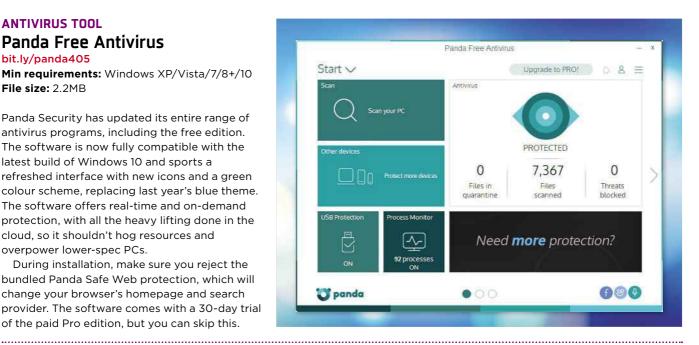

IMAGE MANAGER
ImBatch 5
www.highmotionsoftware.com
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 14.5MB

ImBatch lets you make multiple changes to large batches of photos in one go, such as renaming and resizing them, and applying filters and frames. Pretty much anything you could wish to do with a photo – from auto-cropping the image to sharing it on Facebook – is supported by the program.

The latest version gains a new Image Selection Tool, the ability to sort images by all attributes and the option to save lossless transformations (flips and rotations) for JPEGs. Several tasks have been improved and various fixes have been made throughout. The paid-for edition gains multithreaded task-list processing, which essentially means it works much faster.

ANTI-MALWARE TOOL
Kaspersky Anti-Ransomware Tool for Business
bit.ly/kar405
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 26.5MB
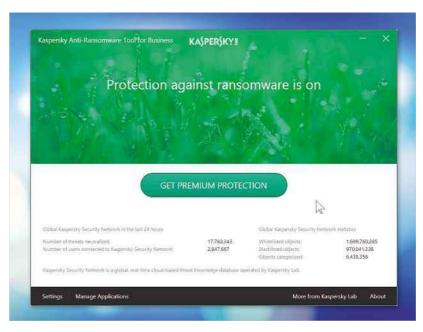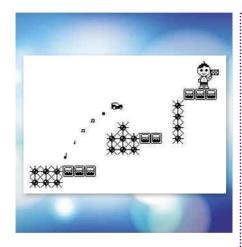
Ransomware is one of the nastiest forms of malware, hijacking your PC and encrypting your personal files unless you pay a ransom to release them. Kaspersky's powerful program protects you from this threat and although it's aimed at businesses, anyone can download it (you just have to enter some made-up details about your 'business' first).

Once installed, the program runs in the background. You can manage blocked or trusted applications, and configure the software through its Settings menu, or just leave things as they are and use it as a second line of defence alongside your other security software.

GAME
Magical Sound Car
bit.ly/mscar405
Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 7.8MB

Magical Sound Car is a distinctively retro, black-and-white platform game in which the aim is simply to guide your toy car from the start point to the finish. It's a cute game that's made even cuter by the fact the car plays musical notes as it moves. There are more than 40 stages to play, and it's a lot tougher than it looks!

❌ **Don't install...**

Banshee
banshee.fm
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/ 8+/10, Mac OS X or Linux
File size: 22MB

Banshee is a basic open-source media player that lets you subscribe to podcasts using RSS feeds. It's not bad for a free tool but offers no options to search or browse for content, and we found it no faster or easier to use than VLC Media Player (see our Top Tips on page 64). Also, it hasn't been updated in more than two-and-half years.

...Install this instead ✅

Grover Podcast
bit.ly/grover398
Min requirements: Windows 10
File size: 7.4MB

Grover Podcast is a free podcast app for Windows 10 that offers a great combination of features, usability and performance. It's very lightweight and, because it's been designed solely for discovering and managing podcasts, its interface is beautifully simple. You can add new podcasts quickly and easily or use the search bar to find and subscribe to your favourites. Grover's search tool is powered by iTunes, so it returns similar results to Apple's software, and lets you browse podcasts by category, including Technology, Arts and Sport.

🔄 **UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs**

AUDIO EDITOR
Wavosaur 1.2
www.wavosaur.com
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 1.4MB

This powerful yet lightweight audio editor offers numerous effects and filters, along with sophisticated features and audio-processing options. This is the first update since 2013 and adds a real-time spectrum-analysis feature, a shortcuts editor and a time bar.

SYSTEM CLEANER
CCleaner 5.21
www.piriform.com/ccleaner
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 7.8MB

This popular system-cleaning tool gets updated every month. The latest version gains improved cleaning of Chrome 52's history and cache, and updated cleaning of DOMStore cookies, which are used by Internet Explorer. The Auto-Update checking process has been improved, too.

SYSTEM CLEANER
System Ninja 3.1.5
singularlabs.com
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 2.2MB

System Ninja removes junk from your PC, including temporary files, internet cookies and history, thumbnail caches and more. This update redesigns the Startup Manager and Process Manager tools, and adds improved cleaning of Google Chrome cache, cookies and session history.

WEB BROWSER
Pale Moon 26.6
www.palemoon.org
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 or Linux   **File size:** 20.4MB

The most notable change in this update to the popular browser is Google being dropped from Pale Moon's bundled search providers, reportedly because Google didn't pay it revenue for traffic sent from its start page. You can manually install Google if you still want to use it. ■

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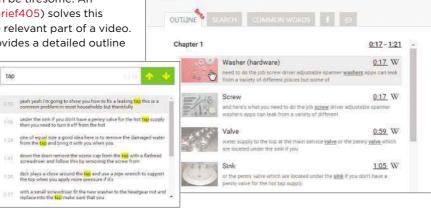
Best New Browser Tools

Search for specific words in YouTube videos

There are loads of brilliant educational and instructional videos on YouTube, but sitting through a 10-minute clip to get to the one piece of information or advice you need can be tiresome. An amazing new tool called BriefTube (bit.ly/brief405) solves this problem by letting you jump straight to the relevant part of a video. The add-on works in three ways: first, it provides a detailed outline of the video, so you see which subjects it covers and at which points; second, you can search for a specific word in the clip to browse and watch each mention; third, it displays a word cloud for the video to give you the gist of its subject matter and the most frequently mentioned topics. BriefTube is designed to help students learn in a hurry, but it's useful for anyone who's thirsty for knowledge but short of time.

Spot disguised adverts on Facebook

As we reported last issue, Facebook is clamping down on ad blockers while using crafty tactics to promote ads – such as sneaking adverts into your News Feed in the form of sponsored content that's designed to resemble genuine posts from your friends. You can foil this devious trick by staying one step ahead of the social network using a new Chrome extension called Facebook Ad Highlighter (bit.ly/facebook405). As its name suggests, this add-on identifies sponsored posts in your News Feed and clearly marks them by concealing their content and displaying the words: 'This is an ad'. Unlike a standard ad blocker, it doesn't filter other adverts on Facebook or other sites, but it stops you being fooled by deceptive advertising and solves the mystery of why plugs for products and services you've never heard of have started appearing in your feed.

Shorten URLs as you browse the web

As you will have noticed in every issue of *Web User*, we use the URL-shortening tool Bitly (bitly.com) to create redirects of web addresses that would otherwise to be too long to print. So we're delighted that the service has updated its Chrome extension (bitly.is/chrome) to make it even quicker and easier to shrink links on the fly. When you're viewing a page that you'd like to share – but don't want to copy and paste an unwieldy URL – just click the 'b' icon on your toolbar to cut down the address to a more manageable length. As with the Bitly website, the shortened link can be customised to include a memorable word or number, rather than random characters. You can also add tags to your Bitly links to keep them organised. By default, the add-on automatically copies the shortened URL to your clipboard, but you can disable this option if you like.

Go back to using Backspace

As revealed here in Issue 399 (bit.ly/webuser399), Chrome 52 ditched the option to press Backspace on your keyboard to return to the previous web page. We recommended a tool called Back to Back (bit.ly/back399) to restore the function, but now Google has released its own extension called Go Back With Backspace (bit.ly/back405). This works in the same way – by overriding Chrome's new default setting to re-enable the Backspace key. We're not sure why Google has backtracked by bringing Backspace back, but it deserves a pat on the back.

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

FIREFOX

Discover Firefox's secret browsing history

When someone has been using your computer without your permission, they can easily cover their tracks by clearing the browsing history – leaving you none the wiser about any dodgy sites they may have visited. Unless, that is, you install a clever new add-on called PinPatrol (bit.ly/pinpatrol405), which shows you domains that are secretly stored by Firefox and not usually visible. Just click the 'PP' icon on your toolbar to view a record of all the sites your browser has connected to recently, including the date the domain was last visited and the number of days on which it was accessed. PinPatrol works retroactively, so you can trace your hidden history over the last few months – you can even search for a specific domain.

Note that many of the entries will be for ad servers and social networks, unless you block those sites using the tips in our cover feature on page 38.

Open websites in Internet Explorer

You probably read the title of this tip and thought: "What year is this – 2002?!". You may feel that Microsoft's old browser has been surpassed by others, but it's still the second-most popular in the world and you'll sometimes stumble across an old website that's "best viewed in Internet Explorer". Equally, web designers still need to consider that some of their visitors – such as those living in China or working for the Metropolitan police – may be stuck using IE. All of which preamble leads us to a new add-on called IE View 2016 (bit.ly/ieview405), which lets you open specific pages in Internet Explorer, from within Firefox.

Simply right-click the link and choose 'Open Link Target in IE' to launch the site in the other browser. You'll need to restart Firefox to install the add-on – just like in the old days!

Streamline the Firefox Add-ons Manager

If you avidly read this section every issue to learn about the latest browser tools, your Add-ons Manager is probably as packed and unwieldy as ours. This isn't helped by the bloated layout, which makes browsing the full list of add-ons unnecessarily slow. Help is at hand from the recently updated Slim Add-ons Manager (bit.ly/slim405), which makes the page tighter and tidier. It reduces the height of entries, so you can view more at a time, and moves the add-on's description to the right of its name rather than below it. Hopefully Mozilla will adopt a similar approach in a future version of Firefox.

OTHER BROWSERS

Download any song from SoundCloud

An increasing number of musicians, DJs and producers now use SoundCloud (soundcloud.com) to share their work online, but often only as streaming audio without the option to download the track to keep. SoundCloud MP3 Downloader beats this restriction by adding a download button to every song featured on the site. To download a track, click Prepare to generate an MP3 link, then click this to download the file. If this sounds like too much trouble, you can subscribe to SoundCloud Go for £9.99 per month to enjoy its catalogue offline and ad-free.

Try the new features in Vivaldi 1.3

We mentioned Vivaldi's (vivaldi.com) new themes in Issue 402 and now the browser has added even more ways to customise its look. Click the main menu button, choose Tools, Settings, Themes and you'll see new options to play around with existing themes and create your own using various colours and styles. Other improvements in Vivaldi 1.3 include smoother mouse gestures – with more than 90 on offer – and enhanced privacy settings, such as the ability to hide your IP address by turning off WebRTC until you need it.
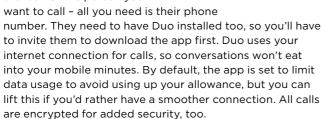
Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight

VIDEO CALLS

NEW

Google Duo

duo.google.com
Min requirements: Android 4.1, iOS 9
Size: Varies by device (Android), 28.2MB (iOS)

There's no shortage of apps for making video calls: Microsoft has Skype, Apple has FaceTime and now Google has Duo. So why would Google bother turning up late to an already crowded party? Because it's bringing something new: a quicker, lighter and much easier app.

Unlike FaceTime, Duo works on Android as well as iOS devices. Unlike Skype and Messenger, Duo doesn't require you to set up an account or log in. Just launch the app and tap the icon of the person you want to call – all you need is their phone number. They need to have Duo installed too, so you'll have to invite them to download the app first. Duo uses your internet connection for calls, so conversations won't eat into your mobile minutes. By default, the app is set to limit data usage to avoid using up your allowance, but you can lift this if you'd rather have a smoother connection. All calls are encrypted for added security, too.

Duo is the obvious choice for calling friends and relatives who don't want the hassle of other video apps. So why only four stars? Call quality was less than perfect, even when both callers were in the same room as the router. We hope to see an update that fixes this soon.

Even so, we love Duo's unrivalled simplicity, as well as the addition of clever features such as Knock Knock, which gives you a video preview of the person calling. You can also flip from the front camera to the rear one during a call. As Duo has no audio-only option, this is great for shy callers who'd rather not show their face when chatting.

Our rating ★★★★★
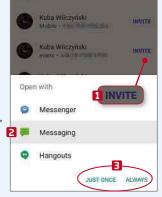
MINI WORKSHOP

Video-call a friend for free using Google Duo
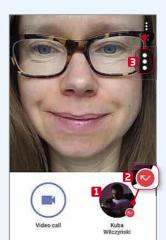
1 Install Google Duo, launch it and tap Allow to accept permissions. Tap 'Video call' on the default screen to load your device's Contacts. Swipe to search for a person to call, then tap the Invite button next to their name. **1** Select a messaging app, **2** tap Just Once or Always, **3** and then send the invitation.
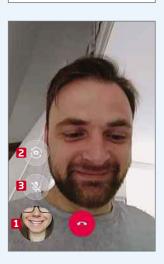
2 Once your contact has installed Duo, their Contacts icon appears on your Duo home screen. **1** Tap it to call them. A red dot indicates that you've missed a call from them. **2** Swipe up to see all your Duo contacts. To change the default settings, such as 'Limit mobile data usage' and Knock Knock, tap the three-dots icon **3** then Settings.

3 The view from your front camera appears in a small window in the corner during calls. **1** Tap it to see your face full-screen. Tap the screen to see more buttons. To switch to the rear camera, tap the camera button. **2** To mute the call, tap the microphone button. **3** After the call, you can rate call quality by tapping Good or Bad in a pop-up box that appears.

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

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INTERNET

NEW

Fast Speed Test

bit.ly/
fastdroid405
bit.ly/fastios405
**Min
requirements:**
Android 4, iOS 7
Size: 614KB
(Android),
800KB (iOS)

Is your Wi-Fi or mobile internet connection fast enough to stream film and TV smoothly and reliably? Find out by using this brilliant tool from Netflix. You don't even have to be a Netflix member to use it – simply launch the app for an instant evaluation of your phone or tablet's internet connection. To find out your broadband speed, visit the free Fast Speed Test site (fast.com) on your PC when it's connected to your router via Ethernet. No Netflix content or adverts appear on the app or site.

| Our rating | ★★★★☆ |

MESSAGING

NEW

Bars Messenger

bit.ly/bars405
**Min
requirements:**
iOS 7
Size: 26.8MB

Here's another app for sending free messages over the internet. So what's the gimmick this time? Bars Messenger looks for relevant song lyrics or inspirational quotes as soon as you start typing and then lets you add the lines to your message or even attach the song. We look forward to devising games such as 'See how fast you can make Bars suggest a Rick Astley song'. It also supports familiar messaging features such as photos, emoji and group chat.

| Our rating | ★★★★☆ |

CUSTOMISATION

NEW

Circle SideBar

bit.ly/circle405
**Min
requirements:**
Android 4.1
Size: 2.7MB

Among the many selling points of Samsung's high-end phones, such as the £630 Galaxy S7 Edge, is a scrollable swipe-out sidebar that provides quick and easy access to favourite settings, tasks and frequently used apps. Now you can get a similar feature on your own phone – without the hefty price tag – by installing this handy new app. Load the sidebar with items of your choice and reconfigure it at any time. The app includes custom icons and support for haptic feedback.

| Our rating | ★★★★☆ |

OCR

NEW
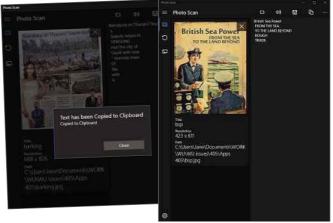
Photo Scan

bit.ly/scan405
Min requirements:
Windows 10 Mobile
Size: Up to 3.2MB

Optical character recognition (OCR) technology converts printed text, such as a page of a book or magazine, into digital text that you can edit and share as if you'd typed it yourself.

