

STOP USING Coole

What should I use that's better than...



What should I use that's better than... Search

What should I use that's better than... Drive

What should I use that's better than... Gmail

What should I use that's better than... YouTube

What should I use that's better than... Maps

What should I use that's better than... Chrome





Money-Saving Loopholes Online

Use them before they close

Switch From Hard Drive To SSD

What to buy . How to install

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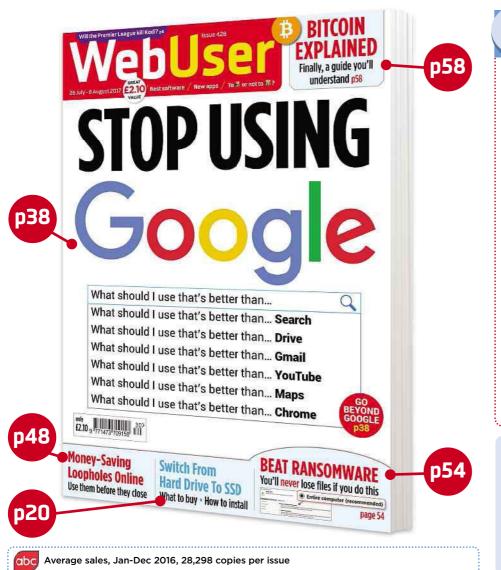
Give up the golden Google goose

ou may see the cover of this issue and ask: "Has Web User completely lost the plot?". Stop using Google? What next - stop watching TV? Stop drinking tea? Surely Google is the goose that lays golden eggs every issue? Well yes, but that doesn't mean we have to subsist on those eggs alone, especially when some of them have started to smell a little off. From guzzling your personal data to honking its rivals into submission, Google's arrogance and avarice certainly remove some of its shine.

In this issue's cover feature, we reveal the darker side of Google's top tools and suggest some of the best alternatives for search, maps, email, browsing and more. We're not saying ditch Google forever not that you'd listen anyway! - but it's always good to expand your web horizons by trying tools from other companies that you might find you prefer. Even if you later

Robert Irvine, Editor robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk





Things you'll How to watch a live video stream of bears catching salmon in an Alaskan river page 6 How to view a list of all the devices connected to your wireless network page 28 How to stop your phone's screen switching off by disabling Sleep mode for certain apps page 33 How to stop annoying pop-up videos that play automatically on Mail Online page 46 Show notifications for THow to make the taskbar notifications in Windows 10 stay visible for longer page 68 1 minute

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ISSUE 428

26 JULY - 8 AUGUST 2017

STOP USING TOP USING TOP USING TOP USING

Avoid the dark side of Google by switching to these alternative tools

What should I use that's better than...



p38









IN DEPTH Articles on the latest tech topics

36 FA0

Phantom-goods scams

38 COVER FEATURE STOP USING GOOGLE

Alternative tools that won't track or spy on you

44 Online video editors

How does YouTube compare with its rivals?

46 Fix the worst website flaws

Make your favourite sites even better

48 Web loopholes to save you money

Try these tricks to get things for free online

REVIEWS Apps, sites and products on test

14 Best New Websites

70 years of the Edinburgh Festival

20 Group Test

Replace the hard drive in your PC or laptop with one of the 17 speedy SSDs on test

26 Best Free Software

Make your PC run like new with TweakPower

30 Best New Browser Tools

Hide offensive web content automatically

32 Best Free Apps

Skype has updated its free messaging app









FAVOURITES Must-read regulars

What's New Online Watch live Google Earth video feeds

Need to Know This fortnight's top tech news stories

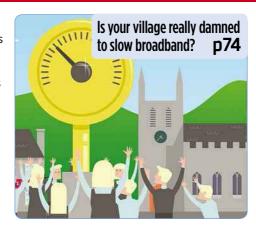
12 Stay Safe Online Security advice for PC and mobile

18 Build a Better Site Expert tips, tools and practical help

24 Best Buys Our pick of the best new products

50 Broadband Deals Find the best-value package for you

51 Take a Screen Break Guess the Shakespeare-play emoji



71 Inbox Tell us your views and opinions

74 Page 404 Barry questions net-speed surveys

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Practical WebUser

Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

52 Workshop 1

Floating widgets for Windows 10

54 Workshop 2

Protect yourself from ransomware

56 Workshop 3

Android Pixel launcher

57 Workshop 4

Sync and back up your iOS devices without using iTunes

58 Weekend Project

How to use cryptocurrencies

64 Web User Masterclass

Customise VLC media player

66 Ask the Expert

All your technical questions answered

68 Readers' Tips

The best tips from our readers

70 Readers' Helpdesk

Answers from our reader forums





What's New Online

Watch live video feeds in Google Earth

oogle Earth has long given us a unique satellite view of our planet, but the new features it added in its recent revamp revolutionised virtual travel even further. One of the additions Google introduced was Voyager, which promised to offer interactive and curated guided tours of some of the world's most intriguing locations. Now

it has gone one better by offering live content for the very first time.

Starting with the Katmai National Park in Alaska, Voyager lets you enjoy footage from five cameras set up by filmmakers Explore.org. If you view them at the right time, you may see bears catching sockeye salmon as they swim upstream. You could also see the bears playing at Brooks



River or hunting for fish underwater. One camera located on Dumpling Mountain offers a stunning view of the countryside and active volcanoes.

Sometimes the camera operators pan and zoom as you watch, helping you follow and get closer to the action. If nothing much is happening when you visit, you can read about the locations and check out 360-degree Street Views





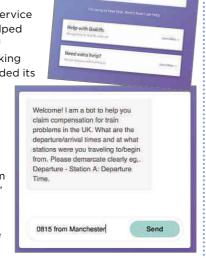
of the places marked with blue dots on the map. It's incredible stuff. bit.ly/earth428

Seek advice from a chatbot lawyer

www.donotpay.co.uk

The free chatbot lawver service DoNotPay has already helped hundreds of thousands of people overturn their parking tickets. Now, it has expanded its

expertise to cover 1,000 legal areas involving consumer and workplace rights, with the aim of cutting out expensive lawyers. Tell the service your problem, such as "I'm arguing with my landlord" or "My train has not arrived" and it asks you a series of questions before producing a document



that you can save, print, email and send. It can be a bit hit and miss - for several problems it simply told us to seek help on Google - but it's undeniably clever, and its natural language processing works well, thanks to some help from IBM Watson. The bot can also point you in the direction of pro bono legal representation if it feels you need it.

Filter your Twitter notifications

www.twitter.com

Twitter has introduced new filters that give you greater control over your notifications. You can now mute notifications from people you don't follow or call a halt to alerts from those who don't follow you. You can also cut yourself adrift from accounts that use the default profile photo, and stop notifications from users who have just joined or who have yet to confirm their email or phone

number. To access the filters from the Twitter app, tap the Notifications button, select the Settings cog and choose Advanced Filters. If you're using the website, just select Notifications, click Settings and tick the boxes next to the options you want to activate. Twitter hopes these new controls will combat trolls and help to protect its users from harassment and time-wasters.



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

Back up to Drive automatically

bit.ly/drive428

Rather than making you use different apps to back up your files and photos, Google has launched a single tool for your PC or Mac. Backup and Sync lets you choose a folder to back up automatically to

Google Drive, so you always have online access to your most recent files. See our



feature on page 38 for reasons why you might not to want to use Google Drive.

Trace a painting's journey in time

www.mappingpaintings.org

Once the artists have finished with them, many paintings go on a journey that is just as fascinating as the artwork itself. Select a painting on this new website and you can not only view information about the work, but track its provenance to see who owned it, where it's been and when. The Mona Lisa, for example, has been in the hands of the French Royal Family, Napoleon and the Italian thief Vincenzo Peruggia, while Nazi troops got their grubby mitts on Titian's The Concert. To discover more, simply browse by painting, artist or owner.



Explore a map of **England's castles**



castles428

Historic UK has pinpointed the location of every English castle on an interactive Google map. That's no mean

feat given that we counted more than 170 of them, and the organisation hasn't even tackled castles in Wales and Scotland yet. Click the markers to read brief descriptions of each fortified structure and, in most cases, see a photo, too. You can also select the Satellite option for a better view of the castle and its defences. We'd love to have seen links to relevant websites, but at least you can fill in a form to suggest missing castles.

Play a game that feels like work

bit.ly/work428

Cleverly mimicking the Windows 95 desktop interface, this odd browserbased game involves typing emails, writing notes, clicking dialogue boxes and completing other mundane admin tasks. It's supposed to highlight the reduced demand for human labour, yet it's weirdly fun. Play a game of Breakout, change the Desktop wallpaper and play music for light relief from "work".



TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@SkyFootball

Sky's football account will share live video clips on Twitter again this season

@celebri2oons

Watch amusing celebrity-based animations posted to a new YouTube channel

@cine verse

An account dedicated to comicbook films and TV shows

@I am KenBarlow

He's not Ken Barlow, but his views on TV, and Corrie in particular, have quite a following

@gamesyouloved

Get nostalgic for Sonic, Street Fighter and other classic games

Force-close Android apps

www.android.com

Android 7.1 Nougat now lets you force unresponsive apps to close by tapping the Back button four times. Once you are back on the home screen, you can relaunch the app or uninstall it if the problem reoccurs.

See every default MacOS X wallpaper

bit.ly/macos428

Mac users will enjoy looking back over the default wallpapers used in each version of Apple's OS X (now named MacOS). Upscaled to 5K and available to download, they go back to 10.0 Cheetah from 2001.

View Google Calendar events

calendar.google.com

The latest iOS update to Google Calendar comes with a handy Today Widget that lets you view events without launching the app. To activate it, swipe right on the Home screen, scroll to the bottom, tap Edit and select '+'.

Need to Know

Premier League to tackle Kodi by streaming matches online

What happened?

Reports suggest the Premier League may start live-streaming football matches online to fight back against piracy. The rumour comes after the English Football League, one level below the Premier League, announced a live-streaming deal for fans outside the UK and Ireland, offering coverage of 1,500 games from the Championship League, and League One and Two, for £110 a year as part of its iFollow service (www.efl.com/iFollow).

British and Irish fans won't be offered the same streaming package - local deals for television rights are worth too much - but will be able to listen to audio commentary and watch highlights.

The Premier League apparently has its eye on the system, and is considering launching a similar package to fight back against dodgy streams. This could be another nail in the coffin for mediastreaming service Kodi, particularly since the Premier League started using technical measures to crack down on pirated streams of its games.

And no wonder, after a BBC survey found that a third of Premier League fans regularly watch pirated live streams of matches, with the majority of them doing so via Kodi set-top boxes. The poll showed that younger people were more likely to watch football via unofficial streams than older fans, with two-thirds of viewers aged under 34 doing it once a month versus a third of 35-54 year olds and only one in 12 over 55 in age.

The survey of 1,000 people revealed



The EFL's iFollow will only be available to football fans outside the UK and Ireland



that a quarter of respondents think the cost of TV sports packages is not good value for money, with Sky charging £27.50 a month on top of its standard TV package – a total of £49.50 a month. It's hardly a surprise that the packages are so pricey since Sky and BT in turn paid the Premier League more than £5bn to show live games over the next three years.

How will it affect you?

TV sports packages are expensive and any alternative that costs less and is easier to use than fiddly Kodi add-ons will surely help draw football fans away from pirated streams. However, if the English Football League is charging £110 for access to its service, you can assume the Premier League's will cost more.

Also, bear in mind that streaming is so far only available to viewers living outside the UK and Ireland. Because Sky and BT have already shelled out huge amounts for a three-year deal, you'll likely still be required to stump up for a sports package to follow your favourite Premier League team.

That may soon be the only way to watch, because the Premier League has won a court order to have pirated streams of its matches knocked offline and to block servers offering subscription content for free. If those efforts are successful, it will become harder to find a stream of the match you want to see via Kodi.

What do we think?

It's understandable that the Premier League wants to protect its source of revenue – after all, someone needs to pay for all those expensive players. And while the league is also targeting piracy sites, offering a better way to watch would also help knock back the pirates. According to the BBC survey, almost half of football fans have watched a Premier League game via an unofficial source at least once in the past.

There are plenty of reasons for that. Many people don't have a standard TV package, or only want to watch a match now and then, rather than pay for a whole season. And, again according to the survey, only 34% of respondents were clearly aware that streaming matches using software such as Kodi was illegal.

No wonder so many people use dodgy streams to watch their favourite team. If the Premier League offered an easy-to-access, affordable alternative, we imagine most piracy would vanish in the same way Spotify helped to discourage music piracy. It needs to act quickly, though - younger fans are already more likely to head for a dodgy stream than a legitimate source. The Premier League needs to get them signed up for a legitimate option now before they get used to not paying at all. We'll be explaining how you can beat the Kodi backlash in next issue's cover feature

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

Facebook adds adverts to Messenger

What happened?

Facebook is looking to squeeze advertising revenue out of Messenger, its free chatting app, by injecting it with ads. The idea is being trialled in Australia and Thailand, where users of the Messenger mobile app will now see adverts in their chat inbox, although not embedded in actual messages.

The move follows Google's decision to remove personalised ads from Gmail, which means it no longer scans your emails to decide which marketing material may work on you.

How will it affect you?

The inbox advertising is merely a trial, and if it annoys too many users, it may well be tweaked before it's rolled out to the rest of the world. If it does arrive in this format, here's how it will work: a message from an advertiser will show up in your inbox. Ignore it and nothing will happen. Tap it, and it will either open a web page with an offer or a full advert, or it will start a conversation with the

company - perhaps via a chatbot.

Facebook also owns
WhatsApp and Instagram,
so any advertising ideas
that are successful on
Messenger are also likely
to find their way to them.

What do we think?

Nothing stays free forever. Messenger and WhatsApp are incredibly successful each app has more than a billion users. But neither one earns cash for Facebook directly. What's more, the time users spend on Facebook on desktop computers is falling, reducing advertising revenue. The company has found more success with mobile ads in the main Facebook app, so it will be looking to replicate this in its messaging apps.

That's fair enough, but we'd like to know if the ads will be "personalised" – using our data to target us with relevant products and services. It's remarkable that Google scanned our emails for as long as it did, and Facebook users may not be happy about the company reading their messages.



Three lets you 'binge' on data streaming

Go Binge.

All the Shows.

Stream your favourite shows infinitely without using up your data.



What happened?

Mobile operator Three is removing several popular streaming services from its mobile-data limits, so customers can enjoy as much video and music as they want without eating through their monthly cap.

Called 'Go Binge', the plan covers Netflix, TV Player, SoundCloud and Deezer, although it doesn't yet apply to YouTube or Spotify. However, support for other services may eventually be added, with Three saying the platform is "open" and it would like to add other subscription services such as Apple Music and Amazon Prime.

How will it affect you?

The Go Binge plan means you won't need to worry about going over your data allowance when streaming music and video. However, it only applies to the four named services, so if you're a heavy user of Amazon Prime on the go, you may not want to upgrade yet.

Additionally, Go Binge is only available to customers on Three's Advanced plans which offer a data allowance of more than 4GB, so you may have to upgrade your current plan. The cheapest Advanced plan is £12 a month for 4GB, so you'd need to upgrade to £15 a month to double your data to 8GB.

If you're not going over your data limit now, switching to Go Binge won't save you any cash – in fact, you'll be paying at least £3 more a month for the privilege.

What do we think?

If you're itching to stream Netflix on your commute,
- without having to worry about exceeding your data allowance - then Go Binge could be a good deal. If not, it's just a way for Three to push for upgrades.

There's a net-neutrality issue, too, because it prioritises Netflix over Amazon Prime on Three's network. If the platform is really open to all streaming services as Three says, this is less of a concern. We'll have to keep a close eye on Go Binge to see how it evolves.



Bupa suffers massive data breach

What happened?

The personal data of more than 100,000 Bupa customers is in the wild after an employee "copied and removed" their information from the health insurer's systems.

No medical or financial information is at risk, but 547,000 people's names, email addresses, phone numbers, dates of birth, nationalities and some admin details of beneficiaries were contained in the 108,000 policies stolen, Bupa confirmed.

The now ex-staff member is believed to have made the stolen information available to "other parties", according to a letter sent to the affected policy holders from Sheldon Kenton, managing director of Bupa Global, the firm's international health insurance division.

Kenton said in a statement: "This was not a cyber-attack or external data breach, but a deliberate act by an employee. A thorough investigation is underway and we have informed the FCA and Bupa's other UK regulators. The employee responsible has been dismissed and we are taking appropriate legal action."

