

# STOP THE WEB STALKING YOU

## The 17 creepiest things it knows about you...

- 1 Where you live
- 2 What you last bought online
- 3 Your **telephone number**
- 4 Where you work
- 5 What you **search for online**
- 6 Who your friends are
- 7 Where you went to school
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- 9 What you look like

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Fast & free - and no adverts p54



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# Hide yourself from the nosy web

**F**acebook is getting on my wick. It's not just the competitive outpourings of grief over the latest musician, comedian or acting legend to die, or even those stupid quizzes that determine which biscuit/Bay City Roller/tropical disease you are (I got leprosy, but I don't think it's medically binding). No, it's the constant oversharing of personal information, from holidays and babies to meals and bowel movements.

What people forget is that everything you post online allows the web to build a better picture of what you do *offline*, to augment the data it's already sneakily gathering. In

this issue's cover feature (page 38), we reveal the 17 creepiest things companies including Facebook, Google and Microsoft know about you, from where you live to what car you drive. But don't panic – we also explain how to remove this info from the web and stop them capturing it again.

Thanks again to everyone who submitted 'Windows Ten' anagrams – turn to page 72 to see our favourites.

**Robert Irvine**  
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[#webuser](#)



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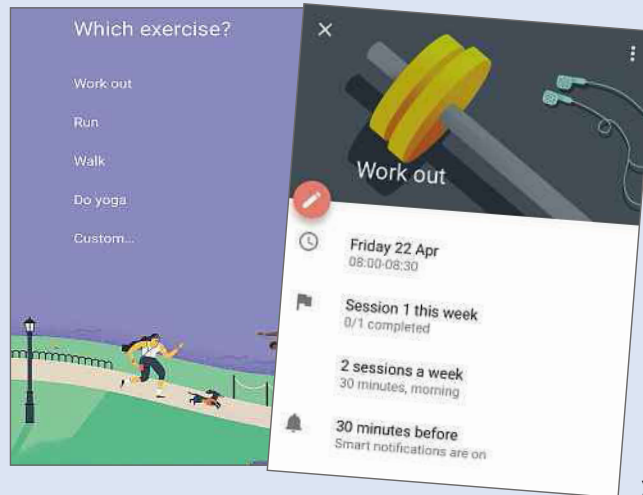
# What's New Online

## Manage your life in Google Calendar

**G**oogle has added several new features to two of its most popular services that, when used together, should make it easier to keep on top of life's events while freeing up time for your personal projects. Most of these new tools have been integrated with Inbox by Gmail ([www.google.co.uk/inbox](http://www.google.co.uk/inbox)) and the most impressive part is the way the service now deals with Google Calendar events.

Inbox makes a note of any messages you receive that contain details of future meet-ups. It then brings together all the relevant emails and detects the important information, which it displays on a single page. If the plans change, so does the data, which makes it far easier to keep on top of what's happening, where and when.

Inbox is also attempting to eradicate the age-old habit of emailing yourself web addresses.



Knowing that so many of us continue to do this despite the existence of apps such as Pocket, Google has added a 'Save to Inbox' feature for links, which brings them together in one place. Similarly, it's now easier to keep on top of email newsletters, thanks to a streamlined preview function that lets

you jump straight to the most interesting articles.

With a bit of luck, these handy new features should leave you more time to do other things, and that's where Google Calendar for iOS and Android comes into its own. Set a goal such as "get fitter" and the app asks you when you'd like to do it and how frequently. It

then sifts through your calendar to find the best slots to work towards this goal. If later it clashes with a new event, Calendar will reschedule it and gradually learn the best times to schedule these slots in future.

[gmail.googleblog.com](http://gmail.googleblog.com)

## Find the source of ransomware

[id-ransomware.malwarehunterteam.com](http://id-ransomware.malwarehunterteam.com)

Sadly, ransomware infections are on the rise, with a growing number of hackers seeking to encrypt your computer's files and charge you a hefty sum for the key to unlock them. It's a nasty crime that underlines the need to back up your precious data, but if your computer does become infected, help may be at hand. Upload the ransom note or a sample encrypted file to ID Ransomware and the tool will try to work out which software family the hackers used to lock

it down. It will then tell you of any known methods and software that may be able to decrypt the files, so you can avoid paying the ransom and encouraging criminals.



## Watch live 360-degree videos

[bit.ly/youtube396](http://bit.ly/youtube396)

By taking the delights of virtual reality and the growing demand for live streaming video and mashing the two together, YouTube looks set to

address one of the internet's other obsessions: the fear of missing out (or FOMO). YouTube has supported pre-recorded 360-degree videos for more than a year, and it now offers live streams, too, with the potential to make you feel you're actually at an event.

There are two ways of experiencing this. You can view the videos in your browser and use the onscreen controls to look around you, or you can pop your phone into a cheap virtual reality headset, such as Google Cardboard, and immerse yourself completely. The service kicked off with some select performances from the Californian music festival Coachella ([www.youtube.com/user/coachella](http://www.youtube.com/user/coachella)), but as more creators climb aboard, we expect to see the range of content widen significantly.



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

## Explore the world's cultural heritage

[www.cyark.org/projects](http://www.cyark.org/projects)

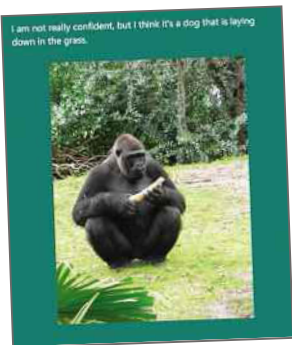
CyArk was set up to create detailed 3D models of the world's cultural-heritage sites amid fears that they could be lost to human destruction and natural disasters. You can now view CyArk's impressive recreations on this map, using the timeline slider to see just when each site came into existence. Models are also organised into themes, with topics ranging from the Atlantic Slave Trade to historic cities.



## Caption photos automatically

[www.captionbot.ai](http://www.captionbot.ai)

CaptionBot, Microsoft's latest stab at artificial intelligence, uses algorithms to determine the content of an image



and then generates a caption that explains what it "sees". It doesn't always get it right – it thought the gorilla in this picture was a dog – but by rating its accuracy, you

can help the bot learn from its mistakes. It seems particularly clued-up on celebrities, which may be a pointed indication about how it's being used, and hopefully its guesses will improve over time. See our FAQ on page 36 to learn more about bots.

## Save articles for later in Chrome

[www.google.com/save](http://www.google.com/save)

A new Chrome extension not only lets you 'save' any photos you come across while searching the web, but also articles you want to read later. Although it's little more than clever bookmarking (the items you save remain online and you're simply given links to them), it helpfully pulls everything together in one place and lets you add tags and notes.

Additionally, if you use Google's note-taking tool Keep, its updated Chrome extension ([bit.ly/keep396](http://bit.ly/keep396)) lets you save entries there too.



## 5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER



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

This is the official account for the writers of the new *Star Trek* series

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

Billed as "the news cats trust", this offbeat account delivers updates for moggies

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

The free newspaper has opened a new Twitter account to promote its daily content

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

Off on your travels? Discover the world's hidden wonders and read interesting articles

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

Apple is now delivering 'curated content' from its news partners

## + Read along with the Bard

[bit.ly/bard396](http://bit.ly/bard396)

Sir Ian McKellen says we shouldn't read Shakespeare but should enjoy his plays at the theatre instead. This site gives you the best of both worlds, as you can watch a performance of *King Lear* while reading each line as it's spoken.

## Listen to Google Play Music podcasts

[play.google.com/music](http://play.google.com/music)

As well as suggesting tunes to suit your mood, Google Play Music now recommends podcasts, too (currently US only). Choose from categories including *Laughing Out Loud* and *Learning Something New*.

## GIF anything on your Mac

[giphy.com](http://giphy.com)

If you own a Mac and you see something onscreen that would make a good animated GIF, Giphy's new tool lets you create it instantly. You can then add stickers and text before sharing it on social media.

## View third-party content on iPlayer

[www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer](http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer)

The BBC is expanding the iPlayer to offer content from outside the Beeb. It already includes programming from Welsh-language channel S4C, and is now screening coverage from arts and cultural organisations, too. Starting with a festival marking the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death, the service will show six months of digital content that includes the RSC's production of *Richard III*.



# Need to Know

## Ad blockers blamed for 'breaking the internet'

### What happened?

More of us are now using ad blockers when we browse the web, but new research suggests that such tools could be adversely affecting more than just websites' ad revenue. Tech firm Oriel ([bit.ly/oriel396](http://bit.ly/oriel396)) tested the 100 most popular sites in the UK, and discovered that ad blockers not only took out pop-ups and advertising but also broke other parts of web pages so the content didn't display correctly. This included check-in screens for airlines and checkout systems for online shops, the report noted.

Although turning off your ad blocker and reloading the page would fix the problem, it might require you to log in again or navigate back to the problem page. What's more, it's not always clear when parts of a page are missing or broken, so it may seem to the visitor as if the site has been poorly designed when in fact it's the victim of an overreaching blocker. The research tested 24 different ad blockers, and found problems across the range of tools, from breaking parts of pages to removing content that isn't advertising.

Oriel said blocking such elements constituted censorship, because "it is interfering, changing and potentially censoring web content" – but it's worth noting that Oriel creates advertising technology, so it has a stake in this fight.

Ad blocking has become very popular of late, as web users grow increasingly frustrated with the proliferation of



invasive and irritating ads. Apple finally allowed blocking tools on the iPhone and iPad last year. These developments have led to widespread concerns that websites, publishers and other companies will no longer be able to make money online.

### How will it affect you?

If you're using an ad blocker such as Adblock Plus or uBlock Origin, be aware that it may cause problems on certain sites. If a page doesn't look right or something isn't working as it should, don't jump to conclusions and blame the website. Instead, either turn off your ad blocker or disable it for that domain, then reload the page. If you're trying to make a purchase, you may have to restart the process from the beginning.

It's worth bearing this problem in mind when you're buying time-sensitive items, such as tickets for a popular event. Rather than risk the frustration of losing your place, it may be a good idea to turn your blocker off or pause it before you start.

Although the makers of ad blockers need to be more careful about overzealous blocking, there is no reason to stop using a blocker if it appeals to you. Aside from speeding up page-loading times and filtering irritating ads, they can also protect you against 'malvertising', which tries to use advertising technologies to hack your

PC. Instead of uninstalling your ad blocker, simply turn it off from time to time, especially when making important transactions.

### What do we think?

Ad blockers are controversial for a host of reasons, most notably because they prevent websites from earning the revenue that keeps them in business. Indeed, that's more likely to "break the web" than a few missing elements on a page. If there's no money in putting content online, less of it will be made, which is another reason to learn how to better control your ad blocker. If you turn it off for specific web domains, you can allow ads for the sites you want to support while blocking them on sites you don't know or trust, or those that use particularly annoying ads.

There are downsides to removing ads and downsides to displaying them. Ad blockers needn't stop you seeing all advertising – they simply give you control over when and where you choose to see them. That said, the developers behind ad blockers need to ensure they don't break websites. Dodgy blocking only gives those who oppose the technology more ammunition in the debate about the effects of ad blockers on websites. This seems counterproductive given that their *raison d'être* is to make the web more enjoyable and faster to use.



**Oriel says ad blockers have a detrimental effect on the content of websites**

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

## Opera adds free VPN to its browser



### What happened?

Norwegian developer Opera has added a built-in VPN (virtual private network) to its browser, just weeks after introducing an ad blocker. Similar VPN tools are available for other browsers, such as Chrome and Firefox, but Opera has removed the hassle of looking for and installing a secure, reliable add-on.

The move comes after Opera's purchase of VPN extension maker SurfEasy in 2015. The VPN is free, requires no registration (you can turn it on and off with a click) and provides unlimited data usage. It's currently available in the developer build of Opera (v38), and will come to the stable version very soon.

### How will it affect you?

Why use a VPN? One major benefit is that it lets you choose which country your IP address appears to be based in. That's handy for accessing country-locked web content – such as shows on the US version of Netflix that haven't made their way to the UK yet – as

well as giving you greater privacy and security. Many businesses require staff to use a VPN when logging into the network from outside their headquarters.

VPNs also let you visit sites that are blocked. In the UK, that's usually limited to illegal sites – such as those promoting hate, or offering child-abuse images or pirated downloads – but in other countries governments block everything from Facebook to BBC News.

### What do we think?

Opera is once again leading the way for browsers. This may seem a small move – after all, you can get VPNs for other browsers – but making one available by default should encourage the use of such security and privacy tools by people who otherwise wouldn't be aware they existed. That's particularly important for Opera users – although the browser has a tiny 2% share globally, it's used by millions of people in Indonesia and Russia, which are known for blocking sites.

## Web host deletes customers' sites

### What happened?

Thousands of customers of web-hosting service 123-reg ([www.123-reg.co.uk](http://www.123-reg.co.uk)) were affected by a catastrophic coding flaw that deleted their data. The UK's largest hosting provider lost data from 67 servers, wiping out customers' entire business websites because it didn't have backups.

It's not clear what caused the fault, but users who tried to log in during the incident were directed to the wrong accounts, allowing them to see private data from other companies. 123-reg has taken the unusual step of referring itself to the Information Commissioner's Office ([ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk)), the UK's data watchdog, over this aspect of the fault.

### How will it affect you?

As we were going to press, 123-reg was working with a data-recovery specialist in an attempt to retrieve as much data from the wiped servers as possible, but many affected websites were still offline.

Whether or not you're a 123-reg customer, the incident is a good reminder to back up your data – it's a lesson 123-reg should

have known, and one that many of its customers have learned the hard way. Putting the lost websites back online is easy if the owners have backed them up elsewhere. If not, they're out of luck. If 123-reg had backed up the data, or the users had done the same, this would have been only a minor problem.

### What do we think?

123-reg stressed that the affected service isn't "managed" by the company itself, and that anyone who paid for a backup service will have had their websites restored already, but that's cold comfort for anyone who entrusted the hosting provider with their website.

It's astonishing that 123-reg hadn't backed up its own systems, but of course many of us know we should do this and still don't bother. Backups are boring, but let this be a reminder to put them on your to-do list, whether it's your small business website, online photo album or personal blog.

#### VPS Outage

**Created:** 16 April 2016, 09:43  
**Last Updated:** 22 April 2016, 10:02

Some customers on our VPS platform are currently offline. Our engineers are working to restore service.

Our primary method of communicating status updates at this time is through individual emails with updates specific to each VPS and customer.

We understand how frustrating this is and ask that you allow our service teams to work through the open tickets and emails you have sent. They will update you with information passed from our system teams.



# EU accuses Google of abusing its power

## What happened?

The European Union (EU) issued formal antitrust charges against Google over its Android operating system and its suite of preinstalled apps.

The EU's commissioner for competition, Margrethe Vestager, said that Google had "abused its dominant position" and reduced competition in the mobile software market by forcing handset manufacturers to bundle its own apps with their devices at the expense of others.

"A competitive mobile internet sector is increasingly important for consumers and businesses in Europe," said Vestager. "Based on our investigation thus far, we believe that Google's behaviour denies consumers a wider choice of mobile apps and services and stands in the way of innovation by other players, in breach of EU antitrust rules."

The charges specifically claim that Google has restricted competition by pressuring manufacturers to include apps such as Gmail, Google Search and Google Play on their devices. There have also been allegations, which Google denies, that it pays companies to preinstall its apps and stop them using rival services.

Google objected to the EU Commission's claims, saying the manufacturers enter its partner agreements voluntarily. It also pointed



out that Android phones come with apps from Microsoft, Facebook, Amazon and other companies installed.

## How will it affect you?

If the EU Commission wins its case, new Android phones may come without many familiar Google apps installed and ready to use. You'll still be able to install them from the Play store for free, but you'll be able to choose which you download. Many Android owners currently use Google's apps simply because they're installed and prominently placed on their home screens. Of course, you may prefer Google's tools to those of other companies, in which case you may

regard the EU's charges to be causing unnecessary inconvenience.

## What do we think?

Google's apps are popular for good reason – they're easy to use, well designed and work seamlessly with one another – but lots of equally good tools from other companies are being deprived of attention by Google's dominance. It's handy to have your favourite Google apps at your disposal as soon as you switch on your new phone, but we should be able to choose alternatives. As with Microsoft's anti-competitive behaviour over Internet Explorer, it's hard not to feel that Google is getting too big for its boots.



## FIRST LOOK

### HTC Vive

[www.htcvive.com/uk](http://www.htcvive.com/uk)

Not all virtual reality (VR) is created equal. Most VR headsets on the market so far have used your smartphone in some way – most notably Google's Cardboard initiative and Samsung's Gear VR headset. However, your phone's mobile graphics hardware simply isn't powerful enough to provide a truly convincing VR experience. That's why the HTC Vive and Oculus Rift both require hulking great gaming PCs to power them. As well as a big desktop PC, the Vive has further requirements that make it even more of an 'enthusiast' product. For starters, it costs a whopping £689, but more importantly its unique feature – full, room-scale VR that lets you move



around freely in 360 degrees – requires a sizeable playing space. Then there's the extra hardware (and cabling) you need to set up to track your movements.

Admittedly, the world's most advanced virtual-reality headset was probably never designed for casual consumers. It's precisely what VR enthusiasts have been waiting for, however, and it delivers in spades. Having the ability to move and wave the Vive's two controllers around like hands

is really quite extraordinary. It's one thing to be able to look around a virtual space and operate your virtual avatar with a gamepad, but the ability to walk through it, lean over its precipices and throw your limbs every which way to evade its dangers is really quite magical.

For the technology to have any chance of success, however, Vive must start making a more compelling case with a bigger range of advanced software. Only a couple of games – Job Simulator: the 2050 Archives and Fantastic Contraption – are what you'd recognise as full, retail-style releases, but unless you really like puzzle games or don't mind replaying Job Simulator's handful of levels several times, you'll be hard-pressed to fill your time until the next big wave of games arrives later this autumn.



## WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

# Is Chrome no longer safe on XP and Vista?

Google has ended support for older operating systems with the rollout of its latest version of Chrome – the world's most popular web browser.

As of Chrome 50, Windows XP, Vista and older versions of Mac OS X will no longer receive Chrome updates or security patches, although the browser will continue to function as normal. Any new vulnerabilities discovered in the browser will not be fixed for users of those operating systems, which means there is greater potential for their computers to be infected by viruses and malware.

Along with Windows XP and Vista, the specific versions of OS X that are no longer supported include OS X 10.6, 10.7, and 10.8. Google announced last November that it would be ending support for the browser on these operating systems.

"If you are still on one of these unsupported platforms, we encourage you to move to a newer operating system to ensure that you continue to receive the latest Chrome versions and features," said Google's director of engineering, Marc Pawliger.

Microsoft and Apple have both ended support for these older versions of their respective operating systems,



although Vista will continue to receive security patches until 11 April 2017. Microsoft also ended support for versions 8, 9 and 10 of its own Internet Explorer browser in January. However, Firefox and Opera are still supported on XP and Vista.

### LIKELIHOOD RATING



It's clear that Google has stuck to its guns about ditching support for Chrome on XP and Vista. You can continue to use the browsers on those old operating systems, but we wouldn't recommend it because they're likely to become prime targets for hackers and malware writers.



## WEBOMETER



### WE LIKE...

#### ↑ EE promises 95% 4G coverage by 2020

The BT-owned mobile phone network currently offers 4G services to 60% of the UK's landmass, and has now announced plans to increase this figure to 95% by 2020.



#### ↑ Chrome OS 'to get Android apps'

After a Reddit user spotted an option labelled 'Enable Android apps to run on your Chromebook', rumours that Google plans to merge Chrome OS and Android have gathered momentum.



### WE DON'T LIKE...

#### ↓ File sharers face 10 years in jail

The UK government plans to increase the maximum sentence for online copyright infringement to 10 years' imprisonment, despite widespread concerns that such punishments are not feasible.



#### ↓ Amazon snubs non-Prime customers

Amazon UK held a sale of several popular PlayStation 4 games including Grand Theft Auto V and Battlefield Hardline, during which these products were available only to customers with a Prime subscription.



## What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

### Pictar

[bit.ly/pictar396](http://bit.ly/pictar396) | From \$70 (£48)

Many of us now use our phones as our primary cameras, but even the best iPhones can't rival the stability and quality of a DSLR – unless, that is, you invest in a Pictar. This innovative camera grip gives you a secure hold on your iPhone, even when you're using it with one hand, while offering easy access to physical controls. These include a sensitive shutter button, a programmable zoom ring and an exposure compensation wheel, as well as a smart wheel that lets you switch between different modes and a selfies button. The team hopes to raise \$100,000 (£69,500) by 27 May.



# Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

### Apple pulls support for QuickTime on Windows

Apple has confirmed that it will no longer support QuickTime for Windows, following reports of serious security vulnerabilities threatening the media-playing software. Security firm Trend Micro released an urgent blog post recommending that Windows users of QuickTime uninstall the software as soon as possible. It claimed Apple would no longer be supporting the video player, and notified readers of two new security holes that had been identified.

Although Apple made no formal announcement about ending support for QuickTime on Windows, it updated its support page dedicated



to the software on Wednesday 20 April to say: "QuickTime 7 for Windows is no longer supported by Apple".

QuickTime has been a fixture for Apple on Windows PCs for many years; iTunes used QuickTime's video player functions for some of its own media, including video content purchased from the iTunes Store. Apple's decision to pull the plug on its support for QuickTime on Windows has also affected other software makers such as Adobe, which rely on some of its codecs.

[bit.ly/quicktime396](http://bit.ly/quicktime396)

### New Qbot malware is tougher to destroy

Security researchers have discovered a new strain of the Qbot malware that is hard to find and difficult to remove. The malware has already infected over 50,000 PCs globally, according to research by BAE Systems, which discovered it at the start of the year after



an attack on a public body that left 500 computers infected.

Researchers managed to analyse the new strain and found that a number of modifications had been made to the original Qbot malware to make it harder to detect and intercept. These included a new 'shape-changing' or polymorphic code, which meant that each time the malware's code was issued by the servers controlling it, it was compiled afresh with additional content, making it look like a totally different program to researchers looking for specific signatures. The malware can also detect if it is being looked at in a sandbox environment – a tool that antivirus programs use to spot malware before it reaches users' inboxes.

[bit.ly/qbot396](http://bit.ly/qbot396)

## Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

**THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:**  
**Paul Fletcher, cyber security evangelist at Alert Logic**  
([www.alertlogic.com](http://www.alertlogic.com))



**Q Why aren't web advertisers doing more to prevent malvertising?**

Jon Patterson, Twitter

**A** Advertising networks can only do so much, because the biggest

problem with malvertising has more to do with browser and plugin settings. Delivering dynamic content to every browser and a variety of plugins (such as Java or Flash) is a difficult task. Malicious attackers know that browser and plugin security is more of a user responsibility and that users respond differently to adverts.

Advertising networks could do more to protect their customers, but that means each user would need to help fix the problem. The advertising network could build browser and plugin

**“ Malvertising is still a problem because most users don't update their browsers and plugins in a timely manner ”**

intelligence into its code and not run any ads if the browser and plugin settings don't meet a certain standard.

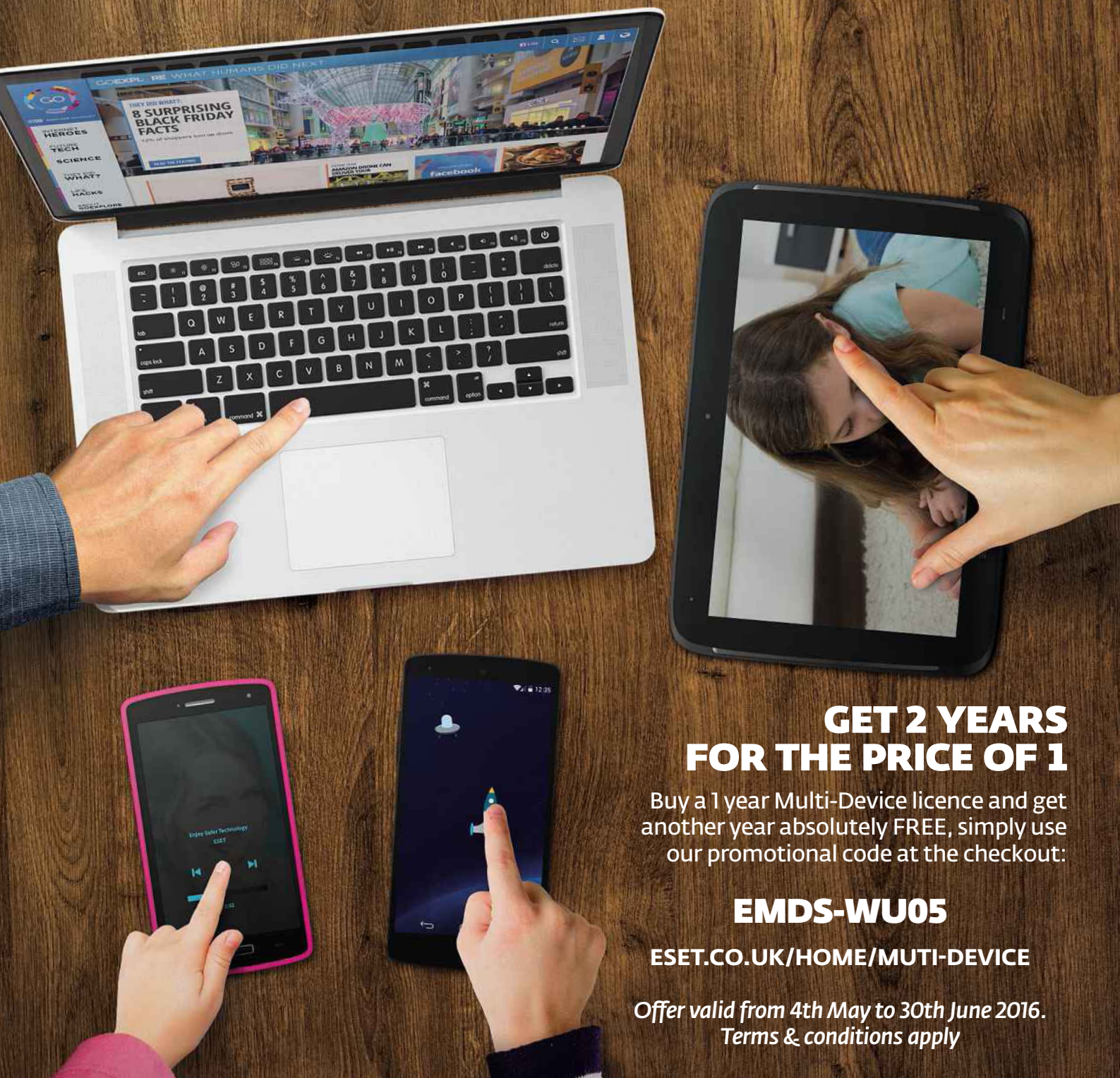
Malvertising is still a problem because of possible 'zero day' threats to browser-based plugins. Also, most users don't update their browsers and plugins in a timely manner. This means the best way to fix the problem is either to prompt the user to update their settings or not to deliver the

content in the first place (which is obviously of no use to advertisers).

Users can help by disabling plugins (but probably won't

because it disrupts their web-browsing experience) and by being willing to use other browsers with the proper updates (although again, that changes the web-browsing experience and takes time and effort on the user's part). Finally, users can switch to browsers that currently support 'sandboxing' technology, such as Chrome, Internet Explorer and Edge.

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# ★ Best New Websites

## Site of the Fortnight

NEWS

**iNews**

[inews.co.uk](http://inews.co.uk)

RELAUNCH

Formerly an offshoot of the *Independent*, the *i* newspaper was sold to Johnston Press in February, and it now has an online version. While some papers merely paste their latest edition on the web, iNews stresses the 'brief' in daily briefing, presenting stories in a bite-size format. The five 'essential' stories of the moment appear at the top of the homepage, above an at-a-glance grid of the rest of the news. We love this no-nonsense approach, which is complemented by an attractive, smooth-scrolling design that takes you straight to the next article when you reach the bottom of the page. It's a triumph of style and simplicity.

Our rating



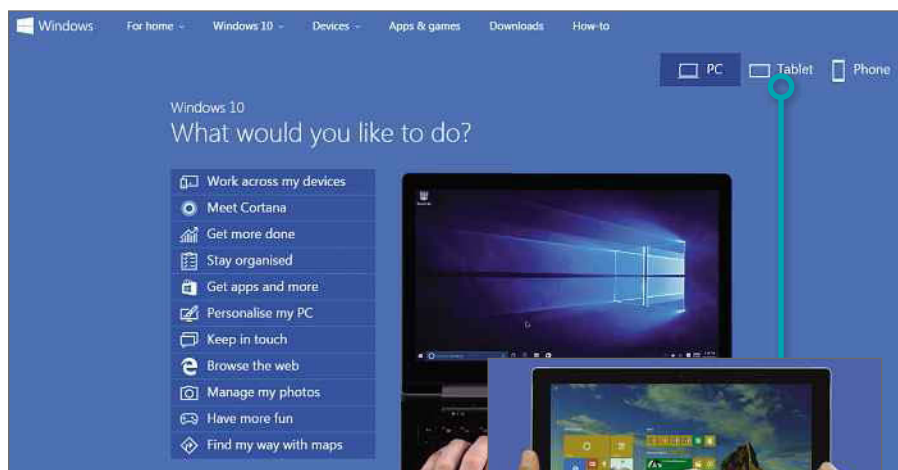
### EXPLAINERS

In-depth articles and videos about the hot topics of the day



### DISTRACTIONS

Amusing videos, quirky quizzes and offbeat news stories



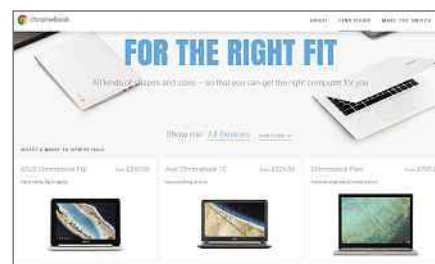
TECHNOLOGY

## Windows 10 Demo

[bit.ly/windows396](http://bit.ly/windows396)

Want to try Windows 10 without risking an upgrade or installing a virtual machine? Well, you're in luck, because Microsoft has launched an online emulator that shows off its key features in your browser. Select an option from the menu on the left, such as 'Meet Cortana', 'Browse the web' or 'Have more fun' to view further options, each of which plays a video on the right. We like the fact that you can switch between PC, tablet and phone, and the range of features covered is impressive. However, the video quality is too poor to see clearly what's going on, and it's a shame you can only watch demos rather than actually interacting with Windows 10 to get a proper feel for it.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

TECHNOLOGY

## Chromebooks – Find Yours

[bit.ly/chromebooks396](http://bit.ly/chromebooks396)

Not to be outdone by Microsoft, Google has updated its Chromebook site to help you find the perfect model. That's the theory, at least, because the new section simply provides details of the latest Chromebooks and lets you filter by manufacturer, screen size and type (laptop, desktop or convertible). True, you get a brief description of each model, but no direct comparisons. Even the promising Make The Switch section tells you nothing practical other than which Google tools you can use to replace Microsoft's and Apple's.

Our rating



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

**The i's Essential Daily Briefing**

We know that sometimes it's easier for us to come to you with the news. That's why our new email newsletter will deliver a mobile-friendly snapshot of inews.co.uk to your inbox every morning, from Monday to Saturday.

This will feature the stories you need to know, as well as a curated selection of the best reads from across the site. Of course, you can easily opt out at any time, but we're confident that you won't.

Oliver Duff, Editor

**NEWSLETTER**  
Sign up to the newsletter to get the daily briefing in your inbox

**OPINION**  
All the views from *i* columnists and analysts, and its editor

**What we do**  
Not just hire. WHAT WE DO >

Love photography? Love Lens Lab...

HIRE EQUIPMENT | LOAN YOUR EQUIPMENT | SWAP YOUR EQUIPMENT

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

**Lens Lab**  
[www.lenslab.co.uk](http://www.lenslab.co.uk)

Photography equipment can be pricey, especially if you only use it once or twice, which is why Lens Lab is such a great idea. The site lets you hire cameras, lenses, tripods and other gear for as many days as you need. You can also swap your equipment for something new, loan it or sell it for some extra cash. Lens Lab is easy to use (although the grey text on the black navigation bar is barely legible) and offers a good selection of equipment to buy as well as borrow. It also hosts photography meet-ups and walks, so you can try the gear before you hire it.

Our rating ★★★★★

**COUNTRY LIVING**

Find, Match & Connect

Get matched

About Country Loving

**DATING**

**Country Loving**  
[www.country-loving.co.uk](http://www.country-loving.co.uk)

This punningly named dating site from *Country Living* magazine offers a place to find "rural romance, relationships and friendship". Adorned with a photo of a pretty field (albeit one that seems to have had a body dumped in it), it feels more upmarket than many dating sites and is aimed at people aged over 45. It's free to join and search, but you'll need to pay to initiate a conversation. It also offers such features as two-way matching and blocking of "unsavoury" types. Oddly, our default search was set to Germany, but the site seems to have lots of UK members already.