This app for Windows 10 devices can capture brief batches of text from photos. Take a snap or select a photo from your library, and the app extracts any text automatically in an instant. You can then copy the text to your clipboard, save it as a TXT file, share it through other apps or even have it read aloud.

Its a handy tool, and all its functions are free – the in-app purchase of $1.99 (£1.50) simply removes an advert. Don't expect too much, however. The app couldn't read our photo of tiny newsprint, and it struggles with elaborate fonts, but it's great for quickly grabbing text from signs, adverts and screenshots.

| Our rating | ★★★★☆ |

➕ Recommend free phone apps at www.facebook.com/webusermagazine

Best Free Apps

OFFICE
Dropbox Paper
bit.ly/paperdroid405
bit.ly/paperios405
Min requirements: Android 4.4,
iOS 8.1
Size: 67MB (Android), 55.6MB (iOS)

NEW

This new document-sharing tool from Dropbox falls somewhere between Evernote and Microsoft's Office 365, with a hint of Facebook thrown in. It lets you create, share and collaborate on Word-style documents, either from scratch or using notes, photos and other files you've stored in Dropbox. Everything you create or edit is saved to your Dropbox account. The collaborative element lets people comment on your documents and even tag each other. All your documents are organised in a tidy list, and you can pin favourite documents to the top for priority attention.

Our rating ★★★★☆

TRAVEL
Trainline
www.thetrainline.com
Min requirements: Android
(varies by device), iOS 8
Size: Varies by device (Android),
47.8MB (iOS)

UPDATED

This essential app for UK train travellers has been updated with a faster search tool and new features, which vary depending on the platform you use (by which we mean mobile platform, not train platform). The iOS version includes PriceBot, a crowdsourcing tool that finds cheaper tickets at alternative travel times based on searches by other Trainline customers; while the Android app recommends accommodation based on your train bookings. There's a postcode-search tool for finding the nearest station, and a discount checker that looks for deals on searched routes.

Our rating ★★★★☆

5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

COLOURING
BBC Colouring: Doctor Who
bit.ly/whodroid405
bit.ly/whoios405
Min requirements: Android 4, iOS 5.1.1
Size: Varies by device (Android),
78.9MB (iOS) **Price:** £2.29
Enjoy a relaxing spot of creativity with this colouring app from BBC Worldwide. You could print the 45 pages and dig out some colouring pens but the app is really designed for digital colouring – just tap a section and choose a fill colour.

TIME MANAGEMENT
Timelines
bit.ly/timelines405
Min requirements: iOS 8
Size: 211MB **Price:** £3.99 (launch price)
Do you wish you could track every element of your life? Now you can. Measure your daily activity using timers, statistics and graphs, then improve your efficiency at work and at home.

MUSIC
Trapezoid – Hammered Dulcimer
bit.ly/trapdroid405
bit.ly/trapios405

Min requirements: Android 4.0.3, iOS 8.1
Size: 7.5MB (Android), 31.4MB (iPhone), 62.1MB (iPad)
Price: £1.79 (Android), £2.29 (iOS)
Play the hammered dulcimer like a folk musician using this great app, which is now available on Android as well as iOS devices.

TRAVEL
Greater London A-Z 2016
bit.ly/atoz405
Min requirements: Android 4.1
Size: 764MB **Price:** £4.99
Google may have mapped the world but when it comes to Britain's infuriatingly labyrinthine capital, there's nothing better than the *A to Z*. This digital version includes GPS and offline street search. Just make sure you've got room – it takes up over 750MB.

GAME
Cribbage With Grandpas
bit.ly/cribdroid405
bit.ly/cribios405
Min requirements: Android 2.3, iOS 6
Size: 33MB (Android), 31.5MB (iOS)
Price: £2.79 (Android), £2.29 (iOS)
Learn to play the card game cribbage against your very own virtual granddad, whose personality and appearance you can customise. Just wonderful.

BBC Colouring: Doctor Who	Timelines	Trapezoid – Hammered Dulcimer	Greater London A-Z 2016	Cribbage With Grandpas

Best New TV Apps

FILM & TV
IMDb Movies & TV
bit.ly/imdbdroid405
bit.ly/imdbios405
Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 8.4
Size: 31.6MB

The Internet Movie Database has made some changes to its Android app and a very minor tweak to its iOS one (we won't keep you in suspense – it's updated the app's icon). Improvements include an updated login screen that makes it easier to create an account and sign into IMDb on your phone or tablet; and a green-tick notification that appears when you add titles to your watch list. These updates might not sound particularly thrilling, but they sho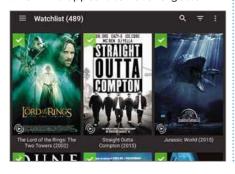w that IMDb is listening to users' comments on its feedback page (bit.ly/feedback405). Spare a thought for movie lovers with Windows phones, who IMDb appears to have forgotten.

FILM & TV
LoveFilm By Post
bit.ly/lovedroid405
bit.ly/loveios405
Min requirements: Android 4.1, iOS 8
Size: 24MB (Android), 3MB (iOS)

Former LoveFilm subscribers may be surprised to discover that the DVD- and Blu-ray-rental service is still going, such is the lack of promotion from owner Amazon, so we're pleased to report that its revamped app is rather splendid. The interface has been completely overhauled to make it quicker and easier to use, with a smart new homepage that presents new and popular movies and TV shows in a Netflix-style layout. LoveFilm now provides similar recommendations for each title, as well as details of subtitles, languages and directors, and lets you save your disc preferences in your account.
"So much better than before," says one happy user on the Play store. "Actually works without crashing all the time."

NEWS
Sky News
bit.ly/skydroid405
bit.ly/skyios405
Min requirements: Android 4.1, iOS 8
Size: 9.2MB (Android), 26.1MB (iOS)

The latest update to the Sky News app for Android and iOS takes the puzzling step of removing the US News category, just as the presidential election approaches, and lumping US stories with the rest of the world. Other changes are more understandable, such as a new section that brings together all the latest Sky News videos in one place and added info showing how long each clip lasts before you start playing it. Sky has also made it easier for 'citizen journalists' to send newsworthy pictures, videos and comments to the newsroom, for those times when Kay Burley can't be on the scene quickly enough.

✗ Don't install...

How2
bit.ly/how405

How2 has nothing to do with the classic children's TV show starring Fred Dinenage, but is instead a shoddy-looking app that claims to provide answers to any how-to question. It sources content from WikiHow (see the far superior app, right), but botches the presentation with spelling and formatting errors, dull text-based pages and slow performance. Our only question for How2 is: "Why would anyone choose you over the official app?".

...Install this instead ✓

WikiHow
bit.ly/wikidroid405
bit.ly/wikiios405
Min requirements: Android 4, iOS 8
Size: 2.7MB (Android), 26.7MB (iOS)

This amazing free app has the modest aim of helping everyone on the planet learn how to do anything. It lets you browse more than 180,000 WikiHow articles on your phone or tablet, following step-by-step photo guides, how-to videos and clear instructions to achieve any task you can think of and plenty of others you've probably never considered. You can bookmark articles to use later, even when you're offline, and read handpicked 'featured' articles every day. Topics include Computers & Electronics, Food & Entertaining and Home & Garden, with such quirky but useful advice as 'how to fix a shaky table at a restaurant'. ■

✚ Recommend free TV apps at www.facebook.com/webusermagazine

Car hacking

You car could be targeted by thieves who can unlock it and even drive it without needing your key. Belt up and listen to **David Crookes**

Surely you mean car jacking?

Afraid not. Car jacking involves thieves physically ejecting drivers from their vehicles, whereas car hackers can access your motor without so much as breaking a sweat, never mind a window. They use electronic equipment to gain access to microprocessors in our cars, taking advantage of what are essentially computers on wheels.

How do the car hackers operate?

Hackers typically approach cars in a similar way to a PC. They look for entry

Unlike this traditional thief, car hackers don't even need to touch your car

points ranging from a shortcoming in the network of connected chips to a vulnerable OBD II port (through which a vehicle's on-board diagnostics system is read). Newer vehicles often come with on-board internet connections that potentially allow savvy hackers to gain access to a vehicle's command centre.

What sort of access could they get?

It's very much an open road. Modern cars have electronic control units (ECUs), which direct a large number of functions. These include the steering, braking and acceleration as well as the horn, lights and windscreen wipers. A car's wireless system also allows ECUs to communicate with vital features such as the tyre-pressure monitors and lets you lock and unlock the doors. Throw in smartphone-like functionality to aid entertainment, navigation and in-car phone calls, and there's a lot of technology that's capable of being exploited.

But why do hackers want access?

It very much depends on what is driving

their motivation. Some want to be the first to crack specific vehicles to enhance their hacking credentials, revelling in the challenge. But others are looking for some sort of financial gain: if they can disable a vehicle's locks, they could pilfer the belongings of the glove compartment and boot. Better still, if they can somehow start the car, they can drive it away.

In the most frightening scenario, hackers could seize control of a vehicle while it's being driven, with terrible consequences such as injury and death.

This is scary stuff. How real a problem is it?

In 2015, two researchers used software installed on their laptop to control the steering, brakes and transmission of a 2014 Jeep Cherokee. They found their way to the heart of the vehicle via the entertainment system and were able to play around with the air-con, radio and windscreen wipers before cutting the engine while it was being driven.

When the researchers informed Fiat Chrysler of their findings, the car manufacturer was so concerned that it swiftly recalled 1.4 million vehicles and sent out software updates on USB sticks.

So car manufacturers are taking this seriously?

Very much so, and they are doing all they can to stop hackers while learning more

Hackers could potentially disable your locks and steal your belongings and car

General Motors chief Mary Barra is leading the car industry's fight against hacking

about security processes and potential for vulnerabilities. The car industry is determined that drivers be able to benefit from new technology without being scared off by hackers. Back in July, the CEO of General Motors, Mary Barra, called on all manufacturers to collaborate on car security, saying it would become a significant public safety issue in the future.

Have there been many scares recently?

Oh yes. In August, a Tesla S car's autopilot sensors were hacked by researchers using off-the-shelf materials; and in June, security expert Ken Munro found a way to remotely deactivate the alarm system, control the lights and drain the battery of a Mitsubishi Outlander. Munro urged Mitsubishi to recall more than 100,000 cars after he was able to open and track the vehicle. But that figure pales compared to the millions of vehicles said to be affected by a hack for Volkswagen cars.

The Mitsubishi Outlander had a vulnerability that could let hackers drain the battery

How have VW cars been compromised?

In August this year, researchers from the University of Birmingham – in conjunction with the German security firm Kasper & Oswald – discovered that the security of the keyless entry system used by Volkswagen Group cars relied on a few global master keys. They noted that by spying on the key-fob signals, it was possible to make clones that could be used to open the vehicles. The problem appears to affect most VWs, Audis, Seats and Skodas manufactured since 1995 (although not current-generation vehicles). Although VW stresses that the technique will not allow engines to be started, and requires advanced knowledge of cryptography, it is working closely with the researchers to close the loophole.

The researchers have also drawn

Hackers could be controlling this Volkswagen car and you won't even know it

attention to another compromised system that affects cars made by Ford, Chevrolet, Opel, Alfa Romeo, Lancia, Renault and Peugeot among others (bit.ly/carhacks405).

Are these hacks only being carried out by researchers?

No. Thieves have been learning the dark arts of the trade. In August in Houston, Texas, two men were arrested for allegedly stealing about 30 Jeep and Dodge cars using a laptop and pirated software, with each engine said to have taken just six minutes to start. Meanwhile, here in the UK – where around 30,000 vehicle crimes are reported each month – police are seeing a rising number of thefts involving electronic gadgets. Sky News recently found that half of all car thefts and vehicle break-ins in London were carried out using devices bought online (bit.ly/skynews405).

What do these devices do?

Some intercept the signals from key fobs, allowing access to a car in just 10 seconds. Others use gadgets that plug into the vehicle's diagnostic port and allow it be controlled from afar. To carry out this kind of attack, the hacker has to find a way to gain access to the car, such as by taking advantage of an unlocked vehicle or tricking the owner into allowing them inside.

So what can I do about it?

The FBI issued an alert in March this year warning drivers about the increase in remote exploits but its advice to US drivers applies equally to us here in the UK. So keep your vehicle software up to date, be wary of connecting third-party devices to your car, avoid unauthorised software modifications and only hand the keys to someone you trust. It is always best to use reputable garages and dealers, too, so you don't inadvertently open your door to hackers.

You wouldn't let a dog in a pink scarf drive your car, so don't let hackers

HACKED-OFF MOTORISTS

These car hackers have provoked virtual road rage in their victims

100 cars disabled
When a 20-year-old was laid off from his job at Texas Auto Center in Austin, Texas, he hacked into the web-based vehicle-immobilisation system, which usually allows dealers to disable a car's ignition or honk the horn if any finance payments on the vehicle are overdue. He left 100 customers stranded or covering their ears.

Mouse jacking
In France, police claim as many as 75% of stolen cars are targeted by hackers in a practice dubbed "mouse jacking" (*vol à la souris*). According to reports (bit.ly/mouse405), the most-stolen vehicle is the Smart Fortwo followed by the Ford Fiesta and Peugeot 406. Thieves carry out their crimes using devices bought on the internet.

Teenage kicks
Industry professionals told a group of students that it would take weeks or months to infiltrate a car remotely. That night, a 14-year-old visited a Radio Shack and bought $15 worth of parts. Building a circuit, he successfully hacked a car, activating its windscreen wipers and doors. He also got the lights to flash to the beat of songs on his iPhone.

WHAT YOU MUST
BLOCK ONLINE

Don't let online annoyances spoil your enjoyment of the web. **Wayne Williams** explains how to block unwanted elements that can cause you problems

The web is full of useful information, entertaining content and fantastic free tools, but it also plays host to a lot of unpleasantness: for example, annoying adverts that obscure your view of pages, hidden trackers that spy on your activities, trolls that spam and harass you, loud videos that start playing automatically and malicious code hidden in images. In this feature, we reveal how to overcome these threats and irritations – for good – so you can enjoy the web unimpeded.

Over the following six pages, we show you how to block Facebook's 'unblockable' adverts, stop auto-playing videos and GIFs, kill Flash dead, deal with abusive Twitter trolls, defeat invisible trackers and much more, using the latest browser tools and secret tweaks.

We also explain how to banish things that annoy you in the outside world – such as Pokémon Go and Donald Trump – to stop them invading your online space and spoiling your enjoyment of the web.

SECURITY RISKS

Cross-site request forgery attacks

A cross-site request forgery (CSRF) attack is not only a bit of a mouthful to say, but also an increasingly common and pernicious security threat. It forces you to perform an unwanted action on a website you're currently logged into, without your knowledge. Sometimes these annoying requests are legitimate – for example, from ad servers or social networks that want to know more about you – but they can also be used for malicious purposes such as stealing your personal details, transferring money from your online bank and changing your email password. Trustworthy sites should offer protection from this sort of threat, but for extra peace of mind you can install a Firefox add-on called RequestPolicy Continued (bit.ly/request405). This automatically blocks all cross-site requests and reveals which servers they originate from. You can unblock specific requests from trusted

destinations or go into the add-on's Options to decide exactly which connections to block and allow using thousands of built-in rules.

There isn't an equivalent extension For Chrome, but ScriptSafe (bit.ly/ssafe405) blocks the scripts that enable CSRF attacks to occur. If you're really worried about these attacks, make sure you always log out after using an online service and don't allow your browser to remember your login details.

Adobe Flash

Because Adobe Flash is such a security risk, it's slowly being phased out or downgraded by most browsers. Firefox now disables Flash by default and Google has said that from Chrome 55, it will make HTML5 the default standard on all sites except those that only support Flash.