A spokeswoman added that the firm discovered the breach in June and has been in touch with UK data watchdog the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and the police. An ICO spokesperson said: "Organisations have



a duty to protect people's privacy and personal data. We have been made aware of an issue involving Bupa Global and are making enquiries."

How will it affect you?

By now, you should have been informed if you were one of the 108,000 Bupa customers' whose policies were stolen. In an online statement, Bupa explained that the data belonged to customers whose policy numbers begin with 'BI'. Customers with domestic health insurance have not been affected. but British customers could be if they purchased plans to use abroad. Bupa said that 43,000 of the customers had an address listed in the UK.

If you were a victim of the breach, you should look out for signs of identity theft, such as scam emails and unusual account activity.

What do we think?

The theft of this amount of customer data by a company employee - who will now be facing charges - shows that it's not just hackers and cyber-attacks we need to worry about, but insiders, too. Bupa says it has introduced additional security measures and increased its customer identity checks, but that won't provide much relief to the victims of this serious breach, which shouldn't have happened in the first place.



FIRST LOOK

Super Mario Odyssey bit.ly/odyssey428

Super Mario Odvssev is an exclusive Nintendo Switch game that's set for release in October. On the surface, it's a wildly different kind of Mario game, with 'open-world' gameplay that bucks the usual puzzle-based levels. And it introduces an entirely new sidekick, Cappy.



Odyssey goes back to the series' roots, putting Princess Peach at the mercy of Bowser as he travels between worlds gathering everything he needs to finally take her as his bride. The damsel in distress is now an antiquated theme, and one we hope Nintendo turns on its head somewhere along the way, but it does help to draw parallels between Mario's most loved 3D

adventure and this new entry.

The similarities don't stop there, either. As in Super Mario 64, Super Mario Odyssey tasks you with collecting Moons (instead of Stars) to help you explore new worlds and get closer to saving Princess Peach. Grabbing the story-critical Moons opens further levels by uncovering new areas for exploration or shifting the current world into a different state of existence. This

encourages you to dive back in and explore these new and reworked areas in search of even more Moons

Super Mario Odyssey is all about feeding your curiosity, making you explore every nook and cranny of the gorgeous world Nintendo's team has built. If you thought The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild was a good-looking Switch game, Super Mario Odyssey will blow your mind.

It's not clear how many different worlds you'll travel to on your journey - we've seen glimpses of five, so far but each one is a huge sandbox for you to explore, making it the biggest Super Mario title yet. In our short hands-on time with Nintendo's E3 build, we barely scratched the surface, but we can confirm that Super Mario Odyssey is shaping up to be one of the plumber's finest outings yet.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is KFC launching its own smartphone?

KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) is usually associated with Colonel Sanders and Bargain Buckets, so the notion of the fried-chicken chain launching its own Android phone sounds like an April Fool's joke. But apparently, the rumour is true. Well. sort of, because the KFC smartphone is actually a branded, special-edition version of the Huawei Enjoy 7 Plus.



The handset is bright red to match the KFC colour scheme and features the familiar Colonel logo on the back. On the phone itself, you'll find a couple of KFC-related bloatware apps - one that lets you order fried chicken, and another that lets you control the music in a branch of KFC. The specifications of the KFC Huawei Plus include a 5.5in screen, 3GB of RAM, a 12-megapixel camera, 32GB of storage and a 1.4GHz processor.

The bad news for finger-lickin' fast-food fans is that the phone was only available for a limited time in China, and only 5,000 were made. The idea was to commemorate the 30th anniversary of KFC's arrival in Tiananmen Square, which coincides

with Huawei's own launch year (kfc.world.tmall.com). It's therefore highly unlikely that the handset will ever reach the UK, although you might get lucky - or should that be clucky - and find one on eBay.

LIKELIHOOD RATING 1111

This is a one-off, gimmicky phone rather than a move by KFC into the mobile market, but it definitely exists. Whether it paves the way for a McDonald'sbranded iPhone remains to be seen, but we can imagine some very greasy touchscreens.

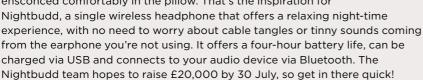
What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Nightbudd

bit.ly/night428 | From £19

When you're listening to the radio, an audiobook or a podcast in bed, you may only need one earphone, with your other ear ensconced comfortably in the pillow. That's the inspiration for





WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

EU to change law to stop employers snooping

An EU data-protection working party has ruled that employers should require "legal grounds" before using Facebook, Twitter and

other social media to snoop on potential job candidates. The recommendation is non-binding but will affect forthcoming dataprotection laws.

YouTube previews in Chrome and Opera

Google is rolling out a new feature that lets Chrome and

Opera users view three-second previews of eligible YouTube videos. To view a preview, just hover your mouse cursor over the video's thumbnail and it will play

automatically.



WE DON'T LIKE...

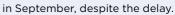
HTC faces backlash over pop-up ads

HTC has promised to fix an 'error' that led to pop-up ads appearing above the touchscreen keyboard on some of its devices. The company's latest devices come with TouchPal preinstalled, but the app was not intended to show ads.

iPhone 8 to be delayed by a month or more

Problems with wireless charging and 3D face recognition could delay the release of the new iPhone by more than a month. according to analysts. Claims suggest the new handset may still be announced





Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

NHS gets £21m to boost cyberdefences

NHS hospitals will receive £21m to upgrade their



cybersecurity measures following the WannaCry attacks that wreaked havoc on NHS IT systems earlier this summer. The Department of Health (DH) announced the funding on 12 July as the government accepted all the recommendations set out by the National Data Guardian review and the Care Quality Commission review into data security standards, carried out before the ransomware debacle. Health minister Lord O'Shaughnessy said in a statement: "The NHS has a long history of safeguarding confidential data, but with the growing threat of cyber-attacks including the WannaCry ransomware attack in May, this government has acted to protect information across the NHS".

The £21m will be spent on increasing cybersecurity measures of major trauma hospitals, with the government calling this "an immediate priority", as well as boosting NHS Digital's national monitoring and response capabilities. bit.ly/nhs428

Australia to force tech firms to give up encryption

In an effort to clamp down on criminal activity, the Australian government wants to introduce new cybersecurity laws to force technology companies to give law-enforcement agencies access to encrypted messages. Australian prime minister Malcolm Turnbull said on Friday that a law modelled on the UK's Investigatory Powers Act would be necessary to curb the growing use of social media as a means for terrorists and criminals to communicate.

The proposed law would oblige technology companies to assist security forces in their investigations, although

warrants would still be needed to access communications. This includes social-media



companies such as Facebook and Google, but also device manufacturers including Apple and Samsung. "We need to ensure that the internet is not used as a dark place for bad people to hide their criminal activities from the law," said Turnbull, speaking to Guardian reporters on Friday.

Facebook has criticised the news, saying that it already has a system for cooperating with security forces, and that the proposed law would be impossible to impose on individual users. "Weakening encrypted systems for them would mean weakening it for everyone," said Facebook spokesperson Antonia Sanda, speaking to Reuters. bit.ly/encryption428

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: David Emm, principal security researcher at Kaspersky Lab (www.kaspersky.co.uk)





Connor Saunders, Facebook

To protect yourself from the risks of vulnerable Internet of Things (IoT) devices, we advise people to follow

these simple rules:

- Change the default username and password. This is the first thing an attacker will test when attempting to compromise your device. Remember that even if it's a non-smart product, such as a satellite receiver or a network hard drive, the administrative interface could be vulnerable to attack.
- Applying security updates is one of the key things you can do to make it harder for attackers to compromise your device and your home network, so make sure all your devices have the latest security and firmware updates. If it's not obvious how to apply the updates,

6 Use encryption, even on the files you store in your network-storage device

check with the manufacturer. This will also tell you if the manufacturer considers a product to be obsolete.

- Use encryption, even on the files you store in your network-storage device. If you don't have access to an encryption tool, put your files in a password-protected ZIP file. It's not as secure, but it's better than doing nothing.
- Most home routers and switches have the ability to set up several different DMZ/ VLAN ports. This means that you can set up your own 'private' network for your

- devices, which will restrict network access to and from a device.
- If you're really worried, you can monitor the outbound network traffic from your devices to see if there's anything strange going on, but this does require some technical knowledge.
- Another tip for techsavvv consumers is to stop network devices accessing sites they're not supposed to and only allow them to download updates and nothing else.



Ultra Wide-Color

with 4K in an immersive design

Colours like you've never seen before. This brilliant 4K UHD resolution display with Ultra Wide-Color offers the richest and most vivid colours wrapped in an immersive curved design for a your best creations yet.





40" 4K curved display (BDM4037U)











Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

70 Years of Edinburgh International Festival

70years.eif.co.uk

This site celebrates the 70th anniversary of the world's largest arts and culture event. As well as telling the fascinating story of the festival, peppered with insightful quotes, it features galleries packed with archive images, newspaper articles, historical videos and audio, reflective interviews and links to info about Scotland's capital city. There are four interactive chapters to explore, broken down into clear subsections, which you can browse simply by clicking items of interest and scrolling down. It's a well-thought-out package that makes for a wonderful tribute.

Our rating



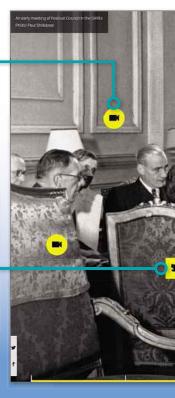


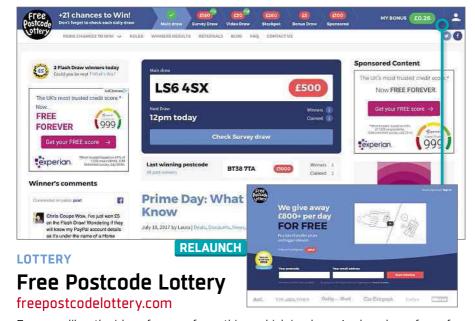
WATCH VIDEOS Click the videocamera icon to enjoy lots of historical festival footage



READ QUOTES

The story is brought to life with quotes from key figures from the past 70 years





Everyone likes the idea of money for nothing, which is why we've long been fans of the advert-funded Free Postcode Lottery. It has been giving away money every day for six years, based on where you live, and this tasteful revamp makes it quicker and easier to see if you've won any of the draws. Aside from those tweaks, there's a new Groupon-sponsored draw, along with an expandable menu that simplifies the results layout when viewing the site on a mobile device. It's not a radical redesign and there are still a lot of distracting, animated advert banners but considering how much cash

Our rating





THEATRE

Book Theatre

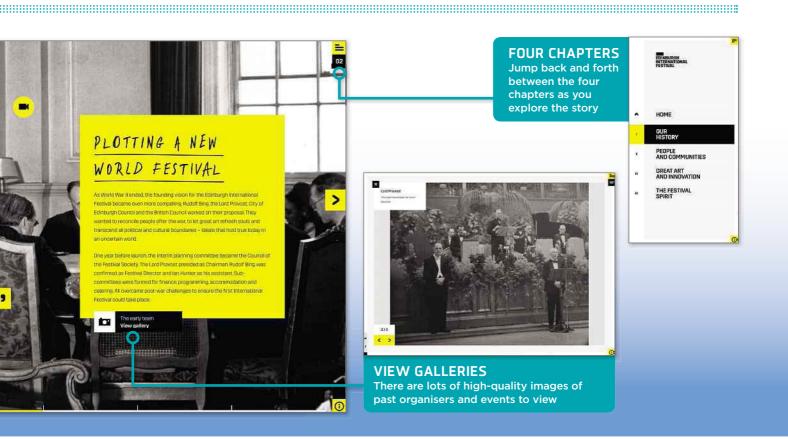
www.book.theater

When you want to book tickets for a London show, it's not always easy to find an agency that has affordable seats to spare. Book Theatre brings various outlets together, letting you select a show to see the lowest prices on offer. You have to click through and book direct but each entry includes information about the running time, dates and venue: and includes a handy Tube map and list of bus services. We liked the brief video trailers, links to production websites and the discountpacked Offers section, and the details of upcoming shows and extended runs.

Our rating

you can win for free, we're not complaining.

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





WINE **Virgin Wines** www.virginwines.co.uk

Virgin Wines has popped the cork on its new site, making it easier to find and buy cases of red, white and rosé. You can now use simple drop-down menus to quickly select pre-mixed cases or browse the entire range according to type, country, price and colour. You can then select bottles, read the excellent descriptions and add them to your basket. The checkout has been overhauled, keeping everything on one page, and you can track your order, add private tasting notes and rate the wines. Doing so gains you a free bottle on your next order, which is very generous!







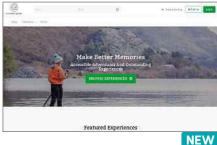
Try It Vegan

tryitvegan.com

Created by two vegan college students, this site intends to serve up lots of plant-based recipes earmarked for different times of the day. There aren't many entries yet, but sections for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks should start to fill up soon. We like the clear layout, easy-to-follow recipes and mouthwatering images that accompany them, and that the site updates you via email when new content is added. With recommended plant-based sites and nutritional information, it could easily grow into a handy resource as long as the pair behind it remain committed.

Our rating





LEISURE

Gather Outdoors

experiences.gatheroutdoors.co.uk

Finding you fun things to do outdoors, this new directory asks its community for recommendations to create an online guide to alfresco adventures. It generally works well, introducing you to selfcatering barns, wild swimming and cycling routes, for example. But since each entry is written by the company or person providing the service, the quality of the content is largely dependent on them. Still, you always get links to more information and contact details, and you can narrow down the experiences by the type of pursuit and location, and purchase gear from the store.

Our rating





BACKISSUES DISC 2016



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

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

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





RELAUNCH

SPEAKERS

Speakers Corner

www.speakerscorner.co.uk

Even if you aren't seeking a speaker for an event, it's still interesting to see who's available. At this revamped site, you can watch funny videos (David Mitchell's made us chuckle) and discover how famous people sell themselves. You can also read biographies and interviews, and get the latest news from the blog, which includes a guide to public speaking. Finding speakers is easy thanks to the fast search engine and topic lists, and you can add people to a wishlist if there's more than one you like. You need to send a message if you want to book but, disappointingly, there's no upfront indication of how much speakers charge.

Our rating





Timbuktu

www.timbuktutravel.com

Catering for people looking to go on safari, Timbuktu claims to reduce the complexity of booking such trips by letting you create your own itinerary online. You can do this by customising Timbuktu's trip ideas or by creating your own from scratch, deciding the places you want to go, the wildlife you'd love to see and even the weather you'd like to experience. As well as searching by country and the type of trip you're after, you can use sliders to indicate the length and cost of your time away and make fine-tuned adjustments. When you're done, an advisor will review your requests before taking your payment.

Our rating





NEWSPAPERS

Birmingham Post

www.birminghampost.com

Birmingham's weekly newspaper has been redesigned in line with other titles within the WN Network group but since it focuses mostly on business, it feels easier to navigate than its sprawling, catch-all stablemates. The design works well on different screen sizes, loads pages more quickly and makes better use of photos. Although the videos play automatically, they're clearly marked on the headline pages to avoid surprise and since there are just four sections, you don't have to scroll forever to see the bulk of the content. However, having to answer Google surveys to access articles will always be utterly infuriating.

Our rating





Now in its third year, Brave the Shave is one of Macmillan's most successful fundraising campaigns, encouraging people to shave their heads in support of people living with cancer. This revamped site lets you sign up, pick a date and raise muchneeded money. Even if you don't fancy going temporarily bald, you can search for registered shavers and help them reach their target by making a donation. Anyone needing inspiration can read shared stories from brave shavers and see how many people are taking part and the amount raised so far. With posters and sponsorship forms to download and print, and a comprehensive FAQ, it certainly makes the cut.

Our rating





Fox Sports

www.foxsports.com

In an effort to appeal to a younger audience, Fox Sports has decided to kick the written word into touch. It now relies more on videos, leaving fewer articles on its revamped pages. Many of these pieces are provided by the Associated Press so they're authoritative and wellwritten, and there's plenty of other stuff to get stuck into. Sections such as football, tennis, boxing and F1 are packed with content including league tables, stats, scores and transfers. Annoyingly, those videos are only available to watch in the UK via a VPN, though.

