

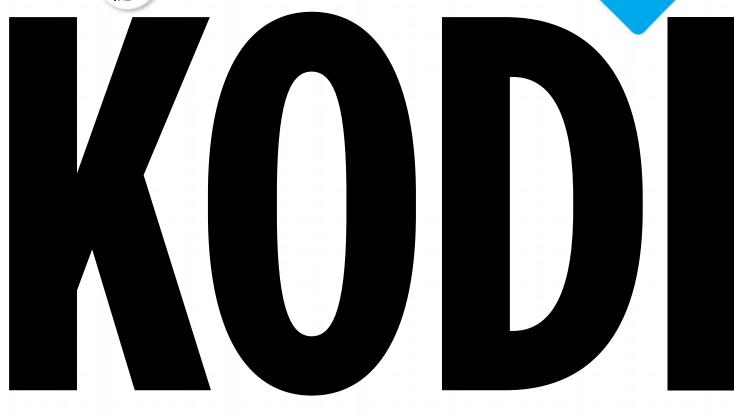
3 - 16 May 2017



Best software /

New apps /

YouTube's dark secret



UNLOCKED

Beat restrictions • Hidden hacks • Secret tools







"ALEXA, ARE YOU A WASTE OF MONEY?"

And is Google Home any better?

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STOP SPAM!

New email-blocking trick companies hate



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7 hidden processes to check p48

CREATIVE



Scan & Win a SoundblasterX Katana! T & C apply



SOUND **PRO-GAMING**

KATANA

CUSTOMIZABLE 24-BIT HI-RES GAMING UNDER-MONITOR AUDIO SYSTEM









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- PC Pro (source: issue 271, May 2017)



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Customizable enhancements for unprecedented levels of audio realism with 7.1 virtual surround and clear cues



Everything's coming up Kodi

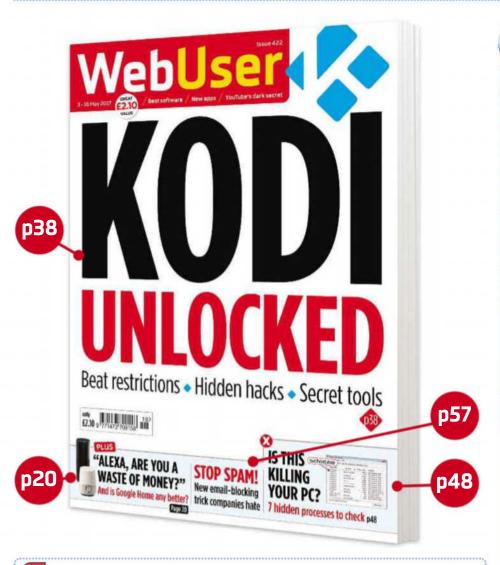
hen the most popular baby names of 2017 are announced, I wouldn't be surprised if Kodi figures highly in the lists for both boys and girls (and probably dogs and cats, too). After all, Kodi is undoubtedly one of the buzzwords of the year, and nobody wants to call their child Brexit or Envelopegate. According to Think Baby Names, Kodi means 'helpful' (bit.ly/baby422) and we think you'll find this issue's cover feature (page 38) extremely Kodi. We've packed eight pages with crafty hacks, expert advice and customisation tips for the marvellous media software, covering everything from beating

unfair restrictions to fixing problems. We also pick the best skins, builds and add-ons for enhancing and expanding Kodi in useful ways.

For even more info, check out our new *Complete Guide to Kodi*, which you can buy from Amazon at bit.ly/kodicomplete. And if you're not a Kodi fan, there's plenty of other great stuff in this issue, including the best alternatives to Skype (which is an awful baby name).

Robert Irvine robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk #webuser





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KOD!



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What's secretly killing your PC?



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Can Google and Facebook tame the fake-news beast they let loose?

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Printed by Wyndeham Bicester, Oxon Distributors Seymour 020 7396 4000

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the publishers, ISSN 1473-7094



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Explorer



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What's New Online

Explore the new Google Earth in Chrome

he new version of Google Earth seeks to educate as well as entertain, with a host of fresh features that teach you more about the world. These include Knowledge Cards that deliver interesting facts and historical information about more than 20,000 locations as you travel around the virtual globe.

Indeed, storytelling is central to the relaunched Earth thanks to the Voyager feature, which lets you choose a thematic adventure. The five options - Editor's Picks, Travel, Nature, Culture and History - include video tours produced by BBC Earth, a guided look at world museums and an in-depth exploration of the Galapagos Islands. There are also child-friendly options, including one involving Sesame Street characters.



Clicking the 3D button lets you view your favourite city or locations such as the Grand Canyon from a birds-eye angle, sweeping over the landscape and zooming in for a better view. Searching is also easier because you can now type more obscure terms or simply click I'm Feeling Lucky to go to a random hidden gem. What's more, all of this can be enjoyed directly in Chrome or on Android, without





downloading anything. The world really is at your fingertips. earth.google.com

Activate YouTube's secret Dark Mode

www.youtube.com

YouTube's bright white interface is great for viewing videos but the glare it emits can be a

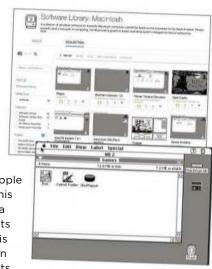
strain on tired eyes. The site's new, secret Dark Mode tackles this problem by making videos, text and images stand out against a black background. The 'hack' works in version 57 and above of Chrome and only entails a tiny bit of work. First, with YouTube open in your browser, press Control+Shift+i to open the 'Developer tools' panel (or Option+Command+i on a Mac). Select the Console tab at the top, type: document .cookie="VISITOR INFO1 LIVE=fPQ4jCL6EiE" and press Enter. Now close 'Developer tools' and refresh the browser. Click the main settings menu in the top-right of the screen and you'll see an option for Dark Mode. Simply toggle it on and off to suit your peepers.



Run old MacOS software in your browser

bit.ly/macos422

Even if you never used the black-and-white version of MacOS in the Eighties, you're bound to feel a pang of nostalgia for the classic operating system. Released in 1988 - three years after Steve Jobs had been ushered out of Apple and nine years before his return - System 6 had a simple interface and lots of quality software. This web-based emulator on The Internet Archive lets



you see for yourself, with more than 45 apps you can load, including MacPaint, MacWrite, Space Invaders, Microsoft Flight Simulator, an early Microsoft Word and a demo version of Lemmings. A second emulator for System 7.0.1 is also included, complete with a wonderful compilation of pre-installed software such as Risk and Cannon Fodder.

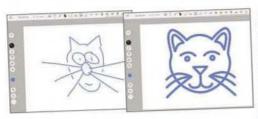
We pick the 10 best things you must do on the web this fortnight

Check out the trees of California

bit.lv/trees422

In its ongoing guest to go off the beaten track, Street View now lets you wander between the famous trees of the Big Basin Redwoods State Park in California. Check out 360-degree views of six new destinations including the Berry Creek Falls viewing platform and the First State park plaque, while reading about the area's lush history and the Sempervirens Club's attempts to protect the forests.





Turn any sketch into a work of art

www.autodraw.com

It doesn't matter if you're not blessed with artistic skills if you use Google's latest AI experiment, AutoDraw. This guesses what you're sketching using your mouse (or your finger on a touchscreen), then replaces your amateur doodles with professionallooking alternatives taken from a crowd-sourced, artist-created library. Just choose the one that best matches your squiggles from a selection above the drawing pad. You can select colours to fill blank sections, add text, use the shape tool and even rotate and resize the image before downloading it or sharing it on social media.

See which celebrity looks like you

bit.ly/celeb422

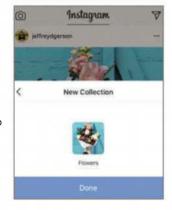
If you've ever wondered which celebrity could play you in a movie, this tool may give you the answer. Upload an image or post its URL and Clarifai will use machine learning to match your face with that of one of 10,000 famous people in its database, telling you how confident it is that you resemble the star. It's not quite what the developer intended - it's primary use is to pick out celebrities in images - which it does well: it was spot on with Ben Affleck and Morgan Freeman.



Save your Instagram posts into collections

www.instagram.com

It may be "inspired" by Pinterest but being able to organise posts you've saved on Instagram into private collections is still a welcome addition. Just tap and hold the bookmark icon beneath a post to create and name a collection, then add images to it using the same method. You can also organise previously saved posts by tapping the '+' icon in the top right, naming your new collection and adding images.



TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@bl music colls

A new account dedicated to the **British Library's Music Collections**

@niantichelp

Stuck on Pokémon Go? This new Twitter-based helpline should be able to assist

@jonsnowc4

Follow the latest developments in the General Election with the Channel 4 News anchor

@healthytips

Get some daily fitness motivation as the nice weather sets in

@KodiTV

If you enjoy this issue's cover feature on page 38, why not follow Kodi on Twitter?

Buy PC games direct from

www.twitch.tv

Twitch now lets you buy and download games direct from the pages of many of its partnered streamers. Titles include Broken Age and Titan Souls, and purchases are made via your Amazon account.

Discover new NHS apps

apps.beta.nhs.uk

The NHS has created a beta website to recommend digital tools for improving your health. So far it has approved just one - myCOPD - and is still testing others, but it's a great way of seeing which apps are built on solid medical evidence.

Find out who owns UK land

landexplorer.uk

Want to know more about that patch of land up the road? Click its location on this map to see details from the Land Registry, its potential for agriculture, the risk of flooding and any planning restrictions.

Need to Know

Google 'to add an ad blocker to Chrome'

What happened?

Google is allegedly planning to introduce a built-in ad-blocking feature in its browser, Chrome, which would allow users to automatically block annoying adverts without the need for a third-party extension.

This is according to a report in the Wall Street Journal (bit.ly/wall422), citing anonymous sources said to be "familiar with the company's plans". The suggestion is that Google is working on an update to both the Desktop and mobile versions of Chrome, which would see an ad blocker built into the browser that could filter out ads deemed to irritate users. It isn't yet clear if the setting will be on by default or be an opt-in tool – the difference between the two will be crucial to the impact on how the web works.

Google already has a relationship with ad blockers. The company is part of the 'Acceptable Ads' scheme offered by the developer of Adblock Plus, Eyeo GmbH, which allows some ads it displays to pass through the filter – for a fee. However, developing its own adblocking feature goes a step further. Google is in a league of its own when it comes to advertising revenue, so why would a company that generated \$60bn (around £47bn) in revenue from online ads in 2016 want to block adverts?

According to the WSJ's sources, the move is a way for Google to curb the worrying growth of third-party ad



The Wall Street Journal was first to report on Google adding an ad blocker to Chrome

blockers. The idea is that by offering its own service within Chrome, Google can wrestle back some control over which online ads are filtered. Given Google's recent pledge to rethink the way it handles ads following a boycott over inappropriate ad placements, it could also be a more general show of muscle over its own online advertisement business.

The report suggests that Google will base its judgments on standards laid out by the Coalition for Better Ads.
The blacklist includes pop-up adverts, auto-playing video ads with sound and "prestitial" ads with countdown timers, so it's likely these would be the first targets of Chrome's new ad blocker. By targeting only the most annoying adverts, Google may hope to convince users not to install a third-party tool that will blanket-block all online ads.

Exactly how these measures will

affect publishers remains to be seen. One suggestion is that Google could block all ads on sites that breach its rules, forcing site owners to ensure that every ad they display passes muster. Google has yet to comment on the report, which claims the new feature could be announced within weeks.

How will it affect you?

If you use an ad blocker with Chrome, such as Adblock Plus or uBlock Origin, the good news is that you may no longer need it - if, that is, the WSJ report is true. Considering that ad-blocking extensions are notorious memory hogs, this could mean a leaner, faster Chrome that places less strain on system resources on both desktop and mobile.

However, it would be foolish to expect an ad blocker fully endorsed by Google to provide an ad-free browsing experience – ads are, after all, Google's main source of revenue. Instead, a built-in ad blocker will give Google even more control over which ads you see – and don't see – online, as well as the websites that display them.

What do we think?

We were surprised to read that Chrome may soon have its own ad blocker. In the past, Google has banned ad-blocking tools from both the Chrome and Google Play stores, so it's a turnaround for it to now introduce its own blocker. That said, it makes sense for the company to want even more control over online advertising, especially because many third-party ad blockers adopt a blanket approach to filtering.

It's also worth pointing out that Opera already has a built-in ad blocker, so Chrome is hardly leading the field in terms of innovation. We'll wait and see if the report turns out to be true, but don't expect any such tool to block all ads without exception.

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

Best and worst broadband providers revealed

What happened?

A Which survey rating broadband providers has found that the biggest companies get the lowest ratings for customer service, speed and reliability.

The top four ISPs in the UK - BT, EE, Sky and TalkTalk - have a 72% stranglehold on the market, yet in the poll of 1,800 people, only one in 10 customers described TalkTalk or BT as "excellent".

TalkTalk had the lowest score of the 12 ISPs assessed, with a total of 38%, while BT scored 45%. Virgin was the best of the big firms, but only earned a 52% customer score. At the other end of the table, smaller rivals Zen Internet and Utility Warehouse scored 86% and 81% respectively, both earning a five-star score for customer service.

This pattern also extends to broadband quality, with more than seven in 10 Utility Warehouse and Zen Internet customers rating their connection as good or excellent, compared to 26% for TalkTalk.

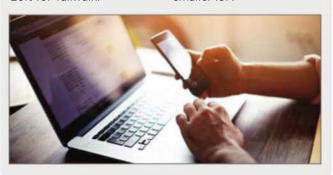
How will it affect you?

If you're unhappy with your broadband, there's an easy solution: switch to a better provider. You'll have to wait until your contract is up, so check that date and be sure to call your ISP with plenty of lead time so you don't find yourself without broadband.

When you do try to switch, there's a good chance that your existing provider will try to win you back with discounts – but stay strong. Such deals can be money savers, but is it worth poor service and unreliable speeds?

What do we think?

There are plenty of reasons to consider a smaller ISP. The upfront prices can be more expensive, because smaller companies don't have the budgets to pull in customers with "free for six months" offers and the like. But there's more to good value than money: if anything goes wrong with your connection or you need to speak to someone on the phone about it, you may find you save a lot of time and frustration with a smaller ISP.



Microsoft wants you to forget passwords

What happened?

Microsoft has launched a new tool that saves you having to remember passwords for your accounts. Instead, you get a fresh login code sent to you

code sent to your phone whenever you need to sign in.

Many of us struggle to manage passwords and we often make them easy to remember, which means they may be just as easy to guess, or we reuse them on several sites, leaving them vulnerable to hackers if one set of credentials is leaked.

The Microsoft Authenticator app (bit.ly/ auth422) removes the need for any password. Instead, when you log in on a new device, you're sent a code or shown a message asking you to approve the sign in.

Microsoft believes the app, which is available for iOS. Android and Windows Phone, is more secure than a standard password because it can't be leaked or stolen. It's similar to two-factor authentication, but is really only one level of protection - if someone had your phone, they could access your account, but that's likely to be true in any case because most of us save passwords in our accounts rather than log in every single time.

How will it affect you?

To use the Authenticator app, you'll first need to





install it for free on your mobile device. Sign in with your accounts on the app and the next time you log into your Microsoft email or Office 365, you'll only need to enter your login name. A notification will then be sent to your phone asking you to "approve" or "deny" the sign-in attempt.

What do we think?

This is a handy tool if you find typing difficult or struggle to remember a range of passwords. But for many of us, a password is still the best way to stay secure, especially if you're worried about someone with access to your phone trying to view your accounts. It's simply a matter of taking the time to think about the risks. weighing them against ease of use and making your security decisions based on real threats.



Facebook develops 'mind-reading' software

What happened?

Facebook announced that it has been developing "silent communication" software, which allows people to type at a rate of 100 words per minute. "We're working on a system that will let you type straight from your brain about five times faster than you can type," CEO Mark Zuckerberg wrote on his Facebook page.

Building 8, the social-media company's hardware-research lab, has been leading efforts in developing the new technology, which will detect brainwaves without surgical implants. The company has enlisted 60 scientists and academics to build the hardware and software required to meet the goal.

This isn't the first time we've seen technology companies wanting to blend artificial intelligence with the human brain. Back in March, Tesla and SpaceX founder Elon Musk launched Neuralink, a medical-research company that aims to improve human memory through the use of artificial intelligence. The startup also hopes to offer numerous other Al-induced brain enhancements.

How it will affect you?

It's easy to understand why people might feel uncomfortable with technology invading their brains. A blog post from Facebook (bit.ly/fb422), however, aims to reassure its audience



that the software won't be used to read users' random, everyday thoughts.

"Think of it like this: You take many photos and choose to share only some of them. Similarly, you have many thoughts and choose to share only some of them," the post explained. "This is about decoding those words you've already decided to share by sending them to the speech centre of your brain."

In theory, then, sending a private text or email with your thoughts should be no different to typing it, one word at a time. However, Facebook will need to have the full trust of its users before we see the mainstream implementation of such technology.

sports team, although it took us a while

to learn which commands we

What do we think?

We welcome anything that can help you type five times faster, particularly if it encourages people to spend less time staring at their phones and more communicating with each other face to face. But we're a little cynical about how such technology could ever be practically implemented. Dictating to a personal assistant such as OK Google can be tricky enough, so will AI really be able to translate your thoughts into coherent text at the first attempt, and how easy will it be to edit your messages if you change your mind? And, given the privacy issues around Facebook, we're not so keen on giving it direct access to our thoughts!



Amazon Fire TV Stick bit.ly/firetv422

Before we start, let's address the elephant in the room: yes, you can still install Kodi on the new Amazon Fire TV Stick. Amazon's updated streamer also comes with an Alexa voicecontrol remote and a quad-core processor that makes it a lot faster than its predecessor. Both dongle and remote have been made slightly larger to accommodate the new hardware, but the remote's redesigned curved back nestles nicely in your palm and its buttons are sensibly spread out.

Alexa integration adds massive potential to the Fire TV Stick. It means you can now use the voice remote to control smart devices in your house, check your diary, discover local restaurants and even follow your

could use. The interface has had a minor facelift and all the big-name apps remain available, so you can still stream Netflix, Amazon Prime and scores of catch-up TV apps. Alternatively, you can play your own content, using apps such as Plex. DLNA and AirPlay streaming are also supported and because file-explorer apps are readily available, you can install your own third-party apps,

You can also download games from the Amazon Appstore and play them using your remote, or invest in the optional Fire TV Game controller.

including Kodi.

The Fire TV Stick isn't as powerful as the Fire TV set-top box, but you can enjoy the sort of basic games usually played on a phone.

amazon

The first-generation Fire TV Stick was great, but it lacked oomph. This new stick is more versatile and thanks to its quad-core processor is much quicker. Alexa is a great addition, too. At £39.99, the Fire TV Stick has only had a modest £5 price hike and is better value than ever.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will Google let employers see your search history?

It's been rumoured that Google's forthcoming jobs website, Google Hire, could enable prospective employers to view your entire search history. According to Axios

(www.axios.com), Google Hire will work much like a normal job site, with

companies posting listings so that people can search for a job. The service appears to work within the Google ecosystem, which should make the process of applying for jobs quicker

However, when the story first broke, several sites - including Mail Online - suggested that Google Hire could allow employers to see everything you've searched for online. A report on the New Zealand Herald (www.nzherald .co.nz), for example, read: "It will reportedly be a recruitment tool similar to LinkedIn - however, early reports suggest it will be available through your personal Google account. If that's the case, it will link things like your search history and YouTube account with your job applications, laying it all bare for employers to see."

Google was quick to deny the claims. In a statement to Engadget, it said "Google Hire is a product under development that will help G Suite customers manage their hiring process more effectively. The product will allow



employers to collect candidate applications online. Only information that a candidate voluntarily provides would be passed to a prospective employer as part of their online application. Private information will not be shared."

LIKELIHOOD RATING 18888

The idea that Google might share your search history with third parties without permission is far-fetched at best. The rumours surrounding Google Hire appear to be founded on concerns about using the same Google account for personal web activity and making job applications. To assume that the company might deliberately compromise your privacy is a ludicrous conclusion to jump to, not least because it would damage Google's reputation beyond repair.

What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

miniRig

bit.ly/minirig422 | From £38

If you're an aspiring videographer, miniRig is just the gadget you've been waiting for. This all-in-one system helps you to record stable, professional video by mounting your smartphone or GoPro in a versatile, handheld gimbal. It comes with an adjustable USB light and 3.5mm microphone so that you can capture any moment, day or night, at the highest quality. The project has already reached its £10,000 funding goal, but you can still get your very own miniRig by pledging £50 before 11 May (a £20 saving compared with the product's RRP).

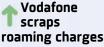


WE LIKE...

Windows 10 updates go biannual

Microsoft has decided to switch to a regular

schedule for Windows 10 updates, so users know when to expect the next big features. Updates will now be released every March and September, until further notice.



Vodafone has made it much cheaper to go on holiday in Europe by getting rid of

roaming charges when its customers visit the continent. Outside Europe, Vodafone will charge £5 a day for data, calls and texts.

WE DON'T LIKE...

Three suffers massive outage

Millions of Three customers were unable to make and receive phone calls, or send text messages, when the network

went down on 22 and 23 April. The two-day outage also resulted in texts being delivered to the wrong people.

Security flaw found in browsers

A vulnerability has been discovered in Chrome, Firefox

and Opera that makes phishing attacks "almost impossible to detect", according to security researcher Xudong Zheng. Patches for all three browsers have since been released to fix the problem.





Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Hackers can control cookers via SMS

Hackers can remotely control the latest Aga ovens by sending a text



message, according to security researchers. Some new Aga ovens feature an IoT (Internet of Things) device called Total Control, which lets users access the oven's functions through a mobile or web app. The device uses a SIM card and a cellular radio connected to a mobile-phone network, which enables the Aga oven to receive and send text messages from anywhere in the world.

According to Ken Munro, partner at Pen Test Partners, hackers can quite easily operate the cooker without the owner's knowledge. In a blog post, he explained that the mobile app sends messages to servers in unencrypted

plain text, meaning the communications can easily be intercepted and modified. He added that the app's password policy

> is only five characters and because it doesn't validate the SIM card's phone number, hackers could simply send a text to a cooker, turning it off or on at will.

bit.ly/hackers422

Criminals use trackers to conduct surveillance

Hackers are using 'pixel' tracking to gather data on phishing victims, security researchers have discovered. According to security firm Check Point, criminals are adopting technology normally used on websites and in marketing emails to discover the types of recipients most likely to

'Pixel' tracking, which gets its name because it comprises a line of

open scam emails.

