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STUNNING
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wishes it could be p52

The Hacker's Guide to...

FASTER INTERNET

Tweak your DNS, change router settings, unlock hidden speed and more p38

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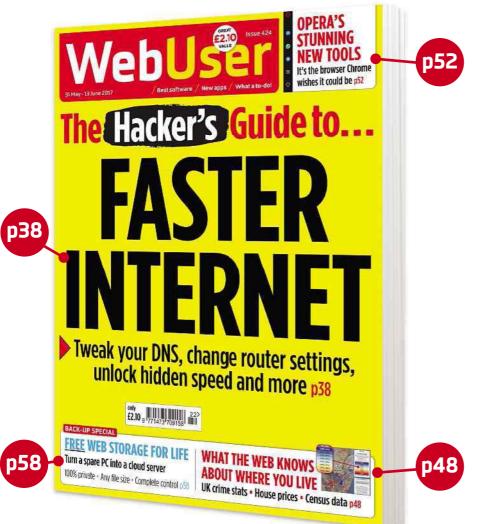
t's been many years since I've heard the horrible screech of a 56K dial-up modem. If I were ever to stumble across one. perhaps in a technology museum or police incident room, rather than experiencing a Proustian rush of nostalgia, my first instinct would be to smash it to bits with an axe, such are my disturbed memories of that slow, aggravating device.

Nowadays, we take our fast, silent internet connections for granted, which means that as soon as speeds drop, we start cursing and crying in confusion (well, I do at least). In our cover feature this issue, we reveal how to boost your broadband using secret hacks that only experts know about - rather than the usual, obvious advice such as "switch to a faster ISP" and "don't put your router in the microwave".

From DNS and TCP to QUIC and DD-WRT, we make baffling internet initials easy to understand and simple to tweak, so you can hack your way to a better web connection.

Robert Irvine robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk #webuser







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ISSUE 424

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The Hacker's Guide to... FASTER INTERNET

We reveal the tweaks, tricks and hacks you need to make your connection faster

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The Hacker's Guide To... FASTER INTERNET

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Chrome unveils its new browser for Android









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What's New Online

Earn rewards by searching the web

with Bing

o you prefer using Google and Chrome to Bing and Edge? If so, you may reconsider when you find out that Microsoft is offering goodies in exchange for you using its search engine and browser. It has finally introduced Microsoft Rewards in the UK (it's been available in the US since 2010), which lets you earn points as you browse the web provided you log into your Microsoft account and stick with its services.

You can swap your points for films, apps, games, competition entries, Skype credits, subscriptions and more, but you'll earn them even faster if you shop at the Windows or Microsoft Store. For every pound you spend, you'll receive a point to put towards your next download and even a new Surface laptop.



Obviously, this is another way of trying to lock you into Microsoft's products (the new Windows 10 S forces you to use Bing and Edge, as you'll learn in our FAQ on page 36), but as a bonus you get 50 points just for signing up to Rewards. The dashboard keeps track of how many points you've earned, and you can set goals or take part in competitions, quizzes and special offers to get more. You can

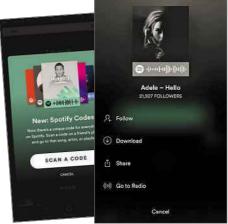


even donate your points to charity, and Microsoft will match the amount. bit.ly/rewards424

Grab a friend's Spotify playlist

www.spotify com

If a friend is playing a song on Spotify and you like what you hear, you can now get it for yourself simply by taking a photo. The music service has introduced scannable



Spotify Codes in its iOS and Android apps that let you share tracks, artists, albums and playlists quickly. To access a song that's on your friend's phone, navigate to it, tap the three-dot menu and look for the code beneath the artwork. Tap the camera icon next to the search bar on your phone, scan your friend's screen and the music will be available on your device instantly. Spotify hopes that musicians will start printing the codes on their posters, flyers and magazine adverts, making it easier to discover new music. You can also tap Codes on your own phone to share your Spotify music on social media.

Learn how to make music

learningmusic .ableton.com

It's probably too late for you to headline the Glastonbury Festival later this month but musicsoftware specialist Ableton's free music lessons will certainly

give you a better understanding of the concepts of crafting a tune. The lessons are spread across 10 fully interactive chapters. You start by experimenting with ready-made drums, bass, chords and melodies, and then move on to producing your



own musical patterns, programming looping beats and learning more about the instruments involved in their production. The lessons become increasingly challenging, covering tempo, style, backbeats, pitch and more, and you get to play around with real songs including Queen's We Will Rock You and Bob Marley's Get Up, Stand Up before powering through to The Playground where you can try out everything you've learned. Don't worry about getting bogged down with too much information, either - you can easily pause your lessons and resume them later.

TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

Be inspired to take a (hopefully) sunny British holiday this summer

The tennis championships are on

their way, so catch the latest news

This feed delivers a constant stream of random stuff you never

realised you needed to know

Nigella shares a tasty recipe each

day, peppered with promos and

Incisive tech advice and opinion

from the experts - see our review

@Nigella Lawson

@bigtechquestion

@VisitBritain

@Wimbledon

@UberFacts

competitions

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

See cyber-attacks in real time

cybermap.kaspersky.com

Those neon lines on Kaspersky's real-time map aren't as pretty as they look: each highlights the spread of cyberthreats around the world, based on the security company's data. You can zoom in and out and spin the globe to see information about different countries, including which are the most infected areas. You can also discover which current threats are the most problematic.



Filter your face on Instagram

www.instagram.com

Instagram now offers eight face filters that you can apply to your selfies, Snapchatstyle. Opening the camera presents a new face icon in the bottom-right corner which, when tapped, lets you augment your selfie with



moving koala ears, nerd glasses and more. These work with your phone's front and back cameras, and you can add your augmented images to Your Story or send them by Instagram Direct. Instagram has also added a new Rewind feature that plays videos backwards, allowing you to produce some clever visual tricks.

Watch live concerts on **Amazon Prime**

bit.ly/live424

In its ongoing bid to attract subscribers to Prime, Amazon has started running and promoting its own series of intimate concerts, with Alison Movet, Texas and Katie Melua to look forward to this month. Tickets are exclusive to Prime members and limited to two per person, but you'll get to see the stars up close in a small, London-based venue, followed by a Q&A session. Don't worry if you can't make it, though, because each gig will be streamed on Prime Video.



of the site on page 14

Pin WhatsApp

conversations www.whatsapp.com

The latest beta version of WhatsApp for Android lets you pin up to three of your most interesting chats to the top of your list by selecting a conversation and pressing the pin icon.

Discover things to do with Airbnb

www.airbnb.co.uk

Airbnb now suggests activities for any planned trips to London, Paris, Barcelona, Cape Town, Los Angeles, San Francisco and more under its For You tab, so you can book them in advance or while you're there.

Take a grand tour of Italy bit.ly/italy424

With five Google Cardboard tours, two dozen videos, hundreds of images, 21 Street View walks and 38 digital exhibitions, this virtual journey brings Italy to life and teaches you about its rich history.

Flick through the **Wolsey Manuscripts**

www.wolseymanuscripts.ac.uk

The Gospel and Epistle Lectionaries commissioned by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey in the final years of the 1520s have been digitised for this fascinating new website. Browse, zoom and pan the pages of the manuscripts to enjoy their amazing detail,



and choose between full screen, thumbnail, book and scroll views. You can also read about the history of the manuscripts and how they came to survive.



WannaCry: who's to blame for worst ransomware attack ever?

What happened?

A nasty strain of ransomware spread across the world on 12 May, infecting networks in more than 100 countries including the UK, where 40 NHS organisations including hospitals and GP surgeries were forced to go offline and cancel appointments. It's been called, by Avast and others, the worst ransomware outbreak in history (bit.ly/avast424).

The WannaCry ransomware, also known as WannaCrypt and Wanna Decryptor, locked down PCs by encrypting files, showing a message demanding \$300 (about £232) in Bitcoin within three days or the data would disappear forever. The ransomware appeared to infect Windows computers via a vulnerability that was hoarded and then leaked by the American National Security Agency. Many reports also pointed out that NHS computers running Windows XP - which hasn't received security updates from Microsoft for more than three years were particularly vulnerable to infection.

The rapid spread of WannaCry was at least temporarily halted by a 22-year-old British security researcher, who noticed the ransomware was contacting a website before infecting computers. That website didn't actually exist, so the researcher registered the domain - and this turned out to be a built-in 'kill switch'. The ransomware saw the domain appear, and stopped spreading. That doesn't mean WannaCry is dead, simply that this version of the threat has been paused - for the moment, at least.



WannaCry spread across the globe, wreaking havoc in more than 100 countries



How can it be avoided?

If you're running Windows XP, it's well past time to upgrade - either get a new PC or update to Windows 7 at the very least. If you're running any other version of Windows, make sure the OS is up to date by checking your Windows Update status in 'System and Security'.

Going forward, make sure you have Automatic Updates switched on - they may be annoying, but they'll help keep you protected from such attacks. Also make sure you have backups of all key data, so you can still access your files if you're infected by ransomware.

As ever, help your less tech-savvy friends and family by making sure they're running an up-to-date operating system and software, and that they too have backups of essential files. And remember the key rule to never open an email attachment - or click a link in a message - from an unknown sender.

Who's to blame?

Initial evidence suggests that the hackers were based in North Korea, and are believed to be the Lazarus Group -

the same criminals behind the attack against Sony Pictures in 2014. But many experts are also blaming Microsoft for failing to provide security for patches for Windows XP unless users pay a fee. Microsoft has since issued a patch for Windows XP but this came months after the fixes for newer versions of the OS

Some pin the blame on poor funding for the NHS, while others note that Microsoft did in fact roll out patches for most versions of Windows, but some people - be they individuals or organisations - didn't bother to install them.

And then there's the NSA, which knew about the very serious vulnerabilities in Windows, but didn't tell Microsoft because it wanted to use the holes in the code for its own purposes. However, the weaponised flaws were leaked, and ended up in hackers' hands.

Will there be more attacks?

Do you really need to ask? Of course there will - this is the second time the hackers have used WannaCry in such an attack and it was hugely successful, so

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

SHOULD I PAY THE RANSOM?

The \$300 ransom is just low enough for some victims to willingly stump up the cash to get their data back.

There's no guarantee that hackers will unlock your data, but it's in their best interest to do so, to encourage more people to pay up. After all, it's the cash they want, not your family photos.



Kaspersky offers free decryptors for files affected by ransomware

That said, in this particular case, paying the ransom definitely isn't advisable. At the time of writing, there have been no reports of anyone affected by WannaCry managing to unlock their data by paying the ransom, and security experts examining the code have said there's no obvious way for the hackers to associate your payment with your data. It's unclear if they ever intended to decrypt the data or if it's merely a sloppy mistake, but either way, you're unlikely to get your files back.

More generally, before paying hackers, try tools such as Kaspersky's No Ransom (noransom.kaspersky.com) to see if you can get your files back without shelling out.

why should they stop? And if the existing vulnerabilities are fixed, the criminals can simply find new flaws to poke their way in.

Even if the WannaCry hackers are caught and jailed, there are plenty of other criminals out there running ransomware campaigns, and such attacks have risen steadily over recent years.

What do we think?

The extent and speed of this hack highlights how bad we all are at prioritising security. We all know we need to keep our operating systems and software updated, run decent antivirus and back up our data, yet major organisations failed to do so.

We hope Microsoft will do all it can to ensure that poorly funded but essential organisations such as the NHS get as much free help as possible. The company makes enough profit from the rest of us to give hospitals and other bodies

we depend on a bit of a pass.

But that's no excuse for the rest of us - many organisations that don't suffer the limited funds and IT support of the NHS were also hit by the ransomware, including Telefonica, Renault and FedEx, so it's not only about money and perceived technical knowledge.

Installing updates can be annoying, but it's much worse to be hit by ransomware, and even more serious to be one of those who helped it spread. This incident has made the repercussions of such hacks clear: while the hackers made only tens of thousands of dollars from the attack, many people will have lost key work and personal files, and hospitals had to postpone operations and important treatment, and turn away ambulances. WannaCry proves that digital security can have a serious offline impact - let's sort this out before people lose their lives.

MP3 format declared 'dead' by its creators

What happened?

MP3 is the audio-file format that revolutionised music, but it's time to move on. That's according to the Fraunhofer Institute, the organisation that funded and developed the format - and has now ended the licensing programme, effectively killing off MP3.

The format's demise has been triggered by the rise of more efficient audio codecs such as AAC, which is used by iTunes and was partially developed by Fraunhofer. AAC and other, newer formats "can deliver more features and a higher audio quality at much lower bitrates compared to MP3," the institute said. Additionally, online music has increasingly moved from downloads to streaming services such as Spotify.

MP3 was developed during the Eighties and Nineties, and became the standard file format for digital downloads, as well as illegal file-sharing tools such as Napster.

How will it affect you?

Don't fret: this move won't destroy your beloved music library. In fact, you may even be using AAC or a similar MP3 alternative without even realising it. You'll still be able to play MP3s in your collection because the licence won't

affect the files you already have, and the format continues to be supported by music players. Because MP3 is mostly patent-free, there's no reason to end such support. However, it's feasible that at some point in the future digital players will stop supporting older formats - just as record players gave way to CD players.

What do we think?

Most of us assumed that our digital files would last longer than their physical counterparts, but this news suggests that's not always the case. Although there's no cause to panic that your MP3s won't play in the future, plenty of other file formats have been phased out for better ones. There's no reason for music players not to maintain 'backwards compatibility', but with even the world-dominating iPod losing popularity, who can predict how we'll be enjoying our tunes in the future?





Microsoft unveils next update to Windows 10

What happened?

Microsoft revealed that Windows 10's next major update, codenamed Redstone 3, will be called the Fall Creators Update and will come to our machines later this year. Its headline feature is Story Remix, a new app that lets you easily stitch together images and video clips. It's a simple but powerful tool that works intelligently to create customised 'stories' at the click of a few buttons. It can also identify highlights and specific individuals in your videos to tailor your stories for your needs. Story Remix will work on Windows, iOS and Android, allowing you to quickly synchronise photos and videos across multiple devices.

This cross-platform integration extends to third-party apps and introduces three useful new features: Clipboard, which lets you use compatible apps to copy and paste across devices - for example, from your Windows 10 PC to your iPhone's keyboard; Timeline, which remembers the apps you were using on a previous device; and Pick Up Where You Left Off, which lets you resume reading from the same spot when you switch from desktop to mobile, and vice versa.

In other news, iTunes will soon be coming to the Windows 10 Store, so you'll be able to use its lightweight app rather than its bloated old software.



How will it affect you?

Unless you've signed up for the Windows 10 Insider Program, you'll have to wait until September to try the new features in the Fall Creators Update, but the long-awaited iTunes app should be available from the Windows Store soon.

If you're still mourning the passing of Windows Movie Maker, which was discontinued by Microsoft earlier this year, you'll probably be most looking forward to Story Remix, which has been described as "Movie Maker on steroids".

Cross-platform integration should also be welcomed, especially because most

Windows users are likely to have an Android or iOS phone or tablet rather than a Windows one.

What do we think?

We'll reserve judgement on Windows 10's new features until we've tried them - after all, the recent Creators Update turned out to be less exciting than its pre-release hype had led us to believe. However, we will say that Fall Creators Update is a very dull and unimaginative name - perhaps Microsoft will change its mind by September - if only to the Autumn Creators Update!



FIRST LOOK

HTC U11 bit.ly/htcu424

The HTC U11 was teased with the bizarre tagline "Squeeze for the Brilliant". The squeezable element, it turns out, is Edge Sense, a series of pressure sensors built into the lower half of the frame of the phone that lets you launch apps from the lockscreen and carry out various actions within those apps, such as capturing selfies.

There's nothing remarkable about the appearance of the device. It looks similar to the HTC U Play and HTC U Ultra, although there are two new colours: 'Amazing Silver' and 'Solar Red'. There's no ultra-widescreen, bezel-free display like the Samsung Galaxy S8 and LG G6, but instead a 5.5in



qHD LCD screen with bog-standard bezels above and below.

However, it is only the second phone we've seen this year to run the Qualcomm Snapdragon 835 chip and it comes with either 4GB of RAM and 64GB of storage, or 6GB of RAM and 128GB of storage. This means it ought to be incredibly quick and responsive, and the new processor should beef up its battery life. The phone is also dust-

and water-resistant and rated to IP67. with a fingerprint reader on the front and a microSD slot allowing the addition of up to 2TB of extra storage.

The camera specs look very impressive: the rear camera has a 12-megapixel resolution with an f/1.7 aperture and optical image stabilisation, just like the Samsung S8. Meanwhile, the front-facing camera captures images at a huge 16 megapixels, has a 150-degree field of view and an f/2.0 lens.

So despite looking like nothing special, there's plenty going on within the HTC's new flagship phone to make it competitive. The big sticking point, however - aside from its lack of the ultra-widescreen bezel-free design of rivals - will most likely be the U11's price, which HTC has set at a rather hopeful £649 inc VAT.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Has Netflix blocked rooted Android phones?

Many Netflix viewers who have rooted their Android phones have found that the streaming service no longer works on their devices. Instead, users are being told that their handsets are "incompatible" with the Netflix app when they try to download the latest version from Google Play. That's no bug: Netflix is actively blocking rooted handsets because they don't support Android's built-in DRM tool.

Netflix uses the DRM technology Widevine to play protected content. "With our latest 5.0 release, we now fully rely on the Widevine DRM provided by Google; therefore, many devices that are not Google-certified or have been altered will no longer work with our latest app and those users will no longer see the Netflix app in the Play Store," Netflix said in a statement.

Google Play doesn't check if the Widevine DRM is on your rooted phone, but appears to be looking for Android Pay's 'SafetyNet' tool, which checks if devices are rooted, customised or infected with malware. That's a controversial way to check for DRM protection, because there's plenty of good reasons to unlock or root a handset, such as letting you install more flexible software. That said, Netflix isn't the first app to block rooted devices -Sky Go has long done the same.

Netflix may have decided to block rooted devices after finally offering the ability to download shows to watch



offline, because downloads are easier to pirate if you can get around copyright protections such as DRM.

LIKELIHOOD RATING **JJJJ**J

Netflix appears to have made up its mind about blocking rooted phones and it's not difficult to see why: if viewers can download its content for free, then why bother paying for subscriptions? Of course, it's possible to get around the restriction by 'sideloading' the app's APK file from another source.

What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Alarmshock

bit.ly/alarm424 | From £77

It's always tempting to hit your alarm clock's 'snooze' button when you don't want to get up in the morning,

but with Alarmshock there's no such easy escape. When it's time to start your day, you're woken by sound and vibrations from the wristband, after which you have two minutes to deactivate the alarm via its docking station. If you fail, you get an electric shock, which increases in power and frequency the longer you stay in bed. Alarmshock may sound like a torture device, but it's undoubtedly effective at tackling lazyitis and hopes to raise £40,000 by 8 June.



WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Amazon upgrades its budget tablets

Amazon's Fire 7 and Fire 8 HD

tablets, which cost £49.99 and £79.99 respectively. now include its voiceassistant Alexa for the



first time. Both tablets also offer improved battery life.

Charge your phone in five minutes

Israeli startup StoreDot says that its FlashBattery Power Bank, which charges phones to full capacity in five minutes, will go on sale next year.



WE DON'T LIKE...

Chrome bug lets hackers steal logins

A vulnerability in Google Chrome could let cybercriminals steal users' Windows login credentials. according to a security researcher. Google is aware of the flaw and is taking the "necessary actions" to patch it.

iPad Mini 'to be killed off'

Reports suggest that Apple will stop releasing software

updates for its smallest tablet. casting uncertainty over the future of the device. The iPad Mini was introduced in 2012.





Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Screen-hijack exploit targets Android

An unpatched exploit in the Android operating system means that almost 40% of users are



However, the fix has meant that

apps hiding malicious codes can bypass security, specifically the 'SYSTEM_ ALERT_WINDOW' permission, which allows apps to display over other apps without notifying the user. This means apps can display fraudulent adverts or links to malicious code. Google says that a fix will be issued in time for the release of Android O in the late summer. In the meantime, Check Point has urged users to beware of dodgy-looking apps. bit.ly/android424

WhatsApp hit by adware scam

WhatsApp users have been targeted by a scam claiming to offer a new colour scheme for the messaging app, according to Reddit user yuexist. The spam



messages, which read "I love the new colors for whatsapp http:// шhатsapp .com/?colors" include a fake URL that directs users to a website where they're asked to verify their identity by sharing the link with their contacts. After circulating the message with their friends, users are then informed that the colours are only available in the web version of the WhatsApp and invited to install adware posing as a Chrome extension. Google has been made aware of the adware and removed the add-on from the Chrome Web Store, but it's not clear whether the website has been updated to target users in a different way.

The scam follows another WhatsApp scam earlier this year, which asked users to pay if they wanted to carry on using the service.

bit.ly/whatsapp424

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Costin Raiu, Director of Global Research & Analysis Team at Kaspersky

(www.kaspersky.co.uk)





David Turnbull, Facebook



relies on the user to make a mistake: for example, by clicking a suspicious link, allowing Word to run a malicious macro or downloading a suspicious attachment from an email message. WannaCry can infect your system without you doing anything.



Luke Sykes, Twitter

We have observed multiple ransom payments in Bitcoins for the three known wallets we are monitoring, which amounts to about 70 people who have paid in total so far.

The attackers made about \$20,000 (about £15,500) in the first 24 hours 📙

Based on the current Bitcoin exchange rate the attackers made about \$20,000 (about £15,500) during the first 24 hours. Taking into account our experience in observing Bitcoin ransomware payments, we estimate that the peak was reached within 24-48 hours from the beginning of the attack, most likely because people need to research ways of acquiring Bitcoins to make the payment, Kaspersky also wants to clarify we do not recommend paying the ransom because this only encourages the criminals to continue their activities.

How can the government prevent this sort of thing in future? Niamh Grant, Facebook

I'm not an expert in regulations or politics, but an incident of this magnitude is bound to result in discussions and possible special measures being implemented to avoid future attacks. This may

have to do with exploit development, usage, safeguarding, export of exploits, cryptocurrencies, Bitcoins, e-payments and patch management.