Our rating



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Wix launches new designs

If you have a Wix website (www .wix.com) and have exhausted its library of themes, you'll be pleased to hear there are 13 new ones that have just been launched. As with most Wix themes, these are styled to provide a specific type of website - Wedding Planner and DIY Blog, for example - but there's no reason why you can't use them for something else or adapt them to your own purposes. Check out all the new options available to you on the Wix blog at bit.ly/wix428.





Name that theme

Because it's so easy to drop new themes into WordPress.org websites, choosing from the thousands available can be overwhelming. If you spot someones else's WordPress website and covet its theme, WordPress Theme Detector (bit.ly/wwpt428) can help you identify it. Copy the address of the WordPress website and paste it into the box. The Theme Detector will sniff out the theme and provide a link to it.

Deal of the Fortnight

Get '.uk' and '.co.uk' domains from Names (www.names.co.uk) for 99p for the first year.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: **Edmund Turbin. WP Engine** (wpengine.com)



I've been told that my site is slow and I should use 'caching'. Could you tell me what this is and how I go about using it, please?

Graham Lott, via email

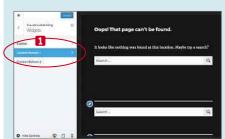
Caching stores the results of a web-page request to make pages load faster. It takes longer for

dynamic pages to load because they use PHP processing, database queries and other ways to retrieve data. This has to be done at the server, so Wordpress sites can use plugins but regular websites will need to work with their web host. WP Engine's service offers caching with no need for extra configuration. We also have tools that can check a site for bottlenecks and troubleshoot problems with back-end processes.

MINI WORKSHOP | Add social-media icons to WordPress.com

WordPress.com: www.wordpress.com | 🕒 10 mins | Requires a WordPress.com website

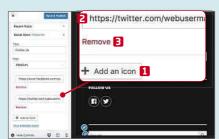
A new WordPress.com widget makes it easy to add social-media links to your WordPress.com site, so people can find you on popular social networks. It's also scheduled to be added to Jetpack for WordPress.org users



Open WordPress.com and select the website you want to add social links to. Navigate to the type of post or page you want them to appear on - so, if you want them at the bottom of your posts, go to a post page in the window on the right. By Themes, click Customize and Widgets, then click on the widget area you want them to appear in. 1



Click the 'Add a Widget' button, scroll down the list to find Social Icons and click to select it. You can change the widget's title 11 and select an icon size. 2 Find the URL for the social site you'd like to add and paste it into the box. 3 The icon on the page will update in real time. 4



To add links to other social-media channels, click the 'Add an icon' button 1 and type the next address into the new box. 2 If you want to remove any of them at a later date, just click the Remove link. 3 Click the 'View available icons' link if you want to see a list of compatible services.



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We test and compare the latest products

Solid-state drives

Switching from a hard drive to an SSD is one of the best ways to speed up a PC. We show you what to buy and how to install it

here are all sorts of ways that you can tweak your PC to get it to work faster, but the single most effective upgrade we know is to transfer Windows off your mechanical hard drive and install it on a solid-state drive (SSD). Like RAM (Random Access Memory), which is the superfast memory that your computer uses to hold the information it's currently working on, SSD technology uses banks of computer chips that can store gigabytes of information. This is even better than RAM, because it doesn't disappear when you turn off your computer.

Because there are no moving parts, SSDs are much faster at seeking and retrieving information, and finding convenient places to store new stuff. Modern mechanical hard drives are fast, but they still rely on spinning disks, which makes them significantly slower at all these tasks.

In this Group Test, we put 17 SSDs through their paces. However, as with most upgrades, it's not as simple as popping out your old hard drive and slotting in a new SSD, particularly because there are two connection standards: SATA and M.2. See our boxout below to check what you need.

HOW WE TESTED

We measured the maximum read and write speeds of each SSD using CrystalDiskMark 5.21 (bit.ly/cdma428). The results are shown in our charts on the opposite page. Because this is a pure speed test, it doesn't automatically follow that it reflects real-world performance, so to test this we used Futuremark PCMark 8 (bit.ly/ pcm428) to see how quickly the SSDs perform when carrying out real Windows tasks.

For each test, we also included the results from a standard mechanical hard drive - a 1TB Seagate Barracuda - so you can see the difference in performance. You'll find these at the bottom of our charts.

Our Gold Award-winning SSD is the Samsung 960 Evo (★★★★ | £211.16 | bit.ly/s9e428), which looks expensive on paper, but it's a 500GB model that uses the M.2 connection and it came at or near the top of all our performance tests, so we think it's worth the extra outlay. The higher-spec Samsung 960

Pro (**** | £274.99 | bit.ly/s9p428) is slightly larger and faster, but doesn't make such a marked improvement that it's worth paying the extra £60. The biggest difference between the two is that the Evo has a write tolerance of 200TBW (Terabytes Written), whereas the Pro is rated at 400TBW. This means that the Evo drive is capable of writing 200TB of data before it starts to fail.

One of the drawbacks with SSDs is that they have have a shorter lifespan than mechanical hard drives. However, this problem has been much improved in recent models so even if you write 5GB a day to the SSD, it'll still last 10

SATA OR M.2?

The main decision when buying an SSD is which type of connector to choose. SATA SSDs use the same data and power connectors as a regular mechanical hard drive, so they should work with most PCs built in the past 10 years. Most modern PCs have a selection of SATA connections placed along the edge of the motherboard near the existing hard drive.

The problem with SATA is that its performance is limited to around 550MB/sec. You'll still notice the benefit compared to a mechanical drive, but you won't realise the full potential of the drive's memory chips.

This is why most manufacturers have

embraced M.2, which is a new type of miniature slot designed specifically for SSDs. M.2 is based on the standard PCI expansion slots that components such as graphics cards use to connect to a PC's motherboard, and can offer five times the bandwidth of SATA, giving a theoretical top transfer speed of 3,940MB/sec. However, even the fastest modern drives can't come close to that speed vet.

Most new PCs have an M.2 slot on the motherboard even if they don't come equipped with an SSD. It's often next to the expansion slots alongside the removable plates at the back of a desktop PC.



Check your PC's motherboard for M.2 1 and SATA 2 ports

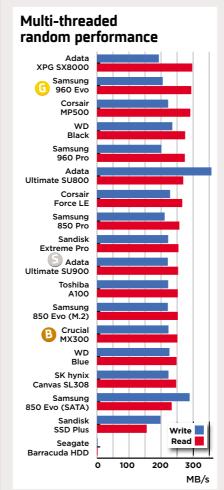
years - probably outliving the the PC you're installing it in.

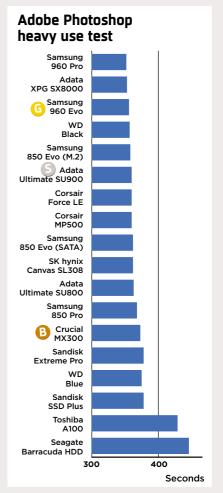
The Evo comes with Samsung's Data Migration tool, which handles the fiddly business of cloning your existing Windows installation from your old hard drive to the SSD. The drive also has built-in AES-256 encryption, so you can lock the entire drive if you're using Windows 10 Pro with BitLocker or if your PC's BIOS supports another form of drive-locking.

If £200 seems like far too much money to spend, our Silver Awardwinner - the Adata Ultimate SU900 (★★★☆ | £100.98, bit.ly/adul9428) - is less than half the price of the Samsung 960 Evo. It also only provides half the storage (256GB) but if you just want to run Windows and a few key programs from your SSD, and are willing and able to keep your mechanical hard drive for storing everything else, it's perfectly sufficient. The SU900 is a SATA drive, so it should be easy to install in most PCs, and it's the only SSD in this test that comes with an adapter for a 3.5in slot, the most common size in desktop PCs.

No SATA drive can match the performance of an M.2 drive, but the Adata Ultimate SU900 is one of the fastest of the SATA drives we tested and it crept further up the results when put through our real-world tests. The drive also comes with Acronis True Image HD 2015, which is a great tool for migrating everything from your old drive to the new one.

TEST-RESULTS CHARTS





| £139.99, bit.ly/cruc428) is our top recommendation. This SATA drive has 525GB of space so it's rightfully joint-top in terms of price-per-GB.

The downside is that it isn't particularly fast, although it will still provide a significant and noticeable boost over a mechanical hard drive. It also comes

Q

MINI WORKSHOP | Install a SATA SSD in your PC



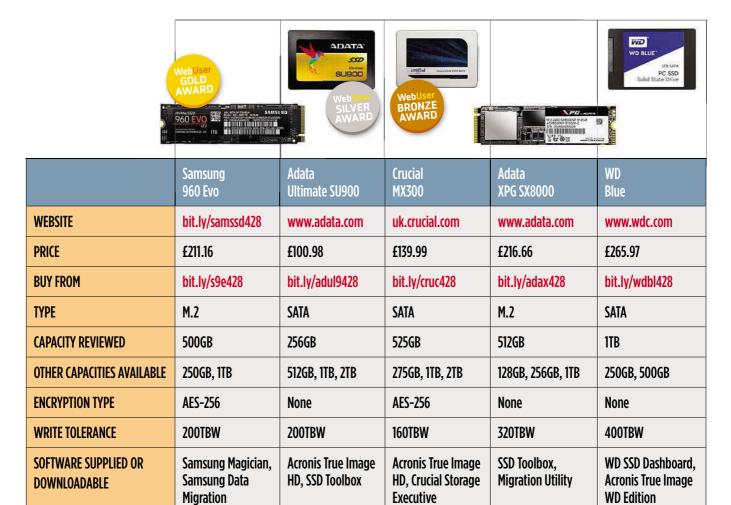
Laptop hard drives are the same size as SSDs, which means you can simply swap one for the other. Remove the battery from the laptop, ground yourself – for example, by touching a radiator – and remove the back of the case. Take out the old hard drive and replace it with the new SSD, then attach the power and SATA connectors and reassemble everything.



To install an SSD in a desktop PC, you'll need a 2.5in-to-3.5in adapter. Your new drive may come with one but, if it doesn't, you can pick one up for around £7 from the likes of Amazon. Ground yourself to disperse any static electricity, as in Step 1, then insert the SSD into the adapter and screw it in. 1



Turn off and unplug your PC, then remove the case. If necessary, unscrew and remove the existing drive. Insert the adapter (with the drive inside) into a spare drive bay and secure it in place. 1 Once that's done, you can attach the power and SATA cables. You're now ready to install an operating system or clone a drive.



with the same Acronis True Image software as the Silver Award-winning Adata drive, but with the added ability to encrypt the whole drive, which Adata doesn't provide.

Despite missing out on one of our awards, there were plenty of other noteworthy drives in our test. The Adata XPG SX8000 (**** | £216.66 | bit.ly/ adax428) is an M.2 drive with 512GB of storage space. It wasn't the fastest M.2

drive in our performance tests but it is rated at 320TBW, which is impressive for a drive of this price, making it a good option if you intend to use its impressive capacity to store files as well as Windows and a few programs.

As well as M.2 drives, Samsung also manufactures SATA models, such as the Evo 850 (**** | £139 | bit.ly/s8es428). This costs almost the same as the Crucial MX300 and has just slightly

less capacity (500GB), but it's a little faster and comes with Samsung's migration tools.

The high price of the WD Blue (★★★☆ | £265.97 | bit.ly/wdbl428) is offset by its whopping 1TB of storage space, which made it joint-top for value for money. This SATA drive's mammoth capacity is its stand-out feature, and it performed reasonably well in our tests, too.

ALSO REVIEWED

SK hynix Canvas SL308

SATA | 250GB | **** | £82.50 | bit.ly/sk428

Adata Ultimate SU800

M.2 | 256GB | ★

Corsair Force LE

SATA | 480GB | *** | £134.99 | bit.ly/corf428

Corsair MP500

M.2 | 480GB | *** | £287.46 | bit.ly/corm428

Samsung 850 Evo

M.2 | 500GB | *** | £154.76 | bit.ly/s8ev428

Samsung 850 Pro

SATA | 512GB | **** | £224.65 | bit.ly/s8p428

Sandisk Extreme Pro

SATA | 960GB | *** | £389 | bit.ly/sdep428

Sandisk SSD Plus

SATA | 240GB | *** | £76.99 | bit.ly/sdssd428

Toshiba A100

SATA | 240GB | **** | £76.38 | bit.ly/ta428

WD Black

M.2 | 512GB | **** | £180.43 | bit.ly/wdb428

OUR VERDICT

Our Gold Award goes to the Samsung 960 Evo, a 500GB SSD with an M.2 connection. It offers a great balance between price, capacity and performance, and comes with a suite of useful



software tools to get you up and running.

The Adata Ultimate SU900, which costs just £100.98, wins our Silver Award. You only get 256GB of space, but that's plenty to run Windows and your most-used software, and its SATA connection mean it will work with most PCs.

In third place, the Crucial MX300 isn't going to wow you with blistering speeds but it's still much faster than a standard drive. It provides excellent price-per-GB value and its migration software lets you encrypt your entire drive.



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HARDWARE

Samsung 960 Evo

£211.16 from bit.ly/s9e428 Tested: Issue 428



It looks expensive on paper, but the Samsung 960 Evo is an excellent 500GB SSD that came at or near the top of all our performance tests. It comes with Samsung's Data Migration software to clone your existing Windows installation from your old hard drive.

KEY SPECS

250GB - 1TB capacity ■ AES-256 encryption ■ M.2 connection ■ 200TBW write tolerance ■ Samsung Magician, Samsung Data Migration software

£500 PC

Mesh Home PC

£499 from www.meshcomputers.com

Tested: Issue 426



The Mesh Home PC is compact and quiet, with a great processor. It has a premium operating system in Windows 10 Pro and includes an SSD and a dedicated graphics card.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 3.4GHz Intel Core i5-7500 processor ■ 8GB memory = 120GB SSD, 1TB hard drive = 2GB Asus GeForce GT710-2-SL graphics card ■ 6 x USB 2 ports; 2 x USB 3 ports ■ Windows 10 Pro ■ Lifetime labour warranty, two-years parts, one-year collect-and-return

INKJET PRINTER

Brother MFC-J5330DW

£125.78 from bit.ly/brot425 Tested: Issue 425



Provided you can find space for this bulky printer, you won't be disappointed, because it's very reasonably priced, cheap to run and produces great-looking prints - especially photos. You won't have to wait long for them to print, either.

KEY SPECS

4,800 x 1,200dpi maximum print resolution ■ 1,200 x 2,400dpi maximum scan resolution ■ 250-sheet input capacity • 100-sheet output capacity • Double-sided printing = 802.11n Wi-Fi = 530 x 398 x 304mm = 16.9kg

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 this 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.

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

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 cost-effective way to keep it safe.

KEY FEATURES

\$59.99 (around £49) per year for 1 PC • Unlimited storage • Back up external drives ■ 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. Use the URL above to save £15.04 (normal price £34.99).

KEY FEATURES

Antivirus and firewall tools ■ Protects online shopping and banking Identity and privacy tools Advanced ad blocking

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, 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 ■ Extra paid-for storage available

Web User Gold Award winners

ONLINE IMAGE EDITOR

Pixlr

CRASHPLAN (A)

Free from pixlr.com

Tested: Issue 427

PixIr is a sophisticated image

editor that's stuffed with useful features that rival the tools you find in Desktop software.

NEW

Google Calendar

ANDROID CALENDAR

Free from bit.ly/googlecal426

Tested: Issue 426

Google Calendar offers the perfect

combination of usability and

features, making organising your schedule incredibly easy.

STREAMING MEDIA RECORDER

ActivePresenter

Free from bit.ly/active425

Tested: Issue 425

ActivePresenter does an excellent job of capturing streaming video

and provides an exhaustive set of editing tools.

TO-DO LIST TOOL

Todoist

Free from todoist.com

Tested: Issue 424

Todoist is the ultimate to-do list tool. Adding new tasks is simple, whether managing small projects or complex ones.



PRIVATE BROWSER

Tested: Issue 423

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

Epic Browser Free from www.epicbrowser.com

INTERESTED IN MAGAZINE STANDARDS?



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If you are interested, please go to: www.ipso.co.uk/about-ipso/vacancies/

Best Free Software

SYSTEM TOOL

TweakPower Beta

bit.ly/tp428

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 8.5MB

TweakPower is a new all-in-one system tool that can clean up, back up and optimise your PC, as well as fix common problems. The software's attractive, tab-based interface is very easy to use. Its Cleaning module keeps your hard drive tidy by removing junk files, internet traces, plugins and old Registry entries, while Optimize can speed up sluggish shutdown, stop background processes that may be slowing down your computer and boost SSD performance (if you have a solid-state drive installed). TweakPower can also prolong your





battery life, and give your PC a speed boost using Turbo mode.

