



Beat EVERY Web RESTRICTION P38

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 - Get apps before they launch
 - Watch TV blocked in the UK
 - Disable default adult filters
 - Access sites the EU bans
 - Read censored news
 - Use banned VPNs
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Convert *any* video in one click!

Watch anything on your tablet – online *and* offline p44

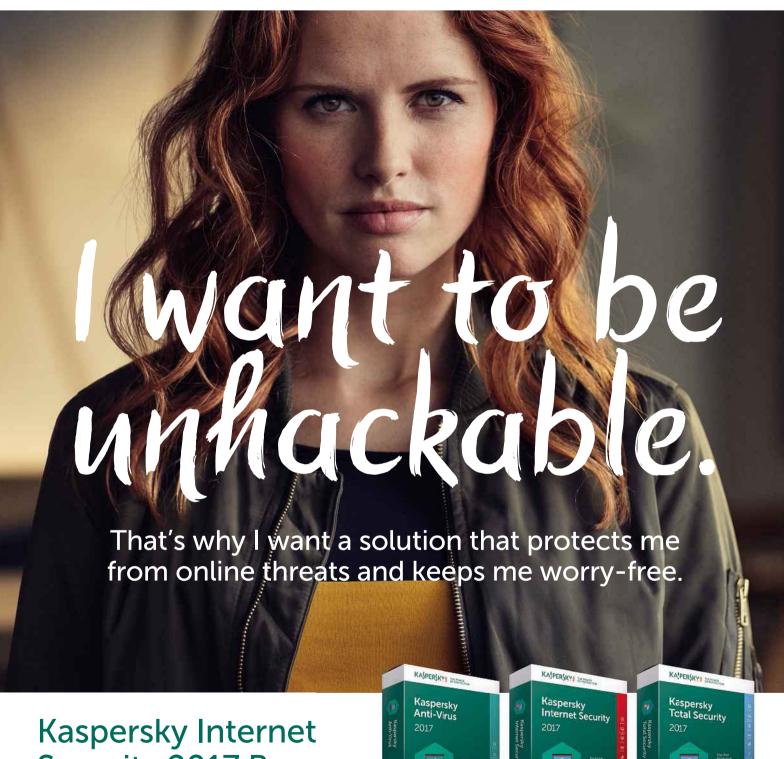
WINDOWS 10

Make your own
Start Menu tiles p54

Download the Milky Way to your PC!

A billion stars on your Desktop p52





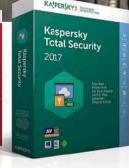
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Can't see? Must see!

e know from the history of pop music, films, TV and books that banning something usually backfires. From Lady Chatterley's Lover to Relax, nothing makes the public keener to hear, watch and read something than being told that they can't, particularly if the ban seems unreasonable.

This desire to have access to everything has grown stronger since the arrival of the internet. It's why *Web User* regularly recommends new and safe ways to bypass web restrictions, such as the VPNs in this issue's Cover Feature (page 38).

If you use a VPN on an Android device, you run the risk of busting your data limit. To avoid this, you could try using the new Chrome for Android beta, which compresses web pages – see page 56.

Robert Irvine

robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk #webuser

PS: 42 days until our annual 'Best Free Software for 2017' Cover Feature - please tell us what you'd like us to include: webuser@dennis.co.uk





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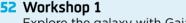
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Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving



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See 50 years of earthquakes and

eruptions

ach orange triangle on this map represents a volcanic eruption, and each blue dot is an

earthquake. They pop up all over the world as you play the timeline, which runs from 1960 to 2016.

Made by the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington DC, it provides detailed information on each event. For example, zoom into the map, then click the red triangle near the toe of Italy (it remains on the map throughout the timeline) and you'll be taken to recent reports on Mount Etna's eruptions (see small screen grab).

For a different perspective, click the 'View as globe' button in the top-right corner, then spin the planet with your mouse. If the timeline



moves too fast, change its speed at the bottom of the page. One of the most interesting options is the 'All Events' button at the bottom right. Click it to eruptions recorded since 1960.
That's what we did to take the screen grab above, which clearly shows the main areas of activity

– Japan and south-east Asia; the Pacific coast of the Americas; and down the middle of the Atlantic.
bit.ly/volcano409

Stream music remotely from your PC

bit.ly/remote409

Millions of people use Chrome Remote Desktop (CRD) when they are away from their PCs. The software lets you open folders and run programs on your home computer while you're elsewhere. You can even type on it using an onscreen keyboard (get started by installing the Chrome extension: bit.ly/chromeremote409).

However, until now, you've never been able to stream audio from your computer to another device. Download version 53 of CRD to your Android device and you'll be

able to hear sound generated by your Windows or Linux PC via a phone, tablet or other computer. This lets you search for sound files on the PC you're controlling, as well as stream your music and fix audio problems. Visit Google's site for more advice on using CRD: bit.ly/crdhelp409.

Use Instagram's Windows 10 app



bit.ly/gram409

Instagram, rather surprisingly, has yet to create a dedicated app for the iPad, but it has shown no such reluctance in embracing Microsoft's range of products. Having launched a Windows phone app in April, there's now one for Windows 10 PCs and tablets (which means it's a "universal" app, to use Microsoft's terminology).

You'll be able to use Instagram's best features, such as the

Live Tile, to find out what your friends and family are up to. You can also search, explore and receive notifications of updates. However, there is one odd restriction: to actually upload photos, you'll need a tablet or touchscreen Windows 10 computer, such as Microsoft's Surface Pro.

For tips on using Instagram in Windows 10, including instructions on sharing photos and tweaking your privacy settings, visit the app's Help Center: bit.ly/help409.

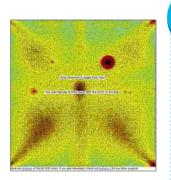


We highlight 10 of the most amazing and amusing things you can do on the web this fortnight

Discover how predictable you are

http://boltkey.cz/multiclick

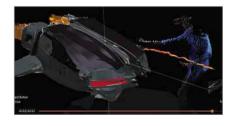
The web is awash with personality tests, but Multiclick is an experiment into how you behave online. The premise is simple: when the background turns green, you're invited to click anywhere. You'll then see a heat map of where other people clicked. As the screen grab shows, people tend to click in the same place.



Disover virtualreality art

bit.lv/art409

Artists bored with watercolours should download Tilt Brush (tiltbrush.com), which lets you "paint in 3D space with virtual reality". This Chrome Experiment reveals how six digital artists combined Tilt Brush and the HTC Vive virtual-reality headset to make dazzling works of art. Use your mouse to move around their virtual environments, and discover more about the artists by watching behindthe-scenes videos. Our screen grab shows renowned car designer Harald Belker, who made the Batmobile for the film 1996 Batman & Robin, working on a spacecraft.



Find airport Wi-Fi passwords

bit.ly/airport409

This handy map lets you find free Wi-Fi passwords to use at many of the world's major airports. It has been created by globe-trotting computer engineer Anil Polat (https://foxnomad .com), who's on a mission to visit every country in the world (he's reached 80). He says that the map is being constantly updated by travellers who have been providing his service with the latest passwords.

You can also buy Polat's new WiFox app for iOS and Android (£1.79 from bit.ly/wifox409).

Convert colour values using Google

www.google.co.uk

You can now convert between Hex and RGB colour values using Google, which is a handy time-saver for website designers who need to know the codes for different colours. Type RGB to Hex into Google, then use the slider and circle to identify the colour you need. You'll see the Hex and RGB values instantly. Clicking Show Color Values displays HSV, HSL and CMYK values, too.



TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

A new account in which patients and staff share their stories about the NHS

@MinecraftWin10_

Official account from Mojang providing news on the Windows 10 Edition of Minecraft

@eyespymp

Public sightings of MPs. accompanied by occasional photos (George Osborne on the Tube)

@msofficelens

Updates on Microsoft's scanner app, which won a Gold Award in Issue 408

@pastpostcard

See real postcards from the past delivered to your feed each day

Download Google's new, free font

www.google.com/get/noto

Five years in the making, Google's new open-source Noto font has 110,000 characters across more than 800 languages, meaning that there's less chance of a small box appearing in place of an unknown or missing character.

Generate a bot that tweets like you

https://chatlike.me

Input your Twitter screen name into this online tool and it will mimic the patterns of your 140-character messages to create a bot that tweets just like you. You can try it with celebrity accounts, too.

Create GIFs from your videos

https://photos.google.com

Upload a video to Google Photos and it will now use artificial intelligence to look for segments that can be turned into a GIF. You can then share the short animation with others.



Hacked smart devices knock the web offline

What happened?

A massive internet outage was caused by hacked 'Internet of Things' devices, security researchers have revealed.

Many popular websites were felled during the huge distributed-denial-of-service (DDOS) attack, which entails massive amounts of web traffic being targeted at a site or service to knock it offline. In this case, the target was domain-registration service Dyn, a provider to web giants including Twitter, Netflix, Spotify, Amazon and Reddit, and the government's portal Gov.uk (www.gov.uk). The attack slowed access to these sites and, in some instances, took them offline for a short while.

It's not clear who instigated the attack, but it was carried out via a botnet called Mirai. Most botnets link insecure, infected PCs, using them to send spam, distribute malware or run denial-of-service attacks. Instead of hacking PCs to power its nefarious activities, Mirai builds a botnet from Internet of Things (IoT) and 'smart' home devices – the cameras, thermostats and other gadgets we increasingly connect to the web for our own convenience.

This isn't the first time Mirai has been used, and it won't be the last. The malicious software was first used against well-known security researcher Brian Krebs to target his blog. After that attack, the hacker who developed Mirai released its code on the internet, so any hacker can now use the botnet. Between that and the weak security of most IoT devices, we can expect another Mirai attack to rear its head soon.



Gov.uk was one of many websites brought down by the smart-device hack



How will it affect you?

Aside from Gov.uk, the attack mostly took down services in the US. Most Brits probably didn't notice the outages but that doesn't mean this is a problem for our American friends alone.

Not only could such an attack be used anywhere, but it was powered by hacked IoT and smart home gadgets such as thermostats, IP cameras and even digital video recorders, and there's nothing to stop similar devices in your own home from being used in such attacks.

The Mirai botnet searches the web for connected devices, trying factory-set usernames and default passwords against the login. If it succeeds, it can use your smart home device as a weapon against the web. That not only affects the direct victims of the denial-of-service onslaught, but could see your broadband slow to a crawl as hackers abuse your bandwidth in their attack.

For this reason, it's essential to protect your gadgets against hackers. If your smart device is accessed via a login, you should change it from the default password in the app or web page you use to control the device.

That won't prevent all attacks, but it should stop Mirai using your device. You can also buy a router with built-in security and additional hardware protection, such as F-Secure's Sense,

which adds a layer of protection for smart home devices and your home network.

What do we think?

Hardware developers should be condemned for building a network of devices that can so easily be abused. Security researchers, industry experts and technology journalists have been warning about the security flaws inherent in the IoT and smart devices for years now – and yet manufacturers have ignored such concerns.

Security needs to be built in by design. In the case of IoT, default passwords should have a forced reset, devices should be prevented from sending significant amounts of traffic, and developers shouldn't leave backdoors in their own products.

Users can help by changing passwords, but some products simply cannot be secured. Those gadgets are already in our homes and there's little we can do other than dispose of them and replace them.

The industry would do well to come up with a security kitemark so we know we're buying a device that meets certain minimum requirements. Hopefully, this incident will encourage better security for smart gadgets or we'll be going back to the safer 'dumb' versions.

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

Register now for Sky's phone network

What happened?

Sky customers can now register for Sky Mobile, its forthcoming phone network that will piggyback on O2's.

Last year, Sky signed up to use O2's network to offer mobile contracts to its millions of TV. home phone and broadband users. The company is focusing on its existing users, suggesting it sees mobile contracts more as an attractive extra for subscribers than a standalone service for new customers. Pre-registration for the Sky Mobile service was due on 31 October, so it should be live now.

How will it affect you?

The move is a big challenge to BT, Virgin and TalkTalk, and the competition could help drive down prices on bundled packages. It also could make life easier for Sky customers, who will be able to get their mobile services on the same bill as their TV, phone and broadband. Expect to be bombarded by ads over the next few months. As Sky's UK chief Stephen van Rooyen said: "There are literally millions of customers for us to go after".

Prices
haven't yet
been
revealed,
but you
could be
pleasantly
surprised.
Sky will
probably feel

the need to undercut network-only deals, and the so-called 'quad-play' bundled packages, comprising broadband, TV, home phone and mobile phone. The latter can include some great deals - BT. for example, offers a £5 monthly discount on mobile packages to its broadband users, while TalkTalk provides a free SIM with 500MB of data a month in all its phone and broadband contracts.

The problem with bundles is it's difficult to compare prices and benefits, so take the time to shop around and add up the total costs to ensure you get the best deal.

What do we think?

Sky has taken its time moving into the mobile market, sealing the deal with O2 in 2015 but waiting more than a year to sign up users. It's been slow in other areas, such as TV-streaming, but has caught up this year. Such improvements may make rivals nervous, though Sky is likely to remain a more expensive option than TalkTalk thanks to its pricier television bundles.



Subsidise broadband for society's poorest

What happened?

The Local
Government
Association
(LGA) said that
broadband is so
important to
everyday life in
modern Britain
that people on
benefits and low

incomes should get help paying for speeds of at least 10Mbps.

It called for this to be part of the Government's broadband Universal Social Obligation, which aims to make access to fast speeds a right on a par with other essential services such as electricity and water.

It urged ISPs to offer subsidised deals to those "most in need", pointing to BT Basic as an example. This costs £10 a month for a broadband and phone line, and is available to people on benefits. Visit BT's website to see if you qualify: bit.ly/basic409.

The LGA, which represents more than 370 councils in England and Wales, says that such measures are necessary because many vital services are now accessible only through the internet. Ofcom says there is a link between socio-economic deprivation and poor broadband availability in cities.

How will it affect you?

Such a plan could help pensioners in particular. The LGA said that one in four adults lack web skills,





Pension Credit can apply.

With one in seven UK pensioners living in poverty (according to Age UK), cheaper broadband is urgently needed. ISPs should offer discounts to those on benefits, with Government subsidies covering some of the cost. The Government is right to move more of its services online, but should recognise the disadvantages to those who can't afford broadband. We hope it listens to the LGA and announces measures in the Autumn Statement on 23 November.

Some analysts say that 10Mbps is too slow for a minimum speed, but that's only true for streaming video and playing games. 10Mbps is fast enough to access most basic websites, and a realistic speed for the LGA to suggest. Anything faster may cost too much money.

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Banks fail to protect us from online fraud

What happened?

Major high-street banks have failed to provide sufficient security steps to safeguard their customers against scams, new research suggests. A report by Which? found that many online banking services lack 'two-factor authentication' at login, where customers are required to provide a memorable answer or password, alongside a single-use code from a mobile app or authenticator.

In a test of 11 bank websites, only five provided adequate security steps to protect customer accounts. Halifax, Lloyds Bank, Santander and TSB were all criticised by the report for providing insufficient protection, despite having the technology to impose two-step verification, according to Which? research conducted in August.

TSB was found to be the worst offender, with a total online protection score of 56%, with Santander only slightly better. Hackers need only bypass one level of security to gain access to account details, which scammers then use to contact customers in the guise of a bank employee, potentially gaining further access to savings.

This year, several banks, including Barclays and HSBC, improved security by implementing telephone voice authentication. This news was welcomed by security specialists campaigning for



safer biometric authentication, and a move away from passwords.

A Barclays spokesperson said its customers can get free cybersecurity services from Kaspersky, adding: "We have no higher priority than the protection of our customers' funds and data. Customers can be reassured that the digital banking service they use carries the highest level of recognised cybersecurity protection."

How will it affect you?

This is worrying news if, like millions of other Brits, you use the web to manage your bank account, and your bank is one of those "named and shamed" by Which?. Using two-factor authentication

makes logging into your account more hassle, but it's an effective means of foiling hackers who may have obtained your banking password. If your bank isn't offering this simple but reliable security option, it might be time to switch to one that does.

What do we think?

Considering the number of high-profile hacks and security breaches that have occurred in 2016, banks have a responsibility to offer the best protection possible against online fraud. The likes of TSB and Santander certainly aren't short of money (pardon the pun), so they should implement two-factor authentication as soon as possible.



Google Pixel and Pixel XL madeby.google.com/phone

After years of collaborating with other manufacturers on Nexus phones, Google has finally made its own - the much-hyped Pixel. There are two models - the Pixel (from £599) and its jumbo-sized brother, the Pixel XL (from £719). Both carry hefty price tags, but they're more than up to the task of taking on the leading phones from Sony, Samsung and Motorola.

The only difference between the two models is the XL's larger screen and battery. They both run Android 7.1 Nought, use Qualcomm's latest quad-core 2.15GHz Snapdragon 821 processor and have 4GB of RAM, making them two of the fastest phones you can buy. Only the iPhone



7 and the Samsung S7 and S7 Edge scored better in speed tests. However, nothing beats the Pixel's 12-megapixel camera. We found it took incredibly detailed photos, even in low light.

The only problem is that the Pixel is one of the ugliest phones we've ever seen. Its front is bland - there's just a metal frame on an otherwise

featureless white exterior - and the combination of glossy glass and matte aluminium on the back is jarring, and attracts fingerprints and hairline scratches.

Another drawback is that the phone has no expandable storage, so you'll need to decide between the 32GB and - for an extra £100 - 128GB models. You also have to be careful when using it at the beach because it's not waterproof (so no selfies while snorkelling).

We'll test the Pixel more thoroughly soon, but our first impression is that while it's an excellent phone, and a worthy successor to the Nexus, it doesn't do enough to justify spending £600. Instead you should consider the OnePlus 3 (oneplus.net/uk/3), which can do almost exactly the same at half the price.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will Netflix introduce offline viewing?

When we asked this question in Issue 380 (September 2015), we auoted Netflix's chief product officer Neil Hunt who said that offline viewing was not "a very compelling proposition". He admitted it was a frequently requested feature, but thought it would make using Netflix too complicated.



Well, a lot can change in 12 months (just ask David Cameron). According to one industry insider, Netflix will add a download option "by the end of the year". That comes from Dan Laitz, chief operating officer at Penthera, a company that makes software for downloading video. Speaking to the website Light Reading, he said: "We know from our sources within the industry that Netflix is going to launch this product".

Some technology analysts agree with Laitz. Dan Rayburn from US consultants Frost & Sullivan told Light Reading that Netflix's plans are an "open secret". However, he said that not all of Netflix's content will be available to download. For example, restrictions from film studios will prevent the company from offering many movies. However, Netflix will be free to offer its own TV shows, including House of Cards and Orange is the New Black.

LIKELIHOOD RATING

Sometimes a bland press statement gives a lot away. Responding to these rumours, Netflix spokesperson Anne Marie Squeo said: "While our focus remains on delivering a great streaming experience, we are always exploring ways to make the service better". Compare that with what Cliff Edwards, Netflix's director of corporate communications and technology, said in 2014: offline viewing is "never going to happen". The implication is that downloadable content on Netflix is just around the corner. Offline viewing could be here within months, in the US at least. The UK might have to wait a bit longer.

What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Mr Fox

bit.ly/mrfox409 | From £95

If you often leave the house without your keys, tablet or laptop, Mr Fox's leather bag could be an essential purchase. It not only comes with a handy built-in battery to charge these devices on the go, but also sends an alert



to your phone if you leave something important behind. Simply attach one of its Bluetooth tags to each of your valuables, install the Mr Fox mobile app and it takes care of the rest. The campaign is looking to raise £80,000 by 18 November. Pledging £240 will entitle you to a Mr Fox bag (black, tan or dark brown).

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Saving data on Facebook Messenger

Facebook is testing a Data Saver mode for Messenger to help stop you going over your limit. It's currently available in the beta version of



the app for Android - sign up at bit.ly/fbbeta409

Price-rise warnings on flights

Google Flights (www.google.co .uk/flights) will soon be able to tell you when the price of flights you're interested in are likely to



rise. Read Google's blog for more details: bit.ly/flights409

WE DON'T LIKE...

Fake Apple cables and chargers

Apple says that 90% of cables and connectors for its products

sold on Amazon are fake, and is suing Mobile Star LLC, one of the companies it claims is responsible. Apple says these counterfeit products



aren't safe to use.

Billions lost in online **y** scams

A "staggering" £10.9bn was lost in fraud - most of which was

cybercrime - in 2015-16, according to figures from Get Safe Online. The report also shows that 39% of victims hadn't reported the



incident. Read more on its website: bit.ly/gso409

Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Ghost Push malware haunts old Android devices

More than half of all Android devices could still be vulnerable to malware discovered two years ago, new research has found. Ghost Push malware, which has evolved since its release in 2014, affects devices running up to version five of Android (codenamed Lollipop). This accounts for around 57% of all users, according to researchers at Chinese firm Cheetah Mobile.

Ghost Push can't work on the two most recent versions of Android – Marshmallow and Nougat – but this accounts for only 10% of users.

Cheetah Mobile found that most infections come from apps installed from sources other than the Google Play store. Once installed on a device, Ghost Push shows pornographic pages and malicious adverts. Clicking these pages and ads leads to more malware being installed.



If your device is already infected, Cheetah recommends using its free app Stubborn Trojan Killer to remove the malware (bit.ly/

trojan409, see screen grab).

Microsoft: young people more likely to be scammed

Microsoft has warned the public that the infamous 'tech support' scam remains widespread, and that a "startling" number of 18-34 year olds fall victim. The fraud is executed via a phonecall claiming to be from a member of Microsoft's tech-support team. The caller says that they need to remotely access your PC to remove an infection. If you provide this, they try to steal money from your bank account.

Scammers have typically targeted older PC users, but new research from Microsoft shows that they are having just as much success with the so-called "millennial" generation.