JavaScript accompanied by one invisible pixel, can collect data including IP addresses, hostnames, operating systems and browser types. In a blog post, Donald Meyer, head of marketing, data centre and cloud security at Check Point, said "Our security researchers have already discovered tracking pixels being used in the wild as a surveillance tool to gather information for use in phishing scams." The company detected such pixel usage in a phishing campaign carried out last August.

The pixels can be used in Office documents as well as emails. Meyer

> added that tracking pixels have not yet been found to have directly caused any security breaches. See our Workshop on page 57 to learn how

> > to block pixels in emails. bit.ly/pixel422



Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: **Bing Wang, Product Director at IObit** (www.iobit.com)



I downloaded **IObit's Advanced** SystemCare, and Malwarebytes detected it as a threat and deleted it. Why? John Binnell, Birmingham

IObit recently found that Malwarebytes

flagged Advanced SystemCare 10 as a

potentially unwanted program (PUP) and removed it without warning, resulting in hundreds of complaints from users.

Many antivirus programs have their own criteria for detecting and flagging threats, but most allow the user to choose what action to take. However, Malwarebytes does not follow this path.

In this case, many users who have both Advanced SystemCare and Malwarebytes installed on their computers find that even if they exclude SystemCare files from Malwarebytes results, the scan continues to report



SystemCare files as a threat. This has led some users to mistrust Advanced SystemCare.

When the false positives were identified, IObit contacted Malwarebytes to enquire about the details. but unfortunately these requests have not been taken seriously. IObit immediately initiated a self-inspection of its programs to eliminate

any potential issues that may have caused the false positives. According to the news website The Windows Club (bit.ly/club422), IObit is not the only victim.

We would like to apologise to our users for the unnecessary frustration caused by these circumstances. This goes against IObit's ultimate mission: to offer the best service for our customers. We hope to resolve this issue through communicative channels. We appreciate the support our users have given IOBit and Advanced SystemCare during this time.

PROLITE XUB2792QSU NEED MORE SPACE?



PROLITE XUB2792QSU

Do you spend most of your workday joggling between multiple applications and windows? Don't get stuck in Full HD. Choose iiyama XUB2792QSU and open up to WQHD resolution accomodating almost 77% more information on the screen.

























Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

FUTUROLOGY

Kaspersky Earth 2050 2050.earth

We can never be sure what's around the corner, but some people make a living by predicting the future. This stunning site gathers fascinating forecasts from prominent futurologists about the years 2030, 2040 and 2050. Navigate the globe, choose a city, object or event and read predictions about what to expect in them. You can indicate whether you agree, see how many people support your view, leave comments and share the page on social media. Many entries are accompanied by striking 360-degree illustrations and you can rate the artists and the graphics. When more entries are added, it'll be truly out of this world.

Our rating





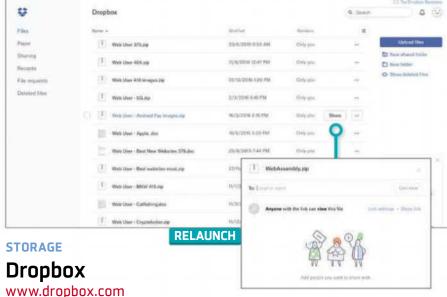
PREDICTION See which predictions have the strongest and weakest support among visitors



RATINGS

Learn more about the contributors to the site and the entries they've worked on





Although the 2GB free limit remains frustrating, Dropbox's streamlined website at least makes it much easier to work with your documents. When sharing files and keeping track of edits, you're now presented with the most relevant options for the task, so you can view thumbnails of documents and see clearer at-a-glance information. You can also now search across your files and Dropbox Paper documents, and quickly switch between personal and work accounts for better file management. Of course, none of this is relevant if you prefer to use the Dropbox Desktop and mobile apps but it's certainly great for working with files in your browser.

Our rating





TRAVEL

Irish Pubs of the World

bit.ly/irish422

Fancy some fine hospitality, a good craic and a pint of the black stuff when you're abroad? Travel company Expedia has created a blog packed with 200 of the best Irish pubs in more than 40 destinations. Just select from UK, Europe, Asia, USA and the rest of the world, then choose a city. You'll see a list of pubs and their locations, together with a description of what to expect there. There's not much more to the site than that - no reviews or ratings, and no means of suggesting your own favourites - but there are Facebook, Instagram and pub website links.

Our rating



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





360-DEGREE **ILLUSTRATIONS** Yellow hexagons on the map show locations and are accompanied by amazing visuals

BEST OF THE WEEK Kaspersky highlights the best predictions each week and lets you click objects in the images





McAfee

www.mcafee.com/uk

If you've been wondering where security company McAfee has been for the last seven years, it was snapped up by Intel in 2010 for \$7.68bn (about £6bn) and renamed Intel Security. Now it's back to being McAfee again and its refreshed website tries to explain all in a letter from the CEO Christopher Young. Aside from that, there are product pages for home and business users, free trials and apps, and blogs that teach you how to be safe online. The site doesn't do a great job of explaining what products do or even selling their benefits, but there's a chat facility to answer your questions.

Our rating





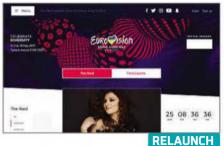
HEALTH

Allergic Living allergicliving.com

Allergies affect more than one in four of us so any site that provides useful advice is not to be sneezed at. US-based Allergic Living is certainly worth a look, and its redesign includes plenty more news, advice and research. Sections for asthma and coeliac disease have been expanded, and there are new pages for indoor and outdoor allergies, and the newly diagnosed. You can also ask medical experts questions, read interesting features from the accompanying magazine and browse tasty recipes. It's an excellent resource once you get past the US terminology.

Our rating





MUSIC

Eurovision Song Contest

eurovision.tv

With Russia having pulled out, the politics surrounding the Eurovision Song Contest has already begun. But at least there's no chance of the revamped official site getting "nul points". Packed with facts about how the contest works, the countries involved and the route to the final, there's info about past events going way back to 1956. Those looking forward to the final on 13 May will love the galleries, videos and behind-the-scenes updates, with merchandise to buy and music to download, too. A little more camp would have been apt, though.

Our rating





SON E

WebUser



2016 BACK ISSUES DISC

Our **2016 Back Issues Disc** containing all 26 issues from last year is now on sale from Amazon

For more information, visit **bit.ly/wudisc16** or search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon

You can still buy our 2015 Back Issues Disc from bit.ly/wudisc15





RELAUNCH

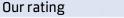
HEALTH

Young Minds

youngminds.org.uk

Prince Harry recently brought mentalhealth issues to the fore so this relaunch is very well timed. It explains the best ways to help young people through difficult times by highlighting typical feelings and symptoms and exploring various conditions. Such information is just a couple of clicks away on what is a well-organised, easily navigable site that extends to assisting parents of affected children and encouraging people to get involved in fundraising or offering assistance. We like the regularly updated blog but we weren't too sure about charging (albeit small) prices for publications that could prove invaluable.

RELAUNCH





VIRTUAL REALITY

WebVR Experiments

www.webvrexperiments.com

Google wants to make good use of WebVR, the VR standard created to work within a browser. To do so, it has launched this new site packed with 12 quirky experiments you can play on your computer or, preferably, through a headset. Each game or demo gets its own page containing a video of the experiment in action, screenshots, an explanation and social-media Share buttons. Just click a button to play and enjoy the experience. The site explains how to set everything up, with a link to the browsers and headsets that support WebVR, and a section for the tech-savvy to submit their own experiments.

Our rating



bit.ly/swim422

Swim England

SPORT

Having recently rebranded from the Amateur Swimming Association, Swim England has taken the plunge with this relaunched website. You can use it to find the nearest pool offering swimming lessons and get info about learning to swim, the various badges and certificates on offer and even the problem that people peeing in the water poses! The site is slickly designed and full of invaluable information, but much of the content deals with the professional side of swimming. To that end, there are bustling sections on teaching swimming and managing clubs, as well as news about Swim England itself.

Our rating





bigtrainlittletrain.com

Tiny trains trundle along many narrow-gauge railway lines throughout Wales, but you need a way of getting to them. This easily navigable website suggests taking the 'big trains' and provides details of the various routes you can take (big and small), along with useful links, top tips, maps and money-saving advice. You can use the site to discover the best walks, views and places to eat, and there are suggestions for more adventurous travellers alongside recommended accommodation and itineraries. If you need more inspiration, browse the wonderful section of traveller's tales. You need to visit the websites of the railways themselves for timetable information, though.

Our rating





Carlsberg

carlsberguk.co.uk

If Carlsberg made the best website in the world, it's fair to say this wouldn't be it. It's a more sober approach than the laddish humour you usually associate with the brand, and is clearly aimed at corporate customers, so the blog and news sections deal with the business end of selling drink. On the plus side, the beer section gives a good taste of what to expect and suggests food pairings, while there's also a picturepacked look at Carlsberg's history and details of the Carlsberg Foundation. However, other sections are sorely lacking.

Our rating



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Professionally designed themes for free

WordPress.com, the web-based version of the popular content management system (CMS), includes lots of professional themes. Some are paid-for, but a large collection has just become free. These themes can be used on any website that has Jetpack (jetpack.com) installed, so they



will also work with standard hosted WordPress sites, as long as they have the plugin. Sign into WordPress.com and find the site you want to add a new theme to. Click Themes in the Personalize menu and scroll down to

'WordPress.com themes'. There are 165 to choose from.

Try an alternative free CMS

WordPress is the biggest opensource CMS but if you're not a fan - maybe you don't like the way that it defaults to creating blog-like websites, for example - there are plenty of others to try and TYPO3 is a good example. The new version is aimed at businesses, but is designed to make websites with pages rather

Find out more about the CMS at typo3.org, and discover what's new in the latest version at bit.ly/typo422.

Deal of the Fortnight

UK2 (www.uk2.net) is offering its Essential Hosting package for £1.20 per month for the first year, down from £7.14 per month.

Web-building Helpdesk

.....

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Russell Hogg, Managing Director of

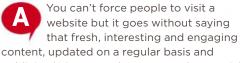


Hogtronix (www.hogtronix.com)



If you could suggest just one thing to make more people visit your website, what would it be?

Frank Maplesden, via email



publicised via external sources such as social media, will help.

Social media isn't just a free publicity platform that links to your site - it also lets people virally share and comment on any interesting content they find with their friends and beyond. Traffic from social-media sites can also raise your website's ranking in search-engine results. However, none of this will work if you don't have original content that your audience wants to read.

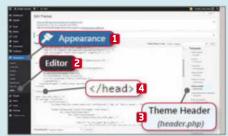


MINI WORKSHOP | Find out which buttons and links people are clicking Hotjar: www.hotjar.com | 🕒 10 mins | Any website

It's not easy to discover exactly how visitors are interacting with your site. Heat mapping overlays information showing where people are clicking, so you can see whether they are using your site in the way you want



Sign up for the service and you'll be taken to the code page. 11 Click 'Copy to clipboard'. 2 You need to paste the code into the header of any page you want the heatmap to work on, so it's best suited to a CMS such as WordPress, where you can paste it into a generic header that appears on every page.



To do this in WordPress, click 🛮 Appearance, 💶 then Editor 🔼 in the menu on the left. Under Templates, look for Theme Header 3 and click it (it might be called 'header.php'). Paste the code before the </head> tag. 4 Go back into Hotjar and click 'I have installed the tracking code'.



You'll need a few visits for the service to collect enough data, but once that's happened you can return to the service and click Heatmaps. [1] A screenshot of your site appears in the main window, with colour-coded hotspots showing where people click. The hotter the colour, the more clicks that button or link is getting. 🖪



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We test and compare the latest products

Google Home

Which voice-controlled smart assistant is the best? Andy Shaw compares the two main players

oice-controlled smart assistants are a serious contender for this year's must-have gadget, and while Amazon got in first with Echo, Google has now jumped in with Home. A bit of competition is a wonderful thing, particularly for consumers, but how do you know which one to buy? To find out, we put both

Home to the test, to see which one we'd invite into our homes.

Amazon Echo and Google

The basics

Both devices are standalone units that contain a bank of built-in microphones and a speaker. The microphones listen out for you to say a specific keyword ("Alexa" for the Amazon device and "OK Google" for Home), at which point you can talk to your assistant, asking it questions that it can respond to. The information comes back to you through the device's speaker as a computergenerated voice. The main difference between Echo and Home's assistants and the now-familiar OS-based versions such as Apple's Siri and Microsoft's Cortana is that there's no keyboard or screen to fall back on, so all communication between you and your machine is via voice.

Both devices are tied to their parent company's online accounts, so if you use a lot of Google services and never buy from Amazon, you're more likely to get on with Google Home. Equally, if you're an Amazon Prime subscriber and frequently take advantage of your free next-day delivery, then the

Echo may be the more obvious choice. Many of us will be caught between these two stools, however, so let's dig deeper into the products to find the best option for those who dabble with the services of both companies.

Integration and services

A voice-controlled assistant is only as good as the information you're prepared to give it access to. Google has email, calendar, maps. documents, an unrivalled search engine, Chromecast connectivity and a whole lot more. Amazon has an enormous shop. Both devices link seamlessly to musicplaying services, including

their own services and big names such as Spotify.

Google Home provides intelligent access to the vast collection of Google's products. For example, if you want to know what you've got going on during the day, simply say "Tell me about my day" and Home will pull all your appointments from Gmail and Calendar, and even check the weather without you needing to ask separately. It can tell you where your calendar appointment is taking place, and give you a rough estimate of how long it will

PRODUCT INFO

Google Home

Price: £129 Buy from John Lewis: bit.ly/home422

FOR

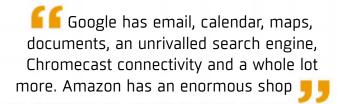
✓ Links seamlessly with your Google accounts

✓ Feels less commercial and more helpful than the Echo

AGAINST

X If you just want a speaker, there are better options for the price X We don't really know how much it's listening in









Amazon Echo



take to get there. It's more contextually aware than the Amazon Echo and has access to a greater number of personal sources to create that context.

And if you already own a Chromecast, you can tell Home to send content from your phone or tablet to your TV. Whether you want to watch selected films and programmes from Netflix, BBC iPlayer or Now TV if it works with Chromecast, it'll work with Google Home.

However, at the time of writing, it isn't particularly clear how many other tools and services will be connecting to Google Home. Amazon, on the other hand, has had its voice-recognition tools open to developers for longer, so anyone can link their services and devices to it with a minimum of effort. This has created an immediate infrastructure of what Amazon calls 'skills', which are like apps that you can install on the device, and there are all kinds of functions available. from weather forecasts to party games.

You can already get headline summaries from The Guardian, Telegraph, Daily

Mail and Sky News, check trains with National Rail, search flights with Skyscanner and hear recipes from Jamie Oliver. You can even order food from Just Eat and, of course, create Amazon orders.

But it won't be long before a similar number of external apps and services are available to Google. Home was launched with much fanfare about it being the central hub of a voicecontrolled home, and it can already control a fair smattering of smart-home products, such as Nest thermostats. But Amazon's list of supported automated home devices is more impressive and, as well as Nest, includes Honeywell. Hive, Netatmo, Samsung SmartThings, Tado, TP-Link's Kasa and LIFX lightbulbs.

Music is an obvious function that suits voicecontrolled assistants, and both devices offer radio services and work well with Spotify. We prefer the audio quality of Google Home to Amazon Echo, although neither device can rival high-end Bluetooth speaker systems.

Privacy

The privacy concerns surrounding these always-on, always-listening units are valid and well publicised, but both Google and Amazon say their devices only listen when given permission, when they hear the "Okay Google" or "Alexa" commands, so your private conversations won't be snooped on or recorded. You can also mute their microphones at any time by simply tapping the button.

PRODUCT INFO

Amazon Echo

Price: £149.99 Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/echo422

FOR

✓ Integrates well with Amazon shopping

✓ Already has lots of compatible 'skills' (apps)

AGAINST

X Doesn't have Google's breadth of integrated services ✗ Inferior speaker to Google Home



OUR VERDICT

Aside from a few teething problems, Google Home is a remarkable home helper. Amazon Echo feels like small fry in comparison to the Google device's technical achievement and lofty aims. Not only does Home provide a more fleshed-out and complete

experience when compared to the ongoing shaping of Amazon Echo, it feels like it has more of a purpose.

That's not to say that the Echo doesn't do its job well. but because it ultimately feeds back into Amazon's services and only lets you purchase goods through

Amazon, you can't escape the feeling that its main aim is to sell you products.

Home, on the other hand. isn't built around making you buy stuff, it's simply designed to be a device that makes your life easier. And we couldn't recommend it more highly.

Samsung Galaxy S8

David Court thinks Samsung's latest phone is brilliant, if you can ignore a few foibles and the eye-watering price

amsung has always been the Android phone manufacturer to watch, taking Apple on at the most expensive end of the scale and offering the pinnacle of smartphone technology. The S8 is beautiful and fast, has a brilliant camera and fantastic display, and offers a ton of extra features – some good, some not so good.

The S8 comes with curved edges, so there's no separate Samsung Galaxy S8 Edge model, and it's the best-looking phone on the market. Samsung has created an 1.85:9 "Infinity Display" which looks amazing. The front of

the phone is 100% glass with a barely-there bezel nestled above and below.

It feels great in your hand – slim, smooth and light – but it's a bit too long: hold the phone in your hand to unlock it using the rear fingerprint sensor and you'll struggle to reach the Home button without readjusting your grip; hold the phone so you can reach the Home button, however, and icons at the top of the screen become unreachable.

The screen's colours are bright and vivid, and it's easy to read in all conditions. We measured superb peak brightness of 569cd/m²; impressive 99.9% coverage of the sRGB colour standard; and perfect contrast.

The camera is exactly the same 12-megapixel specification as that of the S7, but it has a new tool that snaps three pictures simultaneously and merges them to create the sharpest possible image. You have to look hard to tell the difference when comparing it with S7 snaps in daylight, but we saw a significant improvement in low light, with less smearing and more contrast and detail.

Where the S7 brought biometric unlocking, the S8 introduces face recognition. However, neither is particularly convenient in this device, involving some manipulation to get your iris, face or fingerprints into the correct position.

The S8's battery didn't perform as well in our tests as the S7's. It lasted 16 hours and 45 minutes in our looping video test, which is still impressive, but the S7 Edge



was able to squeeze out another two hours.

Some of the extra toll may be due to the improved performance. The S8 feels super-slick and proved to be the fastest phone we've tested yet, beating rivals, such as the iPhone 7 and the more recent Huawei P10, both in processor and graphics tests.

Samsung has also included Bixby, its own answer to Siri,

Alexa and Google Assistant.
Disappointingly, voice control over Bixby has not been deemed good enough to launch yet, but you can ask it to recognise a photo of something and tell you what it is. We found that it was flummoxed by a Nike trainer, but it recognised Heinz
Tomato Ketchup and, oddly, the cloisters of Durham Cathedral.

PRODUCT INFO

Samsung Galaxy S8

Price: £689 (SIM-free) Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/samsung422

SPECIFICATIONS

- Exynos 8895 Octa processor
- Mali-G71 MP20 GPU
- 64GB memory
- 5.8in Super AMOLED touchscreen
- = 1,440 x 2,960 pixels resolution
- = 570ppi pixel density
- IP68 certified (dustproof and waterproof to 1.5m for 30 mins)
- Android 7 (Nougat)
- = 148.9 x 68.1 x 8mm
- 155q

FOR

- ✓ Great camera
- ✓ Brilliant display
- Excellent design

AGAINST

- **X** Expensive
- X Difficult to unlock
- X Battery isn't as good as S7

OUR VERDICT

The Samsung Galaxy S8 is undoubtedly the best Android phone available at the moment, with the most power and the highest specification. However, the best things about the device are its 5.8in 1.85:9 curved-edged display, its beautifully sleek finish and its fantastic built-in camera.

On the downside, though, one-handed usability (especially when **★★★**☆

FEATURES
PERFORMANCE
EASE OF USE
VALUE FOR MONEY

unlocking the device) and battery life aren't as good as its S7 predecessor.

It's also very, very expensive. So you may be getting the best phone around but you'll certainly be paying a high price.

......



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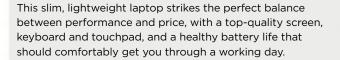
HARDWARE

WINDOWS 10 LAPTOP

Asus ZenBook UX310UA

£564.92 from bit.ly/zen421

Tested: Issue 421



KEY SPECS

Intel Core i3-6100U processor = 4GB of memory = 128GB SSD ■ 13.3in non-touchscreen ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 1 x USB 3, 1 x USB Type-C, 2 x USB 2 ports ■ 323 x 223 x 18mm ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.1 ■ 1.35kg ■ 1yr return-to-base

GRAPHICS CARD

Asus AMD Radeon R7 250

£78.59 from bit.ly/250amd416 Tested: Issue 416



This graphics card provides enough power to make less challenging games run smoothly in 1080p resolution with high-detail settings enabled. It's very cheap and benefits from plenty of speedy stream processors.

KEY SPECS

2,048 stream processors ■ 128 texture-mapping units ■ 32 render-output units ■ 926MHz GPU frequency ■ 4GB RAM ■ Supports up to six displays ■ 4,096 x 2,160 pixels resolution ■ DisplayPort, DVI-D and HDMI video connectors

WI-FI REPEATER

TP-Link RE450

£44.99 from bit.ly/tpl414

Tested: Issue 414

The TP-Link RE450 provides a strong signal at a price that's hard to resist. It's better at extending the 5GHz network than the 2.4GHz, but it also acts as a bridge to transfer older devices to the newer network.

KEY SPECS

2 x 60mm, 1 x 42mm antennae ■ 3.8W power consumption ■ 2.4GHz (450Mbps) and 5GHz (1,300Mbps) ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ WPS button ■ Repeater and access point modes ■ 163 x 76 x 37mm ■ Three-year return-to-base warranty

MONITOR

AOC Q2781PQ

£299.99 from bit.ly/aoc412

Tested: Issue 412



This good-value monitor offers impressive image quality, a lovely design and 178-degree horizontal and vertical viewing angles. You won't need to calibrate it, either. If you're after a monitor with a resolution of 2,560 x 1,440 pixels, buy this.