The LiveTuning section is particularly interesting. It aims to improve system performance by accelerating the speed at which programs launch, while simultaneously managing processes running in the background. However, it can be a little hit and miss and sometimes causes more problems than it solves, so use it with care.

Finally, the All Functions section gives you one-click access to all the tools on offer, sorting them into categories -

Hard Disk, Registry, Security Centre, Customise Windows, Computer and 'Backups and Options' - so you can easily identify the right tool for the job.

TweakPower is currently in beta, so you may occasionally encounter problems and shouldn't blindly apply suggested tweaks if you don't know what they do. You can create a System Restore point before making any changes, which will let you roll things back to how they were in the event of encountering any major problems with the software.

MINI WORKSHOP | Keep your PC running smoothly using TweakPower



1 TweakPower's Dashboard provides an overview of your system. You can see the current PC Mode (Economy, Standard, or Turbo), 11 and your security settings, 2 which shows any antivirus software you have running. You can also view your hard drive's health, 3 your computer's bootup and shutdown information, 4 and its hardware details. 5



To remove junk from your PC, click the Cleaning tab. 🚺 Choose the areas you want to target - Registry, 2 Browser, 3 System 4 and Plugin Cleaner, 5 then click the Analyse Now button. 6 Once TweakPower has finished scanning your PC, you can view the findings and initiate a clean-up.



Click the Optimize tab to make various improvements to performance, such as speeding up shutdown, shortening the time spent waiting for a crashed program to respond and optimising your system. Click the cog icon 2 to choose which areas to target, then click Optimize Now. 3

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



IMAGE VIEWER QuickViewer

bit.ly/quickv428

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10 File size: 20.3MB

QuickViewer is a super-fast portable image viewer that recognises all the popular formats, and can display images inside ZIP, 7Z and RAR files, and CBR and CBZ comic-book archives.

You can jump backwards and forwards through a selection of images, change folders, zoom and rotate pictures, email them or send unwanted ones to the Recycle Bin. It can also create catalogues of images with auto-generated tags.



BACKUP TOOL

MiniTool ShadowMaker Beta

bit.ly/shad428

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10

File size: 57.6MB

MiniTool ShadowMaker lets you back up your system and hard drives. It offers full, differential and incremental backups, and remote backup over a network. You can schedule backups at a frequency that suits you, and use WinPE Bootable Builder to create a rescue disk to restore your system if your PC won't boot. The catch is that to use this free beta software, you need to register it by posting about it on Facebook or Twitter. interface and fixes various bugs.



ANTIVIRUS TOOL

Winia 3

bit.ly/winja428

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 9.1MB

Winja - short for Windows Ninja - uses the online VirusTotal scanner to check files and downloads for malware. The interface lets you browse for a file to scan, run a download and scan (it will rename the download with a safe extension before checking it), or run a quick process scan. There's a selection of advanced tools on offer, too.

The latest version improves the

New Windows Apps

gCalendar Client Pro

bit.ly/gcal428

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 31.2MB

This free app syncs with Google Calendar so you can easily view, create, edit and delete events. It lets you sync multiple accounts, and you can set it to use different colours for each type of event.



Musicloud

bit.ly/musicloud428

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 18.1MB

Musicloud is a free music player for Windows 10 that lets you listen to songs without restriction. Content is pulled directly from YouTube, and its search tool makes it easy to find any track or artist you want.



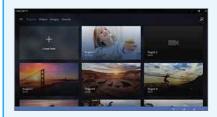
Media Cutter Full

bit.ly/mc428

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 28.6MB

Media Cutter Full is a video, audio and image editor. You can crop and join videos, add transitions between scenes and apply filters to videos and images.



Best Free Software

ANTI-MALWARE TOOL

RegRun Reanimator 9

bit.ly/regrr428

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

File size: 15.1MB

RegRun Reanimator is a free, cut-down version of the RegRun Security Suite, which costs \$74.95 (£58.29). It scans your system for Trojans, adware, spyware and other malware, and removes any it finds, including some rootkits. The program won't clash with any existing anti-malware software you have installed, which makes it a useful second line of defence. When you install the software, it updates its database, then gives you the option to back up your system files or fix problems. With the latter option, you just need to choose the option you require - Fix Malware Issues, Deep Scan, Online Multi-Antvirus Scan or 'Reveal Hidden or Infected Files'.



File Edit View Options Help 의로설코용제 # 129430 # 129431 # 129433 # 129434 # 129436 # 129436 # 129438 # 129438 # 129430 Endelender Wallet Agent Google Chrome 137,186 59,148,741 08/05/2017... WAYNEPC\Wayne 75,485 20,747 08/05/2017_ NT AUTHORITY SY. Intel(R) Ethernet Co... DiagTrack WAYNEPC\Wwyne 5-1-5-21-1851677... 08/05/2017 ■ 129441 ■ 129442 ■ 129444 ● 129446 ■ 129446 ■ 129447 ■ 129448 ■ 129449 ● 129450 08/05/2017 194,601 91,586 11,124 18,640 164,201 23,166 31,643 08/05/2017 Microsoft Windows Photos_ Chprogram files biddefenda 5 1-5:21-1861677... Intel(R) Ethernat Co. CSProgram Files (486)/Mozil. Firefox BitDefender Update Downlo... 14.189 08/05/2017_ 08/05/2917 C\program files\common fil. Microsoft Office Click-to-Ru. 14,652 Clyptographic Services WAYNERCYWayne Intel(R) Ethernet Co. Microsoft Windows Cortana CDPUserSvc_79798 C\program files b865/googl... Google Direme

NETWORK TOOL

NetworkUsageView

Min requirements: Windows 8+/10

File size: 69.1KB

The latest free offering from the prolific software developer Nirsoft is a tool that lists all the applications that have been accessing your network recently, so you can identify anything suspicious. It doesn't require installation - just right-click the EXE file and run it in Administrator mode. The program will get to work and provide a detailed list that you can sort by Record ID, Timestamp, App Name, App Description, User Name, Network Adaptor and Bytes Sent and Bytes Received. The details aren't compiled by the app itself; they're just pulled from a Windows log.

You can save the results in an HTML report for viewing at any time.

SYSTEM TOOL

Search My Files 11

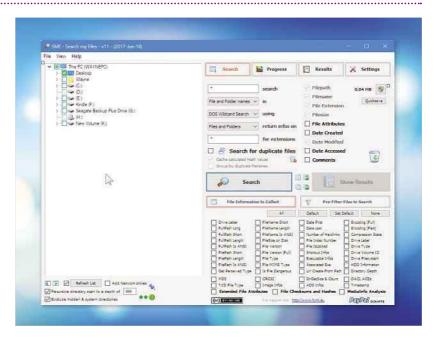
funk.eu/smf

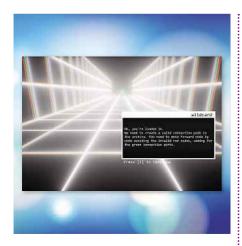
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 6.9MB

When you copy - rather than move - your documents, photos and music tracks from one folder to another, it's very easy to end up with lots of duplicates, which look messy and take up valuable space on your hard drive. Search My Files can find and move or delete these duplicates. It can also track down individual files by a range of criteria - including name, size, date, song length, photo dimension and so on and copy, move or securely delete them. You can also save any search results for another time, which is handy.

The latest version of the software improves the speed of the software's searches and fixes numerous bugs.





GAME Katabasis

bit.ly/kata428

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 322MB

Katabasis is a slick hacking adventure in which you set out to uncover the mystery of your father's death. Was it suicide, as the government claims, or something more sinister? Your first task is figuring out how to log into your computer. It's a challenging game that uses interesting visuals and music to great effect.

Don't install...

Rummage

getrummage.com

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

File size: 8MB

We had high hopes for Rummage when it first appeared - it's an attractive, easy-to-use search tool with some useful options for finding lost files. However, its developer seems to have abandoned the program - it hasn't been updated for a couple of years and the problem of drive indexing taking forever has never been solved.



...Install this instead

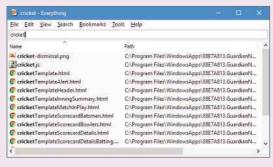
Everything

www.voidtools.com

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

File size: 794KB

When you can't remember where you saved a particular file on your hard drive, the built-in Windows search tool is often slow and unsuccessful at finding the lost item. Everything provides a much faster and more efficient alternative, despite being less than one megabyte in size. It creates a database of all the files on your hard drive, so as soon as you start typing a filename, the program instantly shows where it is. Everything is available in 32- and 64-bit versions, and the latest release (1.4.1.) adds a useful Filters menu for narrowing your searches.





UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



VIDEO CONVERTER

Any Video Converter Free 6.1.5

www.any-video-converter

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ or MacOS File size: 48.3MB

This handy tool converts video from one format to another, and downloads clips from YouTube and other streaming sites. This version improves support for burning DVDs, and also updates the video-download engine.



IMAGE TOOL

JPEGSnoop 1.8.0

bit.ly/jsnoop428

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

File size: 1.4MB

If you want to get information about an image, such as where it was taken, on what camera and whether it's been edited or not, JPEGSnoop can probably tell you. The latest version fixes several vulnerabilities and bugs, and has undergone a major code cleanup. It also works with Photoshop files.



SYSTEM TOOL

WinUtilities Free 15

hi.ylcomputing.com

Min requirements: Windows

XP/Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 6.3MB

WinUtilities is a comprehensive all-in-one system cleaning and optimisation suite that can do everything from delete iunk files to fix broken shortcuts. This latest version adds more programs to the cleaner module, updates the database and fixes various bugs.



SYSTEM TOOL

Speccy 1.31

www.piriform.com/speccy

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 6MB

Compatibility with Windows 10 Creators Update has been improved in this update to Piriform's system-information tool. The interface and sensor tracking have been overhauled, and the 32-bit build updated. It's also had minor interface tweaks and bug fixes.

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



Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

Open Spotify songs in other music players

Spotify is the most popular music-streaming service but not everybody uses it, which makes it all the more frustrating when people only share songs in the form of Spotify links. A new Chrome (and Opera) extension called Playify (bit.ly/playify428) beats this restriction by letting you play Spotify tracks in Google Play Music by default. Just click the Spotify link and Playify will open it in Google's music-streaming service, with the additional option to purchase the track as a download (if it's available). If you don't subscribe to Google Play Music, the add-on also works with Amazon Music and YouTube, so you can listen to Spotify tunes on those services.

Playify currently only works with individual songs, but plans to add support for whole playlists soon.



Auto-hide offensive content on the web

It's becoming increasingly difficult to avoid upsetting material on the web, whether it's idiotic comments on social media or graphically unpleasant news stories. Rather than tiptoeing around your favourite sites to focus only on the nicer stuff, install Soothe (bit.ly/ soothe428) to hide offensive content automatically. This extension runs quietly in the background to detect and blur material of a racist, sexist, violent, homophobic or otherwise disagreeable nature - you can choose the exact topics that you don't want to see. Soothe is still in beta so it doesn't catch everything, but we found it worked pretty well - and if you're intrigued by the censored content, you can click to reveal it.

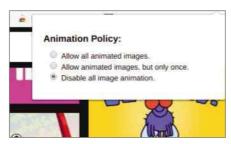
See our feature on page 46 for more



advice about fixing annoyances on your favourite sites.

Block all animated GIFs in Chrome

Aren't animated GIFs hilarious? They make the web so much more entertaining - especially when they're shoe-horned into a dull article to provide some extra 'colour'. If you disagree, you're not alone, which is why it's useful to know how to prevent animated images from playing



automatically. Chrome doesn't have a built-in setting for this purpose, but an extension called Gif Jam (Animation Stopper) (bit.ly/stopper428) solves the problem by freezing all the animations on a page so that only the first frame is

displayed. To allow the GIFs to play, simply click the add-on's toolbar button. If you find Gif Jam doesn't work on certain sites, try Animation Policy (bit.ly/

animation428), which lets you either disable all animated images or only allow them to run once.

Settings

Service

Google Play Music

YouTube

Amazon Music .com ▼

Get instant notifications about earthquakes

Earlier this month, Shetland was rocked by the largest earthquake recorded in the UK for nine years, with a 4.7-magnitude tremor that caused several ponies to topple over. To stay abreast of future quakes around the world, install the new Earthquake-report.com extension (bit.ly/quake428) from the website of the same name. This alerts you with a Desktop notification and a sound as soon as an earthquake occurs, so you can hide under the table or do whatever you're supposed to do. Alternatively, you can click the notification for more information about the 'quake, including the magnitude, depth, exact location on a map and history of seismic activity in the area. Even as we were writing this, Macedonia, Indonesia and the Ryuku Islands in Japan suffered tremors!

> Earthquake-report.com M 4.8, Flores Region, Indonesia



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

FIREFOX

Block all web adverts and pop-ups

As we pointed out in this section last issue, blocking online ads deprives web-content creators of essential revenue, but not blocking them can lead to an irritating and depending on the type of ads - even unbearable online experience. Adblock Hyper (bit.ly/hyper428) is a new ad blocker that uses half as much memory as Adblock Plus and filters all adverts by default making no exceptions for companies that pay not to be blocked. It uses a variety of standard and optional filters to block thousands of advertising and malware



domains to ensure you're never again pestered by ads in videos, webmail, search results and social media, as well as annoying pop-ups. If that sounds a bit extreme, you can easily add specific sites and domains to Adblock Hyper's whitelist so their ads aren't blocked, and block individual elements instead. The interface isn't particularly attractive, but it's easy to use and works like a dream.



Give Google News a dark makeover

So, do you like the new-look Google News? We made it our 'Site of the Fortnight' last issue, but some users have complained that there's too much white space and that it hurts their eyes and makes them reflect on the emptiness of their lives. If you feel the same way, help is at hand from a new Firefox add-on called Dark Theme for Google News (bit.ly/dark428), which changes the colour scheme of the news site to a more vision-friendly black and blue, while retaining the new layout and organisational features. It certainly makes pages look less bare, and you can always disable it if you want to go back to white.

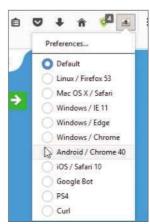
Speed up page-loading

Many sites perform a 'user agent' check

when you visit them, which identifies your browser and device so that content can be displayed accordingly. If the site detects that you're using a phone or tablet, it may load its slimmed-down mobile version, which uses much less data and therefore loads faster - or it may insist that you use a particular browser. User Agent

(bit.lv/ user428) lets vou pretend that vou're using an Android or iOS device, or a different browser on a different

Switcher



operating system - such as Linux or MacOS - to make sites display speedily and without problems. Just click the toolbar button and choose a user agent to switch to. Bear in mind that although streamlined pages may load faster, certain features may not be available.

OTHER BROWSERS

Test your internet speed instantly You're no doubt familiar with Ookla Speedtest.net, but if you want a second opinion about the speed of your connection, install Internet Speed Test (bit.ly/speed428). Click this add-on's toolbar button, select Begin Test and it will measure your download and

upload speeds, and 'ping' (the time taken for data to make a return trip from your PC to a distant server). You can run the



test at different times of day to compare the results, and choose between different speed-test servers. Our office Wi-Fi connection was a rather pathetic 0.6Mbps!

Customise your Speed Dial buttons

In Issue 426, we discussed the new feature in Vivaldi that lets you choose custom thumbnails for your Speed Dial tiles. Now the browser has expanded on that functionality by letting you show or hide the title bar that appears on the tiles, or only display it when you hover your mouse over a thumbnail. You can also remove the 'delete' cross from tiles to prevent you from closing them accidentally; and hide other control buttons so nobody can customise or refresh your tiles without your permission. To access these options, go to Settings, Start Page, Speed Dial.





Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight (sort of)

FREE CALLS

Skype

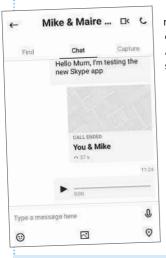
bit.ly/skypedroid428 bit.ly/skypeios428



Skype wasn't broken, but Microsoft has fixed it anyway. The company has overhauled the Android and iOS app versions of its video-chat tool, adding features that have clearly been inspired by WhatsApp and Snapchat. Naturally, it's divided users.