Our rating ★★★★★

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**TECHNOLOGY**

**Drones Direct**  
[www.dronesdirect.co.uk](http://www.dronesdirect.co.uk)

So, what are you flying these days? A DJI Phantom, perhaps? Or a Parrot Bebop? If you don't know what we're on about, propel yourself to this site, where you'll find dozens of delightful drones to fulfil your aerial dreams. Choose from camera drones and racing quadcopters, and buy accessories such as backpacks and goggles. Certain models even come with a free 7in tablet. Prices range from £60 to £4,500 (for the Drone Wedding Proposal Package), and delivery is free on orders over £50. You can view videos of some of the drones in action, but customer reviews would be welcome.

Our rating ★★★★★

**Q** How can I watch US Netflix on my television using my Chromecast?

**A** Page 43, Issue 385



## 2015 BACK ISSUES DISC

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## HEALTH

## Mydentist

[www.mydentist.co.uk](http://www.mydentist.co.uk)

Going to the dentist tends to be something we need to do rather than want to do, but at least this site makes booking an appointment painless. You can find Mydentist practices in your area by searching for a postcode, town or city; clicking 'Use my current location'; or browsing by region. Each entry includes opening times, the names of clinicians, contact information and a map, as well as details of NHS and private treatment costs. You can book an appointment online in surprisingly few clicks, and find your nearest emergency surgery. It's a beautifully presented site and covers more than 650 practices nationwide.

Our rating



## BROWSERS

## Add-ons for Firefox

[addons.mozilla.org](http://addons.mozilla.org)

Remember when Mozilla's repository of Firefox add-ons was last redesigned? No, neither do we, but according to the Wayback Machine ([web.archive.org](http://web.archive.org)) it was 2011, so it's high time the site had a lick of paint. The redesign is more cosmetic than content-led, retaining familiar elements such as the lists of Featured, Most Popular and Up-and-Coming extensions, and Mozilla's 'Pick of the Month'. The fresh blue colour scheme is complemented by more modern fonts, although we find these make the links down the side of the page harder to read. Still, the overall approach seems to be: 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'.

Our rating



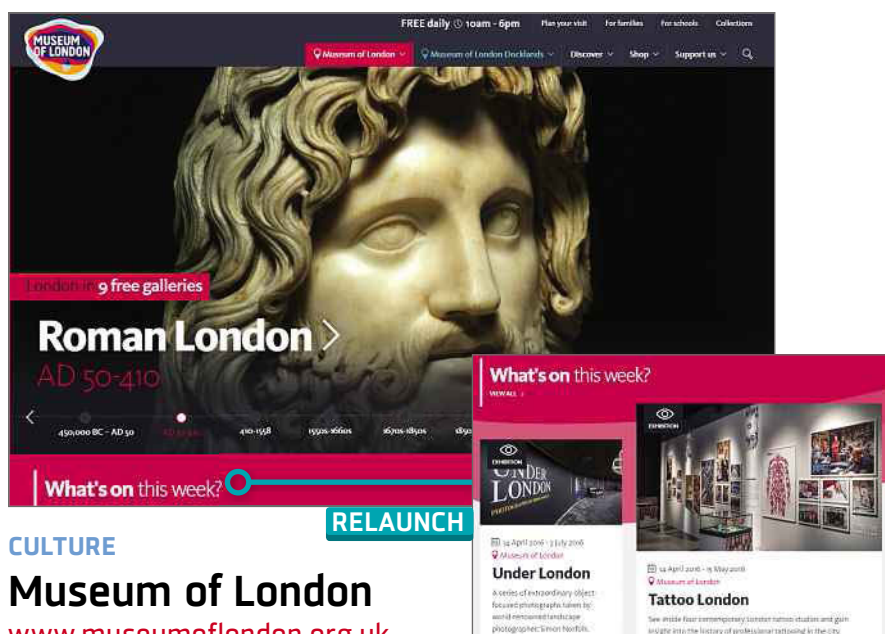
## TRAVEL

## Telegraph Travel

[www.telegraph.co.uk/travel](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel)

Following the relaunch of the *Telegraph's* main website (reviewed last issue), the Travel section has been suitably spruced up and streamlined. Indeed, it now focuses so heavily on images that the only words on the homepage are the article headlines and category names, which makes the site visually appealing. You can now search the site (a glaring omission before) to access thousands of hotel reviews, recommendations of things to do (from experts and users) and more than 150 destination guides. Naturally, there's a commercial element and readers of the *Telegraph* can enjoy exclusive offers from its travel partners.

Our rating



## CULTURE

## Museum of London

[www.museumoflondon.org.uk](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk)

The Museum of London may be one of the capital's less heralded cultural venues – mayoral candidate Zac Goldsmith admitted he doesn't know where it is – but this fantastic new website should put it firmly on the map. You can browse the museum's nine free galleries via an interactive timeline, which takes you from Roman London through the Medieval Era, Great Fire of London and various wars, up to the Olympics in 2012. Each gallery includes a slideshow of high-quality photos to give you a flavour of its exhibits. You can also book tickets for exhibitions and plan your visit online. If the museum lives up to the promise of this gorgeous site, you're in for a treat.

Our rating



## TECHNOLOGY

## Live-Smart

[www.live-smart.co](http://www.live-smart.co)

From a necklace that "hears what you eat" to a toilet 'night light' that helps you aim in the dark, this site reports on and reviews the latest 'smart' devices. Live-Smart's impressively eclectic mix of content is organised into categories, including Smart Home, Health & Fitness and Wearables, and updated several times a day. It's not particularly incisive – some articles read more like promotional puff pieces than hands-on tests – but it makes effective use of photos, videos and screenshots for illustration, and does a good job of explaining the innovative technology. The future never seemed so accessible. ■

Our rating



# Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

## Top Tips of the Fortnight

### Big changes to Xara Web Designer

Web Designer 365 ([bit.ly/xara396](http://bit.ly/xara396)), the latest version of Xara's page designing software, is now a subscription service, although you can still use the program when your subscription expires. Keeping up your subscription lets you access Xara's online tools and get the latest features as they're released.

This new version brings the software up to date with design trends. It has 30 scrolling effects, including parallax scrolling (which creates a 3D effect by scrolling the background slower than the foreground), and sticky navigation bars that keep your menus onscreen all the time. The online tools include the Online Designer, which lets you tweak your site while you're away from your PC.

The Premium version costs £69.99 but there's an entry-level

version for beginners, with fewer tools, for £34.99. Existing users can upgrade from £24.99.

### Personalised WordPress.com sites get more secure

You can now add HTTPS security to all WordPress.com-hosted websites, even if your site has its own domain name. HTTPS security was added by default to all sites that used 'yoursite.wordpress.com' domains in 2014 but if you opted to upgrade to a more personal domain name, you had to sacrifice the extra security. This has now been fixed. For more information, see [bit.ly/https396](http://bit.ly/https396).

### Deal of the Fortnight

Names.co.uk ([www.names.co.uk](http://www.names.co.uk)) is offering 20% off its Starter hosting package. It comes with 50GB of space and unlimited bandwidth for £4.79 per month.

## Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:  
Darren Lavender,  
Network Operations at  
Planet Hippo ([www.planethippo.co.uk](http://www.planethippo.co.uk))



**Q** I want to build a site that will get Google's attention. Is it better to use a CMS like WordPress or hand-code an HTML site?

Matt Kemp, via email

**A** It doesn't matter which you choose. More important is that your SEO is well configured: your keywords should be relevant, with no spamming, and there should be no duplicate content. Google likes pages to have a valid SSL certificate. Fast hosting helps, too, as speed plays a part in Google's ranking and, while not proven, we hear that hosting in the same country as your target market is beneficial.

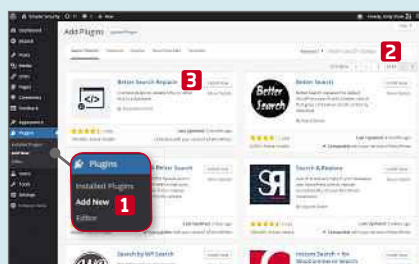
While HTML is more secure, WordPress gives you more options (as plugins) for setting keywords, adding metadata and so on, which can benefit your Google ranking.



## MINI WORKSHOP | Make changes to lots of WordPress posts in one go

Better Search Replace: [bit.ly/bsr396](http://bit.ly/bsr396) | 10 mins | WordPress website

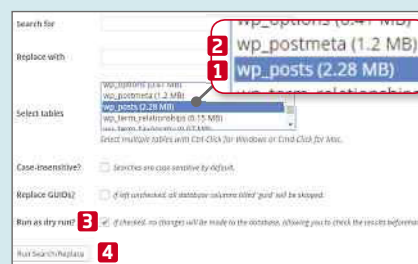
Changing one element on a lot of WordPress posts can be a daunting prospect. Instead of launching each post in the Dashboard and changing it manually, use a handy search and replace plugin to do the job automatically



**1** From the menu in your WordPress Dashboard, select Plugins and click the Add New button. **1** Type **better search replace** into the search box **2** and click the Install Now button **3** for the Better Search Replace plugin. Click on the Activate Plugin link.



**2** Back up your database before you run a search and replace, as the process is irreversible – search the Add New plugin page for 'WordPress Database Backup'. The Better Search Replace interface is under the Tools menu. **1** Type the text you want to find into the first box **2** and the text you want to replace it with in the second. **3**



**3** Select the relevant database table from the list. This is 'wp\_posts' **1** if the text is in the main content of your pages. If it's in a custom field, it may be in 'wp\_postmeta' **2** instead. To avoid mistakes, tick the 'Run as dry run' box **3** to test the search. Then, when you're sure you're ready, click the Run Search/Replace button **4** to complete the task.



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hotspot



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## Synology Router RT1900ac



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# Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

## Tablets

With the new 9.7in iPad Pro tempting us to empty our wallets, it's a good time to survey the current tablet landscape to see whether Apple's latest is the best device to spend your cash on

**T**ablets are the perfect device for when you don't want to sit at your computer, but nor do you want to be confined to a cramped smartphone screen. With the release of the new 9.7in iPad Pro, tablets are getting more powerful and more sophisticated, but just because it's the latest device to hit the shelves, that doesn't necessarily mean it's the right thing to buy.

In this Group Test we've gathered together a selection of our favourite current tablets, encompassing a variety of shapes, sizes and prices. If you want the cream of the crop, you can expect to have to pay a lot for it, but it's worth looking at smaller, more affordable devices, too. These may not have the specs of an iPad Pro, but they can deliver a fantastic tablet experience at a fraction of the price.

### HOW WE TESTED

We used a range of benchmarks to test each tablet's performance, including Peacekeeper ([peacekeeper.futuremark.com](http://peacekeeper.futuremark.com)), Geekbench ([www.primatelabs.com](http://www.primatelabs.com)) and GFXBench ([gfxbench.com](http://gfxbench.com)). We measured battery life by looping a video at a screen brightness of 170cd/m<sup>2</sup>. To gauge screen quality, we measured the maximum brightness, contrast and number of visible colours it displayed.

### Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 8.0 | £238.95 | [www.simplyelectronics.net](http://www.simplyelectronics.net)

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

When designing the 8in Galaxy Tab S2, Samsung must have decided that the best way to beat its main rival Apple was to meet it head-on in every respect. The Tab S2's screen is the same size and resolution as that of the iPad Mini 4, and it launched at the same price. However, you can now get the Samsung model for about £80 less than its rival.

Its build quality is excellent – it feels tough, with absolutely no flex, despite the fact that it's the thinnest tablet in this group. This has a tangible impact, as the device feels incredibly thin and light, and is a real pleasure to hold. It doesn't have the big screens of some of the other tablets we've reviewed here, but you won't lose any detail – its resolution is the same as that of the larger iPad Pro 9.7in. It also follows the iPad's 4:3 screen ratio, which is less popular with movie buffs but is arguably better for scrolling through websites, thanks to the increased depth it offers in landscape mode.

We tested its performance with a variety of benchmarking tools (see How We Tested, above). Its browser-based Peacekeeper score was 1,012, only fourth in this group but respectable enough. It fared better in Geekbench, where its score of



4,182 was second only to the iPad Pro's. In use, it was beautifully smooth when browsing web pages, although we experienced occasional pauses when zooming in, and the tiniest hint of a delay when responding to swipe gestures.

The Tab's battery life is impressive at 14 hours seven minutes in our video-playback test, which places it third in this group and only a few minutes behind the best. It's a great result for a tablet of any size, let alone an 8in model.

### VERDICT ★★★★★

We think 8in is a bit of a sweet-spot for tablets, as it provides a bigger-screened experience than a smartphone but is still small enough to feel truly mobile. Of the Android options, the Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 8.0 is at the top end of the price scale but is still £80 cheaper than an iPad Mini 4. It's built to last, too, with a sturdy exterior, a good screen and enough battery and performance power to keep you going now and into the future.

**Nvidia Shield Tablet K1 | £149.99 | [shield.nvidia.co.uk](http://shield.nvidia.co.uk)**

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

**WebUser  
SILVER  
AWARD**

Nvidia's Shield Tablet K1 is marketed as a gaming device, but non-gamers needn't be put off by that. It's a second-generation Nvidia tablet and, although similar to the first, is significantly cheaper. Some of this price reduction is accounted for by the removal of accessories that were bundled with the first version, including a stylus and a power adapter.

The device now comes with just 16GB of storage built in, but you can add more through its microSD card slot, and the tablet merges it intelligently and seamlessly with the tablet's own. It runs the latest Android 6.0, so is perfectly up to date.

A few of its features will appeal specifically to PC gamers. You can stream games to the device for a monthly subscription of £7.49, and those with compatible Nvidia cards can also stream PC games from their own computer to the device.

The K1's gaming credentials were most evident in our performance benchmarks. It did well in our GFXBench tests, achieving an offscreen score of 1,961 – second only to the iPad Pro. Its Peacekeeper score pipped the Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 to third place but it fell behind its 8in rival with a fourth-place Geekbench score of 3,554.



For a £150 tablet, the Shield K1 has a brilliant screen with a decent resolution and good colour reproduction. The contrast is a little limited but still good enough given the price. It also has some of the best speakers we've heard on a tablet. When watching movies or listening to music, you won't necessarily need to reach for your headphones to get decent sound from this device.

The rear camera is a little disappointing at only 5 megapixels, and at the same resolution the front-facing camera is over-specified. They take good shots outdoors in plenty of light, though.

**VERDICT**

★★★★★

For £150, there are very few tablets as powerful or as flexible as the Shield Tablet K1. It's aimed at gamers and has a few extras that owners of Nvidia's PC graphics cards might enjoy, but it's just as well suited to general users. Nvidia has made a few compromises to keep the price down, such as an uninspiring design and the lack of handy accessories, and its 16:9-ratio screen isn't the best for web browsing in landscape mode, although it's ideal for movies.

**iPad Pro (9.7in) | £499**[www.apple.com/uk](http://www.apple.com/uk)

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

**WebUser  
BRONZE  
AWARD**

The new 9.7in iPad is the best tablet Apple has ever made, and the best tablet you can currently buy. It hasn't won the *Web User* Gold Award, however, because it's just so expensive, especially if you want the peripherals too (and if you don't, there's a strong argument for buying the older and now cheaper iPad Air 2, starting at £349, instead). The base price of £499 for a 32GB model rises to £707 if you include the Pencil and Keyboard cover.

Having said that, for performance it's a long way ahead of any of the other devices we reviewed here, with a Peacekeeper score of 5,417, a Geekbench score of 5,221 and an offscreen GFXBench score of 3,170. Its battery life is the only disappointment – at eight hours and 56 minutes it falls well behind most of the Android tablets we reviewed.

**VERDICT**

★★★★★

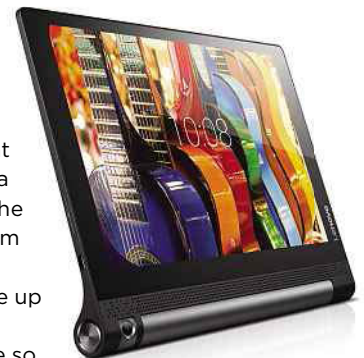
The latest iPad is beautifully made and tramples over its rivals for performance, but it has a price to match. It isn't bad value, and those who can afford it won't be disappointed, but there are better-value alternatives that will still impress.

**Lenovo Yoga Tab 3 | £124.98**[www.ebuyer.com](http://www.ebuyer.com)

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

Lenovo's tablets have all been unusual shapes and this latest model is no different. Its integrated stand is bulky, and you can't unclip it to leave a typical flat tablet, but it has its benefits – it's a firm handle when you're holding the tablet in one hand, it provides room for a larger battery and includes a hinged stand that holds the device up very sturdily. There's only one camera but it's on a rotating hinge so you can flip it round either way.

The screen isn't as vibrant as that of Samsung's Gold Award-winning tablet but at just over half the price it's good enough, and leagues ahead of the much cheaper Android Fire. The same is true of its performance, which bettered the Amazon Fire in our tests but won't worry the other devices. Its battery life, however, was the best of all the tablets we reviewed, lasting for 14 hours and 49 minutes in our tests.

**VERDICT**

★★★★★

Lenovo's Yoga Tab 3 has an unusual but functional design and is good enough for the price, but its performance isn't outstanding. If you want more than just good battery life, Nvidia's tablet is a better bet for a similar price.



## Google Pixel C | £399

[store.google.com](http://store.google.com)

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

The Pixel C is a less expensive option than the 9.7in iPad Pro for those who want a larger screen and an optional keyboard. With a 10.2in screen, a base price that's £100 less than Apple's and a keyboard that costs £119, you get a lot more for a similar price. Its battery lasts longer, too, at 14 hours and 33 minutes in our tests.



Its Peacekeeper score was the second best in our tests, although at 1,572, it's some way behind the iPad's 5,417. Its Geekbench score of 3,976 was third.

The downside is that the keyboard clips onto the screen in landscape mode, and some Android apps are still not designed to flip out of portrait mode – a legacy of its phone origins. Android 6.0 runs beautifully, but unlike the iPad Pro, this tablet doesn't quite feel like a laptop replacement, despite its large screen.

### VERDICT

★★★★★

The Google Pixel C is a great tablet at a reasonable price, especially compared with the iPad Pro. If one thing stops it in its tracks, it's that some developers are still ignoring the different resolutions and ratios that a tablet app needs.

## Asus ZenPad 8.0 | £146.15

[www.stuff-uk.net](http://www.stuff-uk.net)

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

On first impressions the Asus ZenPad appears to be extraordinarily good value. It looks great, with a metal and plastic design where most similarly priced tablets use plastic alone. At this price you get just 16GB of storage, but you can use the microSD slot to add more.



It also has an impressively high-resolution display, which matches the Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 and the 9.7in iPad Pro at 2,048 x 1,536 pixels. Sadly, this screen appears to drain the battery. In our tests, the device lasted for just six hours and 39 minutes, which is the worst performance in this group test.

Its shortcomings are compounded by low scores in our benchmark tests, with a mediocre Peacekeeper score of 938 and a Geekbench score that places it in the bottom half of the group (2,311).

### VERDICT

★★★★★

The ZenPad 8.0 looks the part and is tempting at the price, but it doesn't have the performance power to back its showy exterior, whether you're looking at the overall speed of the device or the life of its battery.

## Acer Predator 8 | £199.99

[www.currys.co.uk](http://www.currys.co.uk)

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

The Predator 8 is another tablet aimed at gamers, and its angular design is more aesthetic than functional. Its four speakers can blast out sound at an impressive volume, though, making this one of the loudest tablets we've tested. The screen is superb, and although it doesn't have the highest resolution for its size, it has brilliant colour and good contrast.



Android 5.1 feels nippy, but the Predator 8 fell behind its cheaper Nvidia rival for performance, remaining in the middle of the group in all our tests. It has a few gaming-specific features, including touch-feedback, although we found this more effective while typing than when playing games.

There's some justification for charging more for this model than similar tablets in that it comes with 32GB of storage as standard and a microSD card slot for adding more. It's not enough, though, and we think Samsung and Nvidia offer better Android tablets in this test.

### VERDICT

★★★★★

Acer's tablet does a lot of things well and has one of the best screens we've seen on an 8in Android device, even with its lower resolution. However, its performance doesn't live up to those of rival devices from Samsung and Nvidia.

## Amazon Fire | £50

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

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

We think you'll be surprised when you first see the £50 Amazon Fire. It's a 7in tablet and is remarkably good looking for the price. Turn it on, however, and it's downhill from there. It feels slow, for a start, coming last in all our tests, and we wouldn't recommend you try to play modern games on it. Even in the Peacekeeper browser test it scored just 283, whereas most of the other tablets we tested managed four figures. Its battery isn't as bad as that of the Asus Zenpad 8.0, lasting eight hours and 43 minutes, but it's nowhere near as good as its other rivals. The screen has a very low resolution (1,024 x 600 pixels) and the colours and contrast are disappointing.








It comes with Amazon's own operating system installed, which is based on Android but only provides access to Amazon's app store. You're also limited to using the built-in browser, Silk, which will annoy savvy web users who are aware that better alternatives are available.

### VERDICT

★★★★★

It looks like a bargain at first glance but the Amazon Fire's low price is indicative of a low-quality product. It's slow, and you're stuck with Amazon's own software, which isn't as good as the Android OS that runs inaccessibly beneath it.

	 WebUser GOLD AWARD	 WebUser SILVER AWARD	 WebUser BRONZE AWARD		
	Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 8.0	Nvidia Shield Tablet K1	Apple iPad Pro 9.7in	Lenovo Yoga Tab 3	Google Pixel C
WEBSITE	<a href="http://www.samsung.com">www.samsung.com</a>	<a href="http://shield.nvidia.co.uk">shield.nvidia.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.apple.com/uk">www.apple.com/uk</a>	<a href="http://www.lenovo.com">www.lenovo.com</a>	<a href="http://pixel.google.com">pixel.google.com</a>
PRICE	£238.95	£149.99	From £499	£124.98	From £399
BUY FROM	<a href="http://www.simplyelectronics.net">www.simplyelectronics.net</a>	<a href="http://shield.nvidia.co.uk">shield.nvidia.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.apple.com/uk">www.apple.com/uk</a>	<a href="http://www.ebuyer.com">www.ebuyer.com</a>	<a href="http://store.google.com">store.google.com</a>
PROCESSOR	Octa-core 1.9GHz + 1.3GHz Samsung Exynos Octa 5433	Quad-core 2.2GHz Nvidia Tegra K1	Apple A9X chip with 64-bit architecture, M9 coprocessor	Quad-core 1.3GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 212	Octa-core 1.9GHz Tegra X1
SCREEN SIZE	8in	8in	9.7in	8in	10.2in
SCREEN RESOLUTION	2,048 x 1,536 pixels	1,920 x 1,200 pixels	2,048 x 1,536 pixels	1,280 x 800 pixels	2,560 x 1,800 pixels
SCREEN TYPE	AMOLED	IPS	IPS	IPS	IPS
FRONT CAMERA	2.1 megapixels	5 megapixels	5 megapixels	✗	2 megapixels
REAR CAMERA	8 megapixels	5 megapixels	12 megapixels	8 megapixels	8 megapixels
STORAGE	32GB	16GB	32GB, 128GB or 256GB	16GB	32GB or 64GB
MEMORY CARD SLOT	✗	MicroSD	✗	MicroSD	✗
WI-FI	802.11ac	802.11n	802.11ac	802.11n	802.11ac
BLUETOOTH	Bluetooth 4.1	Bluetooth 4.0	Bluetooth 4.2	Bluetooth 4.0	Bluetooth 4.0
WIRELESS DATA OPTION (PRICE)	4G (£287.95)	✗	4G (from £599)	4G (£205)	✗
OPERATING SYSTEM	Android 5.1	Android 6.0	iOS 9.3	Android 5.1	Android 6.0
BATTERY SIZE	4,000mAh	5,197mAh	7,306mAh	6,200mAh	Approximately 9,000mAh
DIMENSIONS	199 x 135 x 5.6mm	221 x 126 x 9.2mm	240 x 170 x 6.1mm	210 x 146 x 7mm	242 x 179 x 7mm
WEIGHT	389g	390g	437g	420g	520g
WARRANTY	Two-years return-to-base	Two-years return-to-base	One-year return-to-base	One-year return-to-base	One-year return-to-base

## OUR VERDICT

The Samsung Galaxy Tab is our favourite tablet at the moment and wins our Gold Award. It's cheaper than the iPad Mini 4 but just as good. It performed well in our tests and has a superb battery life and a high-quality screen.

If you want to spend even less money, the Nvidia Shield Tablet K1 is our Silver Award-winning recommendation. It's not as nicely designed and we're less enamoured with its 16:9 ratio screen, but it's great value for money.

Speaking of money, if you can afford it, Apple's new 9.7in iPad Pro is currently the best tablet you can buy, and wins our Bronze Award. It's vastly superior to its rivals in many respects, but it's also very expensive, and our other award-winners offer much better value. ■

WebUser  
GOLD  
AWARD





# Web User's Best Buys

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

## HARDWARE

### TABLET

#### Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 8.0



**£239** from [www.simplyelectronics.net](http://www.simplyelectronics.net)  
Date tested: April 2016

This is the best compact Android tablet currently available. It's light and incredibly thin, which makes it a real pleasure to hold, and offers excellent battery life, a high-quality screen and smooth scrolling when you're browsing the web.

#### KEY SPECS

8in screen ■ 2,048 x 1,536 pixels resolution ■ 1.9GHz + 1.3GHz octa-core processor ■ 32GB of storage ■ 3GB of RAM ■ 8-megapixel rear camera, 2.1-megapixel front camera ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi and 4G ■ 135 x 199 x 5.6mm ■ 389g

### WINDOWS 10 LAPTOP

#### Acer Aspire One Cloudbook 14



**£179.99** from [www.currys.co.uk](http://www.currys.co.uk)  
Date tested: April 2016

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

#### KEY SPECS

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

### SMARTPHONE

#### Samsung Galaxy S7



**£569** from [www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)  
Date tested: March 2016

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

#### KEY SPECS

5.1in screen ■ Octa-core 2.3GHz processor ■ Quad HD resolution ■ 32GB of storage ■ microSD slot for up to 200GB expansion ■ Android 6.0.1 Marshmallow ■ 12-megapixel rear camera ■ 3,000mAh battery ■ Dust- and water-resistant

### COMPACT PC

#### Acer Revo One RL85



**£269.99** from [www.ebuyer.com](http://www.ebuyer.com)  
Date tested: January 2016

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

#### KEY SPECS

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

### WIRELESS ROUTER

#### Netgear Nighthawk X4S



**£259.99** from [www.currys.co.uk](http://www.currys.co.uk)  
Date tested: December 2015

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

#### KEY SPECS

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

### NETWORK CAMERA

#### Y-cam HomeMonitor HD



**£150** from [www.homemonitor.me](http://www.homemonitor.me)  
Date tested: June 2015

This isn't the cheapest security camera, but its unique online-storage option will save you money in the long run when saving captured motion-detected footage online.

#### KEY SPECS

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

# iiyama G-MASTER™ MONITORS 4! GAMERS

RED EAGLE™

GB2488HSU | GB2788HS

24"

27"

144Hz

Free  
Sync

Panel	LED 1920 x 1080
Response time	1 ms, 144Hz, FreeSync™
Features	OverDrive, Black Tuner, Blue Light Reducer, Predefined and Custom Gaming Modes
Inputs	DisplayPort, HDMI, DVI
Audio	speakers and headphone connector
Height adjustment	13 cm



gmaster.iiyama.com

# Best Free Software

## DISK DEFRAGMENTER

### Smart Defrag 5

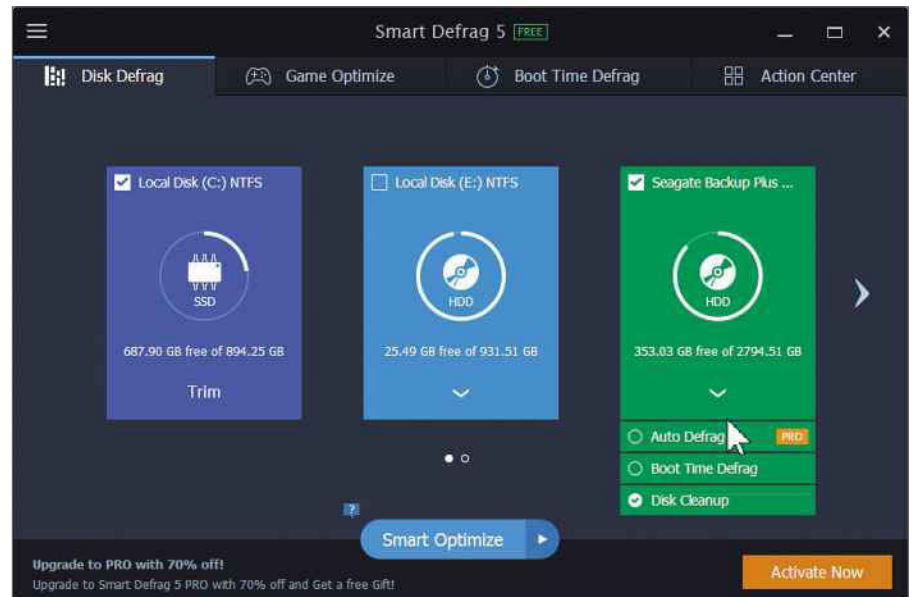
[bit.ly/defrag396](http://bit.ly/defrag396)

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

**File size:** 8.8MB

When you first use a new hard drive, everything you install or copy onto it is laid out in neat, contiguous sections. As the drive fills up, however, the amount of free space diminishes, and when you move and delete data, your files end up being spread across different sections of the drive, which makes accessing them that little bit slower.

Defragging your hard drive can deliver some speed benefits by reordering the contents to ensure that any data that should be grouped together *is* together. Windows comes with its own built-in disk defragmenter, but Smart Defrag is a much more powerful alternative, with intelligent features that can move frequently used



files to the fastest areas of the drive where they can be accessed more quickly. It also offers a special Trim option for SSDs, which shouldn't be defragged in the same way as a mechanical hard drive.

The latest version of Smart Defrag benefits from a new defrag engine and supports multi-threading for much speedier defragmentation. The developer, IObit, says version 5 is 50 percent faster than Smart Defrag 4 and significantly quicker than Windows 10's own defrag tool. The software

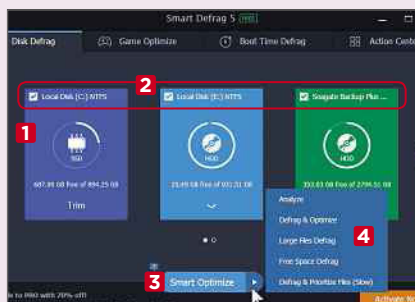
automatically applies the most suitable defrag method for different drives.

Other useful features in the updated version include Large Files Defrag and Game Optimize. The latter is designed to reduce game loading times and improve performance. Smart Defrag 5 can even defrag Registry files before startup, as well as other files that can't be changed while the system is running.

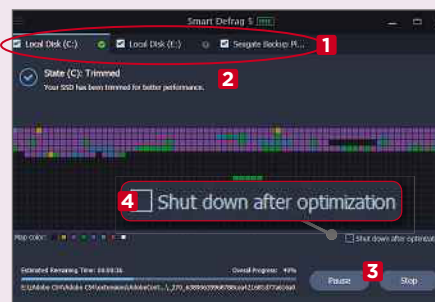
As you might expect, the interface has had a makeover, too. It is now more colourful and offers better compatibility with high-resolution displays.



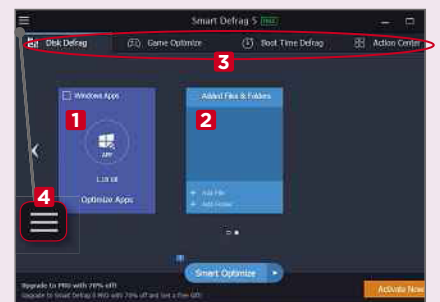
## MINI WORKSHOP | Speed up your PC using Smart Defrag 5



**1** When you launch Smart Defrag, it scans your PC for available drives and displays a coloured tile for each one it finds. **1** You can choose which drives to include. **2** Click Smart Optimize **3** and the program gets to work. Hovering your mouse over the arrow to the right of this button reveals alternative choices. **4**



**2** If you've selected multiple drives, Smart Defrag will optimise them in sequence. **1** SSDs are 'Trimmed' for better performance (the process tells the SSD which blocks of data are no longer considered in use so they can be wiped). **2** You can pause or stop the process **3** and set the program to shut down your PC when finished. **4**



**3** Smart Defrag can also optimise Windows apps **1** and any other file or folder you choose. **2** The tabs along the top **3** give you access to the Game Optimize, Boot Time Defrag and Action Center features. This last one lets you install and run other IObit programs. Click the hamburger button **4** to customise the software.