KEY SPECS

27in flat screen ■ 2,560 x 1,440 pixels resolution ■ 1,000:1 contrast ratio = 350cd/m² brightness = 60Hz refresh rate ■ DisplayPort, HDMI, VGA inputs ■ 330 x 180mm base ■ Three-year collect-and-return warranty

BUDGET TABLET

Amazon Fire HD 8

£89.99 from bit.ly/8hd410 Tested: Issue 410



For its low price, Amazon's Fire HD 8 is a pleasant surprise: it's great for media streaming and web browsing, its battery life is exceptional and it's easy to use. Once it's integrated with Amazon's Alexa voice assistant, it will be even better.

Quad-core 1.3GHz processor ■ 8in 1,280 x 800 pixels resolution screen ■ 2-megapixels rear camera ■ 16GB storage (12.09GB free) ■ MicroSD memory card slot ■ Fire OS operating system ■ 214 x 128 x 9.2mm ■ 341g

CHROMEBOOK

Acer Chromebook R11

£229.99 from www.amazon.co.uk Tested: Issue 409



The Acer Chromebook R11 laptop has a keyboard that flips behind its touchscreen, so it can also be used as a tablet. It's not hugely powerful but it runs all the web apps you might need and its battery lasted over eight hours in our tests.

KEY SPECS

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

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Whether you're an IT professional or a first time buyer, Dennis technology has a magazine for you, all of which are written and produced by expert editorial teams. We cover the whole spectrum of technology news, reviews and features.

Best Free Software

FAMILY-TREE CREATOR

My Family Tree 7

bit.ly/family422

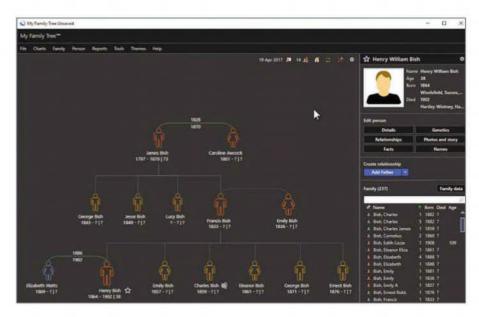
Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+/10 with .NET 4+

File size: 4.7MB

Researching your family history can be very time consuming but it's a genuinely rewarding pastime. Although you're bound to hit a few brick walls, the thrill of a breakthrough as you uncover a hitherto unknown family branch more than makes up for the occasional periods of frustration you'll encounter on your quest.

My Family Tree simplifies the process of building an ancestral map, adding new relatives and checking for errors – for example, no marriages occurring after deaths. It comes packed with features, although it doesn't actually





offer any research tools, so you'll need to use a service such as Ancestry.co.uk for that.

You can add multiple notes, photos, videos and audio clips to ancestors; fill in details regarding genetics (such as blood group and eye colour); and, once your tree is large enough, you can sort and browse family data, and explore graphs showing details including age, gender and which people are still alive.

The latest release of My Family Tree improves support for older GEDCOM

files produced by the Family History System, as well as old Personal Ancestral File (PAF) records, which is handy if you have an old family tree that you'd like to update. You can now add contact addresses for individuals, and order lists of relatives by surname. The Reports panel has been updated to group related reports into categories.

My Family Tree 7 has also added support for the Windows 10 Creators Update, and works much better on high-contrast themes and larger (high DPI) screens.

办

MINI WORKSHOP | Build a family tree with My Family Tree



When you run the program, you'll be presented with three options. You can start a new family tree, open an existing project or import one in GEDCOM format. To add new relatives to a tree, select a member of your family, then use the drop-down menu 1 to add a parent, partner or child.

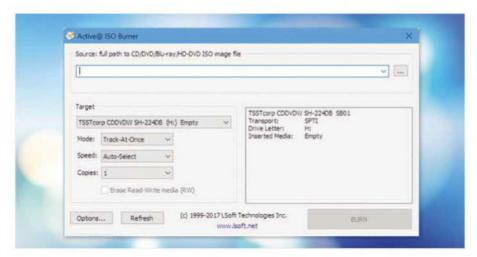


You can fill in details about a relative, such as their gender, aname(s), birth date and birth place, and the date and place they died. You can also add notes and media files, such as photos and documents. You should include citations for the information you enter so you know where it was found.



The Charts menu 1 lets you switch between Family and Ancestors view. Family 2 displays all sorts of information, including lists of everyone in your tree, and places. Tools 3 include a date calculator, spellcheck, relationship calculator and task lists. You can customise the look of the software under Themes. 4

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



DISC-AUTHORING TOOL

Active@ ISO Burner 4

hit ly/iso422

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 2.7MB

ISO files are compressed archives that are often used for packaging operating systems and other large programs. Active@ ISO burns these images to CD, DVD and Blu-ray disc. You can adjust the write speed and method (Track-At-Once, Session-At-Once, Disk-At-Once) and there are plenty of advanced options on offer, such as command-line support to automate the burning process. The latest version offers an improved installer, better multi-burner support and a new interface.



IMAGE VIEWER CPix

bit.ly/cpix422

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 597KB

CPix is a straightforward image viewer that can handle all the major formats, including animated GIFs, plus some of its own. Just run the program and drag and drop files to the interface. You can use keyboard shortcuts to move through the images, control the animation speed and apply effects such as Negative, Grey and Auto Brightness and Contrast. CPix also converts image files into other formats.



CLIPBOARD MANAGER

CopyQ 3

bit.ly/copyq422

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+/10, MacOS or Linux File size: 9.9MB

CopyQ is a powerful clipboard manager that monitors everything you cut or copy, storing the content in customised tabs so they're ready to paste into any application. Stored items can be edited, moved to other tabs, dropped into applications and marked with a tag or note. Version 3 has lots of new features, including the option to pin and protect items, and export and import tabs.

New Windows Apps

Booxio

bit.ly/booxio422

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 23MB

Booxio is an audiobook player that can read books stored in your music folder or on an SD card. Progress is saved automatically and its built-in timer lets you know how much time is remaining.



Hexa Lights!

bit.ly/hexa422

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 54.3MB

The aim of this puzzle game is to put out the lights by dragging your hex tile over all the other tiles on the way to the chequered finish point.



Manager for Devices Gold

bit.ly/devicegold422

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 24.8MB

This app provides detailed info about your PC. There's a summary, and you can also view details on your system, processor, graphics, operating system, network, battery and connected devices.



Best Free Software

VIDEO EDITOR

Lightworks 14

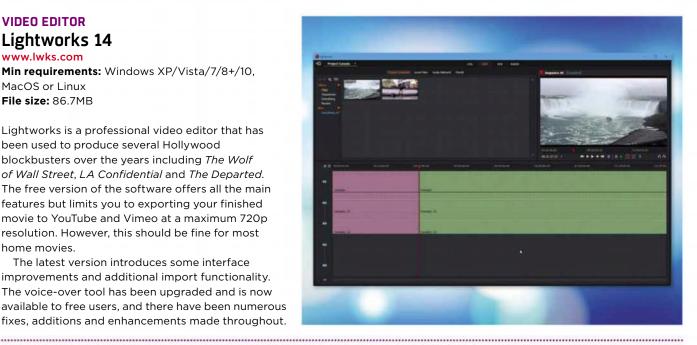
www.lwks.com

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

MacOS or Linux File size: 86.7MB

Lightworks is a professional video editor that has been used to produce several Hollywood blockbusters over the years including The Wolf of Wall Street, LA Confidential and The Departed. The free version of the software offers all the main features but limits you to exporting your finished movie to YouTube and Vimeo at a maximum 720p resolution. However, this should be fine for most home movies.

The latest version introduces some interface improvements and additional import functionality. The voice-over tool has been upgraded and is now available to free users, and there have been numerous fixes, additions and enhancements made throughout.



DoNotSpy10 2.0.0.0 - Windows 10 (Version 1703 File . Actions . About . Advertising: Disable Advertising in Windows Explorer Advertising Disable and Reset Advertising ID On the left, you find all available settings, which prevent Windows from spying on you. Click on the entries to read their descriptions Advertising: Disable App Suggestions in Windows Ink Workspace Advertising Disable Bluetooth Advertising Advertising Disable Start Menu App Suggestions Apps: Disable Access to Calendar Apps: Disable Access to Call History blue - safe to use Mappy: Disable Access to Camera Apps: Disable Access to Contacts orange - read the description Apps: Disable Access to Diagnostic Data red - better know what you do Apps: Disable Access to Email Apps: Disable Access to Language List gray - changes that have changed since the last time DoNotSpy10 was Apps: Disable Access to Location Info Apps: Disable Access to Messaging Apps: Disable Access to Microphone Apps: Disable Access to Notifications Apps: Disable Access to Radios Apps: Disable Access to Tasks Apps: Disable Application Telemetry Apps: Disable Background Applications Oreck All Uncheck All faceboo

PRIVACY TOOL

DoNotSpv10 2

bit.ly/nospy422

Min requirements: Windows 10 File size: 1.6MB

Windows 10 spies on you in all sorts of ways. Microsoft claims this is so it can get to know you better and tailor the operating system accordingly, but if you find such snooping invasive, DoNotSpy10 does a good job of making it easy to tweak and disable numerous privacy and telemetry (snooping) settings from a single screen, and has been updated to work with the Creators Update. There are free (ad-supported) and donation versions available. The latter costs from \$5 (£3.90) and, as well as removing the ads, introduces extra features such as profile support for multiple computers.

Be sure to decline the bundled junk during installation.

SLIDESHOW MAKER

PhotoFilmStrip 3

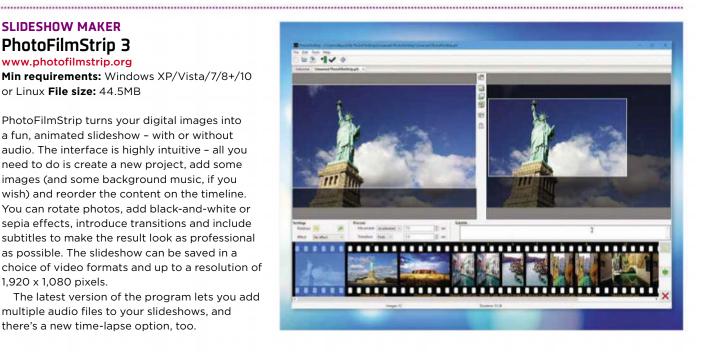
www.photofilmstrip.org

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

or Linux File size: 44.5MB

PhotoFilmStrip turns your digital images into a fun, animated slideshow - with or without audio. The interface is highly intuitive - all you need to do is create a new project, add some images (and some background music, if you wish) and reorder the content on the timeline. You can rotate photos, add black-and-white or sepia effects, introduce transitions and include subtitles to make the result look as professional as possible. The slideshow can be saved in a choice of video formats and up to a resolution of 1,920 x 1,080 pixels.

The latest version of the program lets you add multiple audio files to your slideshows, and there's a new time-lapse option, too.





GAME

You Have 293 Keys

bit.ly/293key422

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 17.6MB

Is this a game or just an exercise in perseverance? In front of a locked door are 293 keys, of which only one will open the lock. The aim is to pick up keys and try them one at a time. We can confirm that the door does open, but won't reveal what lurks beyond it.

Don't install...

Action(s)

app.jbbres.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7 or MacOS

File size: 13.3MB

Action(s) is a taskautomation tool that might once have been useful, but now looks very dated. In fact, that's an understatement because support was ended for Action(s) three-and-half years ago. However if you want to see how it "populates your workflows with pre-built actions", it's still available to download, although you probably won't keep it for long.



...Install this instead

Ellp

www.ellp.com

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

File size: 3MB

This handy program saves you time and effort by performing boring everyday tasks for you. Simply choose an action, such as 'When my hard disk is getting full, free up space' or 'When it's time for bed, mute the sound on my PC'; specify parameters for the 'rule' such as the times it applies or the threshold at which it kicks in; and click Activate. More tasks are constantly being added, spanning categories including Schedule, Internet and Device - and you can receive alerts when they arrive. We love the program's simple, attractive interface and that tasks can be easily toggled on and off.





UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



VIDEO CONVERTER

Any Video Converter Free 6.1.2

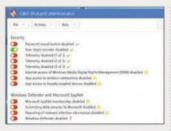
www.any-video-converter

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ or MacOS

File size: 49MB

This free program converts video from one format to another. The new version fixes the crash problem caused by adding files that contain special characters and updates the program's download engine.



WINDOWS PRIVACY 080 ShutUp10 1.5

bit.ly/shutup422

Min requirements:

Windows 10

File size: 681KB

Windows 10 has lots of privacy settings you can tweak, and the portable program O&O ShutUp10 makes them all available on a single screen. The new version is compatible with Windows 10 Creators Update and adds new settings, improves portability and fixes errors.



EBOOK MANAGER

calibre 2.83

calibre-ebook.com

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

or Linux

File size: 60.2MB

This latest release of the popular ebook manager changes the size of the PDFs you create, and introduces new page-margin settings for PDF and DOCX files. It also adds a new Undo button in the Table of Contents tool and improves the metadata jacket feature.



BACKUP TOOL

EaseUS Todo Backup Free 10.5

www.todo-backup.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10

File size: 115MB

This program backs up files, hard drives, partitions, and operating systems. You can run full, incremental or differential backups. The new version offers backup, recovery and cloning between drives with different sector sizes, and improves backup quality.

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



Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

Turn your New Tab page into a desktop

Last issue, we reviewed the best tools for making Chrome's New Tab page more useful and attractive, but - typically - no sooner had we gone to press than another great one emerged. Desktop for Chrome (bit .ly/desktop422) creates a colourful cartoon 'workstation' in your browser that provides a range of useful information. Look through the



window to see the temperature and weather conditions, view appointments in the wall calendar, check your to-do list on the notice board, get the time from the digital clock and access your favourite sites via the laptop screen. You can also 'paint'

the wall a different colour, click a world map to open Google Maps and click a bookshelf to open Wikipedia. It's a brilliant way to spruce up your New Tab page, although it's a pity you can't change the temperature from Fahrenheit to Celsius.

Record and share anything on screen

You don't need to install dedicated software to capture what's happening on your screen. The versatile new Chrome extension ViewedIt (bit.ly/

Vid os

viewed422) lets you

record what vou're doing with just a couple of clicks and share the result by email or on social media. To get started, click the green-face

icon on the toolbar and choose what you want to record: your current browser tab, your entire screen or your webcam and microphone. Then click Record and, after a three-second countdown, ViewedIt starts recording until you tell it to stop. Captured content is saved as an online video with its own URL, which you can share any way you want. You can even receive notifications when people view your videos.

You need to sign in with your Google account to use ViewedIt and grant

the add-on access to your screen (and webcam and mic, if required), but no one can see your videos unless you allow them to. It's completely free to use, and you get unlimited online storage and a recording time of up to an hour. Fantastic!

Hide excessive emoji on web pages

Emoji are everywhere these days, from restaurant menus and cinema screens - in forthcoming film *The Emoji Movie* (bit.ly/emojimovie422) - to our quiz on

Smileys & People Grinning Face Grinning Face With Smiling Eyes G Face With Tears of Joy 3 Rolling on the Floor Laughing Smiling Face With Open Mouth @ Smiling Face With Open Mouth & Smiling Eyes Smiling Face With Open Mouth & Cold Sweat Smiling Face With Open Mouth & Closed Eyes

[no] Smileys & People [no] Grinning Face [no] Grinning Face With Smiling Eyes [no] Face With Tears of Joy [no] Rolling on the Floor Laughing [no] Smiling Face With Open Mouth [no] Smiling Face With Open Mouth & Smiling Eyes [no] Smiting Face With Open Mouth & Cold Sweat [no] Smiling Face With Open Mouth & Closed Eyes [no] Winking Face **AFTER**

page 51, but if you're sick of seeing their quirky yellow faces, why not take an emoji holiday? That's the concept behind Nomoji: No More Emojis (bit.ly/nomoji422), which replaces emoji on web pages with a less irritating and distracting '[no]'. When you're back in the emoji mood, you can switch the extension off by clicking its toolbar button and refreshing the page. Nomoji doesn't work on every emoji-laden site, but at least it reduces their number.

Schedule websites to open later

Open Me Later (bit.ly/open422) saves you the hassle of opening the same web pages every day by scheduling them to load at the times of your choice. Click its toolbar button when viewing a page and select the desired day(s) and time to open that page in future, or even a specific date. You can load the page in a new tab or window so it doesn't interrupt what you're doing.





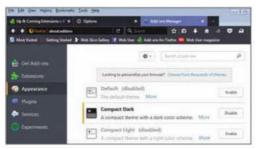
This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more



FIREFOX

Apply a new theme to Firefox

If you're bored with how Firefox looks but can't be bothered to browse the themes on the Mozilla Addons site (addons.mozilla.org), the latest version of the browser, 53, has two themes pre-installed. To access them, open the Add-ons page (about:addons) and choose Appearance to see Compact Dark and Compact



Light listed below the default theme. As you can probably guess, one applies a dark colour scheme to Firefox and the other a light one, but they also change other elements such as making your tabs rectangular rather than curved. What's more, in keeping with their 'compact' names, the themes use fewer pixels than the standard Firefox layout, although you probably won't notice much difference. To apply or remove a theme, just click the Enable or Disable button next to it.

Automatically mute the sound in new tabs

We've all been there - you open a new browser tab in the background only to jump out of your skin when a loud video starts playing automatically. A new Firefox add-on called Auto Mute (bit.ly/ auto422) remedies this problem by muting the sound by default when you

Auto mute 1.0 Mute new tabs in the normal winde Mute new tabs in the private window

open a new tab, thereby eliminating the problem of unexpected audio onslaught. It works both in normal browsing

mode and private mode (go into its Options to ensure both are selected) so you won't risk blasting out sounds that might embarrass as well as surprise you!

Watch YouTube videos without distraction

Ever wish you could watch videos on YouTube without the distractions of user comments, recommendations



and 'up next' thumbnails, but without needing to switch to full-screen mode? Well, now you can thanks to YouTubecinema

(bit.ly/youtube422), a simple but effective Firefox add-on that automatically plays YouTube videos in the full browser window without any of the "distracting cruft". It certainly makes for a more pleasurable viewing experience.

Add more tasks to tabs

Firefox's right-click menu for tabs is undoubtedly useful, but the range of options it offers is pretty basic. The delightfully named FoxyTab (bit.ly/foxy422) makes things more interesting by adding a batch of handy tab-related actions to the menu. These include options to copy the URL of the active tab or the one to the left or right of it; duplicate the current tab or close duplicate tabs; and copy the title of the tab to paste elsewhere. FoxyTab's additions appear in a side menu to prevent the main right-click menu from becoming unwieldy.

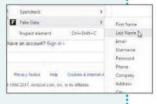


OTHER BROWSERS

Fill in forms with fake data

Entering your name, address and contact details when you register with a website not only takes time but also compromises your privacy and could leave you open to being spammed and scammed. You can avoid this risk by creating bogus information using Fake Data, which is now available for Opera (bit.ly/fake422) and

Chrome (bit.ly/ fake406). Simply right-click a form field and choose



the fake details for it - whether that's a first or last name, email or postal address, phone number or location - and the add-on will enter them for you. By default, the add-on is set to use US data. but if you go into its Options, you can change its language to 'Great Britain (English)' to get UK phone numbers, names and places. You can also save custom data for the add-on to enter automatically.

Shuffle your Vivaldi extensions

The latest tweak to the ever-impressive Vivaldi browser lets you change the position of extension icons on your toolbar so you can place your most frequently used ones within easy

reach. Just click an icon and drag it left or right to change the order of add-ons accordingly.



Chrome offers the same feature, and since Vivaldi uses extensions from the Chrome Web Store, it seems only right that the younger browser should have it, too.



Best Free Apps 🗯 📹

App of the Fortnight

FLIGHT TRACKER

NATS Airspace Explorer

bit.ly/nats422

9.3 (iPad only)

Ever looked up at the sky and wondered where that plane is going? Or where it's come from, or even how high it is? Wonder no more. because this glorious new iPad app from



NATS (National Air Traffic Services, www.nats.aero, latest incarnation of the world's first air-traffic control system) reveals everything you need to know about every plane currently in flight (well, except the top-secret military ones) and lets you track them on fascinating interactive maps.

Other flight-tracking apps tend to rely on crowdsourced data gathered by plane-spotters but NATS Airspace Explorer is the first to use its own advanced radar technology to offer full information about UK airspace, including its controlled military zones, flight paths and altitudes and airways. The data is supplied by 23 NATS monitoring stations, covering more than 2.2 million flights and 220 million passengers every year in UK skies alone. You see flights outside the UK as well, but these are tracked using non-NATS data so they're somewhat less detailed.

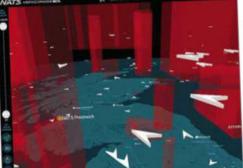
The default 2D mode reveals hundreds of planes above a map of the UK - all moving in real time. Tap a plane for a wealth of detail about it from Skybrary (www.skybrary .aero) - a kind of aviation Wikipedia. If you get lucky on a summer's day, you may even spot a vintage Spitfire. But where this app really comes into its own is 3D mode, which lets you zoom through the sky and investigate the

planes around you.

This is a stunning piece of work, educational and powerful but also very easy to use. We're delighted to hear that Android and iPhone versions are due

for release





NEW

MINI WORKSHOP

Track planes above you using NATS Airspace Explorer

Install and launch the app, then tap Allow. You'll now see a map of the airspace above your location. Pinch to zoom in and out, and swipe to explore. Each plane icon



represents a real aircraft. Tap one 11 to reveal its flightpath 2 and open a Flight sidebar of details including its airline, flight number, altitude and destination. **3** Swipe from the right to see a photo of the plane. Select 3D. 4

3D mode presents a side-on view, with land stretching ahead and the sky above, populated by 'planes' (well, arrows) at their relative altitudes. Pinch the map



to tilt and drag to explore. To only display planes below a certain altitude, move the slider down. 2 Tap the three-line menu icon to open the Dashboard, 3 then choose Search 4 to find a specific aircraft and see its route mapped out.

On the Dashboard, select Airspace then tap the options to see different zones in the sky - for example, you can tap Restricted to highlight military zones 11 and



Airways to highlight flight corridors. To see every arrival and departure at airports in real time, tap Search, then enter an airport. 2 Pinch and drag to move around, or switch to 2D mode to make the view less tangled. [3]

Our rating

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

TRAVEL

LuckyTrip www.luckytrip .co.uk €9

Choosing where to go on holiday usually involves schlepping through a wish-list with mounting disappointment until you finally find something



you can afford. New iOS app LuckyTrip saves you frustration by cutting straight to all the trips within your preferred price range. It provides an amazing selection, hand-picked by the team, with 300 destinations covered and plenty of tips about things to do while you're away. You can save

interesting trips for later, share them with friends and, in some cases, book your holiday via the app.