As part of National Cyber Security Awareness Month (in October), Microsoft surveyed thousands of people worldwide, finding that 50% of people who "continued with a fraudulent interaction" were aged between 18 to 34. You can read Microsoft's report at bit.ly/scams409.



Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Robert Capps, an expert in biometrics and behavioural security at NuData (https:// nudatasecurity.com)



Do you think biometrics (such as fingerprints) and behavioural techniques (like recognising how someone swipes a screen) will ever replace passwords completely?

Nigel Cartwright, via email

I don't believe passwords are going to vanish any time soon because consumers are familiar with typing a username and password to interact online, and there have been few, if any, successful products that have tried to change this.

Biometrics shows promise, but there have been concerns over privacy, and questions about the appropriateness and reliability of such techniques when used online. Where biometrics is more successful is in quickly evaluating a person in a face-to-face situation, where the authenticating party controls both the enrolment

of the actual user and the environment (including the hardware).

For the forseeable future, both biometrics and behavioural techniques will be used to extend the lifespan of the current username-and-password systems, until we can design better, less risky methods to authenticate users. Only then will we be able to begin getting rid of passwords.

Can behavioural methods adapt to a person developing a medical condition, such as Parkinson's?

William Fuller, via email

A Behavioural methods are actually quite

sensitive to physical conditions that gradually appear. Ageing, for example, will subtly alter how people interact with the technology around them, and behavioural systems adapt to these changes. They are less able to handle rapid and sudden changes to how a person behaves, whether it's from illness, injury, or a disability. But these can be dealt with appropriately within the methods that companies use to challenge users who cannot be correctly identified.

python

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- **✓** 20+ stack variations
- √ Managed by 1&1 experts
- **✓** Flexible scalability
- **✓** Deployed <1 minute





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Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

ONLINE SAFETY

GET

many

INVOLVED

There are

awareness

across the UK

sessions

Friends Against Scams

www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk

Figures suggest that scams - online, on the phone, by letter or in person - cost consumers up to £10bn each year. To raise awareness and "empower communities", the National Trading Standards Scams Team has set up this campaigning site. It offers well-judged advice on how to treat victims of scams. and sends fortnightly emails warning you about scammers' increasingly devious tactics. To get involved in the campaign, you can become a 'Friend Against Scams' by attending an awareness session (details are listed) or host a session and become a 'ScamChampion'. One level up are ScamAmbassadors - MPs and influential public figures.

Our rating





ONLINE COURSE You can take part in online training to become a 'Friend'

Home | What are Scams? | What is Friend

FRIENDS AGAINST SCA

Anybody can join Friends Against Sca



The Earth Awaits

www.theearthawaits.com

Ever fancied living abroad but aren't sure where? Just ask this site. After submitting the size of your budget and family, the kind of apartment you want to live in, your typical lifestyle and your tolerance for crime and pollution, it quickly scours data pulled from Wikipedia, the United Nations and public databases to find what it considers to be your best matches (Irvine in California, in our case - see above). You can also see the cost of living, which is updated daily, and what kind of weather you could expect. It needs to add more cities to become a genuinely useful tool, and you can't manually search for specific locations, but it's good escapist fun nonetheless.

Our rating





CARS

Maserati

www.maserati.co.uk

This redesigned website for the luxury car maker Maserati delivers an intricate fact-packed breakdown of each car, interspersed with sparkling, well-shot photos. It also injects a good dollop of fun for true petrolheads - you can listen to the various engine noises, for example, and "build your own" Maserati (you're not given the £80k to buy it, though!), which you can save to tweak the design later. Other features include a bustling news section, a shop selling various merchandise and - best of all, in our view - an interesting in-depth look at the history of the 102-year-old company.

Our rating



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





TECHNOLOGY

Bloomberg Technology

www.bloomberg.com/technology

Bloomberg primarily reports business news but its technology coverage has increased in recent months, culminating in this launch. The striking, modern look differentiates it from the rest of the Bloomberg site and although the design is cluttered and too hyperactive, there's more than enough content to whet your appetite. We particularly like the live web shows, insightful videos and informed analysis, despite the obvious (and understandable) US bias. The 20-minute podcast, Decrypted, shows great promise, even after just one episode.

Our rating





RETAIL

Mail Shop

www.mailshop.co.uk

Not content with running the most visited English-language newspaper website in the world, the Daily Mail is now branching into retail. This web store sells homeware and garden equipment, some of which has recently appeared in the paper. You can shop by room (kitchen, bedroom and so on) or browse product categories (furniture, Christmas, cooking & dining). For ideas and news on trends, click Inspire Me. Each product page is clear and goods are added quickly to your basket. Even better, our price comparison showed some items were cheaper than elsewhere online.

Our rating





Financial Times

www.ft.com

The website for The Financial Times, like the Daily Mail, is very popular and the success of its paywall is due to its niche content - people who work in finance are willing to pay to stay up to date with the latest news. The revamped site is now more accessible, making it easier to find key tools and information. The Market Data tools, alerts and email briefings have been improved, and there's a new portfolio tool that works across PCs. phones and tablets. You get 10 free articles a month, which is enough to get a taste of the site before paying for a subscription (see prices at bit.ly/ft409).

Our rating

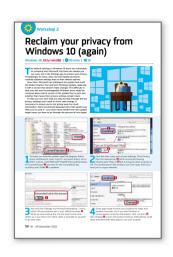




WebUser

Which privacy settings should I change in Windows 10?

A Page 54, Issue 386





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FOOTBALL

The 18

http://the18.com

Presumably named after the 18-yard box, this US-based football site covers the beautiful game with as much flair as a Messi dribble and a Ronaldo stepover. It mixes news of US football (or 'soccer') with what's happening internationally, so you can watch videos that entertain (great goals, crazy incidents) and educate (skills, fitness), take part in fun guizzes and read serious analytical stories and transfer rumours. We love the Free Kick button, which trawls the site for something random, but there are too many large photos, so 90 minutes of action could entail endless scrolling and leave you sidelined with an injury.







LITERATURE

TS Eliot

http://tseliot.com

As one of the 20th Century's major poets, playwrights and essayists, TS Eliot has inspired generations of writers. His legacy has now moved online with a stylishly minimalist website, managed by his estate and publisher, that lets you explore his canon. You can read his works in full or as excerpts, see rare photos from his life and examine important documents, including the telegram from the Nobel committee inviting Eliot to the 1948 ceremony, where he won the prize for literature. Many visitors will be drawn by the hundreds of unpublished letters, with the tantalising promise of more being added in the future.

Our rating





WEB AUCTIONS

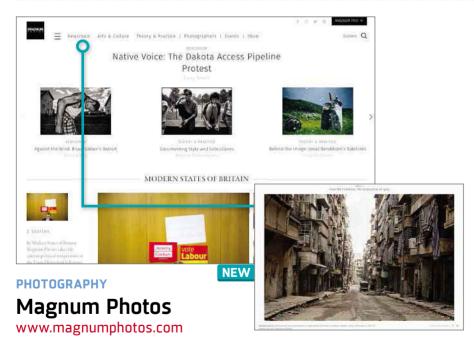
eBay Seller Centre

Sellercentre.ebay.co.uk

With 18 million registered buyers in the UK, eBay remains a very popular online marketplace. But online shoppers have much higher expectations now than they did when eBay launched in 1999, so a new Seller Centre is very welcome. Its main aim is to help sellers create "the perfect listing", thereby boosting the price you get for an item. There are around 300 articles so far, including valuable tips on how to respond to buyers' feedback and details of the protection eBay offers to sellers. It's split into advice for private individuals and businesses - just click the buttons at the top-right of the page to switch.

Our rating





Magnum's photographers have been capturing images of world events for close to 70 years, and this storytelling website gives them an opportunity to showcase their work to a whole new audience. By explaining the stories behind the photos, both new and old, it lends an engrossing context to each collection. The best ones take you to places you're unlikely to see first hand, such as Detroit's derelict streets, behind the scenes campaigning with Jeremy Corbyn and deep into Syria's war-torn cities (pictured above). You can also read about the photographers who took the images and check out the Events page for forthcoming exhibitions.

Our rating





DRINK

Forager's Gin

foragersgin.co.uk

Set up in 2015, Snowdonia Distillery has started selling its first product: Forager's Gin. This site explains how it's made in the foothills of the Welsh mountain range and lets you book private tasting sessions. You can find out where it's sold or buy it yourself from the site (£40 for a 70cl bottle). That's not cheap, so you'll need to know what it tastes like before committing. But until the technology exists to download a sip, you'll have to make do with the site's poetic description. Apparently, Forager's Gin starts by releasing "soft juniper tones" on your tongue, then takes you to "fresh, semi-sweetness of apple and elderberry".

Our rating



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

WordPress updates Jetpack

WordPress recently updated its Jetpack plugin (free from jetpack .com), introducing some great new tools. The Dashboard now provides a useful at-a-glance overview of your stats on its front page, so you can quickly see how



your site's been doing. The interface now uses the same JavaScript technology as the rest of your WordPress dashboard, so you can make changes to settings without having to reload the page. It's packed with great tools and well worth installing, and is so well integrated that you can hardly tell it's a plugin.

Free security certificate with WP Engine

Web host WP Engine (wpengine .com) is giving away free SSL security certificates to all its users. The move is designed to help its customers improve the security of their websites, which is particularly important if visitors are being asked to provide secure information such as passwords. This is also relevant because Google has suggested that any sites requiring secure information that don't have these security tools in place may be penalised in search listings come the new year.

Deal of the Fortnight

UK2 has a range of offers at www.uk2.net/ offers. These change regularly but, at the time of going to press, they included 40% off hosting and a website-building service for £1 per month.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Federico Viani, Technical Support, PlanetHippo (www.planethippo.co.uk)



It seems like WordPress has been around for ages. Is it still the best option?

Keith Walker, via email

WordPress is a widely adopted CMS (content management system) that's stable, reliable and easy to

use. But whether you're building a blog or a corporate website, there are many other options that have thousands of plugins and templates, and are supported by a wide community of users. In terms of web design, I would consider a static site generator such as Nanoc (nanoc.ws). It's quite technical, but it's powerful and gives total freedom to customise a website. The generated pages don't require premium hosting packages. keeping the maintenance on a local machine and mirroring modified pages via FTP.

MINI WORKSHOP | Create a more personal Wix website

Wix ADI: www.wix.com | 🕒 10 mins | Free Wix account

Web-building tool Wix has introduced an Artificial Design Intelligence tool, which asks you questions and scans your social-media accounts to help you create a more personalised website



Sign in (or create an account if you don't already have one) and click the option to 'Create a new site'. Choose the kind of site you'd like to build, then click the 'Start with Wix ADI' button. 1 You can further define the type of site you want by typing it into the box. Click the Next button.



Select from the list the types of things you'd like to include on your site. These have been chosen to tie in with the kind of site you're creating. You can skip this, if you like, and add sections to your site later. You also need to fill in any information you want to reveal on your site, enter your social-networking information and choose a style. 1



The software works through the standard Wix site-design wizard, making choices based on the information you've provided. Once it's finished creating your site, you can click the Add Section tab 11 to insert new sections or click the Site Design tab 2 to choose a different look and colour scheme.







We test and compare the latest products

Chromebooks

Is it worth spending over £1,000 on a Chromebook or should you stick with a budget model? **Andy Shaw** tests both types

riginally, all Chromebooks were affordable laptops costing around £200. This would buy you a model good enough to run the lightweight Chrome OS well, as long as you didn't overburden the browser with too many open tabs. Google changed the landscape in 2013 when it launched the vastly more expensive Google Chromebook Pixel. This also runs the Chrome OS but on hardware designed to rival the best laptops around.

The decision now facing anyone who wants to buy a Chromebook is whether an affordable model is enough to suit your needs, or whether it's worth forking out a lot more to get a super-specified laptop.

In this Group Test, we compare three affordable Chromebooks with two of the pricier models to see which of them provides the best value for money.

HOW WE TESTED

We put the Chromebooks through a variety of tests. We measured their overall performance by running web-based benchmarks including SunSpider (bit.ly/suns409) and JetStream (bit.ly/jets409). We also used a colorimeter to test the quality of the screen.

Finally, we ran our battery-life test, which measures how long a fully charged device can play a looping video before running out of juice.

Acer Chromebook R11 | £229.99 | Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/acerr409

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

Acer's Chromebook R11 has the smallest screen of all the devices reviewed here, but because it's a touchscreen and the keyboard can fold back under itself, the R11 also works as a tablet. At 1.2kg, it's light enough to hold comfortably with one hand and, at 20mm, it's reasonably thin, too.

Despite its compact size, the R11 provides a good selection of ports, with two USB ports (one each for USB 2 and USB 3) and an HDMI port for connecting it to an external display. There's also an SD card reader and a 3.5mm headset jack. Although it doesn't have an Ethernet port,

The keyboard spans nearly the full width of the laptop's chassis, so it doesn't feel cramped. We found that the touchpad required a little more force than was comfortable to register a click, but you can tap it instead and anyway, we think you'll get a lot of use from the touchscreen, even when the keyboard is operable.

The laptop runs cool and quiet, thanks to its fanless design and low-power 1.6GHz Intel Celeron N3050 processor. It only comes with 2GB of RAM (and 16GB of drive space) but we had no problems running individual web apps

and things only slowed down when we opened a lot of tabs with video or ads running in them. As long as you keep a check on your open tabs, everything should run smoothly.

The compact size of the R11 means it has a smaller-capacity battery, so it's no great surprise that its battery life was the shortest of all the devices we tested. It still lasted 8 hours and 42 minutes in our tests, though, which should be enough to get you through a day's work if you're away from a power socket.





VERDICT

Chromebook we tested in this group, but it's more than good enough to perform its core purpose of browsing the web and working with web apps. The touchscreen is versatile, too, giving options for scrolling and pressing buttons on websites with your fingers, rather than using the touchpad. The option of folding it all the way back into tablet mode is a

welcome bonus.



802.11ac Wi-Fi is built in.

Web<mark>Use</mark>

BRONZE **AWARD**

Acer Chromebook 14 | £199.99 |

Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/acer409

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

Acer's Chromebook 14 has a slim aluminium chassis that could fool you into mistaking it for a MacBook Air. However. this Chromebook is a lot more affordable. For £200, you get a 14in display with a resolution of 1.366 x 768 pixels, an Intel Celeron processor, 2GB of RAM and 16GB of storage. Except for the larger screen, this is similar to the Gold Award-winning Chromebook R11 and

performance was almost identical in our tests.

The boon of a larger screen is offset by a decrease in quality: the Chromebook 14 has the same resolution as the R11, but spread over the extra space it looks less sharp. The brightness, contrast and colour are also disappointing, leaving the screen looking dull and washed out. The battery has benefited from an increase in size, though, lasting 10 hours and 22 minutes in our tests, which is over 90 minutes more than the R11. It has two USB 3 ports but is sorely missing an SD card slot.

VERDICT



We love the look and feel of the Chromebook 14's classy metal-clad chassis. The battery, which is more powerful than the Gold-winning R11's, is a welcome addition. However, the screen, though also larger, is disappointing.

HP Chromebook 14 | £229.99 |

Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/hp409

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

This latest version of HP's 14in Chromebook continues the bold colour scheme of its predecessor with a sky-blue plastic case. It weighs 1.69kg and measures 17.8mm at its thickest point, and feels sturdy and well built.

It has more RAM (4GB) and a faster-running

processor than either of the Acer

Chromebooks reviewed here, but this didn't result in any significant boost in performance. The battery wasn't as good as the Acer Chromebook 14 (9 hours and 14 minutes in our test), and came second to last in this group.

Like the Acer 14in model, the HP Chromebook 14's screen is disappointing. It has a similarly low resolution and its blacks weren't particularly dark in our contrast tests. It failed to produce a sufficient range of sRGB colours, although it fared slightly better than the screen on the Silver Award-winning Acer Chromebook 14.

VERDICT

 $\star\star\star\star$

The HP Chromebook's screen is slightly better than the Acer Chromebook 14's, but in all other respects – the aluminium finish, better performance and improved battery life – we preferred our Silver Award Winner.

Google Chromebook Pixel | £1,249.11 | Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/goog409

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

The Chromebook Pixel is the best Chromebook money can buy, but it's very expensive. Availability is getting thin, though, so the price is creeping up and we only found stock through Amazon.

It has 32GB of storage - twice as much as our award-winning Chromebooks - and includes 1TB of Google Drive storage. Its SD slot is designed for the card to sit flush with the edge, so you can leave it in permanently without risk of it catching.

As you'd expect for this price, the build-quality of the hardware is stunning, with a superb keyboard and touchpad. But the Pixel's crowning glory is its 12.9in, 2,560 x 1,700 pixels touchscreen display: contrast and brightness are superb, and it can produce 91.6% of the sRGB colour palette.

Performance was impressive, too, with the Pixel's fast processor and 16GB of RAM outperforming every other Chromebook we tested. The battery didn't suffer, either, lasting the longest in this group at 10 hours and 53 minutes.

VERDICT



The Chromebook Pixel runs Chrome OS better than anything else, but this feels like overkill for a lightweight operating system. It's a beautiful laptop that's a joy to use, but the same money could be better spent on a Windows or Mac laptop.

Dell Chromebook 13 | £1,148.40 | Buy from Dell: bit.ly/dell409

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

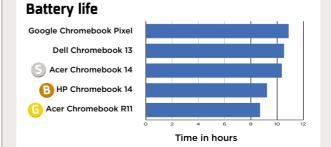
Like the Pixel (left), Dell's Chromebook 13 range brings Chrome OS to a premium product (and price). We reviewed Dell's most expensive model, but there are cheaper versions with less memory and storage, from around £400.

What you're getting for your money is a great screen and a brilliant build quality, though it isn't quite up to the giddy heights of the Chromebook Pixel.

VERDICT

A well-built Chromebook with more than enough power to run its operating system with aplomb, but too expensive for our tastes.

TEST-RESULTS CHARTS



Group Test Chromebooks

	Web Jser GOLD AWARD	Web Usar SILVER AWARD	WebUser BRONZE AWARD		Cangle 9 a a a g
	Acer	Acer	HP	Google	Dell
	Chromebook R11	Chromebook 14	Chromebook 14	Chromebook Pixel	Chromebook 13
WEBSITE	www.acer.com	www.acer.com	www.hp.com/uk	store.google.com	www.dell.co.uk
PRICE	£229.99	£199.99	£229.99	£1,249.11	£1,148.40
BUY FROM	Amazon: bit.ly/acerr409	Amazon: bit.ly/acer409	Amazon: bit.ly/hp409	Amazon: bit.ly/goog409	Dell: bit.ly/dell409
PROCESSOR	Dual-core 1.6GHz Intel Celeron N3050	Dual-core 1.6GHz Intel Celeron N3060	Dual-core 2.16GHz Intel Celeron N2840	Dual-core 2.2GHz Intel Core i5-5500u	Dual-core 2.3GHz Intel Core i5-5300u
MEMORY	2GB	2GB	4GB	16GB	8GB
SCREEN SIZE	11.6in	14in	14.1in	12.9in	13.3in
SCREEN RESOLUTION	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels	2,560 x 1,700 pixels	1,920 x 1,080 pixels
TOUCHSCREEN	1	×	×	1	1
STORAGE	16GB eMMC	16GB eMMC	16GB eMMC	32GB SSD	32GB SSD
USB PORTS	1 x USB2, 1 x USB3	2 x USB3	1 x USB2, 1 x USB3	2 x USB3, 2 x USB Type-C	1 x USB2, 1 x USB3
WI-FI	802.11ac	802.11ac	802.11ac	802.11ac	802.11ac
MEMORY CARD READER	SD	No	MicroSD	SD	MicroSD
SIZE	295 x 203 x 20mm	341 x 237 x 17mm	344 x 240 x 17.8mm	298 x 225 x 15.3mm	323 x 226 x 18.4mm
WEIGHT	1.2kg	1.68kg	1.69kg	1.5kg	1.62kg
WARRANTY	One-year return-to-base	One-year return-to-base	One-year return-to-base	Two-years return-to-base	One-year collect-and- return



Synology®







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Beamforming technology



Downloads & multimedia hub

Synology Router

RT1900ac



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YOUR NETWORK, SMART AND SWIFT

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₩eb User's Best Buys

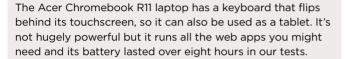
Web User and its sister titles test over 2,500 products every year

HARDWARE

CHROMEBOOK

Acer Chromebook R11

£229.99 from www.amazon.co.uk Date tested: October 2016



NEW

KEY SPECS

Dual-core 1.6GHz Intel Celeron N3050 processor ■ 2GB of memory = 11.6in touchscreen = 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution = 16GB eMMC drive ■ 1 x USB 2, 1 x USB 3 ports ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi = SD card reader = 295 x 203 x 20mm = 1.2kg

WINDOWS 10 LAPTOP

Acer Aspire One Cloudbook 14

£199.98 from www.pcworld.co.uk Date tested: September 2016



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

it includes a year's subscription to Office 365 Personal.

E-READER

Amazon Kindle (2016)

£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.

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 mediumsized 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 = Threeyear return-to-base warranty

SOFTWARE & SERVICES

INTERNET SECURITY

Kaspersky Internet Security 2017

£19.95 from bit.ly/kaspersky2017 Date tested: August 2016

Kaspersky is rock solid at protecting your PC from the worst of the web, and has come top in eight of our most recent tests. blocking all malware with its robust defences. Click the link above to save £15.04 on the software (normal price £34.99).