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



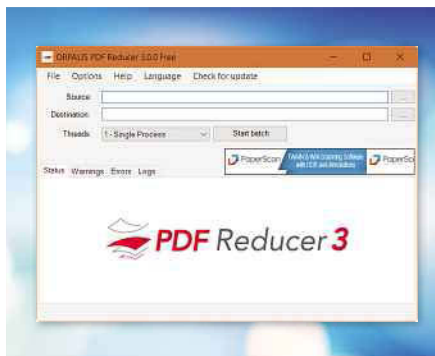
## SYSTEM TOOL

### DiskDiscovery

[bit.ly/diskcovery396](http://bit.ly/diskcovery396)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 226KB

DiskDiscovery provides detailed information about all the drives installed in and connected to your PC. There's no need to install the program – simply launch it, and it will list every storage device and volume it finds, presented in a column on the left. Click an entry to see some general information, such as the drive type, capacity and vendor, as well as its health and temperature. DiskDiscovery also reports the status of partitions, and tells you how long the drive has been in action.



## PDF TOOL

### PDF Reducer Free 3

[www.orpalis.com](http://www.orpalis.com)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 16.8MB

This handy tool reduces the size of PDF documents by removing unused objects and resampling images. The publisher claims it can shrink the file size by up to 80%, and you shouldn't notice any difference in quality. The latest version has received a performance boost and is now twice as fast as its predecessor. Be warned that the free edition displays an annoying timed nag screen that asks you to upgrade to the paid-for version.



## MIGRATION TOOL

### EaseUS Todo PCTrans Free 9

[bit.ly/pctrans396](http://bit.ly/pctrans396)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 5.1MB

Todo PCTrans lets you move files easily from an old PC to a new one. Simply connect two computers over the same wired or wireless network and follow the instructions in the wizard. The latest update lets you copy data and applications to other partitions on your PCs, and the interface has been redesigned so that it's easier to use. It now supports the transfer of even more programs, too.

## New Windows Apps

### Lego Juniors: Create & Cruise

[bit.ly/legojr396](http://bit.ly/legojr396)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 93.2MB

This app for four- to seven-year-olds lets children create their own Lego vehicles and mini figures. They can also collect coins to unlock virtual Lego sets, and there are no in-app purchases for parents to worry about.



### Send Anywhere

[bit.ly/sendanywhere396](http://bit.ly/sendanywhere396)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 1.8MB

Send Anywhere is a cloud-based file transfer service that lets you send files securely from one device to another. You don't need to sign up for an account to use it, and there's no limit on file sizes.



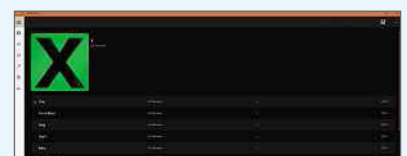
### Audiotica

[bit.ly/audiotica396](http://bit.ly/audiotica396)

**Min requirements:** Windows 8+/10

**File size:** 21.8MB

This attractive music player and downloader can import your music collection and play streamed music, with support for Deezer, Last.fm, Spotify and SoundCloud. It even displays lyrics, which is great for those who like to sing along.



## SYSTEM TOOL

### Never10

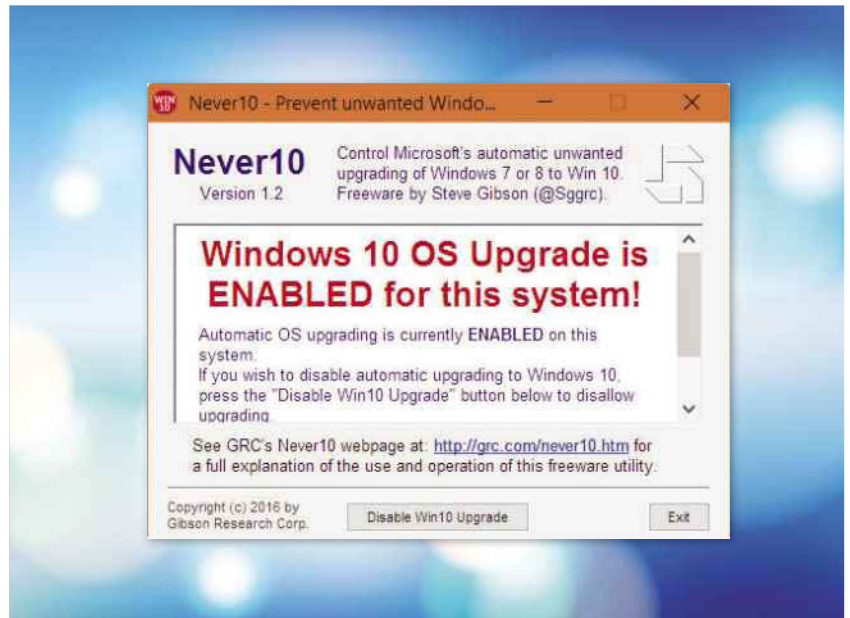
[bit.ly/never396](http://bit.ly/never396)

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8+

**File size:** 81KB

As *Web User* readers will be aware, Microsoft has taken to pushing Windows 10 aggressively to users of Windows 7 and 8.1, making the new operating system a 'recommended' update and, in some instances, even starting the upgrade process automatically without warning.

If you really don't want Windows 10, or you'd rather decide for yourself when to perform the upgrade, give Never10 a try. It's very easy to use – simply run the program and it will tell you whether or not 'Windows 10 OS upgrade' is enabled. If it is, click 'Disable Win10 Upgrade', to block it. You can reverse this easily if you ever change your mind.



## WEB BROWSER

### Vivaldi

[vivaldi.com](http://vivaldi.com)

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8+/10, Mac OS X or Linux **File size:** 37MB

The new browser from the former CEO of Opera has been available in beta for a while, but now Vivaldi has hit the magic 1.0 release. It's built around the Chromium engine, as used in Chrome and Opera, which ensures it renders pages properly and means you can install and run Chrome add-ons. A new first-run wizard helps you set up the browser the way you want it, and you can change the position of the tab bar as well as the Start page background.

Features include stackable tab groups, a collapsible side panel and a Speed Dial page with thumbnails of your favourite sites. Vivaldi also offers Quick Commands (keyboard shortcuts) and mouse gestures.

## FILE MANAGER

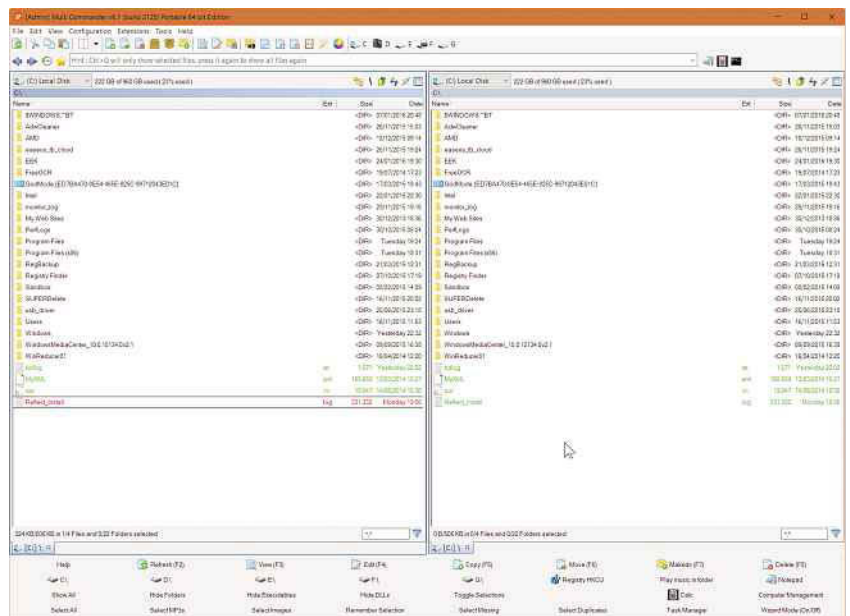
### Multi Commander 6

[multicommander.com](http://multicommander.com)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 7.1MB

Windows has a reasonably good built-in file manager, but better third-party tools are available, such as Multi Commander. This program's dual-panel layout makes copying files between folders much easier, and tabs along the top give quick access to multiple locations. The program is highly customisable, and the latest version makes big improvements to the file-colouring system (you can assign colours to different file types) and the search function.

Multi Commander has two search dialogs: a simple one and another for advanced lookups. More than 280 changes have been made to the program since version 5.9.





## GAME

### Rollovski

[bit.ly/rollovski396](http://bit.ly/rollovski396)

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

**File size:** 22.5MB

Rollovski is actually an old prototype game for Nintendo 3DS, which mobile developer Simogo has decided to dust off and release for PC and Mac. You control a small, round, limbless detective as he infiltrates a strange hotel that has only circular rooms. It's very odd and quite basic, but fun nonetheless.

## Don't install...

### JRiver MediaCenter

[www.jriver.com](http://www.jriver.com)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10, Mac OS X or Linux

**File size:** 27.2MB

Microsoft shelved Windows Media Center, but that doesn't mean you should have to pay to replace it. JRiver charges \$49.98 (£35.22) for features you can get for free elsewhere. Its MediaCenter isn't a bad program – it lets you enjoy music, films, TV shows and photos in one place – but why pay to watch content that's free to stream?



## ...Install this instead

### Kodi

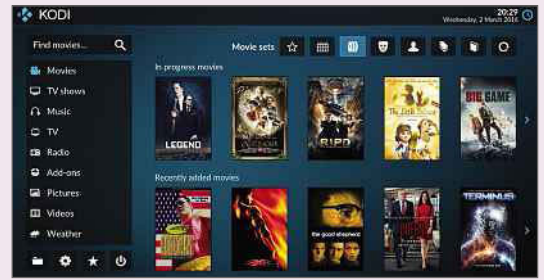
[kodi.tv](http://kodi.tv)

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

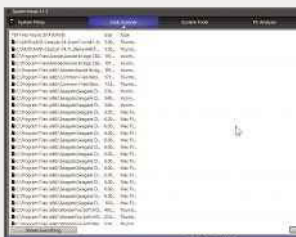
**File size:** 79.2MB

Whether you're a refugee from Windows Media Center or new to the idea of using your PC for all your entertainment, Kodi is the best free media centre available. It's compatible with lots of file formats, so you should be able to play anything, and it can stream your files to other devices.

You can customise the interface with hundreds of user-created skins and dozens of plugins for tasks such as streaming content from iPlayer and YouTube. Playing your own files is just as easy, and Kodi is constantly being updated to make it even smoother and faster.



## UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



## SYSTEM CLEANER

### System Ninja 3.1.3

[singularlabs.com](http://singularlabs.com)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

**File size:** 2.2MB

System Ninja removes junk from your PC, including temporary files, internet cookies, thumbnail caches and more. This update introduces the ability to search scan results, and improves Firefox and Chrome cache cleaning. It also adds support for the Cyberfox browser.



## RECOVERY TOOL

### OMEI OneKey Recovery 1.5

[www.aomeitech.com](http://www.aomeitech.com)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

**File size:** 25.2MB

OneKey Recovery creates a recovery partition containing all your installed programs and settings, which you can use to get a failed system up and running again. The new version adds support for encryption and compression during backup and lets you customise the interface.



## SYSTEM TOOL

### Windows Repair 3.8.6

[bit.ly/winrepair368](http://bit.ly/winrepair368)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

**File size:** 20.1MB

Windows Repair can help you overcome a host of problems with a misbehaving PC. The new version fixes various problems, including a bug that caused controls on windows to resize incorrectly when minimised. Various code improvements have been made to this latest version of the software, too.



## PRIVACY TOOL

### PrivaZer 2.49

[privazer.com](http://privazer.com)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

**File size:** 7.3MB

This privacy tool is designed to remove all references to everything you've ever opened, watched, downloaded, deleted or said on your PC. The new release improves cleanup scheduling and the creation of restore points, as well as support for Media Player Classic. ■

GET FREE SOFTWARE FIRST subscribe to Web User at [subscribe.webuser.co.uk](http://subscribe.webuser.co.uk)



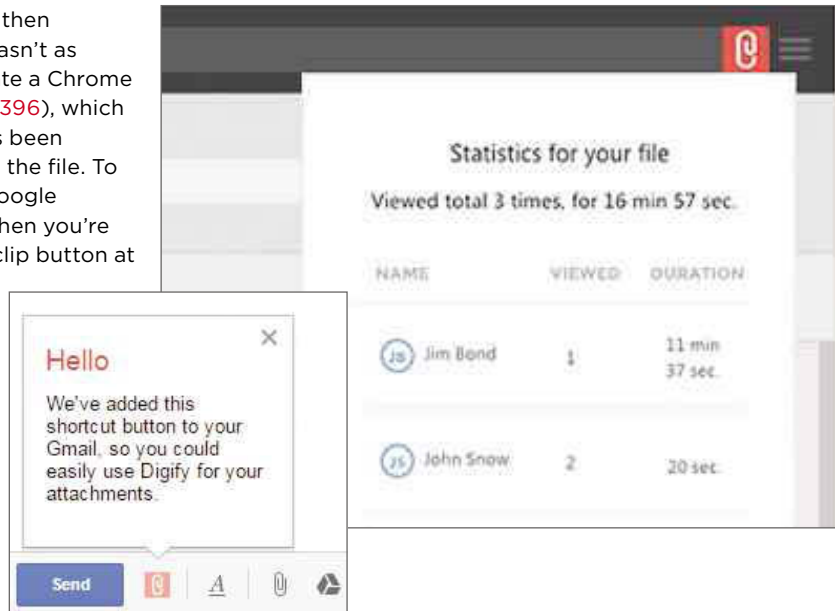
# Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

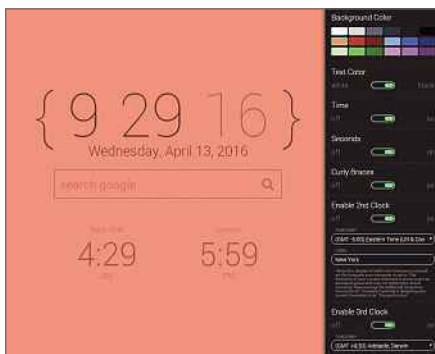
## Track and 'unsend' Gmail attachments

Have you ever emailed someone a photo and then realised a few seconds later that perhaps it wasn't as amusing as you thought? If so, you'll appreciate a Chrome extension for Gmail called Digify ([bit.ly/digify396](http://bit.ly/digify396)), which not only lets you see when an attachment has been opened but also lets you recall – or 'unsend' – the file. To use Digify, install the add-on, connect your Google account and compose a message as usual. When you're ready to attach a file, click Digify's red paperclip button at the bottom of the email and select the item from your hard drive, Google Drive or Dropbox – this can be an image, PDF, text document or spreadsheet. Send the email as usual, then click Digify's toolbar button to view statistics about the attachment – such as how many times it's been viewed, who by and for how long – and to unsend it. Digify is free to use, but there are also paid-for options with extra features, such as watermarking files, setting expiry dates and times, and disabling email forwards.



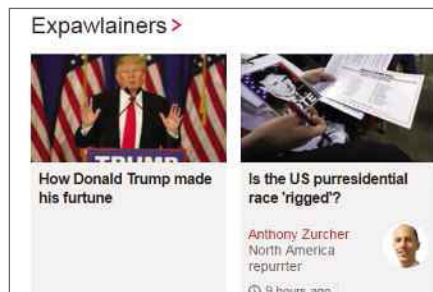
## Cross timezones on your New Tab page

In recent issues, we've recommended Chrome extensions that transform your New Tab page with pretty pictures, but sometimes you might prefer something more practical, such as today's date or the current time in Hong Kong. Step forward CaretTab ([bit.ly/caret396](http://bit.ly/caret396)), which tells you the date and time for your location and two other time zones of your choice. You can customise the add-on to display only the information you want; change the colour of the background and text; and show or hide the date and seconds. CaretTab also provides a big search box, which you can set to use Google or Bing.



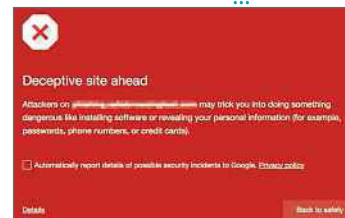
## Turn online text into cat-related puns

Cats may account for 80% of all photos and videos on the web [citation needed], but what if they could write content, too? A new Chrome extension called Text to Cat Puns ([bit.ly/catpuns396](http://bit.ly/catpuns396)) answers that purr-ning question by converting words in online articles into moggy speak. Just click the cat button on your toolbar and the page will be kittied out with a-meowsing puns, including headlines, stories and category headings. Thus we can see that "Tesco has returned to purrofit", follow the "Royal coupawle" around India and learn how Donald Trump made his "furtune". It's not particularly clever, but could cheer you up if you're feline bored.



## Be warned about fake Download buttons

Adverts that disguise themselves as Download buttons are among the worst things about the web, so we're pleased to see that Google is now tackling them through Chrome's built-in Safe Browsing tool. When you click or type a link to a website that contains misleading Download, Install or Update buttons, Chrome displays a red warning page that reads 'Deceptive site ahead' and lets you click a 'Back to safety' button to return to the previous page. That's the theory, at least – we were able to visit several software sites that are renowned for featuring fake Download buttons (we're looking at you, Download.com) without triggering the warning page. However, Safe Browsing is certain to become more sophisticated as time goes on, so we'll give it the benefit of the doubt.



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



## FIREFOX

### Check how much memory your add-ons are using

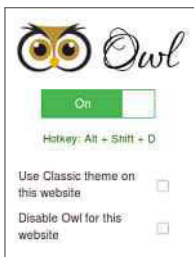
Once upon a time, there was a handy Firefox tool called `about:addons-memory`, which let you see which add-ons were using the most memory so you could disable or remove the biggest hogs. Sadly, it stopped working from Firefox 33 onwards, so we're delighted that some bright spark has updated the tool to work with the latest version of the browser (46, at the last count). The logically named

`about:addons-memory 2016` ([bit.ly/memory396](http://bit.ly/memory396)) works in the same way as its predecessor. After you've installed it, type `about:addons-memory` into your address bar and press Enter to view details of how much memory each add-on is using. The information is presented as an amount (in megabytes) and a percentage of total memory usage, and can prove very illuminating.

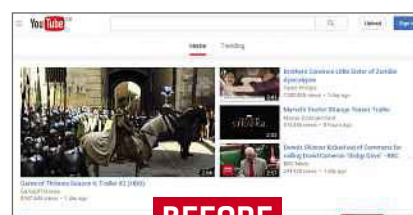
Add-on	Usage	Add-ons	Explicit
Mozilla Firefox 1 by Mozilla (96.44MB / 100.00MB / 96.44MB)	68.87 MB	68.1%	18.3%
Adblock Plus by Wladimir Palant (10.00MB / 10.00MB / 10.00MB)	17.79 MB	17.3%	4.2%
Ad Blocker Ultimate by AdBlocker Ultimate (10.00MB / 10.00MB / 10.00MB)	10.66 MB	10.4%	2.5%
Shortcuts by Chostory (1.00MB / 1.00MB / 1.00MB)	2.53 MB	2.5%	0.6%
about:addons-memory 2016 by Libertheim (0.00MB / 0.00MB / 0.00MB)	694.7 KB	0.7%	0.2%

### Make the web easier to read at night

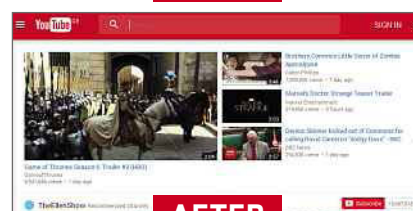
There are plenty of add-ons that prevent eye strain when you're using your computer late at night, but we've yet to see one that's as simple and effective as Owl ([bit.ly/owl396](http://bit.ly/owl396)). When you're viewing a web page that's making your peepers sore and dry, click the owl button on your toolbar to invert the colours – so white backgrounds become black, for example, while black text becomes white. If this doesn't soothe your vision, click the arrow next to the owl and choose 'Use Classic theme on this website' to apply different colours. By default, Owl retains the same theme for every site you visit unless you select 'Disable Owl for this website'. You can turn the inversion theme on or off quickly by pressing Alt+Shift+D on your keyboard, or activate Owl's Classic theme by pressing Alt+Shift+C.



Design interface to most of its Android apps and some of its web services, including Google Drive, the Play store and Inbox. If you're eager to see how the remainder of Google's tools look with the new design, install Ink for Google ([bit.ly/ink396](http://bit.ly/ink396)). This Firefox add-on – which is also available for Chrome ([bit.ly/inkchrome396](http://bit.ly/inkchrome396)) and Opera ([bit.ly/inkopera396](http://bit.ly/inkopera396)) – brings Material Design to several popular Google services, including YouTube, Gmail, Calendar, News and Search. The changes are more noticeable on some sites than others, but the add-on gives Google a fresh look, at least until it performs the Material Design updates itself.



BEFORE



AFTER

### Apply Material Design to Google tools

Since 2014, Google has slowly been applying its cleaner, smarter Material

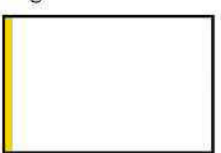
## OTHER BROWSERS

### Click back and forth more easily

All browsers have Back buttons, but they're usually quite small and awkwardly located in the top-left corner of the window. Of course, you can press the Backspace key on your keyboard to go back a page, but that doesn't always work. An easier solution is to use the new Opera extension Big Back Button ([bit.ly/bigback396](http://bit.ly/bigback396)),

which turns the left-hand side of your screen into one large navigation button. Click the left edge with your left mouse button to move back a page or right-click it to go forward.

#### Big Back Button



Turn the left edge of your Screen into a Navigation Button!

### Try the new extensions for Edge

In Issue 394's cover feature about Windows 10's new tools ([bit.ly/webuser394](http://bit.ly/webuser394)), we grumbled that there were still only three extensions available for its Edge browser. Since then, several more have been released or at least announced, bringing the total to 10. The new extensions include Pinterest, Adblock Plus, LastPass, Amazon Assistant and Microsoft's own OneNote note-taking tool. At the time of writing, you need to be a Windows Insider to try the Edge extensions, but once they've been added to the stable release of Windows 10, you'll be able to install them from the Windows Store.





# Best Free Apps



## App of the Fortnight

### SYSTEM TOOL

#### Boost+

[bit.ly/boost396](http://bit.ly/boost396)

**Min requirements:** Android 5

**Size:** Varies by device

Over time, your phone and tablet can become weighed down by memory-hogging processes, junk files and other clutter you're more likely to associate with a slow PC than a sluggish phone. But your mobile device is just a small computer, which suffers similar ailments and needs similar treatment to get the best out of it.

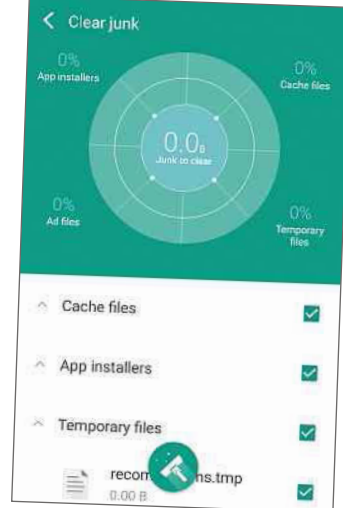
Boost+ is a new app from mobile maker HTC that promises to get your Android phone or tablet – not just HTC devices – working like new, or closer to it. Like CCleaner and Clean Master, Boost+ works by identifying and disabling or removing apps, files and processes that slow down your device. This junk includes caches, temporary files and apps that run unnecessarily in the background, whether you've launched them or not. Boost+ also includes an uninstaller that lets you sort apps according to memory usage, size or the last time you used them, and remove multiple apps at once. You can set passcodes for apps that contain private data.

At its most basic, Boost+ works as a one-tap storage and memory check. When you launch the app, it takes a moment to calculate and display storage information and memory.

We found that our Moto X was a space-busting 91% full, and while its memory usage was a more reassuring 55%, we weren't running any other apps. So what was using all that RAM?

In our Mini Workshop (right), we show you how to find the hidden culprits and then limit or remove them. Apps soon go back to hogging memory again if you let them, so we'll also show you how to keep background app usage to a minimum – by far the most effective way of keeping your Android device running faster and more reliably. Boost+ requires Lollipop or Marshmallow to run.

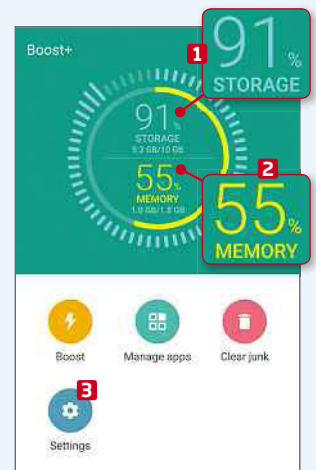
NEW



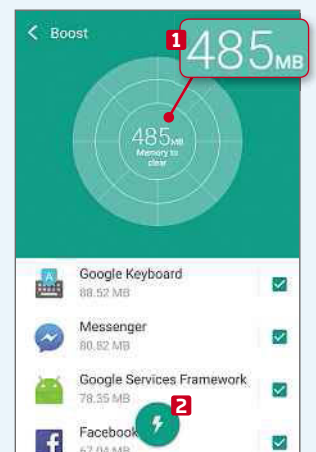
### MINI WORKSHOP

#### Speed up your Android device using Boost+

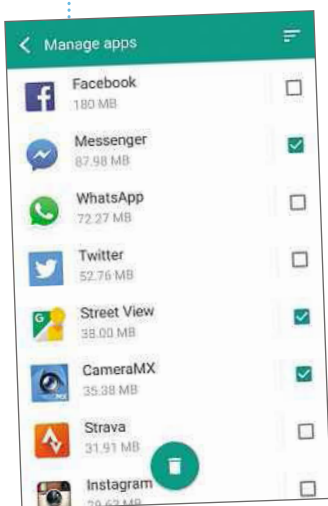
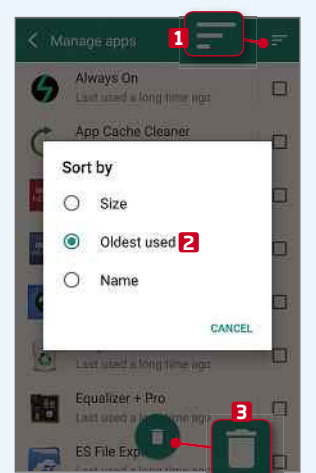
1 As soon as you download and launch Boost+, it tells you how full your phone or tablet is **1** and how much of its memory (RAM) is in use. **2** Tap Settings **3** and then tick 'Smart boost' to clear background memory automatically.



2 Tap the Boost icon to find out how much memory you can clear with one tap. **1** Tick each of the apps you want to boost, then tap the lightning icon. **2** This doesn't remove the apps. The 'Clear junk' icon on the main screen lets you blitz cache files, app installers, temp files and advertising junk.



3 You'll get a bigger performance boost by clearing apps that hog memory even though you no longer use them. Tap 'Manage apps' on the main screen, then tap the three lines, **1** and 'Oldest used'. **2** Follow the steps to allow usage access. Then tap the boxes next to apps you rarely use, and tap the bin to uninstall them. **3**



Our rating



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

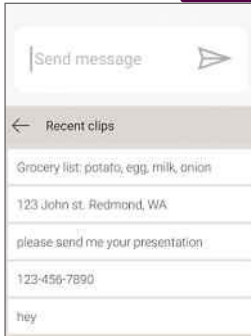
## KEYBOARD

### Hub Keyboard

[bit.ly/hubkey396](http://bit.ly/hubkey396)

**Min requirements:**  
Android 4.3  
**Size:** 20MB

This latest app from Microsoft's Garage project improves the clipboard by letting you paste more than just the last batch of text you copied. It also comes with Microsoft Translator built in, which means you can type in English and have your words automatically translated into one of more than 50 languages, from Arabic to Yucatec Maya. Office 365 subscribers can also copy and share the URLs of Office 365 documents into OneDrive. Find out more about Microsoft Garage on the blog ([bit.ly/hubgarage396](http://bit.ly/hubgarage396)).



Our rating



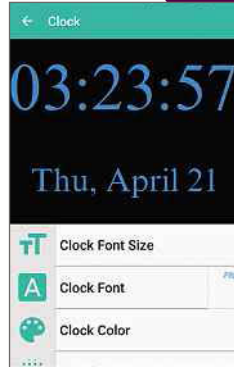
## CLOCK

### Always On: Ambient Clock

[bit.ly/alwayson396](http://bit.ly/alwayson396)

**Min requirements:**  
Android 4  
**Size:** 21MB

Anything your friend's Samsung Galaxy S7 or LG G5 can do, your own Android phone can do too. Well, by 'anything' we mean display a customisable ambient clock, so you can see the time all the time. Ideally, your phone should have an AMOLED screen (or 'active-matrix organic light-emitting diode' to be precise). If yours has a good old LCD, the app will batter your battery. We denied it the permissions it requested but it still worked perfectly. In-app purchases include 700 extra clock fonts.



Our rating



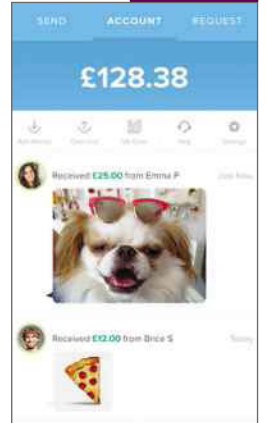
## MOBILE PAYMENTS

### Circle Pay

[bit.ly/circle396](http://bit.ly/circle396)

**Min requirements:**  
iOS 8.1  
**Size:** 43.2MB

Mobile payment is a relatively new technology, but companies such as PayPal, Amazon, Apple and Google are already on board, providing apps that let you send and receive funds instantly using your phone or tablet. It's very useful for splitting the cost of dinner with friends, for example – simply transfer the money to your friend using your phone. Circle Pay lacks the reassurance that comes with a big name (although it's backed by Barclays and Goldman Sachs), but it's very easy to use.



Our rating



## SOCIAL NEWS

### Reddit

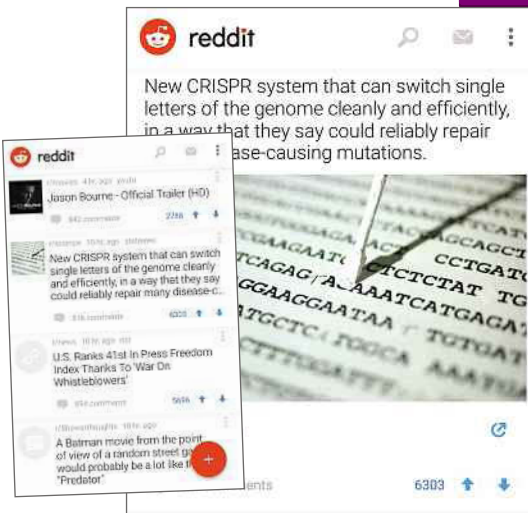
[bit.ly/redditudroid396](http://bit.ly/redditudroid396)

[bit.ly/redditis396](http://bit.ly/redditis396)

**Min requirements:** Android 4.0.3, iOS 7.1  
**Size:** 6.7MB (Android), 6.4MB (iOS)

It has taken a baffling 11 years for Reddit, the self-proclaimed 'front page of the internet', to launch an official app. This seems odd because the social-news network is second only to Twitter for breaking news stories, often from unofficial (and not always accurate) sources, so it lends itself perfectly to the instant-access nature of mobile platforms.

The app's expanded view is more attractive than the text-heavy website ([www.reddit.com](http://www.reddit.com)), but you can switch to 'Compact view' if you'd rather see more stories onscreen at once. Register for free to post, comment, save and share stories, or join a community to get the latest news on everything from astronomy to zoology, via more cat memes than you can shake a pouch of Whiskas at.



Our rating



## GET THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID

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



### Discover how to:

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

Order it now from Amazon at [bit.ly/defguidetoandroid](http://bit.ly/defguidetoandroid)

## PODCASTS

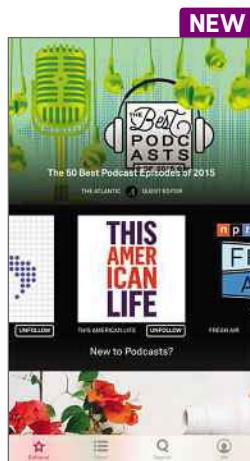
### Aurora

[bit.ly/aurora396](http://bit.ly/aurora396)

**Min requirements:** iOS 9.1

**Size:** 13.6MB

Browsing the web for podcasts can feel like walking into the world's biggest library and wanting to run out again because the choice is so overwhelming. That's where Aurora comes in. This app for iPhone, iPad and Apple Watch is a podcast directory with cherry-picking features that take you straight to the podcasts that suit you. You can browse categories for documentaries, news, entertainment and more. Its recommendations, playlists, offline listening and subscription options are straight from the Spotify book of content-discovery, and it learns your tastes.