Our rating



OFFICE

Dropbox **Paper**

bit.ly/ dropdroid422 bit.ly/ dropios422 **# 4.4** 9

Dropbox finally brought its Google Docs competitor out of beta in

January this year but, even after months of testing, the app still lacked offline support. That oversight has now been fixed so you can create, share and collaborate on documents, either from scratch or using notes, photos and other files you've stored in Dropbox wherever you are. Any changes you make offline are automatically synced as soon as you're online again. Set it to sync over Wi-Fi only to save your data bill.



Our rating





Unimersiv

unimersiv.com

4.4

Journey through space, tour Ancient Rome, board the Titanic and even explore inside the human body using this educational virtual reality (VR) app. Its content is vivid, accurate and highly detailed - but you can't actually view it without a supported VR headset, such as Google Cardboard or Daydream. That feels like an unnecessary limitation, given how many other VR apps work perfectly fine in 2D (non-headset) mode. We're also less than delighted about the in-app purchases (£1.99-£3.09)

Our rating

for each "full" experience.



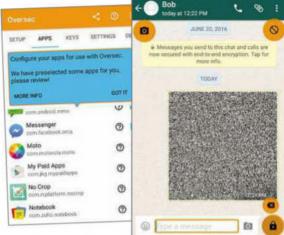
SECURITY & PRIVACY

Oversec

www.oversec.io

4.3

Some messaging apps, including WhatsApp and Signal, use end-to-end encryption to ensure that anything you write is scrambled the moment it leaves your device, so it can't be intercepted by hackers and other snoopers. The handy new open-source tool Oversec adds encryption to apps that don't already use it



- and also boosts encryption in apps that do. It does so by using 'eye-to-eye encryption' that encrypts any data stored on your device, then only decrypts it on screen after you enter a code. You can also use Oversec as an encrypted vault for storing private photos, notes and other secrets. It even incorporates a camera for taking encrypted photos.

All this works without the need to be online, and it's efficient and effective. However, there's a bit of a learning curve so check out the website's Videos section for help with getting started.



Our rating



GET THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID

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



Discover how to:

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

Order it now from Amazon at bit.ly/androidbook2016

Best Free Apps

LANGUAGE

GrammarPal

bit.ly/grammar422



Autocorrect for your grammar sounds like a great idea but does it work? Mostly, yes. No app can judge the nuances of language as well as humans, especially given the degree of in-jokes and slang phrases used in text communication, but we found this app easy to use and broadly accurate. It integrates with your other apps and overlays an icon that you

can tap to check and correct grammar when writing in other apps. You can set it to correct your text in dozens of languages, so it could prove invaluable when writing to friends and family overseas. There are plenty of configurable options including a

personal dictionary, backup and whitelists.

FOOD

Runtasty

bit.ly/rundroid422 bit.ly/runios422

4.1 9

Eat as well as you exercise, using this inspiring new app from the makers of fitness tracker Runtastic (www .runtastic.com). It's built around more than 40 dietician-approved recipes for all needs, including vegan, glutenfree and voraciously carnivorous, with a full breakdown of calorie and nutrient details. You can filter recipes

according to how long they take to rustle up, how many calories they include, what's in the fridge and so on, then follow step-by-step videos to get perfect results. There are also some great How To videos for brushing up your culinary skills, and a Favourites section for the meals you like best.



NEW



Our rating



Our rating

APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

FILM & TV

Netflix

bit.ly/netflix422

Phone 8.1 📒 10 Mobile

Price: from £5.99 per month Windows phone and tablet users (and indeed Windows 10 PC users) can now download Netflix content for offline viewing, just as Android and iOS subscribers have been able to do for yonks.



Square Note

squarenote.co

4.4 8

Price: £2.89 (Android), £2.99 (iOS) Bring more than 600 ancient Gregorian chants to life using beautifully rendered sheet music and glorious choral voices. You can toggle markings on and off, and adjust the speed and pitch.

SIMULATOR

Eaglivion VR

bit.ly/eagdroid422 bit.ly/eagios422

4.4 8

Price: 59p (Android), 99p (iOS)







Be an eagle, via the magic of VR. Fight mid-air battles with other eagles, dive for fish, collect souvenirs and carry out missions. All in a day's work for a raptor.

Five Minute Journal

bit.ly/fivedroid422 bit.ly/fiveios422

4.2 8

Price: £4.99

Psychologists reckon keeping a diary makes you happier. We think that depends on what you write. Either way, this new app makes journalkeeping a joy, with support for photos, reminders, PDF export and password-protection.

SCREEN CAPTURE

Screenshot Pro 2

bit.ly/screen422

iΙΔ

Price: 89p

Taking screenshots using Android is a massive pain in the neck that requires the manual dexterity of a virtuoso harpist. This new app tackles much of the frustration with one-tap grabs that you can crop, edit and share.





Netflix

Square Note

Eaglivion VR

Five Minute Journal

Screenshot Pro 2











UPDATED



Best New Mobile Games

ACTION

Transformers: Forged to Fight

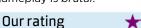
transformersforgedtofight.com





We at Web User would never condone violence, but there's something exhilarating about watching robots smashing seven shades of metal out of each other. This game lets you take on the role of Optimus Prime, Megatron, Bumblebee and other Transformer characters to battle metallic foes in huge, 360-degree arenas. Master special attacks, assemble a crack team of bots and cause as much destruction as you can. Forged to Fight also lets you team up with friends to take on other

Transformers around the world. The graphics are fantastic and the gameplay is brutal.





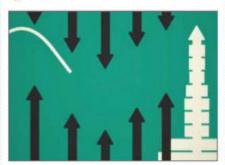


SKILL

Wire

www.ketchappgames.com

9 3 **9** 7



Imagine you are a long piece of wire, gliding gracefully through abstract landscapes while avoiding obstacles and collecting rewards. No, this isn't a therapeutic mental exercise but the bizarre if frustrating game Wire, which has already attracted thousands of five-star reviews on the iOS and Google Play stores. With its simple, one-touch controls - just keep tapping the screen to guide your wire through each screen - it resembles a futuristic version of the classic Nokia game Snake. It's very

addictive, and there are different skins you can apply to make things more interesting.

Our rating



TRIVIA

NEW

Before or After?

bit.ly/beforea422 bit.ly/beforei422

4.0.3 \$8

Which happened first: Neil Armstrong walking on the Moon or the assassination of Martin Luther King? Did Google



launch before the first Harry Potter book? This quiz game asks you to answer such questions with a simple 'before' or 'after', to test your knowledge of historical events. It's stupidly easy to begin with, but soon gets tougher, and an added benefit is that you learn facts while playing. The latest update introduces a level-based mode to see how far you can progress, as well as the existing option to get your high score on the

leaderboard. It's a shame you have to tolerate some awful ads, though.

Our rating



🗶 Don't install...

TouchPal

www.touchpal.com

TouchPal is a full-featured keyboard that offers swiping and dictation, as well as normal typing input. However, it feels cluttered compared to similar rival apps and its focus on garish themes and cute emoji symbols



suggests that it's aimed at teenage users, rather than adults who just want an easy way to type on their touchscreens. Worst of all, the app displays ads on the keyboard unless you upgrade to the premium version for 83p a year.

...Install this instead

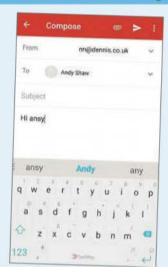
SwiftKey Keyboard

swiftkey.com

(varies with device) 👛 8



Swiftkey is king of phone keyboards, boasting an unmatched combination of features, usability and performance. It's totally free, easy to use and lets you switch instantly between three different methods of text input: typing, swiping your finger between letters and voice dictation. However, what really separates SwiftKey from its competitors is the quality of its auto-correction and its ability to predict your next word. Even when you tap several wrong keys, the app usually knows what you meant to type and, over time, it learns your most frequently used phrases and information, which makes text input wonderfully quick and effortless.







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



What is it?

Google Wifi (bit.ly/wifi422) is a wireless router that promises to enhance your internet coverage and reach further around your home. It aims to banish patchy wireless signals by letting you connect multiple access points to create a 'mesh network' of seamless coverage that ensures you always receive the best signal. This should mean that you can make full use of your Wi-Fi without having to worry that the speed of your network is being adversely affected.

How does it work?

The main problem with having a single router is that its signal has to spread through the walls and into every far-flung corner of your home. This is difficult and leads to slow Wi-Fi and areas where the signal is virtually dead. Google Wifi solves this by using multiple routers to create a stronger wireless network that covers a larger area. As you move around your home, the network establishes a connection with the nearest Wi-Fi point.



In the US, Google Wifi comes in packs of three - for your wireless pleasure

This means you no longer have to worry about losing your signal when you're further away from the main router.

So is it like a Wi-Fi extender, then?

No. Wi-Fi extenders re-broadcast a router's signal, which is why they're also called repeaters. This means they simply use whatever signal comes out of your single router and extend its range. While this is an easy way to fix dead spots and is more than adequate for many people, extenders don't offer consistently high speeds or work perfectly when there are high volumes of traffic from many connected devices. Because Google Wifi uses multiple routers, it can provide a strong, fast signal from each of its points. It won't suffer from a degradation of speed as an extender does.

Why has no one else thought of doing this?

They have. Google Wifi is by no means the only player in this market. Eero (eero



Luma is basically the same as Google Wifi but a different shape and colour

.com), Luma (lumahome.com) and Orbi by Netgear (bit.ly/orbi422) are some of the other systems that do the same thing. The reason Google Wifi is getting a lot of coverage is because it's a well-recognised name with a lot of power to shake up the market. Google's setup is also more affordable than those of its rivals.

So is Google Wifi faster than the competition?

Not really. In fact, Netgear claims its Orbi system's wireless network is 100% faster than Google's and Eero's, and even Google admits that its product is slower than some of the competition. Instead, Google hopes other features will make up for the speed deficit.

Won't this just complicate my Wi-Fi setup?

It's unlikely, although messing around

with routers and their settings is nobody's idea of fun. Thankfully, Google Wifi's simple smartphone app for Android and iOS guides you through the setup process (bit.ly/setup422), which means no more fiddling around with



The Google Wifi app can help you find the router if you lose it on a white floor

poorly designed interfaces that you can only access by typing 192.1.168.0.1 in your browser.

Does this mean I can just plug it in and leave it alone?

To a degree, yes. Google Wifi offers a feature called Network Assist, which works behind the scenes to locate the best access point and ensure the channel you're using is clear. It even searches the faster (but shorter-range) 5GHz Wi-Fi band and switches to it automatically if necessary. If anything goes wrong, the app should be able to find the problem and explain it in simple language.

So I'll always get the best connection?

That's the idea. One of the biggest problems with Wi-Fi is congestion, which occurs when lots of people in your area use the same channel. This can slow your connection without you knowing, which is why ISPs sometimes ask you to delve into the settings and change the channel manually. Google Wifi switches automatically to channels that are less cluttered, using what it calls intelligent congestion sensing. The system isn't entirely hands-off, though, which is where the mobile app comes into play.

What other things can I do with **Google Wifi?**

A key feature is

pause your Wi-Fi

the ability to

using the app.

You can do this

manually or set

and Google says

handy for limiting

up a schedule,

it's particularly

vour children's

You can do this

without affecting

internet use.



Pause vour kids' Wi-Fi when you need them to do their homework

Can I prioritise devices so they receive the best Wi-Fi signal? You can. If you need to download a

68 0 Your Internet speed is lightning fast!

household is using.

Make your own Wi-Fi faster at the expense of your family's

huge file in the shortest possible time. for example, you can temporarily give your PC priority over any other device in the house. Similarly, if you're streaming a film or TV show from Netflix, you can make sure you don't experience any buffering by setting the Wi-Fi

to concentrate on delivering seamless viewing over anything else that the network is being used for.

your own use of the Wi-Fi, because the

app also gives you the power to control

see exactly how much bandwidth your

specific connected devices. You can even

What if someone comes to stay? Can I control their access, too?

You certainly can. Rather than giving them your Wi-Fi password, you can



Poor Olivia's not getting much of a look-in on this Google Wifi network

create separate networks for guests, which they access using their own passwords. At the same time, you can decide which devices on your main network can connect to

the guest network, so guests are limited to using your smart TV, for instance, or a single tablet.

Does this mean I can finally throw away my ugly modem?

Unfortunately not. You'll have to connect one of your Google Wifi routers to your existing modem because Google's devices don't have one built in. What's more, if your modem is also a wireless router, you'll need to disable its Wi-Fi capabilities once you've plugged in Google Wifi. The good news is that any subsequent Google Wifi routers you place around your home can stand alone.

How many Wifi routers will I need?

You may get away with just one. Google says anyone who lives in a small home (up to 1,500ft²) should be able to receive decent coverage without needing a second device. You may still benefit from having a second Wifi, though, and if your house is between 1,500 and 4,500ft2, Google reckons three is about right. After that, it's a matter of working it out for yourself. We imagine the Queen would need a fair few to cover the whole of Buckingham Palace, for example.

How much do they cost?

The base station sells for £129, while a pack of two will set you back £229 (bit .ly/store422). Unlike in the US, there are no three-packs available in the UK yet.



Google Wifi provides the perfect design contrast to a manky onion vase

HOW SECURE IS GOOGLE WIFI?



Google Wifi's unobtrusive design has two Gigabit Ethernet ports (one for your modem and another for hubs and smart-home products), 512MB RAM and a quad-core ARM processor, with each core running at up to 710MHz. It's built with simplicity in mind, so it provides advanced features such as port forwarding and DNS switching while working powerfully in the background.

Google Wifi lets you dim your Philips Hue lights without having to get up

But how do you know it's safe to use? First of all, it uses the latest Wi-Fi encryption protocol, WPA2-PSK, eschewing older, less-secure protocols such as WPA and WEP. It also has a built-in firewall and receives automatic updates every six weeks to ensure it always has the latest software and security. Also, if you have Philips Hue lights in your home, Google Wifi lets you control them through its app. Other smart home features are due to be added in future.



Think you know everything there is to know about Kodi? Well, think again. **Wayne Williams** reveals the latest and greatest hacks for using Kodi to its full potential

s you may have noticed, Kodi is the software sensation of 2017 - despite having been around, in one form or another, for 15 years. Part of its appeal lies in its versatility - you can use it on different devices, stream all manner of great content for free, expand what it can do using thousands of great add-ons, and much more. In this feature, we celebrate Kodi's unlimited capabilities by revealing the most useful and lesser-known hacks for making the most of this marvellous media software.

Over the following eight pages, we look at how to beat

annoying Kodi restrictions, including bypassing geographic locks and ISP blocks; explain how to customise the software using the best skins and builds; and unlock hidden tools you may have missed. We also explain how to fix problems with Kodi and its add-ons, and reveal how to try new versions of the program before anyone else.

In case you're worried about using Kodi in light of the current trial of Middlesbrough shopkeeper Brian Thompson for selling pre-installed Kodi boxes (bit.ly/middles422), rest assured that none of the advice offered in this feature encourages you to break the law.

BEAT KODI RESTRICTIONS

Install 'unknown' third-party add-ons

Kodi's developer is in a difficult position. On the one hand, the huge surge in interest in its media software means a lot of people are now downloading and using Kodi. On the other hand, it has developed a reputation as a tool for watching pirated content. This is slightly unfair because, on its own, Kodi *can't* stream copyrighted material such as films, TV shows and music – you need to install third party add-ons to do this.

To distance itself from the criticism, the latest version of Kodi (v17, Krypton) now blocks unofficial add-ons by default. Getting around this restriction is easy, however. Select Add-ons on the Home screen, then click the cog icon and select Add-ons again. Set 'Unknown sources' to On (if it isn't already) and you can now download whatever add-ons you like. Just bear in mind the legal issues surrounding the streaming of copyrighted content.



Allow add-ons from unknown sources to beat Kodi's block

Beat geo-restrictions and ISP blocks

In March, the High Court granted the Football Association Premier League (FAPL) powers to block servers offering live feeds of Premier League matches being streamed through Kodi. For the majority of people, this means they simply won't be able to watch football matches live. Other broadcasters will no doubt look to follow suit in the future.

However, there is a way around this type of block and other geographic restrictions – if you're not bothered by the legal issues – and that's to use a VPN (Virtual Private Network) such as PureVPN (www.purevpn.com). This costs from \$2.95 (£2.33) a month; \$70.80 (£55.82) in total if you pre-pay for two years. Just fire it up, choose a country outside the UK, then run Kodi and, hopefully, access the content you want.

CyberGhost (www.cyberghostvpn .com) is another excellent choice. It can



CyberGhost lets you circumvent geographical Kodi restrictions

be used for free, but with certain restrictions on speed, continuous stream time and the number of countries you can pretend to be in. The paid-for version costs from £3.74 per month, and there's now a dedicated Windows 10 app.

If you're using Kodi on an Android box, you'll need to set up the VPN on your router, unless your chosen VPN provider offers an Android app you can use – as CyberGhost does. If the router is provided by your ISP, you probably won't be able to make the required changes so you'll need to switch to another router to use Kodi. Google 'setting up a VPN on a router' along with the name of the device to find the instructions you need.

Use Kodi on iOS — with and without jailbreaking

Jailbreaking your iPhone - that is, freeing it from the annoying limitations imposed by Apple and your carrier - has several benefits, including letting you install apps such as Kodi that aren't available via iTunes. If you have a jailbroken iPhone, you can install the media software



You can use Kodi on an iPad but it's not for the faint-hearted

through the Cydia app store.

If you don't have a jailbroken device but you have access to an Apple Mac, you can install Kodi on your iPhone or iPad using Xcode and iOS App Signer. Kodi itself warns that this method is "considered advanced and slightly experimental" and is "not for the faint of heart." The other downside is that you will need to reinstall Kodi every seven days if you're using a free iOS dev account (which you probably will be).

If you don't have a Mac, you can install Kodi on your iPhone via Cydia Impactor (cydiaimpactor.com) and Windows 7 upwards. This process carries a similar warning of "not for the faint of heart" and also requires you to reinstall Kodi every seven days if you're using a free iOS dev account.

The steps for all these methods can be found (with images) at bit.ly/kodiios422. Make sure you back up your iPhone or iPad before you start, and be aware of the usual provisos about voiding your warranty and potentially 'bricking' your device by jailbreaking it.

WILL KODI ADD DRM TO STREAMS?

Kodi has - to a degree - tried to crack down on 'fully loaded' Kodi boxes in an attempt to show that it doesn't support piracy, but many such units are still available online (although not through Amazon, which has banned them). As a result, Kodi's developer is looking at ways to attract legal content and official add-ons to the platform, which may include adding the dreaded Digital Rights Management (DRM) features to future builds. "Our platform has a lot of potential and we are looking into attracting more legal and official content providers. Additionally, we're looking into adding low-level DRM that would at least make it more feasible to gain trust from certain



providers," Kodi's project lead Martijn Kaijser told the TorrentFreak news site (bit.ly/koditf422).

Kodi acknowledged its reputation as a tool for streaming illegal content (albeit through unofficial third-party add-ons) with an April Fool's joke in which its homepage was replaced by a message announcing its closure for copyright infringement.

Oh, how we laughed!



CUSTOMISE HOW KODI LOOKS

Try different Kodi skins

Kodi's current default skin, Estuary - and its touch-enabled variant Estouchy - looks great, but there are plenty of alternatives to explore and install if you want to personalise the software. To find other skins you might like, click the cog icon on the Home screen, then click 'Interface settings'. Hover over Skin on the left, then click Skin on the right. Click the 'Get more' link to see a list of



Personalise Kodi's interface by applying a different skin

available skins. Find one that you like and click it to install it. Kodi will ask you if you want to keep this change and you can answer Yes or No. If you don't provide an answer within a few seconds. Kodi will revert to the default skin.

See our boxout on the opposite page for a selection of the best skins.

Customise your Kodi skins

You can tweak the various elements of a Kodi skin. Click the cog icon on the Home screen, then click 'Interface settings'. On the left, hover over Skin and click Configure Skin.

You can make changes to a skin's general behaviour, such as whether to use slide animations and autoscrolling, and toggle touch mode on or off. Clicking 'Main menu items' lets you choose which categories to show (Movies, TV shows, Music, Pictures and so on) and edit them. For the latter option, you'll need to download the Library Node Editor - you're prompted to do this when you click an Edit link.

The Artwork menu lets you add fan



Hack Kodi skins to make them look exactly how you want

art as a background, choose a background pattern and apply other personal touches to Kodi.

Try different Kodi builds

There are special builds of Kodi that offer a different look and come with the best third-party add-ons pre-installed. These are layered on top of the main software, but it's important to note that they aren't officially supported, so it may be better to download a clean version of Kodi and go from there. Some builds may let you view copyrighted material, so check before you stream

5 BEST KODI BUILDS

Apollo

repo.ares-project.com/magic

Simply put, Apollo is one of the best builds you can get for Kodi right now. It uses a customised skin, so it looks great, but dig deeper and you'll find all the add-ons you could want - and a lot more. Despite its full-featured nature, Apollo is very stable so whether you're on a low-powered laptop or an Amazon Fire TV Stick, you shouldn't experience many crashes. During installation, you'll be asked for a PIN: follow the on-screen instructions to get this and then choose Apollo AiOne (Krypton).



The Beast thebeast1.com/repo Unlike other builds, The Beast doesn't focus on one particular area of content; instead, it gives you a complete choice of everything you



might want to watch. This makes it king of all content and is handy if you want to see everything that Kodi can offer without the hassle of having to find add-ons individually. You need to create a user account and follow the on-screen instructions to make it work.

SpinzTV Premium Lite 3 spinztvrepo.com

SpinzTV Premium Lite is a lightweight build, so it's a good choice for lowpower systems such as a Fire TV Stick.



Its simple but sophisticated skin is exceptionally easy to navigate and works smoothly on all systems.

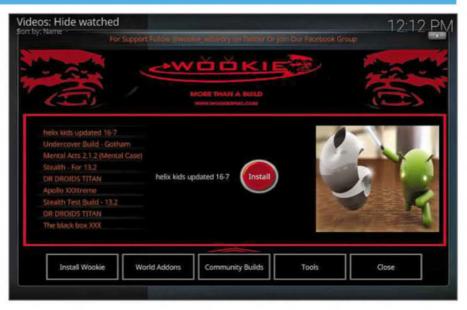
| Duggz Build duggzbuilds.uk/repo

Duggz Build is one of the oldest builds available, but it's still one of the best and is frequently updated to keep it fresh. It has all the main add-ons you could want and makes finding content incredibly easy.