KEY FEATURES

Antivirus and firewall tools ■ Protects online shopping and banking ■ Identity and privacy tools ■ Dangerous-website alerts ■ New software updater ■ Secure-connection VPN ■ Advanced ad-blocking system ■ 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

SYSTEM SUITE

Synei System **Utilities 4**

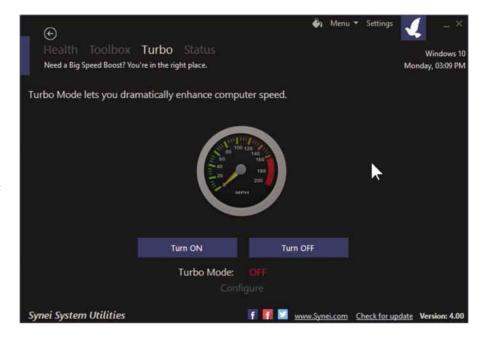
www.synei.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8.x/10 File size: 7.1MB

It's important to perform regular maintenance on your PC to make sure it runs as smoothly as possible. That's where the PC optimisation tool Synei System Utilities can help. If you trust it to get on with its job, simply open the Health section and run 1-Click Maintenance to trigger a sequence

Alternatively, you can launch each tool individually. Go to the Toolbox section (pictured below), where you'll find them sorted into the categories



Optimization, Security, Personal and

Other. Almost everything you could ask for is here, including tools to clean your Registry, boost your browser and defrag your hard drive.

For a speed boost, the Turbo section (shown above) promises to dramatically enhance your computer's performance, which could be helpful when you're carrying out resource-heavy tasks such as playing a game or editing a video. The Status tab

shows any problems the program has found, and lets you quickly fix them.

The latest version introduces a new Task Manager and a Force Deleter, which removes stubborn files locked by Windows. You can now set the Turbo mode to re-apply its settings every 30 minutes, and the Deep Cleaner and Big File Scanner have been improved, too.

There are downloadable and portable versions available, and a paid-for Premiere edition for \$19 (around £15) which provides additional cleaning and more advanced fixing tools.

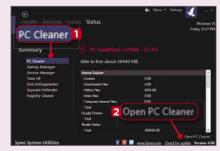
MINI WORKSHOP | Find and fix PC problems with Synei System Utilities



Start with a 1-Click Maintenance scan. You can untick any of the selected elements 11 and add Disk Defragment, 2 if you don't mind waiting for that to complete. The remaining three options are greyed out and only available in the paid-for edition. Adjust the settings for the tools by clicking Configuration. 5



Click the 1-Click Maintenance button and select Analyse Only in the menu that appears. The software will run the various tools, looking for problems. The results will be presented on the Status screen, along with a (misspelt!) PC Condition rating. 2 You can take this with a pinch of salt, however, because things are rarely as bad as suggested.



Click PC Cleaner 1 to see what the program has found. You can clear out the junk by clicking the Open PC Cleaner link at the bottom 2 and following the instructions. Work your way through each of the sections. Alternatively, run 1-Click Maintenance again but this time select 'Analyse and Optimise' from the menu.

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



SYSTEM MONITOR

HARDINFO 8 Free

www.usro.net

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.x/10 File size: 29.7MB

HARDINFO provides detailed data about your PC's hardware and operating system, including the model and manufacturer of your CPU, motherboard and RAM, and which features are supported and enabled in the BIOS. If your system seems slow, use the software to benchmark its components. The latest version is 64-bit only (for 32-bit PCs, use an older edition) and is optimised for Windows 10. The interface now supports large monitors at high resolutions, and includes many more tools.



IMAGE EDITOR

A Sharper Scaling

a-sharper-scaling.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.x/10

File size: 628KB

A Sharper Scaling does a similar job to Reshade Image Enlarger (see Issue 407's Best Free Software). It enlarges photos but avoids the usual problems of blurring, loss of sharpness and jagged edges. A Sharper Scaling does an excellent job and has a very straightforward interface reminiscent of the best mobile apps. You just import your image, then simply choose the size and scale you require.



WEB TRACKER

World Route

www.softperfect.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.x/10

File size: 7.8MB

This intriguing tool shows the route of your web traffic. Enter a destination domain or IP address in the search box and hit Enter. World Route will list the IP addresses and locations of the hops taken to get to the destination, and plot it on a map, showing the total distance, number of hops and round-trip time. The Windows program (installer and portable versions) is free; the paid-for Mac version costs \$9.99 (around £8).

New Windows Apps

One Tap Reminders

bit.lv/1tap409

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 10.8MB

This app lets you quickly create and view reminders. You can pin them to the Start menu, and create and customise your own templates. There are categories for different reminder groups.



Real Kakuro

bit.ly/kakuro409

Min requirements: Windows 8.x/10

File size: 16.9MB

Kakuro is a crossword with numbers instead of letters. It offers 2,000 games in five different difficulty levels. An in-app purchase removes ads

from the game.



Singuler: Duplicate Removal Tool

bit.ly/singuler409

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 3.9MB

If your PC has accumulated a lot of duplicate files, use Singuler to find and remove them, freeing up space in the process. It's easy to preview files, then choose which to delete.



Best Free Software

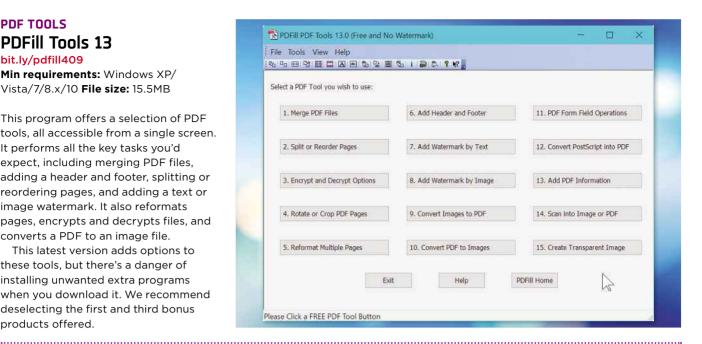
PDF TOOLS **PDFill Tools 13**

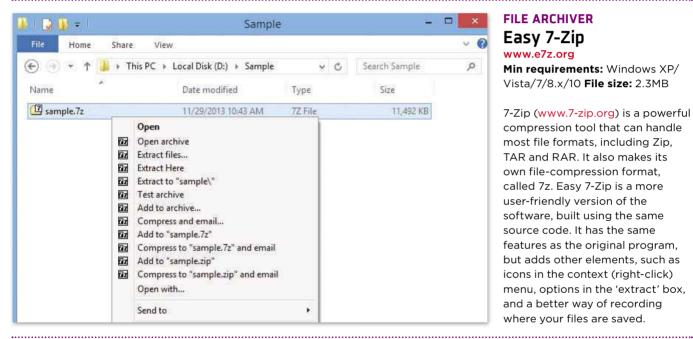
bit.lv/pdfill409

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

This program offers a selection of PDF tools, all accessible from a single screen. It performs all the key tasks you'd expect, including merging PDF files, adding a header and footer, splitting or reordering pages, and adding a text or image watermark. It also reformats pages, encrypts and decrypts files, and converts a PDF to an image file.

This latest version adds options to these tools, but there's a danger of installing unwanted extra programs when you download it. We recommend deselecting the first and third bonus products offered.





FILE ARCHIVER Easy 7-Zip

www.e7z.org

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8.x/10 File size: 2.3MB

7-Zip (www.7-zip.org) is a powerful compression tool that can handle most file formats, including Zip, TAR and RAR. It also makes its own file-compression format, called 7z. Easy 7-Zip is a more user-friendly version of the software, built using the same source code. It has the same features as the original program, but adds other elements, such as icons in the context (right-click) menu, options in the 'extract' box, and a better way of recording where your files are saved.

DUPLICATE FINDER

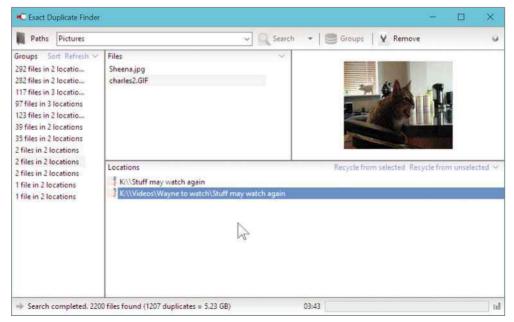
Exact Duplicate Finder

bit.ly/edf409

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.x/10 File size: 162KB

This tiny program looks for duplicate content in your hard drives. To use it, choose the locations to search, then select what you want to look for - all files, audio files, videos, pictures, documents, archives, and so on. Click Search and it will go to work. When it has finished, it will present you with its results, grouped by where they were found on your computer.

You can preview each file and switch between folders to compare them.







GAME Vestige

bit.ly/vest409

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8.x/10. or macOS

File size: 131MB

The aim of this 3D walking simulator is simply to explore some (impressively designed) ruins. It's very atmospheric, with excellent sound effects, although there's not much to actually do besides wander around and enjoy the abandoned architecture. Use Z to move forward, S to move backwards, Space to jump and the mouse to steer.

Don't install...

Malwarebytes StartUpLité

bit.ly/mwb409

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 199KR

We love Malwarebytes Anti-Malware but our love doesn't carry across to StartUpLite. Although it's small and portable, which is a good thing, StartUpLite failed to find all the start-up problems we had installed on our test PC. This is because it concentrates solely on malware and skips the start-up programs that are slowing down your PC.



...Install this instead

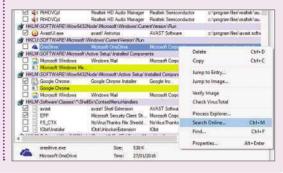
Autoruns

bit.ly/auto409

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

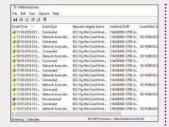
File size: 1.2MB

Autoruns is widely recognised as the classic, essential start-up manager but its interface can appear daunting. Don't let this put you off. though, because Autoruns is brilliant at sniffing out unnecessary software that starts with your PC. Launch the software and it will list everything that's running in Windows. Any programs that start automatically are marked with a tick in the Autorun column. Simply untick the box to stop that program launching when you boot up your PC. As you reduce the number of programs, your PC will start faster.





UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



SYSTEM TOOL

WifiHistorvView

www.nirsoft.net

Min requirements:

Windows Vista/7/8.x/10

File size: 69.5KB

This program provides detailed information about the history of connections made by your computer to Wi-Fi networks. The latest version of WiFiHistoryView adds the option to connect multiple remote computers through the 'Advanced Options' window and adds a useful 'Computer Name' column.



IMAGE MANAGER

ImBatch 5.1

www.highmotionsoftware com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8.x/10

File size: 14.5MB ImBatch is an imageprocessing tool that lets you make multiple changes (crop, resize, rotate and more) to whole batches of photos in one go by queuing up tasks. This latest release introduces the option to create an animated GIF and adds

support for file and image

attributes in photo tags.



DISC-AUTHORING SOFTWARE

BurnAware Free 9.5

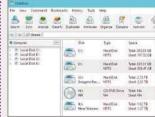
www.burnaware.com

Min requirements: Windows

XP/Vista/7/8.x/10

File size: 9.4MB

BurnAware Free can write to all types of optical disc, including Blu-Ray. This updated version of the disc-authoring tool adds an option to select CDs or DVDs to burn in Span Disc, and asks you whether to save a compilation before exiting. Be sure to decline the bundled junk when installing.



HARD-DISK MANAGER

DiskBoss 7.3 www.diskboss.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/

Vista/7/8.x/10

your hard drive.

File size: 6.5MB DiskBoss offers a wide selection of tools to improve the performance of your hard drive. This latest release adds the ability to search for files created, modified or accessed during a specific period of time. It also performs better analysis of

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



Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

Delete browsing history in one quick click

There are numerous ways to remove a website from your browsing history, which is useful if you're shopping for a surprise birthday present. However, most of these methods mean digging deep into your browser's settings or using a third-party program to clean up traces you've left behind.

Forget That Page (bit.ly/forget409) is a free Chrome extension that lets you instantly delete from your history any web page you happen to be viewing at the time. It wipes cookies, too, and does it all in a single click. A message confirming the deletion appears under the extension's broom icon to the right of the address bar (see screen grab).

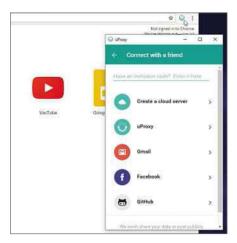
Forget That Page isn't exactly a military-grade solution. Anyone poking their nose into Chrome's cache will still be able to find traces of pages you erased. But for everyday use, it provides a quick and easy way to keep your browsing history free of unwanted sites.



Route your connection through friends' PCs

UProxy (bit.ly/uproxy409) is a proxy server with a social-networking twist: it lets friends route their web connection through each other's computers. You can either create your own private server and share this with your friends, or use a friend's computer as a proxy server to connect securely to the web. You can invite your friends to uProxy via Facebook, GitHub or Gmail.

Free to install and use, uProxy is currently in beta, but it works fine. You need to install two components in Chrome – an extension and an app – and you'll be prompted to install one when you install the other.



The one drawback is that creating your own private server requires a DigitalOcean account, which currently costs \$10 (about £9) per month. Connecting to someone else's server is completely free, however.

Block distractions and get more done

Anyone who reads *Web User* will know just how many opportunities for distraction there are online. Few of us have the self-discipline required to



resist chatting with friends, watching hilarious videos of cats, playing games or just idly browsing through our favourite sites – especially when there's work to be done!

Focus (bit.ly/focus409) is a Chrome extension that not only lets you temporarily block distracting websites, but also presents you with a list of what you should be doing instead. You can add any site likely to divert your attention and build a to-do list of tasks that need your attention, then click the

Focus button for an uninterrupted 25-minute burst of pure productivity.

Add your face to screen-capture videos

It's much better to use images rather than words when trying to explain a problem you're having with your PC, and recording a screen-capture video is one of the best ways to do this. The extension ViewedIt (https://viewedit.com) lets you also add a webcam video of your face so you can explain what's happening on screen. Once you've recorded your video, you can paste a link to it in an email (this works best in Gmail). When people watch your videos, you'll receive emails telling you how long they watched it for, and which bits they skipped and re-watched.





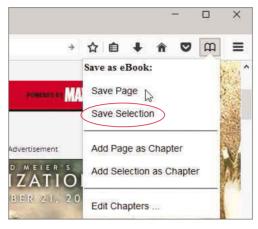
This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more



FIREFOX

Turn websites into ebooks

Save As eBook (bit.ly/ebook409) is an ingenious extension that turns a website into a book, which you can then read on your tablet, phone or e-reader. Navigate to a website you want to convert, then click the book icon on the toolbar to export either selected text or the entire page. If you want to save multiple web pages, you can add each one as a chapter, then select Edit Chapters from the Save As eBook menu to name and organise your book. Exported ebooks are saved in



your Downloads folder as EPUB files, which are compatible with many popular e-readers and apps, including Google Play Books and Apple's iBooks.

The developers have flagged up this extension as experimental, so you may encounter the occasional glitch. There's definitely room for improvement, but we were able to create and export ebooks from all the sites we tested, and the ability to build chapters is a welcome feature. The tool works best when you manually select the text you want and choose Save Selection (see screen grab), rather than exporting the entire web page using Save Page, which can include unwanted clutter.

See URLs in your tabs

We love it when an extension's name sums up its function as perfectly as 'URL in Titlebar' (bit.ly/titlebar409). We barely need to explain what it does, but we've got some space to fill, so here goes: it displays the current web page's



URL on the titlebar of its tab. Why would you need that? Well, it can come in handy when, for example, different pages on a website have been given the same title, making it difficult to establish which tab titlebar refers to which page. The extension ignores http/https and

other prefixes that might otherwise get in the way.

Instantly scroll to the top of a page

One of the great things about using Safari to browse the web on an iPhone or iPad is that a quick tap at the top of the screen instantly scrolls you back to the top of the page. It's a fantastic feature that doesn't seem to have made its way to Desktop browsers yet. But there is a way to replicate it in Firefox using a new, free add-on called tabScrollTop (bit.ly/ scroll409). With the extension installed, a quick double-click on the tab's titlebar will instantly scroll the page to the top. Brilliantly simple.



OTHER BROWSERS

Data-sharing apps named and shamed Opera has added a privacy mode to Opera Max (bit.ly/omax409), its Android app that lets you monitor your data usage. It shows you "which apps are bad and which apps are good" when it comes to sharing your data with other companies, and will name and shame those it says are tracking you for "selfish reasons" (making money, presumably). You can see a timeline of what the apps are up to behind your back, then block the worst culprits. Opera explains more on its blog (bit.ly/ operablog409), which includes a little dig at Apple.





You may already be aware that the brilliant new browser Vivaldi supports Chrome extensions, but did you know it also lets you install Opera add-ons? To do so, just head to Opera's add-on store (bit.ly/addons409) in Vivaldi and locate an extension you want. The 'Add to Opera' button will be greyed out, because you're not using Opera, but click it, then click 'get it anyway' to download it. In File Explorer, change the file's extension from '.nex' to '.crx', then open vivaldi://extensions, drag your file into the browser window and click 'Add extension'.





Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight

MESSAGING

Signal Private Messenger

bit.ly/signaldroid409 bit.ly/signalios409

Min requirements: Android 2.3, iOS 8 Size: 15MB (Android), 36.6MB (iOS)

Signal Private Messenger is the most successful app you've never heard of Its open-source code now provides end-to-end encryption (E2EE) in WhatsApp and Google Allo, so it's the privacy power behind two thrones. But neither of these big names can match Signal's own app,

which sees nothing, stores nothing and

knows the true meaning of 'delete'. Its latest version even lets you impose a self-destruct time limit on every message, photo, video and document you send and receive.

This 'Disappearing messages' feature is a masterstroke. Before or during a conversation, select a time limit - from five seconds to one week - and all messages and attachments sent and received in that conversation will be deleted without a trace at the time limit. A short time limit is best for sensitive information you don't want passing eyes to see. It's strangely addictive, like Snapchat for grown-ups.

You don't need (and indeed can't have) a Signal account - all you need is a phone number. Signal is so securityconscious it won't let you take a screenshot by default, but this is easy to change in Settings (which is just as well, or we'd have no Mini Workshop).

It doesn't back up any messages or photos to the cloud and if you're using 'Disappearing messages', they're not saved on your device, either. However you can manually save a time-limited photo or attachment with one tap,

as long as you tap it before it disappears. You can also copy time-limited messages to your clipboard before they're deleted.

Security features aside, Signal is a really fast, lightweight and easy-to-use messaging app, with free calls (also encrypted) and an in-app camera with video support. You can now use Signal in your browser too,

although this currently only works with Chrome (bit.ly/ signalchrome409).



Our rating





Disappearing messages

Add attachment

Conversation settings

Reset secure session

All images

Q W E R T Y U I O P

ASDFGHJKL

ZXCVBNM

English (UK)

MINI WORKSHOP

Send disappearing messages using Signal Private Messenger

Install and launch Signal. Enter your mobile phone number and then follow the prompts to verify it. This takes a few seconds. Signal then opens on its default screen. To start a conversation with a contact who has Signal installed, tap the pencil icon. 11 To continue an ongoing conversation, tap it. 🔼



To set a time-limit for messages in a conversation, open the conversation, tap the three-dot menu icon and then tap 'Disappearing messages'. By default, the time limit is set to Off. 11 Swipe up to scroll through several time limits, including '5 seconds', 2 '6 hours' and '1 week'. To select one, stop scrolling and then tap OK. 3

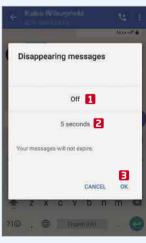


Now, every message, photo and other attachment you send or receive will delete after the time limit. Items due to self-destruct have an egg timer icon. 11 To save a time-limited photo, tap it and then tap the floppy disk icon. To change the time limit, tap the stopwatch. 2 Any changes are logged in the conversation. **3**





This message will self destruct in one minute



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

DRIVING

AutoBud theautobud .com

Min requirements: Android 4.0.3. iOS8

Size: 29MB (Android), 73.6MB (iOS)

AutoBud is like the excellent

fitness app Strava (www.strava.com), but for cars. It records your activity in real time, then creates maps and graphs to illustrate statistics including distance, altitude and average and top speed. You can see previous routes mapped out with detailed information, and get personalised tips to improve your driving, save money on petrol and even keep your car in

good nick. It's a simple idea, beautifully executed, and should help you become a better driver.



Our rating



COMEDY

NEW

0

Laugh.lv bit.ly/laugh409

requirements: Android 41 iOS8

Size: 25MB (Android), 48.4MB (iOS)

This new radiostreaming app lets you listen

to a wealth of stand-up comedy. We found the app rather slow but its content is superb, with new and classic routines by comedians ranging from the legendary (Richard Pryor, George Carlin) and the contemporary (Sarah Silverman, Ricky Gervais) to new emerging comics. New routines are added regularly and it's free to listen, but if you want to remove adverts and filter out the swearing, you'll need to stump up £3 per month for a subscription.

> (m) **(b)**

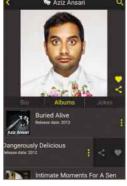
C listen to page

■ desktop mode

g private browsing

Our rating

Enter Passcode



NEWS

NEW

The Telegraph

www.telegraph .co.uk/apps/

requirements: Android 4.1.

iOS 9 Size: 5.7MB (Android), 36.3MB (iOS)

Personalisation



is front-page news in the apps world, and now The Telegraph is joining in where BBC News blazed a trail and News Pro followed (see App of the Fortnight, Issue 408). This redesigned app is similar to the BBC's, with a Top Stories channel, a customisable menu you can fill with topics, heavy emphasis on photos and videos, and breaking news delivered to your lock screen. Content is free, and there's plenty of it -

Our rating

including the usual click-

bait 'sponsored' articles.