Our rating



## FOOD

### Eat This Much

[bit.ly/eatdroid396](http://bit.ly/eatdroid396)

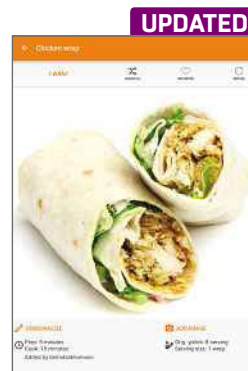
[bit.ly/eatios396](http://bit.ly/eatios396)

**Min requirements:** Android 4.1, iOS 8

**Size:** 24MB (Android), 21MB (iOS)

How much fat, sugar, carbohydrate, fruit and veg are you supposed to eat now? Received wisdom seems to change by the day and may not suit your tastes or budget. Eat This Much helps you find your ideal balance and stick to it.

Enter your diet goals and favourite foods, add a budget and information about your dietary needs (vegetarian, allergies and so on) and let the app generate meal plans to match, with recipes that you can save and customise. You can set up nutrition targets for weight gain, muscle building and fitness training as well as plain old weight loss.



Our rating



## 5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

### PHOTOS

#### This

[bit.ly/this396](http://bit.ly/this396)

**Min requirements:** iOS 9.2

**Size:** 25.7MB **Price:** £1.49

Ever tried writing notes on a photo using a fiddly drawing app? The results are usually a right old mess. Use This instead to adorn your snaps with classy fonts, pointers and graphics.



### WEATHER

#### UKWF Storm Radar

[bit.ly/storm396](http://bit.ly/storm396)

**Min requirements:** Android 2.3

**Size:** 4.2MB **Price:** £3.49

Storm chasers rejoice. This app doesn't just tell you if it's going to rain – it celebrates crazy weather conditions with high-resolution data charts, including a lightning detector and precipitation-type radar.



### PRODUCTIVITY

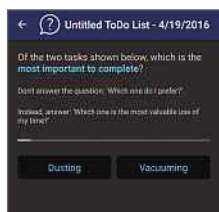
#### WhatsNext?

[bit.ly/what396](http://bit.ly/what396)

**Min requirements:** Android 4.0.3

**Size:** 16MB **Price:** £1.50

We humans aren't very good at getting anything done unless we



absolutely have to or it's fun. This clever app harnesses this tendency by turning your to-do list into a game that forces you to set priorities and measure your wasted time.

### VIDEO

#### Slow Motion Camera Extreme

[bit.ly/slowdroid396](http://bit.ly/slowdroid396)

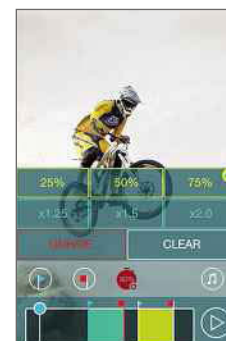
[bit.ly/slowios396](http://bit.ly/slowios396)

**Min requirements:** Android 4.1, iOS 7

**Size:** 26MB (Android), 15.2MB (iOS)

**Price:** £2.33 (Android), £2.49 (iOS)

Create high-quality slow-motion videos using this popular iOS app, now available on Android. It comes with its own built-in editing tools and works with front and rear cameras (slow-mo selfie, anyone?).



### MUSIC

#### BBC Proms 2016: Official Guide

[bit.ly/proms396](http://bit.ly/proms396)

**Min requirements:** Android 4.0.3

**Size:** 16MB **Price:** £1.49

Get full listings and ticket information for the world's biggest classical music festival, which starts in July. The app includes access to video and audio clips, and articles about composers and performers. Coming soon to iOS.



This



UKWF Storm Radar



WhatsNext?



Slow Motion Camera Extreme



BBC Proms 2016: Official Guide





## Best New TV Apps

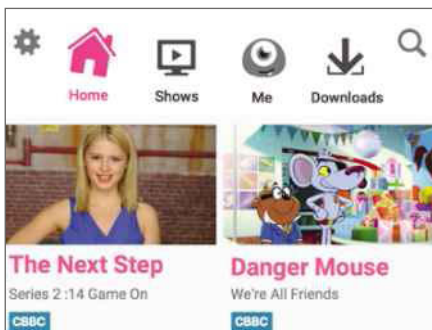
## KIDS TV

**BBC iPlayer Kids**[bit.ly/iplayerkids396](http://bit.ly/iplayerkids396)**Min requirements:** Android 4.1

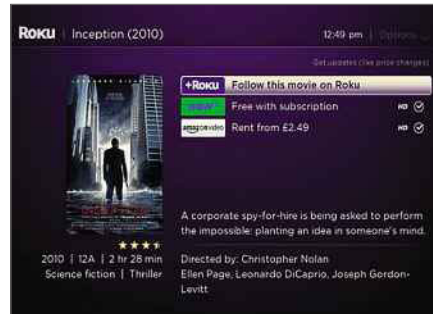
(including Kindle Fire), iOS 8

**Size:** 24MB (Android), 21MB (iOS)

Hot on the heels of Sky Kids (see Issue 395), the Beeb has launched its own mobile app for children, and this one won't cost parents a penny (other than the TV licence fee, but you know what we mean). Kids can watch their favourite shows from CBBC and CBeebies, both live and on-demand, without going near a TV, PC or the 'grown-up' iPlayer app. You can download programmes to play anywhere, and there are no adverts to tempt youngsters with sugary treats and expensive toys. The app works over Wi-Fi and mobile networks, and you can set up multiple profiles to avoid arguments and ensure children see the most suitable content.



## TV &amp; FILM

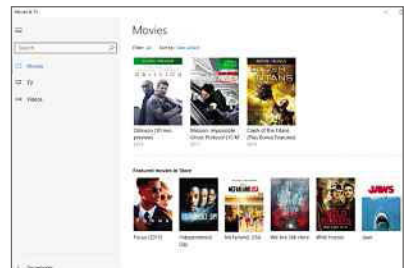
**Now TV for Roku**[bit.ly/nowtv396](http://bit.ly/nowtv396)**Min requirements:** Roku streaming device, Now TV subscription**Size:** N/A

Now TV has been available on Roku players for several years, but you had to browse it as a separate channel when you wanted to find something to watch. Happily, that's now changed because Sky's standalone streaming service has been added to the main Roku Search page. This means that when you look for a TV show, a film or even an actor or director, Now TV is included in the search alongside Netflix and Amazon Video, and if it's available on the service you can access it directly from the results. Obviously, you'll need a Now TV subscription to watch any programmes or films it finds, but this costs as little as £6.99 a month – or even less if you use our tip on page 68.

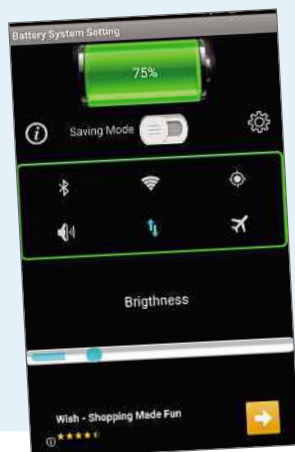
## FILM &amp; TV

**Microsoft Films & TV**[bit.ly/microsoft396](http://bit.ly/microsoft396)**Min requirements:** Windows 10, Xbox One or 360**Size:** 33.3MB

Microsoft has a long way to go before it can take on Amazon Video, Netflix and Google Play Movies, but the latest improvements to its Films & TV app for Windows 10 and Xbox (where it was formerly known as Xbox Video) are a step in the right direction. It's now easier than ever to browse, buy and watch films and TV shows from the online store, as well as videos stored on your PC or console. Downloading content is less buggy, and the app now gives estimated download times. There are new buttons for skipping forward and backward through series. The store still isn't cheap, though, with most movies costing £3.99 to rent for 14 days or £9.99 to buy.

**Don't install...****Smart Battery Booster PRO**[bit.ly/smart396](http://bit.ly/smart396)

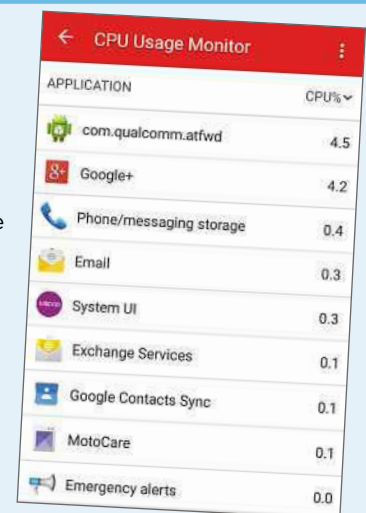
We couldn't believe it when we saw the cost of this battery-boosting app: £300! For that price, we could buy a brand new phone with a much better battery, so what's the point? It's



certainly a massive jump from the free version of the app, especially when – as far as we can see – the paid-for version doesn't offer any more features, aside from being ad-free. It can't even spell 'brightness' correctly!

**...Install this instead****Trepn Profiler**[bit.ly/trepn396](http://bit.ly/trepn396)**Min requirements:** Android 4**Size:** 2.4MB

This brilliant lightweight tool shows you exactly which apps are responsible for hogging the processor and battery on your phone or tablet. Trepn Profiler lets you run six performance tests on your Android device to get a better understanding of what's going on in the background. These include a CPU Usage Monitor test that ranks apps according to the percentage of processor power they use – you can view the current usage or an average figure. There's also a useful Network Activity test that shows the effects of mobile data use, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth activity on your device's battery life. ■





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

# Our guide to **bots**

Need to get something done online, but don't have the time or energy? There could soon be a bot to do the hard work for you, as **David Crookes** explains



([telegram.org](https://telegram.org)) and Kik ([www.kik.com](http://www.kik.com)), which let you chat to bots about a whole range of topics including sport, fashion and the weather. The big news has come from Microsoft and Facebook, however. Both companies are looking at ways to incorporate chatbots into their messaging platforms and are inviting third-party companies to get involved. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella has gone so far as to say "bots are the new apps".

## That's a bold claim. But why the emphasis on chatbots?

There's a big push towards getting us to *talk* to machines rather than clicking and tapping our way around menus and buttons. Chatbots have simple user interfaces that let us access services by the most natural means we have: our own language. These bots can gather data, learn our habits and even work out what we want to do before we realise it. Currently, you can use bots to order food, book flights, receive tech support or find out if the trousers you like are available in a particular shop. But there's a sense that we're just at the beginning of the bot era.

## Why would Microsoft describe bots as the new apps?

It would appear that the app market is reaching a saturation point. Figures released in January by Forrester Research ([bit.ly/forrester396](http://bit.ly/forrester396)) showed that the average smartphone owner in the US spends 88 per cent of their time using just five apps: Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Gmail and Facebook Messenger. With people reluctant to cram more apps on their devices, companies are looking for alternative ways to attract attention and gain business. Social-media and messaging apps show little sign of declining in popularity, so a lot of thought is going into how people can use simple messages to communicate with online services. Hence the rise of the bots.

## What's a bot?

Bots are software applications that have been programmed to perform tasks automatically over the internet or to pretend to be a person. The word is short for 'web robot' and the idea is that they perform simple, time-consuming and repetitive functions that would otherwise require some form of human involvement. They've been around for nearly as long as the internet itself but they're set to become an even more important part of the way we use the web in the coming months and years.

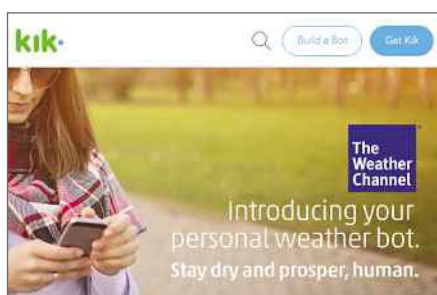
## What kinds of bots are there?

Bots have various uses. Google, for example, uses them to crawl and catalogue the web, which is how it's able to deliver relevant search results, while criminals use them to assault the internet with automated attacks and look for unprotected computers. Other bots help people win online auctions by bidding for them at the last second, and give online

gamers an advantage by performing repetitive tasks in games. However, it's chatbots – pieces of software designed to simulate conversation – that are currently grabbing the headlines.

## Why have chatbots been grabbing the headlines?

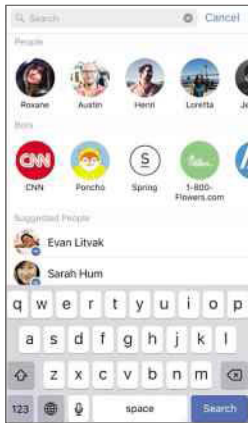
There have been plenty of developments in the field lately. For a start, we've seen the emergence of bot platforms and bot stores for the messaging apps Telegram



Kik's Weather Channel bot tells you whether you'll need a brolly or sunglasses

## Won't we need apps to use bots?

This is where things become interesting. Rather than having a string of bots built into thousands of websites and apps, we can anticipate a rising number of



**Facebook wants its millions of users to interact with bots from its Messenger app**

([messengerplatform.fb.com](https://messengerplatform.fb.com)), which will allow any company to produce its own bots. Although the bots could be embedded on a website, Facebook would rather users communicated with them directly through its Messenger app.

## What bots are active on Messenger right now?

For a while, Facebook Messenger users in the US have been able to book, track and pay for an Uber taxi without needing to download an extra app or leave a conversation. Now additional developers are on board, and have been creating everything from a weather bot called Poncho to a CNN bot that delivers news when you want it. Other companies that are getting involved include

**The Messenger bot for US fashion retailer Spring recommends clothes for you to buy**

Burger King, eBay, Expedia, Staples and US online clothing store Spring, each of which offers conversational ways of getting things done.

The idea is that anyone who wants to carry out a task could end up heading straight to Messenger. For example, you could ask a hotel bot: "Can I book a room tonight?" and receive a message stating the current availability and giving you the chance to reply with a confirmation. There would be no need to visit the

platforms that bring various bots together – a kind of one-stop bot hub. This certainly seems to be what Microsoft and Facebook want to do. Indeed, at its F8 conference, Facebook's head of messaging, David Marcus, launched the Messenger Platform



**Microsoft's Cortana can now work with bots to take even more control of your life**

hotel's website or app, and you could go straight from that to messaging another service or even a friend to let them know where you're staying.

## How is Microsoft using bots?

At the Microsoft Build 2016 conference in March, the company unveiled a more intelligent version of its digital personal assistant, Cortana. Intended to work with 'conversational platforms' such as Skype, the new Cortana can eavesdrop on your text chats and automatically pick up on any tasks that may need to be performed. Because Cortana has access to third-party bots, it could pop up at the appropriate moment and make a suggestion. You could then have a side conversation with the bot using natural language, and get things done quickly.

## How would this be different to Messenger's bots

Messenger's bots will reach out to the web, whereas Microsoft's will also be able to work with the files on your PC. Let's say you're chatting with a colleague about going on a business trip. Cortana would identify your plans, place a provisional entry in your PC's diary and then broker third-party hotel and transport service bots to help you make

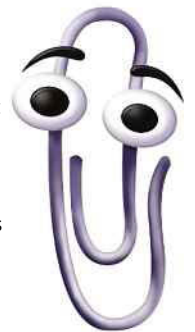
the necessary travel arrangements. During this whole process, no human other than yourself would be involved.

## Isn't this all rather creepy?

Potentially. The ultimate aim is that, in conversing with many of these bots, you could be fooled into thinking you were speaking to a human sales rep rather than artificial intelligence. Having a bot interrupt your private conversation could quickly become annoying, especially if the messages seem like adverts or spam. Bots could also lead to job losses, especially in call centres (although they would eliminate call-waiting times). None of this should stop the development of bots but we may have to start asking some deeper ethical questions further down the line.

## Haven't we seen bots before?

Yes. The SmarterChild chatbot, which was active on AOL Instant Messenger and MSN Messenger around 2001, attracted 30 million people. Some have also pointed out parallels with the dreaded Clippy Assistant in Microsoft Office, which terrorised PC and Mac users from 1997 to 2003. Chatbots are certainly nothing new, but the current resurgence in interest – thanks to the popularity of social media and messaging apps – could truly be a game changer this time.



**Clippy was one of the earliest bots, and one of the most hated software features ever**

## WHEN GOOD BOTS TURN BAD

Not all bots have proved successful. In March this year, in a bid to refine its voice-recognition software, Microsoft introduced an Artificial Intelligence chatbot on Twitter called Tay, who was supposed to speak like a teenage girl. The idea was that Tay would learn from the conversations people had with her, but she soon fell prey to trolls and troublemakers. As some users used "fruity" language and tried to lead Tay astray, she went off the rails,



expressing her support for Hitler, blaming George W Bush for 9/11 and denying the Holocaust.

Microsoft responded by



protecting Tay's tweets to all but confirmed followers, and the experience hasn't put the company off experimenting with bots. Shortly afterwards, it released CaptionBot ([captionbot.ai](https://captionbot.ai)), which lets you upload photos to find out what's in them, and Murphy ([projectmurphy.net](https://projectmurphy.net)), which lets you ask a series of 'What if' questions to see the result.

# STOP THE WEB STALKING YOU

## COVER FEATURE

The web already knows a vast amount of personal information about you. **Wayne Williams** explains what it has on you, and how you can stop it gathering, storing and using that data

**S**everal recent news stories about ransomware and email scams that “know where you live” have highlighted the fact that there’s more information about us on the web than we may realise.

Sometimes this is because we ‘overshare’ our data through social media or neglect to opt out of allowing websites to pass our details to third parties, but our personal information can also be obtained by more sinister means and for malign purposes. In this feature, we reveal

the creepiest things the web knows about you, and show you how you can protect that data.

Over the following six pages, we explain how the web knows such unsettling details as where you live, where you’ve been, what you look like and even if you’re having an affair. We look at what it does with this data, and reveal how you can stop anyone collecting it again.

We also peek into the future to see what other personal data might be recorded in years to come.

## 1 Where you live

Your home address can end up on the web in numerous ways. If you have location services active on your PC or phone, Google, Apple and other companies will know exactly where you live, either because you've provided them with this information or because they can see how much time you spend at that address, and when (such as overnight and at weekends). They can use this info to target you with adverts for local companies and services.



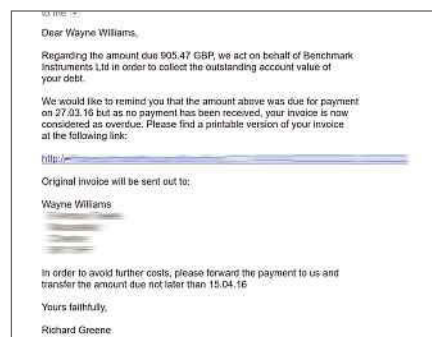
You can pay your web host to hide your details from Who-is searches

That's not the only way the web can find out your address, however. If you have your own website, anyone can perform a Who-is ([who.is](http://who.is)) search to discover the name and address to which your site is registered – unless you've paid extra to hide this information.

Turning off location services on your various devices will prevent sites finding out where you live, and there are plenty of good reasons to protect this information. If you were to mention on a social network such as Twitter that you were going on holiday for a week, for example, and your profile includes a link to your website, a burglar could run a quick Who-is search, find out your home address and pay it a visit while you were away.

Your address can be used in other nefarious ways, too. A recent scam email that tried to get recipients to "print an invoice" by clicking a link included not only the potential

victim's full name but also their home address, making the email seem more legitimate. Clicking the link actually launched ransomware that immediately encrypted all the personal data stored on the PC. The scammers then demanded a ransom to unlock it, with the price rising the longer the victim took to pay. See the BBC News story at [bit.ly/ransom396](http://bit.ly/ransom396).



A new type of email scam uses your home address to appear more convincing

## 2 What you last bought online

When you shop from Amazon or eBay, the retailer remembers the items you've purchased or looked at, so it can present you with a list of other items it thinks you may be interested in every time you visit. There's nothing specifically wrong with that, but we've all had the experience of shopping on one site and then having adverts for the same (and similar) products appear on an entirely unrelated site. It's safe to assume that this information was shared through cookies, and you can prevent

this by opting out of behavioural tracking. Go to [bit.ly/adchoices396](http://bit.ly/adchoices396) and choose which advertisers' cookies you'd like to block.

You can stop Amazon using your browsing and shopping history to make personalised recommendations by going to [bit.ly/amazon396](http://bit.ly/amazon396) and clicking 'Turn off browsing history'. Next, click Your Account and, in the Personalisation section, choose Improve Your



Stop Amazon recommending products based on past actions

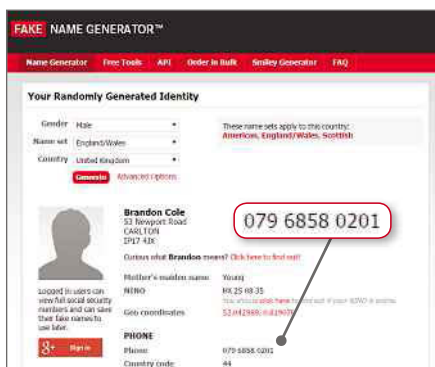
Recommendations. Select the 'Don't use for recommendations' option next to every entry.

To stop eBay displaying items you've viewed recently, go to [bit.ly/ebay396](http://bit.ly/ebay396) and select 'Do not show the My

Recently Viewed Items box'. You can opt out of eBay's targeted advertising service AdChoice by going to My eBay and selecting the Account tab, then Site Preferences, General Preferences.

## 3 Your telephone number

If you share your phone number on social sites such as Facebook, you should make sure you've locked down your privacy settings so it isn't visible to everyone. In the web version of Facebook, click 'Edit profile', About and



Create a fake identity to register with sites, including a fake phone number

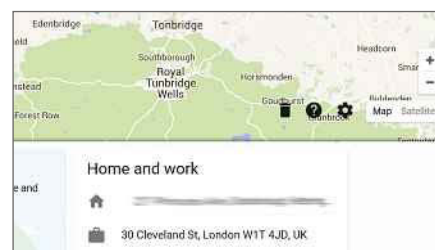
then 'Contact and basic info'. Your number is listed under Mobile Phones. Hover over it and click Edit. Click the down arrow and select 'Only Me' so that no-one but you can see the number. You can take similar action on other social sites, which are the main source of leaks for phone numbers. As we mention above, your phone number (and address) are also listed in the Who-is details for any websites you own, unless you pay extra to hide your contact info. Some directories allow anyone to enter a phone number and find additional details, such as the site owner's name.

Researchers recently discovered that a phone number is all a hacker needs to read your texts, listen to your calls and track your movements ([bit.ly/hackerphone396](http://bit.ly/hackerphone396)), which is worrying. To avoid such problems, try not to share your phone number, and use a fake one

where possible. Fake Name Generator ([www.fakenamegenerator.com](http://www.fakenamegenerator.com)) creates an entirely false identity for you, including a fake mobile number.

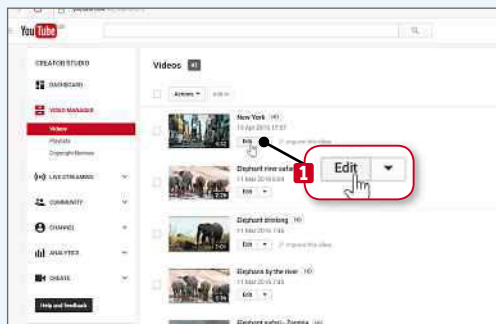
## 4 Where you work

If you've signed up to LinkedIn, your public profile will include your place of work, so anyone who searches for you will also have this piece of

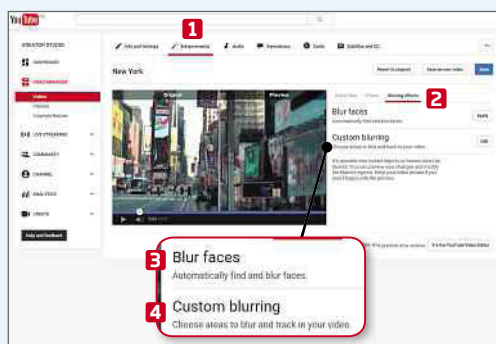


Google can determine where you work by where you spend your day

## **MINI WORKSHOP** **Disguise your details in** **YouTube videos**



**1** You may think the video you uploaded to YouTube is innocent enough, but it's possible that it includes information you don't want the world to see, such as your phone number or car registration plate, for example. YouTube lets you blur out this sort of detail. Go to [www.youtube.com/my\\_videos](http://www.youtube.com/my_videos) and click the Edit button next to the video. **1**



**2** Click the Enhancements tab **1** and the video will be displayed with a split down the centre to show how it looks before and after any changes. Click the Blurring Effects option to the right. **2** The software can automatically find and blur faces in a video, **3** or you can pick an area to track and blur. **4**



**3** Select the second option and draw around the object you want to obscure. **1** YouTube will then track (and blur) it automatically throughout the video. Click the play button **2** to see it in action. If you want to blur a particular spot in the video (a phone number, for example) click the Lock button **3** to fix the box into position.

information. Digital personal assistants including Siri, Google Now and Cortana also learn where you work, even if you haven't expressly told them, because they can use location tracking to determine where you usually are during working hours. Visit Google's Location History page and you'll probably see your place of work listed there.

If you don't mind people knowing where you work, that's not a major problem (on LinkedIn, it's the whole point!), but it's yet more information the web knows about you.

## **5** **What you search for online**

Google records every search you make, as well as all the links you click in your search results. And when we say "records", we mean it logs and stores the information and connects it with your Google account. Google obviously knows this information because you type it into the search engine voluntarily, and it uses this data to build up a profile of you to determine how it should rank the results of your future searches. This means that sites you use regularly are given a higher ranking than sites you've never visited – and, of course, it allows Google to tailor its advertising to your interests in the hope of getting you to click.

To find out what search information Google has gathered about you, go to [history.google.com/history](http://history.google.com/history). You can select and delete any items from the list to prevent Google from using them for search-result shaping and advertising in future.



**Google records all your searches and every link you click in the results**

To stop Google collecting information of this type about you in future, log out of your Google account before searching, or use a search engine that doesn't log your



**Oscobo is a UK search engine that doesn't store info on your searches**

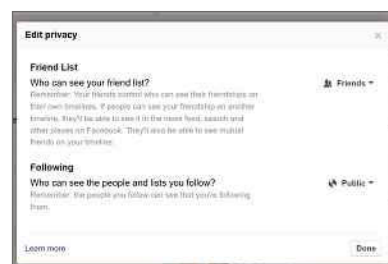
searches, such as DuckDuckGo ([duckduckgo.com](http://duckduckgo.com)) or Oscobo ([oscobo.co.uk](http://oscobo.co.uk)).

## **6** **Who your friends are**

Social networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn make it their business to understand our relationships. If you and another user have a lot of acquaintances in common – and especially if you live in the same area – these sites recognise that there's a good chance you'll know each other. Recommending people in this way helps you expand your social network and keeps you coming back to the site, but it can sometimes feel rather creepy – and the more time you spend there, the more advertising you'll see.

If you haven't locked down your Facebook settings, your public profile will allow anyone to look you up on the web and browse your friends list. To prevent this, go to Settings, Privacy and choose No next to 'Do you want search engines outside of Facebook to link to your Profile'. Click your name in Facebook to open your profile page, then click Friends. Click the pencil icon (Manage) next to Find Friends and select 'Edit privacy'. In the window that opens, you can change who can see your friend list and the people and lists you follow.

On LinkedIn, go to My Network, Add Contacts and click the Settings cog in the top-right corner. Choose 'Manage imported contacts'. Deselect any entries you don't want the site to use as the basis for suggesting 'People You May Know'.

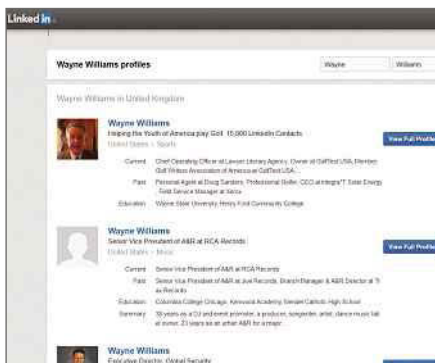


**Control who can see your friends, and the people they know, in Facebook**

## 7 Where you went to school

Facebook and LinkedIn urge you to "complete your profile" by adding various details, including every educational institution you attended. This information is then fully visible in your public profile, which anyone can access simply by running a search in Google. If you've posted anything on your school's website or forum, that information will be readily available, too.

Sites use details like these to build up a more complete profile of you, but the data can also be very useful for identity thieves. For this reason, you should only share this information if you're happy with the world seeing it and you think it will be beneficial to you.



Telling social networks where you went to school could lead to identity theft

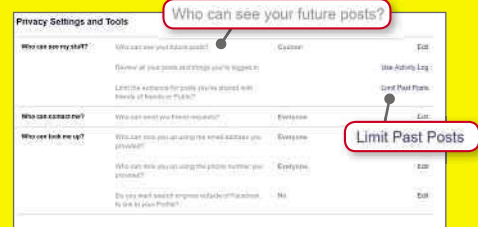
## 8 Who you live with

Finding out who you live with requires only a quick search of [192.com](http://192.com). This information even appears in the site's free search results – in the Other Occupants column, along with the town you live in and your

## 9 What you look like

If you have an unusual name, typing it into Google may well turn up photos of you. These could be from your own website or from social networks including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. If you have a more common name, a searcher can narrow the results by including additional information about you – such as the name of the company you work for or the town you live in. Photos of yourself that you've shared on sites such as Flickr may also pop up, especially if you've helpfully labelled them with your own name. Once a photo is on the web, removing it can be very difficult because there's a good chance it will reappear in places other than the original site.

For this reason, you should make sure any photos you share on the web can be viewed only by your friends and family. To do this in Facebook, for example, go to the Privacy Settings and Tools page ([bit.ly/fbprivacy396](http://bit.ly/fbprivacy396)) and, in the 'Who can see my stuff?'



Change your Facebook privacy settings to stop people viewing photos of you

section, ensure that 'Who can see your future posts?' is set to Friends. Then click the 'Limit Past Posts' option and choose 'Limit Old Posts' to prevent anyone apart from your friends viewing content on your Timeline. You can also tell the social network not to allow search engines to access your profile and profile photo.

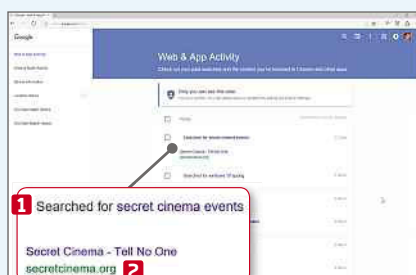
If you have a Google or Microsoft account, you probably have a photo of yourself next to your name. This means that when you send someone an email, they'll immediately be able to see what you look like. You can stop this happening by using a picture of something (or someone) else.

approximate age. 192.com harvests this data from the Edited Electoral Roll, so your cohabitants' details won't appear if they haven't registered to vote. You can remove details from 192.com by completing the C01 Record Removal Form at [bit.ly/192removal396](http://bit.ly/192removal396).

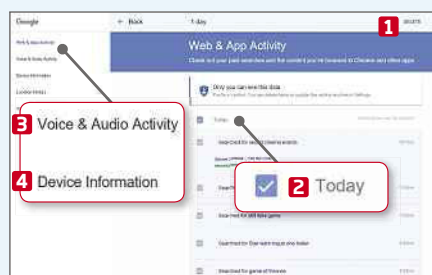
You can ask 192.com to remove details of where you live and with whom



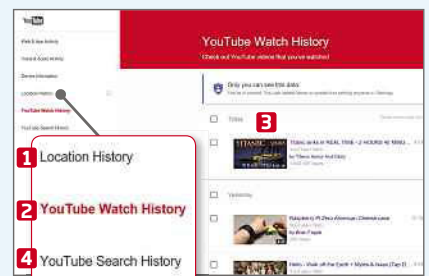
## MINI WORKSHOP | Stop Google stalking you everywhere



**1** Google knows an awful lot about what you do and where you go, both online and off, but you can manage this information at [history.google.com/history](http://history.google.com/history). The Web & App Activity section shows all your past searches **1** and the content browsed in Chrome and other apps. Clicking a link **2** will take you back to that page.



**2** Remove any search from this list by selecting it and clicking Delete **1** at the top-right of the screen. You can select and remove multiple items at a time and clear all searches made on a particular day. **2** From here you can also remove past voice and audio inputs sent to Google, **3** and clear contacts, apps and other device data. **4**



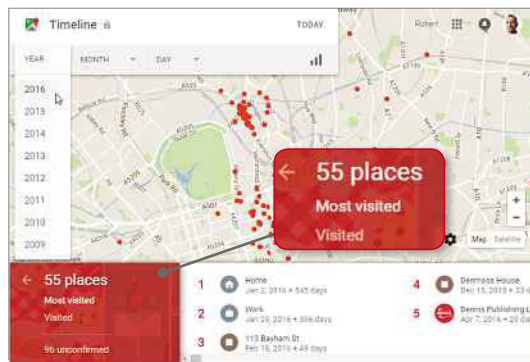
**3** Select Location History **1** to view a map of all the places Google knows you've been. Use the Timeline to display a particular year, month and day. YouTube Watch History **2** lists all the videos you've watched on the site, **3** while YouTube Search History **4** displays a list of everything you've looked for.