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 accommodating almost 77% more information on the screen.



























Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

Dotdash

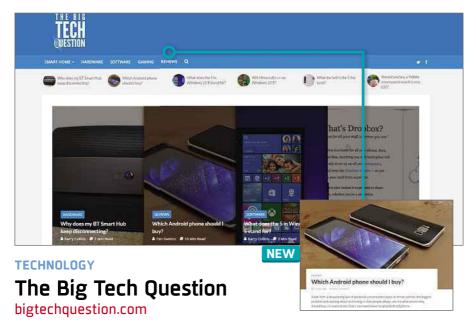
www.dotdash.com

For 20 years, US website About.com published online articles on all manner of topics, but it closed on 2 May to be replaced by Dotdash. This new hub spreads its previous incarnation's content across six spin-off sites for health, home, technology, finance, travel and learning. Content is knowledgeably written and presented in easily digestible chunks, and headlines from the individual sites which look fresh and engaging, and a world away from About.com's dated old design - are gathered together on the homepage in a smart, minimalist layout. Overall, Dotdash is the shot in the arm that About.com sorely needed.

Our rating







This site from a group of tech journalists (including our columnist Barry Collins) could save you a lot of head-scratching in front of your PC or phone. Spanning five categories - Smart Home, Hardware, Software, Gaming and Reviews - its neatly presented pages provide authoritative answers to multiple conundrums such as 'What does the AltGr key do?' and 'Why does my BT Smart Hub keep disconnecting'? You can also comment on articles and share them on social media. We like the mix of short and long reads, the wittily written content and the lists of popular and most discussed topics. It's a great bookmark to visit for some daily advice.

Our rating





GIFTS

Super Geek Stuff

www.supergeekuk.co.uk

Super Geek Stuff sells personalised mystery boxes packed with merchandise related to anything from retro games to Star Wars - just choose your theme and let the site select suitable gifts for you. The premise is sound and the concept is fun, but the lo-res, grainy images and frequent spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and clunky descriptions make the site look unprofessional. Worse still, the seller uses a Hotmail address and provides no phone number, which makes buying boxes a real stab in the dark and doesn't inspire you with any confidence in making a purchase.

Our rating



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





TRAVEL

Great Northern Rail

www.greatnorthernrail.com

Great Northern Rail is on the right track with this user-friendly relaunch. Now more focused on your journey than distracting you with corporate guff, it's quick and easy to find live train times, while buying tickets is more efficient because you can select return journeys, specify the number of passengers and add a railcard directly from the search box on the homepage. We love the prominent button for Delay Repay (a scheme offering compensation for delays and cancellations) and speedy dropdown menus, but we'd like to see GNR's service updates back on the homepage.

Our rating





LOCAL

In Your Area

www.inyourarea.co.uk

From Trinity Mirror, the company that owns the Daily Mirror, this 'hyperlocal' website provides lots of news and information about your area. It draws on reputable sources to bring together weather forecasts, travel updates, planning applications, crime statistics, property prices and even food hygiene ratings for restaurants. It's not perfect a search for Chinatown in London brought up a story about Chinatown in Birmingham - but it already looks useful and it's certainly pleasant to browse. You can sign up for daily email updates, and community forums are promised soon.

Our rating





EMPLOYMENT

Glassdoor

www.glassdoor.co.uk

Glassdoor lets you find out more about a company before you apply for one of their vacancies, or advertise your own jobs to find the ideal candidate. The site was previously rather cramped but this revamp gives it a slick, streamlined look that makes it much easier to access information about companies across the globe. This includes current vacancies, salary expectations and reviews from employees, as well as photos, videos and statistics. You need to register your details to unlock Glassdoor, but this is free and should ensure that reviews are genuine and trustworthy.

Our rating







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





My Book Corner

www.mybookcorner.co.uk

This comprehensive book review site for children and young adults has opened a new chapter. It's still packed with recommendations from authors, teachers, journalists and book lovers, but now feels more structured. Its insightful reviews are organised by reader age, and the responsive new design is easier to browse on smaller screens. We loved being able to search by title, author and ISBN, and also liked the price comparisons, weekly newsletter, bookawards section and author interviews, while the comments below articles encourage interaction. We'd welcome a way of saving recommendations, though.





MUSIC

Musician Go

www.musiciango.com

It may seem that musicians merely need to rock up to an X Factor audition to gain publicity, fame and fortune, but the truth is that most struggle to find an outlet for their talent. By registering with this site, artists, bands, teachers and anyone associated with music can advertise their services for free, while those seeking to hire session musicians or find local tuition, a local shop or studio can connect easily. You can browse the site by category or search for a location. Profiles can include audio and video, and there's a great built-in messaging service. You can also leave reviews and check out the informative blog.

Our rating





ENGINEERING

Tesla Solar Roof

bit.lv/tesla424

As well as rolling out electric cars, Tesla is revolutionising the solar-panel market. This new site lets you pre-order its first two products - texture and smooth-glass solar roof tiles - and explore Tesla's forthcoming Tuscan and slate solar varieties, each of which is designed to complement the look of your home. You can place a refundable order simply by entering your name, email adress, phone number and credit card details, and read about the science behind the tiles. This wasn't in-depth enough for us, however, and leaves lots of questions unanswered about the tech. You can sign up for future email updates for free, though.

Our rating





If you want to make better use of your smartphone's camera, shoot over to Apple's new website. It's aimed primarily at iPhone users but those of you with Android phones will also find many of the bite-size videos useful for improving your photography skills. You may prefer to visit the site with the sound off - the music is rather annoying - but you'll find tips on capturing portraits, close-ups, panoramic verticals, action shots and perfect selfies. There are also tutorials on shooting without a flash, taking bold images and capturing unique angles. Hovering over a subject lets you click and play instantly, and you can share the videos on social media.

Our rating





Archaeology Ireland

archaeologyireland.ie

Delving into this relaunched site without splashing the cash won't unearth many archaeological gems, but it'll give you a flavour of what the accompanying magazine has to offer. You can read just three free articles and grab a list of published heritage guides while discovering the contents of the most recent quarterly issues. Buy a subscription, however, and you can search the entire archive and read as many articles as you like. The site is smart, fast and uncluttered, but a few more freebies and online archaeological links would make it better.

Our rating



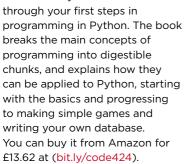
Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

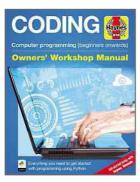
Guide to Python

Haynes is worldrenowned for its manuals that teach you how to fix your car and it's applied the same no-nonsense principles in this latest book, the Coding Manual, which takes you



New Blisk enhancements

Blisk (blisk.io) is a browser tool



that helps site-builders see how their websites look on mobile and wider-screened devices simultaneously. It's just been updated to use all the new technologies in Chromium 57, including CSS Grid Layout. The screenshot tool has been improved,

as has its 'new tab' page, and you can now also choose a dark colour scheme.

You can find a Mini Workshop on using Blisk with your site in Issue 398's Build a Better Site (bit.ly/webuser398).

Deal of the Fortnight

CyberHostUK (www.cyberhostuk.net) is offering 25% off any of its hosting packages. Use the code 250FF during signup.

Web-building Helpdesk

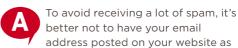
THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: John Morris, CEO of **UK2 Group** (www.uk2.net)



I heard you shouldn't put your email address on your website. What's the best alternative way of letting visitors get in touch?

•••••

Warren Pearson, via email



text, for example yourname@yourbusiness .com, because spammers and cybercriminals trawl the web looking for the @ sign. If they come across yours, you might find your mailbox full of unwanted correspondence. Instead, either write your email address in full, as you would speak it: 'yourname at yourbusiness dot com' or include a contact form on your website. You could also add a Captcha (www.captcha.net) that asks users to type the text seen in an image.

MINI WORKSHOP | Create WordPress charts with a handy plug-in WordPress Charts: bit.ly/chart424 | 🕒 10 mins | WordPress website

If you have some data you'd like to convert into a chart, take a look at the handy WordPress Charts plugin. It uses colour and design to bring visual impact to a dull list of numbers and makes them easier to understand



Install the plugin in the usual way by clicking Plugins and 'Add new'. The plugin uses shortcodes, which are snippets of text, a bit like HTML code, to create charts from templates. Click the Media menu and select WP Charts 1 to see examples. 2



Copy the code below one of the examples and go to the post you want to add a chart to. Paste the code directly into the text-editing window of the post. 1 Click Save Draft 2 and Preview 1 to see how it looks. Edit the text of the code to add your own data or to change elements such as margins and alignment.



To get the best possible design for your charts, it's worth going through the various attributes available for use in the shortcodes, which you'll find at the bottom of the WP Charts page in the Media menu. There are options to give your chart a title, 1 set the size 2 and change all kinds of elements from headings to colours.



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SOUND **PRO-GAMING**

KATANA

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





A small, beautiful-looking soundbar that delivers good audio for under £300 🦡



For keen gamers who want something flexible for movies and music as well, it's a great buy.

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



REACTIVE COLORS

24-bit / 96 kHz Digital Audio

150W PEAK

POWERFUL 150W PEAK, HI-RES 24-BIT/96KHZ AUDIO With integrated sound card/DAC



















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DOLBY AUDIO

DOLBY DIGITAL DECODING

For true-to-life 5.1 channel playback with clear dialog



TRI-AMPLIFIED. ONE-PIECE DESIGN

For uncompromised clear, well-balanced, room-filling audio



5-DRIVER DESIGN

2 up-firing midbass, 2 high-excursion tweeters, 1 long-throw subwoofer





BLASTERX ACOUSTIC ENGINE FOR PC

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



We test and compare the latest products

Samsung Galaxy Tab S3



Both Samsung and Apple have produced new 9.7in tablets. We test them both to see which one you should buy

he proliferation of so many great-value laptops has impacted on tablet sales, so in an effort to turn the tide, both Apple and Samsung have upped their game with their latest models. Samsung's Galaxy Tab S3 is easily the best 9.7in tablet we've seen from the manufacturer, but it's expensive, starting at £599. Its price and

options have clearly been designed to rival Apple's 9.7in iPad Pro.

Meanwhile, Apple has bucked its usual trend of improving on existing models by producing its cheapestever 9.7in iPad. With the basic 32GB model priced at £339. it currently costs less than the cheapest iPad Mini.

Build and accessories

Superficially, neither product looks particularly different to its predecessor. The Samsung has the same gorgeous 9.7in AMOLED display as the Tab S2 and is impressively slim (6mm) and lightweight (429g). The new iPad, on the other hand, is fatter (7.5mm) and heavier (469g) than the iPad Air 2, which it's replacing. However, the overall look and feel of the iPad remains the same, having barely changed its external design since its first incarnation.

The biggest difference between the new Samsung tablet and the previous model is that it now comes with a free S Pen stylus. It also has an optional detachable keyboard that doubles as a cover, but at

£119 it's an expensive add-on.

This is further proof that it's chasing the iPad Pro (£549 for the basic 32GB model), which also works with a stylus (the Apple Pencil costs £99) and a detachable keyboard (Apple's model is £149), both of which are available as optional extras. However, Apple's input devices won't work with the new iPad, only with Apple's more expensive Pro models.

Screen and display

Both the new iPad and the S3 have an identical screen size of 9.7in and resolution of 2,048 x 1,536 pixels, although the iPad trumps the Samsung model's maximum brightness with 520cd/m² (candles per square metre) to Samsung's 301cd/m². However, the new iPad's screen doesn't have the iPad Pro's special treatment, which reflects light in a way that makes it easier to read in bright light. The S3's screen is therefore better for using outdoors.

Moreover, Samsung's AMOLED screen has a better contrast than the iPad's and can produce 100% of the colours in the sRGB standard, although the iPad is no slouch and manages a superb 96.5%.

PRODUCT INFO

Samsung Galaxy Tab S3

Price: £599 Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/sam424

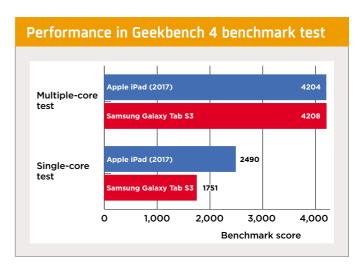
FOR

- ✓ Gorgeous AMOLED screen
- ✓ Brisk performance
- ✓ S Pen included in the box

AGAINST

X Pricey









Performance

Internally, the Galaxy Tab S3's specification includes a quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 820 processor. In our Geekbench 4 tests, it managed an excellent multi-core result of 4,208 and a single-core score of 1,751. The iPad has a dualcore A9 processor, which you'd expect to be slower, but it runs at a faster clock speed than the S3's processor and achieved very impressive scores of 4,204 and 2,490 respectively almost as fast as the Samsung processor in the multiple-core test and significantly faster when running on a single-core.

However, Samsung's extra cores appear to have taken a bite out of its battery life. Although the S3 has a larger battery than its S2 predecessor, it lasted only 11 hours 43 minutes in our continuous video-playback test, which runs a sequence of videos on the device from a full charge until the battery has completely drained. This falls well short of the S2's 14 hours 33 minutes, and is also far behind the new iPad's 14 hours 47 minutes, which

suggests that the iPad's power-efficient dual-core processor might be a better bet, particularly if you are after a tablet to accompany you on frequent travels.

Value for money

All this brings us round to value for money. Apple now has a better range of options than Samsung, with its top-of-the-range 9.7in model in the iPad Pro and this

want an Android device, the Tab S3 is the top of its class. It gives the iPad Pro a run for its money and the bundling of the S Pen is more than worth the small increase in price. But with Apple providing an affordable alternative for those people who want a great tablet without the fussy extras, it's a shame that Samsung doesn't currently have its own cheaper 9.7in option.

f If you can live without a stylus and detachable keyboard, the new iPad makes the Tab S3 look very expensive — not something we're used to saying in Apple reviews!

significantly cheaper model, which may not have all the optional extras of the iPad Pro but can keep up with the performance of the Tab S3, and even outperformed it in some of our tests. If you can live without a stylus and detachable keyboard, the new iPad makes the Tab S3 look very expensive, which is not something we're used to saying in Apple reviews.

However, if you specifically

PRODUCT INFO Apple iPad

Price: from £339 Buy from Apple: bit.ly/ipad424

FOR

- Cheap (for an iPad)
- ✓ Great performance
- ✓ Generous storage

AGAINST

X Screen isn't as good as iPad Air 2

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★

FEATURES PERFORMANCE EASE OF USE

OUR VERDICT

The Galaxy Tab S2 was a brilliant tablet but the S3 is even better. With its speedy performance, bundled S Pen and pixel-perfect display, it's a gorgeous, highperformance tablet. Unfortunately, it's also very

Apple's iOS software is unbeatable and is much better suited to tablet use than Android, so the reduction in price for its new standard 9.7in model is just too attractive to miss - this is the cheapest iPad Apple has ever made and it's still brilliant.

TP-Link Archer VR2800

Jonathan Bray tests a superfast broadband router designed to replace your ISP's basic ADSL gateway

ost of the routers we've tested lately are Ethernet-only devices. If your internet connection enters your property via a telephone line, as most ADSL and fibre connections do, you still need to use an Ethernet modem or your existing router with the Wi-Fi switched off to bridge the gap to your phone line. To replace your existing router altogether, you need to get a 'gateway' router, which does everything a normal router can but also plugs into a phone socket.

This kind of router is less widely available, but TP-Link has just added to their

number with the Archer VR2800. It's a top-of-therange model with a hefty £199 price to match, but it's replete with features and stacked with the very latest technology the Wi-Fi world has to offer.

A black slab with four antennae at the back, the VR2800 has four Gigabit Ethernet ports and a VDSL2/ ADSL2+ compatible socket, plus a couple of USB 3 sockets on the left-hand edge.

There's a line of bright status LEDs ranged along the centre of the router's body but these can be disabled if you don't want to be distracted by flashing lights.

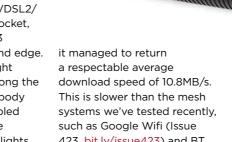
Over 5GHz, it's capable

This is slower than the mesh such as Google Wifi (Issue 423, bit.ly/issue423) and BT Whole Home Wi-Fi (Issue 419,

USB3 memory stick reaching a heady 41.8MB/s, which is absolutely fine for file sharing and occasional backups.

Setting up broadband connections is a doddle: simply run through the router's Quick Setup routine, select your provider from the list (which includes all the big UK ISPs, although Sky is problematic), pop in your username and password and the router does the rest.

TP-Link's Tether app (available on iOS and Android) is also excellent. It gives access to most of the tools available via the router's web-based admin pages, including firmware updates and parental controls.



PRODUCT INFO

TP-Link Archer VR2800

Price: £199 Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/tp424

SPECIFICATIONS

- 802.11ac/n/a 5GHz, 802.11b/g/n 2.4GHz Wi-Fi
- WPS
- = 64/128-bit WEP, WPA/WPA2, WPA-PSK/WPA-PSK2 security
- 4 x Ethernet ports
- (1 x WAN/LAN, 3 x LAN only)
- 1 x RJ11 port
- 2 x USB 3 ports
- **264** x 198 x 37mm

FOR

- ✓ Fast 802.11ac Wave 2 Wi-Fi
- ✓ Top-of-the-range features
- Easy to use

AGAINST

X Not as fast at long range as mesh Wi-Fi

Downloads speeds were the fastest at close range of any router we've tested

of delivering speeds up to 2,167Mbps thanks to its 4x4 stream MIMO (Multiple Input Multiple Output - a way of streaming several Wi-Fi signals at once). You won't be able to connect at those speeds with any single device, simply because there isn't one that supports 4x4 MIMO yet. However, when we connected to the 3x3 adapter in our test laptop - an older MacBook Pro 15in - we found performance was excellent.

In our close-range tests, we saw download speeds reach 109MB/s (872Mbps), which is almost as fast as Gigabit Ethernet and the fastest close-range speed of any router we've tested.

It wasn't quite as impressive at long range, although

bit.ly/issue419), but is enough to deliver full bandwidth of most broadband connections in most parts of the home.

USB transfer performance was just as impressive, with sequential reads from our

OUR VERDICT

If you live in a modestly sized home with an ADSL or fibre broadband connection, and you want to replace the free router you got from your ISP, the Archer VR2800 is easily the fastest alternative we've ever seen.

For larger households, mesh systems such as those from Google and BT **FEATURES**

PERFORMANCE EASE OF USE VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★☆

provide a better connection at long range, but they are more expensive and you would have to continue using your old router as a bridge to your phone line.



STORAGE SOLUTION







4K VIDEO TRANSCODING

Transcode 4K videos to make them suitable for all screens and bandwidths whether they are local media players or remote mobile devices.

TURN YOUR NAS INTO A MEDIA CENTRE

Access and share all the multimedia files stored on your Synology NAS anytime, anywhere for home or work through our large range of apps.

STORE AND STREAM YOUR MEDIA

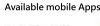
Stream digital content with Roku, Apple TV, Chromecast, Samsung TV and all Bluetooth, Airplay and DLNA devices effortlessly.

For where to buy visit www.synology.com





















₩eb User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE

TABLET

Apple iPad

From £339 from bit.ly/ipad424

Tested: Issue 424

Apple has reduced the price of its new standard 9.7in iPad, making the tablet the cheapest it's ever produced. Battery life is excellent, performance is swift and the screen and build are top quality.

KEY SPECS

Tri-core 1.5GHz processor ■ 8-megapixels rear camera ■ 9.7in 2,048 x 1,536 pixels-resolution screen ■ 1.2-megapixels front camera = 32/128GB storage = 2G RAM = iOS 8.1 = 240 x 169.5 x 6.1mm ■ 437g ■ One year return-to-base warranty

SMART ASSISTANT

Google Home

£129 from bit.ly/home422

Tested: Issue 422

Google Home is a remarkable home helper and we can't recommend it more highly. It can already control a variety of apps and services, with more to come, and has a good-quality speaker. It's simply designed to enrich your life.

KEY SPECS

High-excursion speaker ■ Supports HE-AAC, LC-AAC, MP3, Vorbis, WAV, FLAC and Opus ■ Far-field voice recognition ■ microUSB, DC power ports ■ Android 4.2+ and iOS 8+ ■ 477g ■ 142.8 x 96.4mm ■ 802.11b/g/n/ac Wi-Fi (2.4GHz/5GHz)

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.

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.

KEY SPECS

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

NEW!

SOFTWARE & SERVICES

CLOUD BACKUP

CrashPlan

£49 per year from www.crashplan.com Tested: Issue 420

If you've got a substantial archive of



data, CrashPlan is an impressively versatile and costeffective way to keep it safe. It performed well in our tests and has plenty of options, giving you full control over what's backed up and when.

KEY FEATURES

\$59.99 (around £49) per year for 1 PC ■ Unlimited storage ■ Back up external drives ■ Adaptive versioning ■ Continuous and daily backup schedules ■ Compatible with Windows 7/8+/10, MacOS 10.9+, Linux, Android 3.2+ and iOS 7+

INTERNET SECURITY

Kaspersky Internet Security 2017

£19.95 from bit.ly/kaspersky2017 Tested: Computeractive Issue 493

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



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

- Advanced ad-blocking system Multi-device version
- Compatible with Windows 10

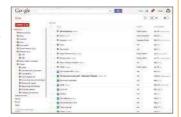
ONLINE STORAGE

Google Drive

From free from drive.google.com

Tested: Issue 389

Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software integrates with Explorer, so saving and syncing files is like keeping them in any other PC folder.



KEY FEATURES

16GB free storage ■ Web-based office software ■ Works with XP, Vista, 7, 8+ and 10 ■ Chrome browser add-on ■ Android and iOS apps ■ 100GB extra storage for £1.36 per month; 1TB for £6.01 per month; 10TB for £60.16 per month

Web User Gold Award winners

PRIVATE BROWSER

Epic Browser

Free from www.epicbrowser.com

Tested: Issue 423

For total privacy online, Epic Browser is fast, easy to use and offers all the tools you need to stay anonymous.