Whether you approve will depend on your expectations. If you're hoping for a mobile version of the businesslike videocalling PC program, you'll be sorely disappointed. However if you're looking for a more lightweight alternative to Facebook Messenger with better video and audio quality, you may actually like it.

Much attention has been paid to the new Snapchat-style Highlights feature, which lets you share photos and videos adorned with doodles, stickers and text. They're like multimedia tweets that can only be seen by family and friends who 'follow' you (you have to accept their follow request), then expire after seven days. We can see their potential as live-action holiday postcards, for example. You can also follow automated 'bots', such as Doctor Who and ticket agency StubHub, whose Highlights work as Twitterstyle updates. On a more sober level, Skype makes easy work of leaving video and voice messages for contacts, although they'll need to have the app installed as well; they can't take your call using the PC program.



And that's a problem. Try as we might, we couldn't get Skype on our PC to sync with Skype on our Android phone, even though we signed in using the same email address and password. We called the same contact using the app and then the program, but our activity didn't sync. If this isn't a bug, it's a serious design flaw - and it makes Skype feel incompetent when compared with WhatsApp,

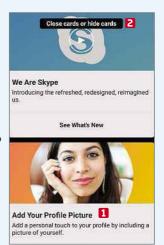
whose app and web versions sync instantly and securely.





MINI WORKSHOP Create and share a Highlight using the new Skype

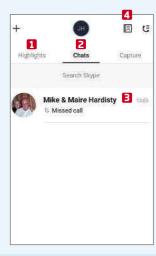
Install and launch Skype, tap Sign In, then enter your Skype account details. Tap the tick to choose a theme, then the tick to import your device contacts. Press the arrow and select Allow to grant permissions. Next, swipe up to browse rich cards such as Add Your Profile Picture. 1 To arrive (finally!) at the main screen, which opens straight away next time, tap 'Close cards or hide cards'. 2



To create a Highlight, tap the plus sign, then New Highlight. Tap to take a selfie, or tap the arrow to switch to the back camera. Press and hold to shoot a video. To choose a device photo, swipe up and tap. Select the paintbrush to doodle on the photo. 11 The other icons are for text and stickers. 2 Press the Save icon to download the image, **3** or My Highlights to add it as a Highlight. 4

Back on the main screen, you can view your Highlight on the Highlights tab. 11 To follow Highlights created by your contacts and Skype bots, tap the top-right icon. The default Chats tab 2 displays contacts you've called or messaged using the new Skype app; 3 your previous Skype activity won't appear here. To invite contacts to install Skype, tap the People icon. 4





Our rating

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

TEXT EDITOR

NeutriNote bit.ly/note428 **# 4.4**

You can jot a quick note or write a website from the ground up using this outstanding app, which is far more powerful than Notepad on your PC.



Everything you write - in plain text, rich markdown or LaTex for maths equations - is automatically saved and searchable, and can be set to back up to cloud-storage services including Dropbox and Google Drive. NeutriNote also integrates with productivity apps including Tasker and Barcode Scanner. Its developer, App Mind

Lab, has a great Google+ site that provides help and tips (bit.ly/ appml428).



SYSTEM TOOL

Caffeine bit.ly/ caffeine428

automatic sleep feature is vital for keeping the battery of your phone or tablet



Google Play Music

Google Play Store

if you're trying to follow a recipe in the kitchen, you don't want to keep tapping your device's screen to keep it awake and get it covered in greasy fingerprints. You can change the default in your Android settings, but Caffeine gives you more configuration options. If you're running Android 5 and above, the new version lets you disable Sleep mode entirely for certain



Our rating

apps, and when the device

is connected via USB.



TRAVEL

Hello World helloworldapp



UPDATED

Customise vour screen using stunning photos of hundreds of places around the world. Hello World isn't iust



another travel-wallpaper app - it offers useful insights about the destinations it covers, with maps and climate graphs as well as historical and local information. You can filter contents by continent and subject matter (including Nature, Food and Mountains), then edit an image before setting it as your wallpaper - or use the

'Auto Wallpaper' settings to get a random pick every day. It's a shame there's no search function, though.



Our rating



EBOOKS

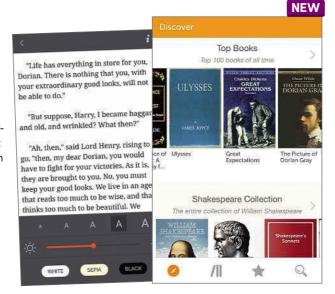
Our rating

Gutenberg Books

bit.ly/gutenberg428

Guess how long ago **Project Gutenberg** (www.gutenberg.org)

started digitising out-ofcopyright books so that everyone can read them for free? Clue: it's the same age as Elon Musk. It actually began in 1971 but 46 years later, there's still no official app - this third-party tool is the closest you'll get. Like its iOS sibling Gutenberg, which



launched a few months ago (bit.ly/gutios428), this app lets you search and browse the Project Gutenberg collection of more than 50,000 ebooks, which includes a few bestsellers as well as a huge range of classics. You simply download any you want with one tap. The built-in e-reader is fairly basic, but it does let you adjust text size and format, and there are no ads or hidden fees to interrupt your reading.



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 vour device
- Remove hidden junk so it never comes back
- Switch from iOS without

Order it now from Amazon at bit.ly/androidbook2016

HEALTH

Nokia Health Mate

bit.ly/nokia428

(varies with device) \$\mathbb{\mathbb{m}}\$



Nokia may be enjoying a resurgence in its fortunes, but its relaunched version of the muchloved health app Withings has met with a mixed reception. Like Withings, Health Mate helps you track your health by recording data such as weight, blood pressure and sleep patterns, then reveals trends and lets you set goals. It's not bad,

but we hit our first snag when trying to create an account (compulsory, alas) and had to use the website to register instead. Once you're signed in, you can import data from third-party apps such as Google Fit and devices such as smart scales, or enter your figures manually.



Our rating



PHOTOS

Aivon

bit.ly/aivon428

A kind of visual Shazam, Aivon's 'Vision Computing Identifier' tool can tell you what (or who) is in a photo, and in some cases offers additional info, too. It could prove useful for identifying mysterious buildings while you're on holiday. We gave it a spin with a photo of two cats, and - ding dong, Aivon calling - "I am 69 per cent

confident this is a picture of a cat lying on a bed," it declared, out loud. Less usefully, there's also a tool for

judging facial expressions (our sulk was deemed "neutral"). An OCR text-recognition feature is coming soon. It's just a shame about the intrusive, screen-hogging adverts.



NEW

Our rating



V APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

Good afternoon Jane!

ASTRONOMY

Solar Eclipse Timer

www.solareclipsetimer.com

Price: £1.89 (Android), £1.99 (iOS)



Track the path of the next eclipse, due to appear over the UK on 21 August. Solar Eclipse Timer will talk you through it out loud including telling you when to put on your solar glasses.



Clamp Audio Player

bit.ly/clamp428

Price: 89p

(varies with device)

Get the best possible sound quality from your music - even in a noisy environment - using Clamp's powerful processing algorithm. Supports most audio formats including MP3, AAC, Vorbis and FLAC.

MUSIC

SynthScaper

bit.ly/synth428

Price £9.99



Start with this mobile synthesiser's built-in library





of samples, noises and instruments, then use layers, mixing and tuning to turn them into audio masterpieces.

RECIPES

BudgetBytes

bit.ly/bytes428

Price: £2.79 (Android), £2.99 (iOS)

4.1

Cookbook author Beth Moncel has amassed lots of fans and awards for her blog (www.budgetbytes.com), and now she's put 100 of her most popular budget recipes in an app, with step-by-step photos and voice quidance

PHOTOGRAPHY

Palette Navy

bit.ly/palette428

Price: 99p

4.0.3

Shoot photos and videos, then give them a clean, modern look using 12 adjustable filters. The price is set to rise to £1.99 soon. For more Palette apps on special offer, see bit.ly/palapps428.





Solar Eclipse Timer

Clamp Audio Player









SynthScaper



Best New Mobile Games

ADVENTURE

NEW

PUZZLE

NEW

NEW

Futurama: Worlds of Tomorrow

bit.ly/futurama428 3.1 8



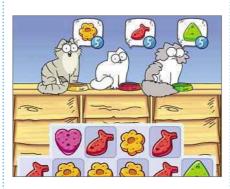
Good news, everyone: this new game brings all the fun and adventure of Futurama to your phone or tablet. Supported by the team behind the animated sci-fi series, it lets you play favourite characters such as Fry, Leela and Bender to clean up New New York, fight bizarre alien species and go on missions to other planets. Complete with amusing video and audio clips, fantastic graphics and music, and lots of challenges and tasks, Worlds of Tomorrow is a must for Futurama fans keen

Express team. Our rating

Simon's Cat - Crunch Time

bit.ly/catdroid428 bit.ly/catios428

4.0.3 7



Simon's Cat has more than 4.3 million followers on YouTube and now the mischievous moggy has arrived on mobile devices, too. Crunch Time is a cute, cartoony take on 'match-three' games such as Candy Crush Saga, except here you're connecting cat treats instead of sweets to feed the eponymous feline and friends. The more you match, the further you progress around the neighbourhood. The graphics and music are adorable, and the gameplay very

addictive until you need to pay to continue or wait for a key to unlock further levels.

Our rating



...Install this instead

ARCADE Jelly Inc bit.ly/jelly428 **4.1 7**



"Easy to learn, hard to master", says the description for this game, and the developer isn't joking. Ostensibly, there's nothing more to it than guiding a jelly along a series of conveyor belts while avoiding deadly obstacles such as circular saws, acid containers and missile-shooting robots. However, the relentless pace will have you furiously tapping your screen to jump your jelly out of danger. There are power-ups and coins to collect, and further jellies to unlock, but if you

make a mistake you risk having to start the level all over again. It's very tricky stuff.



Our rating



X Don't install...

Memory Cleaner & Booster

bit.ly/memory428

to join the Planet

This 'memory boosting' app has got a ruddy nerve. Not only does it charge you a whopping £7.98 to do something you can do yourself for



free - namely, clear the caches of RAMhogging apps - but it doesn't even work properly. What's more, judging by the suspicious number of five-star rave reviews on the Play store ("lots of bang for your buck!"), something much fishier has gone on behind the scenes than mere memory drain.

RAM Cleanup

bit.ly/ram428

4.1

If your phone or tablet has become slow and unresponsive, it's likely that you're running low on available memory. RAM Cleanup solves this problem by reducing the amount of memory being used by apps in the background, making your device

faster and more stable. It's very easy to use, letting you purge excess memory usage with a single tap. and offers additional options to run automatically, close when it's finished and

hide its notifications. The in-app ads are annoying, and cost £1.89 to remove, but we love the exuberant, animated logo, which dances, prances and poses as the cleanup runs!







interesting new technology trends and events



What are phantom goods?

Phantom goods are products and services that have been bought in good faith but turn out to be non-existent. They are often advertised online at bargain prices to encourage people to snap them up. But when the items never arrive or the service appears not to be worth the paper it is written on, victims quickly realise they've been had.

What kinds of items are we talking about?

The range of goods involved in these scams varies wildly and includes electrical items, jewellery, fine wine and musical instruments along with services such as insurance, driving lessons and gift vouchers. In particular, there have been many cases of people buying cars, flights and furniture that don't exist. Just about anything can be a phantom item.



A lot of phantom goods are sold on eBay by real scammers to real people

Where are phantom goods being

Non-existent items are being put up for sale all over the internet. Scammers use social-media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, for instance, to advertise their low-price items. They also use eBay, Amazon Marketplace, Gumtree and Facebook Marketplace - services that many people trust, having used them successfully in the past to buy real items. Some scammers set up fake companies and websites while others simply pose as friendly private sellers. They also use fake customer reviews to fool buyers into thinking they're genuine, trustworthy and reputable.

How big a problem is this scam?

According to the Citizens Advice consumer service (www.citizensadvice .org.uk), there has been a 17% rise in the number of people reporting phantom goods. In real terms, that equates to 555 cases between January and March this year, compared to the 475 cases over the same period last year. Many more cases will have been reported to the police.

Interestingly, a Freedom of Information Act request made to Action Fraud (www .actionfraud.police.uk) found that people in Northamptonshire were most likely to report that a product sold online didn't exist, arrive or match its description.



People living in Northamptonshire are most likely to report phantom-goods scams

How much are people losing to this scam?

Citizens Advice says that people are losing £1,100 on average but there have been cases of much larger sums being handed over. Alistair Black, a 62-year old motorbike enthusiast, wrote to the Telegraph newspaper in February to report that he'd paid £6,000 for a non-existent Harley Davidson on eBay. It was the first time he had used the online marketplace.

What's being done about these crimes?

According to the consumer-protection minister Margot James, 500 Twitter accounts and 140 websites linked to scams have been identified and suspended by National Trading Standards, with hundreds of people arrested. Even so, it's hard to trace many

Margot James is the minister tackling phantomgoods scams

of the scammers because they aren't always in the

> UK and they tend to hide behind false identities and fake contact details. The British Bankers' Association says the financial industry is working closely with law enforcement agencies to spot suspicious, potentially fraudulent activity on accounts.

But is that enough?

The National Audit Office (www.nao.org .uk) doesn't think so. Following an investigation, it said some police forces, along with government and industry, were not treating online scams as a priority even though they're the most commonly experienced crime in England and Wales. It also called on ministers to push for harsher sentences for convicted fraudsters, and questioned whether current legislation was doing enough.

Are people being convicted?

Yes. This year, Joshua Barlow, aged 27, was found to have conned 16 buyers out of £5.520 when he advertised festival tickets, iPhones and computers for sale on Facebook and Gumtree, knowing that he would not be supplying these items. He was sentenced to 12 months at Stokeon-Trent Crown Court. Amazon seller James Symons, aged 32, was sentenced to 32 months in prison after duping close to 2,000 people into buying non-existent electrical goods in a £1m scam. Meanwhile, Constantin Florea, 36, Ion



These three scamming scumbags have been jailed and fined for ripping off Web Users

Buruleanu, 39, and Theodor Draghici, 32, pleaded guilty to a £200,000 fraud at Harrow Crown Court and were sentenced to a total of 90 months in prison. They had placed adverts for non-existent items on eBay, Gumtree, Autotrader, Airbnb and others, directing 'customers' to tradeelectronixx.co.uk to pay for their phantom goods.

Will the victims get their money

Most often not. The problem is that many scammers insist on bank transfers, which makes it harder to retrieve the money, although it's not impossible to get a refund. Citizens Advice talks of a man who paid £2,000 for car insurance from a 'firm' he found on Instagram. When the promised email with his documents never arrived, he asked his bank for help. They managed to get the money back from the scammer's account but many others - including those directed to fake PayPal accounts - have not been so lucky.

Are some online services less secure than others?

Yes, some online marketplaces offer

greater protection for customers. Twitter and Instagram, for example, aren't going to dip their hands in their corporate pockets to bail out victims of scams, because they weren't set up for the buying and selling of goods. Likewise, Facebook Marketplace offers no protection and leaves the buyer and seller to manage their own payment arrangements.

Amazon Marketplace and eBay, on the other hand, do offer protection schemes, along with feedback systems and secure payments.

Where can I get more information or report fraud?

Action Fraud (actionfraud.police.uk) has resources related to phantom-goods scams and you can use their site to report a problem. You can also help in the fight against scams by joining Friend Against Scams (www.friendsagainstscams .org.uk) and helping to spread the word. If you spot a rogue listing on an online marketplace, flag it up: on eBay, look down the right-hand side of a listing as you scroll and you'll see an option to 'Report item'.



Join Friends Against Scams to help the fight against the fraudster enemy

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST PHANTOM-GOODS SCAMS

How can you avoid falling prey to the sale of non-existent items? Here are some questions to ask yourself

Is it too good to be true?

If the price of an item is far cheaper than elsewhere online or on the high street, then treat it with a hefty dollop of scepticism. Question how the seller can offer the item at such a low price.

Is it a legitimate company?

If you have never heard of the company you're planning to buy from, go online and check it out. Visit Gov.uk's 'Get information about a company' page (bit.ly/company428) to see if it is registered. Check any head office or premises address; maybe even look for it on Google Street View.

Who owns the domain name?

If you are buying items from a website, type the company's domain name into whois.com/ whois. It should list the registrant's contact details and address.



Does it match your other information? Does it look genuine?

Are you being asked to transfer the money?