If you don't feel that disabling Flash is a strong enough security precaution, you can completely remove it from your computer. Go to Start, type `Control Panel` and launch the application, then go to Programs and select 'Uninstall a program'. Locate and select any references to Adobe Flash Player, then uninstall them. The number of entries

you see will depend on which browsers you have installed. Chrome has its own Flash plugin which you can disable by typing `chrome://plugins/` into the address bar and pressing Enter. Click the Disable link for Adobe Flash Player at the bottom of the Plugins window.

Bear in mind that many websites still use Flash to display content, so you may encounter problems if you remove the plugin altogether.

Drive-by downloads

Drive-by downloads install malware on your PC without you knowing. You can get infected by visiting a compromised website – even without clicking anything – or by following a malicious link. Microsoft recently added drive-by protection to its SmartScreen technology in Windows 10, protecting

REAL-LIFE ANNOYANCES YOU CAN BLOCK

Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton
Not interested in American politics? You can remove Republican representative Donald Trump from the web using the Trump Filter for Chrome (trumpfilter .com), while Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton can be banished using Hillary Blocker (hillaryfilter.com), also for Chrome.

Pokémon Go
It's bad enough that every outdoor space is thronging with players of the mobile monster-hunting game, but Pokémon Go is also cluttering up social networks and the web. PokeGone – Gotta block 'em all (bit.ly/pokemon405) is a Chrome add-on that removes all mention of the game from the internet.

TV spoilers
Spoilers for popular TV shows, such as *Game of Thrones* and *The Walking Dead*, appear across social networks and the internet, and they often aren't flagged with an alert. You can block them all using Spoiler Shield spoilershield .com) for iOS and Android, or Unspoiler (www .unspoiler.tv) for Chrome.

The Kardashian family
If you're sick and tired of hearing about what the various members of the Kardashian family and their extended clan are getting up to, you can block their exploits using the Kardashian Filter for Chrome (bit.ly/kardashian405). It certainly cleans up the homepage of Mail Online!

users of Microsoft Edge and Internet Explorer 11. When you encounter a malicious site, SmartScreen displays a red warning and blocks the bad page. Chrome and Firefox also offer built-in protection against these sites, which should result in them being blocked and displaying a red warning.

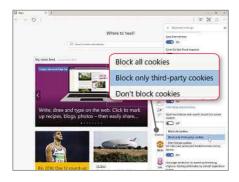To ensure you don't stumble onto malware-infected sites that your browser doesn't catch, you should scan them first using VirusTotal's VTzilla add-on for Firefox (bit.ly/vtzilla365) or VTchromizer extension for Chrome (bit.ly/vtchromizer365). Just right-click a download link and choose 'Scan with VirusTotal' or click the toolbar button to scan the current page for malware.

PRIVACY THREATS

Third-party cookies

Some cookies operate across multiple sites, allowing third parties – usually advertisers – to build up a profile of the sites you visit and track your browsing habits. You can block these third-party cookies, but be aware that this may occasionally cause some websites to behave oddly.
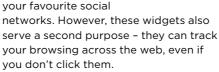
In Chrome, click the three-line 'hamburger' button and open Settings. Click the 'Show advanced settings' link at the bottom, then the 'Content settings' button under Privacy. You can manage third-party cookies there, either by blocking them all or by allowing specific sites to install cookies. In Firefox, click the hamburger button and select Options. Click the Privacy option to manage cookies.

Edge users should click the ellipsis button (...) and go to Settings. Click the 'View advanced settings' button and scroll down to Cookies under 'Privacy and services'. In the drop-down menu, select 'Block only third-party cookies'.

Social-media widgets

Facebook, Twitter and Google+ scatter their buttons across the web to make it easy to 'like' any content you encounter and share it directly on your favourite social networks. However, these widgets also serve a second purpose – they can track your browsing across the web, even if you don't click them.

Privacy Badger (bit.ly/pb405), from the non-profit organisation EFF (Electronic Frontier Foundation), automatically blocks these social-networking buttons and replaces them with versions that let you share and 'like' content, but which won't track you. It's available for Chrome and Firefox, and also blocks spying ads.

See our Mini Workshop below for instructions on using Privacy Badger.

Invisible trackers

Websites use invisible trackers to record the public details of all their visitors. This information includes browser type, IP address, operating system, referrer, page title and URL. It also reports back if you return to the site. This data is supposed to be collected anonymously, but you may still feel uneasy about sites building up a profile and knowing virtually everything about you except your name. Fortunately, you can block invisible trackers using the aforementioned Privacy Badger, which turns red to show you if the site you're currently viewing is trying to spy on you.

MINI WORKSHOP | Block spying ads and invisible trackers

1 Privacy Badger (bit.ly/pb405) is an excellent blocking add-on for Firefox and Chrome. When you install it, a button is added to the top of your browser. **1** Browse the web as normal and the add-on will look for spying ads and invisible trackers. Click the Privacy Badger button to display anything it has found. **2**
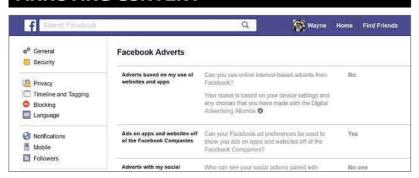
2 When you first start using Privacy Badger, the most intrusive trackers will be shown as green (safe). Use the sliders to change how Privacy Badger handles each one. You can block cookies (amber) **1** or fully block the ad domain (red). **2** As you browse the web, Privacy Badger will learn how you want to handle the various trackers.

3 Click the Settings cog **1** to access the Filter Settings. Here, you can set the action you want to take with each of the found trackers. **2** You can also whitelist domains you know to be safe **3** and enable or disable the add-on's social-widget replacements. **4** The General Settings tab **5** lets you manage notifications.

ANNOYING CONTENT

Irritating adverts

Ad blockers, such as Adblock Plus (adblockplus.org), can remove most forms of advertising but some websites are now retaliating. Facebook has rolled out some new ads that are designed to circumvent ad blockers, so you'll see them even if you don't want to. The social network provides some new controls that let you manage the ads you see, but the move is still highly controversial.

Adblock Plus has responded to these 'unblockable' ads with a workaround, but Facebook hit back by making further changes – to block the block. At the moment, it's a cat-and-mouse game between the two companies, but if you follow the Adblock Plus blog (adblockplus .org/blog), and implement any recommended list updates, you should be able to keep at least some of those tricky ads at bay.

Mobile adverts

Adverts that appear on mobile web pages are often incredibly frustrating because they can obscure important content and be difficult to dismiss. They can also slow down your browsing and eat into your mobile data allowance. For those reasons alone, ad blockers are becoming increasingly popular on iOS and Android. You can install ad-blocking apps, which will work with the default browser, or you can switch to a browser that has ad-blocking built in. Opera's mobile
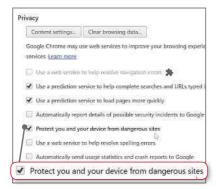
browsers for Android, iOS and Windows Phone (www.opera.com) recently gained a built-in ad blocker, and Adblock Plus has its own browser for Android and iOS called, unsurprisingly, Adblock Browser (adblockbrowser.org).

Malvertising

Malvertising ("malicious advertising") is a growing problem, with malicious and malware-laden advertisements appearing on otherwise innocuous sites. The Daily Mail was one of the biggest sites found to be briefly serving up booby-trapped adverts last year, and sites owned by the BBC, New York Times and MSN have also fallen victim to malvertising campaigns.

You can protect yourself from such threats by making sure that risky plugins such as Flash and Java are either disabled or – if you must use them – fully up to date. As well as running a reliable anti-malware program, consider using an ad blocker such as Adblock Plus or uBlock Origin (bit.ly/ublock405).
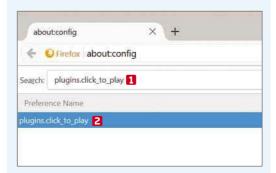
Additionally, in Chrome, click the hamburger menu button and go to Settings. Scroll down and click 'Show advanced settings'. Under the Privacy section, make sure 'Protect you and your device from dangerous sites' is ticked. In Firefox, click the hamburger, choose Options, Security and ensure the option 'Block dangerous and deceptive content' is selected.
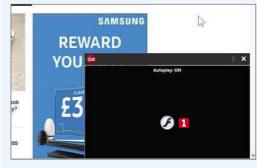
MINI WORKSHOP
Block auto-playing videos in your browser

1 If you use Chrome, it's easy to disable auto-playing videos and media, although there's no button to do so. Open the browser and type `chrome://settings/content` into the address bar. **1** Scroll down to the 'Plug ins' section, and select 'Let me choose when to run plug-in content'. **2** You can also manage each of your plugins separately. **3** Click Finished. **4**

2 There are a couple of ways to stop videos playing automatically in Firefox. To do this in Firefox's settings, type `about:config` into the address bar and click 'I'll be careful, I promise' on the warning screen. Type `plugins.click_to_play` into the search box **1** and double-click the entry **2** to toggle the settings on or off.

3 An even simpler method is to install the excellent Flashblock add-on (bit.ly/fblock405), which will automatically block any Flash videos and other content that starts playing as soon as you visit a site. If you want to allow a blocked item to run, simply click the Play button. **1**

YouTube adverts

The adverts that run at the beginning of some YouTube videos help to monetise the content, and you can (in most cases) click to skip them after a few seconds. If you really can't bear to see ads on YouTube, even if that means cutting off the poster's only source of funding, you can block them using Adblock Plus. Go to youtube.adblockplus.me and choose 'Block all YouTube annoyances'.

'Acceptable' ads

Many websites are funded purely by advertising. If you block their ads, you could potentially be jeopardising their existence. For this reason, Adblock Plus has an 'acceptable ads' programme that lets through some "non-intrusive" adverts. If you really don't want to see any adverts, you can turn this feature off. In Chrome, right-click the Adblock Plus icon, select Options and untick the setting there. In Firefox, click the icon and choose Filter Preferences from the menu. Untick the box 'Allow some non-intrusive advertising'.
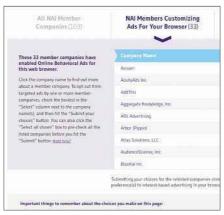
Alternatively, Adblock Ultimate (adblockultimate.net) for Chrome and Firefox prides itself on blocking all ads without exception and offers no 'white-listing' option.

Tailored adverts

Most major websites track your activity to learn about your interests, so they can serve up more relevant advertising, but you can block this through ad-preference pages. For Google, go to the search giant's Ads Settings page (bit.ly/ googlead405) and browse the information it holds on you. This includes gender, age, languages and interests. From here, you can opt out of interest-based ads on Google and across the web. Next, visit the pages for

> **Many websites are funded purely by advertising. If you block their ads, you could potentially be jeopardising their existence**

Microsoft (bit.ly/msad405) and Yahoo (bit.ly/yahooad405). You can also visit the Consumer Opt-Out Page of the Network Advertising Initiative (bit.ly/ nai405) to opt out of multiple sites at the same time.
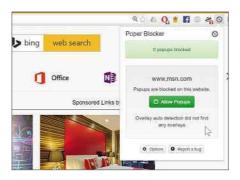
Auto-playing videos

Video adverts (and other content) that play as soon as you open a page are incredibly annoying. If you're listening to music through your computer or working in a shared environment, the last thing you want is some junky video blaring out its unwelcome nonsense. You might be able to stop them by using an ad blocker, but some may still slip through. Fortunately, most web browsers offer settings to prevent content like this from autoplaying.

See our Mini Workshop on page 41 to find out how to configure your browser so videos don't play automatically.

Pop-ups and pop-unders

Your browser should automatically block pop-ups or pop-unders, although some of the more devious examples may still slip through. Poper Blocker for Chrome (bit.ly/poper405) promises to kill pop-ups and pop-unders no matter where you click on a page. A notification displays the number of windows the
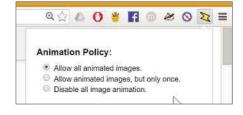

add-on has blocked and you can whitelist individual websites to allow their pop-ups.

Animated GIFs

Animated GIFs are very entertaining in small doses but they can quickly become annoying and may take a while to load if you're on a slow connection. Google offers an add-on called Animation Policy (bit.ly/ap405) for Chrome that controls whether animations should play all the time, just once or not at all.

You can block animations directly in Firefox's settings. Type `about:config` into the address bar and hit Enter. Click 'I'll be careful, I promise!' then type `image.animation` into the search box to show the 'image.animation_mode' option. This is set to Normal by default, which means Firefox will play animated images on repeat. Double-click the setting to change it to None: this stops animated GIFs from playing. You can also set it to Once if you want to allow the GIF to play briefly.

YouTube Autoplay

You go to YouTube to watch a video but as soon as it's finished playing, another one you have no interest in suddenly launches into action. If you want to watch the original video again or post a comment on what you've just seen, this can be really annoying. The simple trick to stop this occurring is to flick the small Autoplay switch in the top-right corner to off. It's obvious when you know how!

UNPLEASANT PEOPLE

Comments on online articles

A lot of websites, especially ones that run on WordPress, use the Disqus commenting platform. If someone is being really unpleasant in a discussion on a site, you can block them, so their messages are no longer visible to you. To do this, make sure you are logged into Disqus (create an account if you don't already have one), hover your mouse over a comment you don't like, click the small down arrow that appears, and select Block User.

Alternatively, a new Chrome extension called NoComment (bit.ly/nocomment404) automatically blocks users' comments on news websites, blogs and social networks so you need never be bothered by an idiotic opinion or spammer again.

Comments on YouTube videos

Occasionally, you'll read some amusing and insightful comments underneath YouTube videos, but much of the time the comments consist of inane drivel, puerile name-calling and offensive insults. If you'd rather enjoy YouTube

without the comments, you can use Adblock Plus to hide them. Go to youtube.adblockplus.me and select the option to 'Block only comments'.

Facebook games requests

You probably get fewer requests from friends to play games on Facebook than back in the days when Farmville and similar games were all the rage, but they can still be an annoyance. To block these requests (which are usually sent to help your friend get more lives or progress further in the game), look for Apps in the sidebar on the left and find the Games entry. When the Games page opens, click the Activity tab at the top, then click Invitations to block any unwanted game requests.

Annoying Facebook 'friends'

If a friend on Facebook posts annoying or upsetting content, you can simply unfriend them, but this could be awkward if they find out. A much better solution is to unfollow them, so you no longer see what they post but remain friends – and they'll be none the wiser.

To do this, click the down arrow to the right of one of their posts and select

Unfollow [Name]. You can easily re-follow them if you change your mind.

Facebook chats

If you're being pestered in Facebook Messenger, you can mute or delete a conversation and turn off chat for that particular person. In the chat window, click the cog icon to see the options, then select Mute Conversation or Delete Conversation. If someone is being particularly odious, you can block their messages completely and report them to Facebook.

Abusive Twitter users

Twitter is home to some of the worst trolls and abusive commenters on the web, and you often need a thick skin when using the site. Twitter is trying to clean things up, albeit with rather limited success, and to that end it has introduced various tools you can use to block and filter out the worst, most unpleasant users. The best option is to click the ellipsis (...) under a tweet and select Block. Mute is also an option, as is Report – if the person is behaving completely unacceptably or illegally. ∎

Best free Android VPNs

Mobile VPNs protect your privacy on the web and let you unlock restricted content wherever you go. **Edward Munn** compares six of the best VPN apps

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CyberGhost VPN | bit.ly/cyberghost405 | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★　**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★　**EASE OF USE** ★★★★☆

What we liked: Unlike most free VPN apps, CyberGhost doesn't limit your data usage or restrict your ability to choose different server locations. If you only want to encrypt and protect your connection, joining a VPN is as quick and easy as tapping a single button. There's no need to set up an account and, if you're not fussed about the location of the server, you don't have to fiddle with any settings.

Should you want to access websites or services that are only available in specific regions, CyberGhost lets you change the server location from Automatic to a country of your choice at any time. You can select from a range of locations including UK (which is very useful for accessing British content from abroad), France, Germany and the US, and the app tells you how many servers are available in each country.