VIDEO-CALLING APP

Google Duo

Free from duo.google.com

Tested: Issue 422

Google Duo is designed to put you at your ease. Calls are smooth and it's easy to set up and use.

Yes D



REMOTE-DESKTOP SOFTWARE

TeamViewer

Free from www.teamviewer.com

Tested: Issue 420

This powerful free remote-desktop program has an impressive array of features that raises it well above its rivals.

SCREEN RECORDER

oCam

Free from bit.ly/ocam419

Tested: Issue 419

With oCam, you can record for as long as you like, in any format, and use great extras such as picture-in-picture video.

MUSIC PLAYER

MusicBee

Free from getmusicbee.com

Tested: Issue 418

MusicBee offers everything you need from a music player. It's fast, easy to use and can be customised to your tastes.

SAFER-BROWSING TOOL

Webutation

Free from www.webutation.net

Tested: Issue 417

The excellent Webutation combines a reliable blocker with a database built on trusted services and users' experiences.

ANDROID KEYBOARD

SwiftKey

Free from bit.ly/swiftkey416

Tested: Issue 416

SwiftKey is the king of Android keyboards, with an unmatched combination of features, usability and performance.

Best Free Software

VIDEO EDITOR

Free Video Cutter Expert 4

bit.ly/cutter424

Min requirements: Windows XP/

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

Unless you're planning to create a Hollywood-style blockbuster, you probably won't need many of the tools and options found in a lot of expensive high-end video-editing software. Free Video Cutter Expert keeps things simple while offering most of the important editing features you need to make a decent movie.

As you can guess from the name, the program's primary function is to cut unwanted sections from your video, which it does in the same way as other editors. Once you've imported a video - all the major formats are supported, including MP4, MKV, WMV, FLV, AVI,





MPEG and MOV - just use the sliders to set the start and end points. You can use your mouse or keyboard to adjust these points with a good degree of accuracy, split videos into equal parts or split them by time, and preview the results in the player window before making the cuts.

However, that's not all the software can do. It also lets you join multiple clips together to create a single movie, fade finished videos in and out, and convert a file from one format to another. If

you're working on a large project, you can set the software to shut down your system once a task has completed.

The latest version of Free Video Cutter Expert shows thumbnails as you move your mouse across the playback bar, and lets you save any frame as an image. It also eliminates the delay in switching positions when you click the playback bar and fixes several bugs.

Make sure you decline the bundled junk when installing the program (an unfortunate trade-off for it being free).

MINI WORKSHOP | Edit and convert videos using Free Video Cutter Expert



Drag and drop a video on to the main program window, or click Open Video and browse to the file you want to work with. The video will appear in the preview window 11 with thumbnails in the playback bar below. 2 You can view the video by clicking the Play and Stop buttons above. 5



To trim content from the beginning of the video, move the yellow marker on the left 11 to the new start point. To trim content from the end, move the right-hand marker to the desired point. 2 The thumbnail above a marker 3 displays that frame in the video. Use the bar above 4 to jump through the video in set increments.



You can also use the yellow box in the top-right of the main window to set the Start and End points or specify a duration for the video. Preview the results by clicking the button 2 and make the desired cuts. 3 To convert the finished movie to another format, pick a new video type from the drop-down menu. 4

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



ANTI-MALWARE TOOL

SanityCheck Home Edition

bit.ly/sanity424

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 1.5MB

We wouldn't say that the fear of malware infection is enough to drive you insane, but it's certainly a cause for concern. SanityCheck is an advanced tool that aims to allay your fears by scanning your PC for threats and irregularities that indicate malware or rootkit behaviour. It doesn't remove the problems but it provides a detailed report containing suggestions on how to solve them. SanityCheck is free for home use, and the latest version has been updated to work with Windows 10.



SYSTEM TOOL

Reset Data Usage

bit.ly/rdu424

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 804KB

Windows 10 contains a tool that lets you keep an eye on your bandwidth consumption. This is useful if you have a metered connection and lets you see how much data you've used over various connections in the past month. Just go to Start, Settings, Network & Internet and click 'Data usage'. Reset Data Usage is a third-party tool that lets you reset and clear this stored data, so you can start afresh.



FTP CLIENT

Cyberduck 6

cyberduck.io

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 45.3MB

Cyberduck is an FTP client but it has much more to offer than simply transferring files over that protocol. The latest version introduces client-side encryption, based on Cryptomator (cryptomator.org), which can secure files uploaded to cloud-storage services. To use it, create a vault in Cryptomator, open it in Cyberduck and then manage your files, which are encrypted and decrypted in the background.

New Windows Apps

Accent Applicator

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 500KB

bit.ly/accent424

This app lets you change the colour of selected text and some other interface elements in desktop applications. It's easy to use and produces good-looking results.



AccuWeather

bit.ly/accu424

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 52.4MB

This weather app was designed for Windows 10 and provides the latest news and forecasts. The automatic theme changes from light to dark depending on the time of day.



Blitz Brigade Rival Tactics

bit.ly/blitz424

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 111.9MB

In this real-time tactical combat game, you assemble a squad of eight heroes and then send them into battle. You can unlock and upgrade units, and join a faction and build allies.



Best Free Software

UNINSTALLER

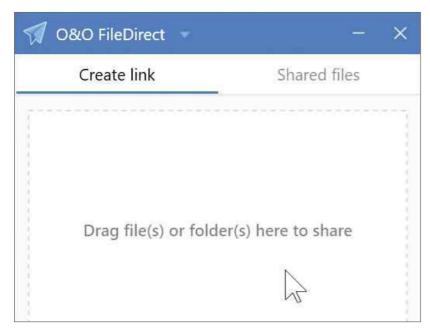
UninstallView

www.nirsoft.net

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 95.5KB

Software developer NirSoft's latest portable tool displays details about your installed applications. Run it to show a wealth of information on all your programs including display name, registry name, display version, install date, install location and much more. The program removes unwanted software quietly - so you won't see any prompts - if this option is supported by the target application, and can uninstall multiple items in one go. UninstallView also lets you uninstall software on a remote computer via the PsExec tool from Windows SysInternals (bit.ly/psexec424). Drop the PsExec.exe file into the same folder as the UninstallView.exe file for this to work.





FILE-SHARING TOOL 080 FileDirect

bit.ly/oofd424

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

File size: 9.46MB

If you have a large file that you want to share with someone, the most common method is to use a cloud-storage service such as Dropbox or Google Drive. O&O FileDirect provides a better solution that doesn't require you to upload files to the cloud.

To use the program, just drag the file you want to share to the main interface. The software will create a web link that takes recipients to a secure web page where they can download the file directly from you. Obviously, your PC will need to be switched on with O&O FileDirect running for this to work.

All file transfers are secured using WebRTC encryption.

FILE MANAGER

Saladin

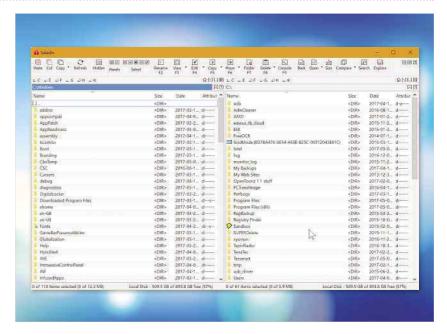
bit.ly/sala424

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 8.4MB

Saladin is a useful open-source file manager for Windows. It has a dual-pane viewer, which makes it easy to copy or move content between folders, and you can specify home directories for each panel. Pressing Alt+Home will take you to the relevant location.

Saladin's integrated file viewer lets you preview images, text files and more without opening them, and you can browse ZIP archives in the same way as regular folders. You can also use Saladin to connect to an

There are dark and light themes available, as well as a compact mode that shrinks the toolbar down to a simple menu bar.





GAME Path of the Rabbit

bit.ly/rabbit424

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 3.3MB

The aim of this game is to lay down tiles to create a path for your bunny without sending her over the edge. Your critter hops along the lines automatically, and you have to guide her to water to refuel. Fighting off foxes and wolves costs lives but also builds up strength for the boss battle. Like the cute little protagonist, this game is tougher than it looks!

Don't install...

Disk Space Fan

www.diskspacefan.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 1.7MB

Disk Space Fan was once a free tool but it now charges you £14.95 (£12.61) to scan your hard drive and tell you which files and folders are taking up the most space. Considering that you probably won't use it very often, and there are many free alternatives available, we'd advise you to spend your money on something more useful.



...Install this instead

TreeSize Free

bit.ly/tree424

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

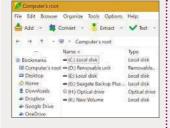
File size: 7.1MB

A hard drive will soon fill up with large programs and media files, and the excellent TreeSize Free reveals where all that free space has vanished. identifying the files that are taking up the most room. The latest release introduces the hierarchical treemap chart that was previously only available in the paid-for edition (\$\mathbb{A}4.95 around £38). This makes it easier to visualise data distribution across your system, so you can pinpoint bloated areas and delete the offending files. TreeSize can also scan Dropbox, Google Drive and OneDrive folders.





UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



FILE-COMPRESSION TOOL

PeaZip 6.4.1

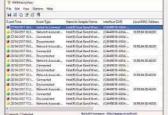
www.peazip.org

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 7.2MB

PeaZip is an open-source file and archive manager that supports 188 popular file formats. The latest version of the software introduces an experimental privacy mode that reminds users to provide a password when they're working on sensitive data.



SYSTEM TOOL

WifiHistoryView 1.45

bit.ly/wifi424

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 74.4KB

This program displays the history and details of connections made to wireless networks by your computer. This updated version now reads archive log files when connecting a remote computer, and can read log files from Shadow Copy (snapshots of files) in Windows.



SYSTEM CLEANER

Black Bird Cleaner 1.0.1.8

blackbirdcleaning.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 948KB

Black Bird Cleaner removes junk files from your hard drive to free up space, and lets you choose the areas you want to target. The latest version of the free software has had a makeover. replacing the original dark theme with a more colourful green design.



SYSTEM TOOL

Windows Repair 3.9.30

www.tweaking.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 31.9MB

Windows Repair helps fix annoying problems with a misbehaving PC. The new version updates the default Registry and file permissions for the Windows 10 Creators Update, and fixes some minor problems and spelling mistakes.

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



Best New Browser Tools

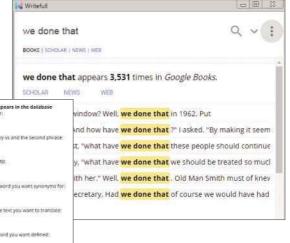


CHROME

Improve the quality of your writing

Have you ever wondered, when writing an email, forum post or online document, whether you could be phrasing things better? We know we done that [sic], which is what makes Writefull (bit.ly/writefull424) so invaluable. This fabulous free Chrome extension (which you can also download for Windows, MacOS and Linux) searches online language databases such as Google Books, Google News and Google

Web to help you find the perfect words. To use it, highlight some text and press Ctrl+Shift+Space or click the toolbar button to open the add-on's panel. This tells you how many times the phrase appears in the databases, provides definitions and synonyms for individual words, and lets you compare two phrases to see which is the more commonly used. You can also translate phrases into English, place words in context and even hear how they're pronounced. You'll wonder how you ever wrote without Writefull.



Find and book cheap flights instantly

If you often feel the sudden need for a holiday but don't have time to browse travel sites for the best flight deal. EscEscape (bit.ly/esc424) from Cheapflights (www.cheapflights.co.uk) can help. Install the add-on, tell it which airport you prefer to depart from, and then when you next feel the urge to get away, tap the Esc key on your keyboard



twice. This opens the Cheapflights website with vour airport selected. so you can search for flights to your desired destination. It's more of a shortcut than an extension. but it saves a bit of time.

Display artwork on your New Tab page

If you're sick of seeing thumbnails for the same old websites every time you open a new tab, why not display classic works of art instead? Art Up Your Tab (bit.ly/artup424) is a new Chrome



extension that shows "enticing and inspiring" paintings and photographs from the "rich collection of Europeana" every time you open a new tab or browser window. The quality of the full-screen images is excellent and the range is impressively varied, including works from European artists such as Edvard Munch, Pietro Longhi and Jan Weissenbruch. You can click 'More info' to find out more about the artist. the year the piece was created, the museum or gallery that currently houses it and other interesting details. What's more, you have the option to download a hi-res version of the artwork to use as you please (depending on the licence), or you can share it on Facebook or Twitter.

Check the popularity of any site

How many people visited the BBC News site last month? How long do visitors spend looking at Reddit? Where in the world is Twitter most popular? You can find the answers to all these questions and more by consulting SimilarWeb (bit.ly/ similar424), which reveals fascinating statistics about the traffic received by any website. Just click the add-on's toolbar button to see an instant breakdown of a site's popularity, including its global and local rank, the number of visitors it receives, which other sites they visited, where they're browsing from and a host of other interesting information. The extension is completely free to use, but be aware that installing it allows SimilarWeb to collect anonymous data about your own browsing habits.





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

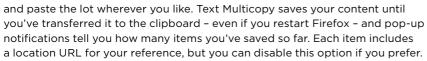


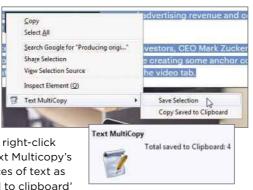
FIREFOX

Copy and paste multiple items at once

With its 'one item at a time' approach, the Windows clipboard is pretty limited, especially if you use copy and paste a lot. Text Multicopy (bit.ly/ text424) solves this problem by letting you copy as many items as you want from different locations, then paste them all in

one go. Simply highlight some text, right-click and choose Save Selection from Text Multicopy's side menu. Repeat for as many pieces of text as you want, then choose 'Copy Saved to clipboard'





Perform reverse-image searches more easily

Reverse-image searches, such as those offered by Google Images (images .google.co.uk), help you find out more about the origin and subject of a photo by using the picture as your search term. You can speed up the process by installing the excellent Firefox extension iGoogle (bit.ly/igoogle424) - not to be confused with Google's now-defunct personalised-homepage tool of the same name. With this installed, you can reverse-search for any online image simply by right-clicking it and choosing

Drag and drop the image here Penguins jpg (759.6 KB)

'Search Google for this image'. However, the really useful part is that you can also search for images from your hard drive, either by dragging



and dropping them to the add-on's sidebar or by clicking Browse to select them manually. Search results open in a new background tab so they don't interrupt your browsing.

Give YouTube a cherry makeover

In Issue 422 (bit.ly/webuser422), we showed you how to activate YouTube's secret Dark Mode to make the site less harsh on your eyes when watching videos at night. But on a lovely sunny day, a dark theme can look depressing, so why not make YouTube look more cheerful by installing YouTube Cherry Mode (bit.ly/cherry424)? This rejuvenates the site in a fetching shade of pink, with a "romantic" wallpaper of cherries and hearts. You can toggle the theme on and off, depending on how cherry-ful you're feeling!



OTHER BROWSERS

Remember to sit up straight It's easy to get into bad posture habits when browsing the web, slouching in your chair or hunching over your desk, which places undue pressure on your poor old back. A new Opera add-on called Quasimodo (bit.ly/quasimodo424), after the famous hunchback of Notre Dame, helps you improve your posture by reminding you to sit up straight at regular intervals. You can choose the frequency of these notifications - from every minute to every half hour - and select one of three different sounds, while a 'silence mode' lets you shut Quasi up for set periods during the day.



Sort downloaded files in Vivaldi

The latest update to Vivaldi lets you sort the files in your Downloads folder by various criteria, making it easy to find the items you want. Just click the menu bar above the Downloads list to sort them by name, size, date added, date finished and web address. Click the arrow in the top-right corner to reverse the order of the list. Another useful addition to the browser lets Windows 8+ and 10 users set their Desktop wallpaper as the background image on Vivaldi's start page.





Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight

BROWSER

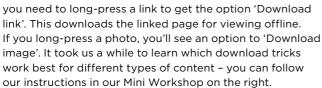
Chrome for Android

bit.ly/chrome424



It's easy to take your internet connection for granted until you're deep into reading a web page on your phone and your mobile or Wi-Fi connection suddenly goes on the blink. To save you from such crises, Google has updated its Chrome app (for Android, at least) to let you quickly and easily download pages for viewing offline.

To use this new feature (which isn't immediately obvious),



] History

Search history

Finding your saved content is much easier. Open a new tab then swipe up to see Downloads. Swiping even further reveals another new feature - 'Articles for you' - which suggests web links based on your browsing history. You can add any suggested article to Downloads by long-pressing, without having to open it first.



With Chrome now offering suggestions and letting you read offline, is there any room in your life (or on your device) for a separate read-it-later app such as Pocket? Not unless you're a particularly voracious reader. Chrome has even started offering mobilefriendly versions of many sites, much like Pocket's readable layout. It can't match Pocket's unlimited online storage, but if your main concern is to keep things simple,

Chrome is now the only offline reading app you need.



D FOXY LODGE WILD ANIMAL AND BIRD RES X

■ Dragon's Watch - A battle RPG - Dev update ×

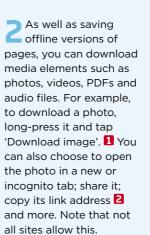
The UK's favourite internet magazine | Web

ng history from this device. Find out more

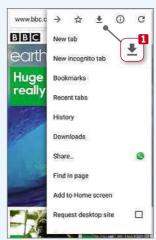
MINI WORKSHOP

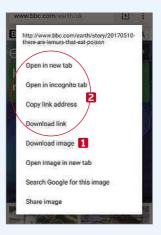
Download web pages to read offline in Chrome

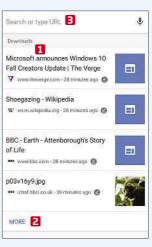
Install and launch the latest version (58) of Chrome (you can check this in Settings), then go to a web page. To save an offline version of the whole page, tap the three-dot icon to open the sidebar menu, then tap the Download icon. 1 Tap the page to close the sidebar. To save an offline version of a linked page, long-tap the link, then tap 'Download link'.

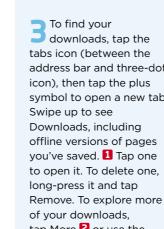


downloads, tap the address bar and three-dot symbol to open a new tab. tap More 2 or use the search box. **3**









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

TEXT CAPTURE

Prizmo Go bit.ly/ prizmo424 **1**0

Take a photo of printed text and Prizmo Go automatically converts it for copying and pasting into other apps on vour iPad or



iPhone. No more standing around jotting down dates from event posters or web links from this page of Web User - just use Prizmo Go to capture the details and copy them into Calendar, Safari or another app. The free version lets you highlight text for pasting, but OCR (optical character recognition, which converts images to editable text) costs 99p via an in-app purchase.

EDUCATION

Felix felixmath.com **1**0

Our second text-capture app of the fortnight also recognises digits in photos - but instead of simply copying them to your clipboard.



it uses them to do maths (or "math". to quote Felix's transatlantic twang. Ah well, not everyone's good at maths and spelling.) Felix is capable of solving quite complex algebra - even from a photo of barely legible handwriting or a laptop screen - and offers a detailed explanation of the answer,

emphasising its role as a tutor, rather than a cheat. An Android version is in the works.

Our rating



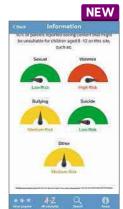
KIDS

NEW

NetAware bit.ly/ netdroid424

bit.ly/netios424 (varies with device) 👛 8

It's a scary fact that the children in your life - kids, grandchildren or perhaps pupils - are likely to be



using apps and sites that compromise their privacy and make them targets for bullies and trolls. You can discover the potential dangers of 50 popular social networks, apps and games - including Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat using this new app from the NSPCC's NetAware project (www.net-aware.org .uk). Reviews are crowdsourced from

parents and children, and come with step-by-step guidelines on improving your privacy settings in every app on the list.



Our rating

Our rating

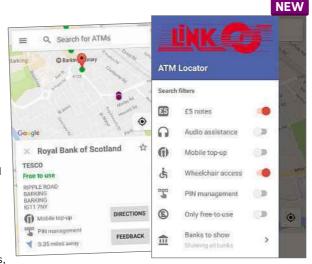
MONEY

Link ATM Locator

bit.ly/linkdroid424 bit.ly/linkios424



Google Maps' ATM Finder doesn't work in the UK and Link's free online ATM Locator (www.link.co.uk/ atm-locator) is too fiddly to use while you're out and about. But worry not, cash-seekers - Link has finally launched an app to help you navigate its UK network of 70,000 hole-in-the-wall dispensers,



and it supports voice control to make searches even easier.

The app displays your current location on a Google Map, then adds colour-coded dots to indicate cashpoints. Tap one to view its details and get directions. Tap the three-line 'hamburger' menu to narrow the field by only showing cashpoints with, for example, wheelchair access, audio assistance and £5 notes. Results were fast and accurate when we tried it, but that may be because we're in an urban area with almost as many cashpoints as potholes.



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

RECORDING TOOL

Mobile Witness

bit.ly/witness424



Silently record audio, video and location data, then automatically and securely upload the recording to your cloud-storage account. Why might you want to do that? "Solid defence against aggressive persons and dubious law enforcement officers," suggests Mobile Witness, which

location and keep audio notes when you go

ask permission before recording anyone.

hiking. Just remember that legally you should

seems to have watched rather too many Hollywood movies. We'd suggest less sinister uses: record important consultations with your doctor, for example, or capture a plumber giving you a complicated quote. You could even use the app to track your

Our rating



MUSIC

SoundCloud

soundcloud.com/mobile



SoundCloud is a kind of Spotify for musicians without record deals. You'll also find audiobooks, live concerts, podcasts, radio shows and the odd chart-topper in its vast audio-streaming catalogue. 'Machine learning' is the technology behind personalised content. Put them together and you get The Upload,



a new SoundCloud feature that creates automatic playlists based on your listening history. Each day, you're offered a different playlist containing newly uploaded songs and other audio content. The more you use The Upload, the more it will learn your tastes. It's a great way to discover music and

Our rating



APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

Mobile Witness

DOCUMENTS

PDF Expert 6

bit.ly/pdf424 Price: £9.99

View, manage and password-protect your PDFs using the redesigned new version of Readdle's app, which now lets you edit PDFs, too - but only if you cough up an extra £9.99.