PRIVACY

Surfy Browser

outcoder.com/apps/surfy

Min requirements: Android 4.4, Windows Phone 8, Windows 10 Mobile Size: Varies with device (Android), 8.29MB-9.13MB (Windows)

This password-protected mobile browser started life as a customisable alternative to Internet Explorer on Windows Phone. Its "mum and dad development team", Daniel and

Katka Vaughan, soon realised users valued privacy above all else, so Surfy now boasts a passcode lock

that lets you set a PIN for locking individual bookmarks or for saving a browsing session as a lockable tile. There's also an incognito mode, offline HTML5 video, a reading mode that strips out clutter from web pages and a text-to-speech engine that can read one page while you look at a different page. Surfy's new Android version is described on its Google Play Store page as "unreleased" - we had no trouble installing and running it, but be aware there may be glitches. The updated Windows Phone and Windows Mobile apps are stable releases.



UPDATED

0

Our rating



GET THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID

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



Discover how to:

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

Order it now from Amazon at bit.ly/androidbook2016

Best Free Apps

EDUCATION

LowRes Coder

bit.ly/lowres409 Min requirements:

Size: 5.5MB

iOS 8

Learning to write programs and computer games



in BASIC is great fun using the newly stable version of this nostalgic app. Simply write your code on a retro screen reminiscent of an Eighties CRT monitor, and then see if it works using an 8-bit emulator that brings new meaning to the word 'blocky'. You can also play games and use simple programs created by other LowRes users. The free version of LowRes Coder lets you write and share chunks of code up to 24 lines long, which is plenty for learning the ropes. You can test your code as much as you want for free, and play as many other users' games as you can handle.

Our rating



SCREEN SHARING

ScreenMeet

www.screenmeet.com

Min requirements: Android 5, iOS 8 Size: 8MB (Android), 37.7MB (iOS)

View your phone's photos and videos on your PC's monitor, using your PC browser and this easy-to-use app that's now available on Android as well as iOS. ScreenMeet isn't quite a mirroring app in the mould of Casto (see Issue 408) - it doesn't let you control your phone or tablet from your PC and you can't mirror other apps.



Instead, it limits you to mirroring its own in-app document browser and photo album, and allows streaming

from your device's camera. But while its functions are limited, it's quick and easy and works with your PC's existing browser, so you don't have to install any software.



Our rating



paperback

NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

HISTORY

Wrecks & Relics

bit.ly/wrecks409

Min requirements: Android 4 **Size:** 4.9MB **Price:** £2.59

Find and explore real plane wrecks and old aircraft in more than 12.000 locations worldwide, using this wonderful new app for plane-spotters

and history buffs.

SYSTEM TOOL

Disko

bit.ly/disko409

Min requirements: Windows 10 Mobile

Size: 6.94MB Price: £7.69

Find out exactly what's clogging up storage space on your Windows 10 phone, tablet or PC, then get rid of it quickly and completely, using this powerful new system-cleaning tool.



Sky Tripping

bit.ly/skytrip409

Min requirements: iOS 8,

also Apple TV

Size: 28.1MB **Price:** £2.29

Is it a travel app, a relaxation app or one for nature and photography fans?







Sky Tripping is all these things, with its stunning aerial footage of the Californian coast.

WORD GAME

Paperback

bit.ly/paperdroid409 bit.lv/paperios409

Min requirements: iOS 5.1.1

Size: 41MB (Android),

55.7MB (iOS)

Price: £3.59 (Android), £2.99 (iOS)

Play at writing pulp-fiction novels by completing words in this beautifully designed Scrabble-style game that casts you as an author trying to finish your book. New to Android and updated for iOS.

PHOTOS

Photomyne Album Scanner

www.photomvne.com

Min requirements: Android 5,

iOS 8

Size: 48MB (Android),

83.9MB (iOS)

Price: 69p (Android, at time of

writing), £3.99 (iOS)

This app lets you quickly digitise entire photo albums. Scan a page of multiple photos in one go, then let Photomyne automatically crop each scan into separate photos.



Wrecks & Relics





Disko





Photomyne Album Scanner





Best New TV Apps & Hardware

VIDEO

Facebook

bit.ly/facebook409

Min requirements: iOS 8 and Apple TV

or Chromecast Size: 278MB



Facebook doesn't make an app for Apple TV or Chromecast - and now it doesn't need to, because vou can stream video from Facebook on vour iPad or iPhone to the big-screen comfort of

your television. It's very easy to use. Open a video in the Facebook app on your phone or tablet, then tap the TV icon in the top-right corner. Select your set-top service (AirPlay for Apple TV, for example), and the video will be beamed over your Wi-Fi to the big screen. This works with all videos, including live video as well as clips uploaded by friends and family. Comments and likes are displayed by default, but you can switch to fullscreen with one tap. Available now on iOS; coming soon to Android.

MUSIC

Shazam

www.shazam.com/apps

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 8, Windows Phone 8.1,

Windows 10 Mobile

Size: Varies with device (Android.

Windows): 138MB (iOS)

Video finally comes to Shazam, and it works a treat. This wonderful songidentifying app has been in business for 17 years - a real "keeper" in these fickle digital times. The app is still brilliant at identifying whatever song your phone or tablet can hear, and is ideal for finding out what's playing over the credits of a film or while you're browsing in a shop. Now, along with information including the song's title and artist. Shazam gives you the music video too, thanks to a new partnership with video



platform Vadio (www.vadio. com). You're also offered related videos but. unlike YouTube's annoying AutoPlay feature, they don't play

FILM & TV

Channels 2.0

getchannels.com/tv

Min requirements: Apple TV and HDHomeRun TV tuner

Size: 47.4MB



Channels sets you free from subscriptions by letting you stream free-to-air channels on your television using Apple TV and a tuner device. This requires an up-front investment of £18.99 for the app, plus £99.99 for an HDHomeRun TV tuner (bit.ly/hdhome409), but that's similar to what you'd pay for a good Freeview box. Channels then turns free-to-air TV into a Netflixstyle experience, with a media player that lets you pause live TV using a 90-minute buffer, and a great-looking EPG that's much faster than the sluggish interface offered by subscription services. Version 2.0 has been redesigned with a TV guide in keeping with the iOS app, which lets you stream TV on your iPhone and iPad (bit.ly/ automatically. channelsios409; £10.99).

X Don't install...

bit.ly/yelo409

Get instant translations by talking to your wrist. Just say a word or phrase to your Apple Watch - or, more likely, your iPhone or iPad -



and Yelo will say it back in the language of your choice. It sounds brilliant, and would be if you weren't constantly distracted by the ticking time-bomb that is 'auto-renewal'. After seven days with this "free" new app, you're automatically charged £2.79 per month. Quelle rip-off!

...Install this instead

Google Translate

bit.ly/translatedroid409 bit.ly/translateios409

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 8

Size: Varies with device (Android), 56.3MB (iOS)

Google really has cornered le marché here. Talk to your device and get an instant translation read out loud? Yep. Type a word or phrase and get it translated with one tap? Of course, in no fewer than 103 languages. Take photos of text and find out what it means? Yes, oui, si and tha (that's Scots

Gaelic, translated by Google). This outstanding tool can also translate your scribbled handwriting, translate inside other apps, save favourite translations in your personal phrase book and translate between 52 languages when you've got no internet connection. Save that £2.79 for a beer (bier, bière, beoir...)







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

The US loses 'control' of the web

For the first 20 years of the internet's life the US decided how web addresses work. But not any more. David Crookes considers whether that's a good thing



What's happened?

The US has 'surrendered' control of the internet. Sort of. Although we generally see the internet as a free and open network that isn't owned by any one person or entity, some countries have been able to exert control over certain aspects of it. The US government, for example, has long overseen the Domain Name System (DNS), which plays a vital role in managing how web addresses work. But on 1 October, America relinguished control, placing DNS fully in the hands of the independent organisation ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, www.icann.org). This ends the US's long-standing role as the symbolic overseer of the world wide web.

Why is this significant?

To understand the implications, it's worth looking at how the web works. When you type a domain name such as www.bbc .co.uk into a browser, your computer doesn't just pluck the website from the air and display it on your screen. As the request travels around the connected

computers which make up the internet. the URL is translated into a series of numbers that is used to find the correct server for the site you want. But in order to do this, there has to be a digital directory that matches the words of the URL to the numerical IP address. It's this huge master file that the US has controlled for the past 20 years. As you can imagine, it's a pretty crucial component of the internet.

So how did the US come to control it?

The list - which includes all domain suffixes such as .com, .org and .net ended up in the hands of the US Department of Commerce purely because the internet was developed in the United States. Their involvement dates back to the early days of the internet when an American computer scientist called Jon Postel began looking after the DNS in his role administering an organisation called the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA). In 1998, the year Postel died, the non-profit Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and

Numbers (ICANN) was set up with the job of overseeing any major changes to the internet and assigning domain names and IP address. The US made a decision to pass over control of the IANA to ICANN but, at the same time, it ensured that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration - which is part of the Department of Commerce would retain a final say over IANA's role and actions

What kind of power did this give to the US?

In principle, controlling what is effectively the web's address book gave the US the power to censor the internet. With America having the final say on how the DNS was controlled, it could, if it wished, have used that power to remove an entire domain block from existence - all .org sites, for example. Similarly, it could have looked to pull particular sites from the web or block the creation of some domains. In reality, the US rarely got involved in such matters but that's not to say it always stood aside. It tried to prevent ICANN from setting up an .xxx domain for pornography in 2005, for instance, although this went ahead anyway six years later.

So what has the US actually done with the DNS?

America has allowed the IANA contract with ICANN to lapse, allowing full control to pass to ICANN. It has done this safe in the knowledge that the organisation is independent, albeit run with the backing of companies, governments and academics across the world. With so many different international bodies managing the web, the US can no longer step in and pull the plug, or dictate terms.



On 1 October, the US handed over full control of the DNS to ICANN

Crucially, it also ensures that no single country controls the DNS. Most of the world will hope it stays that way.

Will I see anv difference online?

Nope. In having the IANA contract since 1998. ICANN was already running the DNS and it will continue to do just that. Your favourite websites will load just as before.

Could another government take it over?

This has been a major concern in the US ever since the Department of Commerce announced its intention, in March 2014, to hand the IANA to ICANN. It's why the US said that it would hand over control only if ICANN implemented reforms to prevent the internet from falling into the hands of another government or a commercial organisation. ICANN agreed to this and the move went ahead. Yet there has still been a lot of opposition to the decision, with some figures accusing President Obama of "surrendering" control of the internet. Republican senator Ted Cruz was among those looking to block the transfer. He published on YouTube a video titled 'We Must Keep the Internet Free': www.snipca.com/22140.

What was his problem?

He was worried that America's decision to step back leaves the door open for authoritarian countries to gain more control of the internet. At a congressional hearing on 14 September, Cruz said: "Imagine an internet run like many Middle Eastern countries that punish what they deem to be blasphemy. Or imagine an internet run like China or Russia that



No country censors the internet more than North Korea



Republican senator Ted Cruz posted an anti-ICANN video on YouTube

punishes and incarcerates those who engage in political dissent." ICANN says these fears are entirely unfounded because it doesn't have the remit or ability to regulate content on the internet.

But will China and Russia try any funny business?

Understandably, neither country was happy about the US controlling DNS, and it's possible they will look to exert a greater influence. Many other countries, including Turkey, Iran and North Korea, don't allow full access to the web and they could seek to block the creation of domains in the future. But, diplomatically, the US has been seen to do the right thing, ensuring such an important part of the web is now under no single government's control.

Does everyone agree that ICANN should be in charge?

No. Countries including China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Egypt wanted control of the DNS to be handed to the United Nations' International Telecommunications Union (www.itu.int) The US, UK, Canada and Australia objected to this because it would mean governments having too much influence. By backing a fully independent ICANN. the US can claim that countries wanting a different organisation put in control are against a free and open internet.

All's good with the world, then?

Not quite. ICANN will still be based on Waterfront Drive in Los Angeles, California, and Iran, Brazil and Argentina are among those pushing for it to be moved outside the US. Where it goes if indeed it does leave the US - will be hotly contested.



Many countries want DNS control handed to the United Nations' International Telecommunications Union

WHO HOLDS ICANN TO ACCOUNT?

Since ICANN is incorporated under the law of the State of California, it will still remain accountable to the laws of the United States. This means it can be taken to court, and that its directors must uphold their duties under corporation law. But as an international organisation, it is not bound by the First Amendment of the US constitution, which defends freedom of speech.

The Internet Governance Coalition (internetgovernancecoalition.com), which comprises major US tech companies including Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Disney, will be watching the situation closely.



The Internet Governance Coalition, which includes Google and Microsoft, will keep a close eye on ICANN

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It said that handing control to ICANN "embodies the very nature of the open internet we experience today". But it also urged caution, saying that "there is still much work that needs to be done to ensure the accountability and transparency of ICANN".

Beat EVERY Web

COVER FEATURE

Websites seem to take a perverse pleasure in blocking what you can see and do online. **Wayne Williams** is having none of that. Here, he explains how to beat unreasonable restrictions

here's nothing more frustrating than coming up against a brick wall when you're browsing the web. We've all been faced with videos "unavailable in your country", ISPs blocking websites and warnings that "your IP address has been banned". Sadly, this is becoming increasingly common as web companies decide exactly what we can and can't access online. In this feature, we reveal how to beat unfair blocks so you can do whatever

you want (within reason!) on the web.

Over the following six pages, we'll show you how to access sites blocked by your ISP, watch your favourite iPlayer programmes from abroad, download apps not yet available in your country, overcome geographical video restrictions, and more. We'll also show you how you can get locked forum and social-media accounts reinstated, and read news stories that Google has removed links to.



BEAT WEBSITE BLOCKS

Access banned download sites

From time to time, you might find Chrome and Firefox blocking access to popular torrenting sites. This happens when the site in question gets flagged as hosting potentially harmful programs or is branded as a "deceptive site" that may steal user information. This is a regular occurrence – access to The Pirate Bay, for example, was blocked as recently as the first week in October.

Google's Safe Browsing technology is designed to keep you safe on the web, and is used in Chrome, Firefox and other browsers. When it decrees a website to be unsafe, it will display a red warning page and block access to that site.

ISPs are also blocking download sites, including KickassTorrents and RapidMoviez, following court rulings in favour of the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) and the Motion Picture Association (MPA).

How to beat the block

A browser block is usually only a temporary inconvenience. Wait a couple of days and access should resume as normal, although you can get around the problem at any time. Firefox users should click 'Ignore this warning' to access the site (see screen grab, below), while Chrome users should click Details, then 'Visit this site'. Of course, it's possible the site in question has been blocked for legitimate reasons – malware in adverts is usually the cause – so always take precautions when bypassing the warning.

To beat an ISP block, try visiting the secure HTTPS version of a site - https://thepiratebay.org rather than http://thepiratebay.org, for example. If that doesn't work, use a VPN to make it look as if you're browsing from outside the UK.

Use video-conversion sites

The video-conversion site YouTubeMP3-org (www.youtube-mp3.org) isn't currently blocked, but record labels are seeking a court order that will effectively put it out of business (read more at bit.ly/tube409). The site, which converts YouTube videos into MP3 files and which reportedly has over 60 million users every month, is accused of four counts of copyright infringement (direct, contributory, vicarious and inducement), as well as "circumvention of technological measures", which means breaking YouTube's rules on copyright.

The world's biggest record labels, including Universal, Sony and Warner Bros, are behind the lawsuit, which is seeking \$150,000 in compensation for every alleged act of piracy. It's asking a federal court in Los Angeles to stop webhosting companies and online advertisers "facilitating" access to the site.

Now to beat the block

You can continue to use YouTubeMP3-org at the moment, but it's probably only a matter of time before the lawsuit has an effect. If it is blocked, you can try

FullRip.net (www.fullrip. net, see screen grab, right), which lets you choose the quality of the MP3 audio (from 32kbps to 256kbps) and add ID3 tags to the track (such as song title, artist, genre, album, year, and track number).

other sites, such



If YouTubeMP3-org is blocked, try FullRip.net instead

Unblock Sky's 'adult content' ban

Sky's 'Broadband Shield' automatically blocks adult content for all new

customers, as a result of proposals in the UK government's Digital Economy Bill. This block is going to be expanded to existing Sky customers in the coming months.

Sky Broadband is among the first ISPs in the UK to implement a porn-filtering

system. The company says it will be "automatically switched on the moment a new customer activates their Sky Broadband".

It's hard to question the motives of Sky and the Government because protecting children from online pornography is vital. But Sky's filters are overkill, and have also blocked some online games, dating sites and file-sharing services.



The Dirate Bay

Click 'Ignore this warning' to bypass Firefox's block on sites such as The Pirate Bay

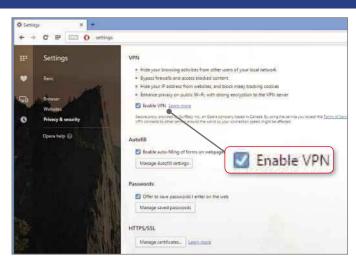
How to beat the block

The first time you try to visit a restricted site, you'll be given the option to amend or disable Shield's settings (see screen grab on next page). You can also customise these on the My Sky site (bit.ly/mysky409).

Alternatively, you can get around the block by using a VPN such as TunnelBear (www.tunnelbear.com) which was recently updated with a new look (see Workshop 4, Issue 408) and now has the ability to prioritise your favourite networks.



If Sky's Broadband Shield blocks a site you want to visit, click the 'Change your settings' button



Tick Opera's Enable VPN to watch TV shows blocked in the UK

Watch blocked TV in the UK

When you try to watch a video in the UK, you may sometimes receive a message stating "We're sorry. This video is not available in your region". You'll see this if, for example, you want to watch the pilot episode of HBO's new sci-fi series Westworld (bit.ly/west409). The broadcaster or the show's creators enforce this restriction, usually because they don't have the rights to show the content outside of their home country (often the US for a lot of current TV that's worth watching). Interestingly,

Read BBC news that Google blocks

A European Court of Justice ruling in 2014 allows EU citizens to request that Google removes search results that link to stories which can be deemed "inadequate, irrelevant, or no longer relevant" (Google extended it to include non-EU European countries, such as Norway). Among the stories that Google removes from its search results are ones from BBC News.

Google decides whether or not to remove search results, and it says that it rejects more requests than it complies with. It's important to point out that the European Court of Justice ruling only requires Google to remove links to stories. The stories themselves aren't touched - they just become harder for people

How to beat the block

In a move the BBC says is designed to maintain the integrity of its online archives - which are "a matter of historic public record" - the corporation has started publishing links to the stories from its news site that have been removed from Google's search results. You can see all of them up to June 2016 at bit.ly/bbcnews409.



The BBC archives every news story that Google blocks, so you can read them by clicking a link

it's often songs in the soundtrack that are the problem, not the actual video.

How to beat the block

As always, a VPN is the easiest solution. The latest version of the Opera browser (www.opera.com) comes with a built-in VPN that you can use to get around the restriction. It lets you pretend to be browsing from the USA, Canada, Germany, Netherlands or Singapore. To enable the feature, click the Menu button and open Settings. Click the 'Privacy & security' entry on the left, then tick Enable VPN (see screen grab above). A blue VPN badge appears in the address bar. Click this to change the location.

You might need to clear your browsing data before the video will play. Click the 'Clear browsing data' button under 'Privacy & security' and refresh the video page.

HOW MANY LINKS HAS GOOGLE REMOVED?

In its Transparency Report, Google reveals statistics on its removal of links to news stories. Go to bit.ly/ google409, click 'Requests to remove content' at the top, then click 'European privacy in search'. Here, you'll see that Google has received requests to remove links to 1.7 million URLs. Of those, almost 230,000 are from "individuals with relationships to the UK". This places us third, behind France (354,000) and Germany (303,000).

Google also shows which sites it has removed the most links to. Topping the list is Facebook, with over 14,500 removals. YouTube, Twitter, Google + and 192.com are all in the top 10.

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BEAT THE SOFTWARE BLOCKS

Download Kodi and other streaming services

The child-safety filters applied by ISPs are also reportedly being used to block videos in the popular (and highly controversial) Kodi media player (https://kodi.tv/download) and other similar programs. If videos don't load for you in Kodi, or its add-ons are failing to display lists, you might be a victim of these filters.

How to beat the block

These filters are often enabled by default for new customers, and might be active without you knowing about it. If you're a Virgin Media customer, log in at bit.ly/vmsafe409 and deactivate the Child Safe filter. BT Broadband customers can see instructions at bit.ly/btsafe409, while Sky customers should log into My Sky (bit.ly/mysky409).



Turning off Virgin's Child Safe filter may unblock Kodi content

Install mobile apps not launched in the UK

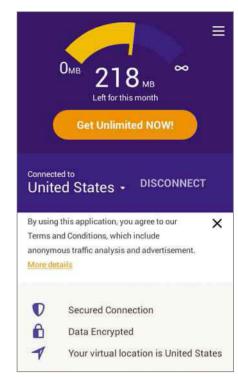
Developers don't always release new apps globally. Often they will test an app's popularity in one country before choosing to release it in others. This happened in July when Pokémon Go was launched first in the US, Australia and New Zealand, leaving Brits watching impatiently from afar as the craze took hold.

The developer or publisher might block an app because they don't have certain rights for it overseas. Or, as was the case with Pokémon Go, an app's popularity may place too much strain on its server. The solution is to stagger the release across the world, so the app works as intended.

How to beat the block

If you have an Android phone, you

could root it, although that carries some risks. Another option is to install Rocket VPN (bit.ly/rvpn409) to disguise your location. Launch the VPN and choose the country where the app you want is available. Google Play will be tied to your Google Account, and that will be linked to your home country, so you'll need to sign out and create



Use Rocket VPN on your Android device to get apps before they launch in the UK

a new Google Play account based in the country with the app you want. You need to enter your phone number for verification purposes, but the fact that it's a UK number won't matter.