One of the standout features of CyberGhost is that it warns you to connect to a VPN whenever you use a new Wi-Fi network, and it can even be set to automatically activate a VPN for specific networks, ensuring you're never left unprotected. In terms of bandwidth, it was the best performer of all the apps we tested, clocking download speeds in excess of 15Mbps when we were using a US server.

Connecting to VPNs was usually very quick, regardless of the location. To access more server locations, including high-speed ones, or to unlock extra features such as tracking prevention and protection against malicious websites, you need to upgrade to CyberGhost Premium at a cost of £3.99 a month.

How it can be improved: There's no data-usage limit but CyberGhost only lets you connect to a VPN for up to three hours at a time, so you might not be able to watch a long film uninterrupted. The app's interface felt a bit clunkier than our other award winners, too, and it had fewer virtual locations outside Europe than Opera VPN.

OUR VERDICT
CyberGhost offers the best all-round service of all the free VPN apps we tested. It's incredibly easy to set up, has no data or speed restrictions and lets you choose from an impressive range of virtual locations, making it perfect for everyday use.

Opera VPN | bit.ly/operavpn405 | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★☆   PERFORMANCE ★★★★★   EASE OF USE ★★★★★
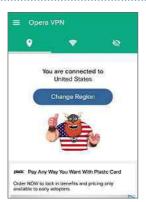
WebUser SILVER AWARD

What we liked: Opera VPN for Android was released on the day we were writing this round-up and its impressive range of features and easy-to-use interface made it impossible to ignore. Like CyberGhost and Betternet, Opera VPN offers completely unlimited free VPN access so you can protect your identity whenever you go online. Activating the VPN is quick and easy, and although it selects the closest region (Germany) by default, you can change your virtual location to Canada, Singapore, the Netherlands or the US. This makes Opera VPN the best free VPN for unlocking a range of restricted content from different global regions.

In addition to its VPN functionality, the app has a handy feature called Guardian, which stops ad trackers stalking you online. You can also run a security test on any Wi-Fi network, which highlights the security benefits of using a VPN whether you're on a public or private connection. Opera VPN scored very well in our download tests, achieving speeds of more than 9Mbps when connected to a US-based VPN.

How it can be improved: The only thing standing between Opera VPN and the Gold Award is that the UK isn't on its list of virtual locations, so you can't use it to access British content abroad. We'd also prefer to have the option of choosing a virtual region before activating the VPN.

OUR VERDICT
Opera offers a truly unlimited VPN with impressive download speeds and an excellent spread of virtual locations. If you don't need access to UK-based servers, Opera VPN is our app of choice.

Betternet | bit.ly/betternet405 | ★★★★☆
FEATURES ★★★☆☆   PERFORMANCE ★★★★★   EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser BRONZE AWARD

What we liked: We gave Betternet a five-star review when we first featured it in Issue 383 (bit.ly/webuser383), and it's still a firm favourite because it's one of the very few VPN apps to offer truly unlimited free VPN access. It's also the simplest of the apps in this test, with no confusing features or complicated settings to worry about: simply open the app, tap Connect and Betternet connects to a VPN, selecting an 'Optimal Location' automatically.

We found the app usually connected to a US-based server, which is ideal if you want to access restricted content from services including Netflix, Pandora or Hulu. Despite offering unlimited usage, there was no evidence of Betternet throttling bandwidth for its free users and we consistently achieved solid download speeds of around 8Mpbs. Like many of its rivals, Betternet's free service is supported by ads, but these are not particularly obtrusive. Removing the ads and unlocking the full range of locations – which includes Canada, Australia, Japan and the US – costs £3.95 a month.

How it can be improved: Betternet doesn't let you choose your virtual location and offers no information about it – we had to use whatismyIPaddress.com to find out where we were being routed.

OUR VERDICT
Along with Opera VPN, Betternet is one of the only VPN apps to offer a truly unlimited service. You can't choose a virtual location, but if your only concern is privacy and you're not accessing restricted content, Betternet is as good a choice as any.

BEST OF THE REST

Tunnelbear VPN
bit.ly/tunnelbear405
We love Tunnelbear's cute interface and impressive range of virtual locations, but it's one of the only apps we tested that requires you to set up an account to use its free services and you're limited to 500MB a month. It also achieved lower download speeds than all our award winners, so unless having a wide selection of free virtual locations is your priority, there are better tools available.

Hola Free VPN
bit.ly/hola405
Hola Free VPN uses peer-to-peer technology to offer you totally unlimited free VPN access. However, by definition, this means you'll need to share your own web connection unless you pay for the Premium version. There are no adverts and the app performed well in our speed tests, but we don't like that you're forced to use Hola's launcher if you want to open any of your apps from a virtual location.

ZPN Connect
bit.ly/zpn405
ZPN Connect offers a generous 10GB of free VPN usage to its users every month, but you have to set up an account or you'll also be limited to accessing it for one hour at a time. ZPN only offers a choice between European or US servers, so it's much more limited than some of our award winners, but it performed better than some of the other free services, offering speeds of around 3Mbps when connected to a US server.

Log in faster to sites and software

Traditional passwords are tedious to type and no longer secure enough to protect your online accounts. **Robert Irvine** reveals clever new ways to sign into sites and services

Save passwords using Google's Smart Lock

Passwords are a pain at the best of times, but trying to type them on a small screen with fumbly fingers requires tremendous dexterity. Google is hoping to make mobile logins easier with a new system called Open YOLO (You Only Login Once), which it's developing with password-management service Dashlane (bit.ly/yolo405). Open YOLO will provide "a seamless, universally acceptable Android app authentication solution to increase your online security", and will allow app developers to forego fiddly login screens and pesky passwords.

In the meantime, Google already offers a speedy login option for Android and Chrome called Smart Lock (get.google.com/smartlock). This remembers passwords you use in your browser and specific mobile apps, such as Netflix and LinkedIn, so you don't need to type them manually, and syncs your logins across devices.
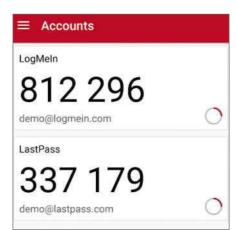
To turn on Smart Lock for your Google account, go to Settings, 'Show advanced settings' in Chrome, scroll down to 'Passwords and forms' and tick the box next to 'Offer to save your web passwords'. Click 'Manage passwords' and ensure the Auto Sign-in option is selected. When you register with a new website, Chrome will offer to save your password so you won't need to enter it yourself, whether you're accessing the site on your computer or your mobile device.

Log into sites securely with a single tap

Many online services now offer extra login security in the form of two-factor authentication, which requires you to enter a unique code as well as a password. It's an effective way to protect your account, but a bit bothersome in practice, which is why the popular password manager LastPass has created a tool to simplify two-step verification. LastPass Authenticator (bit.ly/lastpass405) is a free app for Android, iOS and Windows Phone that generates instant 6-digit codes you can use to log into online accounts securely. Alternatively, codes can be received by text message or as push notifications that

LastPass Authenticator creates instant verification codes for logging in with

can be approved with one tap. Either way, it takes a lot of the hassle out of the process and even lets you mark a specific device as "trusted", so you won't be prompted for codes when using it, but your account will still be protected by two-factor authentication. Codes can only be used once and expire after 30 seconds to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands.

Ditch your password for Windows 10

By default, Windows 10 requires you to enter a password to sign in, which seems rather old-fashioned for this supposedly state-of-the-art operating system. Fortunately, other options are available, which are both more secure than using a password (because they're less likely to be shared across other devices and

Turn on Google's Smart Lock feature to save and enter web passwords automatically

Fed up with typing a password every time you log in? Then use a PIN instead

services) and purposefully less secure (if you're the only person who uses your PC so don't need to log in).

For example, you can set up a PIN code, which is easier to type than a password – especially on a touchscreen. Open the Settings app, click or tap Accounts and select 'Sign-in options' in the list on the left. Click or tap the Add button under PIN, enter your password if prompted (yes, we see the irony there) and enter your chosen PIN. This must be at least four digits long and can only contain numbers – no letters or fancy characters. It's best to avoid obvious combinations such as 1111 or 1234, and not to use the same PIN as your debit or credit card. Click OK to save your PIN – you can change or reset it later via the 'Sign-in options' screen.

Alternatively, you can use a picture password to sign into Windows 10 – this involves selecting a favourite image, then drawing three specific gestures on it, which are then stored as your login pattern. It sounds clever and saves you needing to type anything, but it's fiddly on standard non-touchscreens. Microsoft also lets you sign in using your fingerprint, face or iris through its Windows Hello tool, but you'll need a compatible scanner.

If you'd rather not log in at all, you can disable this security measure. Open the Start menu, type netplwiz into the search box and click or tap the top result. Highlight your account and untick the option 'Users must enter a username and password to use this computer'.

You can prevent Windows 10 from requiring you to log in using a password

Click Apply, then enter your password (again, slightly ironic) and confirm the change. Click OK, restart your PC and you'll now be automatically logged into Windows 10 without a password.

Don't waste time thinking of logins

Security experts always advise us not to use the same login details on more than one website, but coming up with unique usernames and passwords takes time and effort. Next time you need to register with a site in a hurry, get some help from BugMeNot (bugmenot.com). This brilliant online tool provides instant logins for thousands of online services, so you don't need to create them yourself. Just enter a domain or URL and BugMeNot will list fake usernames and passwords that have been tried and tested by its community, complete with details of when they were created and 'success rate' scores left by other users.

Register for sites more quickly by using tried and tested logins from BugMeNot

Not only does this let you sign into sites faster, but it prevents your email inbox from being flooded with spam. There are unofficial BugMeNot extensions for Chrome, Firefox and Opera, but be aware that the service doesn't offer logins for services that offer paid content, require age verification or pose a fraud risk.

If you only need to think of a password, Chrome has a secret built-in tool that generates one for you. To activate the feature, type chrome:flags into the address bar, press Enter and scroll down to the option 'Enable password generator'. Click Enable and restart your browser. Next time you need to choose a password to register with a site, Chrome will create a strong one for you, containing the required mix of letters and numbers. Select this and Chrome will enter the password automatically whenever you

Generate instant passwords in Chrome so you don't need to think of new ones

log into the site. You can check what the password is by going to Settings, 'Show advanced settings', 'Manage passwords' and clicking Show next to the site name. For Firefox, there's an excellent password-generating add-on called Pwgen (bit.ly/pwgen405). ∎

Test anything from your browser

You can do more with your browser than just visit web pages. **Edward Munn** looks at six useful functions you can perform from your browser with no additional software

Test your internet speed

Testing your broadband speed has never been easier thanks to the excellent new Chrome extension from Speedtest by Ookla (bit.ly/ speedtest405). After installing the extension, click its icon in the toolbar and select Go to run all the usual tests that tell you the latency (ping), download and upload speeds for your connection. At the bottom of the pop-up window, you'll see the URL of the page you're viewing and the time that it took to load (click the Refresh button if you can't see this information).

We've always been big fans of Ookla's Speedtest website and we like its browser extension even more because it offers a simpler interface and is faster overall. To keep a record of your speed tests, click the extension's profile icon and select 'Sign in' to log into your account or set up a new one.

Check hotel Wi-Fi speeds

Before you book a hotel, it's useful to know how fast and reliable the Wi-Fi is likely to be. Hotel WiFi Test (www .hotelwifitest.com) is a handy search engine that lets you check the typical download speeds for your prospective accommodation. By installing its Chrome extension (bit.ly/hotel405), you can view hotel Wi-Fi speeds directly in Hotels.com, Expedia and TripAdvisor listings. You might notice that some speeds are estimates, rather than the results of previous tests, but you can help to improve the database by using the site's speed-test tool the next time you use a hotel's Wi-Fi connection. To do this, click the extension's icon, select Hotel WiFi Test and simply follow the on-screen instructions to run a speed test.

Monitor your PC's processor and memory

Your browser can put your PC under a fair amount of strain, particularly if you leave lots of tabs open (which we do far too often!). Windows Task Manager (Shift+Ctrl+Esc) can tell you just how hard your PC is working but if you feel it provides an overload of information, there are a couple of handy browser extensions that offer a more concise view. The tiny tool CPU Monitor (bit.ly/ cpumon405) displays a graph in Chrome's toolbar to represent CPU usage, so you can easily see if there's a spike in processor activity. Hover your cursor over the icon to track the processor usage as a percentage.

If you're more concerned about how

much memory your PC is using, install Memory Monitor (bit.ly/memory405) for Chrome. Your PC's free memory is displayed as a number in your toolbar and you can see a more detailed summary about the memory capacity by hovering your cursor over the icon.
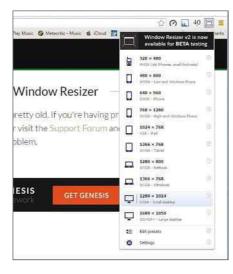
View any file on your hard drive

If you don't want to use Windows Explorer to browse and open files, you can use your web browser instead. To view a directory, simply enter its filepath into your browser's address bar. For example, if you want to view the C: drive, type `C://`. From here, you can click files and folders to open them and use the browser's Back button to move back a step. Chrome lets you open most media files, including PDFs, directly in the browser; all other files appear in the downloads bar for you to run as normal.

Local Explorer (bit.ly/locale405) is an extension that lets you run files in Chrome using your default Windows applications with a single click. For it to work, you'll also need to install an integration module from Local Explorer's options page and tick the box to 'Allow access to file URLs' from the Chrome extensions settings page (chrome://extensions). From the Options page, you can choose a default folder location that loads when you click its icon in your toolbar, and you can choose whether you want folders to open in Windows Explorer instead of Chrome when you click them.

See how sites look in other browsers

The way a website looks can vary depending on the screen you're viewing it on. The Chrome extension Window Resizer (bit.ly/resizer405) lets you quickly resize your browser window to emulate a range of different resolutions. It's a particularly handy tool if you're a web developer, but it's also useful for

checking to see how a web page displays on a phone or tablet. The resolutions list is fully customisable, so you can add to, delete and reorder the entries that already exist.

If you can't get a page to load properly in Chrome, the Browserling extension (bit.ly/browserling405) lets you see how it would appear in Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari or Opera, without needing to install another browser. After loading a page, simply click the Browserling icon in your toolbar, choose a browser from the drop-down menu and click 'Run in Browserling'. You're limited to 3-minute sessions, and Windows Vista is the only simulated operating system that's
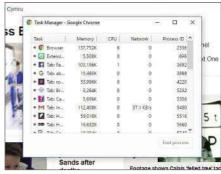
free, but it's a very handy tool for testing web pages in other browsers without having to leave Chrome.

Find out what's slowing down your browser
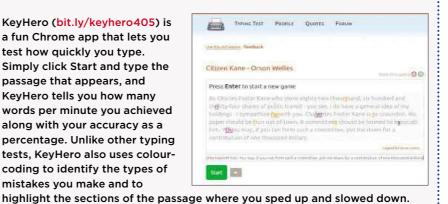
We've already looked at Chrome extensions that tell you how much of your PC's resources are being consumed, but if you want to know whether a particular browser tab or extension is responsible for hogging your computer's processor and memory, Chrome's Task Manager lets you see all this information at a glance, so you can close any web pages or apps that are slowing your PC. You can open it by clicking Chrome's main menu, selecting 'More tools' and then Task Manager; or by pressing Shift+Esc (although this keyboard shortcut didn't work when we tested it).

Unfortunately, Firefox has no equivalent tool, but as we recommended in last issue's Best New Browser Tools, you can install Tab Memory Usage (bit.ly/tabm405) to see how much memory each tab is using; and use about:addons-memory (bit.ly/about405) to find out if any of your add-ons are consuming an excessive amount of RAM. ∎

TEST YOUR TYPING SPEED

KeyHero (bit.ly/keyhero405) is a fun Chrome app that lets you test how quickly you type. Simply click Start and type the passage that appears, and KeyHero tells you how many words per minute you achieved along with your accuracy as a percentage. Unlike other typing tests, KeyHero also uses colour-coding to identify the types of mistakes you make and to highlight the sections of the passage where you sped up and slowed down.