ACCESSIBILITY

DeafWake

deafwake com

Price: £1.99



This ludicrously loud alarm was designed for people with hearing impairment, but would be equally useful for waking heavy sleepers. Set it to flash, vibrate and sound a truly alarming alarm.

REMINDERS

LockScreenIt

www.lockscreenit.com

Price: 99p

10

Pin up to five photos, notes and other items to your lock screen as reminder







widgets. Ideal for holiday time, when you may want to keep a map and boarding pass within quick and easy reach.

shows you'd never find elsewhere.

CAMERA

Fast Camera

bit.ly/fast424

Price: £1.79

4.0.3

If you're trying to photograph wildlife, sport and other things that won't keep still, use this app to shoot multiple frames in a rapid burst. It includes advanced editing tools, gesture controls and HD-video recording.

SCIENCE

Pocket Anatomy

www.pocketanatomy.com

Price: £9.99

4.4 68

Fly around the human body then zoom in on anatomical structures in high-res 3D, gathering facts as you go. This virtual textbook has enough detail for medical students but is also fascinating for the rest of us to explore.





PDF Expert 6

DeafWake

LockScreenIt

Pocket Anatomy













Best New Mobile Games

NEW

NEW City Mania NEW

Star Wars: Puzzle Droids

bit.ly/starwars424

4.2



This shameless but slick cash-in from Disney combines the simplicity of match-three puzzle games - in which you make rows of matching jewels, fruit or whatever - with characters from Star Wars: The Force Awakens. The graphics and gameplay are impressive, especially if you're a fan of cute rolling robot BB-8, and there are plenty of obstacles, collectables and power-ups to keep things interesting. But in-app purchases, which cost up to £71.99(!), and adverts

keep us from endorsing the game unreservedly - especially for cashstrapped parents.



Our rating



CASUAL

Hydraulic Press Pocket

bit.ly/hydraulic424

4.1 7



After a stressful day, what better way to relieve your frustration than to crush a succession of objects using an industrial hydraulic press? That's the concept behind this game, which is inspired by the popular Hydraulic Press Channel on YouTube. You start by squashing easy items, such as a balloon and a light bulb, for an (imaginary) video that you post on YouTube to attract views, comments and likes. The objects get tougher to crush as you progress,

and you need to ensure you don't damage your equipment. It's oddly addictive and satisfying.

Our rating



SIMULATION

bit.ly/city424

🖷 4.0.3 🏿 8 📰 Phone 8.1



City Mania harks back to games such as SimCity, in which you build a metropolis from scratch, although here the focus is more on fun than complex municipal matters. Construct hundreds of unique buildings, expand your streets with homes, shops and essential services such as a hospital and fire station, and then populate your city. You can decorate your skyline with famous landmarks - so you could have Big Ben sitting next to the Eiffel Tower (Brexit

be blowed!) - and visit vour friends' cities to see how their efforts compare. Awesome!



Our rating



X Don't install...

Snore No More

bit.ly/nomore424

This app promises to stop you snoring by vibrating or ringing to wake you from your noisy slumber. Quite how that's supposed to



solve the problem in the long term is unclear, and this is compounded by the fact that it doesn't work. It failed to detect snores while misidentifying other sounds, and often crashed. It hasn't been updated since 2010, but the developer is still charging £1.43 for it in the Play store.

...Install this instead

Do I Snore or Grind

bit.ly/snore424

9 5

If you've ever been accused of keeping your bed partner awake with your snoring or teeth grinding - prompting an outraged response of "I don't do that!" - this free app can reveal the truth about your night-time noises. It detects, records and analyses your snoring and grinding sounds, so you can play them back the next morning to see what time they occurred and how loud they were. Do I Snore or Grind suggests remedies for both problems, and you can use it offline in aeroplane mode if you're worried that the Sandman might try to listen in. Separate iOS apps for snoring and grinding are available from bit.ly/snoreios424.

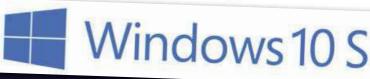






Everything you need to know about the most interesting new technology trends and events

Our guide to



Microsoft has unveiled its rival operating system to ChromeOS, but do you really need it if you already have Windows 10 Home or Pro? David Crookes explains all



What is it?

Windows 10 S (bit.ly/w10s424) is a new version of Microsoft's operating system that's been designed for the educational market and lower-cost computing. It promises to be "streamlined for security and superior performance" - which may explain the 'S'. Although it will be offered alongside Windows 10 Home and Pro, it will be more locked down than either of those, making it feel more restrictive.

What are the benefits of using it?

Microsoft is promoting the new version's faster speed, claiming that it will boot 15 seconds faster than a machine running Windows 10 Pro. It also says the OS won't slow down over time because it is more lightweight than the other versions something that will ensure it runs very well on less powerful hardware. Such improvements will prolong the battery



Windows 10 S is so lightweight, these students have had to glue it to a desk

life of your laptop, Microsoft claims, allowing the computer to run for an entire working day on a single charge. What's more, you'll still be able to use most peripherals that are compatible with other Windows computers.

Does it look any different?

No. On the face of it, Windows 10 S will look and feel just like the Windows 10 versions you've come to know and even love, so switching to it will be virtually seamless. That said, anyone moving from Windows 10 Home will get the benefits of Pro features such as Azure Active Directory, BitLocker encryption and Mobile Device Management. It's by no means a cut-down OS in that respect.

So how is it more restrictive?

The biggest difference is that - as with ChromeOS - Windows 10 S will only work



If you like apps, you're in luck, but if not you're rather stuck

with apps from its official online store. This means that software available from elsewhere will not install or run, so a huge number of PC programs that are only available directly from the developer or download sites can't be used. This will affect software including Adobe Photoshop, Chrome, Steam and many other popular titles.

Why has Microsoft done this?

Microsoft says that forcing people to download all their apps from the Windows Store removes the risk of users installing dodgy software from unsafe places. That's partly because the company requires developers to fix security vulnerabilities in any applications they sell on the store or else risk having them removed. By eliminating the underhand traps in software installers that trick users into downloading junk programs, they can also dramatically lower the risk of malware and intrusive pop-ups.

So it's not about control?

Well yes, it's undoubtedly about control as well. By restricting you to its own store, Microsoft will be able to rule the app market for machines running Windows 10 S and prevent you from downloading and paying for programs from its competitors.



This student can't believe that GIMP isn't available in the Windows Store

But what if I want an app that's not on there?

Tough. You'll have either to forget it exists, wait until the developer releases an app version or look for an alternative. The problem is that free software such as GIMP (www.gimp.org) - which is a great substitute for Photoshop - are unlikely to reach the Store, which could leave you bereft of good options. Still, with a bit of luck, the restriction should eventually boost the number of apps available in the Store, especially if Windows 10 S becomes a roaring success. Given the relatively poor number of apps in there at the moment, that would certainly please Microsoft and would also make the Windows 10 platform more secure.

So what apps can I use?

Microsoft's full Office suite will be available and you can use popular tools such as Facebook, Netflix, Kodi, Dropbox, Adobe Photoshop Express and Autodesk

Sketchbook. Spotify will also be bringing its app to the

Windows Store, while Windows 10 S will integrate with OneDrive, letting you save and sync files to the cloud.



rivals forever

Can I use anv browser I want?

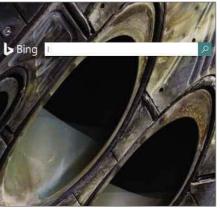
No. As we've already pointed out, Chrome isn't currently available from the Windows Store and neither are Firefox, Opera or any of the other major brands. Until they are, you're stuck with Microsoft's Edge browser. But even when (if?) those rivals come on board, Edge will always be the default browser for Windows 10 S and there's no getting around that - anything you try to open will always activate Edge. In fairness, Edge is faster, slicker and more secure than Internet Explorer ever was, but Microsoft is still depriving users of a choice of browser - an arrogance that has got it in trouble before.

I'm happy with Edge - so all's well, then?

Not quite. Any search queries you type in the address bar will be handled solely by Microsoft's search engine, Bing, and you can't change that either. Microsoft is locking you into its own services by preventing you from using Google and other rivals by default. This could easily be a deal breaker for many users.

Isn't there a workaround?

If you wanted to use an alternative search engine to Bing (and let's face it, you will), then you'll have to visit www.google.co.uk (or whatever your preferred search engine is) by manually typing its URL in the address bar. You could bookmark such sites to make them easier to visit



Bing is known for its attractive homepage photos - except this one

in the future, but this feels like a retrograde step.

So there's no way out of Windows 10 S?

There is one: you can upgrade to Windows 10 Pro. This will be free until the end of 2017, after which the upgrade price has been set at \$49, so expect to pay around the same in pounds. Following this path would let you use apps from outside the Windows Store again - but it also means you'll need a computer that can comfortably handle Windows 10 Pro, and you'd lose the speed, security and battery perks of 10 S. Also, once you've upgraded, you can't go back.

Ignoring all that, how can I get Windows 10 S "for a friend"?

Various machines will come with it preinstalled from the summer while schools will be able to swap Windows 10 Pro for 10 S, with the bonus of getting Office 365 Education thrown in. The first availableto-buy computer is the new Surface laptop, which comes with a 13.5in touchscreen, up to 16GB of RAM and a solid-state drive of up to 512GB. This will last for up to 14.5 hours of video playback thanks to the way Windows 10 S is built. Other computers with the OS installed will be sold by Acer, Asus, Dell, Fujitsu, HP, Samsung and Toshiba.



A Windows 10 S laptop will open you up to a world entirely controlled by Microsoft

WILL WINDOWS 10 S BE GOOD FOR GAMING?

Although Windows 10 S comes with a free subscription to Minecraft: Education Edition, it won't make for a versatile games machine. You'll be able to run any game you find on the Windows Store, which means you can enjoy Microsoft-endorsed blockbusters such as Forza Motorsport, Call of Duty and Age of Empires, along with lots of indie titles. But you'll be prevented from downloading and installing games from other services such as Steam (store. steampowered.com) and Electronic Arts' Origin (www.origin.com), which will put huge numbers of games out of reach. Don't even consider Windows 10 S if you are an ardent gamer because, in the lingo of gaming aficionados, you'll find it "majorly sucks".



The Hacker's Guide to...



If you've tried everything to speed up your connection, but to no avail, never fear. Wayne Williams and Edward Munn present the best new tricks to make your internet faster

The Hacker's Guide to Faster Internet

nternet providers now offer faster speeds than ever but the fact remains that many of us never get the service we signed up for. This is true whether you're using ADSL, fibre, cable or mobile internet. Factors such as slow DNS servers, signal black spots and the settings and hardware you use can all slow you down and prevent you from enjoying a smooth, fast and reliable service.

Thankfully, there are several actions you can carry out to improve the speed and reliability of your connection,

if you know how. This feature rounds up the sneakiest and most effective hacks to help you beat restrictions and get the internet you pay for.

Over the following six pages, we show you how you can boost your connection by tweaking your DNS and other settings, look at ways to hack your router and boost your browser, and reveal the best solutions for upgrading your network. Additionally, on page 44, we explain how to speed up your connection on your phone.

TWEAK YOUR DNS AND OTHER SETTINGS

Switch your DNS server

DNS (Domain Name System) is the service used by the internet to translate site names (URLs using words that we humans understand) into IP addresses (numbers - the language that web servers and routers understand). The DNS server you use is probably the default one provided by your ISP, but you may be able to improve your speed and security by switching to an alternative, such as OpenDNS (www



DNS Jumper lets you switch to the fastest DNS server possible

.opendns.com) or Google Public DNS (bit.ly/googledns424).

You can change your DNS manually by following the instructions provided on these sites but it's much easier to use DNS Jumper (bit.ly/dnsj424). This free tool tests the speed of various DNS servers and lets you switch to the fastest one in a couple of mouse clicks.

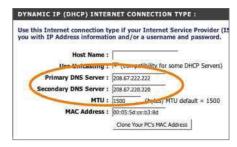
Change your router's DNS

It's possible to change the DNS for your entire network, but only if your router supports the option. To check if it does, open your web browser, enter your router address (you can usually find this on a label on the router) and log in. If your router supports the feature, you should see a DNS option that lets you change the Primary and Secondary DNS server information.

Google's Public DNS IP addresses (IPv4) are:

- 8.8.8.8 (primary)
- 8.8.4.4 (secondary)

The IP addresses (IPv4) for OpenDNS (now owned by Cisco) are:



Change your router's DNS-server information for better speeds

- 208.67.222.222 (primary)
- 208.67.220.220 (secondary)

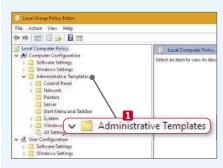
If you can't find a DNS entry, check your manual or search online for how to change the DNS for your particular router. If your model doesn't support DNS changing, you can either buy a replacement that does or switch your current router to 'modem' mode and attach a second router to it.

Flush the DNS cache

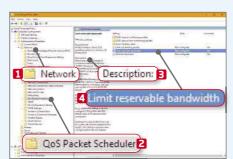
Windows automatically caches IP addresses and other DNS results for sites you look at to speed up future

*

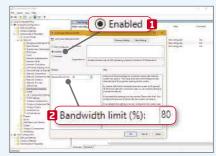
MINI WORKSHOP | How to limit reservable bandwidth in Windows



We're using Windows 10 in this Mini Workshop but the process is largely the same in other versions of Windows. Click Start and, in the search box, type gpedit.msc. Click Enter. The Group Policy Editor will open. In the left-hand tree view, expand the Administrative Templates folder under Computer Configuration.



Open the Network folder, 1 then find and click QoS Packets
Scheduler. 2 You'll see an entry for 'Limit reservable bandwidth' in the right-hand pane. 3 Click it to read about what it does, 4 and then double-click it to open a box where you can tweak its settings.



In the pop-up box, click Enabled (if it isn't already selected) to see the current 'Bandwidth limit' in the box below. By default this is 80%. You can change this to whatever figure you would like. Remember, though, that changing it to 0% will mean system processes won't be prioritised and will need to fight for bandwidth.

indows PowerShell opyright (C) 2016 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved S C:\WINDOWS\system32> ipconfig /flushdns indows IP Configuration uccessfully flushed the DNS Resolver Cache 5 C:\wINDOWS\system32> _

Flush your DNS to fix problems with cached websites loading

visits but this occasionally stops a site loading. To solve the problem, you can flush (clear) the DNS cache. Right-click the Start button and select 'Command Prompt (Admin)' or 'Windows PowerShell (Admin)' (depending on which version of Windows you're running). Type ipconfig /flushdns into the window and press Enter.

Tweak your connection using TCP Optimizer

Back in the days before Windows began automatically optimising broadband connections to provide the best performance at all times, SG TCP Optimizer (bit.ly/sgtcp424) served a very useful purpose. The tool was

particularly beneficial for XP users because it could help improve both upload and download speeds.

TCP Optimizer is still around and regularly updated, and works on all versions of Windows, from XP to Windows 10. You can use it to automatically tweak and tune your TCP (Transmission Control Protocol) settings



Tweak your TCP settings for a potential performance boost

or make manual changes, if you have some networking knowhow. How much of an improvement you'll see from your endeavours is debatable, but you can easily roll back the settings if things go wrong or you want to start over.

Free up bandwidth in Windows

Windows sets aside a chunk of your bandwidth for prioritised system activities such as Windows Updates and licence renewals. By default, this is limited to a maximum 80% of your connection, but you can change this to any figure, including 0% (although that will impact operating system activities such as automatic updates). When Windows doesn't need any of your bandwidth, it won't take any.

You can limit the reservable bandwidth through the Windows Local Group Policy Editor (gpedit.msc), although this is only available in the Pro versions (and up) of Windows.

See our Mini Workshop on page 39 for instructions on how to do this.

HACK YOUR ROUTER FOR EXTRA SPEED

Check for router-firmware updates

Just as software is occasionally patched to plug security holes, fix bugs, introduce new features and improve performance and security, so is firmware (this is essentially software that has been written to a hardware device's memory where it stays "firmly" in place). So if you've had your router for a while but haven't updated its firmware, it's worth checking to see if there's an update for you to install.

You may be able to look for and download firmware updates automatically through your router's management page (log into your router and look for an upgrade option possibly under Maintenance), although some routers require you to download the firmware directly from the manufacturer's website and then upload it to your router manually. Certain routers, such as Virgin Media's Super

Virain Media's Super Hub updates its firmware automatically





Hub, download and install firmware updates automatically in the background, so you don't have to do anything.

Replace the antenna

Placing your router high up and away from walls and furniture can improve signal coverage, but it's not always a practical option. If your router is equipped with external antennae, you can adjust their position to help direct the signal, but you can also replace them with better versions.

The TP-Link TL-ANT2409A 2.4 GHz 9dBi Directional Antenna (£14.61 from bit.ly/antenna424) has a cable attached which lets you position the antenna at a distance from the router. You can also achieve a similar result with the TP-Link TL-ANT24EC5S 5m Antenna Extension

Cable (£8.99 from bit.ly/antcable424). Simply detach the existing antenna, then screw in the replacement (or screw in the cable and attach the old antenna. if you go for the cable-only approach).

Prioritise specific types of internet traffic

Some routers give you the ability to adjust the QoS (Quality of Service) of your broadband. This means that you can prioritise certain types of web traffic - such as Skype calls and streaming, for example - to ensure they always get the bandwidth they need, ahead of other less important types of traffic.

To see if your router offers this feature, and to change it as required, log into your router-management page and look for a QoS option - try looking under Advanced Settings or similar. Enable the QoS option and, if you can, decide which programs to give the most (and least) bandwidth to.



Enabling QoS lets you give important programs extra speed

The Hacker's Guide to Faster Internet

MANAGE WINDOW AUTO-TUNING

Window Auto-Tuning was first introduced in Windows Vista and has been included in every version of Windows since then. It's designed to improve the performance of programs that receive TCP data over a network and should make transfers more efficient. That said, it can sometimes have the opposite effect, especially if you have an older router.

To check the feature is on and working as intended in Windows 10, right-click the Start button and select 'Command Prompt (Admin)' or 'Windows PowerShell (Admin)' (depending on which version of Windows 10 you're running).

In the window that opens, type netsh interface tcp show global. Look for the entry: 'Receive Window Auto-Tuning Level'. It should say Normal. If it doesn't, type: netsh int tcp set global autotuninglevel=enabled and reboot.

If things don't improve, or they get worse, try typing: netsh int tcp set global autotuninglevel=restricted

This keeps the feature running, but in a more limited mode which should reduce potential problems.

Windows PowerShell
Windows PowerShell
Copyright (C) 2016 Microsoft Corporation. All rights
PS C:\WINDOWS\system32> netsh interface tcp show glo
Querying active state...
TCP Global Parameters

Receive-Side Scaling State : enabled
Chimney Offload State : disabled
Receive Window Auto-Tuning Level : normal
Add-On Congestion Control Provider : default
ECN Capability : disabled
Initial RTO : 3000
Receive Segment Coalescing State : enabled
Non Sack Rtt Resiliency : disabled
Max SYN Retransmissions : 2
Fast Open : enabled
PS C:\WINDOWS\system32>

Hacking Window Auto-Tuning can speed up data transfers

There's also a more restricted version you can try by typing: netsh int tcp set

global autotuninglevel=highlyrestricted

If none of that helps, you can disable the feature entirely by typing: netsh int tcp set global autotuninglevel=disabled

To turn it back on again, type netsh int tcp set global autotuninglevel=normal

In most cases, you won't need to mess with it at all, but it's still worth knowing about.



Find and switch to a faster Wi-Fi channel using Xirrus Wi-Fi Inspector

Change the channel

A wireless router can transmit signals on different channels and switching from your current channel to another one helps you avoid interference from your neighbours' Wi-Fi. However, knowing which channel to switch to isn't obvious. Channels 1, 6, and 11 are usually your best choices, but you can use Xirrus Wi-Fi Inspector 2 (bit.ly/inspector424) for Windows and Mac to identify which channels offer the strongest signals. The software offers a range of other features, too, including a dynamic radar that displays all other connections in range, including names and distance.

Changing the channel your Wi-Fi operates on is easy enough. Open your router settings page and look for the Channels option under Wi-Fi. It will probably be in the form of a drop-down box. Click this, select a channel to change to and click Save Settings. If you don't see any performance boost (and it may only be very slight), you can repeat the process with a different channel.

Replace your router's firmware with DD-WRT

Routers come with their own firmware, but you can replace this with a custom version from a third party. The benefits of doing so include introducing new features and configuration options that may not be available in your router's 'stock' (supplied) firmware, such as QoS management and bandwidth usage tracking. The best known alternative firmware is DD-WRT (www.dd-wrt.com),



DD-WRT may look dull but it unlocks some useful router options

a Linux-based open-source download that was originally designed to replace Linksys firmware but is now compatible with most popular makes and models of routers.

Before proceeding, you'll need to make sure your router is supported. To check this, browse the database at bit.ly/routerdb424. Assuming your device is compatible, you can download and install DD-WRT on it.

The process involves "flashing" the ROM (so called because the ROM is usually flash memory), but it's just like installing a new program over an old one. There is, however, a danger that you could brick your router if you do something wrong, so take care and don't turn off your router or computer, or close your browser, during the installation and setup.

Use an old router as a booster

If you have an old wireless router that you no longer use, you could turn it into a range extender to boost your wireless signal. The process for doing this will vary depending on the make and model of the router, and it's possible its router-management page won't provide you with the options you need. However, you can replace the firmware on the router with DD-WRT, which should solve the issue.

Take a look at the DD-WRT wiki (bit.ly/ddwrtwiki424) and follow the instructions for linking your routers.

UNLOCK YOUR BROWSER'S HIDDEN SPEED

Enable TCP Fast Open

TCP Fast Open (TFO) is designed to replace the old T/TCP system and speed up the opening of successive TCP connections between two endpoints. The old TCP protocol uses a "three-way handshake" (three round-trips to the server, or 3-RTT). By combining TCP Fast Open and something called TLS False Start, the initial handshake performs all the key negotiations, so there's just the one round-trip to the server before the HTTP traffic starts, which means pages often load significantly quicker. According to Google, it can improve "whole-page load time over 10% on average and in

Networking ✓ Enable TCP Fast Open Enable experimental networking features Full-screen Enable standard fullscreen API

TCP Fast Open boosts page-loading images by up to 40%

some cases up to 40%".