Afterwards, go to Settings, Apps, Google Play Store and tap Storage. Clear the app cache, then tap Force Stop. Search Google for the app you want, then click the link to open it.

UNBLOCK YOURSELF FROM THE WEB

If you have been unfairly blocked from forums, social networks and other online services, 'unbanning' yourself can be difficult. What matters is how and why you ended up on the blacklist.

The first step is to report the problem. If, for example, Facebook has blocked you, take a look at the



information in the Help Centre (bit.ly/fbhelp409). You can fill out a form to lodge an appeal if you think your account was "disabled by mistake" (see screen grab right).

If Twitter has blocked you, follow the instructions in its help pages (bit.ly/twithelp409). To unblock a OneDrive account, visit bit.ly/odhelp409.

Some forums rely on IP address blacklists to block spammers and trolls, but these can be unreliable. You might find yourself being blocked through no fault of your own because your IP address has somehow ended up on the list. You can try getting



your IP address off the list by speaking to the forum owner. If that doesn't work, sign up or log in from a different IP address by either accessing the site from somewhere else – such as a café – or by using a VPN or proxy server.

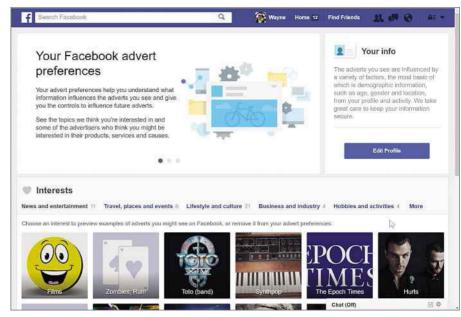
Make sure the new Google account is the one connected to Google Play, and you should be able to download the app.

Rocket VPN is available for iOS (bit.ly/ vpnios409), but it's harder to cheat Apple's system. You'll need to create a new Apple ID, and use a method of payment for the country you're choosing as your location (an iTunes gift card for that country will work). Changing your ID will wipe any existing subscriptions you might have through iOS.

Stop Facebook blocking ad blockers

If you use an ad blocker on Facebook, you may find it hasn't stopped you from seeing ads on the site recently. That's because the social network has started showing adverts that display even if you have ad-blocking software installed (infuriating Adblock Plus in the process).

Facebook's logic, apparently, is that it can't let ad-blocking renegades jeopardise the billions it makes from advertising. Well, that's what we think, anyway. What Facebook claims publicly is that it isn't about the money. Andrew Bosworth, vice president of ads and business platform at Facebook, said (presumably with a straight face): "This



Tweak your preferences on Facebook to restrict the type of adverts it shows

isn't something that we need to do for revenue, this is something that we really believe in".

So what exactly do they "believe" in? Showing adverts that are "better" and less "annoying and disruptive". Bless Facebook - it's acting in our best interests. How sweet.

How to beat the block

Adblock Plus (adblockplus.org) has been fighting back against Facebook's tactics, but this has resulted in a game of cat and mouse. Some days you won't see ads, some days you will. You can manage the type of adverts Facebook shows you by tweaking its new 'advert preferences' (bit.ly/fbads409).

Meanwhile, read Adblock Plus's blog for its take on what it calls a game of "ping pong" with Facebook: bit.ly/adblock409.

MICROSOFT BLOCKS CHROME 'FOR CHILDREN'

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Something strange happened in early September, a couple of weeks after the Windows 10 Anniversary Update (AU). The operating system appeared to be blocking some browsers, including Chrome and Firefox, forcing people to use Edge. Microsoft's replacement for Internet Explorer.

After many complaints, Microsoft confirmed it had tweaked its settings to

block default browsers whose web filtering, it claims, isn't strong enough to "keep your children safe". Microsoft didn't name the browsers it considered unsafe, just referring to them as "most commonly used". That can only mean Chrome and Firefox.

Some critics accused Microsoft of driving people toward Edge by exploiting parents' fears. Recent figures show that Edge's market share on computers is a puny 5% (Chrome dominates the pack on 54%), so Microsoft desperately needs to increase the numbers of people using its browser. One way it's doing

Empower and simplify your family's digital life

Add Chrome and Firefox to a whitelist in the Microsoft Family section to unblock them

this in the US is to "reward" users with credits to spend on Amazon and Skype, and in Starbucks.

You'll find the security settings in the Microsoft Family section of Windows 10 (see screen grab above). - it's called Family Safety in previous versions of the operating system: https://account.microsoft.com/ family. This provides useful tools for restricting what your children can do online, but we think the ban on non-Microsoft browsers is an overreaction. To unblock these browsers, you need to add them to a 'whitelist' within the settings.

Stop Netflix blocking VPNs

Netflix is spending a lot of money on original and exclusive content, but not all its films and TV shows are available in all the countries that Netflix serves. For example, Ricky Gervais's film David Brent: Life on the Road will be available exclusively on US Netflix early next year, but won't be shown in the UK, Ireland, Australia or New Zealand.

It's easy to beat such geographical restrictions using a VPN, but Netflix is cracking down on these services, blocking them where it can. The company doesn't suspend your account or penalise you in any way - it just recognises when VPN software is being used and prevents you from accessing its programmes.

How to beat the block

While Netflix will recognise and block most popular VPNs, such as CyberGhost (www.cyberghostvpn.com), NordVPN (nordvpn.com) and TunnelBear, it does so with varying degrees of success. Switching the location you use in your choice of VPN, even those mentioned above, may be enough to get around the block.



Netflix hasn't yet blocked ExpressVPN, but it's only free for 30 days

At the time of writing, ExpressVPN (www.expressvpn.com) is still working. It isn't free (it costs \$12.95 - about £10.52 - a month), but there is a 30-day money-back guarantee which lets you

try it without risk. This might be worth doing if you only want to use it to binge-watch a series on Netflix.

Don't forget to cancel your account before it starts charging you, though.

Stop BBC iPlayer blocking VPNs

Like Netflix, the BBC is clamping down on VPN use to stop users outside the UK from accessing its content for free. If you live overseas or are holidaying abroad, using a VPN to keep up with your favourite BBC programmes seems like the perfect solution, but it breaks the corporation's terms of service. Last year, the Global Web Index (www.globalwebindex.net) claimed that more than 60 million people watched iPlayer content for free outside the UK.

In an effort to control this, the BBC makes regular updates to iPlayer to block

VPNs. It reportedly plans to launch its own paid-for video service in America in the next few years, so it wants to limit which programmes can be watched beyond British shores.

How to beat the block

iPlayer doesn't block all VPN services, so you may be able to get around the restriction by trying a different tool, or connecting to another network. At the time of writing, TunnelBear still works with iPlayer and lets you watch BBC content overseas.

The BBC updates iPlayer to block VPNs, but it hasn't managed to thwart the excellent TunnelBear



Are you annoyed that Chrome and Firefox have blocked The Pirate Bay?

Nope, because I use Opera! I like its security, interface, speed and now the free built-in VPN. Other browsers just copy it.

Roger Whitcomb @milairpix

No because I don't use Firefox - full stop; and I don't use Chrome to access The Pirate Bay. I use Torrent Rover (www.torrentrover.com) and select whatever their best offering is

Garv Olsen

Just use another browser and access it that way. I use Opera, but I don't download anything illegal.

David Robinson

There are plenty of other ways to get it. Use Tor (www.torproject.org) or Opera, to name only two.

Steve Hamilton



NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 16 November 2016



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Best free video download and convert tools

If you want to watch every type of video on your mobile devices, both online and off, you'll need a tool that can download and convert them.

David Ludlow checks out six free conversion tools – including both downloadable software and online services



TEncoder Video Converter | bit.ly/te409 | ★★★★☆

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

WebUser GOLD AWARD

What we liked:

Free software for downloading and converting video comes in two main types, and each has its benefits and drawbacks. The first is

attractive and easy to use, but often comes bundled with adware and PUPs, which means you have to tread carefully during intsallation. Our Silver Award-winner Freemake Video Converter is a classic example of this. On the other side of the fence is TEncoder, which is completely clean and free of adware, but doesn't have Freemake's slick and simple-to-use interface.

TEncoder's main window has three tabs to choose from, depending on whether you want to convert video on your hard drive; download video from sites like YouTube; or extract the video from DVDs. There's a toolbar of buttons across the top of each tab, which control the list below of videos you want to covert or download.

Once you've built up your list, you have to delve into the settings to ensure the video output is correct for your device. TEncoder doesn't offer any help, so you need to research your device's requirements yourself if you don't

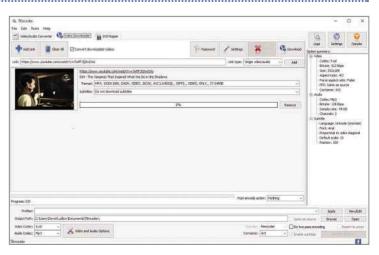
already know the resolution and format you need.

However, if you have all this information and know what you're doing, TEncoder gives you a lot of control over the final video, from the resolution and

frame rate, right down to where the file is saved. Advanced users will find lots to tweak and adapt, and the software doesn't doctor the videos in any way, by adding its own splash screens or watermarks, for example.

How it can be improved:

Some preset profiles for specific mobile devices would make TEncoder much easier to use. You can save your own profiles that you can load if you need to change formats for different devices, but you still need to know your device's settings in the first place.



The outdated interface is crying out for an overhaul - there are a lot of ugly drop-down menus and the few buttons that do have icons look old-fashioned.

OUR VERDICT

TEncoder isn't the easiest video downloader and converter to get to grips with, but it does both jobs well, is crammed with options and gets easier to use once you've set up the profiles for your devices. It's also completely free of adware.

Video-conversion tools

Freemake Video Converter | bit.ly/fm409 | ★★★★☆

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

What we liked:

Freemake Video Converter's friendly interface and integrated downloader make it incredibly easy to use. However, you first have to get past the installer, which is

crammed with adware and may even get blocked by your security software. We managed to install it cleanly, but you should be aware of the risks.

Once it's installed, though, it's very simple to use. Drop the videos you want to convert into the queue and add online video for downloading (from most sites including YouTube and Facebook) by copying the web address and clicking the Paste URL button. The editing tool can remove unwanted sections, such as ads.

When you're ready to convert, click one of the video profiles, such as AVI or Apple, then choose a device (such as an iPhone) or a fixed resolution. For the best compatibility, choose the 1080p AVI or iPad 3 Apple profiles. Click the Convert button to start the process. Online videos are downloaded before being converted.



You can also create photo slideshows by using the Photo option and turn MP3s into videos with funky graphical visualisations.

How it can be improved:

The YouTube downloader has no download-only option, just download and convert. With the free version, all converted videos start with a Freemake splash screen.

OUR VERDICT

Freemake Video Converter is very easy to use, but the bundled adware makes it tricky to install. You have to pay \$9 (around £7.50) to remove the splash screen from your videos.

BEST OF THE REST

Any Video Converter

bit.ly/avcf409

Any Video Converter comes with optional adware so, like Freemake,

you need to be careful durina installation. Our security software also blocked an unknown



file that ran while we were installing, although it continued to install without it. AVC has the best interface of all the software in this test, but we can't recommend it while it continues to get tangled up in security software.

HandBrake

www.handbrake.fr

HandBrake is a classic converter, designed to change video files into a format that's compatible with Apple devices. This isn't as limiting as it sounds because Apple video

formats work with virtually every other (non-Apple) device. HandBrake is easy to use and can



either convert a single file or add a folder's worth of videos in one go. There are video profiles for most Apple devices (iPhone, iPod and so on), but choose Regular if you don't want to resize the video. Click convert, and HandBrake completes the job quickly and efficiently.

Convertilla

convertilla.com

Convertilla is brilliant for basic video conversion. Just install the program (untick any option written in Russian in the wizard), select a file to convert, choose the output format and click Connect. For the best compatibility, we recommend the Gadget, Full HD (1080p) profile.

Convertilla can only work on one file at a time, but this keeps things simple.



CloudConvert | cloudconvert.com | ★★★★☆

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

What we liked:



If you don't want to install software on your computer, try the online conversion service CloudConvert. This simple site lets you upload your

video file and choose the output format. When the conversion's done, you just download the new file.

By default, CloudConvert keeps the output video at the same resolution as the original, although you can click the spanner icon and choose a different resolution if you know which device you want to play the converted video on.

You can also choose to remove ads or other content from a video, although you have to manually type in the start and end times of the unwanted section.

As well as video, CloudConvert can also handle documents, images and audio files, so you can convert practically any file type you like.

How it can be improved:

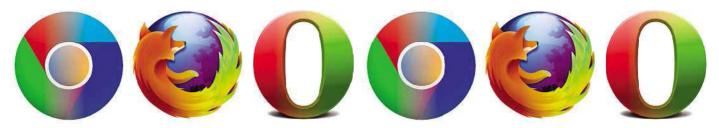
You are limited to 25 free conversion



minutes per day, which is to say that you have 25 minutes of processing time. The number of minutes a video file uses depends on its size, complexity and resolution. This makes CloudConvert better for smaller files unless you're prepared to pay for extra conversion minutes.

OUR VERDICT

CloudConvert is a handy tool for converting short video files (or other file types). It's straightforward to use and means you don't have to install any software on your PC.



Browse the web in different colours

You can choose from a rainbow of hues to apply to your browser and bring some colour to the web. **Daniel Booth** explains how

CHROME



Turn black into white, and white into black

Nothing quite prepares you for how different your favourite websites look when their colours are inverted. That's what happens when you install High Contrast (bit.ly/highcontrast409), an official Chrome extension from Google that turns black into white and vice versa (leaving photos untouched). Look at the BBC News site, for example (see screen grab, below): High Contrast makes it show white text on a black background, and turns the familiar red banner turquoise.



High Contrast turns black-on-white websites into white on black

The idea is to increase the contrast to make it easier to read web pages. To find the right contrast for you, and set it as the default, click the extension's logo at the top right (it's a grey-black circle), then try the options (yellow on black is particularly striking).

Change your Google homepage

Despite stating otherwise, High Contrast works on your Google 'new tab' page - the page showing thumbnails of your most visited sites. But its palette is limited to contrasting colours, omitting



Google's 'new tab' page can be made to reflect the colours of the season

soothing pinks and blues. More calming are the colours offered by the extension 'Color Change for Google' (bit.ly/color409). Click the paint-tin icon to open a rainbow of colours. We chose a suitably autumnal reddish brown (see screen grab, above).

A word of warning: if you don't want this extension to track your browsing, untick the 'Improve Your Experience' box when you install the extension.

Look after your eyes

One of the main reasons for changing the colour of a website is to minimise eye strain. There are many tools that have a 'night mode' which, like High Contrast, darken the screen and turn text white. Another option is to apply



Bathe websites in this soothing pale blue to ease eye strain

a pastel hue to the screen, which the extension 'Care your Eyes' calls its Reseda Mode. Install the extension (bit.ly/care409), click the sunglasses icon, then select Reseda Mode. This will turn your screen a pleasing shade of green - like the Reseda plant (commonly called mignonette) after which it is, presumably, named. There are five more colours available - click the small

arrow next to Reseda Mode to see the rest, including this light blue that looks rather fetching on the BBC News site (see screen grab, below left).

FIREFOX



Add themes to Firefox

There are 410,000 Firefox themes, which means you could try a different one every day until the year 3139. They all change the colour of the URL bar and the space around it, including any toolbars.

They're easy to install, too. Visit bit.ly/themes409, then choose a way to view them – by category, for example, or by how new they are. Click Most Popular and you'll see that the Dark Fox theme – downloaded 243,000 times – tops the list. It's stylish, but a bit gloomy for our tastes. Instead, we chose this cute 'Snoopy Nap' theme (bit.ly/snoopy409, see screen grab, opposite top).

What's really useful about Firefox's themes is that you don't need to download them to see what they will look like. Just hover your mouse over one then see the effect previewed at the top of your screen. Visit Mozilla's website for more help on using themes,

Browse the web in different colours



Snoopy is now sleeping peacefully on our PC (when we use Firefox, at least)

Apply a purple haze to Jimi Hendrix's site - or any site - using Color Transform

including instructions on how to remove them when you want a change: bit.ly/ foxythemes409.

Change text and link colour

Firefox's powers of decoration don't end with themes. It also lets you change the text, background and link colours. Click the three-line menu icon in the top-right corner and click the Preferences cog. Select the Content tab and click the Colours button (see screen grab, below), then change the colour for text and background, as well as for visited and unvisited links. To make these your default colours, select Always in the drop-down menu.





Open Firefox's Content section to change the colour of links and text

Hack a website's colour scheme

Finding the best colour scheme for a site (and for your eyes) involves trial and error. This works best when there are plenty of settings to tweak, as there are in the add-on Color Transform (like many web-colouring tools, it spells 'colour' the American way). Once you've installed it and found a site you want to experiment with, click the arrow next to the add-on's icon to reveal enough colour schemes to make the Dulux dog drool. In our example (see screen grab,

top right) we've applied a purple haze to the official Jimi Hendrix website.

The colour panel looks rather complicated, so take time to read the instructions on the add-on's page: bit.ly/transform409. This tells you, for example, that you can save your colour changes by clicking the panel's star and plus buttons.

OPERA

Make Opera look more 'Stylish'

Downloaded more than 620,000 times, Stylish is an extension that acts as a gateway to hundreds of website themes created by Opera users. Once you've installed it (bit.ly/stylish409), browse the web and click the 'S' icon when you're on a site you want to add a theme to. Click 'Find more styles for this

site', then click one you like. Finally, click the green 'Install with Stylish' button.

The more popular a website, the more themes it will have: there are 100 pages of themes for Google and Facebook, 85 for Twitter, 40 for Wikipedia and six for BBC News. Searching on Google feels like you're picking the brains of everyone on the planet, so we thought it was fitting to add the 'Our Earth' theme to the Google Search homepage (see screen grab, below).



Google takes over the Earth in this Opera

TURN YOUTUBE INTO A CINEMA

You'll have to supply the popcorn yourself, but 'Turn Off the Lights' does everything else to make watching YouTube a cinematic experience. Install the Chrome extension (bit.ly/turn409), then click the lightbulb icon to dim the web page so only the video stands out. It works on Facebook, Vimeo, Dailymotion and other video sites (visit www.turnoffthelights.com for more information).

To save yourself repeatedly clicking the lightbulb icon, turn on 'automatic dimming', which kicks in when you start watching a video. Right-click the icon, click Options, then tick the 'Automatically dim the background...' box (see screen grab, below). You can also select how soon after the video ends - up to 10 seconds - you want the background to return to normal.

'Turn Off the Lights' is also available for Firefox (bit.ly/foxlights409) and Opera (bit.ly/operalights409) and has been available since September for Edge, Microsoft's replacement for Internet Explorer: bit.ly/edgelights409.



Set 'Turn Off the Lights' to automatically dim a website's background when you

Take your free software with you

Saving your favourite software as portable apps to a USB means you can use them on any PC. Edward Munn rounds up the best ones

Take your favourite browser with you

Using Chrome's portable app (bit.ly/ pchrome409), rather than simply logging into your account in the Desktop version, is more secure because your browsing history and other elements will be kept on the USB stick and leave no trace on the PC. However, there are some drawbacks. For example, you can't move saved passwords - and some other settings from one PC to another, because of the way Chrome stores them. They won't be left behind on a PC you've used, but they can't always be retrieved when you log into another computer.

Like all apps packaged by PortableApps.com (see box on the opposite page), the portable version of Chrome doesn't need to be installed on your PC. You just run a set-up file, which is much quicker. When you click the green download button, the file will be automatically downloaded from SourceForge (see the numbered screen grabs below).

Firefox Portable (bit.ly/pfirefox409) is virtually indistinguishable from the full



Click the green download button on any PortableApps page...

AVOID CORRUPTING YOUR FILES

When you run portable apps from a USB stick, it's vital to ensure that you eject it safely before removing it from the port. Failure to do so could corrupt the apps and result in data loss. To avoid this, close all portable apps and files saved to the drive when you've finished with them, then click 'Safely Remove Hardware and Eiect Media' from the System Tray before selecting 'Eject JumpDrive' for the appropriate drive.



Mozilla browser. It offers the same range of excellent features including a customisable layout, Reading Mode and Private Browsing, and you can even use Firefox Sync to make sure that your bookmarks, history, tabs, passwords and add-ons are up to date across all your devices.

•

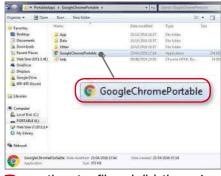
Similarly, the portable version of Opera (bit.ly/popera409) differs little from the full, desktop browser. To save your passwords (and some other information) when you move from one

...the file will automatically download from SourceForge...

machine to another, use the browser's Synchronisation feature.

Work from anywhere

It's frustrating to save your work to a USB stick and then find that you can't open it because the PC you're using doesn't have the right software installed. You can avoid this problem by downloading a free portable office suite. Like its desktop counterpart, Libre Office Portable (bit.ly/plibre409) offers a comprehensive range of tools



..run the setup file and click the app's name in the PortableApps folder

Free portable software



Avoid misleading ads on PortableApps .com 1 and make sure you click the correct language pack for office apps 2

including a word processor, spreadsheet and presentation software. If you prefer OpenOffice, grab its portable

version from bit.ly/popen409.

Take care when installing these office apps because their download pages often contain download buttons for ads and programs you don't want. We saw one of these on the page for OpenOffice, and several alongside other programs on PortableApps.

> Downloading the correct language pack is similarly confusing. Our screen grab above shows three

download buttons: you need number 2, which is 826MB when installed and contains the 'standard' language pack containing UK English (among others). The download to its right contains more languages, and is a bigger app (1.5GB).