Z JayHawk jayhawkmedia.org/kodi

JayHawk is a new build for 2017 that looks set to be one of the best. It's very lightweight, so it should run well on practically every device from a Raspberry Pi 3 to a Fire TV Stick and beyond. It's also packed with content, with loads of add-ons pre-installed and ready to use.





Wookie Wizard makes it easy to find and install Kodi builds

GET THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO KODI

Our new Kodi guide is packed with 100 pages of advice, reviews and tips to help you watch anywhere!

DISCOVER HOW TO:

- · Install Kodi on any device
- Access Kodi from your phone
- better
- Stay anonymous while using Kodi
- Add subtitles to any video you watch
- Install the best TV-streaming add-ons

BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON AT bit.ly/kodicomplete

to stay on the right side of the law.

The easiest way to try a build is through Wookie Wizard, which presents you with a huge list of community builds you can install. To get Wookie Wizard, click the cog icon on the Home screen and open 'File manager'. Select 'Add source' and click None. Type: http:// wiz.wookiespmc.com, call it Wookie and click OK. Go back to the Home screen, click 'Add-ons', click the box icon and select 'Install from zip file'. Open Wookie and click 'Click me succumb to The Wookie.zip'.

Install a Kodi build manually

To install a Kodi build from elsewhere on the web, first go to the Settings menu and select File Manager, then select 'Add source' and '<none>'. Enter the build's web address and click OK. then enter a name for the media source and click OK. To install most Kodi builds. you need to tell Kodi to allow installations from Unknown sources, as explained in the first tip in this feature.

You're now ready to install your chosen build. Go back to the Home screen and select Add-ons. In this menu, select the Package install icon (the box icon at the top left) and select 'Install from Zip file'. Choose the source you named earlier and select the ZIP file you want. Go back to the Home screen and you'll see a message telling you that your add-on has installed. Next, go to 'Add-ons', 'My add-ons' and select 'Program add-ons'. Select the wizard and follow the instructions to complete the installation.

See our boxout on the left for our pick of the best Kodi builds.

5 BEST SKINS FOR KODI

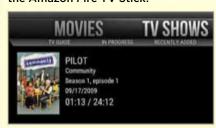


Confluence

Confluence was the default skin for Kodi until the most recent version, and with good reason. It's clear, intuitive and stylish, and gives the software a more 'classic' feel than other more creative skins.

Aeon Nox

If you like Confluence, then you'll probably like Aeon Nox. It's simple and stylish, and doesn't put too much of a burden on your system, so it will run smoothly on even the smallest devices, such as the Amazon Fire TV Stick.



Xperience1080 Xperience1080 offers a better user experience than standard Kodi. It's panel-based design makes it very easy to use, and it will look familiar if you already own an Xbox One.

Metropolis

Metropolis blends retro and futuristic designs, and if you're after a skin that makes a statement, this is the one we'd recommend. The art-deco style icons on the Settings screen are absolutely beautiful.



Titan

Titan is another skin that's designed to be simple and effective, and makes it easy for you to find the next film or TV show to watch. Its unfussy user interface makes it ideal for smaller devices.



UNLOCK HIDDEN KODI TOOLS

Turn on subtitles in Kodi

Subtitles aren't only useful for foreignlanguage films, they can also come in handy if you're a little hard of hearing or you're watching something featuring 'mumbling' actors. Some add-ons already include support for subtitles, but you can also install dedicated ones. Go to the Home screen and click Add-ons, then click the box icon at the top left and select 'Install from repository'. Click Subtitles. If you've installed other third-party repositories, click 'All repositories' first. Choose Subscene.com or OpenSubtitles.org (you'll need to create an account for the latter), click Install and go back to the Home screen. Click the cog icon and select 'Player settings', then click the cog icon at the bottom to switch to Advanced or Expert mode, and select your desired language.



Turn on subtitles in Kodi to ensure that vou never miss a word



Make sure that Kodi is showing the correct date and time on Android

You can then customise how you want subtitles to appear.

Set the time and date

If you're running Kodi on an Android box, you should be aware that Kodi displays its own date and time, which might be different from Android's. To make sure Kodi's time is correct, click the Gear icon and go to 'Interface settings'. Select Regional, change the Settings level to Expert by clicking the cog icon at the bottom, and make sure the region is correct. To change the date and time in Android, exit Kodi and go to Settings, Preferences, 'Date and Time'.

Try the next version of Kodi

Kodi is continually being developed and improved, and new early betas and release candidates are launched regularly. You can keep up with what's new and up and coming by checking the Kodi blog (kodi.tv/blog) and looking at the Pre-Release Page (bit.ly/kodipr422).

There are also semi-stable monthly builds pushed out at the early development stage which appear (or may appear - the page hasn't been updated in a while) at bit.ly/ kodishots422. If you like living dangerously, you can install Nightly builds, which are experimental and often

5 BEST NEW KODI ADD-ONS

Area 51

This add-on lets you watch live broadcasts and enjoy movies, TV shows, music videos and more. To install it, click the cog icon on the Home screen and open 'File manager'. Select 'Add source' and click None. Type http:// area51addon.pe.hu, call it Area51 and click OK. Go back to the Home screen, click 'Add-ons', click the box icon and select 'Install from zip file'. Open Area51 and click 'repository .Area.51-x-x-x.zip'. Go back to the Home screen and hover over Add-



ons, then click 'Install from repository' at the top. Select Area 51 Repo, go into 'Video add-ons', select Area 51 and click Install.

Jango

This is based on Jango (www.jango .com), a music-streaming service similar to Spotify that lets you listen to music from all your favourite artists. To install it, you'll need to use Indigo (follow the steps in the Mini Workshop on page 44). Once it's up and running, you can browse music, and search for artists and songs.



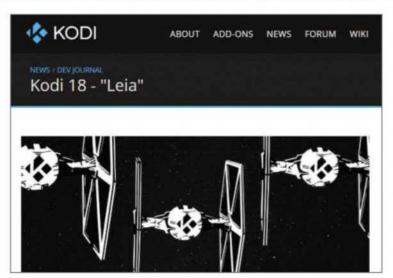


The Movie Mania add-on lets you watch a mixture of old and publicdomain movies, including cult favourites and westerns, as well as classic TV and cartoons. To install it, you'll also need to use Indigo. Once it's running, you'll have a huge amount of content to browse and watch.

Evolve

This add-on lets you view all sorts of content, including sports, live TV, movies and TV shows. To install it, click the cog icon on the Home screen and

The next version of Kodi is named Leia as a tribute to Carrie Fisher who played the iconic Star Wars character



very buggy. You'll find these at bit.ly/kodinight422, although - again - the page hasn't been updated in a while.

The next big version of the media software will be Kodi 18, named Leia in honour of the late Carrie Fisher (and to commemorate the 40th anniversary of *Star Wars*). Although there's nothing to install yet, a placeholder changelog that lists all the planned future features can be found at bit.ly/leia422.

Use multiple profiles in Kodi

If you share your home and Kodi is being used by different members of the household, it makes sense to create

separate profiles for each user so you don't interfere with each other's viewing. This is easy to do, and you can customise each profile – changing its look and choosing which add-ons to allow –



Set up separate user profiles to keep your Kodi viewing private

as you see fit. We explained how to do this in a Workshop in Issue 421 (bit.ly/ webuser421)

Set up a screensaver

Chromecast and Amazon Fire TV both offer a screensaver feature that kicks in after a period of inactivity, then cycles through a collection of attractive images. You can do something similar with Kodi. Click the gear icon on the Home screen and click 'Interface settings'. Hover over Screensaver (it's worth switching to Expert mode to unlock some additional options) and click 'Screensaver mode'. This displays a list of available choices, including the default: Dim. Click the 'Get more' button on the right to browse additional screensavers

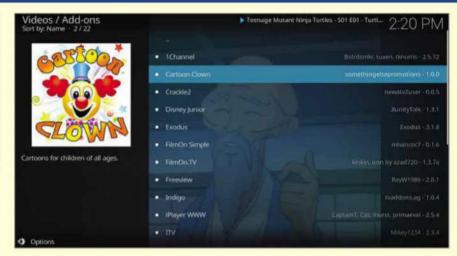
The Screensaver menu lets you access the settings, preview the screensaver, adjust the length of time to wait before the screensaver kicks in (three minutes, by default) and more.



Activate Kodi's screensaver to kick in when you're not streaming



open 'File manager'. Select 'Add source' and click None. Type http://matsbuilds.uk/goliath, call it Goliath and click OK. Go back to the Home screen, click 'Add-ons', click the box icon and select 'Install from zip file'. Open Goliath and click 'repository. Goliath-x-x-x.zip". Go back to the Home screen and hover over Add-ons, then click 'Install from repository' at the top. Select 'Goliaths Unofficial Add-ons repository', go into 'Video add-ons', select Evolve and click Install.



Cartoon Clown

If you have children or grandchildren, this Kodi add-on will keep them entertained with a plentiful selection of animated shows. It offers more than 100 cartoon playlists, with content including such favourites as

Tom and Jerry and Scooby Doo.

To install it, click Videos on the
Home screen, then 'Video add-ons'.
Click Options in the bottom-left
corner and choose 'Get more'.
Finally, click Cartoon Clown and
select Install.

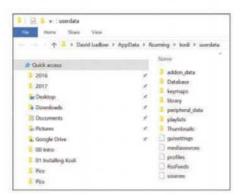
FIX COMMON KODI PROBLEMS

Put an end to Kodi buffering

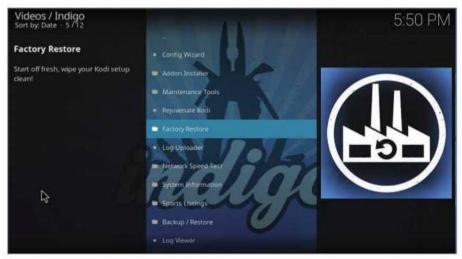
If you have a poor internet connection or your network is congested, then Kodi's constant buffering could spoil your viewing enjoyment. You really need download speeds in excess of 10Mbps to stream HD content, so check your connection using Speedtest.net. There are some obvious steps you can take to improve your streaming speed, such as positioning your router near your Kodi device, and ensuring that you and other people on your network aren't currently downloading large files or streaming other content.

If that doesn't help, open Notepad in Windows and type this (exactly) into it:

- <advancedsettings>
- <network>
- <buffermode> 1 </buffermode>
- <readbufferfactor> 1.5
- </readbufferfactor>
- <cachemembuffersize> 104857600



Save the XML file containing the buffering fix to Kodi's userdata folder



Perform a factory restore to get Kodi running good as new

- </cachemembuffersize>
- </network>
- </advancedsettings>

Save the file as 'advanced settings .xml' and copy it into Kodi's userdata folder. The location will vary depending on the operating system you're using. For Windows, open File Explorer, type %APPDATA%\kodi\userdata into the address bar and press Enter. On Android, the folder can be found at:

Android/data/org.xbmc.kodi/files/.kodi/userdata

On Linux/Raspberry Pi, it's in: ~/.kodi/userdata.

Perform a factory reset

If you're experiencing major problems with Kodi, such as freezes and crashes,

try resetting it back to its default configuration and starting afresh. You could simply uninstall Kodi and then reinstall it, but there's another way. The Indigo add-on gives you the option to Rejuvenate Kodi (which wipes your current setup and installs the config wizard) or perform a Factory Restore (which wipes your current setup and takes you back to the beginning).

To install Indigo, follow the steps in our Mini Workshop below. When that's done, go back to the Home screen, select Add-ons and open Indigo. You'll now be able to select the reset option you require.

Fix the black-screen problem

Many Kodi users have reported problems with a black screen, notably



MINI WORKSHOP | Install Indigo to get new add-ons



Finding and installing new add-ons isn't always as straightforward as it might be. The Indigo installer, which replaces the old Fusion one, makes life much easier. To install it, click the Gear button, then click 'File manager'. Double-click 'Add source', then click <None> under the field 'Enter the paths or browse for the media locations'.



Type http://fusion.tvaddons
.ag 1 and click OK. In the 'Enter a
name for this media source' box, type
fusion 2 and click OK. 5 Go back to
the Home Screen and click the Add-ons
tab. Click the Gear icon, select Add-ons
and make sure 'Unknown sources' is
enabled.



Go back to the Add-ons screen and select the box button in the top-left corner. Select 'Install from zip file', then click 'fusion' and 'begin-here'. Click 'plugin.program .indigo-x.x.x.zip' 1 to install it. Go back to the Home screen, select the Add-ons tab and select Indigo to open it, then launch Indigo's 'Add-on installer'.

Force add-ons to update so you get their latest versions

when upgrading Kodi 16 to the latest version. The trick to preventing this from happening in the first place is to ensure you have the default Confluence skin enabled in Kodi 16 before upgrading.

If you're seeing the problem after upgrading, go into the database folder and delete the Addons.db file, then restart Kodi. The exact location of the database will vary depending on the operating system you're using. For Windows, open File Explorer and type %APPDATA%\kodi\userdata\ Database. In Android, it's at:

Android/data/org.kodi/files/.kodi/ userdata/Database.

You will need an app such as ES File Explorer (bit.ly/esfe422) to navigate to it (also, make sure you can see hidden folders).

Force Kodi add-ons to update

Kodi either updates installed add-ons when you restart the software, or just from time to time. If you know a new version of a favourite add-on has been released, but it hasn't yet shown up in Kodi, try checking for updates. Click Add-ons from the Home screen, select 'Available updates' and click the 'Update all' link to refresh every installed add-on.

You can configure add-on updates by clicking the cog icon on the Home

KODI KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Save yourself a lot of clicking by using your keyboard to control Kodi's main functions. Here are the most useful shortcuts

KEY	MAIN INTERFACE	VIDEO PLAYBACK		
P	Play	Play		
F	Fast forward	Fast forward		
R	Rewind	Rewind		
x	Stop	Stop		
Space	Pause/Play	Pause/Play		
1	Display Info	Display Info		
М	Open the Menu (sidebar menu in the default skin)	Player controls		
Q	Queue			
S	Open the Shutdown menu	Open the Shutdown menu		
Т		Toggle subtitles on and off		
Ctrl+T		Change the position of subtitles		
U	Move item up (in the Playlist editor & Favorites window)			
Enter/Return	Select	Show player controls		
Backspace	Go back	Go back		
Esc	Previous menu or Home screen	Exit full screen		
CTRL+END	Exit Kodi (Only on Home Screen)			
DEL	Delete file (if enabled in settings)	Remove from playlist (Playlist editor only)		
Home	Jump to the top of the menu			
[numbers] then Enter		Jump to that time in playback (for example, 1+2+3+4+Enter will jump to 12 minutes and 34 seconds.)		
Shift+LETTER	Jump to that letter in a list			

screen and clicking 'System settings'. Hover over Add-ons and make sure Updates is set to 'Install updates automatically'.

To force an update for a specific

installed add-on, open 'System settings', hover over Add-ons and click Running. You'll be presented with a list of add-ons. Select the one you're interested in and click Update.

NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 17 May 2017

We reveal the finest free content you can get from the web that isn't software or apps



OBROWSE ANONYMOUSLY

Best new tools to conceal what you're doing online

OUSE YOUR PC HANDS-FREE Control programs and

websites using your voice

OSHUT DOWN SMOOTHLY

Stop Windows hanging when you power down

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Best free apps for VIDEO CALLS

Google Duo now supports voice calls, but is it enough to beat video-calling colossus, Skype? Jane Hoskyn compares six free tools for chatting face-toface from afar



Google Duo | duo.google.com | ★★★★★

FEATURES **** PERFORMANCE **** EASE OF USE ****

What we liked:

WebUser GOLD AWARD

Google Duo's launch last summer felt like a direct response to everything people hate about Skype. First, there's no account to set up. Once you've

installed Duo, you won't even have to log into your Google account to use it. Simply tap 'New call', then tap one of your phone's contacts to call them or to invite them to install Duo. It takes seconds.

You can now switch from Video (default) to Audio with one extra tap. This new voice-only option is ideal for those of us who miss being able to phone someone without

having to comb our hair first. Duo also lets you flip to the back camera during a call, giving your caller a view of the room instead of up your nose. For extra privacy, all calls are protected by end-to-end encryption.

Indeed, all Duo's

features seem designed to put you at your ease and make your calls smoother. For example, you get a video preview of the person calling you – a bit like a spyhole in your front door – and



mobile data means you always get the best possible connection.

When we first reviewed Due for Resi

When we first reviewed Duo for Best Free Apps last summer, call quality was its weak spot, but it now offers the best video and audio of all six tools in our test. However, you can set it to limit data usage if you want to avoid eating into your allowance – another thoughtful setting that Skype lacks.

How it can be improved:

If your friends and relatives don't have Duo installed on their phones, you'll have to go through the rigmarole of inviting them first. And you can't use Duo on tablets and PCs because it's currently phone-only. There's also a dearth of advanced features such as group chat, screen sharing, file sharing and the ability to record a video message if your caller doesn't answer.

OUR VERDICT

Google Duo does less than most of the other tools in this feature, but it does it better. If you're happy to use your smartphone to make calls (surely not a crazy idea), this lightweight app is by far the best tool for the job.

Skype | www.skype.com | ★★★★☆

FEATURES **** PERFORMANCE **** EASE OF USE ***

What we liked:

Skype is so widely used it's now a verb - like Hoover and Google - which

is a big point in its favour because your friends and family probably already have it installed on their PCs, phones, tablets and smart TVs. And if the person you're trying to contact doesn't have

Skype, you can use it to call their landline instead. This option isn't free (it costs from 1.8p per minute, bit.ly/ skypeland422), but it makes Skype the most versatile tool we tested.

To say it's packed with features is an undersell. It lets you send photos, files, contacts and emoticons during calls; translate text; and share your screen in real time. If the person you're calling is out, you can leave video, voice and text messages, or find an AI 'Skype Bot' to talk to instead.



How it can be improved:

Skype's PC program starts testing your patience from the off, by bundling the Bing toolbar in its installer. Then it guzzles space and memory and is a right royal pain to log into. New 'Skype for Web' is simpler, but you have to install an extension and plugin, then give it eye-watering access to your internet activity. This might be worth it if Skype had fantastic call quality but while quality

on a PC is generally good, it falls short of Duo when used on the same network and devices.

OUR VERDICT

More is not always better, and Skype is now bloated. Duo's simplicity demonstrates that Skype's login hassles are unnecessary. But it's convenient because everyone's got it - which is why we keep using it.

BEST OF THE REST

Facebook Messenger

www.messenger.com

Messenger is now the only way to send messages in Facebook, so it's even more universally installed than Skype. Just find the person you want to contact in Messenger, then tap the video or audio



icon to call them for free. You can send texts, photos, GIFs and some truly awful 'stickers' during the call. Messenger devours battery and data, so stick to using it on Wi-Fi - and have your charger handy.

ooVoo

www.oovoo.com

ooVoo's unique selling point is support for group video calls to up to 12 contacts at once, each in a separate window. It's useful on special occasions if friends and relatives can't be together. On the downside, it



doesn't encrypt calls, unlike the other apps we've mentioned, and there are intrusive ads unless you stump up for ooVoo Premium (from 99p for Android, iOS and PC).

FaceTime

bit.lv/facetime422

When Duo launched last summer,

it was hailed as a more widely supported counterpart to this iOS-only app, and they remain very similar. FaceTime's Call Waiting feature lets you put people on hold, but otherwise there are no fancy frills. All the focus is on



an efficient interface and great quality audio and video calls, which are - like Duo - free via Wi-Fi.

Viber | www.viber.com | ★★★★☆

FEATURES **** PERFORMANCE *** EASE OF USE ****

What we liked:

WebUser BRONZE AWARD

Viber is a feature-rich compromise between Duo's easy setup and Skype's

versatility, with a hefty dash of WhatsApp. Like our other tools,

Viber's basic function is to let you make free internetbased video and audio calls to other Viber users. It doubles as a free

text-messaging tool that supports photo sharing, self-destructing messages and recording video. Setup is very quick, and video quality was good when we called a Viber-using friend, although our phone felt very hot afterwards! There's also a Viber Out feature for making paid-for calls to landlines.

All these features work in Viber's free PC program as well as on Android and iOS. If you download more than one, you can connect them securely and

seamlessly using QR codes.

How it can be improved:

The audio during our call was rather muddy, but what pushed Viber into third place was its headache-inducing messiness and full-screen ads. It's like Skype and WhatsApp pasted on top of each other, then wrapped in banner ads. Our other main criticism is the same as with Duo:

not enough people use it, so you have to keep tapping Invite. It's an annoyance that Skype left behind years ago.

......

OUR VERDICT

Viber tries to be all communication apps in one. If you have a generous attention span and a tolerance for purple, you may love it. But it left us needing a lie down.

What's secretly killing your PC?

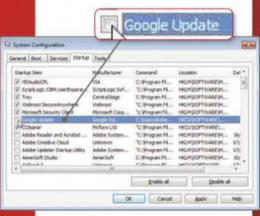
It's not only malware that slows your PC, but resource hogs that run in the background. Robert Irvine reveals how to stop the seven worst offenders

Greedy Google

When you check what's running in the background on your PC, you'll inevitably find at least one Google process. Even if you don't use Chrome (see 'Brazen browsers', right), tools such as Google Updater, Google Drive and Music Manager furtively drain your resources, even when you're not - and have no intention of - using them.

How to stop it:

If you terminate a Google process through the Windows Task Manager (Ctrl+Shift+Esc), it will simply reactivate itself the next time you start your PC. This is because Google presumptuously adds its tools to your startup list, so they secretly leech speed from the moment you turn on your PC. To stop this happening, open the Start menu, type msconfig and press Enter. When the System Configuration Utility opens, click Startup and deselect any unwanted Google entries, then click OK or Apply to confirm. You'll still be able to launch these tools when you want to use them, but they won't be constantly running in the background.



Prevent unwanted Google tools from running when Windows starts

Brazen browsers

Your browser is likely to be the most resource-hungry program on your computer and when your PC starts running low on memory, your browser is almost certainly to blame. This is especially true of Chrome, which uses a separate background process for every tab, plugin and extension. Annoyingly, the Windows Task Manager doesn't tell you which Chrome process relates to which element, so you can't simply close the greediest one.