Broadband Deals

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	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1	sky	Sky: Broadband	£10.00 (FREE for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	**CHEAPEST** £0.00
2	EE	EE: Broadband	£10.00 (£1.00 for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	£12.00
3	TalkTalk	TalkTalk: Broadband	£7.50 (£3.75 for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£45.00
4	Virgin media	Virgin: Broadband	£24.00 (£10.00 for 9 months)	12 months	50Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	£162.00

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 23 August 2016.

Ofcom

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

Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your computer by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you unravel our Windows tools word search and guess our TV-show emoji?

WEB USER WORD SEARCH

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

CALCULATOR
COMPUTER
CONTROL PANEL
DISK CLEANUP
DOCUMENTS
EXPLORER
NOTEPAD
PAINT
RECYCLE BIN
START MENU

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

CAN YOU GUESS THE TV SHOW TITLES FROM THE EMOJI?

1. 🎤🕵️

2. ⚫🐝🌃

3. ❓⏱️

4. 🏡🏠↘️🔨

Get the answers online at bit.ly/quiz405

COMPETITIONS

Run Android apps on your Desktop | www.memuplay.com

MEmu is an Android emulator for Windows that can run mobile apps from the Google Play store and beyond. Here's how to use it

Although the Windows app store is growing, helped by the widespread adoption of Windows 10, the number of apps it offers pales in comparison to the quantity – and quality – of apps available for Android from Google Play. Fortunately, it's possible to run Android apps on Windows if you use the right emulator software.

The best known of these programs is probably Bluestacks (www.bluestacks .com), but it's not the only option. MEmu is an excellent – and recently updated – Android emulator that simulates an Android device on the Windows Desktop and can run most of the apps you throw at it. It even offers a Multi-MEmu mode that you can launch from the Start menu, which lets you run multiple emulator windows at the same time.
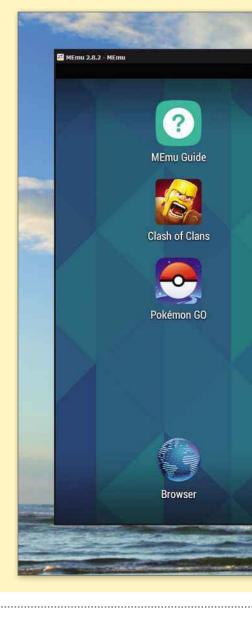
1 Install MEmu and launch the program. Once running, it may update Android before displaying the device Desktop. You can find out more about MEmu by running the guide. **1** The emulator also comes with a web browser **2** and file manager. **3** To find and install new apps, double-click the Play Store icon. **4**

2 You'll be asked if you want to use an existing Google account **1** or create a new one. **2** Choose whichever option you require. If you opt to use an existing Google account, you'll need to enter a username and password and agree to Google's terms. You'll be asked to set up payment info. Click No Thanks.
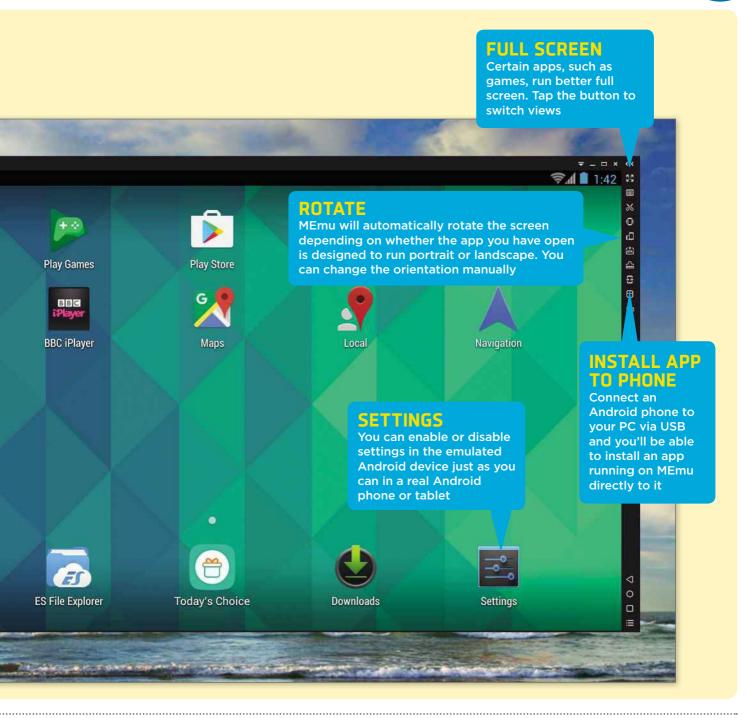
3 MEmu will offer to keep the virtual device backed up to your Google account. Untick this option, then agree to Google Play's terms of service. Google Play will load. Click the Get Started button and browse the selection of apps on offer. Select one you want to run, then click the Install button **1** to get it.

4 Agree the required permissions for the app and it will install, just as it would on a real Android device. When it's finished installing, click the Open button to launch that app. You can now interact with the app, clicking instead of tapping. Use the Back **1** or Home **2** buttons to exit the app when done.

5 You can interact with apps and games using your mouse but if you want to use the keyboard, you need to activate key mapping. Click the Key Mapping button, **1** then drag the relevant action **2** to the correct position on screen. **3** Click the question mark **4** to get help with setting it up.

FULL SCREEN
Certain apps, such as games, run better full screen. Tap the button to switch views

ROTATE
MEmu will automatically rotate the screen depending on whether the app you have open is designed to run portrait or landscape. You can change the orientation manually

INSTALL APP TO PHONE
Connect an Android phone to your PC via USB and you'll be able to install an app running on MEmu directly to it

SETTINGS
You can enable or disable settings in the emulated Android device just as you can in a real Android phone or tablet

6 Certain apps may not be available or compatible with the Android device that MEmu is emulating. Click the Settings cog. **1** Under the General tab, **2** you can change elements such as the device's CPU, **3** Memory **4** and Resolution. **5** Under Advanced **6** you can change the device make and model.

7 Some apps need to know where you are – Google Maps or Pokémon Go, for example. To set a location (change the default), open Settings and click the GPS tab. **1** You can zoom in and out of the map **2** and drag it about, or search for a place by name. **3** Click Save Location **4** to set it.

8 MEmu can run any external apps that you've downloaded in APK format. This is useful for installing apps or games that aren't available on Google Play. Click the APK button in the right-hand strip **1** and browse for the file you want to add. Select it, then click Open **2** and it should install.

Beat hackers by encrypting your DNS traffic

Simple DNSCrypt: bit.ly/dnscrypt405 | ⏱ **20 mins** | 🖼 **XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10**

When you type a website's name into your browser, there is a small but noticeable delay before the page starts to load. This is because the browser has to ask a DNS (Domain Name System) server for the IP address of a site to load it. You probably use the DNS server provided by your ISP, unless you switched to another such as OpenDNS (www.opendns.com) or Google DNS (bit.ly/gdns405).

Hackers can eavesdrop on your DNS requests to find out which websites you're visiting and they can spoof an address and redirect you to a fake site. Simple DNSCrypt safeguards your DNS by encrypting and securing it. It's actually a front end for DNSCrypt – a command-line tool from the team behind OpenDNS – which means it's very easy to use. The software is hosted on GitHub and there are lots of downloads to choose from. You need the latest MSI (installer) package and you'll find the link for it under Installation. To get started, just download and run the file.

1 Launch the program and it will display the menu in German. Click the drop-down language menu at the top of the window **1** and switch this to English. All the menus will change – you won't need to restart the program. Your current network card is shown at the top. **2**

2 The Primary Resolver **1** and Secondary Resolver **2** are the two DNS servers the program will use when active. Simple DNSCrypt has to change your current DNS choices (from your ISP or elsewhere) to encrypt the traffic. You have to allow this to use the software effectively.

3 You don't have to accept the default resolver choices, though. Click the name for the Primary resolver **1** and you can choose from a long list of DNS servers, **2** including ones based in the UK. OpenDNS, which adds safety features such as phishing protection, is also available.

4 You can view the DNS server address **1** and other details, including whether it supports DNSSEC **2** (Domain Name System Security Extensions), a technology that provides another layer of DNS security. Click Save **3** to store your preference. Set up the secondary resolver in the same way.

5 Flick the Primary DNSCrypt Service slider to on, **1** then click your network card. Wait for it to turn green and for the tick to appear (this might take a short while). **2** If the network you use isn't there, select 'Show hidden cards' to display it. **3**
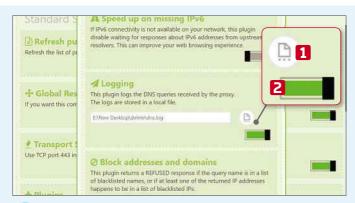
6 That's all you need to do to start protecting your DNS. If you want to get more from the program, click Advanced Settings. **1** From here, you can refresh the list of resolvers **2** to make sure they are up to date. Click the 'download list' button. **3**

7 To use your main PC as a gateway device for other computers and devices, turn on Global Resolver. **1** You can also switch between TCP (Transmission Control Protocol) and UDP (User Datagram Protocol). TCP is slower but it includes error checking.

8 Simple DNSCrypt supports add-ons that expand the software's capabilities. Click the button to 'open the plugin manager' **1** and browse the selection. If IPv6, the newer Internet Protocol, isn't available on your network, you can disable the wait for it **2** and speed up your browsing.

9 If you like to know what's going on behind the scenes, you can enable Logging. This stores any DNS queries you receive so you can spot suspicious connections. Click the Folder button **1** to set a location for where the file is saved. You can toggle the logging feature on and off. **2**

10 You can restrict access to various websites by name or IP address (big sites use multiple IP addresses, but you only need to know one). You'll need to create a text file containing the site names or IP addresses, then point the program to the list for domains **1** or addresses. **2**

+ Get more practical advice at forum.webuser.co.uk

Download and convert YouTube videos

You might not be able to download videos directly from YouTube, but there's plenty of software that can handle the task for you. ClipGrab is our favourite new tool for the job because it has built-in search and conversion options that you don't get in most video downloaders. Just make sure you click the two customise links (side by side) during the installation and reject the bundled junk and changes.

ClipGrab: clipgrab.org | ⏱ **10 mins** | 🪟 **Windows**

1 Run ClipGrab and enter some keywords to search for a video on YouTube. **1** Matches will appear instantly below **2** and update as you type. You can also paste in the URL of the video you want – the program will automatically detect when you copy a video address to the clipboard.

2 Click the video you want to save. The Downloads tab **1** will open showing the name of the clip **2** and its URL. **3** Click the Format drop-down box **4** to select a format for your saved video, such as MPEG4 or WMV.

3 If it's a music video, you can opt to save the audio on its own. Use the drop-down Quality menu **1** to choose the resolution of the saved video file. The options available will depend on the quality of the YouTube video itself, but the higher the better. Finally, click 'Grab this clip'. **2**
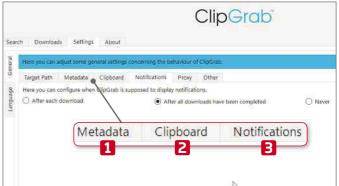
4 Choose a download destination and click Save. The video will begin to download. You can cancel the process at any time. **1** Open the target folder **2** to access the downloaded clip. Double-clicking the video entry **3** will open your default media player and start playing the video.

5 The Settings tab **1** lets you customise the program. Under Target Path, **2** you'll see the default download location. **3** Click Browse **4** to change this. You can also set whether to always save videos to the last-used path **5** and/or skip asking for the file name. **6**

6 The Metadata tab **1** lets you choose if ClipGrab adds ID3 tags to MP3 files. Clipboard **2** lets you specify what the program should do when it detects a downloadable video in your clipboard (always download it, never download it or ask). You can manage program alerts under Notifications. **3**

Foil intruders by locking your Android apps

IObit Applock adds an extra layer of security to your phone by using a pattern or PIN to lock individual apps. What's more, intruders won't even realise that they've been locked out thanks to the excellent Fake Lock feature, which hides the lock screen behind a simple error message. If you're worried about snoopers, you can also use Applock to hide sensitive information contained in your notifications.

IObit Applock: bit.ly/applock405 | 🕐 **5 mins** | 🤖 **Android 4.0.3**

1 When you first run IObit Applock, you'll be asked to create a pattern password. **1** Swipe your finger around the grid of dots to enter a unique pattern, then enter the same pattern again to confirm your password. Alternatively, tap 'Use PIN code' **2** if you prefer a traditional numerical password.

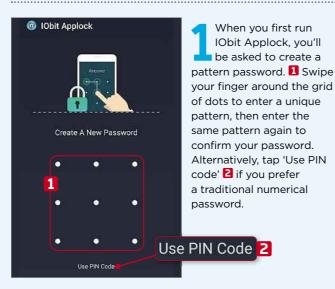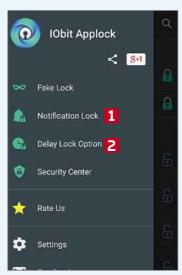**2** IObit Applock shows a list of apps that it recommends you should lock. Tap the padlock icon to lock an app and a pop-up appears. Tap Open, select IObit Applock in the 'Usage data access' settings menu and activate the option to 'Allow usage tracking'. **1** You can now lock and unlock your apps as you please.

3 If you don't want to tip off a snoop or a thief that you've locked your apps, open IObit Applock's main menu, tap Fake Lock and swipe left. Tap Apply **1** to activate the Force Stop option. Now, when someone tries to open an app on your device, a message appears saying the app stopped unexpectedly. They won't know that the only way to access the lock screen is by tapping the OK button three times.

4 Applock's main menu lets you activate Notification Lock, **1** which hides the contents of notifications from any of your locked apps (such as private messages in a WhatsApp conversation). To avoid repeatedly unlocking apps as you switch between them, Delay Lock Option **2** lets you disable Applock temporarily. Choose one of its three options to set the length of time apps are unlocked for.

5 To make sure an intruder can't access your apps by uninstalling IObit Applock, open Security Centre from the main menu and activate the option to Avoid Being Uninstalled. **1** To make it less obvious that IObit Applock is installed on your device, tap Change Icon **2** to disguise it as a weather app.

6 To be alerted if someone tries to get past your PIN or pattern, activate the Intruder Selfie **1** feature. This takes a photo of the person after three failed attempts at entering the password. To make sure you don't ever get locked out yourself, select Bind Email to link the app to your email address.

How to... # Create a portable Windows 10 Anniversary Update

Keep the latest version of Windows 10 in your pocket by booting it from a USB memory drive. **Wayne Williams** explains how

I n Windows 10, updates are mandatory. You may be able to defer or even block some updates, but you will end up installing them eventually. The Anniversary Update (AU) is very large and makes huge changes to the operating system, yet it's treated like any other update and installed automatically.

If you are running Windows 10, you will probably already have the AU installed – or in the pipeline, at least – so you may not see the point in creating a bootable version of it on a USB flash drive. However, there are some practical reasons for doing so: it will allow you to run a clean install of the operating system, and easily upgrade any PCs that aren't already running Windows 10. Also, it means you have a portable version of the Windows 10 Anniversary Update to carry around with you in case of emergency.

The benefits of a clean install

Updating Windows 10 to the latest version happens automatically in the background. Although the update takes a while to complete, it should be relatively painless and, once it's finished, your system should work just as it did before but with the new features and improvements in place.

That said, the upgrade doesn't always run as smoothly as it could. Because the Windows 10 Anniversary Update is so huge, there's more potential for things to go wrong. Also, the OS stores the old version of Windows 10 on your hard drive – in case you encounter problems and need to roll it back – which means you'll lose a considerable chunk of drive space after it's installed.