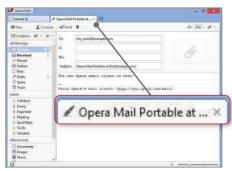
Manage your emails and contacts

If you don't like webmail and miss your email software when you're away from your PC, why not take it with you? Mozilla's Thunderbird (bit.lv/ pthunderbird409) is available as a portable app that lets you open your emails and address book on any PC.

Opera Mail Portable (bit.ly/ poperam409) is another excellent, customisable option. It intelligently sorts your emails to show all the messages in a conversation, and also has a built-in feed reader to help you keep up to date with your favourite websites.

Chat from anywhere

One of our favourite messaging apps is Telegram, available as a portable app directly from its developer (desktop.telegram.org) or bit.ly/ptelegram409 if you're building a PortableApps suite - see box, right). It uses very strong encryption, and you



Access your email anywhere using the portable version of Opera Mail

can set your messages to self-destruct. Skype is also available as a portable app (bit.ly/pskype409) so you can make audio and video calls from any PC and avoid the inferior beta web app. Pidgin Portable (bit.ly/ppidgin409) lets you chat to AOL, MSN and Yahoo users.

Keep your passwords safe

Chrome and Firefox save your passwords to speed up logins on the web, but this makes your private data vulnerable should your PC end up in the wrong hands. For this reason, you might prefer to save your passwords to a portable password manager such as KeePass, (keepass.info/download.html or bit.ly/pkeepass409 from PortableApps). This means you can be confident that the only copy of your passwords is encrypted and on your

LastPass users can use a portable version, too. It's available exclusively from the LastPass site (bit.ly/ lastpass409) but it only works in Firefox Portable and Chrome Portable.

Fix anyone's PC

person at all times.

If you're the person family members and friends call on to fix their computers,



Yumi installs non-Windows operating systems, such as Ubuntu, on a USB stick

you can make your emergency visits more successful by building a USB stick containing essential PC-rescue tools, including antivirus scanners, clean-up programs and uninstallers.

The hugely popular junk-removal tool CCleaner is available in portable form (bit.ly/ccleaner409), as is SUPERAntiSpyware (bit.lv/ superanti409), which scans and removes more than a million malware and spyware infections. Portable versions of IObit Uninstaller (bit.ly/ piobit409) and Revo Uninstaller (bit.ly/

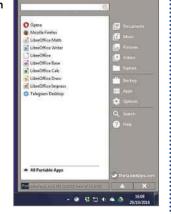
prevo409) are available from PortableApps.com, should you need to tackle stubborn software that Windows can't remove.

If you're trying to fix a PC that won't boot, use YUMI Multiboot USB Creator (bit.ly/ yumi409 or bit.ly/ pyumi409) to install multiple operating systems (Ubuntu in the screen grab above), diagnostic tools and antivirus on a USB.

MANAGE YOUR PORTABLE APPS IN ONE PLACE

Most of the apps in this feature are available from PortableApps.com (see all links on this page starting with 'bit.ly/p'). The advantage of downloading them from this site is that you can also install the PortableApps.com Platform to build your own suite of portable apps.

Visit portableapps.com/download, download and run the setup file and choose where you want to install the PortableApps Platform. Once it's set up, any PortableApps.com apps you install will automatically be added to the launcher when you first run them (see screen grab, right). Apps you've already installed from the site can be added by moving their folders to the 'PortableApps' folder. Portable apps not



downloaded from the site can also be added to the launcher, but there's no guarantee they won't leave information on the PCs they're used on.

.....



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1	sky	Sky: Broadband	£10.00 (FREE for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞	£0.00
2	E	EE: Broadband	£10.00 (£1.00 for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	£12.00
3	Virgin media	Virgin: Broadband	£26.00 (£12.00 for 12 months)	12 months	50Mbps max speed	oon unlimited	£144.00
4	TalkTalk For Everyone	TalkTalk: Broadband	£22.95	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞	£275.40

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 19 October 2016.



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

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

Computer

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Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your computer by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you unravel our Linux-themed word search and guess our sit-com emoii?

WEB USER WORD SEARCH

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

CENTOS DEBIAN ELEMENTARY FEDORA MANJARO MINT **OPENSUSE PUPPY RASPBIAN UBUNTU**

A G M C E C T E 0 N E М E C E E G N

CAN YOU GUESS THESE SIT-COM TITLES FROM THE EMOJI?









Get the answers online at bit.ly/quiz409

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 2

Packed Pixels portable laptop screens

Packed Pixels gives you more screen space to edit photos, watch videos and play games. Lightweight and powered by USB, the high-definition monitor simply clips into place alongside your laptop's screen. To enter,



WORTH

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EACH

email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'pixels' in the subject line. For more info visit www .packedpixels.com and follow @PackedPixels on Twitter.

WIN 1 OF 2

FRITZ!Box 3490 wireless routers

The superfast FRITZ!Box 3490 is the perfect router for streaming music and video across

a home network. It has six antennas offering 5GHz and 2.4GHz, a private hotspot for guests, parental controls and two speedy USB 3.0 ports. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'fritz' in the subject line. For more info visit https://en.avm.de, follow @AVM_INTL on Twitter and 'like' AVM's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/fritzboxinternational.





Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Explore the galaxy with Gaia Sky

bit.ly/gaia409

Gaia Sky is a real-time 3D astronomy program based on the European Space Agency's Gaia mission to map our galaxy. Here's how to use it

he Milky Way is so large that the very idea of cataloguing just 1% of its stars (around 1 billion celestial bodies) seems like an optimistic endeavour, yet that's exactly what the European Space Agency's five-year Gaia mission is working towards. Its ultimate aim is to build a three-dimensional map of our galaxy, and last month it published a preliminary billion-star catalogue.

Gaia Sky is an open-source, real-time astronomy tool that lets you explore the galaxy as seen by the Gaia satellite. The software, which runs on Windows, Linux and macOS, lets you fly freely throughout the cosmos and even perform a close up inspection of Gaia itself.

If the program crashes for any reason, delete the C:\Users\[your user name] \.gaiasky folder and restart the software.



Start Gaia Sky and choose to view the program in either Windowed or Fullscreen mode. Pick a resolution. You can also adjust the graphics settings. Use the bar on the left to customise other settings, such as performance and controls. Click 'Launch application' to begin.



Once Gaia Sky has loaded (this takes a while, even on a fast PC, so be patient), you'll be presented with a view of the Earth as seen from space. 1 Click and drag with the left mouse button to move the view, and use the mouse wheel to zoom in and out. Click the mouse button again to stop moving.



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ce [h/sec] - x16

Lock camera to focus

30 🚳

Change the current date and time, and adjust the speed at which time runs

VIEWINI MODES

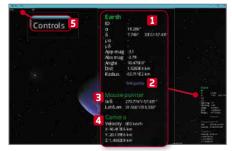
Switch the view to stereoscopic 3D or planetarium projection, if you have the right viewing equipment - such as a planetarium dome system!

MUSIC PLAYER

galaxy to a suitably majestic sound track or add your own songs to C:\Program Files\Gaia Sky\ music

PREFERENCES

Click this to open the Settings, where you can change the graphics quality and configure other options



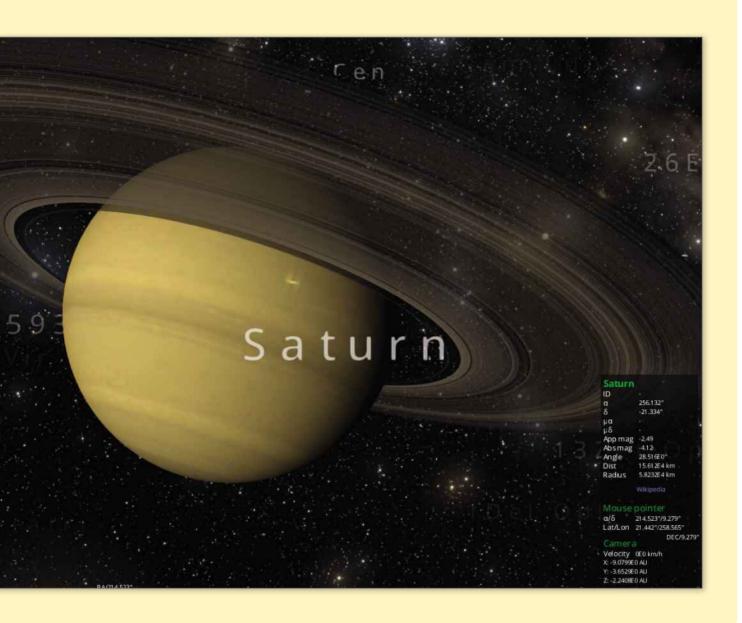
The information displayed on the right shows details about the planet and a link to its entry on Wikipedia. 2 You'll also see your mouse pointer's coordinates (which change as you move your mouse) and camera details. 4 Click Controls in the top-left corner to open a side panel.



The Controls panel has options to set which elements are visible, including stars, planets, moons, atmospheres, orbits, labels and more. • We recommend keeping labels switched on so you can identify what you're looking at. You can enable Gaia tools, • including colouring the observed stars.



5 Explore the galaxy using your mouse, or search for a specific location by pressing Ctrl+F and typing what you're looking for. **1** The sky will move to centre in on the object as soon as it recognises its name. Press Ctrl+G to jump straight there, then zoom in with your mouse.





Expand the Camera section and use the drop-down menu to switch to a different mode ('Free camera', 'Focus object', 'Gaia scene' and more) 11 and adjust the field of view. 2 Moving this slider to the right shows you more of the sky. You can also change the speed of the camera, and its rotation and turn rates.



Expand the Lighting section to adjust settings for the star brightness, size, opacity, ambient light and motion blur. 1 You can also switch the lens flare effect on or off. 2 The Objects menu 3 lets you jump to anything in the list or search for an object by name.



Gaia Sky has an option to record a Gaia Sky nas an option according to the camera path for playing back later. To do this, click the Record button next to Camera, 11 then go wherever you want in the galaxy. Click the button again to stop recording. To watch it back, click the Play button, **2** choose the path you want to load from the list, 🖪 then click Run. 🖪

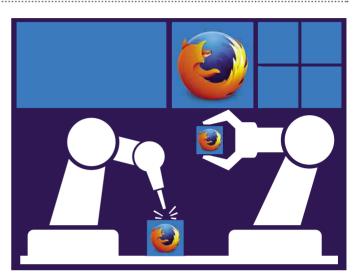


Make your own Windows 10 Start menu tiles

TileIconifier: bit.ly/tile409 | 🕒 15 mins | 📲 10

indows 10's Start menu is better than its Windows 8 predecessor, but there aren't many options for customising how it looks. Shortcut tiles can look dull, particularly when set to Medium size, because the icons look small and lost in the surrounding blue box. TileIconifier is a portable tool that lets you customise shortcuts so the icon fills the tile, which looks a lot better. You can even use a different icon and change the tile's background colour to add variety to the Start menu. In this Workshop, we've used TileIconifier to improve the Firefox tile.

You're not limited to changing icons for Desktop applications, either. TileIconifier's Custom Shortcut Manager lets you create Start shortcuts to Chrome apps, Windows apps, folders and URLs, all of which you can then alter according to your preferences. The tool makes it easy to see which shortcuts you've modified, and switching back to the originals is as simple as clicking a button.

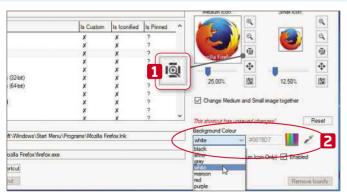




Download and run TileIconifier. From the shortcut list, select a program whose icon you want to enhance. Tick the option to 'Change Medium and Small image together', then double-click the 'Medium icon' box and choose from the icons on offer or upload your own image. Click OK.



TileIconifier automatically adjusts the icon to fit Medium and Small tiles, and shows a preview. You can change the size of the icon for each tile size independently using the zoom buttons and sliders. 1 The Align Image buttons 2 let you adjust the icon's position within the tile.



If, after experimenting with an icon's size and position, you want to revert to Tilelconifier's default configuration, use the Reset button. 1 You can also change the tile's background colour by making a selection in the drop-down menu, clicking the colour chart or using the dropper tool.



If a program is easy to recognise from its icon alone, you may want to remove the text that appears in the foreground of Medium-size tiles. Tilelconifier also lets you use dark text instead of the usual white, which is handy if you want to change the background to a lighter colour.

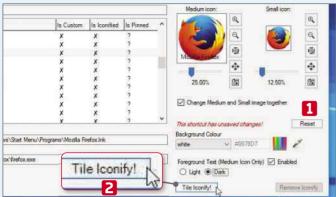




EXPERT TIP

Ed Munn savs

In Step 1, we recommend ticking the option to 'Change Medium and Small image together'. You could untick it, but that doesn't mean you can alter one size of tile while leaving the other as it is. Instead, this option is designed to let you use a different image for each tile size.



You can undo your changes (including background colour) at any time by clicking Reset. 1 Once you're happy with both icons, click the Tile Iconify button 2 to update them. You may need to unpin and repin the program to the Start menu, or restart your PC, for the changes to take effect.



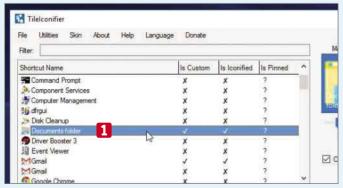
When you've changed a program's icons, a tick appears in TileIconifier's shortcuts list to show that it has been Iconified. 1 If you want to revert to the original Windows icons for a particular program, select it from the list and click the Remove Iconify button. 2



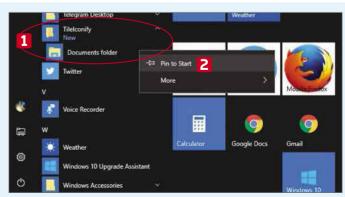
You can create Start shortcuts for items that don't appear in TileIconifier's main list, too. Click Utilities and select Custom Shortcut Manager, then Create New Shortcut. From the Explorer tab, 1 you can create shortcuts to special folders including Control Panel, Documents 2 and Downloads.



Alternatively, click the Chrome Apps tab 🚺 to add shortcuts for Chrome apps, including Gmail, 2 Google Docs and Play Music. You can also create custom shortcuts for Windows apps 3 such as Microsoft Edge, whose icons you can't otherwise Iconify.



Finally, the URI tab lets you create custom shortcuts for a web address of your choice. Any custom shortcut you generate appears in TileIconifier's shortcut list, 11 where you can customise its tiles. You can delete custom shortcuts from the Custom Shortcut Manager.



Once you've 'Iconified' your custom shortcuts, open the Start menu and expand TileIconify to find them. ■ Right-click a shortcut and select 'Pin to Start' to add it to the Start menu. You can then move and resize it according to your preference.



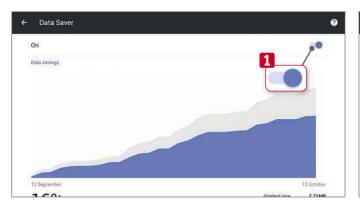
Save mobile data while you surf the web

he collection of new tools in Chrome for Android and its latest Beta version help reduce the amount of data you're using by automatically compressing web pages, letting you download content before you go out and suggesting sites you

may be interested in, so you don't have to browse the web for them.

For more on the Chrome Beta, turn to our Top Tips on page 64.





The Data Saver is new to the standard version of Chrome for Android but is switched off by default. Tap the menu button and choose Settings. Scroll down to Data Saver, where you'll be able to see whether it's on or off. If it's off, tap it and tap the switch to flick it on. 1



Below the switch, there's a graph 11 and a percentage figure 2 that shows how much data you've saved over the past month. Note that websites, images and videos are compressed before being sent to your device, so you may want to switch it off when you're on an unlimited connection.



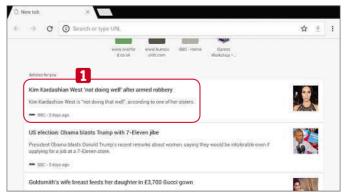
The Chrome Beta can reduce the amount of bandwidth used on a metered data connection by saving the web pages you'll want to read in advance. To download a page, click the Download button. 1 A message appears showing the page that has been downloaded. 2



When you want to look at a page you've saved, tap the menu button and choose Downloads. 1 This opens a page that shows everything you've previously downloaded. 2 Click one to view it, even if you're offline.



Back in the current version of Chrome, you'll see shortcut icons to your most regularly visited sites. Tap the button 🚺 to launch a new tab. The links appear under the search box, 2 as they do in the PC version. These are synced across all your devices if you're signed into your Google account.



Switch to the Beta version again and scroll down below the shortcut icons. Here, you'll find links to news stories you might be interested in, 1 which could save you browsing through the individual news sites. Tap a story to read the full article.



Don't let web trackers spoil your surfing

hostery is a brilliant tool for blocking the unnecessary trackers that adverts and other website elements use to follow your movements around the web. The latest version categorises these trackers and has new alerting tools. These make it much easier to understand what's tracking you and let you block trackers that slow down a site, leak personal information or stop the page working properly.



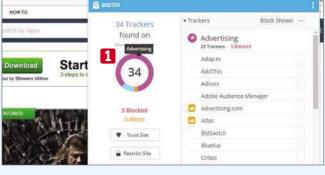
6 5

Ghostery: bit.ly/ghost409 | 🕒 10 mins |









Install the appropriate add-on for your browser. Creating an account is free and syncs all your settings across all your browsers. When you visit a site containing trackers, you'll see them listed in a purple box on the right. 11 The add-on's button displays the number of trackers found.

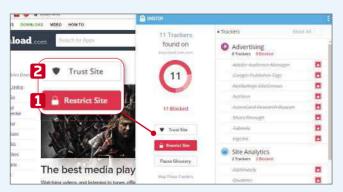
Click the button for more information about the trackers. They are colour-coded into categories and shown on a pie chart. 1 Purple trackers are related to advertising, blue ones are site analytics (collecting data on visitors) and orange ones are categorised as 'essential'.





Trackers with an orange icon 🚺 will trigger an alert. To isolate them, click the pop-up link or 'x Alerts'. B A snail icon dindicates a tracker that slows your browser; an explosion stops a page loading properly; and a shark's fin leaks personal information on a supposedly secure site.

Hover your mouse over the tick box to see the options to 'Trust on this site' 1 or 'Restrict on this site'. 2 If you tick the box next to each tracker, 🖪 it will stop that tracker operating on every site you visit. If you change your mind, just hover and click again to remove your choices.





If you want to stop a site tracking you, click the Restrict Site button. 1 This is like going through every tracker found in Step 4 and clicking the 'Restrict on this site' button. To undo this, click the button again. The Trust Site button 2 does the reverse and lets everything through.

Click the heading bar of the purple box to shrink it to a small button. This expands to a small bar showing the alerts 1 when you hover your mouse over it. The Settings, **2** accessed from the menu, **5** let you turn off this bar, reduce its display time and move it to another location.

Weekend Project

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





Make your old tablet last longer

There's no need to upgrade your tablet with every new release. **Wayne Williams** shows how to extend the life of an old tablet



Upgrades, free space and restarts

There are a number of things that can improve the performance of your tablet, however old or new it is, so let's tackle the basics first.

Upgrading to the latest version of your operating system promises to give your tablet a new lease of life, but this doesn't always happen. Most iPads less than four years old should be able to upgrade to

iOS 10, provided there's enough space on the device. If your iPad isn't compatible, it will be offered the latest version of iOS that it can run.

To upgrade your OS, go to the General section of the Settings app. If you can't upgrade from the device, try connecting it to a computer and downloading the update via iTunes. This often works better for updating an older device.

Upgrading Android tablets isn't as

straightforward, because there are so many different makes of device it can run on. The decision to support a new version of Android is made by your manufacturer and you'll be notified if your tablet is going to be supported.

It's also important to keep plenty of free space on your device so it can properly optimise itself. Battling for storage space slows down a device, so you should aim to keep it half empty if



iKlips DUO expands your iPad storage and lets you copy and remove photos and videos from your tablet

Free up space by removing the largest apps first

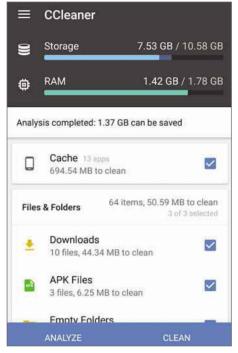
possible. Don't let it drift over 75% full if you want it to operate at peak performance

As well as regularly backing up and removing videos and photos, and deleting unused apps, you should use a cleaning tool such as CCleaner for Android (bit.ly/cclean409). Even a hard reset - simply turning your device off and back on again - can help clear caches and the like, and may give a quick performance boost.

Keep your tablet TRIM

The SSDs (solid-state drives) that you plug in to your PC use a technology called TRIM to manage the data on them. This special command is built into the drive and is used by Windows to better manage the deleted space, which makes the drives faster and more efficient.

CCleaner for Android can free up space on your tablet and boost performance



Tablet memory isn't as sophisticated but some manufacturers have their own way of organising data, which occurs in the background when a device is idle. The next time you recharge your device and don't need to use it immediately, try leaving it plugged in. While in this idle state, your tablet may perform its own housekeeping. Some people have reported that leaving their device plugged in and idle for 24 hours has improved the performance, so it's worth a trv.

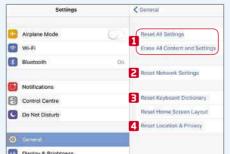
Expand the tablet's capacity

Some Android tablets have a microSD slot, which you can use to increase the device's capacity. When you buy a microSD card, it's worth spending a little extra money to get a faster model. SD cards are categorised by speed and go up to category 10, while category 10 cards can have a further two grades of UHS (Ultra High Speed, graded at UHS-1

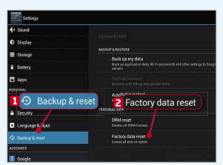




To refresh your tablet and get it running as speedily as it did when it was new, it's worth performing a factory reset. Make sure you've backed up absolutely everything before proceeding. To reset an iPad, go to Settings, General 11 and select Reset 22 at the bottom.