## 10 Everywhere you go

Your phone is constantly noting your location and reporting it back to the web. One upside is that if you ever need an alibi to vouch for your whereabouts at a particular date and time, Google will remember the details even if you don't. This information is also recorded and stored on the phone.

If you have an iPhone, you can see exactly where you've been by opening Settings, Privacy, Location Services and tapping System Services at the bottom. Scroll down to Frequent Locations and tap an entry to see the various places you've been. Apple says this data is only stored on your phone rather than online where it could be subject to hacks, and you can clear your history on this page whenever you want.



Google knows everywhere you've been and the places that you visit most

Google also makes a record of everywhere you've been. Go to [history.google.com/history](https://www.google.com/history) on the web and click Location History on the left. This shows you where you were on any given

day, in any month and year, and also lists the places you visit most often. Google logs this information from all phones, but you can pause 'location gathering' at any time if you want to go partially 'off the grid' for a while.

The search giant stresses that only you can see this information, but anyone else who has access to your Google account will also be able to view

it. That's why it's important that you always remember to log out of shared computers. Of course, Google itself knows exactly where you've been, too. See our Mini Workshop on page 41 to find out how to limit the information it gathers on you.

## 11 What emails you open

Some companies now embed an 'invisible' pixel in the marketing emails they send you, which allows them to track the message. As soon as you open their email, the pixel sends information back to the server, including the time, your location and the device



Use PixelBlock to expose companies that track the emails they send you

you're using. This allows the company to target you with further marketing messages, which is where PixelBlock ([bit.ly/pixel371](https://bit.ly/pixel371)) comes in handy. This Chrome extension for Gmail blocks attempts to use hidden pixels to track emails, and highlights sneaky messages with a red-eye symbol. Click this symbol and PixelBlock tells you the source of the email, which may differ from the official sender.

## 12 What car you drive

If your car appears in photos and videos you've posted on the web, anyone can see your registration number and potentially use that information for criminal purposes. You can stop this happening by using an image editor to blur the number plate in

your pictures before you upload them, and by using YouTube's improved blurring tool ([www.youtube.com/editor](https://www.youtube.com/editor)) to do the same in videos. See our Mini Workshop on page 40 to find out how.

## 13 Where you've been on holiday

The sites you use to book your holiday will obviously know where you've been, and so will social networks, because you've probably shared that information and the accompanying photos, especially if you tag them. Google will also know the dates and destination if you received your booking confirmation emails through Gmail. Recently the search giant launched a Destinations tool that finds you hotels and flights when you search for a holiday from your mobile device – helpful in theory, but also intrusive. Google can also use your phone to track you abroad, in the same way we explained earlier.

Prevent the web knowing precisely where you've been by taking care not to share too much information about your holidays, and by turning off your phone's data connection while you're away. This not only protects your privacy but saves you money, too.

## WHAT WILL THE WEB KNOW NEXT?

Tech companies always want to know more about us, and the next stage of data collection is likely to include (and in fact has already started including) fingerprints and other biometrics, such as iris data. A PIN and built-in device encryption make it very difficult for anyone who steals your phone (or a law enforcement agency) to unlock it, but increasingly we're choosing to protect and open our devices with fingerprints, which are much easier to crack. Windows 10 comes with Windows Hello, which lets you log into your device with just a touch or a glance (provided you have the required hardware), and most flagship smartphones offer this kind of login now.

As the use of biometrics to lock and unlock devices becomes more widespread, so do the chances that this data will make its way off the devices and onto the web. Will future data leaks include info about our fingerprints and eyes? Scarily, it's very likely.



Google's Destinations tool has a vested interest in knowing your holiday plans

## 14 If you're having an affair

Adultery website Ashley Madison was hacked in 2015, resulting in the names, email addresses, home addresses and credit card information of its members



Users of the popular dating app Tinder could be exposed by a new website

leaking onto the web. A lot of members found themselves being blackmailed both online and off (letters were sent to people's homes), so if you're tempted to use such sites, it may be worth using fake details (at least, at first).

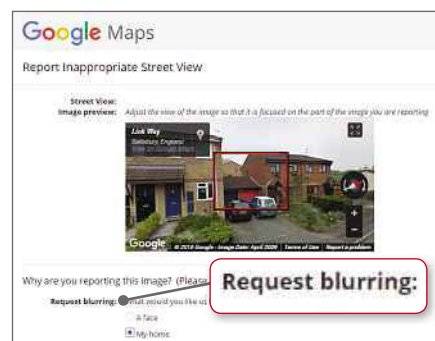
If you use the dating app Tinder to arrange hookups, beware of a new service called Swipe Buster ([www.swipebuster.com](http://www.swipebuster.com)), which lets your partner (or any other curious person) search Tinder for profiles that might belong to you, based on identifying information such as first name, age, gender and location. The site charges \$4.99 (£3.47) per search, and uses data that's publicly available. If the app can find you on Tinder, then potentially anyone can.

## 15 What software you're using

The web knows a surprising amount of information about how you access it, including the browser, operating system and plug-ins you're using, the resolution of your screen, your processor type and even which fonts are installed on your computer. Go to BrowserLeaks.com ([www.browserleaks.com](http://www.browserleaks.com)) and click on the various section headings to discover what information you're leaking about your software and hardware. Sharing certain details is harmless, but when combined, the information could compromise your privacy and security by identifying your browser as unique. If this concerns you, consider using a VPN to conceal this data.

## 16 What your home looks like

Although Google points out that its Street View imagery is not provided in real-time, you may still feel



You can ask Google to blur your house in Street View to fend off online gawkers

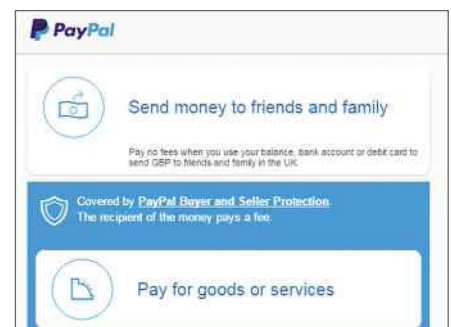
uncomfortable that people can look up where you live and check out your house and garden. If so, you can ask Google to blur the relevant details. Just search for your postcode using Google Maps, switch to Street View and, when you've found your home, click the tiny 'Report a problem' link in the bottom-right corner of the page. Specify what you want to blur – in this case 'My house', but you can also choose a face, car or other detail – and adjust the view

so that it focuses on the part of the image you want Google to conceal. Note that Street View blurring is permanent, so you can't reverse it if you change your mind later.

## 17 Your credit card details

Most online shops now offer to store your debit or credit card details when you buy something. This makes future purchases easier because you won't have to enter your payment details manually, but although this information is held securely, data breaches happen, and there's always the risk that your details might be leaked online. Credit card details are the most popular commodity sold on the dark web, with stolen UK cards going for between £10 and £25 each, depending on the level of detail supplied. Many of these are sourced from card skimmers in the real world, so be careful how and where you use your cards.

To keep your card details safe, it's best to avoid storing them on any site. It might take you longer to complete the process when you next buy something, but at least your data is less likely to fall into the wrong hands. Alternatively, you can use PayPal to store your payment information securely, and choose that option (where available) instead. ■



Use PayPal to pay for goods online rather than sharing your card details

NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 18 May 2016

## Why your PC is still slow

The worst mistakes you don't realise you're making that are killing the speed of your system



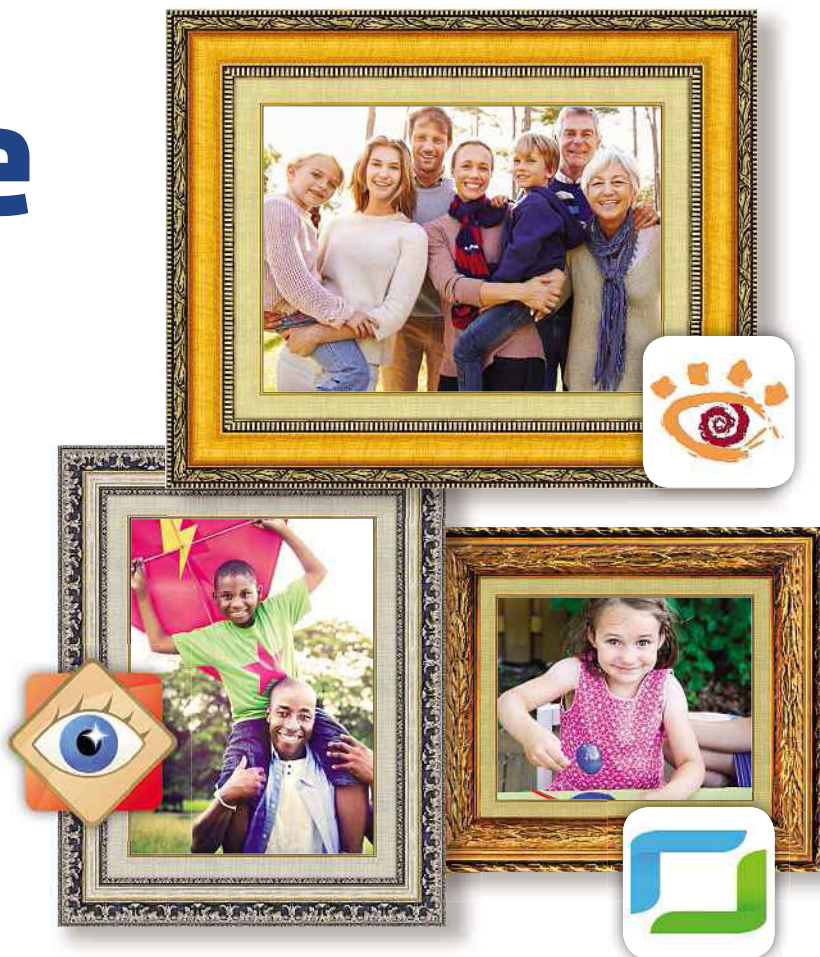
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# Best free photo viewers

Google recently ended support for its Desktop image viewer and organiser, Picasa. **Edward Munn** tests six of the best alternatives for managing the photos on your hard drive



**XnView** | [www.xnview.com](http://www.xnview.com) | ★★★★★  
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

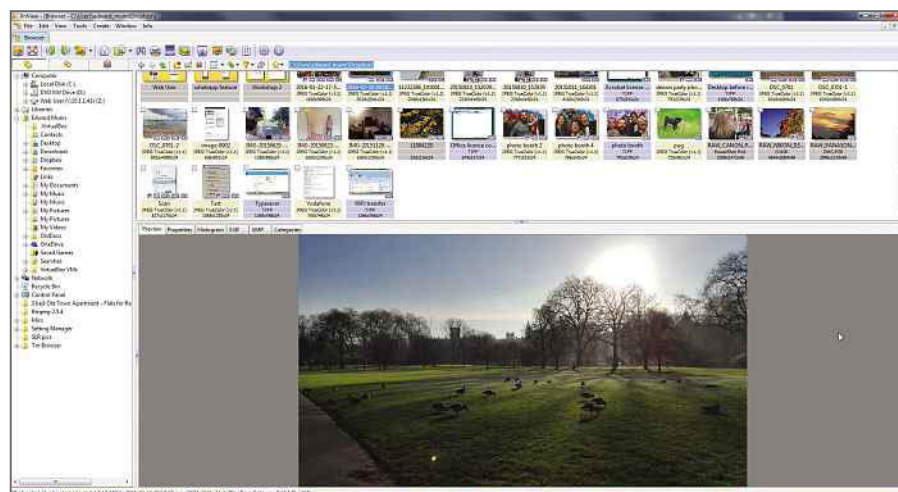
WebUser  
GOLD  
AWARD

## What we liked:

XnView is a feature-packed image viewer that, like our other award winners, offers a file browser to help you find and manage your image files. You can use this to

perform a range of useful functions including moving, renaming and converting files, viewing an image's properties and EXIF information, and labelling and rating your images to help you organise them. Its interface is one of the simplest to use of all the image viewers we tested, yet its advanced features, such as Batch Processing and Batch Rename, can save you a lot of time when you're working with a large number of files.

Double-clicking a thumbnail (or its preview) from XnView's file browser opens an image in its own tab. From here, you can take advantage of a number of basic editing features, including tools for resizing, cropping and red-eye removal. The program also lets you optimise the colour and contrast, with buttons for 'Automatic levels' and 'Automatic contrast' (or you can adjust these manually if you prefer), and you can add a range of effects using its Filter menu.



When you open several pictures from XnView's browser, each appears in its own tab but you can view them side by side if you click Window and choose Tile or Cascade. When you open image files from Explorer, XnView launches quickly and offers its full range of tools, as well as the option to browse the remaining images in the folder by pressing the arrow keys. If the program is already running, you can open images simply by dragging and dropping them to XnView.

## How it can be improved:

Considering it's free, there's very little

we can fault with XnView. We like its interface, although if we had to criticise one thing, it's that it looks rather dull compared with Zoner Photo Studio.

## OUR VERDICT

XnView's impressive features, fast performance and simple interface make it the obvious candidate for the Gold Award. It's even available as a portable application as well as an installation, so it will suit every type of user.

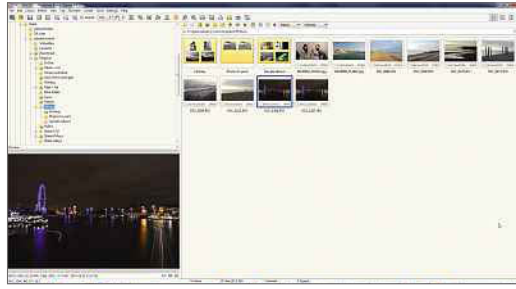
**FastStone Image Viewer** | [faststone.org](http://faststone.org) | ★★★★★

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

**WebUser  
SILVER  
AWARD****What we liked:**

FastStone Image Viewer is a free, lightweight tool with an abundance of features. Its file browser works much like that of our Gold Award winner, helping you organise the image files on your PC while providing useful processing tools, such as batch conversion and renaming. Cropping, rotating and light adjustments are all available from the main toolbar, but its standout feature is the Compare Selected Images option, which lets you view up to four images at once, zooming and moving them all simultaneously.

Double-clicking a file (either from its own file browser or Explorer) opens it in full-screen mode, where you can move your cursor to the edges of the display to access different options including the folder tree, file attributes window and an editing pane. You can also use a Windowed View instead of Full Screen if you prefer to have access to the toolbar at all times. FastStone occupies just



over 5MB of hard drive space, so it's quick to install and run, and there's also a handy portable version.

**How it can be improved:**

FastStone Image Viewer has the most impressive tools of all the image viewers here, but accessing them feels convoluted at times, as its interface isn't as easy to use as XnView's.

**OUR VERDICT**

FastStone was unfortunate not to win the Gold Award. You'll struggle to find a better-equipped free photo viewer, but XnView's simplicity gives it the edge for everyday use.

**Zoner Photo Studio Free** | [free.zoner.com](http://free.zoner.com) | ★★★★★☆

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

**WebUser  
BRONZE  
AWARD****What we liked:**

Zoner Photo Studio Free is perhaps the most aesthetically pleasing of all the image viewers we tested. It looks like a professional photo suite, with a Catalog feature that lets you save your favourite photo folders for faster viewing. When you click a thumbnail, Zoner previews the image in the centre of your screen, and its Manager tab presents important information, including its properties, EXIF details and even its GPS position. The Develop tab offers a range of tools to crop or rotate your image and change its colour, white balance and exposure. Edited photos retain the original's image quality, and your edits can be reversed using the Restore Original button, a feature that separates Zoner from its rivals. The program has a range of export shortcuts for converting your images to different formats, and you can share photos easily using its built-in Facebook and Twitter buttons.

**How it can be improved:**

Zoner Photo Studio Free is the free version of a premium program, so many of its tools, including batch processing and most of the editing options, are only available if you upgrade for \$99 (£68). The program also takes up 315MB of hard drive space, and can be slow to run.

**OUR VERDICT**

Zoner Photo Studio Free has a beautifully designed interface and is great for organising, viewing and sharing images, but it lacks features compared with XnView and FastStone Image Viewer.

**BEST OF THE REST****Nomacs Image Lounge**[nomacs.org/download](http://nomacs.org/download)

Nomacs Image Lounge is a simple, user-friendly image viewer that's available as a full installation or a portable application. You can use it to perform all the essential quick



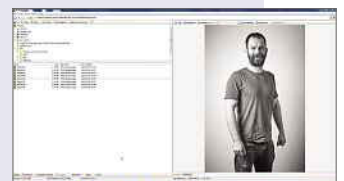
fixes, such as cropping, rotating and resizing, and there's a useful Image Manipulation Tool for adjusting brightness, contrast, saturation, exposure and other attributes. In fact, the only major shortcoming we found with Nomacs is that it lacks the thumbnail browsers of its competitors.

**IrfanView**[www.irfanview.com](http://www.irfanview.com)

IrfanView is a small program (around 2MB) that offers all the tools you'd expect from a good image viewer. You can make quick edits such as cropping, rotating and resizing and it even has tools for batch renaming and converting. Despite being lightweight and quick to load, however, the program feels rather dated compared with the award winners, and too many of its features are buried in long, unwieldy menus or require further add-ons.

**WildBit Viewer**[www.wildbit-soft.fi](http://www.wildbit-soft.fi)

WildBit Viewer is a fast, lightweight image viewer that comes with an advanced search tool, highly customisable slideshows and full-featured image editor. Although this sounds impressive, its tools are split across six small, separate applications, making it clunky and disjointed. The Viewer element of the package, in particular, could be easier to use and didn't appear as an option in the 'Open with' context menu.



# Windows 10 apps that are **better** than software

Some free Windows 10 apps are more than just cut-down versions of full programs. **Robert Irvine** picks 11 that surpass traditional software

## MAIL AND CALENDAR

[bit.ly/mail396](http://bit.ly/mail396)



### What's so good about them?

Unless you enjoy being spied on or pestered with ads, you can ignore most of Windows 10's built-in apps. We make an exception, though, for the Mail and Calendar apps, which recognise that not every Windows user wants to be limited to Microsoft services. Mail works with accounts from most popular providers, so you can manage your Gmail, Yahoo Mail and iCloud inboxes alongside your Outlook.com or Office 365 messages. Likewise, Calendar lets you connect with Google Calendar and iCloud to synchronise all your events and appointments in one place. Neither app is particularly sophisticated, but both are easy to use and work seamlessly with one another.

### What are they better than?



Thunderbird ([www.mozilla.org/thunderbird](http://www.mozilla.org/thunderbird)) also combines email and calendar functions but is no longer supported by Mozilla.

## FLIPBOARD

[bit.ly/flipboard396](http://bit.ly/flipboard396)



### What's so good about it?

Part social app, part news app, Flipboard lets you create your own

free magazine full of content that interests you. Choose a few topics, such as Gear & Gadgets, Gardening and Bon Appetit, to view articles, photos and videos in an attractive grid layout, which you can swipe through at your leisure. You can also connect your Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts to see everything your friends are sharing in one place. Stylish and endlessly fascinating, Flipboard saves you having to buy any magazine – other than *Web User*, of course – again.

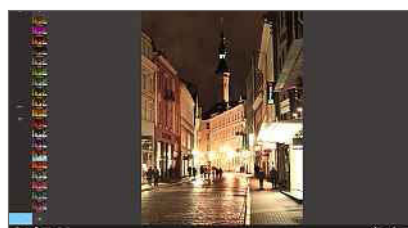
### What's it better than?



Flipboard's closest software equivalent is a Desktop RSS reader, such as FeedReader ([feedreader.com](http://feedreader.com)), but its superb presentation makes RSS tools look dated and dull in comparison.

## AUTODESK PIXLR

[bit.ly/pixlr396](http://bit.ly/pixlr396)



### What's so good about it?

Image editors are often overloaded with tools you'll never use, but Autodesk Pixlr keeps things simple while still providing lots of useful options. You can apply quick fixes to your photos, such as crop, straighten and resize; balance colours and poor lighting with a single click; and apply 25 effects to your shots. The app also lets you remove red-eye and other imperfections, merge two images and add borders and overlays to your pictures. Additional features are available when you sign up for a free Pixlr account.

### What's it better than?

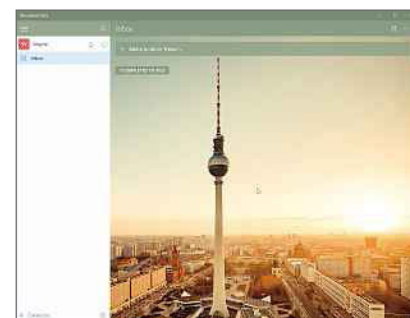
Picasa ([picasa.google.co.uk](http://picasa.google.co.uk)) is no



longer being updated, so Autodesk Pixlr provides an excellent Desktop alternative. See our feature on page 44 for more free image viewers.

## WUNDERLIST

[bit.ly/wunderlist396](http://bit.ly/wunderlist396)



### What's so good about it?

Designed specifically for Windows 10, this app for the popular note-taking tool is a brilliant way to organise your life. As well as creating and managing to-do lists, and syncing them with your phone or tablet, Wunderlist lets you share photos and files, set reminders for specific tasks and collaborate on projects at home and work. The app works with Cortana, so you can add items to your to-do lists using spoken instructions, complete with due dates and reminders.

### What's it better than?



Wunderlist has a Windows program ([www.wunderlist.com](http://www.wunderlist.com)) as well as an app, but we prefer the latter's lightweight interface, and its compatibility with Cortana is a definite boon.

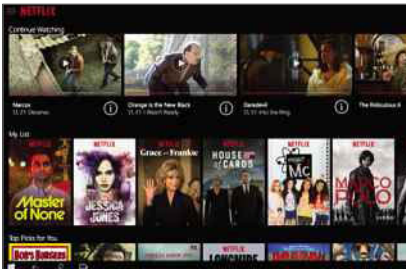
## NETFLIX

[bit.ly/netflix396](http://bit.ly/netflix396)


### What's so good about it?

Netflix is available on virtually every platform you can think of – from mobile devices and games consoles to smart TVs and streaming sticks

– so it's no surprise that it also has a Windows 10 app. This is easy to use and adjusts automatically to suit your screen's size and resolution. We also like the fact that when you adjust the volume or use a media button on your keyboard, a control panel appears, showing you what's playing and providing a volume meter and play/pause, skip and back buttons. You can use Cortana to search for films and TV shows, and if you pin the app to the Start menu, it displays a handy Continue Watching option.



### What's it better than?

 The Netflix app for Windows 10 actually beats watching movies and series in your browser, for the reasons mentioned above and because you can continue to watch while performing other tasks online.

## TOVIEW


[bit.ly/toview396](http://bit.ly/toview396)



### What's so good about it?

Who needs a television when you can watch live TV on your Desktop using the new ToView app? You can stream all five national channels in one resizable window, as well as free music, sport and news channels, while the 24-hour programme guide helps you plan your viewing. ToView even lets you pin your favourite shows to the Windows 10 Start menu, so you never miss them again.


### What's it better than?

 ToView beats having to switch between five separate TV-streaming services and, unlike ITV Hub and All 4, you don't need to register to start viewing.

world in 3D from the comfort of your Desktop. There are currently more than 200 locations that you can explore as if you were there on foot or flying above them in a helicopter, including New York, London, Paris, Rome and the Grand Canyon, while many more are available in flat 2D. You can easily capture screenshots of your favourite 3D views, and use the satellite map to decide where to go.



### What's it better than?

 Although not as comprehensive as Google Earth ([earth.google.co.uk](http://earth.google.co.uk)), Earth View is a lot simpler and faster, and the quality of its 3D imagery is stunning.

## THE WEATHER CHANNEL


[bit.ly/weather396](http://bit.ly/weather396)



### What's so good about it?

There are loads of weather apps for Windows 10, including its own built-in tool, but we're rather partial to the one from The Weather Channel, which is packed with useful features and looks marvellous. It provides hourly and 15-day forecasts in Celsius or Fahrenheit, with detailed weather conditions that include "feels like" temperature, humidity, pollen alerts and much more. You also get radar maps of rainfall, snowfall, wind speed and other useful information. The app responds to Cortana commands and uses Windows 10's Live Tiles to display at-a-glance updates about current conditions and temperatures for your favourite locations.

### What's it better than?

 The Weather Channel previously had a Desktop program for Windows, but its app is much less bloated, doesn't require the .NET Framework and isn't bundled with junk. ■

## MUSIC MAKER JAM


[bit.ly/music396](http://bit.ly/music396)



### What's so good about it?

Although it's rather large for an app (336MB), Music Maker Jam is a fantastic free download for anyone who wants to create their own tunes. It offers a choice of four music styles, which you can swap for new ones every month for free, and many more that you can buy as in-app purchases. Choose from a range of professionally produced loops and arrange them however you want, adjusting the pitch, applying effects and mixing everything together across eight channels.

### What's it better than?

 Free Audio Editor ([www.free-audio-editor.com](http://www.free-audio-editor.com)) may be free, but it's known to be infected with adware, which is a considerable price to pay for indulging your musical creativity.

## PLEX


[bit.ly/plex396](http://bit.ly/plex396)



### What's so good about it?

Plex makes it easy to browse and enjoy all the music, videos and photos you have stored on your PC, phone and tablet, as well as media content from the cloud, by bringing it all together. The app is free to use, although to unlock its full potential you need to pay \$4.99 (£3.49) for a Plex Pass, which removes all restrictions and syncs your files across all your devices so you can view and play them offline.

### What's it better than?

 Plex is much better value and easier to use than JRiver MediaCenter ([www.jriver.com](http://www.jriver.com)). Yes, that's the second time this issue we've criticised JRiver – see page 29.

## EARTH VIEW – MAP 3D

[bit.ly/earth396](http://bit.ly/earth396)

### What's so good about it?

This brilliant app lets you tour the



# Secret tricks for WhatsApp



WhatsApp is now the most popular messaging app in the world, with more than a billion monthly users. **Edward Munn** reveals 10 tips to help you discover its best hidden features

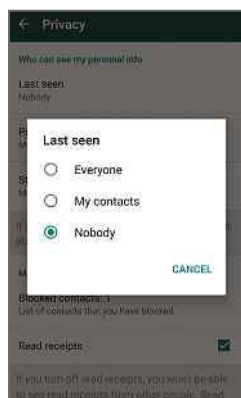
## Know when your messages have been read

The symbols that appear next to your sent WhatsApp messages tell you their delivery status. One tick indicates that the message has successfully reached the server, two grey ticks show that the message been successfully delivered to the recipient's phone, and two blue ticks indicate that the recipient has read the message. If you long-press a message then tap the 'i' (information) button, the app shows you when it was both Delivered and Read.



## Protect your privacy in WhatsApp

If you'd rather not allow people to see when you've read their messages, you can turn off the option that tells them. From WhatsApp's Settings menu, select Account and Privacy, then untick the box for 'Read receipts'. Bear in mind that if you

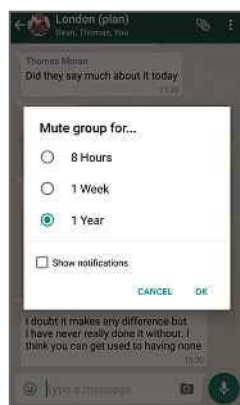


turn this feature off, you won't be able to see when other people have read your messages either.

From the same Settings menu, you can choose who is allowed to see your personal information, including your profile picture, status and when you were last online. Setting the 'Last seen' option to 'Nobody' means you won't be able to see when any of your contacts were last online.

## Silence annoying group chats

If you're regularly disturbed by group chats on WhatsApp, try muting them. To do this, open the offending chat, tap the three-dot button in the top-right corner and select Mute. You can choose to silence the chat for eight hours, one week or a year, and untick 'Show



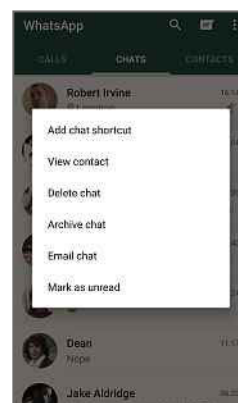
notifications' to stop notifications appearing in your notification drawer. If you change your mind, simply select the menu button again and choose Unmute.

You can also mute conversations with specific people by opening the appropriate conversation, tapping the menu button, selecting 'View contact' and switching Mute to On. Choose from the list of mute options (as described above), then tap OK. If someone is a real pest, you can block them completely. To do

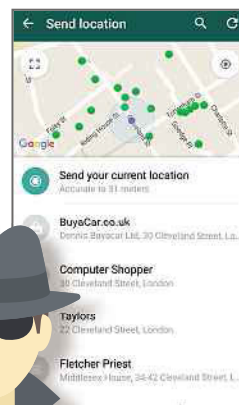
this, tap the chat's menu button, select More and Block. Tap OK when WhatsApp warns you that you will no longer receive calls or messages from that person.

## Add chat shortcuts to your home screen

For quick access to your favourite chats, why not add a shortcut to your phone's home screen? From WhatsApp's Chats tab, long-press the conversation you want to make a shortcut to and select 'Add chat shortcut'. An icon will appear on your home screen, which you can move to a position of your choice.



## Share your location with other people



If you've ever tried meeting someone in an unfamiliar place, you'll know how difficult it can be to explain where you are using a vague description of your surroundings. Thanks to WhatsApp's location



sharing feature, you'll never need to do this again. To share your location in a chat, tap the paperclip icon and select Location, followed by 'Send your current location'. When the recipient receives your location they can tap it to launch Google Maps and get directions to find you.

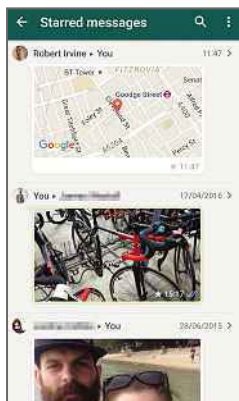
## Chat in WhatsApp from your PC

Wouldn't typing long messages in WhatsApp be so much quicker and easier if you could do it on your PC? Well, in fact you can. To use WhatsApp in your internet browser, open the app's main menu and select WhatsApp Web. Next, visit [web.whatsapp.com](http://web.whatsapp.com) in your PC's web browser and use your smartphone to scan the QR code that appears onscreen. All your chats will be displayed on the page for as long as your phone is switched on and has an internet connection, so you can continue to use the messenger even while your phone is charging in the next room. In fact, as long as you've already paired it with the PC, you can use WhatsApp at work even if you've accidentally left your phone at home.



## Find important messages quickly

When someone sends you information in WhatsApp, such as an address or telephone number, scrolling back through reams of messages to find it again can be annoying. To avoid this, long-press the message and tap the star icon to save it. Then, when you need it again, open the app's main menu and select 'Starred messages' to view all your favourite messages. To find starred messages from



a particular contact, long-press the relevant chat and select 'View contact'. The 'Starred messages' option shows you how many saved messages you have in that conversation, and tapping it lists them in chronological order.

If you're looking for a link that someone sent you in a message you didn't star, there's a trick for that, too. Go to the appropriate chat and tap the three-dot button. Select Media, then Links to scroll through a chronological list of all the links shared between you and that contact. You'll also see tabs for Media and Documents, which make it easier to find any files you've shared with that contact.

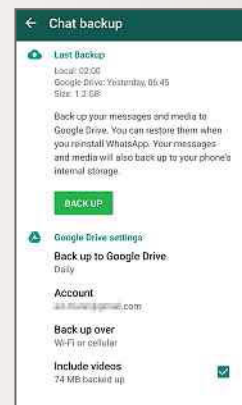
## Make free voice calls over Wi-Fi

WhatsApp lets you make free voice calls whenever you have a Wi-Fi connection, which is very handy when you're abroad and don't want to pay expensive roaming charges for phoning home. Even when you're not connected to a wireless network, the feature can be cost-effective if you have a phone contract geared towards free mobile data rather than free phone calls. To call someone with WhatsApp, simply tap the phone button at the top of the appropriate chat. If you've never messaged them before, you'll need to use the Contacts tab to find them first. Once you've made your first voice call, you can use the Calls tab to review the call log or to call the person again.

To keep the cost of calls down when using mobile data, tap the three-dot menu, select Settings and 'Data usage' then tick the box for 'Low data usage'.

## Back up your conversations and received images

These days, you can back up pretty much anything on your smartphone to the cloud, and WhatsApp chats are



no exception.