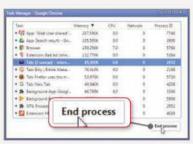
Firefox is more efficient than it used to be but the longer you leave it running. the more memory it guzzles, which can eventually crash the browser and even your whole computer.

How to stop it:

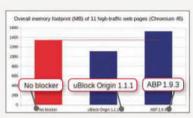
The best way to discover and disable Chrome's biggest memory hogs is via its own Task Manager, which you can open by pressing Shift+Esc. Click the Memory tab to sort the 'tasks' by the amount of memory they're using, then select an entry and choose 'End process' to close it.

You can conserve memory in Chrome by using The Great Suspender (bit.ly/ suspend422) to suspend idle tabs and reload them later. Alternatively, there's OneTab (www.one-tab.com) for Chrome and Firefox, which frees up memory by converting your open tabs to a single list.

You should also disable or remove any add-ons that you no longer need - and may even have forgotten are running. Ad blockers are notorious resource hogs, so consider switching to the more lightweight uBlock Origin (bit.ly/ublock422).



Find out which tasks are slowing down Chrome and end them



uBlock Origin is much lighter on resources than rival ad blockers

3Dodgy driversDrivers allow your PC to control the hardware that's installed in or attached to it, but outdated and missing drivers can cause performance problems and significantly slow down your system.

How to stop it:

Although you can usually download the latest versions of drivers from the hardware manufacturer's website,



Driver Booster scans your hard drive for old, problematic drivers

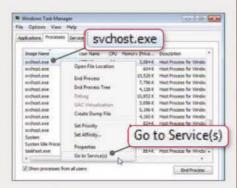
or by using a specific tool (graphics cards usually come with a control panel for this purpose), a simpler solution is to use Driver Booster (bit.ly/booster422). This free program scans your system for old and absent drivers, and lets you update them all in one go. You can easily roll back any changes it makes if you experience any problems.

Suspicious svchosts

It's common to see at least one 'svchost.exe' entry in the Task Manager. This is the generic name for the background processes used by many Windows services, and it's usually nothing to worry about (if you can't see any, select 'Show processes from all users'). However, there's also a risk that malware could be disguising itself as one of these svchosts, and threatening the safety and stability of your PC - especially if it's using excessive memory.

How to stop it:

To find out exactly what an svchost exe relates to, right-click it and choose 'Go to Service(s)'. On the Services tab, the relevant service will be highlighted with an accompanying description - for example, Windows Firewall, Task Scheduler or Windows Update. You can terminate it by right-clicking it and choosing Stop Service, but only do this if you're absolutely certain what it does -Google it, if not. To disable the service permanently, click the



Ensure that svchost.exe is a genuine Windows system process

Services button, right-click the troublesome entry and choose Properties. Select Disabled from the drop-down menu and click OK.

To check if malware could be the cause, right-click the suspicious sychost.exe and choose Open File Location. A genuine sychost should be located in the C:\Windows\system32 folder; if not, your system may be infected and you should run a full scan using your security software.

Jillions of junk files

The temporary files left over by programs and everyday PC use are harmless in isolation, but en masse they can have a detrimental effect on the speed of your system. This junk can consume gigabytes of hard-drive space and pointlessly prolong Windows scans and indexing, yet despite its 'temporary' nature, it won't just delete itself.



Stop junk files slowing your PC by using CCleaner to delete them

How to stop it:

CCleaner (www.piriform.com/ccleaner) and Windows' own Disk Cleanup tool can be used to delete the junk from your PC and empty the oft-forgotten Recycle Bin, without touching your personal files. CCleaner also offers a Registry cleaner, startup manager and duplicate finder for further system maintenance, but it's worth tweaking its cleaning settings to ensure it doesn't remove too much.

Wicked Windows DUpdate

We mentioned Windows Update in the previous tip, but it's problematic enough to deserve its own entry. Many users experience system slowdown following an update, although they may not identify the cause at the time. Updates can also cause hardware and software to stop functioning properly, sometimes resulting in crashes. Because updates are installed automatically, it's difficult to predict and prevent the damage they cause but, of course, they solve problems, too.

How to stop it:

You can undo recent updates by opening the Control Panel and going to Programs, 'View installed updates'. Sort the list by clicking the Installed On column, then right-click an update and choose Uninstall. If you're not sure what the update relates to, or you want to reinstall it manually, search for its Knowledgebase Number - for example, KB2952664 - at the Microsoft Download Center (bit.ly/ download422). Alternatively, you could reverse problematic updates by performing a System Restore.

Windows Update Block

To gain more control over your updates, install Windows Update Blocker (bit.ly/

blocker422), which lets

This tool is designed to turn off-on Automatic Windo Updates easily and prevent uncontrolled change Windows Update Service Service Status Enable Service Obsable Service Protect Service Setting Apply Now

Control Windows updates to stop them messing up your PC

you turn them off and on at the click of a button.

7Aggravating antivirus

Malware infection is one of the most common causes of PC slowdown, so it's essential to have antivirus software installed on your computer. However, some security tools can actually exacerbate performance problems rather than fix them. This is particularly true on older computers, which might not have the specifications to cope with the demands of full-featured anti-malware programs. Having more than one security tool installed also places a significant strain on system resources.

How to stop it:

Switching to another antivirus program is the obvious way to fix this problem. For reference, AV-Test (bit.ly/ avtest422) recently tested the "average influence on computer speed" of all the main security products, on both standard and high-end PCs, and on different versions of Windows. The antivirus programs rated top for performance across the board were Kaspersky Internet Security (bit.ly/ kaspersky2017), Norton Security (uk.norton.com) and Avira Antivirus Pro (www.avira.com), while notable

resource hogs included Comodo Anti-Malware and Panda Security.



Kaspersky scored best in AV-Test's antivirus performance tests



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3	8	EE: Broadband	£28.50 (£21.00 for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	unlimited	£252.00
4	Virgin media	Virgin: Broadband	£45.00 (£32.00 for 12 months)	12 months	100Mbps max speed	unlimited	£384.00

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

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

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- 1 Round-the-world solo yachtswoman
- Pale green variety of melon
- 3 Actor who played *Doctor Who* 1966-69
- 1982 Michael Jackson album
- Japanese city targeted by US atomic bomb on 6 August 1945
- Large seabird found mainly in the southern oceans
- Grand Canyon river
- 8 Female cartoon character from the Thirties (5,4)

1					
	2				
3					
	4				
5					
6					
7					
8					

COMPETITIONS

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Master Paint 3D in the Windows **10 Creators Update**

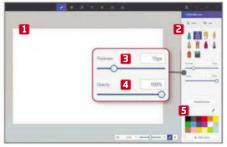
Paint 3D is a new creative art tool from Microsoft. Here's how to get started with it

Paint 3D: bit.ly/paint3d422 | @ 20 mins | Windows 10

aint 3D comes as part of the new Windows 10 Creators Update. Rather than replacing Microsoft's aging image-editing program Paint, it's an entirely separate app that you can launch directly from the Start menu or through Paint itself.

Paint 3D lets you be creative in every dimension - you can design and load

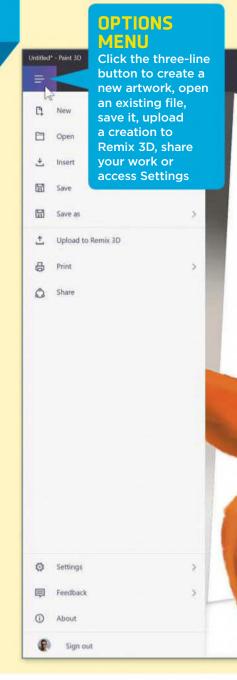
3D models, and manipulate them in the workspace. But if you're not interested in 3D creation, you can use the app to paint and draw 2D masterpieces. Paint 3D lets you do pretty much everything that you can in Paint, but with the benefit of a more modern interface and the ability to drop in 3D elements, such as objects, models and doodles.

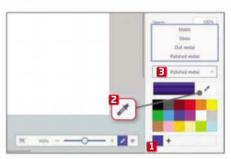


The canvas for your creations appears on the left, 11 with tools for drawing and painting on the right. 2 Select a tool to customise it. The options vary depending on the tool, and include adjusting the thickness 3 and opacity. 4 You can use the Fill tool 5 to set your artwork's colour range.

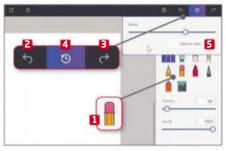


You can switch between colours by clicking any of the preset shades at the bottom. 1 To use a different variation, click the 'Add colour' button 2 and pick the one you want in the 'Select a new colour' window. You can enter the colour values 3 if you know them.

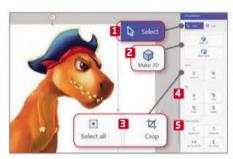




The currently selected colour is shown at the bottom. 11 You can use the eyedropper tool 2 to select a colour from the canvas - just hover over it and click. Paint 3D offers four preset material variations: Matte, Gloss, Dull Metal and Polished Metal. Use the drop-down menu to switch between them.

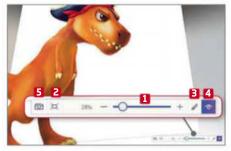


If you make a mistake when drawing, you can use the eraser tool 🚺 to correct it, or click the Undo 2 and Redo 🔁 buttons to move backwards and forwards through the stages. There's also a History tool 4 that lets you review your edits. You can export the creation process as a video. 5



🧲 The Select tool 💶 lets you select any part of your creation by clicking and dragging. You can make the selection 3D 2 (so you can manipulate it as if it was a 3D object on the canvas), select all or crop, **B** edit the piece **4** or rotate or flip it. 5





The slider at the bottom lets you zoom in and out. 🚺 You can reset the view 2 and switch between Edit 3 and View 4 in 3D modes. With the latter selected, you can manipulate your creation as if it was 3D by clicking and dragging around. You can take a screenshot **5** at any time.



That's not the only three-dimensional element to Paint 3D. Click the 3D objects tab 🗓 and you can add 3D shapes 2 or make 3D doodles. 3 You can also introduce (and manipulate) 3D models. 4 Click the 'Get more models' button 5 to browse and import new objects through Remix 3D.



Click the Stickers tab 11 to add Stickers to a 2D artwork or wrap them around a 3D model. 2 The Text tab Blets you add 2D or 3D text, and Effects 4 lets you change the background colour of the canvas window. Click the Canvas tab 5 to adjust the canvas size to fit your creation.



Unlock Google Maps' most useful new tools



Google Maps: bit.ly/maps422 | 🕒 10 mins | 👘 Android (varies with device), 💣 iOS 8+

o you find yourself arranging to meet friends at a specific time and place, only to be left waiting (or keeping them waiting!)? Google Maps' ingenious new 'Share location' tool lets you track each others' movements in real time so you know exactly where the other person is. There's no need to worry about privacy, either, because you can choose who you share your location with and for how long, and you can manually toggle location sharing on and off.

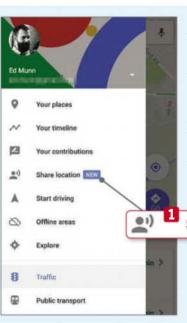
In this Workshop, we show you how to use this handy new feature along with other Google Maps tools for saving and sharing locations. For example, you can now use the app to share a restaurant, shop, park bench or even the place where you left your car, and use the new lists feature to share multiple recommendations at a time. You can even replace your guide book by saving an entire area offline. You'll never have to worry about losing your travel buddy again!



EXPERT TIP

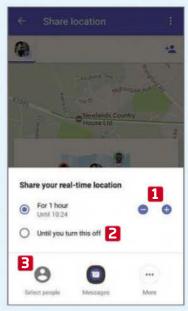
Edward Munn says

You can share any of your place lists with friends by tapping the three-dot button next to the list (from Your Places) and choosing 'Share list'. 'Sharing options' lets you choose whether your list is private, public or can only be seen by people who have the link.



To share your location with a friend, open the Google Maps app, then tap the main menu button and choose 'Share location'. A page loads saying 'Let friends know where you are'. Tap 'Get Started' and a pop-up will appear.

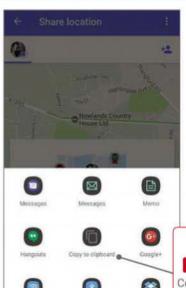
Share location NEW



You can choose to share your location for a specific amount of time (use the '-' and '+' buttons 1 to set this) or until you manually disable the feature. 2 Pick the most suitable option, then tap 'Select people' 1 to choose contacts to share your location with.

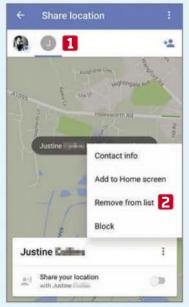


You can choose from your Frequent Contacts, scroll through the whole contacts list or use the search bar. 1 Google Maps displays whether it will alert the person you've shared your location with via email, 2 phone or notification.

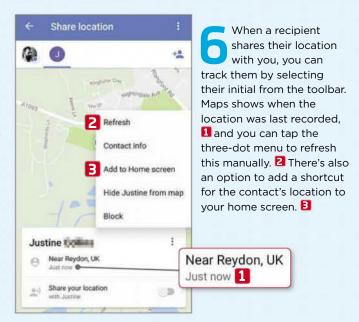


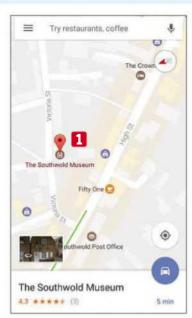
Select all the contacts you want to share your location with, then tap Share to proceed. Alternatively, tap Back, select More and choose 'Copy to clipboard' 1 to get a link that you can paste to any app to share your location with anyone.



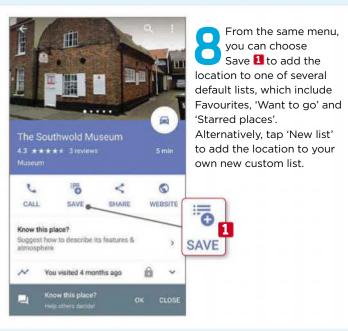


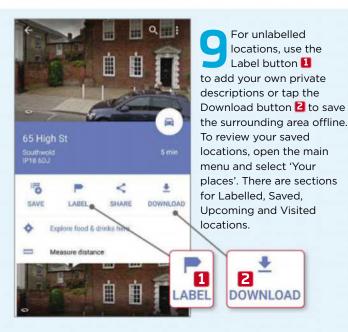
Once you've started sharing, you can tap the X next to the recipient's name to stop sharing at any time. To quickly enable sharing again, select their initial from the toolbar and turn on sharing. If you're unlikely to share with them again, tap the three-dot menu and choose 'Remove from list'.

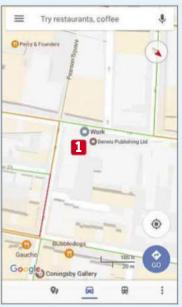




To share a location with someone, select its name on the map (or long-press an unlabelled location), then tap the red marker 1 and choose Share. Google Maps lets you choose which app to share with – for example, Messaging, Gmail or WhatsApp – or you can pick 'Copy to clipboard'.







You can see your saved locations on the map, 1 both in the Google Maps app and when logged into your Google account in your Desktop browser. Icons also appear on the map to display the whereabouts of contacts who are currently sharing their location with you.



Add new tools to File Explorer

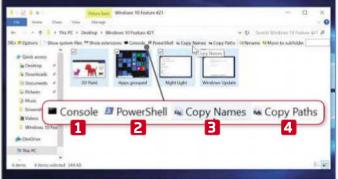
tExBar has just been updated to work in Windows 10, bringing advanced tools to File Explorer including one-click shortcuts to Command Prompt and Powershell. This handy free tool even lets you add your own options to

File Explorer and create keyboard hotkeys for them. It also works with Windows Explorer in previous versions of Windows. +

StExBar: bit.ly/stexbar422 | 🕒 10 mins | 🧱 Windows 10



Download and install StExBar, then close and reopen File Explorer. Click the View tab, select Options and click StExBar. The StEx toolbar displays buttons that let you show (and hide) system files 1 and file extensions 2 in File Explorer.



There are also shortcuts for opening a command-prompt window 1 and launching PowerShell. 2 To copy the names of multiple files, highlight them, then click the Copy Names tab. 2 Alternatively, click Copy Paths 4 if you want to copy the entire filepath of each file.



To move files to a new subfolder, select the files, then click 'Move to subfolder'.
A window appears where you enter a name for the folder. Click OK. If you'd prefer to just add a new subdirectory, you can do so by pressing Ctrl+Shift+N.



To batch-rename files, make your selection and click Rename. StExBar uses regular expressions for file renaming – click Help 1 to see examples of regular expressions. You can search Google for 'Regex' to learn more about this useful computing language.



If you'd prefer not to clutter File Explorer, you can hide StExBar's toolbar and perform its actions using keyboard hotkeys instead. To see the full list of commands, click Options. You can change or set a hotkey by double-clicking a command, 1 then entering a keyboard shortcut.



To add your own commands, click Add, then enter the necessary details. All StExBar actions, including your own commands, are also accessible from the right-click context menu 1 in File Explorer.



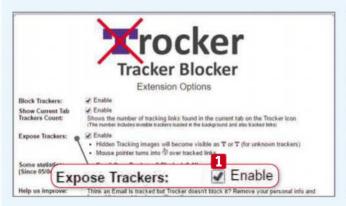
Stop email trackers invading your privacy

here are plenty of tools available that let people know when you've opened an email they've sent you, but there are also ways for you to prevent this from happening if you'd prefer them not to know. Trocker can

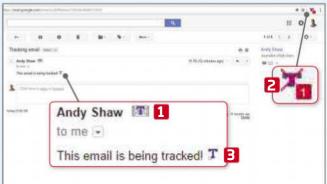
detect whether an email you've been sent is tracking this information, and will block the alert before it's sent to the email's sender.



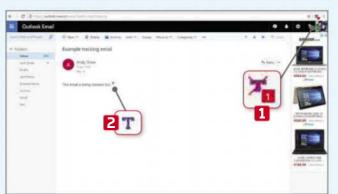
Trocker: bit.ly/troc422 | 🕒 10 mins | Gmail, Outlook.com, Yahoo Mail



Trocker will happily get on with the job of hiding trackable items but if you want to see what it's doing, click the add-on's toolbar button to open its settings. In the Expose Trackers section, tick the Enable box 1 (which is unticked by default).



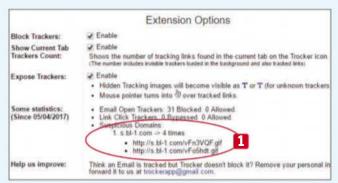
If you open an email that is trying to track you, Gmail will notify you with a 'T' in an envelope next to the sender's name. 🚺 The add-on's icon also displays the number of tracking elements there are in the current tab. 2 Known trackers are marked with a blue 'T'. 1



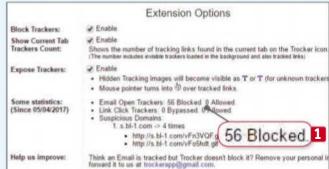
Detection in other webmail programs appears in a similar way, though Outlook.com, pictured here, doesn't have the envelope symbol next to the sender's name. You're still warned of trackers by the add-on's icon 🗓 and tracking images will be blocked and replaced by a blue 'T'. 2



If the email has a link that tracks you if you click it, Trocker adds a 'T' to the finger pointer that usually appears when you click a link. 11 It can also detect suspicious tracking images even if it doesn't specifically recognise them - these are marked with a purple 'T'. 2



Back in the settings screen, you can see the web addresses that the tools tracking you are referring back to. If you want to know more about them, type the main part of the address into a Google search box (not your browser's address bar).



The settings screen also shows statistics of how many trackers the add-on has discovered since you started using Trocker. 11 If you find a repeat offender, you may want to consider unsubscribing from their emails or using an email filter to delete their messages as they arrive.

Weekend Project

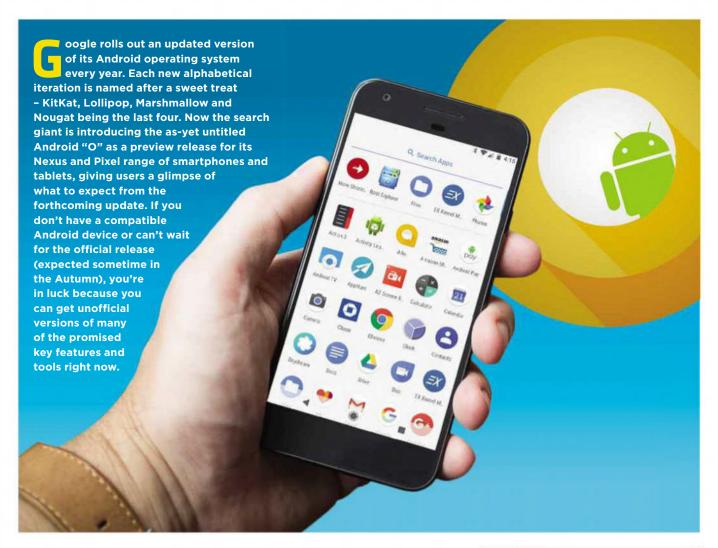
Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance





Get Android O tools now

Wayne Williams shows you how to get the benefits of the next version of Android before it's even released



GET THE NEW TOOLS

Unread notifications on apps

This is a feature that's been copied from Apple's iOS and is long overdue on Android. The number of unread messages or notifications are shown in a red bubble on app icons, so you can see at a glance if you have anything new in the app – such as unread emails or WhatsApp messages – waiting for your attention. You can get this feature on your version of Android by installing the

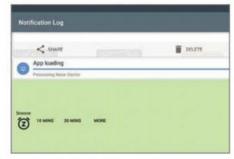
Notifyer Unread Count app (bit.ly/noti422). It's free but contains ads.

Picture in Picture mode

You might have this feature on your TV or an iPad. It's essentially a floating window that lets you continue to watch a video while using another app. If you have Android Nougat, you can kind of get this already by using the operating system's split-screen mode, but the Android O version is even better.



Notifyer shows apps that have unread messages and notifications



Notif Log lets you snooze notifications until vou're ready to tackle them

Better notification controls

Android O gives users the ability to snooze notifications. If you can't deal with something immediately but don't want to forget about it completely, you can send it away for now and have the notification return at a more convenient time. Notif Log (bit.ly/nl422) provides quick access to all the notifications you receive. It lets you dismiss or snooze new notifications, and even lets you pin important ones.

Lock-screen shortcuts

The new version of Android lets you add shortcuts for your favourite apps to the Lock screen so you can access them quickly. There are several apps that can recreate this feature for you, but our



Start is an attractive looking Lock screen replacement for Android

What will Android 0 be called?