TCP Fast Open is available in Chrome, but only on Android and Chrome OS, not in the PC browser (to access it, type chrome: //flags and look for the 'TCP Fast Open' setting). Microsoft Edge on Windows 10 does support it, though. To enable it, open Edge, and type About: Flags into the address bar. You'll see an **Enable TCP Fast Open** setting under Networking, which is where you can turn on the feature.

Bear in mind that this is an experimental feature, so you might run into problems. We've used TCP Fast Open extensively without any trouble but if something does go wrong, you can just untick the setting to go back to how things were.

Enable QUIC in Chrome

QUIC (Quick UDP Internet Connections) is a new transport protocol developed by Google. It has a number of benefits over other protocols (such as TCP, TLS,

C @ Chrome Experimental QUIC protocol Mac, Wi Default Default Disabled Disable GPU ra

Hack Chrome to turn on its experimental QUIC feature

HTTP/2), including congestion control and requiring zero round-trips once the initial 1-RTT handshake has been completed. You can enable the QUIC protocol in Chrome by opening the browser and typing chrome://flags into the address bar. Click Enter and scroll down to Experimental QUIC protocol (Mac, Windows, Linux, Chrome OS, Android). You can switch between Default, Enabled and Disabled in the drop-down menu.

TEST THE SPEED OF YOUR NETWORK

Use the new Speedtest

Making changes to your setup might appear to speed up your connection, but how can you tell for sure? One of the best-known ways is to measure your upload and download speeds using Ookla Speedtest (www.speedtest.net). The former beta version (beta .speedtest.net) has now replaced the old Flash-based test but works in the same way.

Click the Go button and Speedtest will measure your connection's ping time (the length of time it takes for a site to receive a connection and send a reply) along with your download and

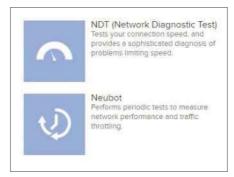


Find out if your tweaks have had any speed benefit

upload speeds. Because internet speeds can fluctuate, it's worth running the test several times, and at different points in the day, to get an average. There's also a free mobile app (speedtest.net/ mobile) available for iOS, Android and Windows 10, which you can use to test the connection around your home.

Measure your quality of service in the M-Lab

The Measurement Lab (www .measurementlab.net) offers a selection of tests you can run to check the speed and latency of your connection (over the network and on mobile), and



Try M-Labs tests to identify the causes of slowdown

identify anything that might be causing slower-than-expected speeds, such as application-specific blocking, throttling and traffic shaping. All the tests are open-source and created by researchers.

The site records and analyses over 242 million user-generated internetspeed tests from more than 87,000 cities, and lets you view the results and see how yours compares.

Troubleshoot problems using **NetCrunch Tools**

All sorts of things can affect your internet speed - from issues with your router to outages at your ISP's end. Identifying the problem can sometimes be tricky, but NetCrunch Tools 2 (bit.ly/ nctools424) provides almost everything you need to troubleshoot slowdowns and diagnose the cause. It offers 11 commonly used networking tools such as Ping and Traceroute, as well as Who Is and DNS info.

NetCrunch Tools does a good job of explaining what all the tools do, although it helps if you have at least some knowledge of networking. You need to register the software before you can use it.

The Hacker's Guide to Faster Internet

UPGRADE YOUR HARDWARE & NETWORK

Replace your outdated router

If your router is more than a few years old, you should consider replacing it with a newer model although the benefit you'll get from doing so will depend on a couple of things. If your router only offers the 802.11g Wi-Fi standard, you should definitely replace it. If it offers 802.11n, then it makes sense to upgrade it to an 802.11ac model. While this standard offers significantly faster speeds and greater coverage, it does require you to also have devices that are compatible with 802.11ac. Anything that doesn't support that standard will only receive 802.11n speeds.

The good news is that all modern smartphones, such as the iPhone 7 and Samsung Galaxy S8, are fully 802.11ac compatible. Here's how the standards compare, to give you an idea of the speed benefits of upgrading:

Standard	Year	Frequency	Data Rate
802.11g	2003	2.4 GHz	54Mbps
802.11n	2009	2.4 GHz/5 GHz	600Mbps
802.11ac	2014	2.4 GHz/5 GHz	1,300Mbps

Upgrade to a mesh network

If you have weak or patchy Wi-Fi in your home, there are several options you can try to boost it. A range extender takes your existing signal and repeats it, while HomePlugs make use of your house's electrical wiring and transmit data



Linksys Velop is one of the best options for a mesh network

alongside the power. However, a better, more modern option is to set up a mesh network. This is a modular Wi-Fi system with multiple access points that work together to deliver solid coverage and use a single name and password.

Although it's not the cheapest choice, Linksys Velop (bit.ly/velop424) is a whole-home mesh network with Dynamic Tri-Band technology that means you don't have to worry about buffering. On Amazon, a single unit costs £199.99, a twin

Google Wifi is easy to use and significantly boosts your signal

pack is £249.99 and a

triple pack is £399.99.

Velop works with Amazon Alexa for voice-controlled access.

Add Google Wifi to your network

Google Wifi (bit.ly/gwifi424) is the search giant's mesh offering, and adding this to your network can make a huge difference to the range and quality of your coverage. Although it's not the only smart-home networking system around, it has the benefit of being an elegant solution that's easy to set up and manage.

Plug the first Google Wifi into your router or modem using an Ethernet cable, then connect to it using the free Android or iOS app. Create a password, then add the next Wifi unit and it will create a mesh network. You'll then need to connect all your smart devices to the new router.

A single Google Wifi unit costs £129, while a twin pack is £229. You can buy and add as many units as you require, but it gets pricey. We reviewed Google Wifi in our last issue (bit.ly/webuser423).

BROADBAND SPEEDS HALVE DURING PEAK TIMES

A recent report from Ofcom revealed that many broadband customers using the internet at peak times only get half the speed promised by their ISPs. The watchdog found that households on a standard broadband deal offering speeds of up to 17Mbps often receive speeds of just 9.8Mbps in the evening.

This may affect users' ability to perform data-intense activities such as playing online games and streaming Netflix films and TV shows without experiencing 'buffering' and freezes. According to Ofcom: "The speeds offered by providers are not consistent throughout the day and can fall significantly during busy periods due to people going online at the same time."

The regulator's report found that

Average fixed broadband download speed, by rurality

40.0
Mbit/s

UK
Urban
Rural

Proportion with average 8-10pm peak-time speed of less than 10Mbit/s

the average UK broadband download speed has risen in the past year, increasing by 7.3Mbps to 36.2Mbps

in the year to November 2016, although in rural areas this is as low as 12.2Mbps.

Ofcom's reasons for web users not getting the speeds they pay for are as follows:

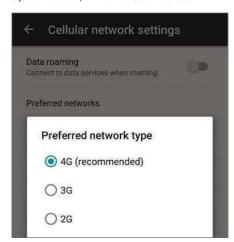
- Your Wi-Fi router may need an upgrade, or may be poorly configured.
- Your router may experience interference due to its location within your home.
- More people use your provider's network during peak hours, which may cause slower speeds at these times
- Distance from the cabinet exchange can affect your broadband connection.

For a full breakdown of the report, see bit.ly/ofcom424.

SPEED UP YOUR MOBILE INTERNET

Switch to a less congested network

Your mobile internet can become slow when you're in a busy area - even when your device shows a good 4G signal - because of the large number of people using the network. One way to combat this problem is to turn off 4G. This may sound counterintuitive, but doing so forces your device to use the next fastest connection - usually 3G or the H+ band - which is often less congested and therefore produces faster speeds. To turn off 4G, open Settings, tap More and choose 'Mobile network' and 'Preferred network type'. By default, 4G devices will be set to 4G/LTE so select the next option down, which should be 3G.



Use the Lite version of apps

If you can't make your internet any faster, the best thing to do is to make sure you have less to download in the first place and one way to achieve this is by getting rid of slow, bloated apps



such as Facebook This doesn't mean avoiding the social network altogether because you can still access it with your web browser at m.facebook .com. This handy web app is much the same as the Facebook Lite app designed

for use on 2G networks in developing countries, so it should cope with even the worst connections you encounter. See the Opera Max tip on the right for help with saving even more data when using Facebook.

If you want a faster alternative to the Twitter app, try Twitter lite. There's no need to install anything, just visit mobile.twitter.com from your mobile web browser. The first time you log in with Google Chrome, a pop-up appears asking if you want to add a shortcut to the web app to your home screen. From the site's Settings menu, enable 'Data saver' to use even less data and load tweets even faster.

Compress web pages in your browser

Opera for Android (bit.ly/operaa424) has built-in features to help you use less data and load pages faster, including image- and video-compression tools. From the browser's Settings menu, choose 'Data savings', then tap the switch next to Enabled. You can now tick the box for 'Video compression' and choose the 'Image and video quality' using the slider. You can also turn on the 'Block ads' function to help you load pages even more quickly.

Google Chrome (bit .ly/gc424) also has an option to reduce the amount of data used when you visit web pages, enabling websites to load faster on slow connections. Like Opera's tools, it works by first loading the pages to Google's servers. This means it won't work with secure pages that have URLs starting

Data savings Enabled Block ads Video compression Image and video quality Low Reset data savings

with 'https' or when you're using incognito tabs. However, another benefit of Data Saver is that it activates Chrome's Safe Browsing system, which protects you from phishing websites and other malware.

To switch on data saving, tap the three-dot menu and choose Settings. Under Advanced, select 'Data saver' and slide the switch to On. If you have any problems loading websites in this mode, you can turn the feature off at any time from the same menu.

Use Opera Max to reduce data usage

Opera Max for Android (bit.ly/ operam424) helps you manage data usage across all the apps on your smartphone or tablet. As well as identifying which apps use the most data, it lets you route your internet traffic through a VPN to provide data savings and load content faster in apps such as Chrome, eBay and Instagram. There's also a handy new feature that lets you benefit from even more data savings when using Facebook's mobile website. Open the app on its Home screen, then tap the button to 'Save in Facebook' and you'll be invited to log into your account. Once that's done, tap

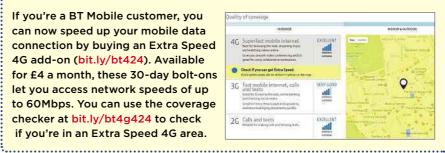
the three-dot button and choose 'Create shortcut' to add a Home screen shortcut for 'Savings for Facebook'.

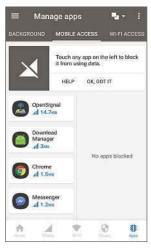
If you think a particular app is using up too much bandwidth and slowing you down, you can use Opera Max



SPEED UP YOUR BT MOBILE CONNECTION

If you're a BT Mobile customer, you can now speed up your mobile data connection by buying an Extra Speed 4G add-on (bit.ly/bt424). Available for £4 a month, these 30-day bolt-ons let you access network speeds of up to 60Mbps. You can use the coverage checker at bit.ly/bt4g424 to check if you're in an Extra Speed 4G area.





to block it from using the internet altogether. Tap 'Manage apps' from Opera Max's main menu, then follow the instructions on screen. Next, while the Mobile Access tab is selected.

tap any apps you want to block from accessing the internet while you're on a mobile connection. There's a separate tab for Wi-Fi Access, so you can ensure your apps continue to sync properly when an appropriate connection is available.

Find the best area for 3G or 4G

Sometimes a slow internet connection

is purely down to poor reception. Speed Test (bit.ly/ speedtest424) is a handy Android and iOS app from OpenSignal that not only tells you how fast your mobile network is. but also maps this data anonymously so you can

can't download

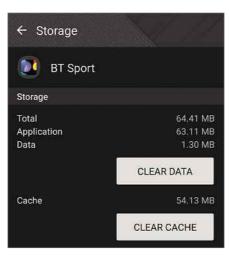
see which areas offer faster mobile data connections.

One of the app's standout features is a compass that tells you which direction your signal is coming from, so when your signal starts dropping in and out, you know which direction you should move in to get a more reliable connection. The app also displays the location of all nearby cell towers in a map view and lets you check which networks have better 3G and 4G reception.

Clear your app cache

It's possible that the reason for your slow internet has nothing to do with your connection but is the fault of your Android device and the apps installed on it. Indeed, if one app is hogging too much memory, it can cause everything to slow down - including the speed at which you load web pages. To see how much cache an app is using, open Settings, then Apps and tap the app you want to check. Next, tap Storage and you'll be shown how much cache the app is using. Tapping 'Clear Cache' wipes it.

This is an especially common problem



on devices running older versions of Android - if your phone is a recent model, you're less likely to encounter problems related to memory.

Change your DNS server without rooting

As we explained on page 39, changing your DNS servers can produce significant speed benefits. Doing this on your phone usually requires you to 'root' it, but DNS Changer (bit.ly/ dnschanger424) offers a simple workaround and operates on both Wi-Fi and mobile data connections. Simply install the app, pick a DNS provider from the drop-down list and tap Start to connect to the servers.

You may or may not notice speed improvements from the app, but it is totally free to use, so there's no harm in trying it. One caveat is that DNS Changer cheekily asked us to give it a 5-star rating in order to carry on using the service. We were able to bypass this by tapping OK and then selecting Back after the Google Play Store loaded.







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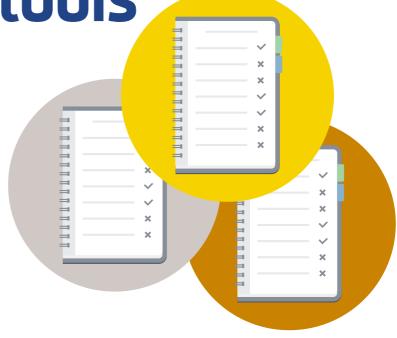
O HACK-PROOF ACCOUNTS

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Best free to-do list tools

With Microsoft killing off Wunderlist, Andy Shaw re-evaluates to-do list tools to find out which one ticks the most boxes



Todoist | todoist.com | ★★★★

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

What we liked:

WebUser GOLD

If you're forever making lists of things you have to get done - whether you you use random scraps of paper or an organised, digital system - Todoist will make the job easier and more

efficient. This finely tuned tool provides you with the basic equipment for creating simple tick-lists but also harbours the power to turn you into a super-human task manager if you unleash its full capabilities.

When you first open Todoist, it presents you with some basic questions to get your first few tasks set up, then encourages you to transfer all your tasks over to the system, starting you off with handy preconfigured projects for you to fill, including Personal, Work and Errands. Click a project, click the plus button or the 'Add task' link and type in the details.

You then have the option to customise your tasks further, adding priorities, deadlines, labels and filters. Some filters are already set up, so you can see tasks that are due today or in the next seven days.

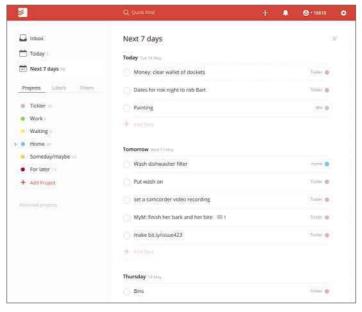
The main interface is web-based so you can access it on any computer, but it also provides apps for all your mobile

devices. These sync immediately, so if you make changes on the web interface then switch to a mobile app, for example, the changes will svnc straight away.

How it can be improved:

Todoist tracks the number of things you've ticked off your lists and twists the data into

a mash-up of 'karma' and gamification. It then encourages you to beat your productivity score to achieve taskbased enlightenment, which is all a bit much. However, this is well hidden away so you won't notice it if you don't want it. The Premium version costs £21.99 per year (£1.83 per month) with a few tools - such as reminders - available only to paying customers. However, most people will find the free version perfectly sufficient.



OUR VERDICT

Whether you want to organise small projects or need a serious organisation tool that can track and manage several large projects, Todoist is the ultimate to-do list tool. Adding new tasks is simple and straightforward, and doesn't get in the way of actually getting the tasks done.

Toodledo | toodledo.com | ★★★★☆

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

What we liked:

Part of Todoist's appeal is its great-looking interface, but Toodledo has knocked all that superficial nonsense

into a cocked hat. Despite its frivolous-sounding name, Toodledo is all about the end result - creating lists of tasks and managing them until you can tick them off again.

It does this by displaying everything in its web-based interface, which is so plain it's almost text-based, with only a few icons for tick boxes to indicate a task's completion and stars for marking them as important. High-priority tasks can be highlighted in bold but there's no colour for folders or any other such distractions. It doesn't even space things out aesthetically, so you get a lot of information on the screen and a good grasp of everything you need to do.

This businesslike approach applies across the board, from the no-nonsense mobile apps to the methods for adding tasks, which can be organised as you



type using special keyboard commands. This is great if you prefer using a keyboard to a mouse, although it takes a bit of getting used to.

How it can be improved:

The functional design and steep learning curve will put some people off who may prefer the bold design and themed mobile apps of Todoist.

OUR VERDICT

If you value function over form, you'll get a lot out of Toodledo. It has more tools for creating to-do lists than its rivals but it's nowhere near as attractive or as friendly as Todoist.

Microsoft To-Do | bit.ly/mstd424 | ★★★☆☆

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

WebUser BRONZE AWARD

What we liked:

If you're happy to manage your to-do lists while sitting at your Windows 10 PC (or any other Windows 10 PC that's logged into your Microsoft account), then Microsoft's new

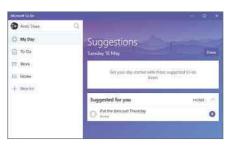
software could be all you need.

Compared to the likes of Todoist. To-Do is disconcertingly simple. You just type in your tasks to add them and organise them into folders. If you want to work on them today, you can drag them into the My Day section, which is handy for focusing on urgent jobs. You can also defer tasks for tomorrow but no further, so any tasks you need to complete in the fututre can't be hidden from your current list of jobs.

Despite such limitations, To-Do is slick and easy to use, and if Microsoft follows through on its promise to turn it into the next Wunderlist (www.wunderlist.com), it's sure to become more popular.

How it can be improved:

We loved Wunderlist so it's a real shame



that Microsoft has halted all future development. However, Wunderlist isn't dead yet - Microsoft has claimed that it won't shut the service down until this new app can do everything that Wunderlist can. That's great news, but frankly it still looks a long way off.

.....

OUR VERDICT

Microsoft bought Wunderlist but has sadly ceased development and moved its engineers over to Microsoft To-Do. While this is good news for To-Do, it's bad news for Wunderlist. To-Do is a simple and effective tool but has a long way to go before it can rival Todoist.

BEST OF THE REST

Any.do

www.any.do

Where our award winners stick to the traditional layout of to-do lists, Any.do defaults to a card-like structure, which is a different approach to organising your lists. The default view is to organise tasks by when they're due, putting them into four columns: Today, Tomorrow, Upcoming and Someday. Viewing them in a more standard list is only a button-click away, but this could be a good option if you'd like a different way to view your tasks.



Trello

trello.com

For anyone planning to impose their organisational skills on others, whether it's family, a club or work colleagues, Trello has some great tools for sharing the responsibility (and culpability) for tasks. Far more than just a simple task-ticking tool, it can be used to organise vast projects, using a card-based system that provides a visual flow of tasks as they're completed.



TickTick

ticktick.com

If, for some strange reason, you don't get on with Todoist, try TickTick instead. It's so similar it could almost be a clone of our Gold Award-winner, but it looks and feels a little different and has a few extra tools. The free version has some limitations, though, and the paid-for version is more expensive at \$2.79 (£2.16) per month.



Discover secret info about

Learn more about your neighbourhood without leaving the house by exploring the web's best local-data maps. Robert Irvine rounds up our favourite free tools

View information about local land

Land Explorer (landexplorer.uk) is a new tool from not-for-profit organisation Shared Assets that lets you view open data about any area of land in the UK (or it will eventually - it mostly covers England at the moment). Explore the map, then click a location to see useful information in a sidebar on the right. This includes the land type (grass, crop, wood and so on), the potential for agriculture, the flood risk and any known planning restrictions. You can also look up who owns a property by clicking the link to the Land Registry, although its dated website makes this a rather frustrating experience.



Learn more about your neighbours

Censuses offer a fascinating insight into the people in your area, and although the most recent national data is now six years old, it's still worth exploring via DataShine's interactive map (datashine.org.uk). This places a wealth of colour-coded information from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for England and Wales at your fingertips, so you can learn much more about your neighbours (anonymously, of course), from their living arrangements, occupations and education to their ethnic groups, religions and health. The data can be



downloaded as a PDF map or a CSV file. For Scottish data, see scotland .datashine.org.uk.

Discover the age of your home

Are you living in a predominantly Victorian area or a post-war development? Find out by using the excellent CDRC Maps (bit.ly/cdrc424), which uses colour-coding to show you when dwellings in your area were built - from pre-1900 to 2010-15 - as well as the population density. If that doesn't excite you, CDRC also provides other data, including residents' preferred methods of getting to work, their country of birth and even the type of central heating they use! It covers England and Wales only.



Check where you can afford to live

The cost of renting and buying property in the UK is exorbitant, but it's handy to know exactly how much you need to earn to live comfortably in a particular area. The new Earnings Vs Postcodes map (bit.ly/earnings424) tells you the average hourly salary required to rent in specific postcodes, based on a single person working a 37.5-hour week and rent being 35% of income. In Central London, unsurprisingly, this can be as high as £119.45 per hour, while in Burnley, Lancashire you need earn 'only' £7.49 an hour.





For house prices, check the Guardian's Unaffordable Country map (bit.ly/unaffordable424), where you can enter your annual salary to see which areas in England and Wales are within or beyond your means.