A better option is to perform a clean install rather than an in-place upgrade, because the end result will be a fresh operating system that isn't bogged down with old system files, unnecessary Registry entries and incorrect drivers. Once the installation is complete, you will need to spend some time reinstalling all your programs and copying over personal data and settings, but it's worth the extra effort because it means Windows will run faster and be less likely to crash once you've finished setting up everything.

Installing or upgrading Windows 10 is very straightforward – just follow the instructions in the Setup box

Click the 'Download tool now' button to save and run the Media Creation Tool and create a bootable flash drive

Create a bootable USB flash drive

Many newer computers and laptops don't have an optical drive, so although it's easy enough to save the operating system to a CD or DVD to boot from, a USB flash drive is more versatile.

The easiest way to create a bootable USB flash drive is to use Microsoft's own Media Creation Tool (bit.ly/win10mct405 – see our Mini Workshop below for instructions on how to do this). The Media Creation Tool has been updated to the very latest version of Windows 10, with the Anniversary Update, and you can use it to download and install the OS immediately, or create your own installation media. You have the option of writing the operating system directly to a USB flash drive or saving it as an ISO file that you can manually write to the drive or a DVD later on.

The Windows 10 Anniversary Update is several gigabytes in size, so the download will take a while to complete, depending on the speed of your internet connection. Make sure the flash drive you choose is large enough – we recommend a drive that's at least 8GB in size and preferably quite fast – USB 3.0 is ideal, if your PC supports this. Another way to create
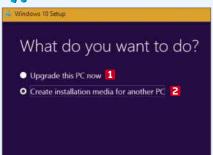

The USB flash drive you choose should be at least 8GB in size and very fast

a bootable drive is to use Rufus (bit.ly/rufus405). This excellent third-party tool takes all the hard work out of creating a bootable drive from an existing ISO file. It can also create a Windows To Go drive which will let you install and run Windows 10 directly from the memory stick, turning it into a portable PC that you can use on your travels. You will need a very fast flash drive for this option, however. See our Mini Workshop on page 61 for instructions on creating a bootable Windows 10 drive using Rufus.
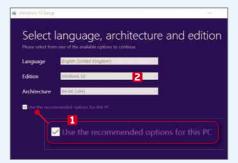
Finally, you can manually create a bootable drive using an ISO file and a series of commands in the command prompt. While this works well enough, it's a bit fiddly and the other two methods described are much easier to perform.

⚙ MINI WORKSHOP | Create a USB flash drive using the Media Creation Tool

1 Go to the Media Creation Tool page (bit.ly/win10mct405) and click the 'Download tool now' button. Run the file and accept the terms and conditions. In the next window, you are given the option to 'Upgrade this PC now' **1** or 'Create installation media for another PC'. **2** Select the second option.
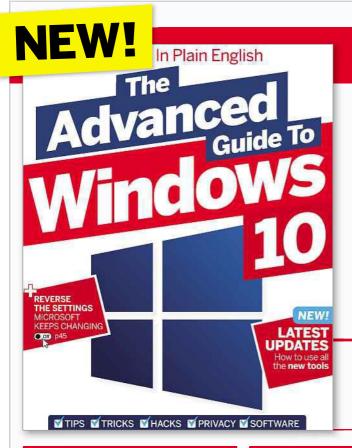
2 Click Next and choose the Windows 10 edition you require. By default, the tool will automatically pick the correct version for your current PC. If you intend to use the installer on a different computer, untick 'Use the recommended options for this PC' **1** and change the Language, Edition and Architecture settings **2** accordingly.

3 Click Next, and choose 'USB flash drive'. **1** Select the drive to write the installation files to. If your drive isn't listed, click the link to 'Refresh drive list'. Make sure you select the correct drive because the tool will wipe any existing files it contains. Click Next and Windows 10 will be downloaded and written to the drive.

WebUser
Bookstore

Make sure the PC you want to install Windows 10 on is set to boot from USB first

You can start an upgrade inside Windows by finding and running setup.exe in the Sources folder
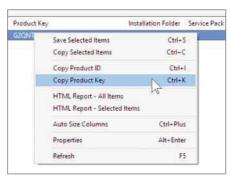
How to use the bootable flash drive

Booting into the drive is very straightforward – just plug it into a USB port on the PC you want to install Windows 10 on and start or restart your computer. It should automatically detect the drive and begin the boot process.

If your PC isn't set to boot from a USB flash drive, you'll need to specify this in the BIOS. Turn on your computer and press the required key to enter setup. This is likely to be F2 or Delete. Once the BIOS loads, look for a boot-order menu and set USB drive (or similar) as the first option. Press F10 to save the changes and reboot – this time, your drive should be detected.

You don't need to boot into the drive if you're planning an in-place Windows 10 upgrade. Select the memory stick in File Explorer, open the Sources folder and double-click the setup.exe file to begin the upgrade process.
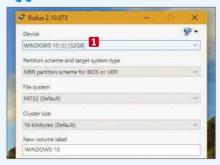
ProduKey finds your Windows key. Right-click to copy and keep it in a safe place

Activating Windows 10

Windows 10 was free for the first year, but that period ended on 29 July. If you didn't upgrade before the deadline, then you will need to purchase a licence to activate the new OS. If you did upgrade your PC to Windows 10, then you will have been granted a digital entitlement which is tied to your computer and stored in the cloud. It doesn't matter if you subsequently rolled back your PC to Windows 7 or 8.1, or if you wiped or formatted your hard drive – you'll still be able to install and use Windows 10 for free on that device. If you're planning a clean install, you will need your Windows key, which you can find by running NirSoft's ProduKey (www.nirsoft.net/utils) in Windows. ∎

⚙ MINI WORKSHOP | Create a bootable Windows 10 drive using Rufus

1 Download the ISO file to the Desktop and insert a blank USB flash drive (or one you don't mind wiping the contents of) into your PC. Launch Rufus and select your USB drive in the drop-down box. **1** Make sure you select the correct drive because you don't want the software wiping the wrong one by mistake.

2 Click the button with the disc icon **1** to the right of the ISO Image box and locate the ISO file you made or downloaded earlier. You can choose how to format the drive. **2** Select the option to create a 'Standard Windows installation' **3** rather than 'Windows To Go' **4** and leave all the other settings as they are.

3 Click Start **1** to format the drive and copy over the relevant installation files. This may take a while, depending on the speed of your memory stick. When the progress bar **2** shows it's completed, click Close. **3** You now have a bootable Windows 10 drive you can use to perform an upgrade or clean install.

NEXT ISSUE **How To...** Create and restore ISO images

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21 Sept

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STEP 3   Tap 'Subscribe'

available on
kindle fire

...via the ▮▮▮ app

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STEP 2   Tap the 'Subscribe' button

STEP 3   Choose whether to create an optional ▮▮▮ account

STEP 4   Enter your Apple ID password to confirm

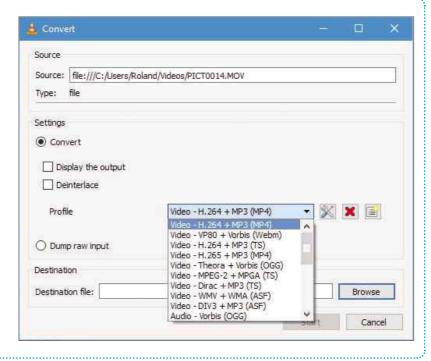## Subscribe to *Web user* today and save on the single issue price

Web User's Top Tips

There's much more to popular media player VLC than you might expect. Our experts reveal the best functions

TOP TIPS FOR USING VLC MEDIA PLAYER

Convert file formats

VLC (www.videolan.org/vlc) is a fantastic media player that can be used to watch or listen to almost any type of video or audio. It supports more formats than other applications so if you want to load footage into a video editor, VLC can convert the clip to a compatible file format. To do this, select Convert/Save in the File menu, click the Add button and select a video file. Click the Convert/Save button and select the relevant file format from the Profile menu. There are useful presets such as Video for YouTube in both standard and high definition; and video for Android phone, iPhone and iPod. Click the Browse button at the bottom to choose the save location and file name, then click Start.

VLC has lots of presets for converting one file format to another

Record any video

Any video that is playing on your computer screen can be recorded by VLC. This includes video that is streaming over your network from another computer or the internet. To record your screen, go to the View menu and select Advanced Controls. At the bottom of the window, just above the Play/Pause buttons, you'll find some extra controls including a red Record button. Click it to start recording and click it again to stop. The recorded videos are saved to the Videos folder with names like 'VLC-record...'. They can be played in VLC, loaded into a video editor and copied to a mobile device.

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.

Play YouTube videos

VLC can play most YouTube videos. This is useful when you don't want to use a browser or if you want to create a playlist of your favourite videos. Visit YouTube and right-click a video, then select 'Copy video URL' from the menu. Right-click in the playlist area and select Advanced Open, then click the Network tab and press Ctrl+V to paste the video URL. Click Select and the video will be added to your playlist.

You can add more videos in the same way, then play the whole lot or double-click a single video to play it. Remember – any video that is playing can be recorded.

Use VLC to build playlists of your favourite YouTube videos and stream them

Record your Desktop

VLC can record and save everything that you do on your Desktop. This is useful for recording a guide to using certain software or demonstrating how to perform a particular task on your PC.

Open the Media menu, select Convert/Save, then click the Capture Device tab and select Desktop in the Capture Mode menu. Set the
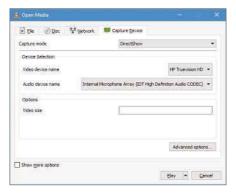
number of frames per second to record, such as 5, then click the Convert/Save button. Select a video profile from the list, such as one of the Video H.264 (a common video format) or Video for MPEG4 options. Click the Browse button to select the save location and filename, such as your Videos folder. Then click Start.

Use your webcam

If you have a webcam, VLC can access it and display live video. Click Media, Open Capture Device and select DirectShow to activate the Capture mode. Select the webcam in the list of video devices and the microphone in the 'Audio device name' list. Click Play to make VLC display the video. As we've said previously, VLC can record any video that is playing.

VLC can use your webcam to capture and display live video

Rip DVDs and CDs to your PC

DVDs can be copied to your hard drive and stored as video files, which could be useful if you want to stream them around your home or store backup copies. It won't work for every DVD, so try it on a few to see which ones are okay. Music CDs can be copied, too.

Go to Media, Convert/Save and select the Disc tab. Set the disc type, such as DVD or Audio CD. Make sure 'No disc menus' is clear and click the Convert/Save button. On the next screen, you must select a profile. There are several video and audio options, such as Video H.264, or MP3, FLAC, OGG and others for audio. Select the save location and filename, then click Start.

Control VLC using gestures

Using the VLC app on your phone or tablet lets you perform some actions with gestures: tap with two fingers on the screen to pause or play the music or movie; swipe left and right to move the play position; adjust the screen brightness by sliding your finger up or down on the left side of the screen; and adjust the volume by sliding your finger up or down on the right-hand side.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL
More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Share with everyone
The media library on one PC can be accessed from another computer, phone or tablet using VLC. This is a great way to turn an old PC into a repository for movies, music and photos. You can then access your media library from other devices around your home.

Open Homegroup in the Windows Control Panel and click the link to 'Allow all devices on this network such as TVs and game consoles to play my shared content'. Name your media library to enable it.

On your phone or tablet, download the VLC app from the store – you'll find both Android and iOS versions. Open it, tap the menu button in the top-left corner and select Network. The computers on your network are listed, including the PC's shared media library. Tap it, then press Music (for example), and browse the song selection. Tap a music file to play it on your Android device.

Remote control VLC
If you are sitting some distance away from your computer, perhaps watching movies or listening to music, you won't want to keep getting up and walking over to your computer to select media and press play, stop and other controls. Stay where you are and use remote control instead.

To set this up, go to the Tools menu

Use a mobile phone as a remote control by enabling the web interface on your PC

in VLC and select Preferences. At the bottom, Select All under 'Show settings', then select 'Main interfaces' under Interface and tick the Web box. Expand 'Main interfaces' on the left and select Lua. Click inside the password box under Lua HTTP and enter a password, then save the settings, quit VLC and run it again. You might see a pop-up message from Windows Firewall asking if it should be allowed. Yes, it should.

You can test that it is working by opening your web browser and typing `localhost:8080` into the address box. If you are asked for a username, leave it blank; if asked for a password, use the one you entered in settings. The VLC web interface appears.

Accessing VLC from another computer, mobile phone or tablet requires the IP address of the PC that's running VLC. Press Windows+R and enter `cmd`. Type `ipconfig` and look for the IPv4 address. On any computer, phone or tablet, open the browser and go to the IP address:8080 – for example, 192.168.1.2:8080. the VLC controls appear in the browser.

Reset VLC
VLC has a lot of configuration options and it's possible to mess things up as you're experimenting with them. If VLC is not working as you want, it can be reset from a Command Prompt window. Open Explorer and find the VLC folder: it's most likely in C:\Program files. Go to Explorer's File menu and select 'Open command prompt here'. Type `vlc --reset-config` to apply the default configuration settings. Start VLC and everything will be back to normal again.

Get Chromecast support and more
VLC is updated daily and, at the end of each day, the latest version is posted on the web. Go to nightlies.videolan.org to get the most recent version of the software. It may have bugs, be unstable and may crash, but it also has cutting-edge features, such as support for Chromecast.

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

Suspicious Hotmail hack warning

Q I received an email from Google saying that someone may have tried to hack my Hotmail address. The message offered to help recover my Hotmail account. I think it is a scam. When I visit Hotmail, there is another message asking me to provide some additional information, which I have not done, but I cannot now log into my Hotmail account. Can I use System Restore or Windows 10 Recovery to get rid of this problem?

Joe, via email

A The problem is not with your computer, so System Restore and Windows 10 Recovery will not solve it. Email messages that ask you to sign into online accounts because of a problem are always suspicious, so you shouldn't click any links they contain. If you have gone to Outlook.com (as Hotmail is now called) in your browser and tried to log in and failed,

The 'forgotten password' link recovers a password or Microsoft account

there is clearly a problem.

Make sure you manually type your email address and password instead of using a password manager or your browser's password tool because a fault may enter the wrong data. If you can't sign in, click 'Change password' and follow the instructions. If that doesn't work, return to the previous screen, click 'I think someone else is using my Microsoft account' and follow the instructions. Only Microsoft can restore account access so there is no way around this.

via the Start button, I get a continually flashing hourglass symbol alongside my mouse pointer. I've tried carrying out a maintenance check, but nothing was found.

The problem doesn't occur with any of my Desktop programs or Chrome and Opera browsers. I don't know if this has any relevance but when I first tried upgrading Windows 10, it failed to install and displayed error code 0x80070057. I was advised to use the Media Creation Tool to download it again, which I did and everything installed properly except for this niggling problem. I was using Windows 10 previously and it was working fine.

John Frankton, via email

A Last issue, we covered Windows troubleshooters in our tips and you should try using the same solution for your problem. Go to bit.ly/startfix405 and click 'Try the troubleshooter'. Click 'Start menu troubleshooter' to save a file to your hard drive, then open the Downloads folder and double-click it to run it. If this doesn't solve the problem, open the Control Panel, set 'View by' to 'small icons', then click Troubleshooting, 'View all'. Run Search and Indexing, System maintenance and Windows Store Apps.

If you are still having problems, go to bit.ly/script405. A little way down the page, you'll find a Windows PowerShell script (it is too complicated to print here). Copy and paste it into a command prompt window, then follow the instructions.

Windows Store and Start menu troubleshooters solve problems with apps

SHOPPING

The secret to ebook refunds

Q I recently bought an ebook called *The Secret Behind the Secret* from Believe And Manifest. The password to download the product did not work so I emailed the company and got another password, but this was equally useless.

I contacted them several times and they eventually said I no longer needed a password; instead I should log into a particular site, which I did, but this still did not work. I wrote to them asking for a refund of my $37 payment. They replied saying that I should "Kindly contact ClickBank for a refund, we are unable to locate your order". I really want this ebook. Is there a way I can get it?