Every time Google announces a new version of Android, the guessing game as to what it will be called begins. No one outside of Google knows for certain what the 'O' will stand for (and it's possible that no one inside Google knows yet, either) but we can make some guesses. These are our suggestions, and the odds we'd give them on being right.

Oreo Evens

Google has taken the brand name of a confectionary product on a previous occasion - KitKat - so it could easily do so again.

Orange 10-1

It's a simple choice - a sweet (natural)

......

treat beginning with O, so why not? Or it could be Orange Jello or something else along those lines.

Oatmeal Cookie 20-1

Google had Icecream Sandwich a while back, so Oatmeal Cookie is a definite possibility.

Chocolate Orange 100-1

This is unlikely because the order of the words is wrong.

Opal Fruits 1,000-1

Only really known to British sweeteaters over a certain age, Opal Fruits became Starburst in 1998, so we doubt the mouth-watering chew will be on Google's shortlist.

preferred option is Start (bit.ly/ startand422). It comes packed with tools and lets you customise your phone with interactive themes, live wallpapers and background images.

New and improved file manager

Android O comes with a much-improved, better-looking file manager that introduces some welcome additional features. However, this is one area where other apps actually do an even better job. Our recommended choice is Solid Explorer File Manager (bit.ly/sol422). It's not free, but will only set you back £1.49 and you get a 14-day free trial so you can try it before upgrading to the Premium version. We show you how to use it in our Mini Workshop, below.



If you need a good file explorer for Android, try Solid Explorer File Manager

Quick access to the app drawer

You don't need to swipe up from the navigation bar to access the app drawer in Android O because you can swipe up from anywhere on screen. This is a tiny change but a welcome one. Omni Swipe (bit.ly/om422) doesn't work in

WORKSHOP | Master Solid Explorer File Manager



Solid Explorer offers dual panes, to make it easy to copy files from one location to another. To navigate between folders, just tap the location in one of the panes. Tap and hold some files to select them. [1] You can cut or copy them to the clipboard, 2 or delete them. **3**

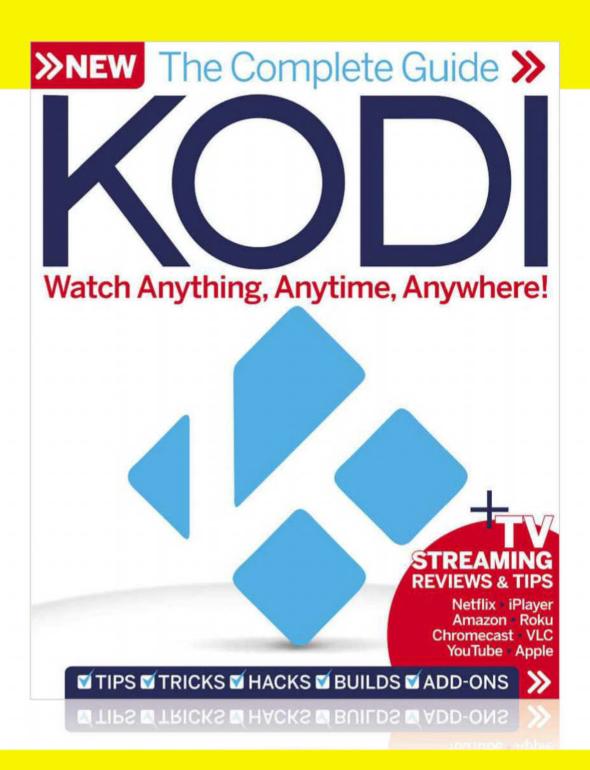


If you tap the Options menu (the three-dot icon in the top-right corner of a pane), more choices appear. [1] The menu lets you 'Select all', view Properties, 'View options', Filter the content, open 'Folder options' (to see hidden files, for example) and check on any currently running Operations.



Tap the three-line menu button 🗓 in the top-left corner of either pane and you'll be able to jump to common locations, such as Download 2 and Documents, **3** and collections including Photos, Music, Videos and Applications. 4 You can also view 'Hidden folders' and 'Recent files'. 5

ON SALE NOW!



Buy now from Amazon:

bit.ly/kodicomplete

(or search for 'Kodi guide' on Amazon)



Omni Swipe is a brilliant Android launcher but it's ruined by huge ads

quite the same way, but it's arguably better. Swipe in from the screen's bottom-left or bottom-right corner to open a customisable radial dial that provides instant access to your favourite apps.

There's a significant drawback in that Omni Swipe displays massive adverts, which rather spoil the experience. However, you can remove these by upgrading to the Prime version if you're willing to pay £3.89.

How to get the Android O Developer Preview

If you want the real thing - rather than a collection of tools that recreate Android O's new features - you can install an early Developer Preview. There are some major catches, however. Firstly, the preview is unlikely to be stable enough to run on your main device and, more significantly, it will factory reset your phone, wiping everything on it. If you decide to install it, make sure you back up everything

Perhaps the biggest catch, however, is that it will only run on certain Google devices: the Pixel, Pixel XL and Pixel C; and the Nexus 6P, Nexus 5X and Nexus Player. You also need to be running at least Android 7 (Nougat), although this should already be the case if you have one of these phones.

If you have a compatible device, have backed it up and are ready to take the risk, you'll need to download some files in preparation:

The Android O image

bit.ly/ao422

Make sure you download the correct image for your device

Android Fastboot and ADB

(Android Debug Bridge)

bit.ly/debug422 If you're using Windows, you'll also need to download the Google USB driver bit.ly/gusb422

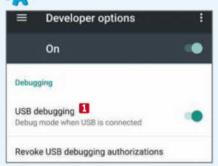
Before you start, install the Android Fastboot and ADB tools in Windows, and unzip the contents of the Android O image file to your hard drive.

We take you through the rest of the steps in our Mini Workshop, below.



You'll need to install the ADB Installer before you can get the Developer Preview on your Nexus or Pixel phone

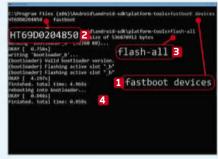
MINI WORKSHOP | How to install the Android O Developer Preview



First, you need to enable developer options on your device. Open Settings, go to About Phone and tap the build number seven times. Go back to Settings and you'll see a new Developer Options menu toward the bottom. Go into this menu and enable 'USB debugging' 🚹 and 'OEM unlock'.



Boot your phone into Fastboot mode by holding down the power and volume-down buttons. Connect the phone to your PC via a USB cable. In Windows, click Start, type cmd and press Enter. In the Command Prompt window, type: fastboot flashing unlock. 11 Confirm that you want to unlock the bootloader using the device's volume keys and power button.



🔁 In the command prompt, navigate to the folder containing the Android O files. If it's on the Desktop, for example, you might type cd Desktop\Android O. Type fastboot devices 11 and this should display the serial number of your phone. 2 Now type flash-all. 1 The Android O Developer Preview should install. 4

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Control Windows with your voice

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Web User Masterclass

Accessing your PC **remotely** is made easier with great advice from our experts

Access your files remotely from any computer

icrosoft's cloud-storage service OneDrive lets you access any file on your Windows 10 PC remotely from any computer - even an Apple Mac or Linux computer. You can use it to share not only the OneDrive folder on your PC but the entire hard drive. Right-click the OneDrive icon in the notification area on the right-hand side of the taskbar (it may be hidden in the pop-up tray), and select Settings. Select the General tab and tick the box 'Let me use OneDrive to fetch any of my files on this PC'. Then, on another computer, open a browser and visit the onedrive.com website. Select PCs on the left. All your computers are listed, and selecting one lets you access its files.



OneDrive can provide remote access to your entire hard drive

Find all your IP addresses

When setting up a remote-access service, you need to know your computer's IP address. It will have two of these – a private one that's used only on your home network and a public one that lets you access your computer from anywhere over the internet.

Press Windows+R, type cmd and press Enter, then type ipconfig in the command prompt window. This will bring up a lot of information and you'll need to scroll to find what you need. Look for IPv4 Address. This is the address your PC uses on your local network and is probably something like 192.168.x.x. Use this IP address if you need to connect to the computer from another device in your home.

Another useful piece of information here is the address of your router. It's called Default Gateway, and its address

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.

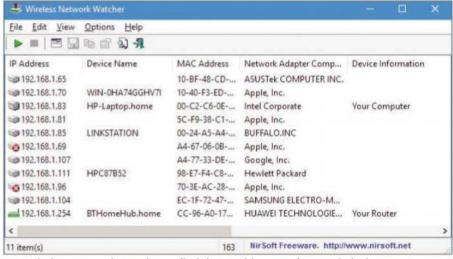
is similar to the PC's, usually with just one number different. Wireless Network Watcher (www.nirsoft.net) is a utility that lists the IP address of every computer, phone, tablet, printer, router and other devices on the network.

Finding out your public IP address is easy - just type "What is my ip" into Google. You'll need this if you want to access your computer or devices remotely over the internet. TrueIP (bit .ly/tru422) is a useful free tool that tells you your IP address and can alert you if

it changes – your ISP may change your IP address regularly.

Remotely access NAS drives

To add a network-attached storage (NAS) drive to a PC, open Explorer and select This PC on the left. Click 'Map network drive' on the Computer tab in the toolbar, then click Browse. Here, you'll see the IP address or name of the NAS drive. Expand it, then select the shared folder or drive and click OK.



Use Wireless Network Watcher to find the IP addresses of network devices

Now that the NAS is connected, you can access it over the internet from anywhere and from any computer using the OneDrive tool 'Let me use OneDrive to fetch any of my files on this PC'. Log into OneDrive and select PCs on the left, then click your PC, followed by the NAS drive. Your access is read-only, but that lets you stream music and movies, as well as view and download any file.

Temporarily disable the firewall

A firewall stops people gaining access to your computer from the internet or your local network. This is great if you're trying to keep out hackers and malware, but it may also keep you out when you're trying to use remote-access software and services.

If you're having trouble connecting to your computer remotely, turn off the firewall until remote access is working properly, then turn it back on. To do this in the Windows Firewall, open the Control Panel, select 'Small icons' view and click Windows Firewall. Click 'Turn Windows Firewall off or on'.

If you use a different security suite, look in the settings (usually available from the icon in the notification area) and switch off the firewall from there.

Disable the router's firewall

Your router also has a firewall of its own. This prevents hackers and malware on the internet accessing your home network but it might also block you when you try to access your computer remotely.

Some remote-access software can bypass the firewall, but if you're having trouble connecting to your computer or devices over the internet, turn it off. Doing this makes your network less secure, so don't disable it permanently.

Enter your router's IP address into a browser and log in. If you don't know the password, you may find it printed on a sticker on the router or in the manual. Different routers have different configuration programs, so we can't give precise instructions, but look for the security and firewall settings.



Temporarily disable the firewall to make remote access easier to set up

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Get a dynamic DNS

In theory, a computer can have the same IP address forever, but most ISPs provide customers with temporary addresses, and sooner or later the IP address will change. This can break any service or software that needs to know your IP address. The solution is a dynamic DNS service.

These web-based services let you create a URL, such as "myhomepc .ddns.net", which then forwards connections to your computer at whatever its current IP address is. A small tool on the PC updates the service automatically whenever the computer's IP address changes, so the URL always points to the correct place. You can use the URL with remote-access software and other services that need to be able to connect to your PC.

Some dynamic DNS services require a subscription but a few are free, such as No-IP (www.noip.com), FreeDNS (freedns.afraid.org) and Dynu (www .dynu.com). Sign up for an account, create a URL, then download and install the updater utility.

Port forwarding

Ships can't dock just anywhere - they use ports to deliver and pick up cargo. In a similar way, packets of information arrive at and depart from computers and routers through ports. These are part of the networking software and not to be confused with physical ports, such as USB and Ethernet. Each port has a specific purpose. When accessing your computer remotely, the data will be sent to a particular port on the router, and must then be forwarded to your computer.

Some remote-access services ask you to set up port-forwarding on the router. This can be confusing, and because every router is different, we can't give precise instructions. Fortunately. a website called Port Forward (portforward.com) provides instructions for many routers and popular programs used over the internet, particularly games.

Use a static IP address

The router assigns unique IP addresses to computers and other devices on your network. However, if you switch off your PC and switch it back on again, it may get a different IP address. This can cause problems with remote access because the PC is no longer at the expected address.

The solution is to give it a static IP address that doesn't change. Right-click the network icon in your notification area and click 'Open Network and Sharing Centre'. Click the active network link, then Properties. Double-click Internet Protocol Version 4. At the top, select 'Use the following IP address'.

Press Windows+R, type cmd and press Enter. Type ipconfig and press Enter again. Look for the IPv4 Address, Subnet Mask and Default Gateway. Enter those figures to make them permanent. The last number of the IPv4 address can be anything from 0 to 255, provided no other computer or device is using it.

IP addresses are assigned to network devices by a DHCP server in the router. Enter your router's IP address into a browser and log in. Find the DHCP server settings and see what IP addresses it assigns. The range is 0 to 255, but if it uses only part of this, say 64 to 255, then 0 to 63 can be used for static IP addresses.

With a fixed IP address, the computer is configured specifically for your network. If you take your computer elsewhere, such as a friend's house, you'll need to switch back to 'Obtain an IP address automatically'.



Make sure your PC's local IP address doesn't change by assigning it one manually

Ask the Expert

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



SECURITY

Trust free downloads

I tried to download PMPlayer 8 recommended in Issue 419 (bit .ly/issue419) - but when I clicked the download I was warned that it was a dodgy site. I aborted the download and await your comments before I try again. I have often bought Web User but this is the first time I tried to download recommended free software.

Fred Chamberlain, via email

We downloaded PMPlayer, scanned it with two antivirus tools and found no problems. There are several reasons why you might have received a warning about this program and it could affect other downloads.

The same software can often be downloaded from a number of different websites. Download sites are convenient but they sometimes add extra items to the download, such as advertising and adware. This may trigger warnings in your browser or your security software. It's best to find the developer's website and download software directly from there. Our link (www.pmplayer.com) goes to the



Your settings may cause apps from unknown sources to display a warning

developer's site but if you used Google to search for the program and found an alternative download site, it may have come bundled with adware.

Some security services use a list of known safe websites and software, and label anything else as potentially unsafe. This is to warn you of potential rather than actual problems. For example, Windows 10 Creators Update has settings that warn or even block all software downloaded outside of the Windows Store. This makes every non-Store program seem potentially dangerous, which is not true.

Security software always blocks malware but if it's not sure, it displays a warning and you can decide whether to proceed or not. If you know something is safe, ignore the warning; but if you're not sure, stay away.

GoogleDriveBlacklisted. The second location is under HKEY_LOCAL_ MACHINE\SOFTWARE\WOW6432Node. On my PC this includes CryptonShellExtHandler.IconOverlayExt, Dropbox and OneDrive, but none for Google Drive.

It's all very confusing and a number of forum members still have the same problem after applying the recommended steps. What is the definitive list of what the two ShellIconOverlayIdentifiers folders in the Registry should include?

Gareth Williams, via email

We looked at a PC on which Google Drive was working. At HKEY_ LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\ Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ Explorer\ShellIconOverlayIdentifiers, we found three keys: GoogleDriveBlacklisted containing the string value {81539FE6-33C7-4CE7-90C7-1C7B8F2F2D42}, GoogleDriveSynced containing {81539FE6-33C7-4CE7-90C7-1C7B8F2F2D40} and GoogleDriveSyncing containing {81539FE6-33C7-4CE7-90C7-1C7B8F2F2D41}. This is a different location to yours, and only appears once, so this may be the problem.

There is a workaround: when the mouse hovers over the Google Drive icon in the Taskbar, it displays a status message, such as 'Sync complete'. Right-click the icon to display a panel showing detailed information, such as the most recent files synced and the files waiting to be synced. You can instantly see the status.

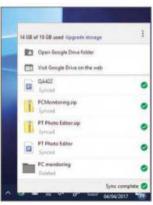
You can also right-click the Google Drive icon in the notification area, click the three-dot icon and then Preferences. Select the Advanced tab and make sure there's a tick next to 'Show file sync status icons and right click menu'.

Uninstalling and reinstalling may have failed to fix the problem because not all the Registry settings and files were removed. Use a dedicated uninstaller such as IObit Uninstaller Free (bit.ly/ uninst420), but make sure to opt out of any unwanted extras when you install).

ONLINE STORAGE

Bring back Google Drive icons

The files in my Google Drive are syncing with my PC but the sync status icons (the green ticks that appear next to synced files) are not showing in



Explorer. It used to work fine alongside Dropbox and OneDrive, but I think it stopped working after I installed Box.

Right-click Google Drive to see the sync status and storage used

I read that if you have too many cloudstorage tools, it can cause the sync icons to disappear. I've tried the following and re-booted after each step: Uninstalled Box; renumbered the references to GoogleDriveSync under ShellIconOverlayIdentifiers in the Registry (suggested in online solutions); uninstalled Google Drive then reinstalled. But I still don't have any green ticks.

There are two references to ShellIconOverlayIdentifiers in the Registry, one under HKEY_LOCAL_ MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft. This includes a number of references to Crypton Shell Ext Handler. I con Overlay Ext(0 to 9), Dropbox (01 to 10) and OneDrive (1 to 5), with only OGoogleDriveSynced, 1GoogleDriveSynced and

GENERAL PC

Revive a PC that won't boot

I downloaded a free system repair tool, called Windows Repair 3.9.25, which you recommended in Issue 418 (bit.ly/webuser418). After downloading it to my laptop, I received instructions that I should remove the battery and hold down the On button for about 20 seconds, refit the battery and reboot. It then stated the app itself would restart. After the reboot, I got a blue screen and the message: Page Fault In Non-Paged Area. It said it would do an automatic repair on restart, but didn't. I tried all the suggested advanced options to no avail.

My HP laptop is only 18 months old, but customer services don't want to know. I'd be grateful for any comments.

James Lingard, via email

Switching off, removing the battery and holding down the power button is the procedure recommended by HP (see bit.ly/hp422) to reset its laptops, so it's unlikely to be the cause of your problem. The boot error is probably due to corrupt files on the hard drive. Was there a problem with Windows that you were trying to fix with Windows Repair?

If you are still getting the login screen, click the power icon, hold down Shift and click Restart. When the PC restarts, select Troubleshoot on the menu and, on the next menu. 'Refresh your PC'. This reinstalls Windows without losing your files. The 'Reset your PC' option erases everything and should be used only as a last resort.

If the boot error occurs before the login screen, start the laptop and switch it off before it finishes booting. Do this three times and Windows displays a notice with Restart and 'Advanced options'. Click 'Advanced options', then Troubleshoot and click 'Reset this PC'.

Another option is to start the laptop and press F11 a few times or hold it down until Recovery Mode appears. Select Advanced, then Command prompt. Type chkdsk c: /r /x and, when it has



Press Shift+click Restart to fix problems in Windows with its Troubleshoot tools

finished, type sfc /scannow.

If none of this works, use another PC to download Windows and create a boot DVD or bootable USB memory stick. Go to bit.ly/windows422 and follow the instructions to create the installation media. Boot your laptop with it and reinstall Windows. You may need to press one of the F1-F12 keys for the option to boot from a DVD or USB drive instead of the hard drive.

SECURITY

Force Firefox to forget Kaspersky's password

I just bought Kaspersky Internet Security 2017 and tried the Money Safe Secure Browser. When I logged into my bank account, Firefox offered to remember the login and I stupidly clicked Remember instead of Never Remember. The password is not shown in Firefox's remembered passwords. so I can't delete it, and the option to change it is not available.

Whatever setting I use in Money Safe doesn't work, including deleting the bank account. Even with this deleted, if I log into my bank account direct from Firefox, it still opens in a secure browser with the login details filled in. I can't remove it.

Kaspersky support seems non-existent, so I registered for the forum and confirmed my email, but the forum



If you have problems with Firefox, remove or disable extensions

continues to say I need to register. It won't let me re-register, stating that there is already a member with my email.

I'm about to give up and switch to Norton. Will Norton uninstall Kaspersky or should I use Revo Uninstaller?

Ron Paterson, via email

Before you give up on Kaspersky, try switching off the Money Safe feature. Open Kaspersky Internet Security, click the gear icon to open the settings, select Protection on the left and turn off the Safe Money switch.

Safe Money works by installing a browser add-on. This detects when you visit your bank and triggers Money Safe Secure Browser. To remove it in Firefox, click 'Add-ons' in the menu and delete any Kaspersly entries in the Extensions and Plugins sections.

If you decide to switch your security software, you should uninstall the old one first. Then restart the computer before you install the new software.

SOFTWARE

Catalogue books and DVDs

I want to catalogue my library. Can I use my laptop's camera to read each book or DVD, put it in a list and possibly produce a print out, at minimal or no cost?

Brian Carter, via email

There are database applications for various types of collection including books, music and DVDs, but we don't know of any that use a laptop's camera. However, there are lots of mobile apps that let you create collections of items and use the phone's camera as a scanner. You point the camera at a barcode and it scans it and looks up the product information online. All the following are free on Android: Book Catalogue (bit.ly/bc422), My Library (bit.ly/mylib422), Libib (bit.ly/



Use your phone to create databases of books and DVDs

libib422) and DVD Library (bit .ly/dvdlib422).

There are PC applications, too, but any barcode scanning is usually via a phone app. Invelos Software **DVD** Profiler (invelos.com) is free for up to 50

DVDs, after which some advanced features are locked unless you pay \$14.95 (£12.06). However, most of its basic functions continue to work. You type in barcode numbers and it fetches the DVD details and artwork from online databases.

Movie Collector (bit.ly/mc422) works for DVD collections. Its barcode reader app for the iPhone and Android is free for 50 DVDs but you have to buy it for £39.95 to add more.



This fortnight Roland has been getting to know the Windows 10 Creators Update

Your Top Tips

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

visit forum.webuser.co.uk

TOP TIP

winner WebU

РНОТО

Create photo collages online

If you've ever installed photo-editing software with the intention of combining several photos, you'll know how tricky it can be to pick a size for your canvas and resize your pictures to fit on it. Thankfully, I discovered PhotoCollage.com (www .photocollage.com), a handy website that makes this quick and easy.

Visit the site, then click the Collage drop-down menu to choose the size of the canvas. Next, drag and drop the photos you want to add to the canvas or click 'Add images' to select them one by one. You can now click Template to pick a style for your collage or click the 'Auto collage' button to automatically arrange the pictures in the simplest layout.