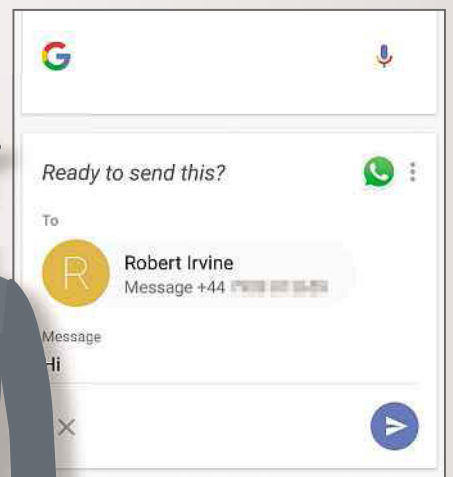
To set WhatsApp to back up to Google Drive, open the app's main menu and select Chats, then 'Chat backup'. Tap 'Back up to Google Drive' if you want to choose how

often the app saves backups, or select the green Back Up button to back up immediately. You'll be asked to select a Google account to which you'd like to save your WhatsApp backups. Tap 'Back up over' to specify whether WhatsApp can perform backups over 'Wi-Fi or cellular' or only Wi-Fi. If you want to include videos in the backup, tick the appropriate box. When you get a new smartphone, you can restore WhatsApp from your Google Drive backups when you first run the app.

WhatsApp also lets you email a copy of your chat history. To do this, long-press the chat you want to send and tap 'Email chat'. You're given the option to include or exclude media files in the email. WhatsApp then lets you choose the app you want to use to send it.





## Use Google Now to send messages

If you'd like to send someone a WhatsApp message but you've got your hands full, you can ask Google Now to do it. Simply say 'OK Google' then 'send a WhatsApp message to Robert Irvine', for example. Google Now will ask you what you'd like to send. After you've dictated the message, Google will ask "Do you want to send it or change it?". You can respond accordingly or use the onscreen dialogue box to modify or send the message. ■



# Broadband Deals

Call **FREE** on 0800 083 2357 to switch your broadband

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

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](http://www.broadbandgenie.co.uk). Correct as of 21 April 2016.

**Ofcom**

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

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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 browser add-ons word search and guess our classic-novel emoji?

## WEB USER WORD SEARCH

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

**ADBLOCKPLUS**  
**CAMELIZER**  
**DISCONNECT**  
**GHOSTERY**  
**GRAMMARLY**  
**LASTPASS**  
**LAZARUS**  
**ONETAB**  
**TAMPERMONKEY**  
**ZENMATE**

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

## CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE CLASSIC NOVELS FROM THE EMOJI?

1



2



3



4



Get the answers online at [bit.ly/quiz396](http://bit.ly/quiz396)

## COMPETITIONS

### WIN 1 OF 4 TP-Link AV500 Powerline ac Wi-Fi Kit (WPA4530PKIT)

TP-Link's latest kit – which we awarded five stars in Issue 393 – is an effective and affordable way to boost your home Wi-Fi network. It significantly increased the signal in distant corners of our test house. To enter, email your address to [webusercomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webusercomp@dennis.co.uk) with 'powerline' in the subject line. For more information, visit [uk.tp-link.com](http://uk.tp-link.com) and follow [@TPLINKUK](https://twitter.com/TPLINKUK) on Twitter.



WORTH  
£69.99  
EACH

### WIN 1 OF 5 Serif PagePlus X9 software

Serif's PagePlus X9 remains the best desktop-publishing software around. Anyone who needs to make documents from text and images will find its powerful tools and simple interface easy to use. We were impressed enough to give it a five-star review in Issue 394. To enter, email your address to [webusercomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webusercomp@dennis.co.uk) with 'pageplus' in the subject line. For more info, visit [www.serif.com](http://www.serif.com) and 'like' [www.facebook.com/SerifSoftware](https://www.facebook.com/SerifSoftware).



WORTH  
£89.99  
EACH



# Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

## Use Google's free Nik Photoshop plugins in Paint.NET

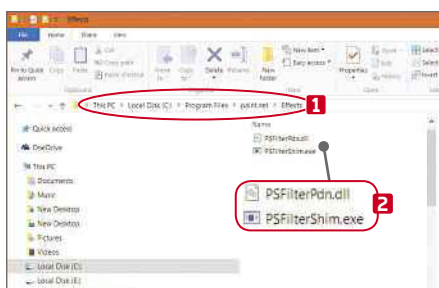
[www.google.com/nikcollection](http://www.google.com/nikcollection)

Google's Nik Collection of image-editing tools is now free. Here's what you can do with them

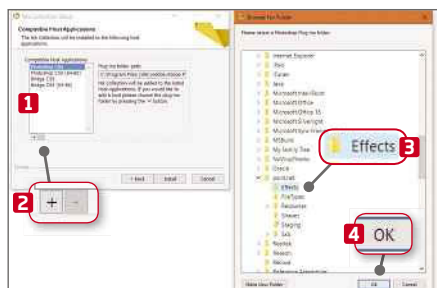
**W**hen Google bought Nik Software in 2012, one of the first things the company did was slash the price of its collection of image-editing Photoshop plug-ins and tools from \$500 (£353) to \$150 (£106). The same collection has now been made entirely free for anyone to download and use, and consists of seven plugins – Analog Efex Pro, Color Efex Pro, Silver

Efex Pro, Viveza, HDR Efex Pro, Sharpener Pro and Dfine. It's a fairly sizable 429MB download and is available for both Windows and Mac.

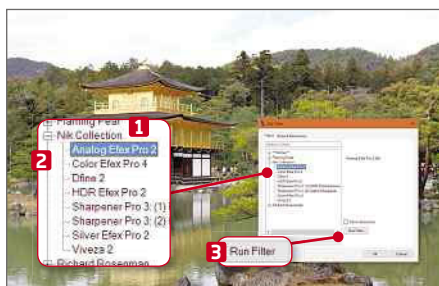
While the Nik plugins are designed to work with Photoshop, they can also be used in free image-editing software Paint.NET ([www.getpaint.net](http://www.getpaint.net)). Installing and using them is easy but requires the use of an additional free plugin.



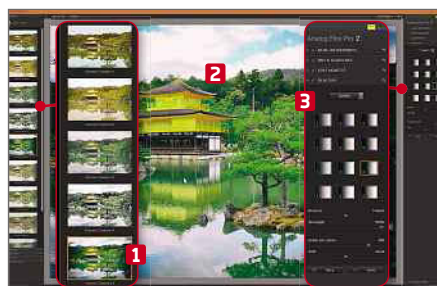
**1** First, download the latest version of Paint.NET's PSFilterPDN plugin from [psfilterpdn.codeplex.com](http://psfilterpdn.codeplex.com). Then open Paint.NET's effects folder in Explorer – it's likely to be at C:\Program Files\paint.net\Effects. **1** Unzip and copy the files PSFilterShim.exe and PSFilterPdn.dll to the Effects folder. **2**



**2** You don't need to run the PSFilterShim.exe file – just copying it and the DLL into the folder will install it. Now run the Nik Collection installer. It will find compatible host applications, **1** but not Paint.NET. Click the plus sign, **2** and browse to C:\Program Files\paint.net\Effects. **3** Click OK **4** then click Install.



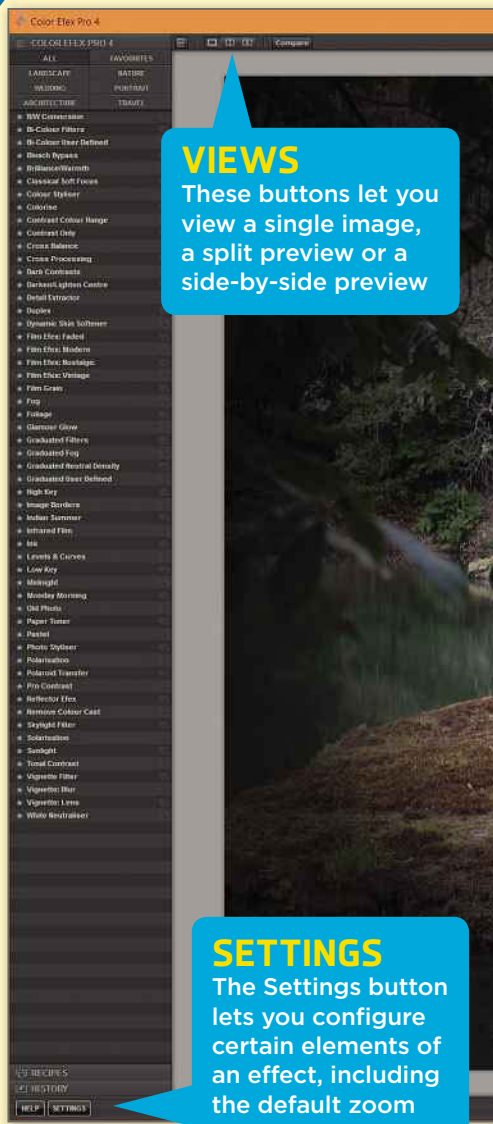
**3** Launch Paint.NET, open a photo, then go to Effects and select 8bf Filter. Locate the Nik Collection and open it. **1** You will see a list of all the available effects. **2** We'll start with Analog Efex Pro, which makes photos look as if they were taken on classic cameras and film types. Select it and click Run Filter. **3**



**4** This tool presents you with a selection of classic camera filters applied down the left. **1** Select one, and the filter will be applied to your photo in the large preview window. **2** The sidebar on the right **3** lets you customise the results by making basic adjustments, tweaking the lens vignette and changing the film type.



**5** Color Efex Pro offers filters for colour correction and creative effects. Select any of the preset options on the left, **1** and you'll see the result instantly. **2** You can narrow down the list by subject (All, Landscape, Wedding, Portrait and so on). **3** The right-hand bar offers options you can use to tweak the effect.



### VIEWS

These buttons let you view a single image, a split preview or a side-by-side preview

### SETTINGS

The Settings button lets you configure certain elements of an effect, including the default zoom and preview mode

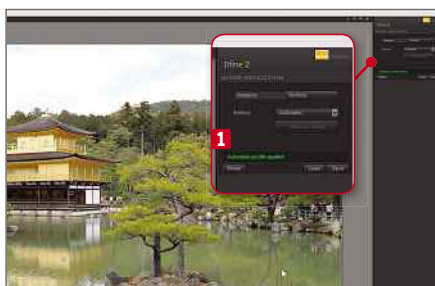


## TOOLS

Depending on the filter, the tools on the right include Select, Pan, Zoom In, Zoom Out, Change Background Colour and Hide or View Adjustment Panels

## LOUPE

This shows a preview of a small portion of the image. Click the pin under the Loupe window, then click the image to set the point



**6** HDR Efex Pro lets you apply High Dynamic Range filters to your pictures and offers a selection of presets and customisation options. Silver Efex Pro is for black-and-white photography. Dfine automatically removes noise from your image, based on your camera, and you can then adjust the results. **1**



**7** Sharpener Pro 2 and 3 both do a fantastic job of sharpening photos. The latter fine-tunes your image based on how it will be viewed – on a display, printed from an inkjet, as a halftone, and so on. You can choose output settings for it on the right. **1** You can also adjust creative **2** and selective **3** sharpening.



**8** Finally, Viveza gives you fine manual control over your image's brightness, contrast, saturation and structure. **1** Use the sliders to make the adjustments you require. There's also a Levels and Curves feature. **2** Adding control points to your image **3** lets you make more precise edits.



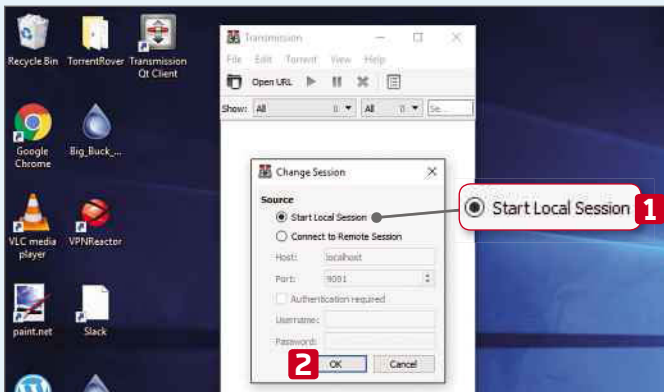
# Use the popular BitTorrent tool that's finally come to Windows

Transmission: [www.transmissionbt.com](http://www.transmissionbt.com) | ⌚ 20 mins | 🖥️ Vista, 7, 8, 10

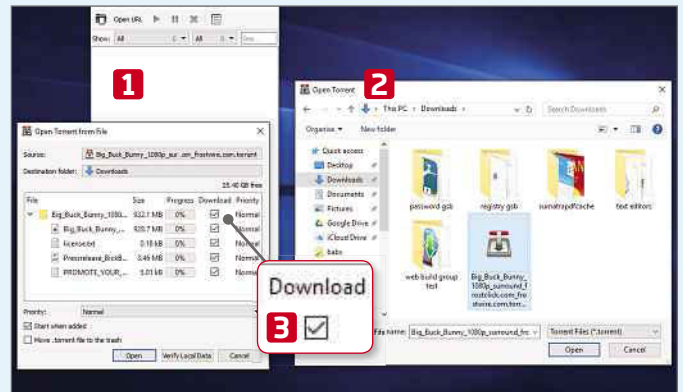
**T**ransmission is a BitTorrent program that's been available on OS X and Linux computers for a decade, proving extremely popular with downloaders on those operating systems. It's free, open-source, lightweight and comes without any annoying extras or adverts, but Transmission has been out of reach for Windows users – until now.

The new Windows version is still in development but is extremely stable and very similar to the other versions. It hasn't launched officially on the main Transmission website yet, but if you scroll to the bottom of Transmission's file storage area ([bit.ly/tran396](http://bit.ly/tran396)), you'll see that there are two Windows versions available. If you use a 64-bit version of Windows, you should download and run transmission-2.92-x64.msi, while 32-bit Windows users should opt for transmission-2.92-x86.msi.

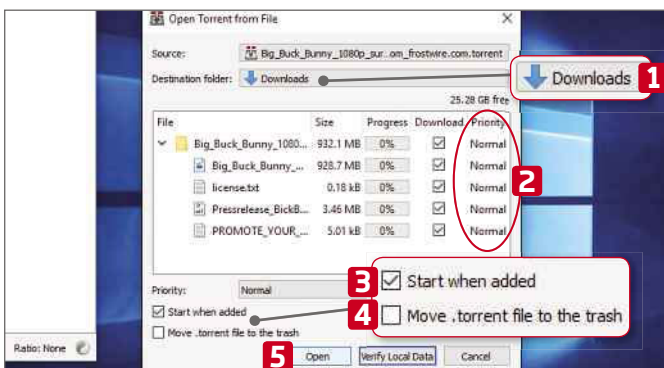
If you haven't used BitTorrent software before, Transmission is a great place to start. It uses small files called 'torrents', which let the software know where it can find the particular file you want to download. It then downloads this larger file from the computers of any other people who are currently sharing it through their own BitTorrent software.



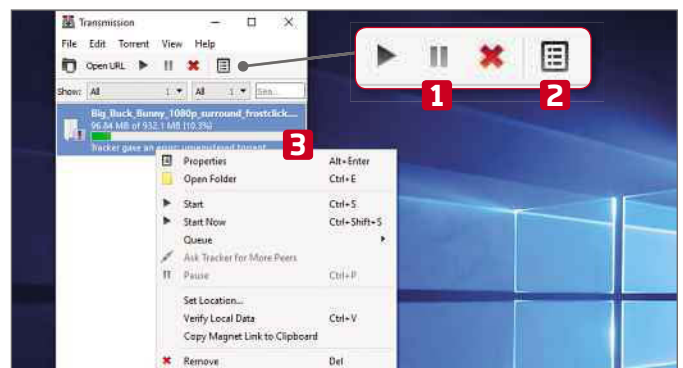
**1** When you start the program, you'll see a Change Session box. Choose Start Local Session **1** and click OK. **2** Then search for the torrent of the file you want, and download it to your Downloads folder or any other folder you choose, as long as you can find it later.



**2** To add a torrent file to Transmission, drag and drop it into the main window **1** or click the Open Torrent button **2** and select it. This opens another window, where you can choose exactly what to download. Deselect any extras you don't want by unticking their boxes in the Download column. **3**



**3** You can also use this window to change the destination folder, **1** change the file's overall download priority (from Normal to High or Low), **2** choose whether to start downloading the file immediately **3** or to delete the original torrent file. **4** When you're ready, click the Open button. **5**



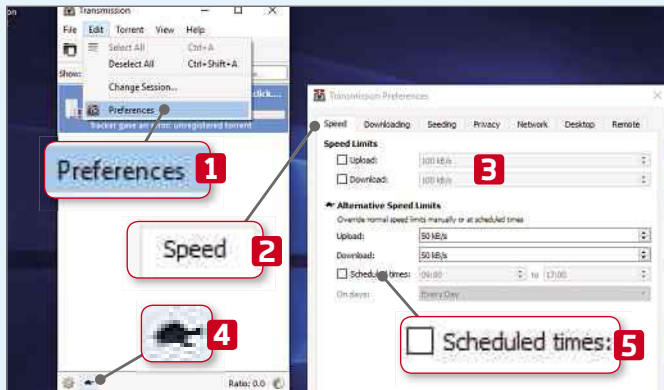
**4** Once the file has started downloading, you can use the buttons in the toolbar to pause, resume or cancel the torrent. **1** Clicking the button to the right of these **2** displays the file's properties. You can access further options by right-clicking the file. **3**



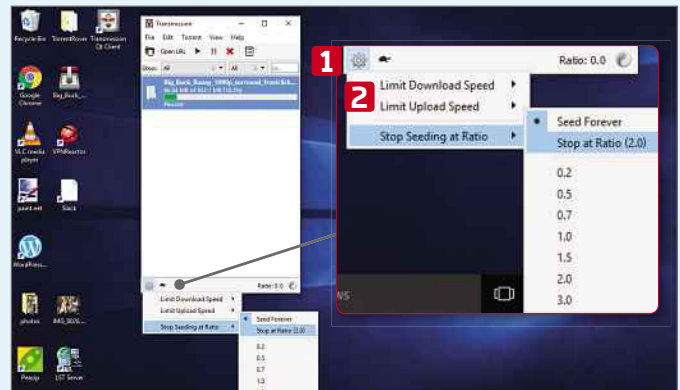
## EXPERT TIP

### Andy Shaw says

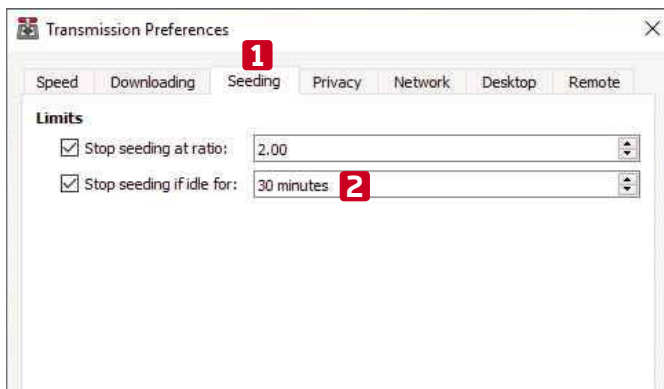
If you're downloading a lot of files, click the View menu and choose Compact View. This limits the information displayed for each file to title, status and percentage downloaded. From here you can also reorder your files by progress, size, time left and more. This can help you keep track of how your downloads are going, and whether you need to adjust the download priority for particular files.



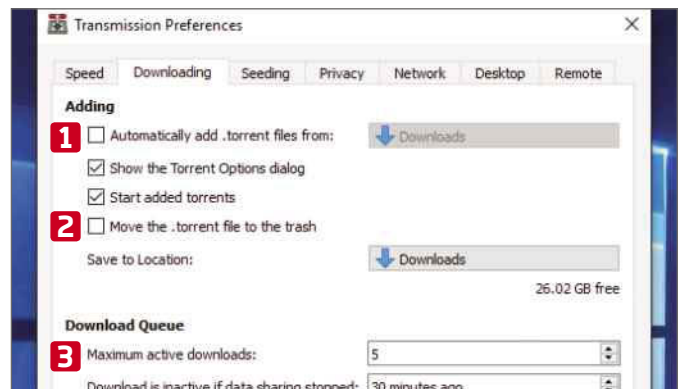
**5** Further options are available in the Edit menu, under Preferences. **1** In the Speed tab **2** you can apply speed limits to uploads and downloads, **3** and set a limit that comes into effect on clicking the tortoise button **4** or to a schedule **5** for times when you can't spare the bandwidth.



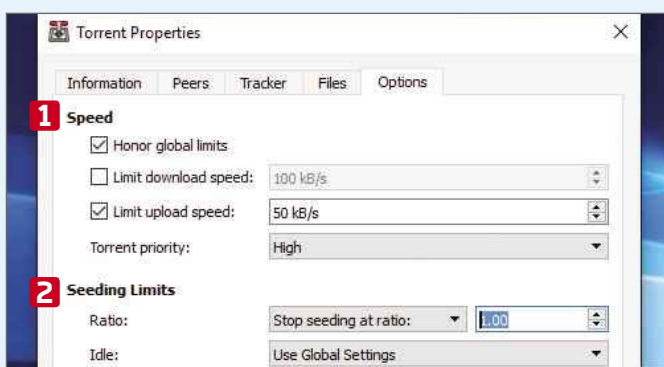
**6** You can make quick changes to these settings by clicking the cog button. **1** From here you can limit download and upload speeds on the fly. **2** You can also change your seeding ratio, which is the number of times other users can download a file from you before you stop sharing.



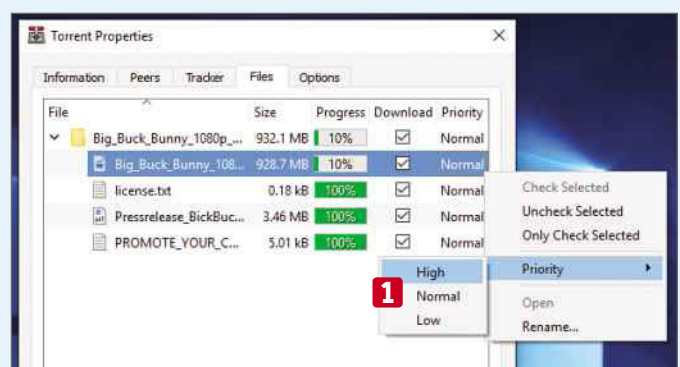
**7** The seeding ratio option is available in the Preferences, on the Seeding tab. **1** As well as selecting and adjusting this ratio, you can stop seeding any files that are no longer in demand by choosing to terminate the seeding process if the file is idle for a set period. **2**



**8** The Downloading tab is where you manage your files. You can set the software to automatically download any torrent file you put in your Downloads folder, **1** and to remove the original torrent file when it's done. **2** You can also limit the number of files Transmission can download at once. **3**



**9** Override the program's preferences for individual files by right-clicking them and selecting Properties. The Options tab lets you specify a different speed **1** and seeding **2** limit for the particular file you've selected.



**10** As in Step 2, the Files tab lets you adjust the priority of individual files within a zipped file, which is useful if you're downloading a series and want to start watching the first episode. Right-click the individual element to change its priority. **1**



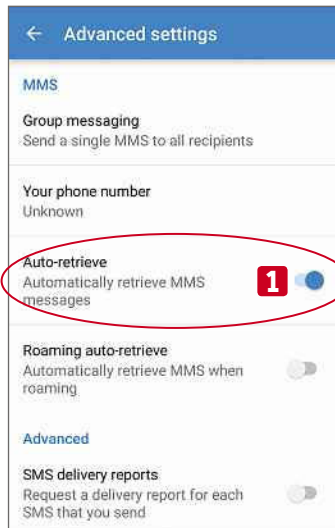
# Stop picture messages hogging your phone

**S**ending image files has never been easier thanks to Hangouts, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, but one drawback of these apps is that your smartphone quickly fills up with the images (and videos) you've been sent. In this

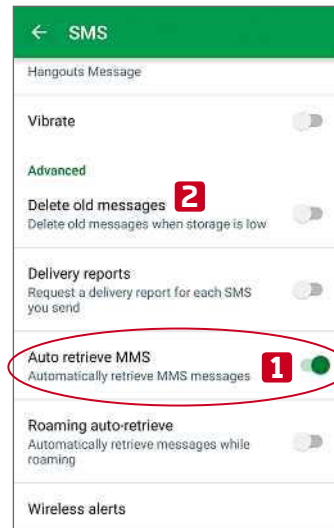
Workshop, we show you how to stop these messaging apps downloading files automatically and how to reclaim the space those files have already taken up.



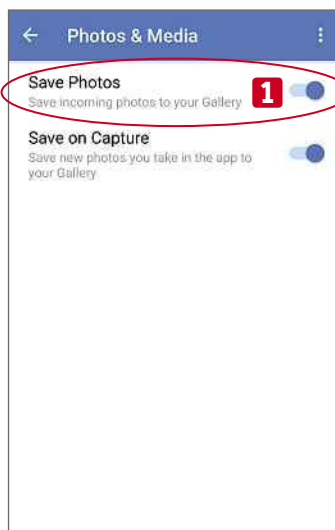
Android messaging apps | ⌚ 10 mins | 🤖 Android



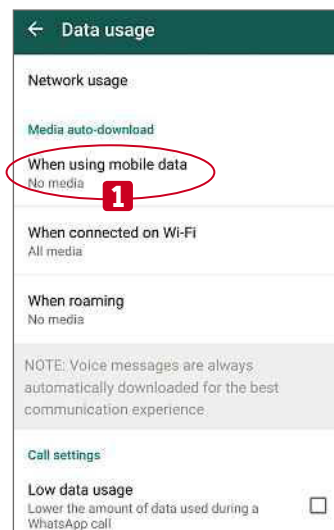
**1** Your phone's own messaging app is probably set to retrieve MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) messages by default but it's more secure to turn this feature off. This has the added benefit of saving space on your phone. To turn off auto-retrieve in Google's Messenger, tap the menu button, select Settings and Advanced, and set the Auto-retrieve switch to the off position. **1**



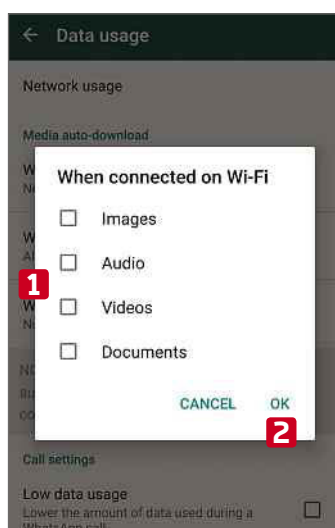
**2** If Hangouts is your default messaging app, tap its menu button, select Settings and SMS, and scroll down to Advanced. From here, switch 'Auto retrieve MMS' to off. **1** You can also enable the option to 'Delete old messages', **2** which removes the oldest pictures when your storage is low.



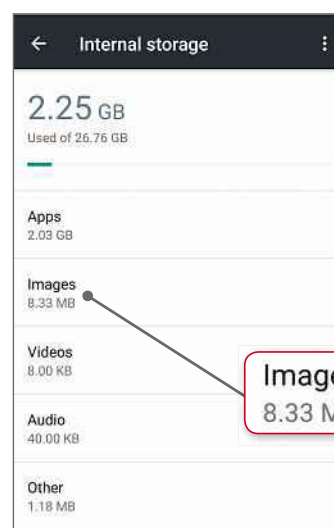
**3** Facebook Messenger won't save photos to your Gallery by default, but you might have activated this option at some point in the past. If so, you can switch it off again by tapping the Account icon, selecting Photos & Media and turning Save Photos to off. **1**



**4** WhatsApp downloads photos and videos to your device by default but you can easily stop this happening. Open the app's main menu, select Settings and choose 'Data usage'. Under 'Media auto-download', select 'When using mobile data' **1** and make sure the options for images, audio, videos and documents aren't ticked.



**5** Tap OK, select 'When connected on Wi-Fi' and repeat the process from Step 4, making sure all the options are unticked **1** before selecting OK. **2** The next time a contact sends you something, you'll see a preview of the file (including its size) to help you decide whether or not to download it.



**6** To see how much of your device's storage is taken up by photos you've been sent, open Settings, select 'Storage & USB' and look for the Images **1** option. Tapping this lets you browse all the images on your device. You can then delete individual files or entire folders.

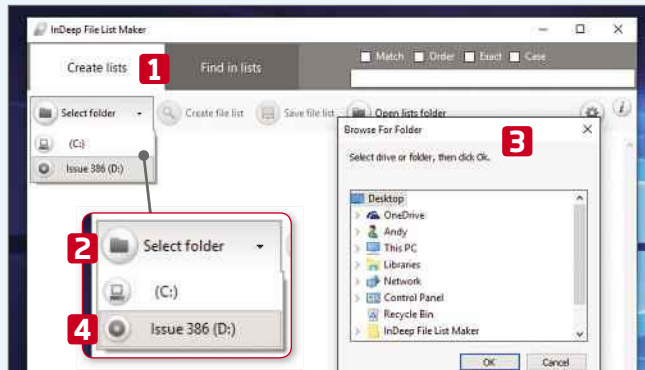


# Find files that aren't on your PC

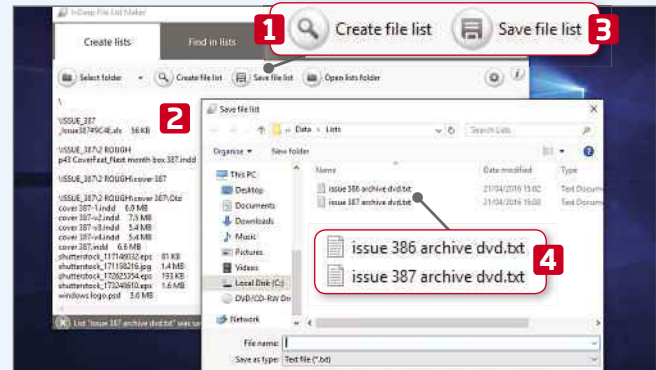
If you keep your computer's hard drive tidy by backing up older files to external hard drives or writeable DVDs, you'll know that this can make it trickier to find your files later, especially if you can't remember where

to start looking. InDeep File List Maker creates lists of the files and folders you keep on external storage devices, and uses these to help you find them again.

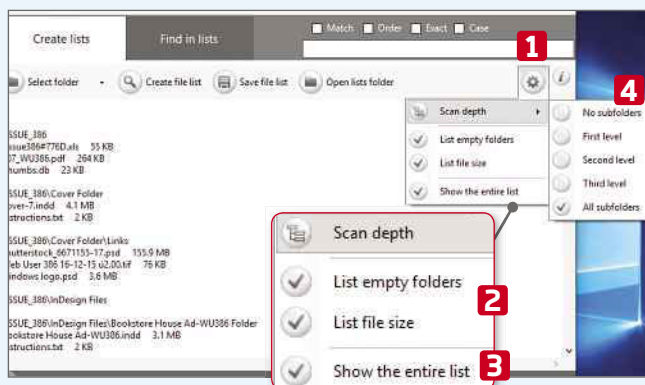
**InDeep File List Maker:** [bit.ly/indeep396](http://bit.ly/indeep396) | 20 mins | XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10



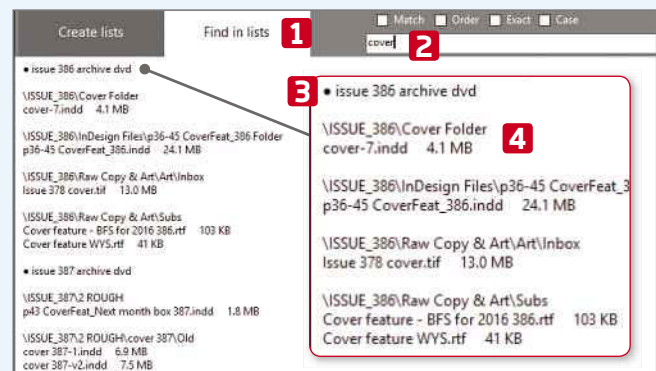
**1** You don't need to install the software – just unzip the folder, save it to your hard drive and double-click FLM.exe. Plug in the drive you want to index. On the 'Create lists' tab, **1** click 'Select folder' **2** and choose from the 'Browse For Folder' list, **3** or choose an entire drive. **4**



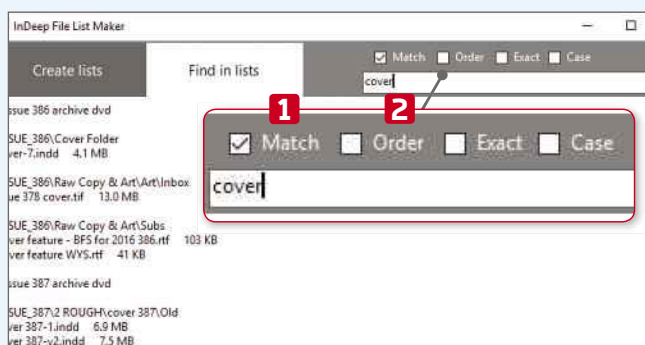
**2** Click the 'Create file list' button. **1** The software will create a list of all the folders and files on the drive and display it below. **2** Click 'Save file list' **3** and give the list a name that will help you locate the particular drive or disc should you need to search for a file on it. **4**



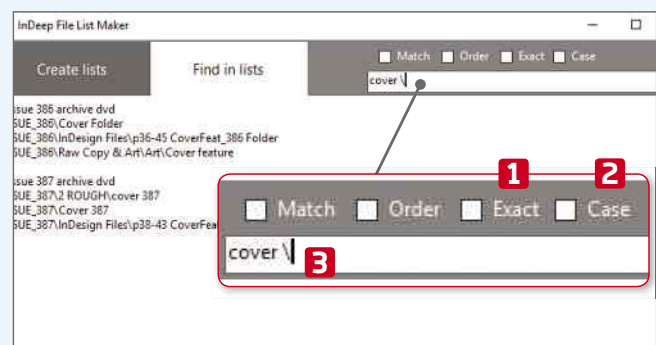
**3** To control how lists are created, click the cog button. **1** Select 'List empty folders' and 'List file size' **2** to add these items to your list. You can choose whether or not to display the list after it's created. **3** 'Scan depth' lets you choose how many layers of subfolders **4** to index.