Legitimate traders will, by and large, avoid asking you to wire cash or transfer money direct to an account, so alarm bells should ring if you get such a request. Use a credit or debit card, or PayPal, to pay.

Is the company approved or protected?

Buying a holiday online? Check to see if it is ATOL-protected (bit.ly/ atol428). Purchasing insurance or another financial product? Check the Financial Conduct Authority's register (register.fca.org.uk).







Google may be king of the web, but it's far from perfect. Wayne Williams reveals the darker side of your favourite Google tools and suggests better alternatives

What should I use that's better than...



What should I use that's better than... Search

What should I use that's better than... Drive

What should I use that's better than... Gmail

What should I use that's better than... YouTube

What should I use that's better than... Maps

What should I use that's better than... Chrome

oogle dominates the web like no other company and we'd be lost without it. From Search, Gmail and Chrome, to Maps, YouTube and Android, most of us use at least one Google product or service every day, and enjoy the simplicity and seamless integration offered by Google tools. However, as the massive fine from the EU recently proved, along with other shady revelations, Google is far from perfect and it has a rather dubious attitude toward both its rivals and its users. It's also true that Google's dominance of the web unfairly overshadows

many good-quality tools from smaller companies.

In this feature, we explain why you should reconsider blindly using Google's most popular products and services, and reveal the best free alternatives to switch to instead. Naturally, we're not suggesting you should abandon Google altogether - we're just outlining how you could, and the benefits you gain by doing so.

Additionally, in our Google Timeline of Shame, we highlight some of the company's biggest controversies and backlashes over the past few years.

SHADY SEARCH



Why stop using Search?

It's a well-known but unnerving fact that Google monitors and stores your searches so it can target you with advertising – a shameless invasion of your privacy that allows the company to build a profile of who it thinks you are.

There's also the highly controversial issue of your search results being adjusted to benefit the web giant. Google was recently fined a record £2.1bn by the European Commission after a seven-year investigation found the company had unfairly promoted Google Shopping above other, similar shopping-comparison services in its search results. Alarmingly, that's not the only area where Google adjusts the results. There are similar ongoing EU investigations into both Maps and local business listings.

Google also customises what you see based on your past preferences (known as the 'filter bubble') and makes changes to the results rankings in subtle ways, such as downgrading sites that offer pirated content or push hate speech, terrorism or racism, for example. It prioritises newer content,



Beneath the minimalist Google Search homepage lurks a darker side

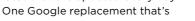
too, so sites that aren't regularly updated slip off the first page of results.

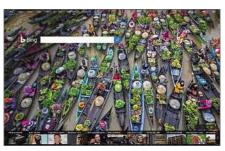
Most of us won't have a problem with having fresh, non-controversial links prioritised, but the fact remains that Google presents results based on its own agenda, so you may not always get to see the most relevant sites available.

What to use instead:

Google won its position as the number one search engine by delivering clean, comprehensive and accurate results. Microsoft's Bing (www.bing.com) is its closest rival, and is growing in popularity. According to Microsoft, Bing now has a 9% market share globally and in Europe, but that figure is much higher in English-speaking countries: 26% in the UK and 33% in the US. For a blind test of Google and Bing, enter a search query at Bing It On (www.bingiton .com). You'll see results from the two search engines side by side and can rate your preferences through five rounds - you may be surprised by the winner.

Another reason to use Bing is that its reward scheme has just launched in the UK. Bing Rewards gives you points for searching on the site, which can be used to enter competitions, make donations to charity and buy Skype credit, Groove Music passes, Microsoft gift cards and more. Bing suffers from some of the same privacy issues as Google, so it won't appeal to everyone, but it benefits from stunning, interactive homepage photos that are updated every day.





Bing's daily-updated homepage wallpaper is better than boring Google's

definitely worth considering - especially if you value your privacy - is DuckDuckGo (duckduckgo.com). This ever-improving search engine stores no personal information, and doesn't track you or show personalised ads. The quality of its results is mostly very good because they are pulled from more than 400 different sources. You can easily add the search engine to your browser with a couple of mouse clicks, making the switch fairly seamless. DuckDuckGo also offers more than 9,400 clever 'bang' commands (duckduckgo.com/ bang) that let you quickly search specific sites including Amazon, eBay, Facebook, BBC iPlayer and, er... Google.



You'd be quackers not to protect your privacy by using DuckDuckGo

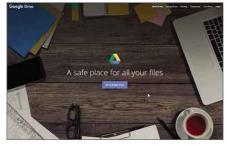


DODGY DOCS & DRIVE



Google Docs/Drive is a great combination of online office suite and online storage, but its privacy policy raises serious questions about who owns the content you create and store

Why stop using Docs and Drive?



Upload your files to Google Drive, and you hand over a lifetime licence

in the service. "When you upload, submit, store, send or receive content to or through our Services, you give Google (and those we work with) a worldwide licence to use, host, store, reproduce, modify, create derivative work, communicate, publish, publicly perform, publicly display and distribute such content," says the Google Terms of Service page (bit.ly/terms428). It goes on to say: "this licence continues even if you stop using our Services", suggesting that Google owns your content forever.

What to use instead:

Microsoft OneDrive (bit.ly/oned428) comes pre-installed with Windows 10 and is the closest free service to Google

Drive. You only get 5MB of free storage but it includes access to free Office Online apps - Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote (bit.ly/msoo428).

Zoho Docs (www.zoho.eu/docs) is similar to Microsoft's offering and also gives you 5GB of storage.



OneDrive is conveniently and seamlessly integrated with Windows 10



GREEDY GMAIL

Why stop using Gmail?

Google has always, controversially, scanned messages in Gmail, using their content to present users with personalised - and more relevant adverts. If you receive (and read) a lot of emails about cars, for example, then you're likely to see adverts about new makes and models of vehicles. Google also knows which emails are more appealing to you - if you delete messages without opening them, or mark them as spam, then it won't use those to tailor its advertising.

Even though this is all done by machines rather than people, it's unquestionably creepy, which is part of the reason why Google recently announced plans to stop the practice, although this move was as much to



We used Gmail to plan this feature, but that doesn't mean we trust it

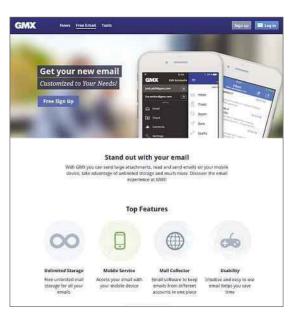
appease its corporate users. That's good news, but Gmail will still serve up ads personalised for you from Google's many other services, which is just as annoving.

Another reason to stop using Gmail is that although Google provides you with a generous amount of space (15GB) for your emails, this is shared with Drive/Docs. If you use the storage service a lot, you could quickly find yourself running out of room for your messages - especially if you regularly receive emails with large attachments - and you'll either have to delete some content or pay for an upgrade.

What to use instead:

Outlook.com from Microsoft is the obvious replacement for Gmail. In addition to a solid email experience, you get access to Office Web Applications and SkyDrive.

If you'd rather not trust another tech giant, GMX (www.gmx.com/mail) offers free, unlimited storage, a powerful spam filter, antivirus protection, a calendar, the ability to pull in emails from other



GMX is an unlimited free email service that provides a host of useful features

(non-GMX) accounts and more. You can send email attachments up to 50MB in size, and there are free apps for Android and iOS. GMX is linked to 1&1 Internet, one of the world's largest web-hosting providers, and it's been going for many years (we first wrote about it in 2008), so you don't need to worry that it will suddenly vanish overnight, which could



GOOGLE PRINT CONTROVERSY

Google is criticised for its plan to digitise and make public millions of print books, including many still under copyright. In the end, the project peters out after numerous lawsuits and ill-fated deals.

Google has been involved in so many controversies over the years that it would take a whole issue of Web User to list them all! Here are some of the most notable low points

FTC ANTITRUST INVESTIGATION

With the European Commission still investigating Google for manipulating search results, the US. Federal Trade Commission seems set to sue Google for the same thing. Google agrees to make changes and the case is dropped.



2005

2008

2010

March 2012

SHARING DATA ACROSS SERVICES

October 2012

Google makes a change to its privacy policy, which involves the company sharing the data it gathers across its many other services - a move that upsets privacy advocates.

November 2013

GOOGLE-YAHOO DEAL

Google agrees to a deal that allows it to sell advertising on Yahoo's search pages. This is deemed to be in violation of the **Sherman Antitrust Act** in the US.



SEARCH-RESULTS ABUSE

The European **Commission begins** a formal 'antitrust' inquiry into Google abusing its dominant position in Search, including favouring its Shopping service over its rivals.

YOUTUBE COMMENTS O

Google instigates a change that means users require a Google+ account to be able to comment on YouTube videos. This requirement is eventually dropped in July 2015.









YUCKY YOUTUBE



be a risk with some newer startups.

If you're concerned about your privacy, and you don't mind paying for a decent suite of ad-free services that includes email, calendar, address book, integrated file cloud service and more, then Kolab (kolabnow.com) is definitely worth checking out. Your data is stored in Switzerland, which has some of the tightest privacy laws in the world, and the service offers all the features you could want. It costs from around £7 a month (for an individual account), with a 30-day trial available so you can see whether it suits your needs before you commit to it.



Kolab isn't free to use but there are no adverts and it's tight on privacy



Some YouTube ads deliberately distract you from what you're watching

Why stop using YouTube?

YouTube is home to vast amounts of content, with more than 500 hours of video uploaded to the site every minute. Unfortunately, some of this includes offensive and extremist clips that Google is often slow to remove. Additionally, as on Twitter, YouTube's comments section is often plagued by trolls who intimidate and attack other users, and ruin otherwise entertaining videos for everyone else. YouTube adverts can also be annoying, especially when you can't skip them or they distract you from what you're watching.

What to use instead:

The closest service to YouTube is Vimeo (vimeo.com). While it doesn't have YouTube's breadth of content, it offers



Vimeo offers better quality videos than YouTube with no ads or trolls

plenty of high-quality videos, including creations from professional filmmakers and videographers. Vimeo doesn't just promote popular videos on its site, it also hand-picks quality content. Perhaps because it has a more select audience than YouTube, the comment section tends to be politer, more mature and more constructive, too.

Finally, there aren't the pre-roll adverts on Vimeo that you'll find on YouTube, so you can start enjoying your chosen video immediately. In fact, there are no ads at all because Vimeo makes its money from optional paid subscriptions. Even if you choose not to avoid YouTube completely (which we appreciate might be a huge ask), it's definitely worth spending some time exploring the delights offered by Vimeo.

ANDROID ANTITRUST

The European Commission files an antitrust complaint against Google for forcing its software onto Android devices and preventing hardware firms from creating forks (alternative versions) of the mobile operating system.

YOUTUBE EXTREMIST-CONTENT CONTROVERSY

Many large advertisers, including the BBC and The Guardian, pull their business from Google after finding their ads appearing next to extremist content. Google makes changes to how it removes unsavoury content. This has the unfortunate side effect of removing monetisation from any video judged (by a Google algorithm) to not be "advertiser friendly".

GOOGLE RECEIVES RECORD EU FINE

After a seven-year investigation, the European Commission fines Google a record £2.1bn for manipulating search results and favouring its own Shopping service.

July 2017

January 2016

TAX AVOIDANCE

should pay.

After years of using various

paying tax, Google agrees

to make a £130m payment

a company the size of Google

to the UK tax authorities. The sum is a fraction of what

shifty schemes to avoid

April 2016

August 2016

GOOGLE FINED BY RUSSIA

The Russian Federal Antimonopoly Service (FAS) fines Google \$6.75m (£5.2m) for preinstalling apps on Android, following a complaint by Russian search engine Yandex.

March 2017 — June 2017



YOUTUBE CENSORS LGBTQ CONTENT

YouTube was found to be filtering out videos in Restricted Mode that contained lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning/queer content.

GOOGLE BREACHES DATA PROTECTION ACT

A 2015 partnership between Google DeepMind and the Royal Free hospital was found by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to have breached the Data Protection Act due to the sharing of confidential patient data.





MEDDLING MAPS



Why stop using Maps?

There's no doubt that Google Maps is an excellent tool, and its turn-by-turn directions and alerts for traffic delays and congestion can be an invaluable addition to your phone. But have you ever wondered how it knows what the road conditions are like? Google tracks your position, and the position of all other Android users, and notices any drop in your speed of travel. While this is beneficial to all, and not on its own a reason to abandon Maps, Google also records everywhere you go, and when, regardless of whether you're driving, walking, cycling or on the bus. If you visit bit.ly/maps428 you can see all those locations on a map. Scary, huh?

Admittedly, your travel history is only visible to you (and Google), and it can come in handy if you want to pinpoint a specific date that you visited a particular place, but it still feels a lot like being stalked. The Timeline page lets you pause location tracking, which is useful to know.



Google Maps tracks and stores your movements without asking for permission

What to use instead:

Here WeGo (wego.here.com) is an excellent alternative to Google Maps that's available on the web and for Android and iOS. It displays information about places of interest (pulled from Wikipedia), accommodation (from Booking.com) and dining reservations (from Bookatable.com), and provides detailed routes and turn-by-turn directions. Most importantly, it doesn't



Here WeGo is a feature-packed and less nosey alternative to Google Maps

spy on your every move.

Alternatively, there's OpenStreetMap (www.openstreetmap.org), which is built and continually updated by a community of mappers, so they are very accurate and up to date - even more so than Google Maps. Its maps are used by various services and apps, such as OsmAnd for Android (bit.ly/ osmand428). This lets you view maps both online and off, guiding you to your destination and highlighting points of interest along the way.



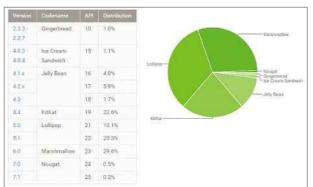
ARROGANT ANDROID



Why stop using Android?

Manufacturers of mobile devices often install their own apps and customise Android to some degree, but Google's mobile operating system still comes with all the search giant's main apps pre-installed and prominent on your home screen. It's precisely this anticompetitive approach that is the subject of Google's next case before the European Commission. Additionally, like all of Google's creations, Android will furtively gather information on you.

Unless you buy the latest and greatest smartphones, there's also a good chance you'll be running an older



Android fragmentation is a problem. As you can see in Google's table, Kitkat and Lollipop are still widely used

version of Android, which could leave you at risk from unplugged security holes. Fragmentation (whereby different phones are running different versions of Android) has long been a major problem and it isn't getting any better. At the time of writing, just 11.5% of users have the latest version of Android (7.0. Nougat) installed, with 31.8% running 6.0 (Marshmallow - released in 2015), and 30.1% running 5.x (Lollipop, from 2014). To make matters worse. Android 8.0 - version 'O' - is due out in a matter of weeks. Fragmentation is an issue because it means a lot of Android phones can't run certain apps,

especially newer ones.

What to use instead:

Although the obvious answer is to get an iPhone, Apple's devices are expensive and you might not fancy being locked into the iOS ecosystem. A cheaper solution is to buy a Tizen smartphone. Tizen is a Linux-based mobile operating system that's very similar to Android

(which is also Linux-based) so you should feel right at home using it. The Samsung Z4, which runs the latest version of Tizen (3.0), is the best choice, but it's not currently officially available to buy in the UK. You can buy one unlocked from eBay for between f110-f140

If you really can't do without Android, try the new OnePlus 5 phone, which comes with a customised version of the operating system called OxygenOS

that's simpler, more refined and regularly updated. The OnePlus 5 will be getting the equivalent of the Android 'O' update once it becomes available, as will the older (and therefore cheaper) OnePlus 3 and OnePlus 3T devices (there was no OnePlus 4, in case you were wondering).

The Samsung Z4 runs the Linux-based mobile operating system Tizen





GHASTLY GOOGLE NEWS



Why stop using Google News?

Google describes the recent makeover of its News service as long overdue, saying it's "more accessible and easier to navigate" with a "clean and uncluttered look". But while Google News looks great on mobile, Desktop users are very unhappy with the new design, which looks awful when viewed on a large screen (yes, we realise we made it 'Site of the Fortnight' last issue, but we've changed our minds).

There's now a lot of white space on either side of the central news column (see page 30 for a fix for this), which means it displays fewer than half the number of articles as the old design. As well as looking ugly, it takes longer to skim the top news stories of the day. Where previously you got a one-line



The recent redesign of Google News has annoyed many Desktop users

description for an article, you now only see a headline and have to click through to get a sense of its content.