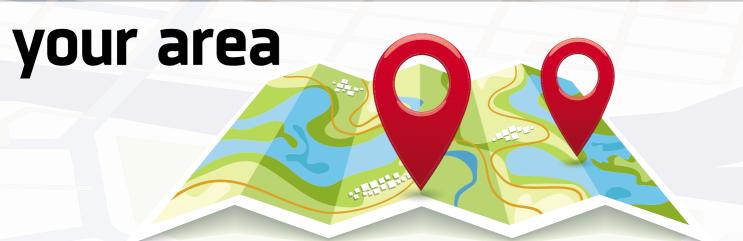
See where your neighbours are moving

The Royal Mail has collated data from the redirection requests of more than a million of its customers to create a map (bit.ly/redirection424) that shows where people are migrating to and from. Enter the first part of your postcode to discover where people have relocated, as represented by blue lines that cross the UK. You can switch between movement in and out, and view further info such as the average, greatest and shortest distances moved.



Find out what was filmed near you Even if Hollywood hasn't

dropped by recently, it's interesting to find out which films and TV shows were made in your area. The BFI's Map of Britain on Film (bit.ly/ bfifilm424) pinpoints the shooting locations of thousands of vintage films - for example Cradley Heath Market (1967), Pitlochry Welcomes You (1958) and Llandudno - Gateway to Snowdonia (1975) - and lets you watch them online





for free. TV addicts should check out Tim Ritz's map at bit.ly/timritz424, which details the locations of series ranging from Call the Midwife to Dad's Army, while Hillary's (bit.ly/hillarys424) has a map of 82 famous film homes, from Doune Castle (Monty Python and the Holy Grail) to Hardwick Hall (Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows).

Browse crime statistics for your area

Not every local crime is reported in the press, but it's likely to have been logged by the police, which is why Police.uk (www.police.uk) is such an invaluable resource for residents of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Click the Find Your Neighbourhood button on the homepage, enter your postcode and click Search to see a map of incidents near your home. You can filter these by month and crime type from antisocial behaviour through to shoplifting and violence; expand the selected area to a mile radius or draw freehand; and view detailed statistics about crime levels, case timelines and outcomes. It may sound like a good way



GET A WHIFF OF WHAT LONDON SMELLS LIKE

Smelly Maps (bit.ly/ smelly424) provides an olfactory guide to the capital by revealing the smells that characterise different London streets. For example. the Waterloo IMAX

roundabout is predictably dominated by the stench of traffic emissions, while Covent Garden gives off pleasant food aromas and Regent's Park carries the whiff of animals from

91.7%

London Zoo. The data is sourced from social-media posts including Flickr photo tags and smell-themed tweets It's an ingenious idea. although thankfully,

perhaps, it's not 'click and sniff'. Smelly Maps also covers New York, Barcelona, Rome and other big cities, but it's a shame it hasn't expanded beyond the Big Smoke in the UK.

to scare yourself, but the site also provides helpful advice about preventing crime and details of your local policing team.

Get flood warnings as they happen

Knowing the flood risk for your area is all very well but when heavy rain causes unexpected problems, it's crucial that you have up-to-date info. That's the idea behind Shoothill GaugeMap (www.gaugemap .co.uk), which provides real-time data about river levels so you know when to dig out your wellies and sandbags. The site gathers its info from the thousands of Environment Agency gauge stations around the UK, each of which has its own Twitter feed and shares the current status of the river, reservoir or tide it's

monitoring every 15 minutes. The map also features webcams for 147 locations, so you can see water levels for yourself.

Expose landfill sites in your backyard

Last year it was reported that living within three miles of a landfill site increases your risk of lung cancer and other respiratory diseases (bit.ly/landfill424), but you might not even realise there's one around the corner. The Environment Agency lets you see the exact locations of landfill in England and Wales, both authorised and historic (meaning the sites are closed or covered). The agency's 'What's in your backyard?' page (bit.ly/ backyard424) also covers pollution emissions, water quality, flooding and erosion information.





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1	sky	Sky: Broadband	£28.99 (£18.99 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	CHEAPEST £227.88
2	TalkTalk For Everyone	TalkTalk: Broadband	£25.50 (£20.00 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£240.00
3	E	EE: Broadband	£28.50 (£21.00 for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	wunlimited	£252.00
4	Virgin media	Virgin: Broadband	£45.00 (£32.00 for 12 months)	12 months	100Mbps max speed	unlimited	£384.00

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 16 May 2017.



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Give your eyes a rest from your computer by taking our fortnightly challenges. Can you guess our company-name emoji and solve our word puzzle?

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CAN YOU GUESS THE COMPANY NAMES FROM THE EMOJI?



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Enter the answers in the grid to reveal a computer term in the highlighted column

- Cumbrian lake and village
- King Arthur's queen
- 3 1983 single by Wham! (5,4)
- Rodgers and Hammerstein musical
- 5 1987 World Champion javelin thrower
- 6 US acting dynasty Lionel, Ethel, John and Drew
- 7 Shape with five sides of equal
- Almond-flavoured Italian liqueur

1					
2					
3					
	4				
5					
6					
	7				
8					

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 4

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WORTH

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EACH



Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Discover Opera's best new tools

Opera's latest update, codenamed 'Reborn', offers a glimpse into the future of browsers. We show you how to use its best new tools



he new update introduces some of the best features from Opera's concept browser, Neon. One standout feature is the ability to browse and chat at the same time. Shortcuts for WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger appear in a sidebar, and you can resize and pin them so you don't have to switch between tabs when responding to

.....

messages. The sidebar itself is new, and you can customise it by adding any shortcuts you like. Other improvements include the option to choose which ad-blocking lists the browser uses and to pick from a range of themes and wallpapers. The browser also warns you if you try to enter private information in a non-secure web form.

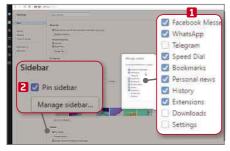


Open Opera. In its new sidebar, you'll find icons for WhatsApp 11 and Facebook Messenger. 2 Click the messaging service you want to connect to, then click Get Started 3 and follow the instructions on screen. You can resize the chat panel by dragging its edge with your cursor.

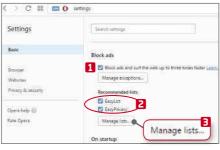


Click the three-dot button for options to mute the messenger or hide it. 2 You can also do this by clicking the shortcut again or pressing Ctrl+Shift+M. Alternatively, click the pin 13 to dock the panel alongside your tabs. Press Alt+P to open Settings, then scroll down to 'Manage sidebar' and click it.





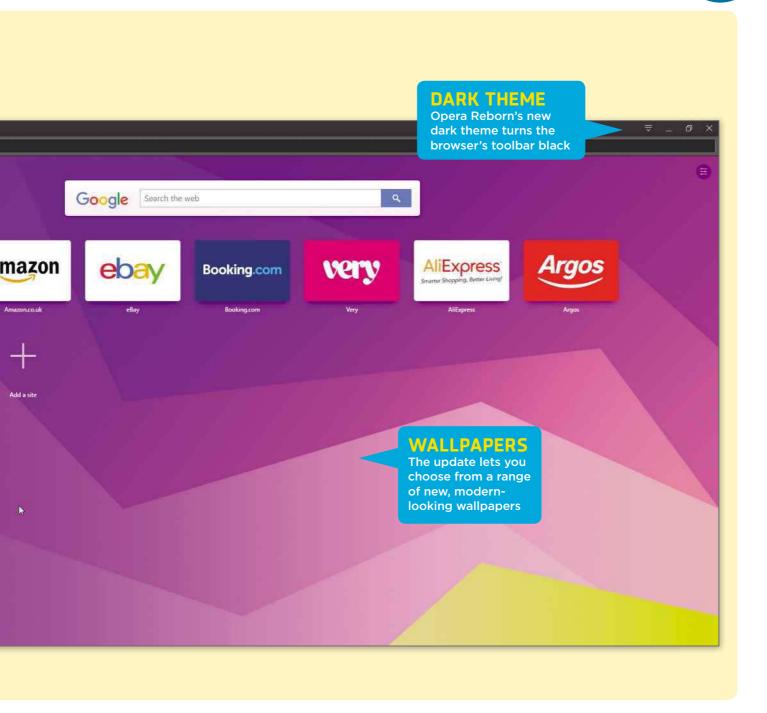
You can choose what appears in the sidebar. As well as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, the default sidebar contains shortcuts for Speed Dial, Bookmarks, 'Personal news', History and Extensions. 1 If you'd like the sidebar to appear only on the Speed Dial page, untick 'Pin sidebar'. 2

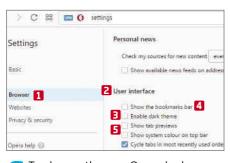


Open Basic Settings again (Alt+P) and tick the box to 'Block ads and surf the web up to three times faster'. 1 Opera lets you choose which block lists it uses. EasyList and EasyPrivacy are enabled by default, 2 but you can click 'Manage lists' 3 to choose from a range of others or add a custom list.



When you load a page that contains ads, a counter in the toolbar shows how many the browser has blocked. 1 Select the counter to see how many ads Opera has blocked over different time periods. 2 If you click the switch to disable ad blocking for that site, **3** Opera reloads the pages instantly.





To change the way Opera looks, open Settings and click Browser. 1 Scroll down to 'User interface' 2 and you can tick the box to enable Opera's new dark theme. 3 Here, you'll also find handy options to 'Show the bookmarks bar', 4 'Show tab previews' and 'Show system color on top bar'. 5



Below the 'User interface' menu is the Wallpapers section, which contains a range of new backgrounds. Use the right arrow to scroll through the various options. If you don't find anything you like, click 'Get more wallpapers' to view more. When you've found one you like, click to select it.



If you load a page that contains a form but doesn't provide a secure HTTPS connection, Opera displays a warning to stop you accidentally leaking sensitive information. The warning message says 'Login not secure', 1 and you can click it to see more information.



Clean up after the Windows 10 Creators Update



Windows 10 Creators Update: bit.ly/cu424 │ ⊕ 20 mins │ ■ Windows 10

he Creators Update introduced some major changes to Windows 10 and it's a big download - but did you know that the files Microsoft saves to your PC don't get removed once the installation is complete? On top of that, the upgrade backs up the previous version of the operating system, so it can be restored if you encounter problems. Altogether, this could hog a massive 20GB of space. In this Workshop, we show you how to reclaim this space, and our first three steps tell you how to tackle any common problems you may have encountered with the update.

Bear in mind, though, that once you've reclaimed the hard-drive space, there's no way to go back, so make sure you make a full external backup before you remove anything permanently.

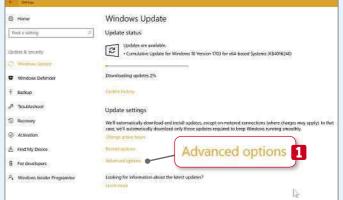
EXPERT TIP

Wayne Williams says

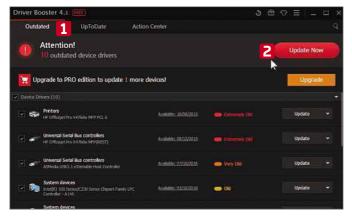
If upgrading to the Creators Update is causing you major problems and none of the steps below help, rolling back to the Anniversary Update (for now at least) is the best solution. Click Start, open Settings, select 'Update & security', and click Recovery on the left. Click 'Get started' under 'Go back to the previous version of Windows 10'. This will only work if you haven't yet removed the 'Previous Windows installation' files.



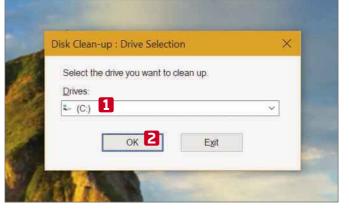
Installing the Creators Update may have interfered with the existing software and hardware on your PC. It's worth checking whether Microsoft has issued any fixes that solve any problems you may be having. Click Start, open Settings and go to 'Update and security'. Click 'Check for updates'. Windows will install any that are listed.



Under 'Update settings', click 'Advanced options' and make sure 'Give me updates for other Microsoft products when I update Windows' is ticked. Under 'Choose when updates are installed', select 'Current Branch'. This will ensure you get all of the updates as soon as they become available.



If you're having a problem with a particular program, check the developer's site to see if there's a newer version that's compatible with the Creators Update. Hardware drivers can cause problems, too. Install Driver Booster (bit.ly/driver424, taking care not to install any unwanted extras) and scan existing drivers. In the Outdated tab, 1 click 'Update now'.



Once everything is working, you can start removing the update's files. Almost everything you need is available in the operating system itself. Click Start and type disk cleanup. Launch the Disk Clean-up app that appears in the menu. Make sure your system drive is selected in the dropdown box (if you have more than one drive) 1 and click OK.



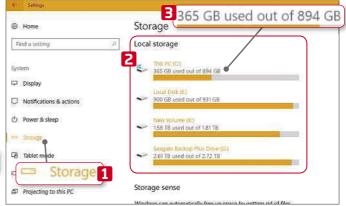
The Disk Cleanup tool scans your hard drive and calculates how much space can be regained. 11 However, this first count doesn't include any Windows files. For that option, click the 'Clean up system files' button. 2 Select your system drive, as before, and click the OK button again. The tool will recalculate your space savings but include additional options.



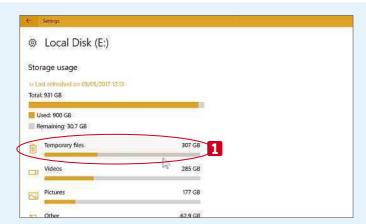
You'll see a new 'Previous Windows installation(s)' entry 1 which includes the files created by installing the Creators Update - in our case, a whopping 35.2GB. Removing this will free up all that space, but also means you can't roll your PC back to how it was before the upgrade, so make sure you're happy with your current setup before you proceed.



You'll also want to tick the box to remove 'Temporary Windows installation files'. 1 These are files that were downloaded in order to upgrade your old version of Windows 10 to the Creators Update. Click OK 2 to remove the selected files and regain your missing hard-drive space. Be patient because the process may take a while to complete.



You can also free up hard-drive space through the Settings app. Press Windows+i and click System, then click Storage on the left. 11 This will display all your connected drives 2 and show the amount of free space you have remaining on each one. 3 Click a drive to get more details on its usage.



If you click the Temporary files entry, 11 you'll have the option to remove junk files. The list of options varies depending on what is on your system, but may include temporary files, old downloads, Recycle Bin contents and the previous version of Windows (which makes this another handy way of cleaning up after the Creators Update upgrade).



It's a good idea to do a spot of general tidying up and remove any unwanted bundled apps. Open Start, find an unwanted app in the list of applications on the left 1 - Get Office, for example - then right-click it and select Uninstall. 2 Repeat the process for any other apps you no longer need.

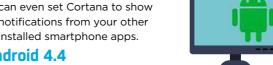


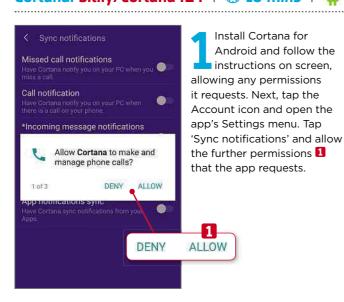
Get Android phone alerts on your Windows PC

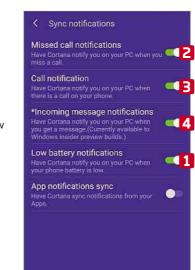
ne of the useful new features in Windows 10 Creators Update is that you can set Cortana to sync notifications from your smartphone to your PC and vice versa. This means you can be notified when you receive a call or when

your battery is low - and you can even set Cortana to show notifications from your other installed smartphone apps.

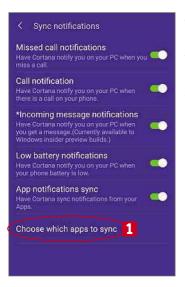
Cortana: bit.ly/cortana424 | 10 mins | 1 Android 4.4



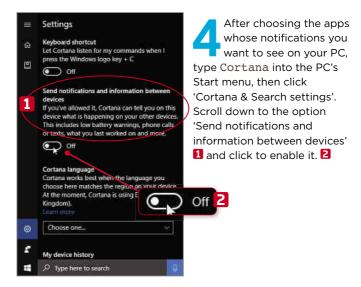




'Low battery notifications' 11 is enabled by default and the options for 'Missed call notifications', 2 'Call notification' B and 'Incoming message notifications' (the latter option is only compatible with Windows Insider preview builds) are activated by the permissions approved in Step 1.



Tap 'App notifications sync' and 'Got it', then tap the slider to give Cortana notification access and tap OK. Tap back, press the slider again and you'll see an option letting you choose which apps to sync with Cortana. 11





At this point, you might be asked to sign into your Microsoft account again. Click Sign in, select the appropriate account and click Continue. Then enter your password 1 and click 'Sign in' again. 2



When you reopen the Cortana settings menu in Windows 10, click 'Edit sync settings' to choose whether your notifications from your PC are also sent to the mobile app. A message may appear in Action Center asking you if you trust the PC you're using 1 before notifications start appearing.



Schedule websites to open when you need them

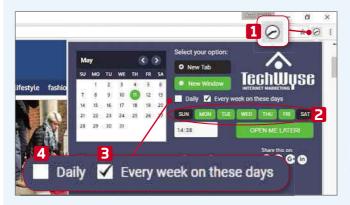
ost of us routinely open certain websites at a particular time, such as perusing the latest headlines over a morning coffee. Open Me Later lets you schedule and automate a website to open at just the right

Open Me Later: bit.ly/oml424 | (19) 10 mins

time. It can also defer pages until they're needed, are updated or you just have more time to read them, acting as a handy reminder to check or buy something later.



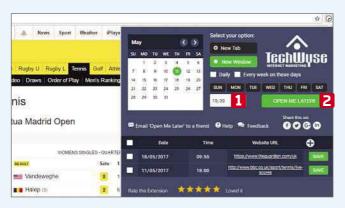
Chrome



Go to a page you want to open regularly and click the Open Me Later icon. I Click the days on which you want lit to open. 🔁 This automatically puts a tick in the 'Every' week on these days' box. 3 If you want to open it every day, both weekdays and weekends, tick the Daily box instead. 4



Click the clock 1 to set a time for the page to open. Clicking the hours or minutes lets you type in the time or you can click the up and down arrows instead. 2 Choose whether you want the website to open in a New Tab 3 or a New Window. 4 Click the Open Me Later button. 5



If you want a site to make a one-off appearance later today because, for example, you know it will have some updated sports results at a particular time, just set the clock 11 to the time you'd like the page to reappear and click the Open Me Later button. 2



Your scheduled site appearances are listed below the main window. 1 Click the plus button 2 to manually add a new event, then click the Date, Time and Website URL box 3 to edit it. Click Add 4 when it's ready.



The time and date can also be adjusted from the list - just click the relevant section, make your changes and click the Save button. 1 You can remove sites you no longer want to appear by ticking the boxes next to them, 2 then clicking the minus button.



You can make sites appear as far into the future as you like. This is handy if you spot, for example, a Christmas gift you want to earmark for a future purchase. Use the calendar's arrow buttons 11 to find a future date 22 and click it. Click the Open Me Later button to confirm.

Weekend Project

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





Create your own personal cloud storage

Wayne Williams shows you how to turn a spare PC into an unlimited cloud-storage server you can access from anywhere



Why create your own cloud storage?

By setting up your own cloud storage, you no longer need to worry about storage limits because you're the one in charge of how much space you have at your disposal. If you need more, just add it. Installing a large hard drive will provide you with terabytes of storage space, which would cost hundreds of pounds per month from the professional services.

For example, Google charges \$10 (around £8) per month for 1TB of space, but you could buy a 1TB hard drive to install in your own PC for around £40.

Using your own cloud storage makes it completely private, so you don't have to worry about snoopers and, because it's yours, you can choose to use it for all

> Free cloud services become expensive if you need a lot of space





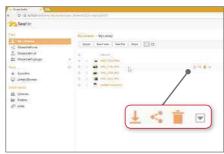
kinds of purposes, including personal (or very exclusive) file sharing, backing up your PC and transferring files to different devices.

What you'll need

To create your own cloud storage, you'll need a computer that will act as a server for your files. This can be your current PC, an old desktop or laptop computer, or even a Raspberry Pi. It doesn't need to be very powerful, so long as you have a connection to the internet and sufficient storage.

You'll also need a copy of the Seafile server software from www.seafile.com. There are different versions to choose from, depending on whether you plan to run your server on Windows, Linux or Raspberry Pi. The process for setting up Seafile will depend on which operating system you're using. In this Weekend Project, we look at how to create a server under Windows, which we found to be the easiest method. However, you're not limited to accessing your files through that operating system because there are Seafile clients for Windows, Linux, Android and iOS.

To set it up, you first need to download a copy of the Seafile Server for Windows, which is available from bit.ly/sf424. Download the newest version (6.0.7. at the time of writing). You'll also need a copy of Python v2, which you can download directly from bit.ly/python424. Our link takes you to a direct download to ensure you get the correct file, because you need version 2 of Python, not version 3; and it has to be the 32-bit version. Don't be tempted to download



Hover your mouse over a file on the server to download, share or delete it

v3 or a 64-bit version, even if you're running a 64-bit version of Windows.

You'll also need your server's IP address - this is your PC's internal IP address, not the one that websites see when you're browsing the web. To get this, press Windows+R, type cmd and press Enter. Type ipconfig and press Enter. You'll find the IP address next to 'IPv4 Address'. Make a note of it.

Set up Python

Once you've downloaded the Python file,

you can install it. You need to add the installation path to the system PATH environment variable, which sounds a lot more complicated than it is. Make a note of the directory Python was installed in (probably 'C:\Python27') and open File Explorer, then right-click My PC/This PC (depending on your version of Windows) and go to Properties. Click the 'Advanced system settings'

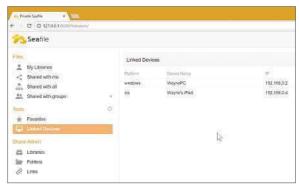


To share a private folder with someone, consider password-protecting it

link (this may also be different, depending on your version of Windows) and, in the new window that opens, click the 'Environment Variables' button.

In the 'User Variables' section at the top, double-click on the Path entry. In the window that opens, click New and enter the install path for Python (C:\Python27). Click OK, then OK any other open windows.