Peter Fletcher, via email

A The payment options are credit card and PayPal, and whichever
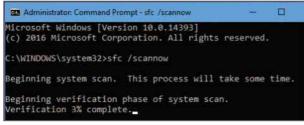
company you used may be able to help. PayPal (bit.ly/paypal405) provides information about reporting problems with buying goods that don't arrive, and you can open a dispute with the account holder to get a refund. Your credit card company might be able to help, if you used that option. It sounds like the seller uses ClickBank to process orders and payments; you can request a refund at bit.ly/clickb405.

A search for the ebook didn't turn up anything useful, so it looks like Believe And Manifest is the only source.

WINDOWS 10

Flashing hourglass after upgrade

Q I recently installed the latest Windows 10 Pro 64-bit Anniversary Update on my desktop PC. Since then, whenever I launch a Windows 10 screen

Get to know the sfc command and use it to check that Windows is working properly

WINDOWS
Windows 10 update failure

Q My son and I both own laptops running Windows 10. The other night, I decided to install the Windows 10 Anniversary Update on my laptop. It started fine, went through all the necessary steps and then, after about an hour, the computer restarted with the new Windows 10.

I did the same with my son's laptop last night. Again, it went through all the motions and restarted, but instead of the new Windows 10, it was still running the old version. I went into the Windows Update history and found that no new updates had been installed. I went into Explorer and found two Windows folders, one marked Windows.old and one marked as Windows. I am guessing that the folder marked Windows is the update, so can you tell me how to install it so the computer boots up with it?

Les Pearson, via email

A Before installing a major update, Windows makes a backup of the Windows folder and saves it as C:\Windows.old. If something goes wrong, it can undo the update by copying all the files back to C:\Windows.

Press Windows+R and enter `cmd`. Type `sfc /scannnow` to fix any problems with Windows. Afterwards, open the Control Panel and, in small icons view, click Troubleshooting. Click 'View all' and double-click Windows Update. Finally, go to bit.ly/update405 and download and run the Anniversary Update installer.

OFFICE
Outlook links not working

Q When I try to open a link to a web page in an email I have received, I get a message saying: 'This action has been cancelled due to restrictions on your computer. Contact your system admin.' This applies across all Outlook folders, not just the Junk email folder, which has always displayed a similar but different message. The problem also occurs in both Excel and Word, but not

in my browsers.

I suspect the problem has been caused by something I did a couple of days earlier. I was working through the suggestions about turning off unwanted features in Windows 10 (*Web User* issue 401) but I may have unticked one box too many. Do you know which feature I should switch on again to get it working?

Also, there are two JavaScript files that appeared on my Desktop a couple of weeks ago and I am not able to get rid of them. They are files that were once contained inside a WordPress backup file that I tried to delete. Everything was deleted except these two files. If I try to delete or even move them to another folder, I get a message saying they don't exist, yet I can still see them on the desktop and they even show up when I look at the desktop in File Explorer.

It's not a major problem, but I am worried that it's an indication that something is starting to go wrong with the hard drive. Can you tell me what the problem might be?

Ron Thomson, via email

A Most drive problems are software related and the hardware is usually fine. The answer to the first problem is to be found at bit.ly/hyperlink405 and there is a download on the page that

fixes it for Windows 7 users. There are also manual instructions for Windows 10, which involve copying a part of the Registry from another computer.

Press Windows+R and type `regedit` on a working Windows 10 PC. Select the following key:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE \Software \ Classes \htmlfile \shell \open\command

Select File, Export and save the file. Transfer it to your computer and double-click to import it. Afterwards, run regedit again and go to HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT \.html. If (Default) on the right is not set to htmlfile, double-click it and enter `htmlfile`.

Some files cannot be deleted because they are locked but in this case, they cannot be found. Desktop icons are not always files; sometimes, as is the case with the Recycle Bin, they exist because of a Registry setting. You should check whether the two items on your Desktop that can't be removed are there as a result of a Registry setting.

Press Windows+R and enter `regedit` to open the Registry editor. Go to:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE \ SOFTWARE \Microsoft \Windows \ CurrentVersion \Explorer \Desktop \ NameSpace

Expand the key. Below are lots of alphanumerical sub-keys and you should select each one in turn and look at the data on the right. If any item matches the filename of the immovable Desktop icons, you should delete the subkey.

GENERAL
Remove ink stains

Q This is possibly one of the most important questions I have ever asked: What is the best way of removing printer ink stains – cyan in this case – from a shirt? Please let me know before my wife finds out!

Name withheld on request

A Not all ink is the same and different manufacturers have different formulas, but according to HP, which is one of the biggest printer and ink cartridge manufacturers, you should immediately rinse the material in cold water. Do not use hot water because it will set the ink in the fabric.

If the material is white, you should then use bleach containing chlorine (wear rubber gloves) and more water. With coloured fabrics, you need to use a watery, soapy mixture of

If ink gets on your clothes, rinse them in cold water as soon as possible

detergent and ammonia. Mixing ammonia and bleach with chlorine creates a toxic gas, so use one method or the other but not both!

If the ink has dried, it will be much harder to remove and it may not be possible at all. Some people recommend soaking the area with hairspray, then using tissues to mop up the inky mixture. This may have something to do with the solvents in the hairspray. Good luck!

This fortnight Roland updated his test version of Windows 10 to the Anniversary Update

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✚ Find more solutions to PC and web problems at forum.webuser.co.uk

Your Top Tips

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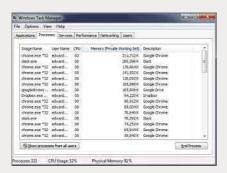
TOP TIP

GENERAL PC

Handy keyboard shortcuts

I've been teaching computer skills to NHS staff for a number of years, so I thought I'd share some of my favourite lesser-known keyboard shortcuts.

You might be familiar with using Ctrl+Alt+Delete to access the Task Manager when your PC freezes, but did you know you can jump straight to the Task Manager by simply pressing Ctrl+Shift+Esc? This is really useful for finding out which process is slowing your PC to a crawl or if you want to force an application to quit, when clicking the X doesn't work.

Another one of my favourites is pressing the Windows Key+Pause/Break, which lets you quickly find out vital information about a PC. It jumps you directly to the System page of the Control Panel, where you can see the version of Windows that's running and hardware information such as the type of processor and installed memory.

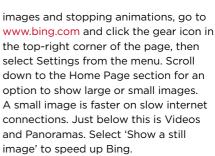A couple of other handy shortcuts include pressing F2 to rename a

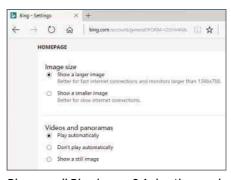*The keyboard shortcut Ctrl+Shift+Esc opens Task Manager instantly*

selected item in Windows Explorer (which saves you double-clicking it) and pressing Alt+Enter to open Properties for a selected object.

Lastly, if you want to delete an item completely rather than sending it to the Recycle Bin, press Shift+Delete. Be careful with this one, though, because there's no way of easily recovering the deleted files.

MeesterChris, Web User Forums

INTERNET
Hide Facebook friends

Someone asked me how to hide their list of friends on Facebook so other people can't see it. It was a case of being friends with A and B, but A and B not being friends themselves. They were stuck in the middle trying to keep the peace.

After looking on Facebook, I found it was quite straightforward. You go to your profile (not your News Feed), click

Choose who you share your friends list with in Facebook settings

the down-arrow in the Friends box and select 'Edit privacy'. A window opens with options to set who can see your friends and who you are following. Click the Friend List button and select Only Me, so no-one else can see your friends.

You can make this more specific by clicking the Custom menu and finding the 'Don't share with' option. This lets you enter a name so only that person can't see who you are friends with.

Calvin Miller, via email

INTERNET
Speed up Bing

Some of the images and animations that appear on the Bing homepage are stunning but if you have a slow internet connection, you may not want to waste time or bandwidth loading them.

To speed up Bing by showing smaller images and stopping animations, go to www.bing.com and click the gear icon in the top-right corner of the page, then select Settings from the menu. Scroll down to the Home Page section for an option to show large or small images. A small image is faster on slow internet connections. Just below this is Videos and Panoramas. Select 'Show a still image' to speed up Bing.

Michael Spencer, via email

Big or small Bing images? Animations and videos or still images? It's your choice

WINDOWS
Hidden audio options

There are lots of small changes in the Windows 10 Anniversary Update. I found a useful one that lets you use the speaker menu to select a device for playing sound. Click the speaker icon at the right side of the taskbar to bring up a volume control. You'll see a little arrow, like an upside down V, which you can click for a menu showing all the available audio output devices. This is useful if you have internal speakers, external speakers, headphones or more.

Duncan Storey, via email

WINDOWS 10
Set Cortana to use another browser

Normally, Cortana only lets you use Edge and Bing to make web searches, but you can change this by installing Search Bar Connector (bit.ly/search405). Install the

app and open Settings, System, then choose 'Default app' and scroll down to select 'Choose default applications by protocol'. Now, scroll down until you see MICROSOFT-EDGE URL:microsoft-edge in the left-hand list and click Microsoft Edge on the right. A pop-up appears asking you to 'Choose an application'. Simply select App Connector and now, when you make a web search using Cortana, it opens your default browser. To pick which search engine it uses, open Search Bar Connector from the Start menu and choose one from the list.

Jack Gold, Web User Forums

HARDWARE
Fix HP printer problems

Further to Darren's problem with an HP Printer in Issue 398 (bit.ly/ webuser398), I wanted to let *Web User* readers know that HP has an excellent tool for diagnosing and fixing scanner and printer problems. I've been using HP Print and Scan Doctor for a number of years to good effect and its availability and usefulness have been a major factor in making me a repeat customer for HP printers. To download the tool or read more about it, visit bit.ly/hpprint405.

Karen Wood, via email

APPS
Fix typing errors in Swiftkey

Don't you hate it when you accidentally capitalise a letter or even a whole word on your Android keyboard? In the past if I did this, I'd end up deleting the whole word and typing it again, but now I've discovered a neat trick with SwiftKey that lets you cycle through lower case, upper case and sentence case for any selected word.

You can retrospectively change the case of a word in Swiftkey using the Shift key

To do this, move the cursor to the end of the word containing the mistake, then tap the Shift button repeatedly. You'll see the case change in the prediction bar; when it reaches the correct option, tap it to select it.

Ed Wright, via email

GENERAL PC
Start Windows with Num Lock activated

I was reading a tip from Simon Mellor in issue 397 (bit.ly/webuser397) about starting your PC with Num Lock activated and, because I prefer to use the number pad for input, I decided to give it a try. Unfortunately, Simon's method didn't work for me. I double-checked every entry in Regedit but still no luck.

After a bit of Googling I finally found an answer. Apparently there is something called 'Fast Startup' (also known as Hybrid Boot) that seems to override the setting and makes Windows 10 continue to boot with Num Lock turned off. To get past this, follow Simon's instructions but don't restart your computer – intead, make sure you select the 'Shut down' option. Boot the computer again and when you reach the login screen, press the Num Lock key once to enable it, but don't log in yet. From the login screen, click the power button and select 'Shut down' again. Boot the computer once more and Num Lock should be enabled on the login screen every time you start your PC.

Gary Prater, via email

BROWSERS
Be a Firefox test pilot

Most people know that if you want to try out the latest features in Firefox, you can get beta versions from bit.ly/ffbeta405. There is the normal beta, which is like the last test version before it goes public; and the Developer Edition, which has more experimental features but could also have more bugs.

I recently discovered a third way to test new and upcoming features in Firefox – and you don't need to install a beta. Using the ordinary release version of Firefox, go to testpilot.firefox.com and install the Test Pilot add-on. It lets you try experimental features that are being worked on by the Firefox team. Currently, the list includes No More 404s, Activity Stream, Tab Center and Universal Search.

Bill Fortune, via email

ANDROID
Best free photo editing apps

You featured Adobe Lightroom in Issue 403's (bit.ly/issue403) Best Free Apps and although it handles RAW files and full-resolution output, in all other

Aviary is a popular free photo-editing app that's very eassy to use

respects I find Aviary (bit.ly/aviary405) just as good and more intuitive.

I would also point out that if you want an Android photo-editing app that handles layers in the manner of professional Desktop software, Image Editor (bit.ly/image405) is the only tool I've discovered that will do this. I find this function very useful for laying an image or second photo on top of the one being edited. It's free or you can pay £2.99 if you want to use it without ads.

Tim Sinclair, via email

WINDOWS 10
Sticky Notes changes

Following the Windows 10 Anniversary Update, Sticky Notes has changed a little. To alter the colour, you now need to click the three-bars icon at the top of the note and choose a colour. You can also format your text by highlighting your selection and pressing Ctrl+B to make it bold; Ctrl+I to make it italic; or Ctrl+U to underline it.

FratPark, Web User Forums

You can now format text in Sticky Notes using the normal keyboard shortcuts

Readers' Helpdesk

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

HARDWARE
Should I buy a Doogee Mobile?

Q Are Doogee Mobiles any good? Their devices look great and have excellent features, but the prices also seem too good to be true. They're available from Amazon but before buying I wondered if anyone has got any knowledge of these phones?

robbydesigns, Web User Forums

A I bought my daughter the Doogee X6 Pro and she loves it. She lost her Samsung S4 Mini on the beach and the X6 was its replacement. There are lots of pros for the X6 when comparing it to the Samsung, in particular its screen size and battery life. There are a few downsides, too – the screen seems to need to be pressed harder (you quickly get used to this, though), and you need to make sure that the cable is properly connected to the charging port, because it can be a bit temperamental.

The Doogee X6 Pro costs just £69.99

I have recommended the X6 to a few people and now my other daughter wants one when her contract ends.

Providing the products are sold directly by Amazon or show as being 'fulfilled by Amazon', you can be sure that they're not fake and you should also be better protected if you need to return your phone inside its warranty.

Space_Cowby, Web User Forums

SOFTWARE
What program should I use to fill in a PDF form?

Q I have received a PDF form that I need to fill in and then return to the

sender. I've converted it to a Word document but I'm unable to add text to the converted file for some reason. Can anyone recommend some free software to convert PDFs to Word files that will keep the formatting and still make the document editable?

TheClash, Web User Forums

A You don't need to convert the PDF to a Word file because you can fill in PDF forms and save a new version without changing the format. The free Windows 10 Reader app (bit.ly/reader405) and Foxit Reader (bit.ly/foxit405) both let you do this. Foxit even lets you fill non-interactive forms (bit.ly/forms405).

To do this with Adobe, you'll need Acrobat rather than the free Reader application. You can sign up for a seven-day

GENERAL PC
How can I transfer all my files to a new hard drive?

Q I want to install a new SSD in my 32GB Windows 10 laptop. What is the best way of transferring all the files on my old hard drive to the new hard drive?

brading, Web User Forums

A Although some new Windows 10 laptops are sold with 32GB eMMC or SSD storage, in my view they should not be produced because they become almost immediately full and slow. You will have to look up your particular model to check that it's possible to change the storage because it could be that everything is soldered into the motherboard. Once you've done that, buy an SSD of whatever size you prefer along with a USB enclosure so you can connect it to your laptop. You can then use free

You can transfer files to an SSD using a USB enclosure

cloning software such as DriveClone (bit.ly/driveclone405) or Macrium Reflect (bit.ly/mrfree405) to clone the old drive to the new one. Lastly, remove the original SSD and replace it with the new drive. You can use the old drive for backup purposes or for storing files.

calimanco, Peru and Helmut, Web User Forums

free trial for Acrobat (bit.ly/acrobat405) or, if you still want to covert PDF to Word, IceCream PDF Converter (bit.ly/ic405) is a good free option.

If you get really stuck, remember you can always print the form, fill it in using a pen and then either scan it or return it by post!