To move an image, drag and drop it. You can also use the small squares on the edge of a picture to resize it, or press Shift and use the direction

Faster Gmail formatting

I switched to Gmail a few years ago and

like it a lot. For anyone else that uses it,

here are some handy keyboard shortcuts.

When typing an email, you can highlight

text by holding down Shift and pressing

text is highlighted, there are a number of

the left or right arrow keys. When the

formatting keyboard shortcuts:



PhotoCollage.com lets you create collages quickly

arrows to change the selection that's cropped. There are also handy tools for adding text, borders and even filters. When you've finished, click File and choose how you want to save the collage.

The website is completely free to use and, if you look along the top toolbar, you'll see a range of other web apps for image resizing and converting PDFs, along with other useful functions.

Phil Collins, via email

on-screen keyboard instead. Right-click an empty part of the taskbar and select 'Show touch keyboard button'. This adds a button to the right side of the taskbar and clicking it brings up a keyboard on the screen. Just use your mouse to type

by clicking the on-screen keys.

Matt Ellerton, via email

GENERAL PC

Apps vs websites

Facebook and several other online services can be accessed in your web browser or a Windows 10 app. You can choose whether to open links and URLs in the app or a browser. Open Settings and search for 'apps for websites'. There are sliders that let you choose between the app and the website version.

Luke Higgins, via email



Choose whether to open URLs in your browser or in Windows 10's apps

Click instead of typing

Some types of malware try to find out your passwords for websites, banks and so on by recording the keys you press as you type. For extra protection against such attacks, use the Windows 10



For extra protection against key-loggers, use the onscreen keyboard to type

ctrl + B

EMAIL

Bold Italic Underline Increase text size Decrease text size Numbered list Bullet-point list Remove all formatting Ian Pritchard, via email

Watch YouTube offline

It's possible to watch YouTube videos offline, which is useful if you have a poor internet connection or are travelling with a laptop. You need Firefox and its Video DownloadHelper add-on (bit.ly/vdh422).

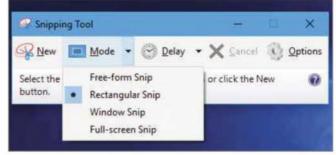
Video DownloadHelper adds a button to the toolbar. Click this button when you visit a page on YouTube that has a video. A menu opens with options to download the video in different resolutions and formats, such as HD, mobile and so on.

Brian Hayes, via email

GENERAL PC

Use Snipping Tool for screen captures

If you want to capture and save what's on your screen, you can press the Print Screen key (often abbreviated to Prt Scn). You can then paste vour screen grab into Paint or another app.



Capture the screen, a window or any area you want using Snipping Tool

That's normally fine, but my computer is a Mac and I installed Windows 10 using Boot Camp. Windows runs perfectly but the Mac doesn't have a Print Screen key so my solution is to use an often overlooked Windows tool - Snipping Tool - which you'll find on the Start menu in Accessories. Click Mode on the toolbar and you can capture the full screen. windows, rectangles or a freehand area.

S Smerdon, via email

WEBSITES

Make Wikipedia better

If you're tired of the way Wikipedia looks, why not try Wikiwand (wikiwand.com), a handy Wikipedia reader for Chrome, Firefox, Opera and Vivaldi? Simply install the appropriate add-on and, when you open a Wikipedia page, it'll change the way the site is displayed in your browser. I find it makes the online encyclopedia easier to read and navigate, and generally more pleasing on the eye. Note that the add-on will not install in Pale Moon and if you've got a script blocker such as NoScript installed, be sure to whitelist Wikiwand, otherwise its pages may not load properly.

Madeline, Web User Forums



Wikiwand gives Wikipedia's interface a complete overhaul

ANDROID

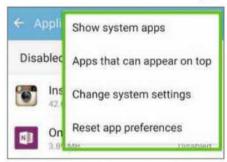
Remove annoying pop-ups on your phone

A few weeks ago, when I plugged in my Samsung Galaxy S6 to its charger, a fullscreen pop-up appeared warning me 'Your phone is in silent mode. You might miss calls'. I was confused as to where this strange pop-up had come from because it looked totally out of keeping with the rest of the operating system.

After performing a Google search

about the problem, it seemed that an app was probably to blame, so I tried to find the culprit by checking which apps I'd installed recently. After uninstalling all these recently installed apps, the pop-up still showed and I was no closer to fixing the problem. I then decided to check which apps had recently been updated. Peel Remote, which came installed on the phone, looked like the only name on the list that could be to blame. Unfortunately, there was no way to uninstall it, so I was left scratching my head.

A couple of days later, I discovered by chance that there's a settings menu on



Samsung phones let you control which apps appear on top of others

Samsung phones that lets you control which apps can appear on top of others. To access it, open Settings, Applications, Application manager and select 'Apps that can appear on top' from the threedot menu. From here, I disabled Peel Remote and - just like that - the pop-up never appeared again!

I'm very frustrated that Samsung doesn't let you uninstall an app that forces such intrusive and annoying features on you, but I am relieved that I was finally able to find a solution to my problem.

Ed Wright, via email

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

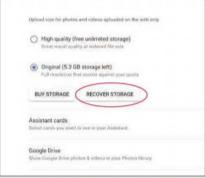
CLOUD

Stop Photos using up your Google Drive allowance

I've used Google Photos to back up images on my smartphone and PC for many months but last week a notification appeared telling me that I'd used up nearly all my free cloud space. I was surprised by this, because I was certain I'd selected the 'High quality' option on all my devices, which lets you upload unlimited images for free.

Thankfully, there was an easy way to fix my mistake and convert any fullquality photos to high quality so that they'd no longer count against my 15GB Google Drive allowance. All you need to do is visit photos.google.com/ settings and click the option that says Recover Storage. A pop-up window appears showing you how much of your Drive allowance you'll free up and you just click Compress to process all the images automatically.

Unfortunately, there's no easy way to filter all your original-quality files. However, if you want to see if any one image is high quality or original quality, I've learned how you can do so. First,



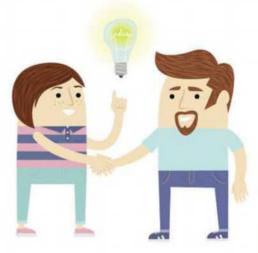
Google Photos lets you reclaim space used by full quality images

select the Google Photos from the sidebar at drive.google.com. Next, right-click the image in question and choose 'View details'. Click the Details tab and you'll see the size of the image. If it appears as 0 bytes, you know that it's a high-quality file. However, if the actual file size is shown, then it means the image is at its original quality and counts towards your Drive allowance.

Connie, via email

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster? If so, please send your story to webuser@dennis.co.uk





Readers' Helpdesk

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

GENERAL PC

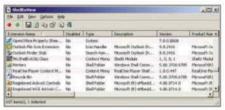
Why can't I right-click anything in File Explorer?

File Explorer crashes whenever I right-click a file or folder. It closes on its own and I have to relaunch it, but even then I still can't right-click. This is really annoying and never used to happen. Have you any idea what's causing this and how I can stop it?

pcuser1, Web User Forums

This sounds as if it could be caused by a rogue entry in your right-click context menu. Download ShellExView (search for it at www.nirsoft.net/utils), run it and look in the Type column for Context Menu items - you can click Option and use 'Filter by Extension type' to select Context Menu from the list. Ignore Microsoft entries and look under Extension Name for anything you don't recognise. You can narrow down your search by checking the File Created Time. If you find anything you suspect might be crashing File Explorer, disable it.

Stewart40, Web User Forums



ShellExView lets you disable right-click menu items without touching the Registry

GENERAL PC

Why is Windows Update failing?

A Windows 10 Update keeps failing and I get the following message: "Update for Microsoft Office 2010 (KB2553347) 32-Bit Edition failed on (date)." Does anyone know what might be causing this problem?

gareth5506, Web User Forums

Go to Start, type **reliability** and press Enter when you see

GENERAL PC

Why can't I log in with my Microsoft account?

My Windows 10 PC was running fine until today, but now I can't log in using my Microsoft account details. I can log in with a local account, but I know my Microsoft account is active and works because I've been able to log into Outlook.com. Does anyone have any suggestions as to how I might fix the problem?

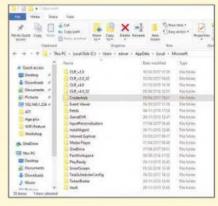
Space_Cowby, Web User Forums

A I've seen a possible fix that involves deleting a specific folder, but I'd create a restore point before you try it. Navigate to:

C:\Users\[your name]\AppData\ Local\Microsoft

then delete the Credentials folder and restart your PC. You may need to make hidden files visible to see the AppData folder - click the View tab and tick the 'Hidden items' box.

If that doesn't work and you're using the Pro or Enterprise version of Windows 10, try using your local



Deleting the Credentials directory can fix bugs relating to Windows logins

account to log into Windows 10 with administrator rights. Press Windows+R, type secpol.msc and click Enter. In the Security Settings window, go to Local Policies, Security Options and double-click 'User Account Control: Run all administrators in Admin Approval Mode'. Select Enabled, then click OK and restart Windows. Finally, log in again with your local account, then open Settings, Accounts, Your Account and click 'Sign in with a Microsoft account instead'. You should see the option to log in with your Microsoft account.

Cantrel, Web User Forums

'View reliability history'. Click the entry for the date when the update failed to install, then find the recording for the failed update and click the blue link

to 'View technical details'. This should give you an error code that you can look up, which should help you establish what's causing the problem.

If you're

using antivirus software, you could try installing the update with that disabled or uninstalled.

Helmut, Web User Forums



Use Reliability Monitor to identify the cause of problems in Windows



Star Email

Mug/

How I dealt with a BT phone scammer

just want to say, first of all, that I do not think I have missed an issue of Web User since you started. I find it very informative, always interesting and worth every penny.

Now, on to the real reason I am emailing. I bought Issue 420 from my local newsagent this morning and around 4pm settled in for a good read. When I got to the Inbox section, I saw the email from Stuart Jolliffe about a BT hijack scam. What a surprise!

That morning, my wife had answered our telephone, even though our caller ID was unable to identify the number. We usually ignore such calls, but she had been waiting for an important call. When it became

.....



clear that it was something to do with the internet, she passed the telephone to me. I heard a nice Indian lady telling me that she was from BT's Technical department and that my router was

downloading all sorts of nasty viruses each time I went online. I let the woman carry on for a bit and then told her I was not having any problems with my BT service at this time, that I had all the protection I needed and was taking common-sense precautions. I informed her that the last time I talked to BT Tech. about a minor problem, it was to a nice young man whose department is now in the UK.

I then told her that I believed she was trying to scam me and put the phone down on her before I forgot myself and completed her education with some fine old Anglo Saxon terms!

David Barton-Smith, via email

Painnt is great and worth the money

Regarding the photo-editing tool Painnt (bit.ly/painnt420), which was your Workshop 1 in Issue 420 - what a brilliant

app! I paid for a year's subscription and have already spent many an hour applying filters to family photos. It's very impressive and well

crashing so I emailed Painnt's helpdesk for comment. However, I found that the Windows 10 Creators Update solved the problem. The update went smoothly although it took about an hour, so panic over - and keep up the good work!

Eric Page, via email

worth £7.69 per year. At first the app kept

Copyright law confuses me,

I completely agree with your Star Email correspondent in Issue 421 - copyright infringement is indeed a confusing issue, and it long has been. Remember all those warnings in the Eighties that "Home taping is killing music"? Yet blank cassettes were widely available and every hi-fi came with a tape deck for the

precise purpose of recording music from the radio and your own records.

Once everyone started listening to MP3s instead, we were told it was illegal to rip the music you owned on CD into digital format, even though software such as Windows Media Player and iTunes was originally designed for that very function. After the government

finally decided that it was legal after all, it changed its mind again! How are we supposed to keep up?

I'm still not entirely sure whether you're allowed to download

> videos from YouTube if they're kept for your own personal use. There are certainly enough tools available out there that let you do so, which are easily found through Google.









Boyle has turned into a cross-dressing unicorn

Turn to page 74 to find out what's making Barry mad this issue

Since Google owns YouTube, you'd think it would hide such results if it had a problem with people downloading videos to keep.

Perhaps Web User could publish a feature that more clearly explains the ins and outs of copyright law, because I can't make head nor tail of it.

Dominic Vincent, via email

It's not only web fat cats who get big payoffs

In Issue 420's Page 404, Barry Collins expressed his anger at the executives of tech companies getting richly rewarded despite their carelessness resulting in our personal info being leaked. Actually, most executives of big companies who fail disgracefully or act unethically never pay the price of dismissal in disgrace that the rest of us would suffer.

As a member of the Co-op, I watched in fury as it was taken over by fat cats in a supposed rescue. Organised by Lord Myners, the man reported to have given his fellow banker Fred Goodwin millions of taxpayers' money when RBS collapsed, the company's first act was to treble executive pay. CEO Euan

Sutherland quit in a huff when his pay was made public,

apparently believing that
Co-op members had no right
to know this. But the worst
excess was the payoff to
HR Director Rebecca Skitt.
She decided to quit after 11
months in the job, and
was given six months'
pay as 'gardening

leave', a year's pay in lieu of notice, another year's pay as a long-term bonus (after 11 months!), £89,000 to compensate for loss of pension that longer

employment would have given her and a bonus of I forget how much or what for.

And this is the norm. The amount executives are paid for doing their job, or even deciding they don't wish to do it any more, is totally unconnected to their performance or market forces.

Jon98, Web User Forums

Stick to one keyboard layout

When we use an on-screen keyboard for TV apps such as BBC iPlayer, why on Earth are some keyboards in QWERTY layout and others alphabetical? Can we not just stick with QWERTY as it is such a pain otherwise? Just as you get accustomed to entering letters with your remote control as quickly as a 16-year old texting, the next keyboard you use changes to alphabetical. What is going on here?

Stan Elliott, Bangor Co Down



Raspberry Pi puts the web on your TV

In reference to Roland's answer to Paul Aungiers' question in Issue 420, in which he asked: "Is there such a thing as a box that plugs into a TV and which provides the full internet access that you get on a PC?" – I was surprised that Roland didn't recommend a Raspberry Pi (version 3), which does everything that Paul Aungiers requires.

My son has his Raspberry Pi situated under his TV and uses it to stream media and access web content. As long as you have an independent 5V AC adapter supply for the Pi, and are not using a 5V



USB supply from the TV, then I am told it works faultlessly! He connects to the Pi using a wireless keyboard and mouse.

Perhaps you would like to pass this suggestion on to Paul Aungiers.

Cliff Evans, via email

Changing its name won't help Yahoo

Shakespeare wrote that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet; likewise, an awful company can 'rebrand' all it likes, but it will still be rubbish.

For this reason, I greeted with some scepticism the news in Issue 421 that Yahoo is to merge with AOL (another awful company) under the new name Oath. Considering the track records of the two companies, the merger hardly inspires much confidence!

As I assume will be the case with many web users of my age, my initial forays on the internet were made using a dial-up modem and an AOL disc, but as soon as I realised how dreadful AOL was, I ditched it for Freeserve (remember that?) and a Yahoo Mail webmail address. To be fair, this account served me well for many years, but in recent times the constant reports of security breaches and sloppy business practices persuaded me to abandon ship.

Now it appears that Yahoo wants to pretend its problems never happened, with a new name and a new partner. Well, all this Oath nonsense doesn't fool

on sale now from Amazon, visit bit.ly/wudisc16











ark johnson producer

me and I doubt the millions of Yahoo customers whose personal data was leaked will be fooled either.

It may be calling itself Oath now, but why should we trust a company that has so frequently let us down?

Spencer Arnold, via email

Online namesakes protect my identity

I was interested and amused by your 'Who's talking about you online?' feature in Issue 421. Being someone with a very common name, I am thankful that anyone searching for me through Google is likely to come up against a brick wall.

That doesn't mean I'm not envious of some of my many namesakes, who

include an ice hockey coach, a film producer, a meteorologist, a sociology professor and a rehabilitated drug user who now runs a charity. But being obscured by more famous men with the same moniker means that

no one can track me down in a matter of seconds, at least not without some doubt that they might have the wrong person. It's not a perfect way to protect your identity, but it helps!

Mark Johnson, via email

Disappointed by the Creators Update

I eagerly downloaded the Windows 10 Creators Update as soon as it was available, waited impatiently for it to install and then dived in to find... well, not very much really. A few nice design tweaks, a new 3D version of Paint [Web User says: see our Workshop on page 52] and various things to do with gaming and Cortana that I'll probably never use. Oh, sorry, there's 'Night light', a feature I've already had for years through F.lux (justgetflux.com). Poor effort, Microsoft,

Bryan Nolan, via email

What you say...

O YOU THINK ISPS USE THE WORD 'FIBRE' **MISLEADINGLY IN BROADBAND** ADVERTS (bit.ly/fibre422)?

Every ISP uses the word 'fibre'. It's a marketing tool. Just a shame that some people don't get the speed they are paying for.

Brian Brown

Yes. They don't make the distinction between 'Fibre to the cabinet' (FTTC) and 'Fibre to the premises' (FTTP).

Lee Dodgson

I don't think Virgin do as most of their network is fibre. I have Virgin on 150Mbps and I've never had any complaints.

Stuart A Hordern

I have BT 'fibre' to a distribution box a mile away then copper. I get 18Mbps. Because I am so far from the exchange, I can't get any better.

......

Ian Phipps

OOGLE SAYS CHROME IS 10-20% FASTER THAN LAST YEAR (bit.ly/chrome422). **DO YOU AGREE?**

Seems to be true for me. Opera for Android comes close. On my laptop, I mainly use Chrome, but I'm getting to like Edge a bit more.

Ted Taylor

No. Opera is faster for me. I also like the built-in ad blocker, the VPN and the news feed.

Jenny Jacks @JenJacks3

Not for me - I'd say it's 10-to-20% slower. I'm going to stick with it, though, hoping it'll speed up with future updates.

Jason Cooper

Not noticed any difference in speed but since Windows 10 came out, it seems to be freezing more.

Paul Emsley

S IT PLAUSIBLE THAT RUSSIA HACKED THE EU REFERENDUM **VOTER-REGISTRATION SITE** LAST YEAR (bit.ly/brexit422)?

......

Absolute cobblers! Government IT is renowned for being third-rate, and the site couldn't cope with the traffic.

Derek Brigas

You couldn't make it up. Those corrupt MPs blaming the Russians. Biggest laugh ever.

lanto Wishart

What is implausible is any of our MPs knowing anything about hacking. Expense accounts, yes. Hacking, no.

lain Kenworthy-Neale

Does it matter? The site was open for an extra 24 hours.

......

Anthony Higham

O YOU AGREE THAT ISPs 'PUNISH' LOYAL CUSTOMERS WITH PRICE RISES (bit.ly/ rise422)?

They certainly do, until you threaten to cancel, then suddenly you get lots of offers thrown your way.

David P-Smith @david_p_s

Absolutely. I'm a Virgin Media customer since Telewest days and always have to pay more than new customers. Very frustrating.

@ray_burns_

Can you not barter? We've been with Virgin Media for years. Our bill has stayed the same and speeds have gone up. Got a few freebies, too.

Deborah Starman Ankers

People who don't barter end up paying extra for those who do. They should just let everyone pay a fair price and stop the discounting.

Caroline Alderson

try harder next time.

A Page 404

Google and Facebook aren't fixing fake news - they're breeding it, says Barry Collins

The Frankenstein's Monster of fake news

ou WON'T BELIEVE this, but online news is rotten. High quality journalism is now confined to a few outposts, while the vast majority of so-called news sites relentlessly churn the same drivel, with sensationalist headlines PARTLY CAPITALISED to make you click. Note to news editors: unless Susan Boyle has turned into a cross-dressing unicorn, I absolutely WILL BELIEVE what she looks like after six months on a diet.

Celebrity flim-flam isn't the worst of it. A whole cottage industry for 'fake news' has emerged, where sites knowingly publish false stories for either political or financial gain. Publish a story claiming Prince Harry indecently assaulted a goat, watch as it sweeps across gullible swathes of social media, then sit back and claim the advertising revenue. Or the American Presidency.

The public's appetite for this bunkum appears to be sated, which is why companies such as Google and Facebook are suddenly developing tools to sort the chaff from the utter chaff. This is ironic because those same two companies were largely responsible for creating the Frankenstein's monster of fake news in the first place.

Google certainly deserves the lion's share of the blame. It's been nothing short of a disaster for journalism, giving Joe Bloggs and his blog almost equal status to renowned publishers. Pretty much anything claiming to be a news site gets listed on Google News, irrespective of its quality. I've frequently found my own stories cut and pasted onto other 'tech news sites', awarded a higher listing than my original and given traffic by Google News and its search engine. Publishers used to pursue these copycat sites, but most don't bother any more. Even in the rare instance when



you do manage to get a story removed, 10 others appear in its place.

Google spoon-feeds these sites with advertising revenue, but the rates are so meagre that nobody can afford to invest in proper journalism. Instead, it's more

ff Publish a story claiming Prince Harry indecently assaulted a goat and watch as it sweeps across gullible swathes of social media 📕 📕

lucrative to copy what others are doing - either word for word or by paying 'interns' to rewrite the stories with clickbait headlines. Or simply make it up. According to an investigation published by Buzzfeed, Macedonian teenagers were reportedly making \$5,000 a month by writing fake pro-Trump stories that went viral ahead of the US election - or as much as \$3,000 per day if the story was picked up and widely shared across Facebook. Where does the money come from? Google's AdSense program.

Google is at least doing something about this problem, even if it is a token effort. It's encouraging publishers to mark stories that have been verified by fact-checking schemes, allowing those stories to display a 'fact-checked' label in Google's listings. But the effort and cost involved are high, and visibility is low. If Google really wanted to make a difference, it could set up an accreditation program for Google News, instead of giving every publisher instant credibility.

Facebook, meanwhile, is offering 'How to spot false news' tips on its website, including the sage advice: "Think critically about the stories you read and only share news you know to be credible." So what's top of Facebook's trending news stories as I write this? "US Navy Strike Group Heads Towards Korean Peninsular In Response To North Korea's Ballistic Missile Tests!". The highly credible source of this Facebookpromoted story? Worldstarhiphop.com. You couldn't make it up.



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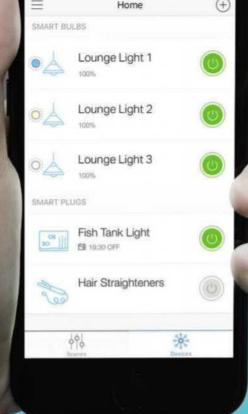
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