**4** Click the 'Find in lists' tab **1** and type your search term into the box. **2** The software will search across all the lists saved in its Lists folder. Individual lists are separated with a bullet point. **3** You can then see file and folder matches for each drive below its list name. **4**



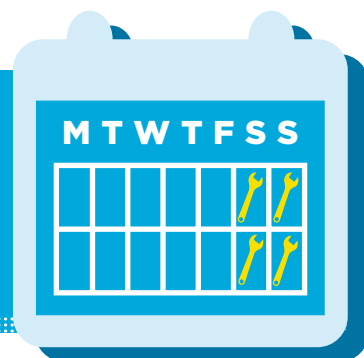
**5** Use the tick boxes across the top to refine your search. Match **1** shows only exact results for a specific word, so it won't show a word if it's within another word (such as words with an 's' added). Tick the Order box **2** to show only words that appear in the same order you typed them.



**6** The Exact box **1** displays results that are a perfect match for the search you typed, while the Case box **2** only shows results where your capitalisation matches. If you only want to show folders, add a '\' separator to the text box. **3**

# Weekend Project

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



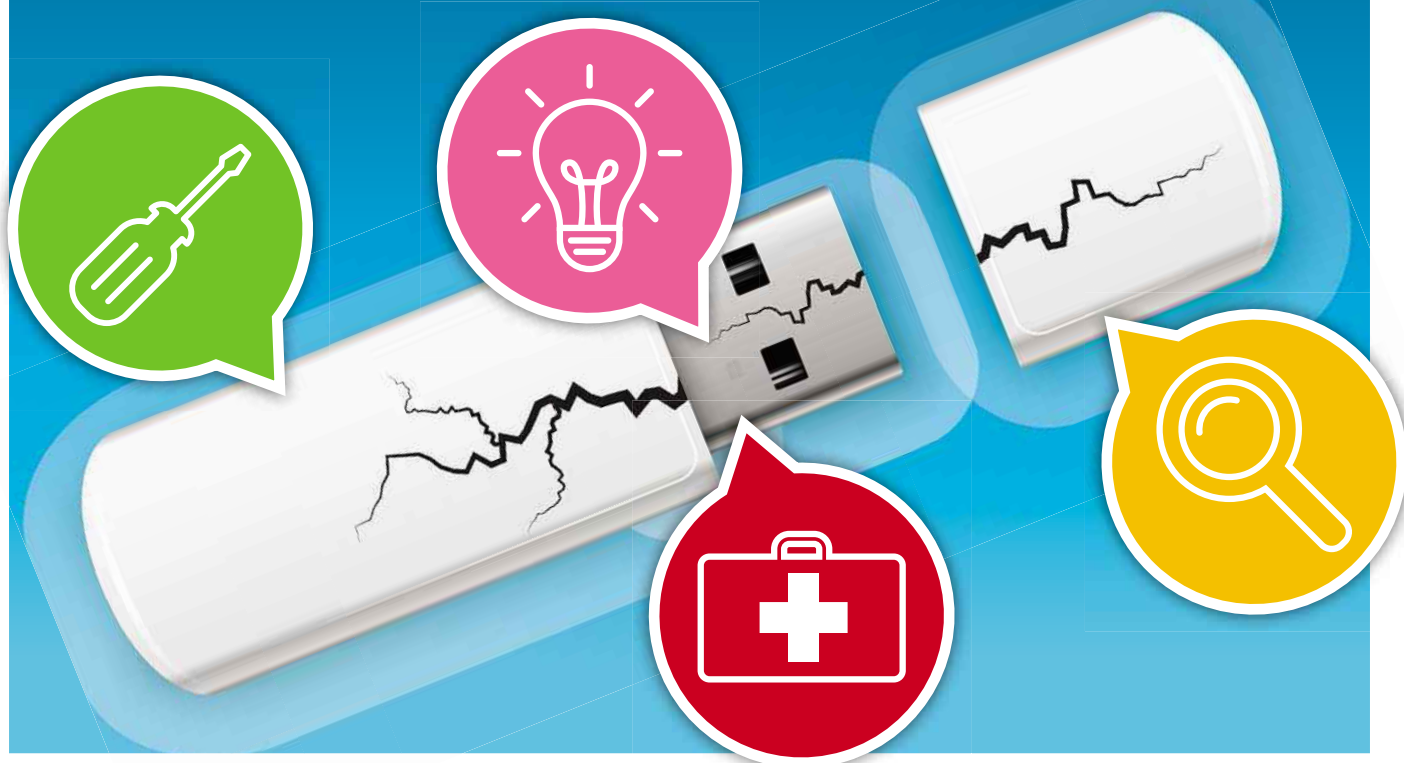
How to...

## Fix USB sticks you thought were beyond repair

Have you got any USB flash memory drives that simply don't work? **Wayne Williams** shows you how to breathe new life into broken drives

**U**SB flash drives are handy little things that can be used for many purposes – from carrying and sharing files to installing and running an operating system. These sticks are robust for the most part, and should last a long time. But sometimes they can go wrong, and suddenly you're left with a flash drive you

can't reformat or copy content to, or that your computer simply won't recognise. This can be devastating, particularly if the drive holds the only copy of some important personal data. However, the good news is that you might be able to resurrect a problematic drive and rescue your files.



### Reformat the drive

Formatting an apparently broken drive (wiping it and starting afresh) can fix all sorts of problems. You can do this directly in Windows. Open Explorer, right-click the drive (making sure you select the correct one) and choose Format. Check that the capacity is correct and pick the file system you require. Depending on the drive and your requirements, this will be FAT32, NTFS or

exFAT. You can set the allocation unit size (or select the default if you don't understand what this means), restore device defaults (which may fix any problems you're having) and give the drive a new name. You can choose between a quick or regular format. The former is much speedier, as the name suggests, because it simply wipes any files. A regular format is more thorough, as it scans for bad sectors as well as

removing files. If you're having repeated problems with a drive, a regular format is the best option, even though it's slower.

### Write-protection is stuck

Some USB flash drives have a physical switch that activates write-protection, safeguarding its contents from accidental deletion. If you want to format a protected drive or write some files to it, look for this switch and turn it off to



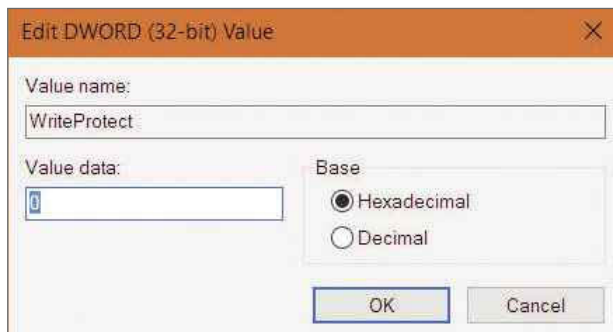
disable the protection. Occasionally, however, you might encounter the 'write protect' message on a drive that doesn't have a 'write protect' switch. This often happens when a flash drive detects a potential fault with itself and goes into write-protected mode to prevent possible data loss.

When this happens there's a very good chance the drive has developed a hardware fault, and you may need to give up on it and buy a replacement. Before you do that, however, it's worth trying to fix the problem with a simple Registry tweak.

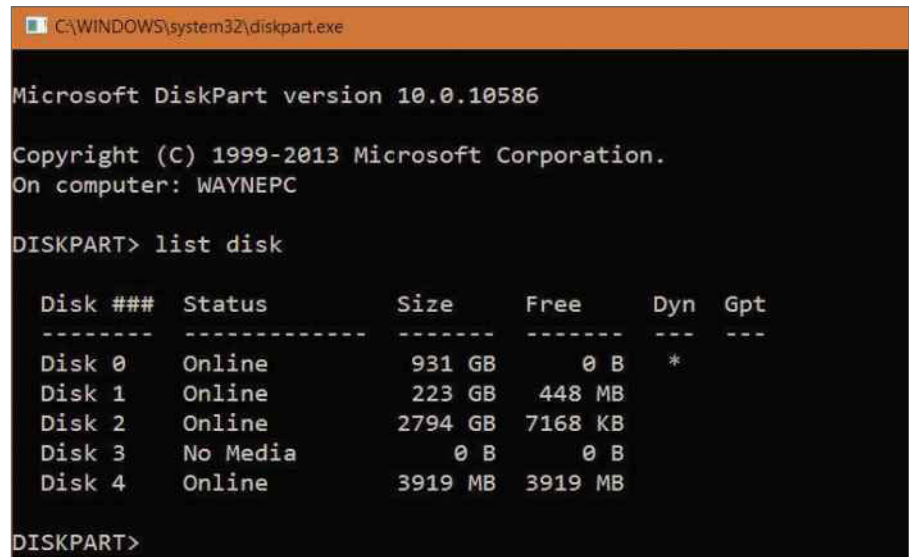
Press Windows+R, type `regedit` and press Enter. Wait for the Registry Editor to load, then navigate to:

HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\  
SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\  
Control\StorageDevicePolicies

Double-click the WriteProtect value in the right-hand pane and change the Value data from 1 to 0. Click OK to save the change. Close the Registry Editor and restart your computer. Connect your USB drive again and hopefully it will no longer be write-protected.



USB drives can get their write-protection stuck, which you can fix using Registry Editor



Microsoft's DiskPart may be able to fix drives that other tools can't

If there's no StorageDevicePolicies entry on your computer, you'll need to create it manually. Right-click on Control and select New, then Key. Give this key the name StorageDevicePolicies. Select it, right-click, and select New, then 'DWORD (32-bit) Value'. Enter its name as WriteProtect.

Double-click the new WriteProtect key in the right-hand window and make sure the value is set to 0 in the 'Value Data' box. Click OK, then restart your computer and try copying some files to your drive.

If that isn't successful you can try running Check Disk on the

USB drive. Press Windows+R and type `chkdsk x: /r`, replacing 'x' with whatever letter has been assigned to the flash drive.

If that doesn't work either (and, frankly, there's a good chance it won't), the final thing to try is to use Diskpart to perform a special format on the drive. Click the Start button and type cmd. Right-click the Command Prompt and choose 'Run as administrator'. In the box that opens, type the following, pressing Enter after each line:

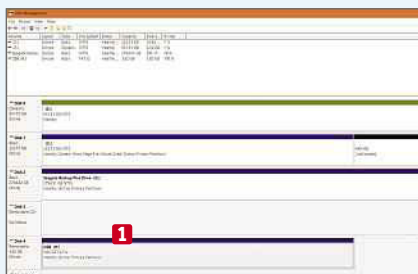
```
diskpart
list disk
```

Note the number of your flash drive, which is based on its capacity.

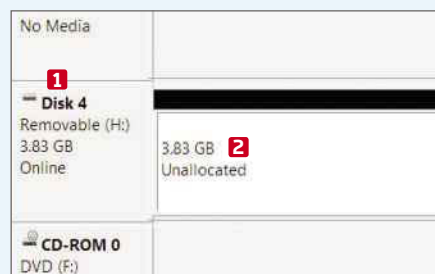
```
select disk x (replacing x with the
drive number)
attributes disk clear readonly
clean
```



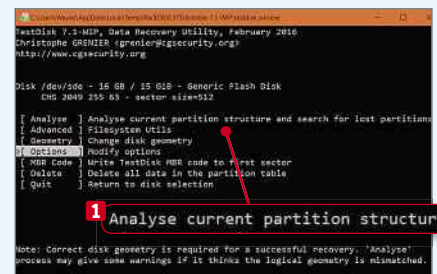
## MINI WORKSHOP | Fix USB drive problems with Windows' Disk Management tool



**1** To launch Disk Management, press Windows+R, type `diskmgmt.msc` and press Enter. In Windows 10 you can right-click the Start button and select Disk Management here. In the window that opens, look for the problem drive in the list. **1**



**2** If the drive isn't listed as Healthy or doesn't have a drive letter assigned to it, that's likely to be the cause of your problems. Right-clicking the drive name on the left **1** will let you assign a drive letter or path. If the drive is shown as unallocated space, **2** it means the partition(s) may have been deleted.



**3** In the case of partition problems, you can try using TestDisk ([bit.ly/test396](http://bit.ly/test396)) to fix the partition and recover your data. Run the software, and in the menu that appears, select the option to 'Analyse current partition structure'. **1** Other tools are available that you can use to troubleshoot and fix any problems that are identified.

# WebUser Bookstore



## THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID

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

### BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON

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## THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WINDOWS 10

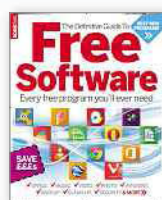
This 148-page book is the only guide you need to Microsoft's fantastic new operating system. You'll learn how to master all the new tools and software, and how to upgrade without losing anything. It has been updated to include fixes for problems that have appeared since Windows 10 launched.



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## THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO FREE SOFTWARE

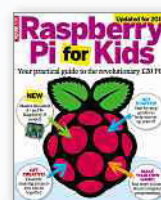
Free software can be a worry. Is it as good as a paid-for package? Will it sneak junk on to your PC? Does it nag you to update to a premium version? In our new 148-page book *The Definitive Guide to Free Software*, we recommend only the best free programs that deliver high-quality features and no nasty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



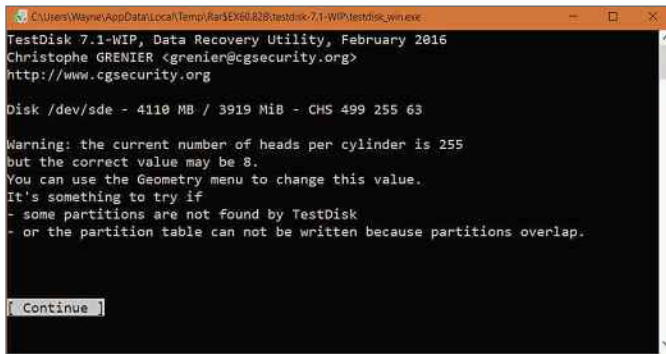
**BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON**  
at [bit.ly/guidetosoftware](http://bit.ly/guidetosoftware)

## RASPBERRY PI FOR KIDS

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



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**TestDisk can fix a variety of drive-related problems with its text-based interface**

If Diskpart reports an error here, you'll have to try something else, but if everything seems to be working up to this point, you can proceed with formatting the drive. Type these commands:

```
create partition primary
format fs=fat32
(you can replace fat32 with NTFS if
that's the file system you want)
exit
```

## Wrong drive capacity

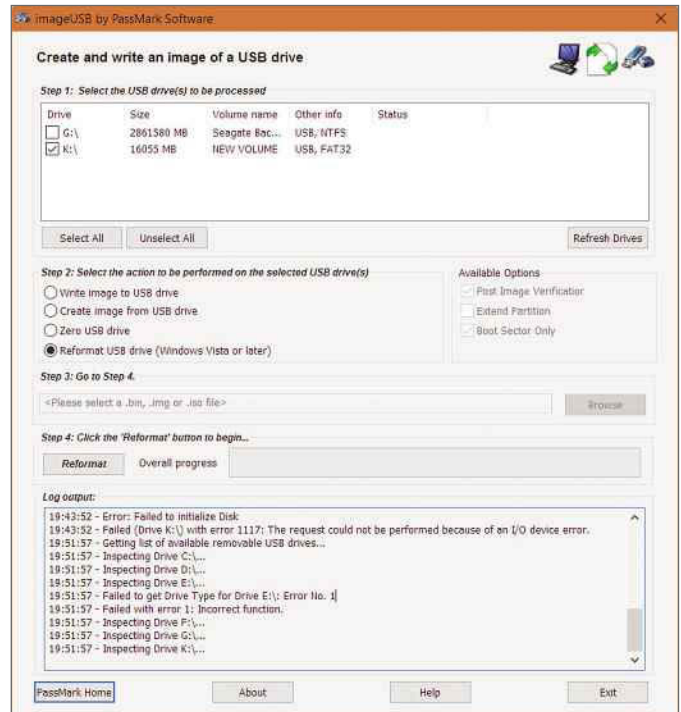
One of the more annoying problems you can encounter with a USB flash drive is when it reports the wrong capacity, such as a 32GB drive incorrectly showing as 242MB, for example. Assuming the drive actually has the capacity it claims to have and isn't a fake (drives purchased on eBay can sometimes be a different size to the one advertised), this can be due to a formatting problem. You can attempt to reformat the drive in Windows, but

that may not fix the issue. ImageUSB ([bit.ly/iusb396](http://bit.ly/iusb396)) is a free tool that you can use to back up the contents of a drive and then format it, fixing the partition structure and hopefully reclaiming the missing drive

space. ImageUSB can only format drives using the NTFS file system, but once you've got your missing space back, you can always use Windows (or another tool) to reformat the drive using the file system of your choice.

## Unrecognised drive

Plugging in a USB drive and finding that Windows fails to recognise it can be heart-stoppingly scary. There are several possible causes, ranging from a faulty



**Image USB makes a copy of the files on your USB drive then attempts to reformat it**

USB port or software driver to a corrupt partition. It's also possible that your drive has simply died – nothing lasts forever.

The first thing to do is try a different USB port, and if that doesn't work, a different port on a different PC. You can also try turning the PC off and back on again. Avoid using a hub – plug the drive straight into a port on your PC.

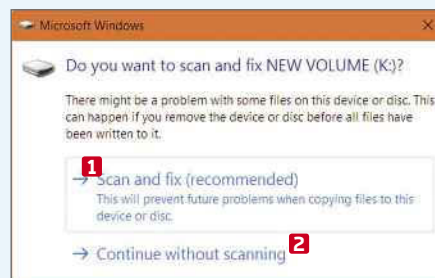
If none of that helps, try using the Disk Management tool in Windows (see Mini Workshop on previous page).



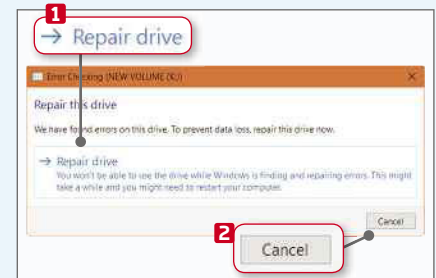
## MINI WORKSHOP | Scan and fix a drive in Windows



**1** Since Windows Vista, Microsoft's operating systems have been able to detect when a connected USB flash drive has a problem, whether it's an issue with the drive itself or some files on it. When you plug in the drive you might see an alert. **1** Clicking this message launches the tool to scan and fix it.



**2** The window that opens will ask if you want to 'Scan and fix' the drive, **1** which is the recommended option, or 'Continue without scanning'. **2** It also provides some useful information about how the problem could have occurred – removing the device before all the data was written to it is a common cause.



**3** Click the Scan option and Windows will look for problems on the drive. If it finds errors, it will offer to 'Repair drive'. **1** Click this and hopefully it will fix the problem. If you don't want to repair the drive, you can just click Cancel. **2** If the error reoccurs, you'll need to investigate the possible root cause or run Check Disk.

**NEXT ISSUE**

**How To...** Access your home network from anywhere

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# Web User's Top Tips

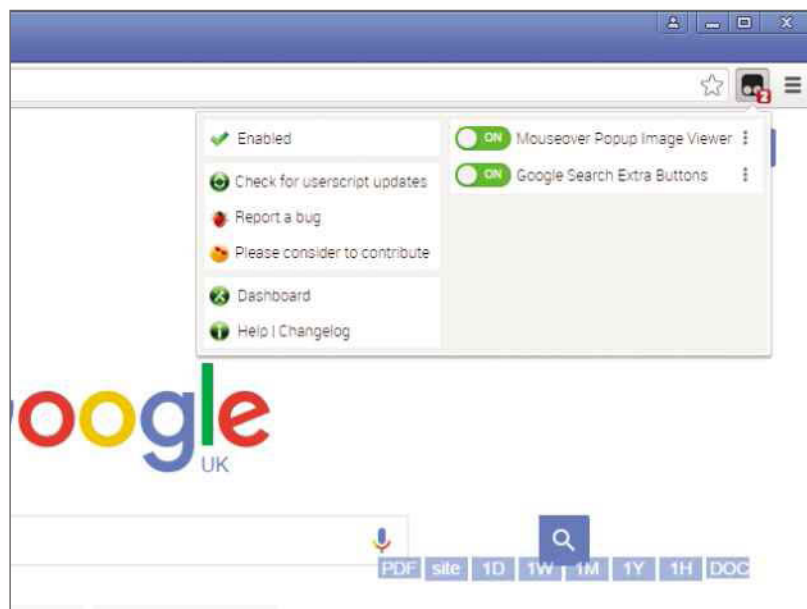
Our experts show you how to extend Chrome's features without installing memory-hogging add-ons

## TOP TIPS FOR LIGHTER CHROME TOOLS

### Get Tampermonkey

**A**dd-ons are a brilliant feature in Chrome that let you bring in extra tools and make the browser more useful. They're not the only way to extend Chrome's capabilities, though, as you can also install simple userscripts. These are smaller and use fewer resources than add-ons, and they perform different functions. They are especially useful for modifying web pages, such as adding extra features or removing annoyances.

Tampermonkey 4 is a new version of a Chrome add-on that makes userscripts easy to install and manage. Download it from [bit.ly/tamp396](http://bit.ly/tamp396). Once installed, it adds a button to the right of the address box. Click this to access the Dashboard and try the userscripts we've highlighted here. There are thousands more you can try for yourself.



*Install lightweight scripts using Tampermonkey to add new features to Chrome*

### Better Google searches

Google produces so many search results that it can be hard to find what you're looking for. Narrow your search and focus on something specific to get the results you need. Google Search Extra Buttons ([bit.ly/goobut396](http://bit.ly/goobut396)) is a script that does that by providing additional search buttons.

After installing the script, go to [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk) and type in something you want to search for. You'll see several new buttons under the Search button, which you can use to refine your search. The PDF button limits your search to .pdf files, and DOC finds .doc files. The 1D, 1W, 1M and 1Y buttons limit the results to web pages that have been

updated in the past day, week, month or year. Hovering your mouse over these displays further options, so instead of 1W (one week), you can choose 2W, 3W and so on. Click these to broaden searches by the specified time.

### View images from thumbnails

Mouseover Popup Image Viewer ([bit.ly/view396](http://bit.ly/view396)) is useful on websites that

contain thumbnails and links to images. When this script is installed and enabled, let the mouse hover over a thumbnail or link and the full image appears in the browser window. This means you can view full-size images without leaving the current page.

The script only works with links and thumbnails that click through to JPEGs and other image formats. Links

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.



*Google Search Extra Buttons adds easy-to-access filters*



that go to a page where the image is displayed will not trigger the Popup Image Viewer. Try it at [bit.ly/winwp396](http://bit.ly/winwp396).

## Stop scripts running

It's a good idea to stop scripts running while you're using online banking or buying something online, because you don't want to risk them scanning pages that contain private information. The safest way to bank and shop is to open an Incognito window from the menu or press Ctrl+Shift+N. Extensions aren't allowed in Incognito mode unless you have specifically enabled them, and because Tampermonkey isn't running, the scripts you have installed won't run.

If you'd prefer to use Chrome in normal mode, click the Tampermonkey icon to the right of the address box. In the panel that appears, click Dashboard to list all the scripts and use the switches to turn them all off.

## Bring back Tampermonkey

If you find that the Tampermonkey button has disappeared, it may have been disabled by a Chrome update. To restore it, go to the menu and then choose 'More tools', Extensions. Tick the Enabled box next to Tampermonkey.

## Browse Pinterest

Pinterest is a great place to browse for things you're interested in, and you'll find many thousands of images covering a huge range of topics. If you are not logged in, however, the site pesters you to sign up, which is irritating. Fortunately, there is a script that hides the annoying pop-up and lets you browse Pinterest privately and unimpeded, so you can choose to sign up or log in when it suits you. Go to [bit.ly/fork396](http://bit.ly/fork396) and click the Install button. Tampermonkey appears and offers to install it for you. Click Install and you can browse Pinterest freely.

## Avoid bad scripts

Scripts have access to everything on a web page, so they can see what you're doing online. This is a security risk, so you should install only those scripts that you trust. If you have any doubt about a script, avoid it.

Greasy Fork ([greasyfork.org](http://greasyfork.org)) offers thousands of scripts, which it rates with a traffic light system. When browsing the scripts, you will see green, amber and red circles on the page with numbers in them. Green is good, red is bad and amber is OK. Install only those scripts that have a high number in the green circle because those are the best. Avoid any that have a significant number in the red circle.

# TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave



## Use the Dashboard

Go to the Dashboard by clicking the Tampermonkey button, then clicking Dashboard. This provides information and lets you perform several useful functions, so getting to know your way around it is a good idea. The Dashboard lists your scripts, with an on-off switch to the left of each one, which you can use to enable or disable it. The Last Updated column tells you when a script was last updated. Click the time/date to check for a new changed version of a script.

Some scripts are designed to work with only one website, such as Facebook, Pinterest, Google search and so on. Hover your mouse over the icons in the Sites column to see which websites a script can access. There are more icons in the Features column, which show whether a script has full internet access, whether it can access secure HTTPS pages and so on. Keep an eye on which sites and pages a script is allowed to access, and consider turning scripts off when they're not being used.

## Delete a script

Open the Tampermonkey Dashboard and tick the box to the left of the scripts you no longer want to use. An action control appears above the scripts. Select Remove, then click the Start button. There are also icons in the Actions column on the right-hand side. Hover your mouse over each one and a pop-up tip box appears showing the icon's function. One of these icons deletes the script.

## Sync your scripts

If you have two or more computers running Chrome, or two different versions of Windows on one computer, you might want to sync

## Manage scripts and get information on them using the Dashboard

your scripts so you have the same options on each computer. This is possible if you're signed into your Google account in each Chrome browser, but the option to sync scripts is not enabled by default – you have to go into the settings.

Click the Tampermonkey icon in the toolbar and click Dashboard. Select the Settings tab and, at the top, set the 'Config mode' to Advanced. Scroll down the page and look for the section called TESLA. Set the Type to Chrome Sync, tick Enable TESLA and click the Save button.



## Enable TESLA to sync userscripts between computers

## Import and export

The sync facility is useful for making two Chrome browsers the same, but only for your own account. If someone else has a user account on the computer, or you want to give userscripts to a friend, you should use the export and import facility.

Click the Tampermonkey button in Chrome and click Dashboard. Select the Utilities tab, and you'll see two options: Zip and File. Each of these has an Export button and a 'Choose file' button. Zip is the best option because it results in one file that is easily copied or emailed. Click Export and a zip file of the userscripts is saved to the Downloads folder on your hard drive. Email this to the other person or put it on a USB flash memory drive and then transfer it to the other computer. They should click 'Choose file' and select the zip.

# 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](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk)



## BROWSERS

### Stop Chrome running in the background

**Q** When I run the latest version of CCleaner ([bit.ly/cclean396](http://bit.ly/cclean396)), it tells me it has cleaned Google Chrome, but when I check, I find that the Chrome files have not been deleted. Earlier versions of CCleaner deleted Chrome files. How can I solve this problem?

**Vic Poulton, via email**

**A** This is probably not a fault with CCleaner but is due to the fact that Chrome runs in the background. CCleaner can't remove files from an application while it's running because it might cause it to crash or corrupt important files. Chrome can continue to run in the background even when the browser window is closed, which is why CCleaner fails to clean it.



**Chrome can run in the background even after you've quit – unless you stop it**

Go to the Chrome menu and select Settings. Scroll down to the bottom of the screen and click 'Show advanced settings'. In the System section, clear the tick against 'Continue running background apps when Google Chrome is closed'. Doing this will mean you miss out on notifications and useful apps such as Google Keep, but you should be able to clean Chrome with CCleaner.

Control Panel (you may have to click User Accounts again on the next page) and click 'Manage another account'. Click the link, 'Add a new user in PC settings'. New accounts are created with default Windows settings, so if this works, it points to a settings problem with your account.

It might also help to check for driver updates. Click Start or the search box in Windows 10 and start to type **Device Manager**. When it appears in the search results, click to open the program. Expand the 'Network adapters' section, right-click each item and select Update Driver Software.

## GENERAL PC

### Block the Windows 10 update

**Q** I've heard that GWX Control Panel ([bit.ly/gwxc396](http://bit.ly/gwxc396)) will stop the incessant reminders to convert to Windows 10. Is it safe and worthwhile?

**D Leoni, via email**

**A** This tool is well known and many people say it works. Windows 10 is a free upgrade until 29 July but it won't be free forever, so if you change your mind after that, you may have to pay for it. Not everyone is happy with Windows 10, but most people find it works fine.

## BROWSERS

### Release Chrome from a hijack

**Q** A few days ago, I clicked the Chrome icon to search the web and noticed that my homepage had been altered. I was looking at a homepage from search site mpc.am. I searched for it on Google, and the results advised that it's a browser hijacker.

I have tried in vain to remove it using various downloaded programs, including IObit Uninstaller ([bit.ly/iobit396](http://bit.ly/iobit396)), Malwarebytes Anti-Malware ([bit.ly/mbam396](http://bit.ly/mbam396)) and Malwarebytes FileASSASSIN ([bit.ly/file396](http://bit.ly/file396)). However, every time I open Chrome, the page is back. I'm not sure where the program came from – maybe it slipped through with another download – but I'd really like to get rid of it.

**Tony Fresher, via email**

## INTERNET

### Restore blocked net access

**Q** My laptop recently had a virus that turned off Windows Defender and stopped me accessing the internet. I restored Windows Defender using the local group policy editor and then ran it, along with AVG ([www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)). This seemed to rid me of the virus and I was able to access the internet again. However, now when I log in, I am unable to connect to the internet until the laptop has been on for 20-30 minutes. How can I fix this?

**Alastair Coulson, via email**

**A** This is a strange problem with no obvious cause, so you'll have to try a few things. First, check that the PC is free of malware. Get the free version of Malwarebytes Anti-Malware ([bit.ly/mbam396](http://bit.ly/mbam396)) or Emsisoft Emergency Kit ([bit.ly/emsis396](http://bit.ly/emsis396)) and scan the PC.

Windows saves your network settings, so it might help to clear them and get a fresh connection. In Windows 10, press Windows+i to open Settings and click

Network & Internet. Select Wi-Fi and click the wireless connection, followed by Disconnect. Then click 'Manage Wi-Fi settings' and scroll down to the list of networks you use. Click each one and select Forget. Then restart Windows, click the Wi-Fi icon in the taskbar and select your router to connect to it.

If you're still suffering from a 20-30 minute wait, try switching off the router, waiting 10 seconds and then switching back on. Routers sometimes get in a muddle and need to be rebooted. It might also help to create a new user account. Open User Accounts in the



**Forget a network if it is troublesome, then reboot and reconnect to it**

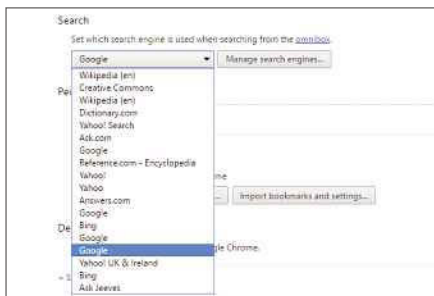


**A** Browser hijackers like this have two components. One is a program that is installed in the usual way, and the other is installed in the browser. Go to 'Programs and Features' in the Control Panel or run IObit Uninstaller. Look at each program and uninstall anything that sounds like a search tool or browser toolbar. For example, Search.mpc.am, Search Helper, Safe Search or similar.

After that, run Chrome, click the menu button and select 'More tools', then Extensions. Click the bin on the right of any extension you don't want or recognise. Next, return to the menu and click Settings. In the 'On startup' section select 'Open a specific page or set of pages' and click 'Set pages'. Hover your mouse over all the unwanted items and click the cross on the right, leaving the one you want to use as your homepage.

In the Search section of the Settings page, select Google from the list of search engines, and click the 'Manage search engines' button. Hover your mouse over each search engine in the list that you want to delete and click the cross on the right.

That should be sufficient to clean up Chrome and get it working properly. However, if all else fails, select your profile in the People section and click the Remove button (you can sign in again later). Scroll to the bottom of the page and click 'Show advanced settings', then scroll all the way down and click the 'Reset settings' button.