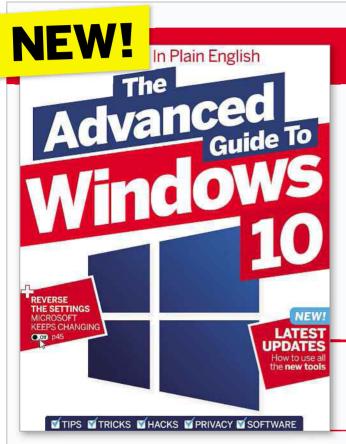


You are given two options. You can choose to Reset All Settings or 'Erase All Content and Settings'. 11 The latter is the option if you want to start from new. You can also reset other options here, such your network settings, 2 keyboard dictionary B and 'Location & Privacy'. 4



The process is similar on Android. Go to Settings and tap 'Backup & reset'. 11 To wipe the tablet, tap 'Factory data reset'. 2 The procedure will vary slightly, depending on the make and model of your tablet, and the version of Android that it's running.

WebUser Bookstore



THE ADVANCED GUIDE TO WINDOWS 10

The Advanced Guide to Windows 10 is a must-have manual for anyone who uses Microsoft's operating system. Its 196 pages are packed with expert advice written in plain English, helping you unlock every hidden tool. You'll learn how to customise Windows 10 so it works exactly how you want it to, and how to reverse settings that Microsoft keeps changing. It's also the ideal troubleshooting guide, providing fixes for every conceivable problem. Don't turn on your PC without it!

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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID

Get the most from your Android device with our 148-page book. It explains all



you need to know about the latest versions of Android (Lollipop and Marshmallow), reveals the best apps for everything you'll ever want to do, and exposes dodgy ones that slow your device and drain the battery. It also tells you how to stay safe.

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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WINDOWS 10

This 148-page book is the perfect way to get started with Microsoft's fantastic



operating system. You'll learn how to master all the new tools and software, and how to upgrade without losing anything. It has been updated to include fixes for problems that have appeared since Windows 10 launched.

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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO FREE SOFTWARE

Free software can be a worry. Is it as good as a paid-for package? Will it sneak junk on



to your PC? Does it nag you to update to a premium version? In our new 148-page book *The Definitive Guide to Free Software*, we recommend only the best free programs that deliver high-quality features and no nasty surprises.

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MicroSD cards come in various speeds, marked by a number in a 'C' or a 'U'. Buy the fastest your device can handle



Reduce the animations in Android's interface from the 'Developer options' menu

or UHS-3, the latter being the faster). Check your device's specification and buy the highest category card it can handle. All the speed categories are backwards-compatible, so faster cards will work in older devices but data will only transfer at the highest rate that the tablet can support.

If your tablet doesn't have a memory slot, or you have an iPad, you can instead connect a wireless hard drive or a dongle to the tablet. Adam Elements' iKlips Duo (www.adamelements.com) is a flash storage device for iPads that connects to a tablet through its Lightning port (see photo on page 59). It has a USB 3.1 adapter at the other end, so you can easily copy files between an iPad and a PC; or you can just use it to store photos and videos, away from the iPad's main storage.

Minor tweaks to add speed

You might be able to speed things up a fraction by carefully choosing which apps you use. Apple's apps are designed specifically to run on Apple hardware, which may give them the advantage over apps by other developers. Safari, for example, uses fewer resources than Google Chrome. The pre-installed apps may not have the same tools as the alternatives in the app store, but they should be faster and more stable.

Having Siri Suggestions turned on during searches can hog your tablet's resources, so it's worth turning it off if you have no need for it. To do this, go to Settings, General, then Spotlight Search. Other resource-hogging search options can be turned off, too.

Some people suggest you can free up resources by closing apps that are

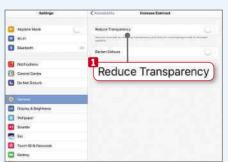
running in the background (in iOS, you do this by double-clicking the Home button and swiping away the open apps) but, in fact, this is only of use if an app has frozen or crashed

We suggest more iPad settings to tweak in our Mini Workshop, below. including turning off some of the interface's animations. To do the same thing in Android, go to Settings, About and tap 'Build Number' seven times. This unlocks Android's 'Developer options', which you'll now find back in the main Settings menu. Scroll down to the 'Window animation scale', 'Transition animation scale' and 'Animator duration scale' settings, select each one and change the animation scale to '.5x'. Experiment with selecting 'Animation off', too. If you encounter any problems, return the setting to '1x'.

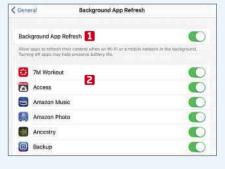
MINI WORKSHOP | Reduce resource-hogging iOS settings



iOS offers all sorts of fancy graphical effects. Reducing these can free up resources to boost your tablet's performance. In iOS go to Settings, General, • Accessibility. To kill unnecessary animations, turn on the Reduce Motion setting. 2



Next, tap the Increase Contrast option, and enable the Reduce Transparency 1 setting. This removes the transparency effects found on certain elements of the interface, freeing up some processing power. These changes won't make a huge difference, but they may help if your tablet is struggling to perform well.



You can also disable the Background App Refresh tool. Go to General, Background App Refresh. You can either disable it entirely 11 or choose which apps are allowed to refresh their content in the background, 2 so you don't waste your tablet's resources on apps you rarely use.

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Turn an old PC into a home-security camera

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Web User's Top Tips

Our experts show you how to get the latest browser tools before anyone else

TOP TIPS FOR BROWSER BETAS

Benchmark your browser

ew versions of web browsers often improve performance as well as increase efficiency and provide new tools. However, it's sometimes hard to tell the difference between versions because the internal tweaks that make it faster aren't visible. It's therefore useful to benchmark your regular browser before downloading and installing a new one or trying a beta version, so you can find out whether or not your browser's performance has improved.

Go to Speedometer at bit.ly/speedo409 and run the test. It mimics a range of real-world web applications, so the differences indicate what you will see when you're actually using the browser. Google says Chrome's performance has improved by 15% this year, though more improvement is predicted for Chrome version 55, which halves the amount of memory it needs to run on certain websites.



Test your current browser against a beta to check for improved performance

Chrome beta and beyond

There are eight different versions of Chrome: four 64-bit and four 32-bit versions. The four types are called Stable (the public version that most people use), Beta, Dev and Canary. Each version represents one step in the development process, so if the current Stable version is 53, the Beta is 54, Dev is 55 and Canary is 56.

New tools are first tested in Canary, which is updated once or twice a week, and is never more than a few days old. It may have a few bugs but that's to be expected because it's at the cutting edge of new browser tools.

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.

Chrome Beta is one version ahead of the Stable public release and it rarely crashes. You can use it as your main browser because most of the bugs have been fixed and any new tools or technologies are almost ready for public release. New Beta versions of Chrome come along every six weeks, at which point the previous Beta becomes the new

Stable release and a new Beta filters down from the Dev version.

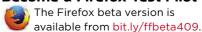
If you find that Canary is too buggy, but the Beta doesn't offer enough new features, try the Dev version. It's more experimental than the Beta, but is still reasonably stable. Chrome Dev is updated once or twice a week and



Get the Canary version of Chrome to try its new tools early

shows what Google is currently working on. You can download all these versions of Chrome from bit.ly/chrome409.

Become a Firefox Test Pilot





Test new Firefox features before anyone else by installing the Test Pilot add-on

Here, you'll also find a more advanced version called the Developer Edition. However, new tools are currently thin on the ground in Firefox's preview versions because Mozilla is taking a new approach to testing, which is built into the regular version of the browser and is called Firefox Test Pilot

Go to testpilot.firefox.com and install the Test Pilot add-on. This brings a collection of new tools to your browser, all of which are experimental and so may or may not eventually reach the public release. Click the Test Pilot button in the toolbar to access the experiments. When we looked, we found a range of tools including Page Shot, Min Vid, Tracking Protection, Activity Stream, Tab Center, No More 404s and Universal Search.

Best Test Pilot tools

Our favourite Test Pilot tools are Page Shot and Min Vid. Page Shot adds a button to the toolbar that takes screen grabs of web pages. Click the button, then click and drag over the area you want to save. The image is saved and can easily be shared on social-media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

Enabling Min Vid places a button on any video you're watching on sites such as YouTube and Vimeo. Click the button and the video will jump off the page into its own frame. You can then drag it anywhere you want and it will continue to play while you carry out other PC tasks. The video stays on top of all your other windows, even if you use the browser to visit another site or switch to a different program.



The latest Firefox Test Pilot tools include a video viewer that's always on top

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

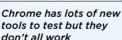
Try Chrome experiments

You can try some of Chrome's experimental tools without having to install the Beta version of the browser. Type chrome: //flags into the address bar to access a list of experimental features. These come and go, and some are more useful than others. Each has an explanation and a link to Enable or Disable it, or a menu of further options. You can search for an experiment by using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+F, then typing its name and pressing Enter.

We particularly like 'Fast tab/ window close', which makes the browser feel more responsive by removing all the delays and pauses that occur when closing tabs. If you want to see what Chrome might look like in the near future, enable the two Material Design settings and the 'Extension Toolbar Redesign'.

Enable 'Password generation' if you'd like Chrome to create new passwords for you automatically when

> websites call for them. and disable 'Hidina close buttons on inactive tabs when stacked' to ensure tab close buttons are always visible. 'Tab audio



Password generation

muting UI control' adds

a speaker icon that you can click to silence any audio playing in a tab.

Betas on Android

You can also download beta

versions of mobile browsers. Go to the Google Play Store on your Android phone or tablet and search for 'Chrome beta' to download and install it, and access the latest tools. The Beta is one version ahead of the standard release (Chrome is currently version 53 and the Beta is version 54). Dev and Canary versions (55 and 56, respectively) are also available. They're likely to have more new tools but will also be more prone to bugs. Different versions of Chrome can

exist side by side on your Android device, with separate icons. This is useful because if you encounter a problem with a particular website on the Beta, Dev or Canary version, you can easily switch back to the Stable release. Some of the tools in our Workshop on page 56 use the latest beta version.

Firefox beta is also in the Google Play Store and is around a month or two ahead of the stable release.

Listen in the background

A new tool in the Chrome Beta for Android lets users listen to videos in the background while using another app. This is particularly useful when listening to music videos. To try it, go to a website that streams video, such as YouTube (www.youtube.com) or Vimeo (www .vimeo.com), and start playing a video. As it plays, switch to another app. If the video pauses, just swipe down from the top of the screen and tap the play button to continue playing the video in the background.

Getting the Edge beta

Microsoft doesn't release beta versions of Edge in the same way as Chrome, Firefox and Opera (which has beta and developer versions available at bit.ly/opera409). The only way to get the development version of Edge is to switch to the Windows 10 Insider Program (insider.windows .com), which you can join with your Microsoft account. To switch to it in the standard version of Windows. press Windows+i to open Settings, then click 'Update & security' followed by Windows Insider Programme. Click 'Get started'. The downside is that you often have to update the whole of Windows 10 just to get the latest version of Edge. It's like reinstalling Windows 10 every week.



To see the new tools for Edge, you have to join Microsoft's Insider Programme

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



HARDWARE

Recover a lost DVD drive

In Issue 404 (bit.ly/webuser404), Castman complained that his DVD drive had disappeared after installing Windows 10, and suggestions were made about uninstalling IDE/ATA controllers. I have the same problem but my drives are SATA not IDE. Judging by the number of complaints on the internet, this is a serious fault in Windows. Alas the Anniversary Update hasn't fixed it either.

Ron O'Brien, via email

There isn't a simple answer to this, and some solutions have worked for some people but not for others. One person we know fixed the problem simply by putting a DVD in the drive. Another suggests using the Windows Troubleshooter: open the Control Panel and click Troubleshooting, then click 'View all' and run 'Hardware and Devices'.

Someone else found that the DVD drive had been disabled in the BIOS security settings. To check this, turn on your PC and immediately press F1,



Windows Troubleshooters can often solve PC problems. It's worth a try

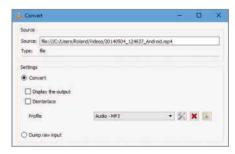
F2, F10, Del or whichever key your PC uses to enter the BIOS setup, then check all the sections.

Another solution is to download a driver-update tool and update all the drivers. Try the free version of Driver Booster (bit.ly/drive409) but be careful to avoid installing any of its unnecessary optional extras.

If you've tried everything and the problem still isn't fixed, you may have to buy a new DVD drive. There are budget models available online for around £10. An external USB model is the simplest to install - you just plug it in and it works. If you have a desktop PC that's easy to open, you could replace the internal DVD drive as most are held in position with just four screws and a cable.

Next, use VLC Media Player (www .videolan.org), which can read a video file and save the audio track as an MP3. Run VLC, click the Media menu and select Convert/Save. Select the File tab, click the Add button and select the video file output from HandBrake. If the button at the bottom doesn't sav Convert/Save, click the arrow next to it and select it. Click Convert/Save. Select 'Audio - MP3' on the Profile drop-down menu, click the Browse button and choose where to save the audio file. Click Start to convert it.

If you've made it this far, you now need CDBurnerXP (cdburnerxp.se), which can create an audio CD from MP3 files. Put a recordable CD-R in the drive, run CDBurnerXP and select 'Audio disc' on the home screen. Open Windows Explorer and drag the MP3 audio file created by VLC and drop it on the CDBurnerXP window to add it. Then select 'Burn disc' from the Disc menu. Once that's done, you can play the CD in any CD player.



Use VLC Media Player to strip the audio from a video and save it to your hard drive

MUSIC

Record a soundtrack from a

My wife and I have a collection of musicals on DVD, which we regularly play through our DVD player, but I would like to transfer the soundtracks to a CD so we can play them in the car and elsewhere.

I have tried various methods without success and have had some programs recommended that will do the job, but they are too expensive. Could you advise me of an alternative method?

I am using a Toshiba laptop running Windows 7 Professional. I appreciate there's a copyright problem but I'd only be using the CDs for personal use.

Brian Foster, via email

Commercial DVDs often have protection and security systems to stop people copying them, so the only option may be to buy the CD versions of the soundtracks. However, there are some free programs that, if used together, might be able to help.

First, download and install HandBrake (handbrake.fr), which can read a DVD and save it as a video on the PC's hard drive. Put the DVD in the drive and run HandBrake, Click Source and select the DVD drive to scan the disc. Click the Title button to select what to convert the biggest item is usually the main content. Click the Browse button, choose where to save the video file and enter a filename. Select Normal in the presets panel and click Start.

SOFTWARE

Updating Java

I recently bought an HP webcam for my computer. It keeps asking me to update Java. I am at the stage where it says Install or Later. I assume I click install but what should I click on next?

Darren, via email

Webcams don't always need Java to work, but it sounds as if the software bundled with yours does. Java is less common these days than it once was and many people don't want to install it. However, it is still in use and

needs to be updated occasionally to add new features or to fix bugs and security flaws.

You could try using the webcam without installing its software. Windows has built-in drivers for this kind of device and it may work without its own software. If you decide you want HP's extra tools, go to bit.ly/unjava409 and download the Java Uninstall Tool. Run it to remove old copies of Java, then return to www.iava.com and click the button to install the latest version.



Only install the latest version of Java from the website, and remove old versions

SECURITY

Stay secure after Windows update

I have Windows 8.1 on my PC and I also run Kaspersky security software. If I install Windows 10, will Kaspersky still protect my PC or will I have to buy a new copy?

S Allan, via email

Before upgrading to Windows 10, make sure you have the latest version of your security software. With Kaspersky, you can do this from within the program or download and install the latest version on top of the old one. There shouldn't be any problems, but if there are, you can uninstall Kaspersky security software before upgrading and reinstall afterwards. When uninstalling, watch out for the Saving Objects screen and keep the following items: 'License information', 'Operational settings of the application', and 'Checker data'. The licence is the most important because it tells the software that you have already paid for it when it's reinstalled.

GENERAL PC

Move Windows Store apps

My PC has a small solid-state drive (SSD) that I installed some time ago. It's fast but is now nearly full with Windows updates and other software. I recently bought a 1TB external USB hard drive to offload some files and free up some space on the SSD. I have some large apps from the Windows Store



Use Windows 10 Settings to move apps from one location to another

(mostly games), which take up several gigabytes of drive space. How do I move them to the USB drive?

Paul Harris, via email

Some games can use 2GB or more, and to free up space you can uninstall or move them. Both options are in the Settings app. Press Windows+i to open Settings, click System and then select 'Apps & features'. Use the menu on the right to select 'Sort by size' and, a minute or so later, all the apps will be displayed with the largest first. Click an app and you'll see Move and Uninstall buttons. Click Move and it will ask which drive to move it to. Select the one you want.

GENERAL PC

Find out if you have the **Anniversary Update**

I have resisted all blandishments to upgrade anything except Firefox on my Windows 10 HP Pavilion. However, yesterday the HP Assistant was very keen for me to download a BIOS update. I took this seriously

and made sure I only ticked and downloaded the BIOS update on the HP Assistant screen.

It seemed to work, but then a message appeared telling me that another download was happening. It said that the installer wouldn't appear on screen and that I must be patient until it stopped. I wanted to find out what it was, but when I went to look at it today it had completed and installed.

I have a number of networks, and as I moved physically from one to another and the PC automatically logged on, this download seemed to carry on regardless. Am I correct to think that this is the Anniversary Update for Windows 10? If so, it must be enormous because I have fast connections on all networks.

D C Fergusson, via email

Windows 10 Anniversary Update is huge. It takes a long time to download, partly because of its size and partly because it runs slowly in the background so as not to interrupt your normal computer use. If it were to download at your internet connection's maximum speed, it wouldn't take as long, but it would stop you doing anything else online at the same time.

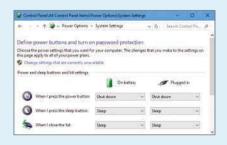
To see if you have the Anniversary Update, press Windows+i to open Settings and click System. The new Settings app places an icon next to each item. Select About to see the Windows version and build number. The original Windows 10 was version 1507, the November 2015 update was 1511 and the Anniversary Update is 1607.

GENERAL PC

Flickering power light

I have a trusty old desktop PC that runs well on Windows 7 and is coupled to my HP Deskjet printer. However, the last update has had a strange effect and my PC no longer shuts down as it did. In the past, when I logged off and closed the desktop, it would switch off and all the lights would go out. Now I find that it ceases to function but the power light (LED) stays on, flickering as if it's searching for something, and a message appears on the screen to say there is no video input. I have to power off completely and reset to get it to work again.

Sandy Cameron, via email



Choose what action to take when buttons are pressed or the lid is closed

The LED flashes while your computer is in sleep mode, so it sounds as if it's sleeping instead of powering off. Right-click the power/battery icon at the right side of the taskbar and select Power Options. Click 'Choose what the power buttons do', then set all the options to 'Shut down'.



This fortnight Roland has been developing WordPress websites using plugins to add brilliant extra features

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

Create anonymous YouTube playlists

I recently stumbled across an excellent way of creating YouTube playlists that are easy to share but aren't connected to your YouTube account. However, you need to be logged into your Google account because this tip uses a Google Sheets spreadsheet created by the website Digital Inspiration (www.labnol.org).

Go to bit.ly/sheet409 and click the 'Make a copy' button.

In the spreadsheet that opens, copy the URLs of the videos you want to include in your playlist into column A, starting with cell A3. As you post the links, you'll see columns B and C filled with the videos' unique IDs and thumbnails.

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This clever Google Sheet can be used to create an anonymous YouTube playlist

Once you're happy with your list, simply follow the URL in cell A1 to view it in your browser and then share it as necessary. Whenever you make any changes to the spreadsheet, the link in cell A1 is automatically updated.

Tom West, via email

PHOTOS

Search photos by content

I used to use the Photos app on my iPhone but I switched to the Google Photos app instead because you get unlimited storage for your photos. It uploads them to your Google account and you can access them on your PC at photos.google.com using a web browser.

The search tool is amazing and can identify objects in a photo. If you search for the term 'flower', it will show every photo you've taken of flowers. Search for



Google Photos knows what's in your snaps and can find almost anything

'mountain' to find every photo containing a mountain. I typed in 'koala' and it showed my photos from Australia. How can it tell there's a koala in the photos? It's amazina!

Sarah Ortiz, via email

Move WhatsApp to a phone with no SIM

I recently had to return my phone to have it repaired. I backed up all my files where possible, including saving my WhatsApp chats to Google Drive. However, I was worried about losing access to important correspondence while my phone was being fixed. How would I know if somebody was trying to contact me, and would they realise that I was not seeing their messages?

I decided to try moving WhatsApp across to an old phone I had knocking about, so I could continue to receive messages. Unfortunately, the old device would not take my newer phone's nano SIM and I didn't have an adapter, but I managed to find a way around it.



First, after checking my backup was up to date (open WhatsApp Settings, tap Chats and 'Chat backup'), I uninstalled WhatsApp from my newer phone. I then downloaded and installed WhatsApp on my older device (via Wi-Fi) and, when prompted, entered my phone number. A verification code was sent via text to the newer phone, which I entered into WhatsApp on the older phone. This meant I was able to trick it into thinking the SIM was installed, so it then restored my chats from the cloud.

When the phone came back from its repair, I simply repeated the process in reverse to move my WhatsApp account back to my current device.

Tim Arthur, via email



You can install WhatsApp on another phone if you have the verification code

PHOTOS

Take selfies more easily

I refuse to buy a selfie stick, but sometimes when there's nobody around to ask to take a picture, I use my phone's front-facing camera. If you've ever tried this, you'll know how tricky it can be to hold the device and tap the shutter button at the same time. However, my son recently told me a simple trick that makes taking selfies much easier.