What to use instead:

As is the case with most Google products, Microsoft offers a decent alternative. Bing News (www.bing.com/ news) works in much the same way. pulling news stories from a variety of



Bing News is a great way to browse news stories

sources, including the BBC, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail, Reuters and The Independent, as well as smaller news outlets that Google News ignores. It offers numerous editions - Top Stories, World Stories, UK, Entertainment, Sport, Sci/Tech, Health - and is highly customisable. A 'Realtime news sidebar' keeps you up to date with breaking stories.



CRUMMY CHROME



Why stop using Chrome?

Chrome is much more bloated now than it ever used to be, which means it consumes a lot of memory. If you have a lot of tabs open when you're browsing the web, you could find your system is more prone to crashes and freezes. As Microsoft is keen to point out when pushing its own Edge browser, Chrome also consumes a lot of power, which means it'll drain a laptop or tablet battery significantly faster. Also, Google already spies on you enough - do you really need it to know everywhere you go on the web too?

What to use instead:

Firefox (www.getfirefox.com) remains a great browser, without the privacy

concerns of Chrome, and if you haven't used it for a while then it's definitely worth revisiting. It has a massive selection of add-ons - soon to become cross-browser WebExtensions - and has dedicated 32- and 64-bit builds.

Opera (opera.com) is also a very good alternative, and uses the same rendering engine as Chrome. That means it supports the same extensions, making it pretty much a straight swap.

If you're looking for a new browser that could prove even better than Chrome, there's Vivaldi (vivaldi.com). Created by the former CEO of Opera, it's highly customisable, supports Chrome extensions and offers a range of powerful features such as the ability to 'rewind' back to the first page you



For a more innovative browser, swap crash-prone Chrome for vivacious Vivaldi

visited on a site, a notes tool, colourful web history, Speed Dial thumbnails, mouse gestures and keyboard shortcuts, and the option to view a second site in a side panel. As the new kid on the block, Vivaldi has a lot to prove, so its developers are constantly refining it and adding unique features and functionality.



Free online video editors

The last time we reviewed online videoediting tools, WeVideo kept YouTube from the top spot. Andy Shaw takes a look at what's changed



YouTube Editor | www.youtube.com/editor | ★★★★☆

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

What we liked:

The last time we rated online video-editing tools (Issue 349, bit.ly/webuser349),

YouTube won the Silver Award. This time it's been promoted to Gold but, perhaps surprisingly, nothing about the YouTube Editor has changed. The difference on this occasion is that WeVideo has been demoted right out of the awards - you can see why in our review, right.

The primary benefit of using the YouTube Editor is convenience. Your completed films will most likely end up on the video site anyway, so using it to edit your movies cuts out any requirement for a middle man. You can upload videos of any size, length and quality, without having to worry about limits, and there's no paid-for version to deprive you of the full set of features.

You can use YouTube's tools to trim your videos, split them into shorter sequences, stitch them back together in a different order, insert simple transitions and apply a number of special effects including stabilisation and filters. This may sound like a lot but it's actually a relatively basic collection



of tools compared to most videoediting software, even free programs. One advantage of this simplicity is that you won't be tempted to overdo your editing.

The convenience and speed of the service is another strength. Edits can be made quickly and without fuss, and there's no need to save them and re-upload them afterwards because they're already in the right place.

How it can be improved:

The editing tools are deeply buried and aren't that easy to find, so if you don't edit videos that often, it's easy to forget where they are. The other annoyance is that you can't make frame-accurate

cuts. If you want to trim a clip, you have to drag and drop a bar as close as you can to the cutting point, which can be very hit and miss.

OUR VERDICT

YouTube Editor may have won a promotion to our Gold Award but it's more by default than merit, thanks to the relegation of WeVideo. While this gives us a Gold Award-winner that feels short of perfect, its direct connection with the biggest video-hosting site in the world makes up for shortfalls in its interface.

Stupeflix | studio.stupeflix.com | ★★★★☆

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

What we liked:

Stupeflix is an online videoediting tool that was acquired by camera manufacturer GoPro. Fortunately,

they've bucked the trend of many web-service buy-outs and kept the free web editor going, although there's been

no development of the service in the 18 months since it was purchased.

The free version of the service only lets you upload videos of a certain size (we had problems with anything over 100MB, though the Help information isn't clear on what the limit actually is) and create videos up to 20 minutes long. This is fine for grouping together short clips, such as video snapshots from your mobile, but not so good if you've got a long video to start with, such as footage of an entire holiday.

Stupeflix has a solid set of basic tools, including overlay text to create titles, and five basic transitions you can insert to add some variety to your cuts.



How it can be improved:

Whereas YouTube lets you edit in the background, Stupeflix does things on the fly as you ask for them, which often leaves you waiting for previews to be created or videos to fully upload before you can start working on them.

OUR VERDICT

Stupeflix's tools are great for cutting superfluous content from short videos and piecing together your clips into a more coherent movie. It's best at editing short clips from mobile devices, though.

.....

Magisto | www.magisto.com | ★★★★☆

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

WebUser BRONZE AWARD

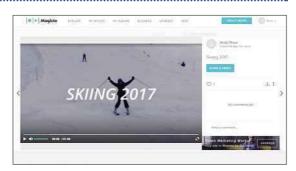
What we liked:

Magisto retains the Bronze position it won in Issue 349's round-up. Its stylish templates provide a great way

of throwing together a few clips (up to 10 and totalling no more than 15 minutes long) to produce a professional-looking video.

Upload your clips, choose an editing style, such as Extreme Sports, Storyteller or Caring Moments (try not to throw up) and add a soundtrack the software will do the rest.

Magisto's algorithms intelligently select any good shots in your videos - we found it recognised faces and dynamic movement in our footage of a skiing holiday, for example, and cut out boring sections where nothing was happening. The Extreme Sports edit that we used also drops in speed-up and slow-down effects, along with an interference effect that made the footage much more interesting.



How it can be improved:

The free version puts a Magisto title at the end of your video but you'd have to be a bit mean to deny them this small and comparatively unobtrusive piece of advertising.

OUR VERDICT

Magisto lets you collate your short clips into a longer, dynamically edited video, and does most of the work for you. However, it's worth trimming your movies before you upload them if you want to ensure that the boring bits are taken out.

BEST OF THE REST

ClipChamp

clipchamp.com

Sometimes, all you want to do is trim a video or extract a clip from the middle of a longer one. ClipChamp does this with aplomb. and will even convert and compress your film. However, it won't stitch videos together into longer movies, and you can only convert five videos per month. The paid-for version is pricey, costing \$7.50 (around £5.80) per month.



WeVideo

www.wevideo.com

Despite tumbling from the top spot in our awards, WeVideo remains a brilliant online video-editing tool. What's changed, however, is that it now plasters an enormous watermark over films created with the free version. This completely detracts from your footage and renders it useless as a free service. While WeVideo's tools and interface are still top-notch, we don't think it's worth the \$4.99 (around £3.86) per month you'll be charged to remove the watermark.



Kizoa

bit.ly/kiz428

Kizoa looked like it might hold promise, because it lets you upload clips that are bigger and longer than some of the other tools we've reviewed here. However, the interface is clunky and we found it occasionally didn't work properly, despite trying it on a handful of different computers and browsers.



Fix the worst flaws in y

Even your favourite most-visited sites will have elements you find annoying.

Block flyout videos on Mail Online

The world's most popular news site, Mail Online (www.dailymail.co.uk), bombards you with annoying, auto-playing 'flyout' videos as soon as you scroll past the embedded video players in most of its articles. After much head-scratching, we managed to prevent them from auto-playing by installing the Disable HTML5 Autoplay extension for Chrome (bit.ly/html428). With this enabled, when you scroll past a video, the flyout appears but the video does not play, sparing you the unwelcome blast of its soundtrack.



Our Editor, Robert Irvine, managed to go one better and block these flyout players from appearing at all. First, you need to install an ad blocker such as Adblock Plus (adblockplus.org), then create a new filter blocking the element dailymail.co.uk##.vjs-flyout-placeholder. To do this in Adblock Plus, click the extension's button in the toolbar and select Options. Next, click 'Add your own filters', type the above element in the appropriate box and click 'Add filter'. If, for some reason, you really want to see the flyout videos again, then delete the filter.

Make **Gmail** notify you when you receive an email

Gmail is one of our favourite webmail providers but one of its shortcomings is that it doesn't alert you about new emails by default. To get a pop-up notification when a new email arrives, open the website's Settings page, go to the General tab, and scroll down to Desktop Notifications. This option is set to 'Mail notifications off' but you can



select 'Important mail notifications on' or 'New mail notifications on', depending on how often you'd like to be alerted to new emails. After changing the settings, make sure you remember to scroll down and click Save Changes.

Stop Amazon suggesting products to buy

If you resent Amazon pushing suggestions at you based on your browsing history and past purchases, there's a (relatively) easy way to stop it. First, open your Account page, scroll down to the bottom-right hand corner and select 'View or edit your browsing history'. Click the drop-down menu labelled 'Manage history' and choose 'Remove all items'. Next, use the switch to turn off Browsing History. Now, select Your Recommendations from the Your Account account drop-down menu and click the button to Improve Your Recommendations. On this page, tick the 'Don't use for recommendations' box for every item you've bought. You can repeat this process for 'Videos you've watched', 'Items you've marked "I own it", 'Items you've rated' and 'Items you've marked "Not interested"' by clicking the appropriate options in the sidebar. After doing this, you should no longer see recommendations based on your previous activity. However, you'll have to clear out the relevant lists again after any future purchases.



Block fake friend requests on Facebook

Having used Facebook for a while, we find that most friend requests seem to come either from fake accounts or from people you've never met before. The easiest way to filter them is to change the settings that determine who can send you a friend request. To do this, open Settings and click Privacy. Next to the 'Who can contact me?' heading, you'll see the option 'Who can send you friend requests?'. If this is set to Everyone, click Edit and select 'Friends of friends'. Bear in mind that if you select this option, anyone you meet who doesn't share mutual friends with you will not be able to add you on the social network. They should, however, still be able to message you.



Reduce Twitter's incessant mobile notifications

Twitter can infuriate you with its constant mobile notifications. particularly those for new followers and recommendations. Thankfully, it's very easy to turn these off so you're not pestered so often. Just open the sidebar in the Twitter app, swipe up and tap 'Settings and privacy'. From this menu, tap Notifications, then 'Push notifications'. By default, most of the notification types are enabled, so just uncheck any you don't want to disable them. You'll notice that the options for 'Mentions and replies', 'Retweets' and 'Likes' are set to 'Tailored for you', which means Twitter only shows the notifications it thinks you'll be interested in. Select any you don't want and switch them off.

If you've chosen to receive notifications whenever a particular user



our favourite sites



Edward Munn reveals simple tweaks to make your favourite sites perfect



tweets, tap the Tweets options at the top of the page, select the person and untick the relevant box.

Stop YouTube videos autoplaying In last issue's

workshop about the excellent Magic Actions For YouTube (bit.ly/ webuser427), we explored the impressive range of features the extension brings to the video site. Using this handy tool, you can stop YouTube videos auto-playing by opening the Options menu and ticking the box to Stop Autoplay. This then lets you set the exception of enabling autoplay when videos appear as part of a playlist.

If you'd like to stop autoplay without installing any browser extensions, there's an even simpler way. Load a YouTube video and, in the top-right



corner above the 'Up next' videos, you'll see a switch labelled Autoplay. Toggle this to Off and videos will stop playing automatically until you turn the feature

Make Netflix easier to

Netflix's layout is notoriously cumbersome to navigate, but you can easily improve your experience by using the excellent site New On Netflix UK (uk.newonnetflix.info). This lets you browse the entire UK Netflix catalogue.



sorting films by A-Z, rating or year, and applying genre filters. You can also search for content by title, actor or director and, if you're stuck for ideas, the site displays categories for Latest Additions, Popular This Week and Leaving Soon. There's even a Randomiser tool that picks eight selections based on criteria of your choice, including duration, rating, genre and certificate. Once you've found something you want to watch, just click the appropriate button to open it on the Netflix UK website.

Stop eBay making annoying suggestions

Like Amazon, eBay makes recommendations based on items vou've recently viewed as well as your saved searches, which can be annoying if you don't want everyone to know your shopping habits. You can remove these suggestions by first clicking 'See All' next to Your Recently Viewed Items, then selecting Clear All and Confirm. Next, choose 'Searches you follow' from the sidebar and click Unfollow below

searches vou no longer want to appear on the homepage. If you also follow sellers, click the 'Sellers you follow'



option and repeat as above.

To see all the things you follow in one place, you can enter the URL www .ebay.co.uk/usr/your-username/ all-follows, where 'your-username' is your eBay login name. From here, you can unfollow all your interests with a single click from one page. You'll still see recommendations on the homepage, but they should no longer be targeted ones based on your previous searches and purchases.

BLOCK ANY ELEMENT ON ANY PAGE

The tips in this feature show you how to fix annoying flaws on the most popular websites, but if you want to block elements from any web page we haven't covered, you can do so permanently by installing uBlock Origin (bit.ly/ublocko428) for Chrome, Firefox, Edge or Opera. Right-click the element you want to block and select 'Block element'. If you're happy with your selection, click Create in the bottom-right corner of the screen. Alternatively, click your mouse, move the cursor until the appropriate selection is highlighted, click again and select Create.

To unblock the element. right-click uBlock Origin's button and select Options, then 'My filters'. Next, delete the appropriate entry from the list and click Apply Changes. Other ad blockers, including Adblock Plus, should also let you remove web-page elements in this way.







Secret web loopholes that

save you money

Where there's a will, there's a workaround. Robert Irvine reveals seven sneaky ways to unlock brilliant bargains and fantastic freebies online

Upgrade to Windows 10 for free

It's now two years since Windows 10 was released and one year since Microsoft's free upgrade offer ended. If you missed that initial 12-month window but you're reluctant to pay from £119.99 to upgrade now, there is still a legal way to get the operating system for free. Microsoft allows customers who use 'assistive technologies' such as a screen magnifier, text narrator and on-screen keyboard to upgrade to Windows 10 for free, without asking for proof of their physical or cognitive difficulties, impairments or disabilities. Simply

visit bit.ly/upgrade428, click Upgrade Now and follow the instructions to install Windows 10. Microsoft has yet to announce an end date for this freeupgrade offer, although it does say that "it is not intended to be a workaround for people who don't use assistive technology".

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

This is really a matter for your conscience: are you comfortable with exploiting an offer aimed at people with genuine accessibility needs? Considering the cost of the OS, the



You can still get Windows 10 for free if you use assistive technologies

number of ads it displays and the way it harvests your data, you may think it's a fair trade-off.

LOOPHOLE RATING











Split your train ticket

Breaking a train journey into multiple smaller ones can save you money on fares but you have to play around with permutations to find the best deals. Ticketclever (ticketclever .com) simplifies the process by using a smart algorithm to calculate the cheapest and/or



Ticketclever splits train journeys into several cheaper tickets

quickest travel options, including those involving multiple 'split' tickets. Tickets can be booked through the site, with no fees, and either collected from the departure station or posted 1st Class.

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

Ticket-splitting is generally only worthwhile on long journeys, and works best when you can stay on the same train rather than having to change. That said, it's also important that your train stops at the station where you're splitting your ticket.

LOOPHOLE RATING







Watch iPlayer without a TV licence

Since 1 September last year, you need a licence to watch any TV programme on BBC iPlayer - live, on-demand or online-only. You're now asked to confirm you have a licence when you access the service on your phone, tablet, computer, games console or smart TV. The one exception to this rule is if you're a



Only disconnected students can avoid paying £147 for a TV licence

student whose parents have a TV licence, and if the device you're using is powered "solely by its own internal batteries and not connected to the mains".

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

You must be a student and can only watch iPlayer on a disconnected laptop or mobile device. The second you plug it into the mains to charge, the protection offered by your parents' licence ends and you'll be breaking the law.

LOOPHOLE RATING



Don't pay for music streaming

If you've spent years assembling the perfect digital-music collection, you may resent having to a subscribe to a music-streaming service - or put up with annoying ads in the free version of Spotify. One way around this is to upload your entire iTunes library to Google Play Music's free online music locker (play.google.com/music), so you can stream it to any device. The service lets you upload 50,000 tracks and is automatically updated when a new track is added.