Helmut, calimanco and Stewart40, Web User Forums

Foxit offers tools to let you fill in both interactive and non-interactive forms

Inbox

Star Email

Even dinosaurs embrace *some* technology

Mug winner

I have to say that in every issue of *Web User* I read, I tend to agree with what Barry Collins says in his Page 404 column. His column in Issue 403 (bit.ly/webuser403) about the pointlessness of contactless phone payments was a classic.

It seems that we are being invited to use technology for the sake of technology. There's nothing wrong with this if it is safe and effective, but I personally find smartphones are incredibly inconvenient to use. They're great as emergency phones, reasonable for SMS, poor for web browsing and pretty pointless for everything else.

Now, I know I'm a bit of a dinosaur, but I find so much of what technology currently makes possible verges on being pointless. I never use any type of social media, I sent back my contactless bank cards in exchange for normal ones and I tend to communicate either by email or landline phone. I rarely use a smartphone, despite owning one, because the 5.5in screen is pathetic, my fingers are too big and my eyesight is too poor. I also resent phone companies pestering me with offers they consider to be too good to miss.

My dual-SIM phone is on two pay-as-you-go networks (I live in an area where no single provider offers decent coverage) and one £20 top-up lasts me a year or more.

Just to prove I'm not a total T rex, I do embrace other technology – I own a modern laptop, a convertible laptop, a tablet, a desktop PC, a smart TV and also three NAS systems, one of which I built myself using FreeNas (www.freenas.org) on an old disused desktop PC. Also, all my PCs are running Windows 10.

Ron Hagley, via email

Embrace new technology or get left behind

What an excellent Star Email in Issue 403 ('We should embrace the future of driving') and well worth the prize. I missed the preceding comments that prompted Malcolm Wallace to write to you, but he is 100% right. I well remember all the problems we had with driving in the past: frequent breakdowns, crap radios, out-of-date maps, having to open a window to cool down – the list is endless.

Today's car technology has come a long way, but it's easy to see why there are Luddites out there. Technology in all walks of life is moving at such a fast pace that it's hard to keep up. Unless you're prepared to embrace technology and try to learn about what's going on around you, you'll never see the benefits

Mark Woolley, via email

Barry underestimates contactless payments

Barry's comments about contactless payment using bPay are wrong. Once you receive the device of your choice, you load it with money and set a top and bottom amount for when it tops up. So, for myself, I started with a top level of £100 and when the balance drops below £30, it is automatically topped back up by £70. The other main advantage of bPay is that if anyone manages to hack it, they will only get your available money, not your bank details, so they can't empty your account.

I have used bPay for a year and have had no problems whatsoever. You simply load it up at the beginning and then forget about it.

J Jordan, Leicester

Windows 10 works perfectly for me

I've read with interest over the last year and a bit about the problems other people have had with the 'evil Windows 10'. I have upgraded my desktop PC from Windows 7 to 10, along with other family members' laptops of various makes and ages – six of them at the last count. I have also connected various printers and scanners, some of which are seven or eight years old. I have carried out the Anniversary Update and I've not experienced a single problem. Everything has worked first time, including all my software.

Is it me? I think Windows 10 is great. I've tried Linux Mint, and it just seems so old-fashioned compared to Windows. Surely I can't be alone in this experience.

Ray Pearce, via email

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

Sony is to blame for Windows 10 woes

Well, the dust is settling on Windows 10 and you either upgraded or you didn't. In May, I upgraded one PC and also followed *Web User*'s advice by installing the GUI overlay Classic Shell (www.classicshell.net). I then started the process of changing over the other 14 PCs at home and work.

The only computer I had problems with was a Sony Vaio laptop. Apparently, because Sony has left the computer market, it has deemed the laptop I bought just six years ago (on my niece's wedding day) to be too old to be worth creating Windows 10 drivers for. Essentially Sony has, in a corporate way, stuck up two fingers and said "yah boo sucks" to the consumers who thought they had bought from a quality manufacturer.

I am not in the PC industry and so I don't know what it costs to develop a suite of drivers for a Windows 10 upgrade. What I do know is that there are a lot of peeved Vaio customers out there who will think long and carefully about buying other Sony products – after all, there are plenty of other tech manufacturers out there. As The Who used to sing: "Won't get fooled again!".

John Barton, via email

Microsoft is acting unfairly over updates

I'm inclined to agree with Ted Berry's assessment of his problem (Inbox, Issue 403, 'Did Microsoft deliberately withhold updates?'). Following a major corruption of my Windows 7 system and after wasting a lot of time trying to resolve the problem, I decided that my only option was to reinstall Windows.

During the process, you are given the opportunity to either download updates (recommended) or just carry on with the procedure. After a whole day and no updates, I carried on without them. The reload went on to finish without incident and I then loaded back my software.

Everything now works okay, but only 13 installed updates are showing in the Control Panel. On previous installations, you could measure the updates in the hundreds and they took hours to process. Because this was a 'clean' install, one can only assume that Microsoft is deliberately withholding the updates. Am I being punished for not changing over to Windows 10 and daring to reinstall Windows 7?

If this is the case, then Microsoft has a lot to answer for, particularly as it supposedly places a strong emphasis on keeping your system updated.
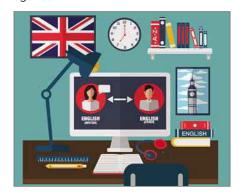
Reading online, it seems that Microsoft has decreed that PCs running sixth-generation Core i5 or Core i7 processors should only get limited stability and security support, as part of Microsoft's effort to get business customers to transfer to Windows 10. Not everyone who owns a PC with a powerful processor is in business. Indeed, my reason for not moving over to Windows 10 is that I can't afford to replace expensive software.

Given all the controversy created by Microsoft's attempts to intimidate people into moving over to Windows 10, I am disappointed that the government and the EU have singularly failed to take action against the company.

Barrie Pearce, via email

Americans speak better English than Brits

Regarding Martin Fletcher's letter in Issue 403, 'Americanised English drives me crazy': I'm fed up with fellow Brits moaning about 'Americanized English'. Words ending in '-ize' are actually not American, but Oxford English. The British guy who discovered 'aluminium' wanted it to be spelt 'aluminum', yet it was the British scientific establishment that went against him.

I've heard Brits have a go at Americans for saying 'erb' instead of 'herb', yet in England, long ago, the 'h' was silent. The worst is accusing the Yanks of calling football 'soccer', when that word was invented by us Brits, too.

This is because Americans have been speaking English for over 400 years; they even kept words like candy, garbage, trash, and "fall" (meaning autumn). These words are wrongly assumed to be American when they are in fact British. The so called "Queen's English" isn't that English if you go far back enough. It was fashionable in the British aristocracy to speak in a French

accent, which is why received pronunciation sounds so unnatural.

The standard American accent is actually far closer to the English spoken in the 1700s than the London accent, for example. Why should we have a go at the Yanks for anglicizing French words like "centre"? Does the word 'colour' really need the 'u'?

Robert Sheehan, Scotland

Get a free TV licence from your gran

Fate determined that Issue 404 of *Web User* would have an error, and I've found it. Well, perhaps not an error, but an incomplete explanation. The FAQ article on the iPlayer says that a TV licence is free to anyone over 75. What it should say is that any household with a resident aged over 75 gets a free licence. So if your gran or grandad lives with you, they can get a free TV licence for your home, provided it's in their name.

Jon98, Web User Forums

You don't need more than a Motorola

Thank you for printing my letter about contactless payments in Issue 404. I suspect this will prompt a few replies from the cool 20- and 30-somethings. That's what happens when you retire early, get to 70 and want a rant.

Regarding your review of the Motorola Moto G4, I do not know why anybody would buy a more expensive phone when this is more than good enough. I am a Nokia fan, but I bought a 2nd-generation Motorola phone about 18 months ago and paid about £140. You can get one now for £75 and it is more than adequate for users who do not use the camera much and just need a reliable phone and good internet. My phone is rarely on, which makes the purchase expensive in one way, but good for a few years in another way.

Martin Fletcher, Thorpe Hesley

What you say...

DO YOU THINK THE UK NEEDS A SPECIAL POLICE UNIT TO INVESTIGATE HATE CRIME ONLINE (bit.ly/crime405)?

I don't get how someone can commit hate crime on Facebook. Surely you just delete them, don't you?

Paul Emsley

Define hate crime. I think the government will abuse the term to be anything that does not agree with their narrative. Free speech will be eroded and our democratic right to an opinion will be under threat.

Shaun Aubert

A lot of people get offended at the slightest thing nowadays, so anything could be classed as a hate crime.

Rick Bicker

Online hate crime is a 21st-century version of malicious phone calls or hate mail. Certain people will abuse whatever means of communication is available.

Brian Brown

Bye, bye freedom of speech and the freedom to have an opinion.

Ian Proctor

SKY HAS LAUNCHED ITS FASTEST EVER BROADBAND PACKAGE (76Mbps). WOULD YOU PAY £42 A MONTH FOR IT?

Considering that my Virgin bill is rising faster than UK rail fares, it might be worth considering.

Simon Mellor @Simon9Hops

Not when I'm on 150Mbps with Virgin.

Derek @dlee1

I get that with Virgin for half the price!

Roger Whitcomb @milairpix

Sky? No chance! I already get full fibre broadband for only £21 per month (and that includes line rental) with my gas and electricity provider SSE.

Gary Olsen @Gary_Olsen

ARE YOU MORE LIKELY TO BUY A PHONE IF BROOKLYN BECKHAM IS ADVERTISING IT (bit.ly/brooklyn405)?!

I've never bought anything because of an attached "name". I'm not going to start with someone whose only claim to fame is their surname.

Rich Grove @Rich_Grove

Absolutely not! 'Sleb' endorsement usually puts me off. If the product is what I want at the right price, then I'll buy it.

Ian Phipps

I once bought a telescope because Patrick Moore said it was value for money. I doubt if the manufacturer knew anything about it. I was 10 years old and it was 1964.

Richard Morgan

Hardly. Celebrity endorsements mean little to me, unless it was someone whose view I respect, like Steve Jobs.

Harvey @haskipsey

HAS THE WINDOWS 10 ANNIVERSARY UPDATE BROKEN YOUR PC?

Both my desktop PCs updated without any problems.

Geoffrey Boow

My PC and two laptops have updated and are working brilliantly. So far, not one problem.

Michael Bradbrook

Yep, hard drive and webcam errors mean my laptop is almost unusable.
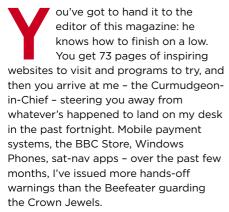
CodingDobby @CodingDobby

Two PCs updated a week ago without a hitch (downloaded from the support site rather than Windows update).

David Ward @davidewuk

⚠ Page 404

If VR headsets are anything to go by, **Barry Collins** is happy to stick to the real world

The future's made of virtual insanity

You've got to hand it to the editor of this magazine: he knows how to finish on a low. You get 73 pages of inspiring websites to visit and programs to try, and then you arrive at me – the Curmudgeon-in-Chief – steering you away from whatever's happened to land on my desk in the past fortnight. Mobile payment systems, the BBC Store, Windows Phones, sat-nav apps – over the past few months, I've issued more hands-off warnings than the Beefeater guarding the Crown Jewels.

However, nothing – not even TalkTalk's broadband service – comes with a sterner 'don't touch with a barge pole' recommendation than virtual-reality headsets. These are, according to the teenagers who write the tech blogs, The Hottest Must-have Gadget of 2016 Ever. The kids are, as ever, less right than a bacon sandwich at a bar mitzvah.

Take, for example, the HTC Vive, the first VR headset I had the misfortune to have strapped to my head at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas this year. To run this thing, you need the following: a spanking great desktop PC with a stonking graphics card inside; two black box sensors screwed to the wall, with 25ft of cabling running back to said PC; an unobstructed space of 140 square feet to wander around in; two Wii-like controllers to be held in either hand; and the whacking great headset itself, which make you feel not so much immersed in virtual reality than like you're undergoing an MRI scan. All told, you're looking at £700 for Vive, the thick end of a grand for the PC and

around £400,000 for the new house you'll need when your partner throws you out for installing the damned thing.

There are cheaper alternatives. The Samsung Gear VR I tried this weekend, for instance, which costs only £80 – but you'll need a high-end Galaxy S-whatever smartphone to pop in the front of the headset to act as the screen, which costs £400 for the handset alone.

> ❝ The tech world has managed to invent a virtual reality that's grimmer than the actual world we're living in ❞

All this expense and inconvenience might just about be worth it if the headsets delivered anything close to a virtual reality – games where you could actually feel like you're immersed in a make-believe world. Alas, the only thing I was immersed in after playing with both of these sets for half an hour was sweat. These headsets are big, heavy, padded, heat-generating

monsters. Imagine wearing a ski mask in a sauna and you're somewhere close. I had to unstrap the Gear VR after 20 minutes because the screen had steamed up with condensation. Five minutes later, the phone itself gave up, claiming it had overheated and needed a breather!

I found 20 minutes inside one of these contraptions is more than enough. The very slight, blurry lag that occurs when you move your head to look around does strange things to your senses. It's a computer-generated hangover and – sure enough – after about five minutes of zapping spaceships or exploring your Minecraft buildings, you begin to feel nauseous. Spend an hour inside one of these things and you'll have lost around a stone in sweat and vomit. It's less of a game, more of a SlimFast plan.

The tech world has managed to invent a virtual reality that's grimmer than the actual world we're living in. Come back in a fortnight's time, for more cheery recommendations of what not to buy.

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

WebUser

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GET THE NEXT ONE EARLY!

Thank you for reading this issue of *Web User* – we hope you found the tips and advice useful. The good news is that you don't have to wait too long for the next issue. If you subscribe to *Web User* by Monday 12 September (8pm)*, you'll receive it through your letterbox before it's available in the shops!

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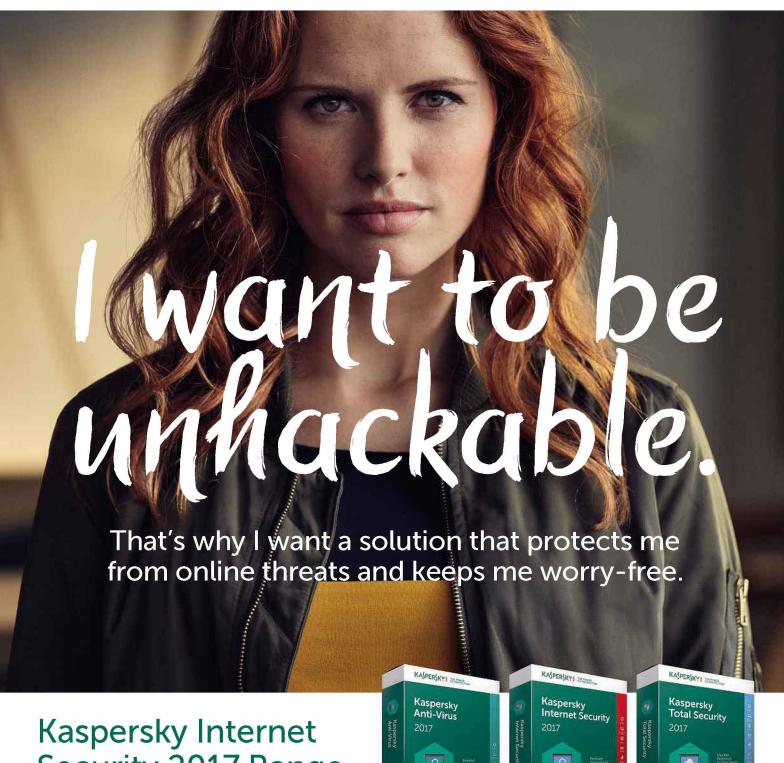
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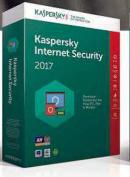*Includes FREE DELIVERY   Quote offer code: **P1618P**