On most Android phones (and iPhones, too), pressing either of the physical volume buttons on the side of the device acts as a shutter. Depending on whether you're left or right handed, you can use a finger or thumb to take the photo while still comfortably holding the device. In fact, this option also works when using your device's back camera, and makes it feel more like a traditional point-and-shoot model.

Pauline W, via email

GENERAL PC

Start folder secrets

The Start menu in Windows 7 was the best Microsoft ever came up with and although the Windows 10 Start menu looks pretty, it's still not as good.

The Windows 7 Start menu had a folder called Startup where you could put programs that you wanted to automatically start with Windows (or remove them to stop them from starting). The Windows 10 Start menu doesn't have this but if you know where to look, you can still use this feature.

Press Windows+R, type appdata, press Enter and then navigate to:

Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs

This is where the Start menu items are stored and, here, you'll see a Start-up folder. It works the same way as the Startup folder in Windows 7. If you copy items from the Programs folder and put them in the Start-up folder, they will automatically run when Windows is launched.

Just to confuse matters, there is another place where Start menu items are stored:

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

This has more Start menu items and another Start-up folder.

T Buick, via email

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Restore old Instagram filters

Some time ago, Instagram introduced a range of new photographic filters and, when it did so, a number of the older ones seemed to disappear. However, I have just discovered that these filters have not been removed but are only hidden. To restore a hidden filter, swipe all the way to the left through the



You can disable any of Instagram's filters

available filters until you see the Manage button. Tap this and you can not only enable and disable filters, but also change their order in the list. If there's one that you find yourself using again and again, this lets you make the filter more accessible. Likewise, if there's an effect you really don't like, you can remove it from the available options.

Rob, via email

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Stop Twitter tagging

When a photo is posted on Twitter, you can tag people in it. If you don't want to be tagged by others, you can block this in the settings. Click your account picture, then click Settings, 'Security and privacy'. In the Privacy section, there are options to stop anyone tagging you, or to only allow people to tag you if you already follow them.

John Crowley, via email



Do you want to let people tag you on Twitter? If not, change these options

Blurred background in portraits

I followed the launch of the iPhone 7 with interest. It has some interesting new options, but while some may be new to iPhone users, they aren't new to everyone else. Take the new 'portrait picture' mode in the iPhone 7 Plus, for example. When taking portrait shots of people, you can blur the background to make the subject stand out. This has been available on my Samsung phone for some time.

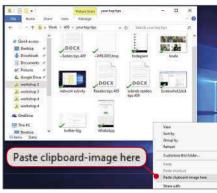
If you have a Samsung phone, press the Mode button at the bottom of the screen in the Camera app, then press Selective Focus. Tap the subject of your photo to focus on it, then take the photo. Open the Gallery to view the photo and, when you tap the button in the middle, you'll see three images with different focus effects. Select the one with the blurred background. Many people aren't aware of this tool.

Rob Hannon, via email

SOFTWARE

Paste screenshots quickly

The most common way of taking screen grabs is to press the Print Screen button, open up a picture-editing program such as Paint, then paste the image and save it



Screenshot2Disk lets you save screen grabs without opening any software

wherever you want. A far quicker way is to use Screenshot2Disk (screenshot2disk .codeplex.com). Once installed, this tool adds the right-click option 'Paste clipboard-image here'. Simply take a screen grab by pressing Print Screen, browse to the folder where you want the image to be saved, then right-click and select the option to paste. Where possible, I'd recommend taking screen grabs in the PNG format.

Jack Gold, Web User Forums

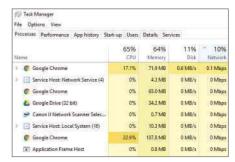
GENERAL PC

Find bandwidth hogs

Last issue, Ed Wright explained how to find the apps that are hogging your internet bandwidth by using the 'Data usage' tool in Windows 10. However, Task Manager provides an even simpler way to find out what's slowing you down on the web. First, press Ctrl+Shift+Esc to open Task Manager, then click the Network tab to sort the processes by the amount of bandwidth they're using. If large amounts of bandwidth are being used by a process you don't recognise, it's important that you check what it is before stopping it.

One service that frequently uses a lot of bandwidth is sychost.exe. which is used by a variety of different Windows processes. The easiest way to stop it is to disable Background Intelligent Transfer Service, which can be found under the Services tab. Simply right-click it and select Stop, but remember to re-enable it again when you can spare the bandwidth.

Brian Wooley, via email



Windows 10 lets you see which processes use the most bandwidth



Readers' Helpdesk

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

GENERAL PC

Can I create a restore point in the Start menu?

Whenever I make major changes to any of my PCs, I create a restore point with Windows Restore. Is there any way I can create a shortcut tile in the Windows 10 Start menu to take me straight to this option?

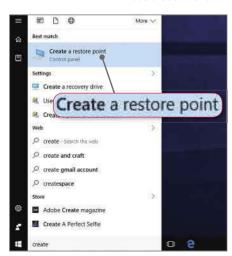
dave1510, Web User Forums

To make a shortcut for creating a restore point, right-click the Desktop and click New and Shortcut. Type %windir%\system32\sysdm.cpl into the empty box and click Next. Change the name to 'Create restore point', then click Finish. The shortcut will appear on your Desktop. When you double-click the shortcut, vou'll still need to select the 'System Protection' tab, then click Create to make the new restore point.

Unfortunately, Windows 10 doesn't let you add the shortcut to the Start menu, but you can download and install Restore Point Creater (bit.ly/restore409) if you need this option.

Alternatively, type create into the Start search bar and one of the top suggestions is to 'Create a restore point'.

Stewart40, DavidNewton and tornado, **Web User Forums**



Typing create in the Start menu is one of the fastest ways to create a restore point

SECURITY

How can I check my downloads are safe?

Today, I downloaded a PDF of a book from a website I am registered with and have downloaded many PDFs from in the past. I tried to send the PDF as an email attachment but Yahoo said that it contained a virus and would not send the email.

I scanned the PDF with Avast, which said no threat was found, but I was wary of opening it on my computer, so I deleted it. Should I have done so or was Yahoo simply being overcautious? How can I know whether a file is safe in such instances?

FratPark. Web User Forums

It's possible that it was a false positive from Yahoo. The best way of checking whether a file is really safe is to use VirusTotal (www.virustotal .com), which scans your files with multiple anti-malware engines. It works both with files on your PC and those you've not yet downloaded, as long as



VirusTotal lets you scan files before you download them

you have the URL. If the majority of services report the file as safe, you can be fairly confident that any saying the opposite are false positives.

There is a range of browser extensions you can also use that let you right-click a link and check it for viruses or malware with VirusTotal. For Firefox and Pale Moon, try VTzilla (bit.ly/vtzilla409); and for Chrome and Opera, use VTchromizer (bit.ly/ vtchromizer409). Alternatively, there's Security Plus (bit.ly/security409), which works with Firefox, Chrome, Opera and Safari.

> succulent95 and Madeline, **Web User Forums**

GENERAL PC

Why don't web pages I've saved load properly?

I'm really puzzled because when I download articles from Firefox and later go to Downloads to read them, the article is broken up into numerous little files. Can anyone help please?

alex2527, Web User Forums

Saving the web page using File, Save will do this. You'll get all the different elements, but they'll only load properly in your web browser. If you're always connected to the web, I'd recommend bookmarking the sites instead.

Alternatively, if you want to view the articles offline, try printing them as PDFs. In Chrome, you can do this by pressing Ctrl+P and choosing 'Save as PDF' as the Destination. You can use the same

keyboard shortcut in Firefox and select 'Microsoft Print to PDF' from the Name drop-down menu. Another option is to install the WebToPDF extension (bit.ly/ webtopdf409), which lets you save the web page as a PDF to your Downloads folder with a single click.

succulent95 and Stewart40, **Web User Forums**



Chrome and Firefox let you print web pages as PDFs





Star Email

f WU

Mug winner

WebUse

Chrome's dominance makes Google complacent

n News, Issue 408, you predict that Chrome will remain the world's most popular browser "for years to come". You're probably right, but I'm not sure it's a cause for celebration. You also

say that competition among browsers is "a positive force", but I'm not convinced.

The problem as I see it is that Google has become very complacent with Chrome. This is because its rivals pose no serious threat. Nobody uses Internet Explorer any more, and the less said about Edge the

better. Firefox is an old favourite for many people, but it will never regain the users it lost in the past five years.

That leaves Chrome as the emperor among browsers. The only way it could

> be challenged is if another company as big and respected as Google launches a browser But does such a company exist? Apple, you say? But it wouldn't make a Windows browser. Facebook perhaps, but would you trust it with your data? I know I wouldn't. Amazon? It would probably bombard you with product 'recommendations' (adverts, in other words).

Cast your mind back to the

fuss that ensued when Chrome launched. It made so many headlines because it was a browser from the mighty Google. I remember feeling excited about its prospects. If it had been from an obscure company, it wouldn't have grown beyond a cult following - like Opera.

You may think that I don't use Chrome, but I do. It is the world's best browser, after all. But it's not the most innovative. That accolade belongs to Opera, which has introduced pioneering tools such as built-in VPN because it can't survive on brand recognition alone. I wish Chrome's rivals were more popular, to force Google into taking greater innovative risks with its browser.

Alan Barlow, via email



'Bribed' reviews: did Amazon turn a blind eye?

While I'm glad that Amazon is making it harder for companies to get positive reviews by sending customers free and discounted products (Webometer, Issue 408), I'm alarmed that this practice was tolerated in the first place. It makes me question all the reviews I've ever read on Amazon, many of which played a large part in my purchasing decisions.

I wonder how bothered Amazon was by the plague of bribed reviews. As it chases mega profits, it needs all the buyers it can get, and a glut of positive reviews can only lead to more buyers. Amazon may be cracking down now, but has it turned a blind eye for years?

Susan Delaney, via email

Without 'nagging', Windows 10 wouldn't be free

I think Windows users should be a bit more realistic about how Microsoft works. I say this after reading your news story in Issue 408, in which you lament the possible return of the 'nagging' message urging 7 and 8.1 users to upgrade to 10. Let's remember that Microsoft didn't make Windows 10 free as an act of charity. It did so because it was confident that it could persuade

millions of users to upgrade. I was one of those millions, and I was grateful, because it gave me an escape route from Windows 8.1.

Let's face facts - nothing is truly "free". Someone, somewhere always incurs a cost, and in this case it was the 7 and 8.1 users who were 'nagged' into upgrading. I'm not saying these messages weren't irritating, but such marketing is how Microsoft justified giving Windows 10 away for free. So, you win some, you lose some. Nothing to get irate about.

Eric Walters, via email



Terms like 'doxxing' trivialise web abuse

I was pleased to read in Issue 408 (News) about new guidelines to target people who bully others online. Your news story



touched on one of the reasons why, in my opinion, online abuse has never been taken seriously enough. It's because of the bizarre names given to some types of abuse, such as 'doxxing'. I had no idea what this meant until reading your story. It sounds intriguing, almost exciting. There's no indication of the ugly truth, that doxxing is when someone publishes your personal details online. Suddenly it sounds less fun. If we stopped using these daft euphemisms, I think there would be more stigma attached to online abuse and fewer people would do it.

Martin O'Connor, via email

Being 'offensive' shouldn't be a crime

While I acknowledge that the law needs to catch up with the new crimes being conducted online, I'm concerned by the





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webuser@dennis.co.uk, www.facebook.com/webusermagazine, www.twitter.com/webusermagazine and forum.webuser.co.uk

emphasis on being "offensive". The Director of Public Prosecutions Alison Saunders says that only people being "grossly" offensive have anything to worry about, but that's very different to abuse. I don't wish to defend Twitter trolls, but they should have the freedom to criticise public figures as long as they don't encourage others to attack them. I'm sure some of this criticism will be considered "grossly offensive", but that shouldn't make it criminal. It will always be a tricky line to tread, but freedom of speech must come first.

Simon Barnwell, via email

EU copyright laws: thank God we're leaving

I've just read the FAQ in Issue 408 on the EU's proposed copyright laws. In fact, I read it twice just to make sure I grasped all the details. So, as I understand it, the EU wants to force news websites to charge Google to link to their stories, even if some sites don't want to do this because they rely on traffic from Google. What an insane piece of regulation! When will the EU learn to stop meddling? Oh, wait, it never will, which is why we voted to leave.

Gareth Mann, via email

EU copyright laws: oh God, we're leaving

Every day I get more worried about the implications of Brexit. There are big issues, like jobs and inflation, but thanks to Web User I now realise it will also affect the internet. The FAQ in Issue 408 was very illuminating – and worrying – if Brexit means we won't have the same right as people in Europe to access our paid-for content. But I doubt our Brexit negotiators will care too much about Brits on holiday in the Med who want to watch the iPlayer or listen to Spotify. It will be little inconveniences like this that the Leave voters didn't take into consideration.

Christine Parkinson, via email



Four Motorolas for the price of an iPhone

I had to laugh when I read your 'What you say' column (Letters, Issue 407) regarding Apple ditching the headphone socket in its new iPhone. Here's my question: why pay £700 for a phone when you can buy a Motorola for £150? Let me have a quick think: should I buy an iPhone for myself, or should I buy a Motorola phone for myself and one each for the rest of my family, then spend the other £100 on something else? Tough choice.

Stan Elliott, via email

Revisiting Vectrex will make me smile

In Issue 408, I saw a word in *Web User* that I never thought I would see: Vectrex. It was one of the gaming systems that you said Lakka (www.lakka.tv) was compatible with (in the Weekend Project). For the uninitiated, the Vectrex (pictured above) was a games console from the early Eighties that was a bit like having an arcade machine in your bedroom. I was 11 when I got it for Christmas (1983, I think), and spent the following six months playing games like MineStorm, Solar Quest and Berzerk.

But times move on and my Vectrex was replaced by a Spectrum, which itself was replaced by a Commodore, and so on. I've always had a soft spot for it, though, so I will attempt to relive its glory days by installing Lakka on my PC. It may not rival my PlayStation 4, but it'll make me smile like a kid again.

Scott Bradshaw, via email

Samsung's 'sheep-like' fans

If I were head of Samsung, I would have enjoyed reading 'What you say' in Issue 408. Three of the four people who answered your question about Samsung's exploding phones said that they wouldn't be put off buying the company's products in the future. Being kind, you could say they were being loyal to a brand they love. Being unkind, you could say they were being foolish and sheep-like. I do wonder what Samsung would have to do to put off these people.

Warren Valentine, via email

Stay loyal to Yahoo

This may not be a very popular viewpoint, but I'm going to stand up for Yahoo. Or at least explain why I don't want the company to go bust as a result of people switching from it.

I'm not downplaying the hack. Any company that loses the details of 500 million users has deep-rooted problems. It should also be forced to explain why it

Our 2015 Back Issues Disc is on sale now from Amazon, visit bit.ly/wudisc15









took two years to admit the hack. But we will all be poorer if Yahoo fails to get through this difficult period because companies like Google and Microsoft will have even more of a monopoly on email and other online services.

I'm sticking with Yahoo as my main email provider because, as awful as this hack is, I don't want all my eggs in Google's basket. We need more choice online, not less. I hope other Yahoo diehards will also give it a second chance. Jack Wright, via email

Confused by TV streaming

What possessed Roku to bring out *five* different versions of its streaming device (First Look, Issue 408)? I like my Roku 2, and I want to upgrade it soon, but I'm now bamboozled by the choices on offer. Customers can easily become confused by too many options. I've read all the specifications of the new devices, but I have no idea which one is best for me.

Marcus Pound, via email

Web User says: Many readers, like Marcus, have told us that they're bewildered by the range of TV-streaming devices, apps and services. So we're working on a special issue (out Weds 16 November) that explains everything you need to know. You'll discover which boxes to buy, what apps to install, and which services to subscribe to.

Web User: you'll love it or hate it

I'd like to congratulate your designer on making the cover of Issue 408 look like a jar of Marmite, just days after the Tesco-Unilever fallout (or PR stunt). I expect sales of Marmite rocketed in the days after the controversy. I hope the same is true of Issue 408. I bought a

copy, as did mv sister! Ian Philips, via email



ALKTALK HAS BEEN FINED £400.000 FOR THE HACK LATE LAST YEAR. IS THAT BIG **ENOUGH?**

Given how much it makes, plus the potential repercussions for customers of such lax security, it's far too low.

Dawkins Dog @DawkinsDog

Less than £3 per person potentially affected is an insult.

Steve Ellis @gb022621

No, that's a pittance for what TalkTalk makes each year. Most companies are fined way too little.

Jack @imthegoldmaster

Why wasn't TalkTalk fined the maximum of £500k? I wonder if individuals were to take them to court, whether they would get a payout.

Shamus Doherty

I'm a TalkTalk customer and, as a result of my personal details being stolen, I've received in excess of 500 scam calls saying I have errors on my router. A £400k fine is a drop in the ocean to a company of TalkTalk's size.

Brian Brown

ILL YOU BUY GOOGLE'S **NEW PIXEL PHONE?**

Priced way beyond my expectations, so no. Maybe later if it drops in price.

Shaun Vaughan

Really want to, but it depends what else is released between now and upgrade time.

Karl Robson

I would like the Pixel XL but £710 for the baseline model is too much. I will wait until they drop in price.

Anthony Ridley @a_ridley

Think I'll still wait for the next Samsung Galaxy Note (presumably number 8 now.) Pixel looks fantastic but overpriced for an iPhone clone.

Neil Williams @neilenator

No, I love my iPhone too much.

Joanne Evans

No, I've got an LG G4 phone, which I've no intention of changing.

Phil Graham

RE YOU THINKING ABOUT SWITCHING FROM YAHOO, FOLLOWING THE RECENT HACK?

I switched from Yahoo a few years ago to Gmail then Outlook.

Colin Wallace

I got rid of Yahoo in 2013 and switched to Gmail. I opened up another Yahoo account purely for circular emails and, only a few weeks ago, a hacking attempt was made.

Martin Phillp

No, but only because it isn't the Nineties, so I haven't had a Yahoo email in years.

Rich Grove @Rich_Grove

People still use Yahoo?

Jimmy Riddle @j1mmyr1ddle

HAT'S THE OLDEST PIECE OF TECH YOU STILL USE?

A ZX81 Spectrum. It takes me back in time to how my career started.

David Batty

A Dell Studio laptop. It's thicker and heavier than an encyclopaedia. The missus bought it direct from Dell back in 2007. It came with Vista.

Simon Mellor @Simon9Hops

A Sony minidisc player. It still works, and I still have blank discs!

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

The Atari 2600 'Woody' from 1977. Ross MacGillivray @rossmacgill The fine imposed on TalkTalk for leaking customer data is pitiful, argues Barry Collins

Another fine mess gets swept under the carpet

ow much is your personal data - vour phone number, address. date of birth, even your bank account number and sort code - worth to you? Hundreds of pounds? Thousands? It certainly could be worth that much if a thief used the information to steal your identity, empty your bank account and leave you with a years-long fight to get your money back and restore your credit history.

According to the Information Commissioner, however, that information is worth precisely £2.55. Less than the cost of two issues of Web User. Because that's how much the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) decided to fine TalkTalk for its "failure to implement the most basic cyber security measures", resulting in the theft of 156,959 customers' personal details, 15,656 of which included bank account numbers and sort codes.

The Information Commissioner would

like you to think she's playing tough cop. heralding the "record £400,000 fine" as the biggest it has ever levied on a company. But it's still £100,000 less than the maximum she could have imposed on TalkTalk, and it's inexplicably soft given that the ICO's own investigation revealed that the leak

resulted from an attack on a database that "was affected by a bug for which a fix had been made available over three-and-a-

half years before the cyber-attack, but which had not been applied". That's gross incompetence, pure and simple.

Will £400,000 make much of a difference to TalkTalk? Will it convince the firm not to be so cavalier with customers' data in the future? Hardly. The company's CEO, Dido Harding,

didn't even seem to know in the customers' bank details had been encrypted, and later admitted they hadn't. Yet, for this abject failure to protect her own customers from an everyday attack perpetrated by a teenager, she was paid £2.8 million in

f That £400,000 fine

represents only 6% of what

TalkTalk paid its four executive

directors last year

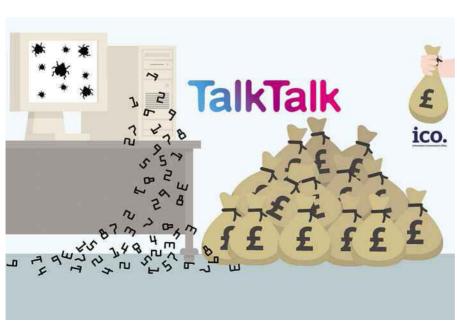
2016, including a bonus of £220,000 for the vear 2016 alone. That £400,000 fine represents only 6% of what TalkTalk paid its

four executive directors last year - it barely makes a dent.

Yet, the ICO isn't so coy about punishing those who really can't afford it - us. It has a long history of imposing big fines on taxpayer-funded bodies responsible for far less serious data leaks. Take Hampshire County Council, which was fined £100,000 in August "after documents containing personal details of over 100 people were found in a disused building". Or London NHS Trust, given a £180,000 fine in May for revealing the email addresses of more than 700 users of an HIV service. Both serious offences, both deserving of punishment, but both far less likely to cause the kind of widespread fraud and distress that the TalkTalk leak did.

When I asked a spokesperson for the ICO why she thought that customers' personal data was only worth £2.55 a pop, she refused to comment, pointing me back to the press statement in which the new Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham says "TalkTalk should and could have done more to safeguard its customer information". They're not the only ones who should and could have done more, Ms Denham.







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hank 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 7 November (8pm)*, you'll receive it through your letterbox before it's available in the shops!

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