**Set the search engine to use in Chrome and delete those you don't want**

## ANDROID Store music on a phone

**Q** I have moved from an Apple iPhone 5 to a third-generation Moto G and I'm very happy with the switch. I have 13GB of music stored on the new phone's internal 32GB of storage. In the past, I simply copied each artist folder from my Google Drive to my Windows 10 PC and then to my phone, but now Google Play just adds it to my playlist, and it's a mess. Are there any apps that work better with folders on my Moto G

so that my music library remains in the folders I originally created?

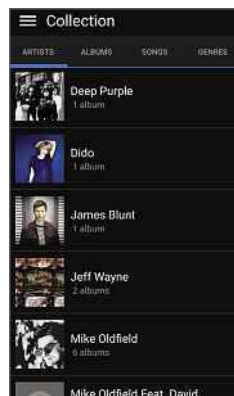
**Graham Ogle, via email**

**A** You have several options. First, if you have space on OneDrive, you could create a Music folder and move all your music to that from Google Drive. Then install the Microsoft Groove music app on your phone and you can stream your music. OneDrive provides 5GB of space for free but you can get more by agreeing to upload photos and so on.

Alternatively, instead of storing your music on Google Drive, you could upload it to Google Play Music. It doesn't use any of your Drive space and you can stream the music to your computer, phone or tablet for free. Go to [play.google.com](http://play.google.com) and select Music on the left.

**Stream your music from OneDrive with Microsoft Groove**

Select My Music, then click the menu button to open the left panel. Scroll down to the bottom and click 'Upload music'. Drag files and folders from the PC's hard drive to the browser window and drop them to upload them. Google Play Music organises the music and adds artwork.



## WINDOWS 10

### Bring back missing Start tiles

**Q** I own an HP TouchSmart 300 PC and a Linx 1010b tablet. Last night, I noticed that a tile was missing from the Start menu of each. I can't remember which, but they may be for the same app. Can I get them back?

**Darren, via email**

**A** During a major Windows update, apps may be removed because they're incompatible or no longer supported. Anyone who upgraded from Windows 8 will have noticed that some apps disappeared, like the People app, while others were renamed, such as Music to Groove Music. Some people have reported that software has been removed, too.

These streaming-music apps cache the music you listen to, storing it on the device. This means you can listen offline so you don't use your mobile data.

There's an entire category dedicated to music and video in the Google Play Store. You'll find lots of great apps here, such as Just Music Player, Pulsar Music Player, BlackPlayer Music Player, and many more. Try out a few of the highest scoring music apps, and keep the best.

## SECURITY

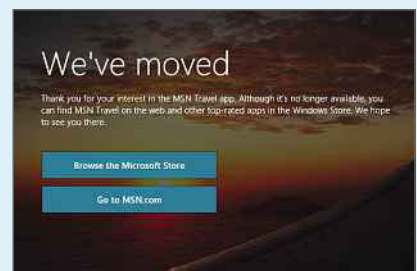
### Can SterJo be used as malware?

**Q** Can the SterJo software ([sterjosoft.com](http://sterjosoft.com)) featured in Issue 393 be hidden in an email to someone and used to gain sensitive information?

**Stuart McWhinney, via email**

**A** SterJo tools are not designed to be hidden and run remotely, or to send information back over the internet. They must be run manually, and they retrieve information stored on the computer and display it on the screen.

It's possible to create malware that performs as you suggest, though. A program could be attached to an email and the recipient encouraged to save and run it, with a message like "You've won the lottery. Open the attached file to claim your prize." That's basically how a lot of malware is spread these days. Unfortunately, some people believe emails like this, open the attachment and become infected.



**Apps can be abandoned, disabled or even deleted during Windows updates**

There are two things you can do. First, check the 'All apps' menu on the Start button. It's possible that the tile has been removed but the software is still there. If so, you can add it to Start by right-clicking it and selecting 'Pin to Start'. If the software has been removed, try reinstalling it. Open the Store app and search for the app, or go to the software company's website and download the latest version.



This fortnight Roland has been using a long Ethernet cable instead of Wi-Fi to get a 1Gbps connection

# 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](http://forum.webuser.co.uk)



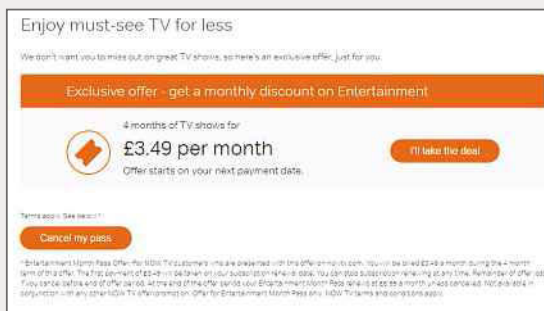
## TOP TIP

### TELEVISION

## Get a discount on Now TV

I bought a Now TV box for the bargain price of £15 in January because I wanted to convert my old television into a Smart TV and access apps such as the BBC iPlayer, ITV Player and All4. The version I bought also came with a free three-month subscription to Sky's Entertainment package, which was an added bonus.

When I checked my bank statement last week, however, I noticed that I'd been charged £6.99 for the Now TV service, because my three free months were up. I logged into the website ([www.nowtv.com](http://www.nowtv.com)), clicked 'My passes' from the My Account drop-down menu and selected Cancel, as I had no interest in paying for Sky's Entertainment channels. When I did so, I was immediately offered four



**Now TV offered a subscription at a reduced rate when Russell attempted to cancel the service**

months of the service at a reduced rate of £3.49 a month. I still decided to cancel my subscription but I thought I'd pass on the information in case it can save other readers a few quid. And if you do buy a Now TV box, don't forget that you'll be charged for the service once your free trial is over unless you cancel it!

**Russell Watts, via email**

### INTERNET

## Remove a default Wi-Fi network

My BT Home Hub router creates two Wi-Fi networks: the normal one and another one called BT WiFi-with-FON. I never use this and I don't know anyone else who does. I searched for information about it and the idea is that it turns your router into a Wi-Fi hotspot that other people can use. For some strange



**If your PC always connects to the wrong Wi-Fi network, select it and click Forget**

reason, however, my laptop started connecting to it by default whenever I switched it on. I managed to solve the problem by 'forgetting' the network, which stopped my laptop connecting to it automatically. I then selected my normal Wi-Fi network, and it now connects to that by default instead.

If anyone else has this problem, they should open Settings (I use Windows 10) and click Network & Internet. Select the WiFi section, then click 'Manage WiFi settings'. Find BTWiFi-with-FON (or any other network you want to stop connecting to automatically), click it, then click the Forget button. This won't stop you connecting to the network later if you choose, as you can simply enter the password, but your PC will no longer connect automatically. You can click the wireless icon in the taskbar and click any network in the list to connect to it.

**Dave Harris, via email**

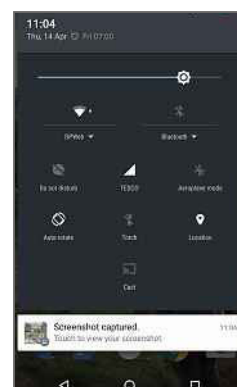
### ANDROID

## Open settings drawer quickly

I was browsing Twitter the other day when I read a useful tip posted by the official Android account (@android). It said that to open your device's settings drawer, you can simply swipe down from the top of the screen with two fingers, instead of swiping down to open the notification tray then having to swipe down again to access the settings. I'm

not sure when this was introduced but it definitely makes things quicker.

**Rob, via email**



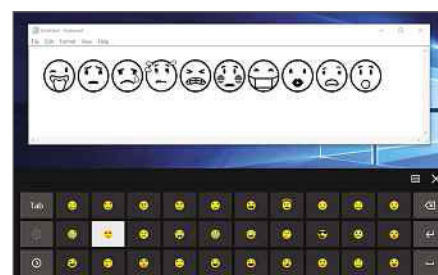
**Access Android's settings drawer by swiping down with two fingers**

### WINDOWS 10

## Use the emoji keyboard

My new Windows 10 laptop has a touchscreen but I was struggling to find a use for it. A mouse and keyboard are so much easier to use, and tapping the screen makes it wobble. However, I have finally found something it is useful for: entering emoji characters.

Tap the keyboard button at the right of the taskbar. If you can't see it, right-click



**Enter emoji characters using the onscreen keyboard in Windows 10**



the taskbar with the mouse and select 'Show touch keyboard button'. The keyboard button opens a large keyboard on the screen and, unlike the one on the computer, it has an emoji button. Press it and the letter and number keys are replaced by emojis. You can then tap the ones you want to enter into whichever program you're using. The bottom row switches between emoji character sets, which include emojis for people, party, travel, weather and more.

Once you've entered the emoji characters you want, click the cross in the corner of the keyboard to hide it.

**Sarah Baker, via email**

## IOS Fix bug to send text messages while abroad

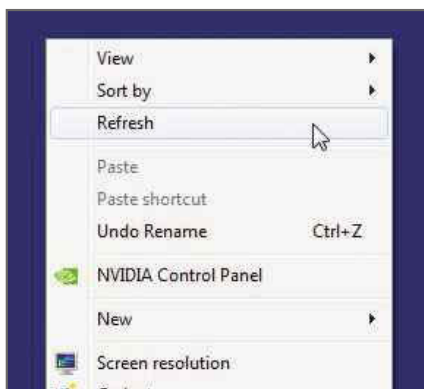
I recently had to resort to taking two phones abroad with me because my iPhone 4S wouldn't send or receive text messages from UK numbers, even though many of them were stored in my contacts. Apple told me the problem was with the phone and that I should take it in for repair.

For the next trip, I upgraded to a 5S, but the problem persisted. The solution turned out to be to remove the '+44' or '0044' country code wherever it appeared in my saved contacts, and to replace it with a '0'. I'm not sure whether O2 or Apple is responsible for the bug but I didn't have the same problem with an old PAYG Samsung on Vodafone.

**Alastair Newton, via email**

## GENERAL PC Refresh your Desktop

After moving a few important files to my Desktop using Explorer, I was shocked to discover that they weren't there later when I needed them. Before reaching a full state of panic, however, I remembered a trick that a friend had told me a few years earlier, which is to refresh the Desktop manually. To do this, simply right-click the Desktop and select Refresh (you can also press F5 when the



*Right-click the Desktop and select Refresh to update its icons*

Desktop is in view). Doing this made my transferred files and a few other shortcut icons reappear. So the next time you have problems with your Desktop, give this a try before going through the rigmarole of Restarting your PC.

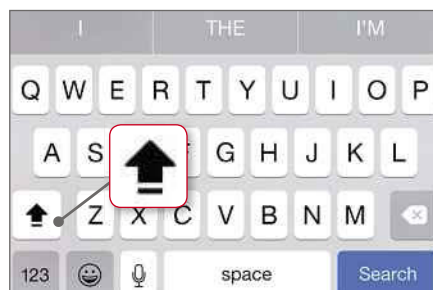
**Will, via email**

## IOS Activate Caps Lock on iPhone

It might already be common knowledge but I didn't know there was a way of activating Caps Lock on an iPhone. Indeed, when I had to enter the key for my son's wireless router last week, he watched me tap the Shift key for every letter before asking why I wasn't using Caps Lock. I had certainly wondered in the past if such a thing existed, but long-pressing the Shift button didn't work, so I gave up looking.

To activate the Caps Lock, simply double-tap the Shift key. The arrow turns black and has a black line under it. To deactivate it, simply press the Shift key again. Finding this out has saved me so much time.

**Jane Bennett, via email**



*The Shift button has a line below it when Caps Lock is activated*

## SOCIAL NETWORKING Filter your Facebook feed

If your Facebook news feed is full of things you don't want to see, you can hide them and make sure your friends' posts come first. Click the tiny arrow in the top-right corner of Facebook to show the menu and select News Feed Preferences. A box offering various options appears, the first of which is 'Prioritise who to see first'. Click it and select 'Friends only' in the drop-down menu. I've tried this, and your friends' posts really do appear before any others.

Back in the options, select 'Unfollow people to hide their posts'. This doesn't only unfollow people but also those pages you once liked but that now post 10 times a day, filling your news feed with things you're no longer interested in. You can undo unfollows by following them again - use 'Reconnect with people you have unfollowed' and click the people or pages you want to see.

**J Hall, via email**

## BROWSERS

### Create your own Firefox buttons

If you've ever wanted to add your own button to Firefox, there's a great add-on you should try called Custom Buttons ([bit.ly/custom396](http://bit.ly/custom396)). I use Gmail a lot, so I've created a Gmail login button that provides me with a shortcut without having to go to the Bookmarks Toolbar.

First, you need to search Google images for a suitable icon. It's best to use a PNG file with a transparent background, if you can find one. The Gmail Icon I use is from [bit.ly/gmail396](http://bit.ly/gmail396). Save the icon somewhere you can find it easily, such as your Documents folder. Launch Firefox and press the Alt key to show the Menu Bar. Under View, select Add New Button, and a new window opens. Leave the Button URL field blank. In Name, type something like Gmail Login, and in Image, browse to and select your previously saved icon. Finally, in the Code window, add the following text in the line below `/*CODE*/`:

```
loadURI("https://accounts.google.com/ServiceLogin?service=mail&continue=https://mail.google.com/mail/#identifier/");
```

Click OK and you can then remove the Menu Bar with the Alt key.

To add the button you've just created, go to Firefox's main menu and choose Customize. You should be able to see your Gmail icon on the page that appears, so simply drag it to where you want it, then exit Customize.

For more help with creating buttons and getting scripts that other people have created, visit the handy forum at [bit.ly/customforum396](http://bit.ly/customforum396).

**JayH, Web User Forums**



*Custom Buttons lets you create your own Firefox button*

## GENERAL PC

### Change volume using the mouse wheel

Here's a quick tip I discovered last week that might be of help to your readers. When you click the speaker icon in the notification area, you can alter the volume by scrolling the mouse wheel, as well as by dragging the slider up and down.

**Ian Mckellar, via email**



# Readers' Helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit [forum.webuser.co.uk](http://forum.webuser.co.uk) – it's friendly and free!

## TELEVISION

### How can I access online content from my TV?

**Q** I thought that by connecting my Sky+ HD box to my router I'd be able to access YouTube and the like on my TV, but it appears this isn't possible. Am I correct in thinking I could buy some sort of dongle for one of the remaining HDMI ports that would let me access services including YouTube and BBC iPlayer? I don't have a smartphone, so I would need a device that comes with its own remote control.

**Scooby, Web User Forums**

**A** Google's Chromecast lets you access apps for YouTube, BBC iPlayer and All4 through your TV, but you need a smartphone or tablet to control it so that's no good for you. Roku ([www.roku.com](http://www.roku.com)), on the other hand, produces a range of excellent streaming devices that come with their own remotes and offer a wider range of apps and channels than most of their competitors. What's more, you can connect the Roku 2 and Roku 3 to your router using an Ethernet cable for a more reliable internet connection than most streaming sticks can provide over Wi-Fi.

If you only want to use YouTube and apps for the main terrestrial channels, however, Sky's Now TV box ([www.nowtv.com/box](http://www.nowtv.com/box)) probably offers the best value. The current model contains the same hardware as the Roku 2 but costs a fraction of the price – the version that comes with a three-month Entertainment package



*Sky's Now TV is built using the same hardware as a Roku 2*

## SOFTWARE

### What's the best program for downloading podcasts?

**Q** Can anyone recommend a good program for downloading podcasts? I was using Juice but it seems to have stopped working, even after I uninstalled and reinstalled it. On its download page, it says it's for XP and Windows 2000, but I'd been running it on Vista with no problem until now.

**Rob1955, Web User Forums**

**A** Juice is no longer available, but I'd recommend a free, open-source podcast program called gPodder ([gpodder.org](http://gpodder.org)). You need to download Python 2.7 before you can run it, though. Alternatively, give Banshee ([banshee.fm](http://banshee.fm)) a try if you want a



*Banshee is a free, lightweight media player*

small, free podcast program. You can also use Miro ([www.getmiro.com](http://www.getmiro.com)), VLC ([www.videolan.org](http://www.videolan.org)) or iTunes ([bit.ly/itunes396](http://bit.ly/itunes396)) – but I personally find iTunes too large and bloated just for listening to podcasts.

**Dave\_1, Web User Forums**

is £18.99 on Amazon (compared with £59.99 for the Roku box). After the free trial, you're under no obligation to pay for any of Sky's services, although you'll have to remember to cancel your subscription or you'll be charged for it (see 'Your Top Tips' on page 68).

**BobClayton and jak, Web User Forums**

## HARDWARE

### What's the lifespan of a lithium battery?

**Q** Can someone tell me how long the batteries in cameras should last? I've had an Aiptek pocket camera for nine years, and now the battery doesn't last long at all, no matter how long I charge it.

**awam7, Web User Forums**

**A** Lithium-ion batteries don't suffer from the 'memory effect' that can reduce the amount of charge a Nickel battery holds, and no scheduled cycling is required to prolong their life. They

don't degrade significantly with time either, but they can fail, and as with all rechargeables there's a limit to the number of charge-discharge cycles they can endure – typically around 2,000 to 5,000 cycles. It sounds as if yours has reached its limit. For more information about lithium batteries, visit Battery University's website at [bit.ly/lithium396](http://bit.ly/lithium396).

**Sneakybeaky, Web User Forums**



*Lithium-ion batteries are widely used in portable devices*



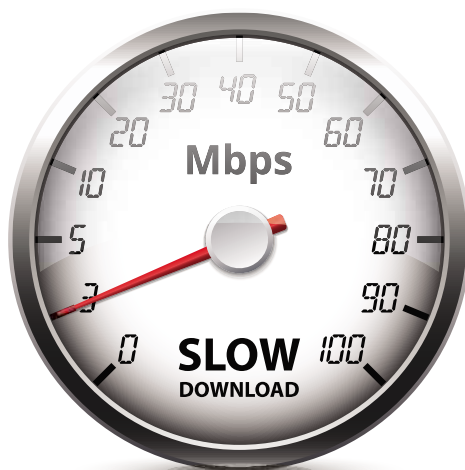
## Star Email

### Don't believe misleading download speeds

In his letter 'Speed test results don't add up' in Issue 394 ([bit.ly/webuser394](http://bit.ly/webuser394)), Alistair Newton expresses his confusion over the results of broadband speed tests from services such as Speedtest.net.

I believe that for many years ISPs have hoodwinked us into this false anticipation of high-speed downloads, which are often far from realised in practice. Many years ago, when I was with Virgin Media (I have Sky Fibre now), I upgraded my broadband speed because Virgin Media claimed that by doing so I could download an HD movie in around 40 seconds. This proved to be far from my experience.

After a great deal of discussion with Virgin Media's techies, one of their guys finally explained that such claims are theoretical. The problem is that the speed of any connection, whether



uploading or downloading, depends on a whole host of factors. These include distance, server speeds, the number of servers between your PC and the target computer, the number of connections active on your local service and so on.

In my experience, Microsoft downloads are never quick, which is hardly surprising when you consider how many computers around the world use its software. The type of connection you're making can also affect the speed, as some ISPs 'manage' speeds for certain uses. So, for example, it might deliberately slow a BitTorrent connection (Sky says it doesn't do this, but many others do).

When testing my own broadband connection, the results from Speedtest.net have been fairly consistent at around 38Mbps, but that figure falls dramatically when I test again on my wireless laptop or iPad. The bottom line is: don't be hoodwinked into paying for higher speeds that may not result in faster downloads in practice.

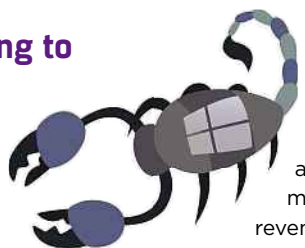
*Ron O'Brien, Luton*

### Is Microsoft planning to sting us all?

Regarding the issues raised by Barry Collins in his column, 'Forcing upgrades will backfire on Microsoft' in Issue 394, I'm left wondering why Microsoft is so desperate to get us all to update to Windows 10.

Don't get me wrong: I'm using Windows 10 on four PCs and my wife also uses it. Neither of us has experienced any problems, although we were also very satisfied with Windows XP and Windows 7 (let's not mention the terrible Vista or the awful Windows 8/8.1).

However, my sceptical nature has me wondering if Microsoft has a hidden agenda in making Windows 10 free for users of Windows 7 and 8. Is it possible that Microsoft will send us a piece of software (or should that be malware?) that will disable Windows 10 until we start paying a monthly premium to use it again? This scenario would fit Microsoft's current philosophy of charging for software (Office 365) on a subscription basis.



It would also maximise Microsoft's profits because it would no longer need to pay software developers to create a 'new operating system' to maintain its uninterrupted revenue stream. Advertising costs would also fall because Microsoft wouldn't need to 'persuade' us all to update to the 'new' version.

I hope I am wrong but I'm not holding my breath. If such a thing were ever to

occur, I'd hope that users would show their disapproval by switching to an alternative system rather than rolling over and accepting it.

*Ron Hagley, Tiverton*

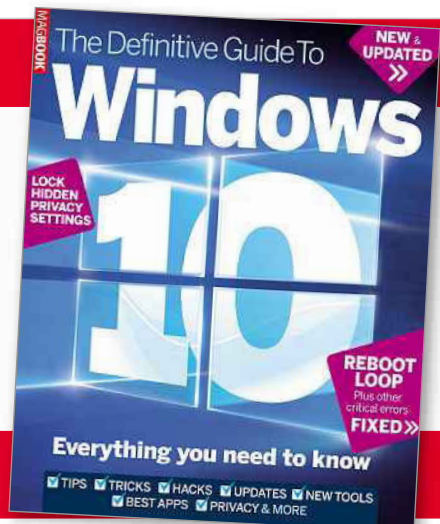
### Bewildered by Microsoft's behaviour

The title of Barry's column says it all. Forcing upgrades *will* backfire on Microsoft. I completely agree with Barry and I hope he's right.

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[www.twitter.com/webusermagazine](http://www.twitter.com/webusermagazine) and [forum.webuser.co.uk](http://forum.webuser.co.uk)

This is nothing to do with whether you like or hate Windows 10; it's about the deplorable way Microsoft has tried to foist its new operating system on users, particularly because many of them won't have realised what was going on. Windows 7 and 8.1 are in line for extended support until 2020 and 2023 respectively, so surely it should be up to users to decide when to upgrade?

I feel that Microsoft's behaviour has been abysmal and that Barry Collins put the company's shortcomings concerning this update very well indeed. Presumably, Microsoft has a target to reach and will boast about how many "happy" Windows 10 users there are. Happy? Bewildered in many cases, I suspect. Will Microsoft still be trying to get recalcitrant Windows 7 and 8.1 users to install this update in August 2016, I wonder? Apparently by then the

update won't be free any more.

Thank you Barry, I always enjoy your articles, and this one in particular was excellent and very much to the point!

*Madeline, Web User Forums*

## Windows 10 works perfectly for me

Here's my Windows 10 experience. Having decided that I needed to buy a new laptop, I visited Currys PC World. My minimum requirements were that it should have at least three USB slots, the ability to use a wired mouse, a screen no smaller than 13in and, if possible, a disc drive that would let me install Encyclopedia Britannica from a disc. I assumed it would be a Windows 10 computer, and this was confirmed. Surprisingly, the assistant said he could recommend a product that would meet my needs.

## YOUR WINDOWS 10 ANAGRAMS

We received an overwhelming response to our request for 'Windows Ten' anagrams in Issue 394. Thanks to everyone who sent them in. Here are our five favourites:

Endows Wit - suggested by Derek Bartrip  
Widens Town - S Barley  
Wet Swindon - Clive Jenkins  
Tinned Wows - Louse Savage

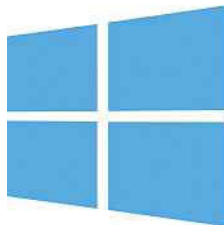
### AND OUR WINNER: **Wits End Now**

suggested by Ian Harvey, Gordon Cuthbert and Colin Horn, who all win a Web User 2015 Back Issues Disc.



The suggestion was an HP Pavilion, which was on offer for £150 less than the previous price. I had a choice of colours: red, blue or white.

The first two were horrible and looked like toys. The white was fortunately very nice, with a light silver base and off-white keys.



As I switched on the laptop, I expected to see a screen asking me to set up a password. Rather surprisingly, this didn't happen, perhaps because of something Currys had done. I also expected to be faced with loads of tiles but that was easy to avoid. In fact, I have yet to try them and I'm not sure I need to. I've switched off Cortana and haven't yet found the need to use Edge.

So far, I am impressed with my laptop, and Windows 10 is much better than I expected, probably helped by the fact that it was installed on a new machine.

*FratPark, Web User Forums*

## Why is it so hard to make money online?

I have tried several methods of making money online. The first was Amazon Web Services. I opted for Amazon.com because the potential market is bigger in

America. I sold over \$500 of products for Amazon through adverts on my website, and ended up with \$30 dollars in my Amazon.com account as a result. However, you can't transfer this cash to Amazon.co.uk, and if you buy brand new CDs you end up paying more in delivery charges than the discs cost.

The second thing I tried was Google AdSense. I made a small amount of money, but Google won't let you claim it until you verify your bank account. To do this, Google sends you a small deposit of under £1. I typed the deposit amount into AdSense, but Google said it was wrong, even though I had entered the correct amount. I was then taken to a contact form that asked for the last two digits of my bank account and, once again, the deposit amount. Google wouldn't allow me to submit the form - it just said I had to correct errors but didn't tell me where the errors were. I then tried cancelling my account in the hope that I would get an email from Google allowing me to tell them what was going on. I received no cancellation email, and in the end I removed Google AdSense adverts from my website.

One thing I've found that works quite well are online surveys from PopulusLive ([populuslive.com](http://populuslive.com)) and GfK ([www.askgfk](http://www.askgfk))

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.co.uk), both of which pay out regularly. Also, Nielsen Homescan ([www.homescan.ca](http://www.homescan.ca)) lets you collect points that you can use to order things from its website.

I'd be grateful for any tips from your readers on making money online.

**Adrian Bonnington,**  
Northampton

## More ado about music streaming

In response to all the letters in Issue 395 ([bit.ly/webuser395](http://bit.ly/webuser395)) about my Spotify comments, it seems I have some egg on my face, and I hold up my hands. I would still say, however, that the major streaming companies such as Spotify and Apple cater for the younger generation, in the main.

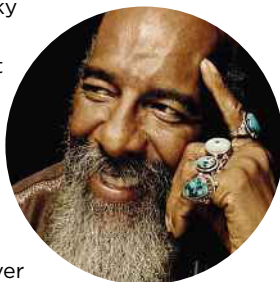
I don't listen to the radio except on the internet, which is where I find most of the music I like. I wouldn't trust Google with my dead relatives, let alone my music preferences or my bank card details.

I have been dealing with Amazon for 14 years, and because my music downloads are now also stored in the cloud, I have uploaded all my music to its site. I've never had any serious problems with Amazon. Although I have a lot of music on my tablet and phone, which I can take with me on holiday, I can access the lot through the Amazon Music app if I get cheap or free Wi-Fi while I'm away. I find Oldies.com ([www.oldies.com](http://www.oldies.com)) and CD Universe ([www.cduniverse.com](http://www.cduniverse.com)) in the US very good for old music. I can't get on Amazon there.

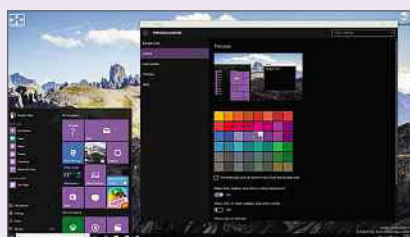
Does anybody watch old episodes of *Cold Case* on Sky Atlantic? They play some great tracks on their very sad episodes by groups I've never heard of and whose full CDs I would never buy. For example,

they played a track at the end of one episode from *Groove Armada*. To be fair, Richie Havens (pictured) was singing on that track, which was one of his last. I managed to find it on Amazon.

**Martin Fletcher, Thorpe Hesley**



## What you say...



### DO YOU LIKE THE NEW 'DARK THEME' FOR WINDOWS 10 (pictured)?

It's so ugly – just like the regular Windows 10 (and 8). Even Windows XP looks much better.

**ZoNi @zoniweb**

No, I prefer the bright side of life.

**Jenny Jacks @JenJacks3**

Yes, I'll definitely use it. Less stress on the monitor and your electricity bill!

**Chris Panayi**

Yes, I think I'll give it a go. It's easy on the eyes, and I don't like the screen to be too bright. Come over to the dark side!

**tyson pashley @tysonpashley**

Yes. A dark theme means that your battery lasts longer, and you can see the screen better at night.

**Jack @imthegoldmaster**

### SOME MIGHT SAY THAT £270 IS EXPENSIVE FOR THE NEW KINDLE OASIS. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

It's far too expensive. I much prefer books anyway.

**Madeline**

It looks nice and the cover is useful, but it's disappointing that it doesn't

have a colour screen. It is also very expensive. I will stick with my Kindle Paperwhite.

**FratPark**

I was disappointed when I heard this announcement because I feel it doesn't do enough to justify the price. Perhaps a colour screen or integration with Alexa and Amazon Echo would have made it more appealing. I'm quite happy with my Paperwhite and the Kindle app on the iPad.

**Ezyduzzit**

It's about £170 too expensive. If my Paperwhite ever gives up the ghost, I'll buy another one.

**Doublell**

### A GROUP OF 50 MPs HAVE SAID THAT BROADBAND ADVERTISING IS MISLEADING ([bit.ly/bband396](http://bit.ly/bband396)). DO YOU AGREE?

Only in that not all people are aware that advertised speeds are megabits per second, not megabytes, so they are confused when they download something and get three megabytes, not 24.

**Dave Harper**

Absolutely. My brother did a speed test on his 100Mbps broadband from Virgin and was only getting 106Mbps! But seriously, when he had 20Mbps from Sky, he got less than 2Mbps. Tethering over 4G on his mobile was faster!

**John Scott**

Yes, they are confusing – and deliberately so, I believe.

**Richard Morgan**

That has been the case for years, so why has it taken until now for MPs to realise it? What about the line-rental rip-off, which now costs £18 per month? Why are we forced to have a landline at all when it is completely unnecessary for those of us who have cable?

**Joe\_London**

# ! Page 404



Don't believe the hype – there's nothing yet that's ready to kill off email, says Barry Collins

## Email isn't dead, you muppets

I remember the first time I ever encountered email. I was sitting at a PC in a sixth-form computing class when my teacher explained it was now possible to send messages to our classmates simply by entering their name in the 'To:' field, writing the message and pressing Send. Eyes lit up. Knowing glances were exchanged. Keyboards began to rattle. Within seconds a message arrived in my inbox from my mate sitting two rows behind me. It comprised just one word: "Muppet".

That single piece of teenage tomfoolery sums up everything that's right and wrong with email. Even then, I knew that the ability to send electronic messages in an instant, at zero cost, was going to be a life-changer – the reason I would spend countless hours in the computing rooms at university, waiting to find out which pub we were meeting in tonight or how my mates at other universities were getting on. But it was also immediately apparent that email would be a massive time sink,

that effortless, cost-free messaging would be wantonly abused. My pal wouldn't have paid 20p for a stamp to send me a one-word insult, after all.

Now, 20-something years later, I look at my email account and I want to weep. The 'inbox' has somewhere in the region of 350,000 messages in it – and I reckon I delete 75% of the emails I receive within seconds. In the past 30 days, it's received almost 3,000 messages that Gmail has identified as spam, and that's just the stuff Google isn't sure about. The other 99% of messages that Google is absolutely sure are junk never even make it as far as the Spam folder. And that's only my primary email account: I have five more.

Email is so fundamentally broken that every organisation I work with – be it publishers, big corporations or

non-league football clubs – is trying desperately to wean itself off it. Apps such as Slack ([slack.com](https://slack.com)) and Basecamp ([basecamp.com](https://basecamp.com)) – the so-called "email killers" – are making inroads, replacing internal email with instant messaging, message boards and shared document stores. They work brilliantly, killing off almost all internal

email in a couple of the organisations I work for, but will they drill the coffin lid shut? Not a prayer.

Slack and Basecamp are superb for

inter-team communication, but they're hopeless for communicating with the outside world. If companies want to send me press releases, or other non-league clubs want to confirm a fixture, they still need an email address to send it to. Even Slack and Basecamp demand that I register with an email address, so they can send me alerts and daily updates of activity among my teams. Slack's marketing slogan? "Less email. More productive." My email inbox contains something like 2,000 messages received from Slack in the past six months – and those are just the ones I haven't deleted.

Face it, email is still irreplaceable. The list of things you still need email for – communicating with clients, receiving your utility bills, registering with Amazon, Facebook and pretty much any other major website you can mention – still requires that you have an '@' after your name. By all means experiment with Slack, Basecamp and the like, but if anyone tells you these apps will kill off your email completely, there's only one word for them: Muppet.

“ I look at my inbox and I want to weep. It has somewhere in the region of 350,000 messages in it ”



Illustration: Andrew Torrens

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