You can now install Seafile - we guide you through the process in our Mini Workshop, below. We also show you how

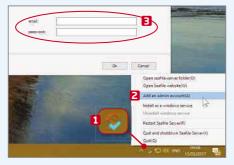


Click the Linked Devices option under Tools and you can see which devices have connected to your server

WORKSHOP | Install Seafile Server for Windows



Once Python is properly installed, create a new folder for the Seafile installation files on your Desktop or anywhere else you'll be able to find it later. Using a program such as 7-Zip (www.7-zip.org), extract the contents of the server file (seafile-server_6.0.7_ win32.tar) to this folder. It will take a while. When it's done, open the folder and double-click the run.bat file. 1

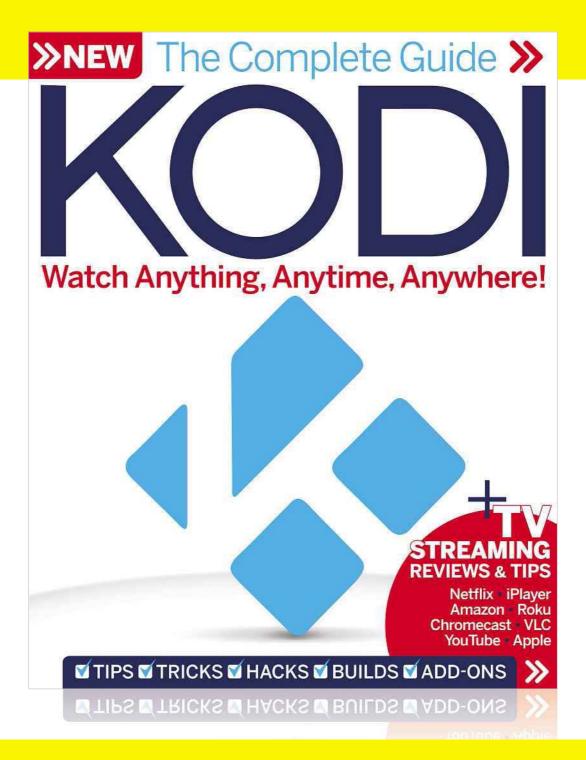


If you have more than one hard drive attached to your PC, select the one you want to use for storage. A Seafile icon should appear in your notification area. If it doesn't, launch 'run.bat' again. Right-click the icon 11 and choose 'Add an admin account'. 2 Enter an email address as a username and a password. E Right-click the system-tray icon and choose 'Open seafile-server folder'



Go into the 'conf' folder and open ccnet.conf in Notepad. Enter your IP address next to 'SERVICE_URL ='. So, for example: SERVICE_URL = http://192.168.1.100:8000. Save the file, then right-click the icon in the notification area and select Restart Seafile Server. Open a browser window and go to http://127.0.0.1:8000. Log in with your Admin details. 2

ON SALE NOW!



Buy now from Amazon:

bit.ly/completekodi

(or search for 'Kodi guide' on Amazon)



Click the Select link in the client to sync a folder on that computer to your server

to get started with Seafile in our Mini

Workshop at the bottom of this page.

Once your server is up and running, you

can begin using it to share files. Your files

Like Dropbox, anything stored in your

Manager and you'll see a My Library entry

on the left-hand side. You'll recognise it

because it displays the Seafile logo. You

can copy content to and from this folder.

To share a library or some folders,

you have two options. You can create

a shared library in a group, or you can click the Share icon next to the library

provides options to create a download

or upload link. You can add password

on the My Home page or the Share button in a folder. A box will appear that

personal library is synced to a folder on

your computer. To view this, open File

are stored in libraries, each of which can

be synced and shared individually.

Share using Seafile

document, it opens in a preview window protection and/or an auto-expiration date to a download link, and you can

also password protect upload links.

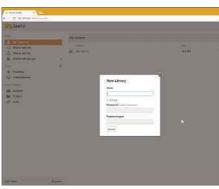
When you click a photo, video or

< 0 1 8

Additionally, you can share the library with a particular user (search for the user by name or enter their email address), and specify the permission - read-write,



Seafile's mobile apps let you browse files and folders on your server, and also share items



To create a new library, click the New Library button in the server, then name it

or read-only. You can also share the folder with a group.

Mobile clients

Like all good cloud-storage services, Seafile has apps for Android and iOS that let you access and share your files and

> folders from a mobile device and ioin in group discussions. Search for Seafile on Google Play or the Apple App Store (there are also links on the download page at bit.ly/sf424).

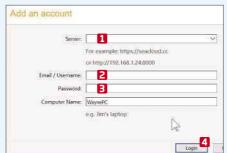
When you launch the app, you should choose to add an account, select Other Server and enter the IP address of your personal server (toggle HTTPS off first), followed by your email address and password. The client will now connect to the server and you'll be able to access your libraries.



MINI WORKSHOP | Share and sync content in Seafile



Once you've logged in, you'll be able to manage any files you add and share. Click My Libraries 11 and open My Library. By default, this contains a tutorial file. 2 To add something to your storage, click Upload [3] and select a file. You can also create a new folder. 4



To access your files from somewhere else, you'll need to install and run the Seafile Client from bit.ly/sf424. At the login window, enter your server address (the IP address you noted down earlier - with :8000 at the end). 1 Next, enter your email address 2 and password 5 and click Login. 4



The software connects to the server, and you should be able to browse through the libraries, 11 including shared content. 2 If you want to sync a new folder, drag and drop it to the grey bar at the bottom. B Click the cloud icon 4 to sync a library. Any starred content can be viewed here. 5

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Create and set up your own VPN server

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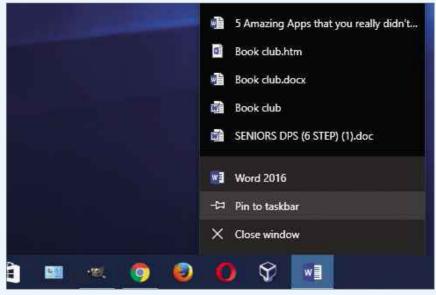
Tidy up your **Desktop** and remove distracting shortcuts, files and folders with helpful tips from our experts

Use taskbar shortcuts to launch programs

our Desktop can become a dumping ground for all sorts of files, folders, program shortcuts and links to websites. You can easily reduce some of this clutter by moving your program shortcuts to the taskbar.

When a program is running in any version of Windows, right-click the icon in the taskbar and select 'Pin to taskbar'. The icon then remains in the taskbar after the program has closed, and you can reopen it with one click. You can also right-click a Desktop shortcut and select 'Pin to taskbar' to add its icon. then delete the Desktop shortcut to clear some space.

If the taskbar becomes crowded with icons, open the Windows 10 Settings app and click Personalisation, then Taskbar. Turn on the switch labelled 'Use small taskbar buttons'.



Clear Desktop space by pinning programs to the taskbar and deleting the shortcuts

Tidy icons into folders

Folders on the hard drive are used to organise files into Pictures, Documents, Videos and Music, and you can use the same technique with Desktop shortcuts. Right-click the Desktop (if you can find an empty space) and select New, then Folder. Give the folder a short but descriptive name.

Drag all your web links into one folder, your Word documents into another and so on. Organising your Desktop clutter into folders makes things easier to find and keeps your Desktop tidy. You may find you can manage with a handful of folders instead of 50 or more icons (yes, some people's Desktops really are that cluttered).

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.

Create custom organised wallpaper

If you'd still rather keep all your shortcuts, files and folders on your Desktop, you can at least organise them so the screen doesn't look such a mess. Find an image you'd like to use as Desktop wallpaper, such as a photo vou've taken or downloaded. Open it in Paint.NET (www.getpaint.net) or another photo editor and use the selection tool to allocate areas on the image where you can place icons.

Drag your Desktop icons to the designated areas to organise them. Windows rearranges Desktop items whenever you change the screen

BEFORE

resolution, but most people tend to stick with the same resolution, so this shouldn't be a problem.

Create tiles for shortcuts

Another way of keeping program shortcuts off the Desktop is to add tiles to the Windows 10 Start menu. Right-click any shortcut or program. either on the Desktop or in an Explorer window, and select 'Pin to Start'. Open Start, find the tile and click and drag it to the top-left corner of the tiled area. Add all your favourite programs as Start-menu tiles and then delete the shortcuts on the Desktop.

Windows 7 users can also pin items



Cleverly designed wallpaper can bring order to your Desktop

to the Start menu. Pinned programs appear in the top-left corner, which is the handiest place for your frequently used programs.

Launch from the most recent list

You don't need to create Desktop shortcuts or taskbar icons for the programs you use most frequently because they're already listed on the Start menu. Click Start in Windows 10 and you'll see a list of your most used programs on the left. Simply click one to run it. This means you can delete any Desktop or taskbar shortcuts for programs on this list.

If you don't want a particular program to appear on the 'Most used' list, right-click it and select 'Pin to Start'. Right-click it again and select More, then 'Don't show in this list'. This moves it from the list to the tiles section. Adding a tile makes the program quick and easy to find, and removing it from the 'Most used' list makes room for another item.

Pin folders to Explorer

If you keep folders on your Desktop, or even shortcuts to folders, you can organise them better by pinning them to Explorer and still access them in a couple of clicks. Use Explorer to move folders off the Desktop and place them in the Documents. Pictures. Videos or Music folders as appropriate. Then delete their Desktop shortcuts.

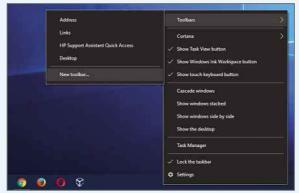
In Explorer, select a folder you've moved and choose 'Pin to Quick access'. Repeat with other folders you access regularly. Now when you open Explorer, you'll see your favourite folders listed in the sidebar, where they're just one click away. If Explorer is closed, minimised or buried under other windows, right-click its icon in the taskbar and left-click the folder you want.



Pin folders to 'Quick access' and rightclick the icon to access them

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave



Turn a folder into a toolbar

A useful way to clear Desktop clutter is to turn folders into toolbars on the taskbar. Open Explorer, go to your Documents folder and create a new folder called Desktop. Then drag your files and shortcuts from the Desktop to this folder to clear the screen.

Right-click the taskbar and select Toolbars, then 'New toolbar'. Select the folder you created and it will be added to the taskbar at the right, next to the notification area. Click it to see all the items that were previously cluttering your Desktop.

Expand the taskbar

If your taskbar is getting cramped due to all the shortcuts and folder toolbars you've moved there, you can make it bigger. Right-click the taskbar and make sure there's no tick next to 'Lock the taskbar'. Click and drag the top of the taskbar up the screen to make it two or even three rows deep. It can then hold many more program shortcuts. If you've turned a folder into a toolbar, click and drag the double bar to the left of it. The toolbar contents then

Go to Settings, Personalisation, Taskbar and turn on 'Automatically hide the taskbar in desktop mode'. This hides the taskbar until you move the mouse to the bottom of the screen, when it pops up with two or three rows of your favourite items.

appear as icons on the taskbar.

Try a launcher

A launcher is a software tool that lets you open all your other programs from one place. One example is SlickRun (www.bayden.com).

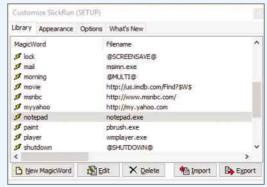
Turn a folder into a toolbar instead of storing icons on the Desktop

which adds a small rectangular box to your screen. This can replace most of the icons that are cluttering up your Desktop.

SlickRun is basically a command-line tool, which means you click it and type in a

command. It comes with a collection of ready-made commands, so typing paint opens the Paint program, player opens Windows Media Player and google opens a browser and goes to Google.

The best part is that you can create your own commands, which the program calls 'MagicWords'. Rightclick the SlickRun box and select New MagicWord. Enter a word, select a program and add it to the MagicWord collection. You can now click SlickRun and type your designated word to run the program, so there's no need for a Desktop shortcut.



Replace Desktop shortcuts with SlickRun and use MagicWords to start your programs

Use Cortana to open apps and files

You can use Cortana in Windows 10 to open programs and applications via vocal commands, such as "Hey Cortana, open Word", or "Hey Cortana, open Notepad". To set this up, click in the search box on the taskbar and then click the gear icon. Turn on the switch under Hey Cortana.

Experiment with this. If you have a shortcut on the Desktop, say "Hey Cortana, open..." and see if it opens. If it does, then you could delete the shortcut to save Desktop space.

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



GENERAL PC

Switch off background apps

A message appeared on my Windows 10 laptop saying: "Too many background apps can drain your battery. Select here to improve your battery life." I have a number of apps on my taskbar, including TripAdvisor, Amazon and Dropbox. I don't use these, so should I remove them to make more room on the taskbar? How do I do this?

Darren, via email

Icons appear on the taskbar to show you which apps are running, but you can also pin icons to the taskbar and use them as shortcuts to launch apps. In other words, if a program appears on the taskbar, that doesn't necessarily mean it's running. If you want to create a shortcut, right-click an icon while a program is running and select 'Pin to taskbar'.

The icons for services such as TripAdvisor and Amazon are shortcuts. If you're short of space, right-click an icon you don't need and click 'Unpin from taskbar'.

Let apps run in the background (C) (On © €amera () On Notifice **3** 00 Speech. **●** 0#

Stop apps running unnecessarily in the background to improve battery life

Only software that's running affects the battery life, but some apps run in the background. Press Windows+i, click Privacy and select 'Background apps'. You'll see a long list of apps, each with an on/off switch that determines whether or not it's allowed to run in the background. Turn off any that don't need to do this, such as Candy Crush Saga and Calculator.

Only apps from the Windows Store appear in the settings. To see which other software runs in the background when you start your PC, press Ctrl+Shift+Esc to open Task Manager, then select the Startup tab. Disable any non-essential startup programs to reduce battery drain.

EMAIL

Download email from Lycos

I have a free Lycos email account and would like to back up all the messages there, preferably by downloading them. The problem is that my Lycos account doesn't offer POP3 access or anything other than logging into the account through the website. I've tried various programs, including a couple of suggestions in Weekend Project (Issue 421 - bit.ly/webuser421) but without success.

I found a program called POP Peeper (bit.ly/peep424), which lets me read my messages without having to log into the account, but it doesn't offer any tools for backing up my email or transferring it elsewhere.

Is there a way I can download or transfer my emails? Can this be made to work with Thunderbird?

Ernie, via email

You're right - free Lycos Mail accounts don't provide POP or any other kind of direct access to your messages. For that you'd have to pay for Lycos Mail Plus, which costs \$4.95 (around £3.82) per month or \$19.95 (around £15.41) per year. If you decide to do this, you can find the server, port and other details you need to set it up with Thunderbird at bit.ly/lyc424. You can then forward any important emails to another account for backup purposes, such as Gmail or Outlook both of which are free.

GENERAL PC

Stop windows popping up

I have a problem on my Windows 10 PC. Sometimes, when I'm using either Gmail or Word, a program from my Desktop opens up over whatever I'm doing. I close it, only for it to pop up again. I then have to restart my PC and hope the problem goes away. It's very annoying.

Also, when I type in Word, the letters don't always appear on the screen, so I'm wondering if it's something to do with my keyboard, which is relatively new.

Edward Turner, via email

Budget keyboards start at around £5, so it wouldn't cost much to try a different one to see if it fixes the problem. But most such glitches are caused by software so check a few things first before spending any cash.

Windows 10 has lots of keyboard shortcuts. Is it possible that you're pressing keys accidentally - perhaps by resting your hands on the keyboard as you type? For example, Windows+1 opens the first item in the taskbar, Windows+2 opens the second and so on. Windows+A opens the Action Centre and Windows+Tab opens the task switcher. Could you be touching the Windows key by mistake?

You don't specify which programs open or whether it's the same one each time. Could it be adware or a potentially unwanted program (PUP)? Check which programs start automatically with Windows to make sure there are no unwanted items. Press Ctrl+Shift+Esc to open Task Manager and select the Startup tab. If anything looks suspicious, select it and click the Disable button.



Disable adware and other unwanted software in Task Manager's Startup tab

BROWSERS

Reinstall Opera

Can you tell me how to uninstall Opera? I've tried removing it in the usual way using the Control Panel, and have also tried Revo Uninstaller (bit.ly/ revo424), but neither worked. Each time, a message appears on the screen saying 'Unable to uninstall Opera'. I only want to uninstall this program so I can reinstall it to solve some problems with it occasionally crashing. Has Opera deliberately made its software impossible to uninstall or am I doing something wrong?

John William Jones, via email

Opera is usually easy to uninstall, either from the Control Panel or using an uninstaller such as Revo. On rare occasions, however, something can go wrong. It's not you, it's the software.

Restart Windows. You can't uninstall Opera if it's running, so right-click the taskbar and select Task Manager. Look for Opera on the Processes tab and, if you see one or more items in the list, right-click each one and select 'End task'. Then try uninstalling it.

If this doesn't work, download and install the latest version and then try to uninstall it. The new version might repair or replace corrupt files, which may then allow the uninstaller to work.

BROWSERS

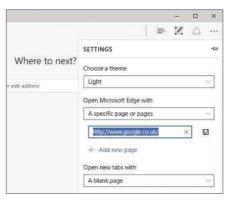
Bring back Edge

Edge recently disappeared from my Windows 10 laptop. I am relatively new to Windows 10 and wanted to try out the new tools it offers. However, the next time I booted my laptop, Edge was missing. Now, when I try to open it, the blue Edge page appears for a moment, but is then replaced with a page saying, 'Where to next?' and a search box that says 'Search or enter web address'. If I type Edge into this, I simply get a series of addresses advising me to purchase Windows 10.

I should add that I haven't deleted anything on this laptop since upgrading to Windows 10 from Windows 8.1.

Derek Wellings, via email

It sounds as if everything is working as it should. Edge has an unusual interface that can be confusing at first. For example, there isn't an address box at the top for typing in web addresses, just a 'Where to next?' box in the middle of the window. It's weird, but you can change this in the startup settings to give it a more familiar look.



You can set Edge to start with your favourite homepage in Settings

Open Edge and click the three-dot menu button in the top-right corner. Click Settings and you'll see 'Open Microsoft Edge with' near the top. From the box below, choose 'A specific page or pages'. In the box that appears, type the address of your chosen homepage, such as www .bing.com or www.google.co.uk. Quit Edge, then restart it, and you'll see your homepage and the familiar interface.

HARDWARE

Wake a sleeping laptop

Since installing Windows 10 Creators Update, I've had a problem with my laptop. It goes into sleep mode when I close the lid but doesn't wake up when I open it again - all I get is a black screen. I have to hold down the power button to power off, after which I can start the computer as usual. Any suggestions?

Brian Wells, via email

This is probably due to a bug in one or more drivers or applications. A known problem affects some laptops that use certain NVIDIA video cards, and there is a fix at bit.ly/nvd424.

To check that your other drivers are up to date, right-click Start and select Device Manager. Expand each section, right-click each item and click Update Driver Software. Just update everything from 'Audio inputs and outputs' to Printers. There's no need to go further. Also update any software you have installed, and check for Windows Updates in the Windows Settings app.

HARDWARE

Connect to a network printer

I bought a printer with the intention of sharing it between the two computers on my home network. I've done this before, so I wasn't expecting any problems, but I can't install it.

Nicholas Harwood, via email

This is a known problem with network printers and computers that have less than 4GB of memory. Windows Update will probably deliver a fix sooner or later, so it shouldn't be a problem in the future.

Type command prompt into the Start menu. When it comes up, right-click it and choose 'Run as administrator'. At the command prompt, type

sc config fdphost type=own. Press Enter and try reinstalling the printer.

GENERAL PC

Find out your Windows version

How can I tell which version of Windows 10 I have? I've heard that the Creators Update is version 1703, but I can't find any reference to 1703 or any other number in Windows just that it's Windows 10.

Helen Mayers, via email

You'll find this information in the Settings app. Press Windows+i and choose System, then About. Here, you'll see which edition you have such as Windows 10 Home or Proas well as the version and OS Build.

Windows 10 has received three major updates since the original 1507 version: 1511, 1607 and now 1703, which is the Creators Update. New versions add features to Windows.



Open the Settings app to find your Windows version and build number

Each version has a build number. These indicate minor updates that have been installed, such as bug fixes and patches. New builds don't usually add features to Windows. Version 1607, for example, had 16 build numbers at the last count. Version 1703, the Creators Update, is brand new but already has two build numbers - the original and a newer build that fixed some early bugs.



This fortnight Roland has set up his own cloud storage on a spare PC. Try it yourself on page 58

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

HARDWARE

Clone your Wi-Fi by using HomePlugs

For years, I've used a Devolo HomePlug to improve the Wi-Fi coverage on the top floor of my house. This appears as a separate Wi-Fi network, and all my wireless devices upstairs are set to connect to the Devolo network rather than the main router.

This works well, but problems sometimes occur when using a mobile device around the house. If I've been using my tablet in the living room, for example, I have to manually switch to the Devolo network upstairs, because the main router is still just in range but has a very weak signal.

I recently discovered a solution to this problem. A firmware update to my HomePlug a couple of years ago made it possible to clone a Wi-Fi network and doing this provides all the benefits of a normal HomePlug setup, but only one network appears in your Wi-Fi settings. The effect is similar to using a Wi-Fi extender.



A simple firmware update could make your Devolo Wi-Fi devices even better

To clone your Wi-Fi network, press the Encryption button on the Devolo device that's connected to your router, then press the WPS button on your router and wait. Now that I've done this, my devices usually choose the option that gives the best signal automatically. If they don't, I just toggle the device's Wi-Fi off and on and it always picks the best option. It's certainly a lot quicker than opening the Settings menu and selecting the network manually.

Lauren S, via email

AnyMote Universal Remote +WiFi ****

AnvMote replaces your TV and set-top box's remote control

out, and they're not cheap to replace. However, I found an alternative when mine stopped working. It's a free app for Android phones called AnyMote (bit.ly/ anym424) that lets you control your TV and set-top box using your phone.

As with any universal remote control, it takes a minute or two to select the correct TV and Sky box model, but it then works well. I can switch my TV and Sky box on and off, browse the menus, select programmes and so on.

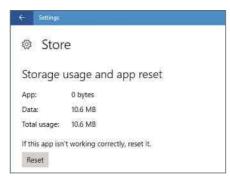
I'll probably buy a proper remote control eventually but at least I can still watch TV for now.

H Carr, via email

GENERAL PC

Reset Windows 10's Store

I've noticed that a few people are having problems with the Windows Store in Windows 10. There is a command that resets it but I can never remember what



The Windows 10 Store can be reset in the Settings app to fix problems

it is. However, you don't need it anyway because you can reset the Store from Settings. If you don't yet have the Creators Update, Open the Settings app (Windows+i) and click System. Select 'Apps & features' and find the Store app. Click it, then choose Advanced options and click Reset.

My wife's laptop has the Creators Update installed, which has moved things around in Settings, so 'Apps & features' is now in the Apps section.

Paul Hayes, via email

MOBILE

Control your TV with your phone

Sooner or later the buttons on the remotes for TVs and set-top boxes wear

GENERAL PC

Restore lost files

Windows backs up your files automatically but not many people are aware of this. If you lose, overwrite or accidentally delete files, here's how to get them back.

Right-click the folder where the files were stored and select 'Restore previous versions'. A window opens with a list of previous versions of the folder saved at various times in the past. Select one, click the arrow next to the Restore button and select 'Restore to'. Choose where to save it and Windows will restore the folder with all the files it contained on that date.

The only problem with the system is that Windows doesn't make backups



very often. Sometimes they're a week or a month old, but this is still useful if you've run out of other options.

Michael Godwin, via email

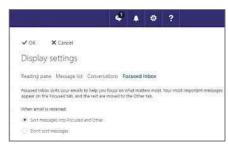
EMAIL

Stop sorting Outlook mail

I logged into Outlook.com today and found that my mail was sorted into two lists: Focused and Other. This means that rather than seeing all my messages in one place, I have to look in two places. I'm not sure this is an improvement.

To change the inbox back to how it was, click the gear icon in the bar at the top and select 'Display settings'. Click Focused Inbox at the top and select 'Don't sort messages', then click the OK buttons to close the settings.

Gary Griffiths, via email



Do you prefer your email automatically sorted or not? Choose at Outlook.com

SOFTWARE

Customise Spotify playlist covers

Did you know that you can add custom artwork to your Spotify playlists rather than using the default covers generated from the songs it contains? It's best to use a square image, otherwise it won't display correctly. To add your image, click a playlist in the PC version of Spotify, then click the three-dot button and select 'Edit details'. Click Choose Image and select the appropriate file on your PC. Note that the image must be a JPEG and less than 4MB in size.

Jack Gold, Web User Forums

EBOOKS

Reboot Kindle to fix problems

If you are having problems with a Kindle, you can restart it as you would a misbehaving PC. Press and hold the power button for seven seconds until the power box appears, then tap Restart. If the power box doesn't appear, press and hold the power button for 40 seconds to restart your Kindle.

Another quick tip for Kindle users is that if you have a lot of ebooks or PDFs that you want to send to the device, you don't have to send them one at a time. You can add multiple attachments to the email you send to your 'Send to Kindle' email address. Just make sure you don't

exceed 25 attachments and that the total file size is less than 50MB.

FratPark, Web User Forums

BROWSERS

Access additional settings in

Did you know that you can access some experimental settings and configurations in Microsoft Edge? Type about:flags in the address bar and press Enter. You can fiddle with any of the settings and if you don't like them, just reset them to the default configuration by clicking 'Reset all flags to default'.

Stewart40, Web User Forums

WEBSITES

Unlock hidden Netflix genres

I recently discovered a handy way of browsing for films in Netflix. The service has thousands of categories, ranging from 'Mind-bending movies' and 'Cult horror movies' to 'Movies starring Matthew McConaughey', but only shows 25 or so by default. Each category has a four- or five-digit code and if you know this, you can see all the films in that category by typing the standard genre URL into your browser and adding the code to the end, so it looks like www .netflix.com/browse/genre/XXXX (substituting XXXX with the identifier

Access thousands of hidden genres in Netflix

available categories, visit bit.ly/ netflix424. Click a link on this page to open the category directly in Netflix.

Bedstor, Web User Forums

WEBSITES

Find overwritten files in **Google Drive**

Yesterday, I added a file to a folder in Google Drive and was dismayed to discover that it had overwritten a file with the same name. However. I remembered seeing a pop-up a few days before that said if you add a file of the same name as an existing one, Google Drive adds it to the version history rather than creating a duplicate. With this in mind, I right-clicked the file, selected 'Manage versions' and found the overwritten version, which I then downloaded. Note that previous versions are only available for 30 days.

Neil Bowler, via email

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

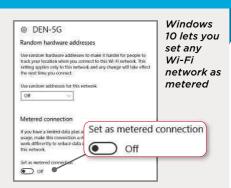
GENERAL PC

Stop Windows 10 wasting data

code). For a comprehensive list of the

Last week, my home broadband stopped working. While I was waiting for BT to fix it. I decided to connect my PC to the internet using my smartphone as a Wi-Fi hotspot. Unfortunately, because I hadn't used my PC for a while, Windows Update started downloading some large files and now I've all but used up my entire mobile data allowance for the month.

I've since learned a simple way to avoid this problem in Windows 10, which is to set the hotspot as a metered connection. To do this, click the network's name in the Wi-Fi settings menu, select Properties and turn on 'Metered connection'. Now when I use my phone as a personal hotspot, my PC no longer downloads software updates automatically.



If you want to keep an eye on how much data you use, open Settings, click 'Network and Internet' and choose 'Data usage' from the sidebar. Make a note of the Wi-Fi total so you can calculate how much data you've used during a given period.

You can also monitor your usage on your Android device. On my Samsung Galaxy S6, I open Settings, then 'Data usage'. The total for 'Mobile hotspot and tethering' is in the application list.

Ed Wright, 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

Does Windows 10 need a Microsoft account?

My neighbour is trying to set up his new laptop but can't remember the details of his Microsoft account or indeed whether he even has one. Is there an easy way to check this?

The Badger, Web User Forums

You don't actually need a Microsoft account to activate Windows 10. When asked to enter your account details, simply look for the button that says 'Skip this step'. There's an article at Gadget Hacks (bit.ly/msa424) if you want more information. Alternatively, you could create a new Microsoft account during the setup if you don't have one or you want an additional one.

If your neighbour can't remember whether or not he has an account, one trick is to try entering the phone number he would have registered with the account into the box in the login screen and see if anything comes up.

lizzygraham, Web User Forums



You can log into your Microsoft account using your mobile phone number

NETWORKING

Why can't I access the Web User Forums?

I'm having problems with my HP ProBook 4540s laptop when trying to post on the Web User Forums (forum.webuser.co.uk). Just recently, it refuses to post my replies and I keep getting the error message "This site can't be reached". I've tried various things to fix the problem, including

GENERAL PC

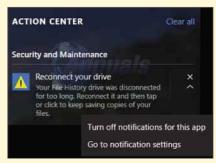
How do I stop File History pop-ups?

I often get a notification on my Windows 10 PC that says I need to reconnect my File History drive. What does this mean, and how do I stop the notifications appearing?

Pups, Web User Forums

Have you set File History to back up your files to an external hard drive? Technically, File History needs to have a drive connected permanently – I use a NAS drive on a 12-hour schedule. If you disconnect your external drive, you'll keep seeing the notifications.

If you want to hide the notification, right-click it when it next appears and opt to 'Turn off notifications'. Beware, though, that doing this instead of connecting an external drive will stop File History working properly. When restoring files, for example, you won't



Stop notifications by right-clicking them in Action Center and choosing an option

have as many previous versions to choose from if the drive isn't there to save them. To create a File History backup manually when you next connect the drive, open Settings, click 'Update & security', then Backup, 'More options' and select 'Back up now'.

One advantage to not having your backup drive connected all the time is that you should be better protected against ransomware.

Cantrel, Helmut and lizzygraham, Web User Forums

rebooting the laptop, restarting the router and using a different browser, but nothing

has worked.
I've also run scans using both AVG
(www.avg.com) and Malwarebytes

(www.malwarebytes.com), and used CCleaner (www.piriform.com/ccleaner) to clean all browser caches and remove redundant junk. I can still browse other websites without any problems.

egg, Web User Forums

Right-click the Start button, select
Command Prompt (Admin) and click
Yes. Type the following commands,
pressing Enter after each one:
netsh winsock reset
netsh int ip reset resetlog.txt
shutdown /r /t 00

Once you've done that, your PC will reboot and you can see if you can post

Administrator:Command Prompt

Microsoft Windows [Version 6.1.7601]
Copyright (c) 2009 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\edward_munn>netsh int ip reset resetlog.txt_

Resetting your TCP/IP settings fixes many internet connection problems

to the forum. If you still get the error message, click Start, type ncpa.cpl and press Enter. Right-click whichever network adapter you're using and select Properties. If (TCP/IPv6) is ticked, untick it, then click (TCP/IPv4) and select Properties. Click the button for 'Use the following DNS servers', and type 8.8.8.8 into the top row of boxes. In the row below that, type 8.8.4.4. Tick the box to 'Validate settings upon exit', then click OK and Close. Finally, open Command Prompt (Admin) again and enter the following commands:

ipconfig /flushdns ipconfig /registerdns

Close the console and you should hopefully be able to access the forum.

Cantrel, Web User Forums



Star Email

Mug/

Google will never block its own ads

eading your lead news story in Issue 422 (bit.ly/webuser422) about Google adding an ad blocker to Chrome, I have to wonder if we're all being taken for fools. After all, Google is the biggest advertising network on the web - indeed, in the world - and has built its fortune mainly on getting web users to view and click online ads. Now we're supposed to believe that it's made a U-turn and decided that ads are a bad thing after all, and is giving us an easy way to block them. Well, forgive me while I stroke my chin in a sceptical manner.

I have found that using the web without an ad blocker is nigh on impossible these days, such is the prevalence of annoying ads, and I'd



challenge anyone to visit sites such as Mail Online or CNN without being driven doolally. To be fair to Google, its own ads are less intrusive than those awful video pop-ups that start playing automatically, and the fly-out banners that obscure the articles you're trying to read. However,

they still distract you from genuine search results and creepily seem to

> know what you've been looking at. If Google is to build its own ad blocker into Chrome, I think it's highly unlikely that we'll be able to use it to block Google's own adverts, or it will be cutting off its nose to spite its face. It's more probable that the blocker will only filter the ads from

companies that aren't signed up with Google Adwords, to wipe out its

Personally, I will stick with using uBlock Origin, which I find is perfect for my needs and doesn't take backhanders from advertising companies. If I don't want to suffer ads online, then why should I have to?

Spencer O'Neill, via email

Confuse phone scammers by asking for specifics...

I agree with David Barton-Smith in Inbox, Issue 422: Web User is worth every penny.

I just wanted to share a tip I use when I get obvious scam calls such as the famous Microsoft tech-support scam or the BT call that David describes - I ask the operator the make and model of the particular piece of equipment they are referring to.

In the case of the Microsoft scam,



where you are told that software on your computer has been infected with viruses, I ask which computer and which piece of software. They'll reply with something generic like "your Windows computer" and

have a guess at some popular software application. I usually stop them there by telling them I know it's a scam because I use a Mac but if I'm feeling playful, I ask them to be more specific. After all, if they know I have a virus and can fix it for me,

they should already have access to my computer and be able to provide a bit more detail.

The phone tends to go dead at that point. If it doesn't, I ask them - less than politely - not to try scamming me again, and then I put the phone down myself. It's funny how few of these calls I get these days. Is there a central knowledgebase perhaps?

Jeff Hurst, via email

...or by being completely bonkers

I read with interest your Star Email from David Barton-Smith, but I wonder why he wasted his time explaining his situation and past experience to a caller who already knew that, and couldn't care less anyway.

I find that a good way to deal with these scam calls is to say something completely bonkers, that has nothing







Web User readers almost certainly know how to punch 'plumber' and 'telephone number' into Google 🕊

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

to do with the subject or indeed, anything else. I change what I say from time to time, but my current tactic, when they tell me about all the dreadful things my computer is suffering, is to say with great joy and enthusiasm:

"I've got a blue rabbit!".

So far this phrase has achieved 100% success with their ending the call immediately. In fact, we haven't had any scam calls for a while now.

Mike Palmer, via email

Rip-off prices killed the music industry

Regarding the recent debate in your Inbox pages about copyright: under copyright law, when you buy a book, you are buying the licence to read it. Yet you can buy second-hand books all over town, even though this breaks copyright law. What is annoying - especially if you're like me and guite old - is that if you purchased an album on tape then vinyl then CD, you've paid three times for the same product. Some old VHS videos like Infected by The The have never been put out on DVD format so what are fans to do but transfer their old VHS copy to DVD? Similarly, Lady Gaga has made lots of great videos for her songs, but has



never put these on a DVD, so people copy them from YouTube.

The music industry used to advertise that "Home

Taping is Killing

Music", but most of the things I taped from the radio that I liked, I purchased at a later stage. The thing that killed music was the high cost of CD albums, which were much cheaper to manufacture than vinyl but double the cost. Also, people only have so much disposable income, so if they had no money they would not have purchased the CD anyway.

Adrian Bonnington, Northampton

Barking up the wrong family

In your write-up of My Family Tree 7 in Issue 422, it would have been more complete to point out that this application is yet another product

of the wretched Mormons, in pursuit of their bizarre notions. I do not want my ancestors baptised or whatever it is these people do. So do us a favour and find some good genealogical software that isn't polluted by

Bill Anderson, via email

Web User says: My Family Tree is the work of Chronoplex Software's developer Andrew Hoyle (bit.ly/hoyle422). It is in no way affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, although it does let you import GEDCOM files - a format that was developed by the Mormons as an aid to genealogical research, which has become the

standard for exchanging family-tree data. Other than that, software is entirely secular.

this nonsense.



Are we under attack from aliens?

In the past, I've commented on the fact that software programmers speak a language not previously heard on earth. Another example appeared in Issue 422. when a reader said their PC wouldn't boot, and the message "Page fault in non-paged area" appeared.

Now, you'd think that if an area is 'non-paged', there's no way it could have a page fault - or anything to do with



pages, faulty or otherwise! Is it that there's a hardware fault in the programmers brain? Or are we being attacked by aliens from the planet Geek?! Jon98, Web User Forums

Squirrel your data away in the UK

In a recent edition of Web User (Issue 420, page 21), I read with interest your article on cloud backup, but was surprised to see that you hadn't included SquirrelSave (www.squirrelsave.co.uk).

I started using this company three vears ago and haven't

looked back. I thought about using Carbonite but like the idea that my data is stored in the UK. I can also use this software on all three of my PCs.



SquirrelSave

After the initial backup, which takes some time (depending on how much data you have to back up), SquirrelSave runs in the background updating automatically. You can also recover deleted files up to 30 days later.

Maybe next time include this company in your review?

Andy Chandler, via email

Bored of reading about Kodi

Every now and then, something comes along that gets hyped up so much you just get sick of hearing about it. Last year, it was Pokémon Go, the year before that it was Windows 10, and this year it's Kodi ruddy Kodi.

I open the newspaper and there's stories about Kodi; go for lunch with family and they talk about Kodi; and when my favourite tech magazine pops through my letterbox, what a surprise: it's got Kodi on the cover and eight pages of Kodi inside.

Having tried Kodi a couple of years ago, I really can't understand what all the fuss is about. As a piece of software, it's pretty basic and boring-looking certainly not on a patch on Windows Media Centre - and it really only becomes interesting once you install

As we well know from recent stories in the press, it's these add-ons that get you in trouble with the law because most of them are specifically designed to

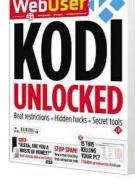






stream TV channels and films illegally. Fortunately. most of them are so fiddly to set up that most people quickly give up on Kodi -I know I did.

I realise that Web User and its sister title



need to sell magazines, and that Kodi is a current 'hot topic', but I believe I speak on behalf of a lot of readers when I say that I'm bored of reading and hearing about Kodi. I'd be much happier if we could all move onto the 'next big thing' (until we get bored of that, too).

So please, let's hear no more about Kodi - at least for a while.

Frank Christensen, via email

Hurry up and split BT from Openreach

Not so long ago, you told us that BT was separating from Openreach, which would make things better for other ISPs. So I was very annoyed recently when my Sky connection disappeared, leaving me without internet and landline phone for four days. When I eventually got through to Sky's customer support - which took several phone calls that got me nowhere, a failed attempt at text help and finally having to install the My Sky support app - I was told the problem wasn't Sky's fault but BT Openreach's. This meant that all Sky could do was notify Openreach of the problem, and say that an engineer would probably be sent out "within five working days". Talk about passing the buck!

The sooner this Openreach split happens, the better for all of us.

Carol Jameson, via email





OW WORRIED ARE YOU **ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT SPYING ON YOU IN REAL TIME** (bit.ly/realtime424)?

I'm not bothered about what the Government sees because I've nothing to hide. What I am bothered about. though, is hackers using the same back door to harvest information they could use to steal my identity.

Lee Dodgson

I'm not worried at all. If you're law abiding, you have no need to worry about what you get up to.

Geoffrey Boow

It's not so much the Government. but there are hundreds of organisations whose employees can spy on you now. Your neighbour could be prying into your affairs!

David Batty

The trouble is that the Government won't deal with the real problems, such as returning jihadis. They endanger everybody's online security because of their weakness in dealing with people who are really a threat.

Derek Briggs

ABOUR SAYS IT WILL DELIVER 30MBPS BROADBAND TO EVERYONE BY 2022. CAN THIS BE ACHIEVED?

They can say anything they like, because they have no chance of winning the election.

Robert Slater @Mistyrobert

It's a realistic target, at least, and needs serious Government intervention, rather than the Tories blaming BT and occasionally slapping its wrist.

Richard Morgan

The priority is to ensure everyone is connected. Some people in my area (rural north Wales) still have dial-up.

Anne Blackwood

Fast broadband for all would be great, but I doubt it will happen, because BT and Openreach have ruined any chance of future-proofing our telecommunications.

Pete Fitzsimmons

NEW REPORT SAYS THAT ON AVERAGE PEOPLE **USE 10 APPS A DAY. HOW** MANY DO YOU USE?

I regularly use at least 16 of the 280 apps I have installed on my phone.

Tweety McTweetface @Gary_Olsen

These are the apps I open every day: Facebook, BBC News, BBC Weather, Guardian and my work email. I always open the weather app first, looking for signs of summer.

Chris Armstrona

I only use three: a browser, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Lance Parkington

None for me. I use the internet on my PCs, and use my phone just for calls.

Paul Adrian

OU'LL SOON NEED A PASSWORD TO WATCH ANYTHING ON IPLAYER. DO YOU APPROVE?

No. I think most of the BBC content is terrible, and its news coverage biased. I pay to watch Sky instead.

Mike Dailly

I don't watch TV so I don't have a licence. This password thing won't affect me. If I must watch a program, I'll just download it

Andrew Wakeman

No, because it's a hassle. People just want to watch a programme instead of faffing about with passwords.

goldmaster @imthegoldmaster

A Page 404

Barry Collins reckons one small sticker could put directory enquiries out of business

Ring the necks of rip-off phone lines

ang directory enquiries lately?
No, of course you haven't,
because this isn't 1987 and
you're a Web User reader who
almost certainly knows how to punch
the words 'plumber' and 'telephone
number' into Google.

True, not everyone is as tech-savvy as you, which is why services such as 118 118 exist – to profit from the vulnerable and the elderly. It was recently revealed that the service charges a minimum of £8.98 to give you the requested telephone number, with some lesser-known rivals charging as much as £10.50 per call. So that's a tenner to have a minimumwage slave in a call centre punch a search query into Google and read the number aloud over the phone, or the same amount again if you want them to actually connect the call.

When directory enquiries was deregulated in 2003, telecoms regulator Ofcom let prices drift from a flat rate of 40p to the current, shocking maximum of £23.97 per minute, and it's naturally getting hot under the collar now that the scam (remove that word Web User

lawyers, I dare you) has been exposed. "Ofcom is very concerned about the rising prices of some 118 numbers," a spokesperson told the BBC. "We are already planning to review this market to ensure prices are transparent and fair

to consumers." Talk about shutting the stable door after the horse has set up a premium-rate phone line.

Meanwhile, the Department For The Bleeding Obvious at consumer watchdog Which? says: "Our advice to consumers looking to avoid being hit with these exorbitant charges is to



check online for a cheaper, more direct way to obtain a contact number."

If these people had access to Google, do you think they'd be ringing the marathon-runner rip-offs in the first

That's a tenner to have a minimum-wage slave in a call centre punch a search query into Google and read the number aloud

place? It's your 87-year-old mum who's keeping these services alive - she doesn't ring them for company in between games of

Cut The Rope on her iPad. She rings them because the telephone is her main connection to the outside world, and because she's seen their silly ads on the telly during *Coronation Street*. And now we know how they pay for them.

Regulators and watchdogs aren't the solution to this problem: we are. You

and I can put a stop to the 118 extortion right away, and all it will cost is the price of a plain sticker. On that sticker you write your telephone number and attach it to the phone of an elderly relative, friend or neighbour. Invite them to call you every time they need to find a number for an electrician, the council or even Susan from number 72, instead of getting fleeced by the 118 numbers.

If they're ringing your smartphone, you can even look up a number on Google while they are on the line. Just press the Home button on your phone, open your web browser or Google app and search for the details you need. It's a 10-second job that will save that person a tenner. How good will that minor inconvenience make you feel?

Plus, you'll get the satisfaction of watching the greedy 118 merchants tumble out of business, which is no more than these shysters deserve.



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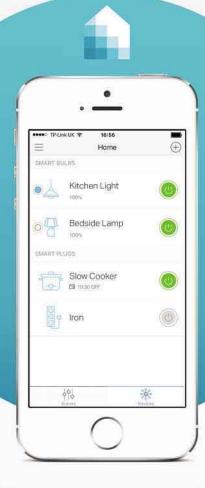
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