To use this handy feature, click 'Upload Music' in the left-hand

column and either drag songs to the window or click 'Select from your computer'. The process takes a while but once it's complete, you'll be able to access your music library wherever you are, without having to pay any monthly subscription fees.

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

Although Google Play Music's online locker is completely free, you still need to enter your card or PayPal details when you sign up. This also gives you a 30-day free trial of the Unlimited service, but remember to cancel once



Stream your entire iTunes library for free using Google Play Music

the period is up or you'll be charged £9.99 per month.

LOOPHOLE RATING









Get Amazon refunds without returns

Back in May, several news outlets ran stories on a 'secret Amazon refund loophole' that allows customers to claim their money back on items bought from the website without actually returning the goods. This 'unofficial policy' only applies to products that cost less than £10, with shoppers who requested refunds on an £8.25 box of pens and a £3.99 hose connector reportedly receiving emails from Amazon stating: "We are processing the refund. You don't need to return the item to us!". This not only

saved them on return postage but meant they effectively got the product for free (even though they didn't want it).

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

Our main reservation in recommending this loophole is a moral one: many small businesses sell goods through Amazon, and they won't make any money from items that customers claim refunds for but don't return. Additionally, if you abuse this unofficial policy to try to get regular freebies, your Amazon account might be suspended.



Amazon offers refunds on some items without requiring you to return them

LOOPHOLE RATING





Earn cashback without spending

Cashback sites let you earn money as you shop online and, for some deals, you don't even need to spend anything. You can find Free Cashback sections at both TopCashback (bit.ly/ topfree428) and Quidco (bit.ly/quidfree428), where



Cashback sites often let vou earn money without spending anything

such tasks as comparing car-insurance quotes with Confused.com (£2.30), completing an online survey with MySurvey UK (£1.89) and checking your credit score at Experian (£2.25).

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

rewards are available for

Many no-spend offers require you to sign up for a free trial and hand over personal info, which could lead to a deluge of marketing emails. Always read the small print and cancel free trials before they end.

LOOPHOLE RATING



ENJOY A YEAR OF FREE MOVIES

Insurance-comparison site Comparethemarket.com offers its customers 2-for-1 cinema tickets through its Meerkat Movies app (bit.ly/ meerkat428). A secret loophole lets you enjoy this amazing deal for 12 months for a tiny outlay. Just install the app, sign



Pay Aleksandr £2 to get a year's worth of 2-for-1 cinema tickets

up, then compare insurance deals and make a 'qualifying purchase'. This can be as little as £2 for one-day travel insurance - much less than the price of a cinema ticket!

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

Comparethemarket.com could withdraw the offer at any time, although it's now been running for over two years. You only get one 2-for-1 code a week and, of course, you have to pay for one cinema ticket.

LOOPHOLE RATING













Call FREE on 0800 083 2357 to switch your broadband

	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
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 (£19.95 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£239.40
3	E	EE: Broadband	£28.50 (£21.00 for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	wunlimited	£252.00
4	Virgin modio	Virgin: Broadband	£40.00 (£29.00 for 12 months)	12 months	50Mbps max speed	unlimited	£348.00

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 12 July 2017.



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



BEST FREE PROGRAMS THAT DO WHAT WINDOWS CAN'T

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^{*} Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.



Take a Screen Break

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

WIN A **WEB USER** MUG!

Be the first to send the correct answers to webuser@dennis.co.uk to win a Web User mug



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE SHAKESPEARE PLAYS FROM THE EMOJI?



WEB USER WORD PUZZLE

Enter the answers in the grid to reveal a tech-related term in the highlighted column

- Actor who played Corporal Jones in Dad's Army (5,4)
- Multi-discipline sport consisting of cycling, swimming and running
- Capital of Uzbekistan
- One-humped camel
- Dutch 17th Century painter of The Night Watch
- Father of Ophelia and Laertes, in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*
- Hard Italian cheese, often grated over pasta
- 1970s German band, pioneers of electronic music

1					
2					
	3				
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 2

BakkerElkhuizen **UltraBoard 940 Keyboard**

The UltraBoard 940 Bluetooth keyboard can be used wirelessly or via a USB cable. Up to five

computers or mobile devices can be connected at the touch of a button, and switching between them is effortless, letting you work ergonomically wherever you are. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@ dennis.co.uk with '940' in the subject line. For more information visit www.bakkerelkhuizen.co.uk and follow @BakkerElkhuizen on Twitter.

WORTH **WIN 1 OF 2**

Linksys EA8300 Tri-Band Wi-Fi Router

Ideal for homes with multiple connected devices, the Linksys EA8300 Max-Stream AC2200 Simultaneous Tri-Band Wi-Fi

Broadband Router offers ample bandwidth for simultaneous 4K and HD streaming, next-generation online gaming and other data-heavy activities. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'ea8300' in the subject line. For more information visit

www.linksys.com/gb and follow @Linksys on Twitter.





Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Add widgets to Windows 10

Spice up your Desktop with Win10 Widgets floating mini-apps that you can customise and arrange to your liking. Here's how to use them

Win10 Widgets: win10widgets.com │ ⊕ 20 mins │ ■ Windows 10

indows 7 let you add floating widgets - clocks, calendars, photos, news feeds and system monitors - to your Desktop but they were dropped from Windows 8 due to "serious vulnerabilities". Win10 Widgets safely brings them back to the latest version of Microsoft's operating system. **Built using the Rainmeter customisation**

tool, which is included in the download, it lets you add customisable widgets to your Desktop. The widgets are designed to suit any wallpaper and screen resolution, and automatically adapt to your Windows 10 accent colour. Win10 Widgets comes with a good selection of widgets to get you started and there are more planned for the future.



Download and run the program, selecting the Standard Installation option. The default widgets are displayed on your Desktop. These include a clock, battery meter, drive-space monitor, Wi-Fi, volume control, 1 system monitor 2 and weather. B Click and drag to move them around the screen.



The Welcome widget 11 can be moved around the screen like any other. Watch the video 2 to get started or share details on Win10 Widgets through the usual social channels. If you want to be notified about program updates and new widgets, click the Send Me Updates button 4 and sign up.





Close the Welcome widget by clicking the 'X' in the top-right corner. 1 To close any of the other widgets, right-click one and select 'Unload skin'. 2 The right-click context menu is used to customise the different widgets and add new ones. You can change a widget's size under Variants. **3**



To add a new widget, right-click an existing one and go to Win10 Widgets. 1 Choose a widget from the list 2 and select the size you require. There are some additional widgets that aren't loaded by default, such as the Spotify one. You need Spotify installed for it to work, though.

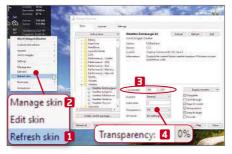


፫ The Settings menu 🗓 lets you customise the look and behaviour of the widgets. You can adjust the position and transparency (in 10% steps) 2 and have the widget disappear when you move your mouse over it. 13 This is handy if you don't want widgets getting in the way of your Desktop.

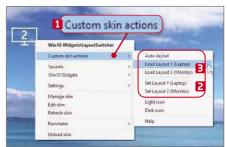




You can also set whether widgets can be dragged, and have the program remember their location and snap to edges, 11 which makes the layout tidier. You can add the option to click through a widget, 2 which lets you launch any shortcuts hidden behind it.



If a widget stops updating for any reason, you can refresh it. 11 There are some advanced customisation options available. Select 'Manage skin' 2 and a new window opens. From here, you can make various changes, including adjusting the widget's coordinates **B** and making it transparent. 4



🕇 The Layout Switcher widget lets you create layouts for different purposes (single or dual screen, for example). Add it and it will appear as a semi-transparent monitor icon that goes opaque when you mouse over it. Right-click it, go to 'Custom skin actions,' 11 and choose to set a layout **2** or load one. **3**



Protect yourself against ransomware

Veeam Agent: bit.ly/backup428 | 🕒 40 mins | 🎥 Windows

nce your files have been locked by ransomware, your chances of getting them back are extremely slim. One of the best ways to protect yourself from this type of malware is to create regular incremental backups on a drive that is not (normally) connected to your PC. Veeam Agent for Windows makes this job very easy: you can set it to create a backup as soon as your external drive is connected to your PC, and it'll disconnect as soon as it's finished, minimising the risk of infection. The program also lets you create recovery media, so you can restore your backups from the safety of a non-Windows environment.

All you need to follow this Workshop is an empty USB flash drive to install the recovery media and an external hard drive to save the backups. This should protect you from losing your data, but we also recommend you keep Windows up to date and use reliable internet security software to protect your PC from infection.



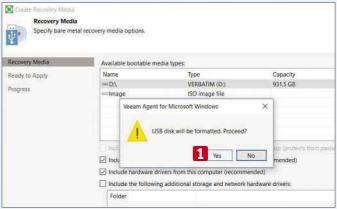
EXPERT TIP

Edward Munn savs

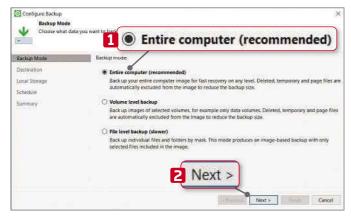
To minimise the risk of your backups being locked by ransomware, we recommend disconnecting your PC from the web before mounting your backup drive. On any operating system, the simplest way to do this is to turn off Wi-Fi and/or remove any network cables.



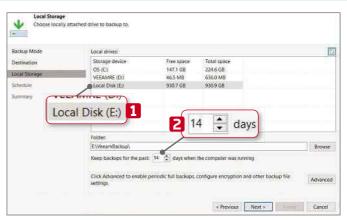
Download and install Veeam Agent for Windows, skipping the step that offers to configure backups automatically. When invited to 'Run Veeam Recovery Media creation wizard', leave the appropriate box ticked 1 and click Finish. 2



In the wizard, select the USB flash drive on which you want to save the recovery media, then click Next. A box appears asking if you are happy to format the USB drive. Click Yes. I Click Create and Veeam will begin creating the recovery media, displaying its progress on screen. Once it's done, click Finish.



Open the Start menu and click 'Veeam Agent for Windows'. Follow the instructions to install a free licence file, then select 'Configure backup'. Leave the default backup mode 'Entire computer (recommended)' 1 selected, click Next, 2 then select 'Local storage' and click Next again.

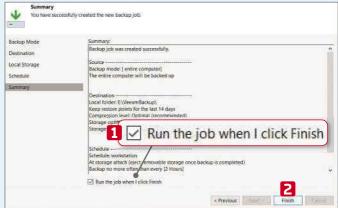


Select the drive to which you want the backup saved 11 and the folder - if you don't want it to be saved to the top directory. Now pick the number of days you want the backups to cover 2 before selecting Next.





On the Schedule page, untick the 'Daily at' 1 option and instead tick 'When backup target is connected'. 2 Below this, tick the box to 'Eject removable storage once backup is completed'. E The next option lets you choose the most frequent intervals at which backups can be made.



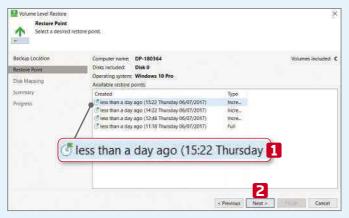
Click Apply, tick the box to 'Run the job when I click Finish', 11 then click Finish. 2 Your backup starts and the progress is displayed on screen. The program's Status page shows a summary of when the latest backups were completed.



To restore a backup of a non-system drive or partition, you can run Veeam's Volume Restore from the Start menu. 11 However, if you suspect that your PC is under attack from ransomware, you should not connect the external hard drive while running Windows. Instead, power off your PC and attach the USB flash drive containing the recovery media.



Now, switch on your computer, pressing the appropriate button to launch its boot options before Windows loads. Select the option to boot from USB and a green Veeam Recovery Media screen will load. Use the arrow keys to Select Bare Metal Recovery 1 and press Enter.



Now connect the external hard drive that holds your backups. The drive should appear in the recovery console. Select it, if necessary, and click Next. Choose the Restore Point 1 you would like to restore your PC from and click Next 2 again.



Finally, select 'Entire computer' and click Next. The recovery console displays a summary of your selections for you to check. Click Restore to allow the files on your PC to be overwritten by the backup.



Get Google's Pixel launcher on any device

e love the launcher that comes with Google's Pixel phone, but until recently it was exclusive to that handset. Now that's changed, thanks to developer Till Kottmann, and you can install the home-screen app on any

Android device. What's more, it includes tools that aren't available in the original, such as options to install icon packs and hide apps.

Lawnchair: bit.ly/lach428 | 🕒 10 mins | 👘 Android

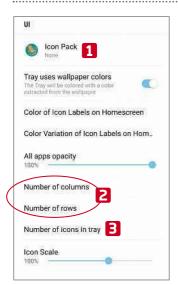




Download Lawnchair to your Android device by visiting bit.ly/lawnchair428, which is a direct link to the software. To install it, you'll need to temporarily enable the option that lets you install apps from 'Unknown sources'. 1 Next, press the Home button and choose Lawnchair from the options that appear.



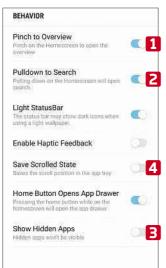
On the home screen, you'll see the date and a pill-style widget that contains shortcuts for searching Google using text 11 or your voice. 2 Swipe right to see the Google Now page, which provides personalised News and Weather. Swipe up from the bottom of the screen to display the app tray. 🖪



Long-press any blank space on the home screen, then tap Settings and open the UI (user-interface) menu. You can choose an icon pack, 11 set the number of columns and rows on the home screen 2 and change the size of icons and text. There's also an option to specify how many apps appear at the top of the app tray. 🖪



Tap Back and select Pixel Style. Here, you can enable the option to Use Wide Searchbar 1 instead of the pill-style widget. Below this, you can opt to disable the voicesearch button 2 or simply deactivate the widget altogether by switching Show Pixel Top Bar **E** to Off.



Tap Back again and this time open Behavior. This menu shows you which gestures are active by default, such as pinching to show an overview of the home screens 1 and swiping down to open the search function. 2 You can enable the options to Show Hidden Apps **(see Step 6)** and Save Scrolled State, 4 which remembers the apps you last scrolled to in the app tray.



To hide an app. long-press its icon in the app tray and drag it up to the Edit button. From here, you can change the app's name, 11 or hide it by toggling the Visibility switch. 2 Note that this only hides an app from the app tray, so if it's also on the home screen, you'll still be able to see it there. To view hidden apps, switch on the option mentioned in Step 5.



Sync and back up iOS devices without iTunes

pple's iTunes software is a monstrous behemoth that takes ages to load, uses shedloads of memory and generally slows down your PC. The bad news is it's also the software that Apple uses to sync and back up mobile same job (and more) without the bloat.

devices to your PC. The good news is that you don't have to use it.

3uTools is a free alternative that does the

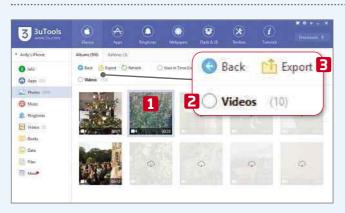
3uTools: www.3u.com | 🕒 10 mins | ಿ Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10



After installing the software, connect your device to your PC using its USB cable. The device will ask whether you trust the computer - choose Trust. 1 On the PC, you'll be told to turn off your personal hotspot, if it's switched on. You should do this, otherwise your PC will connect to it instead of using its own network connection. If you need to, go to Settings on your iOS device, choose Personal Hotspot and switch



The software launches in the Info tab, 1 which shows a range of interesting data from your phone's serial number 🔁 to the version of iOS you're running. 🖪 The Battery Life section 4 is particularly thorough. Click Details 5 for a further breakdown of useful information.



To clear space on your phone, sync photos and videos to your PC. Click the Photos tab and find the photos or videos to save. Click one to select it, 11 or Shift+Click to select more than one. Clicking the circle 2 selects them all. Click Export **3** and choose where to save them.



Select the Apps tab 11 to see a list of all the apps that are installed on your device. You can uninstall them from here by selecting any you want to remove 🔁 and clicking the Uninstall button.



Like iTunes, 3u backs up and restores your phone if you need to reset or replace it. Click Toolbox, 11 then the 'Backup/Restore' icon. Click 'Back up iDevice', 2 then Remove Password if you've backed up the device previously, and 'Back up Now'. Click Restore Data 10 to reinstall it later.



There are other tools in the Toolbox section that you won't find in iTunes, such as Icon Management, 1 which reorders your icons on screen and saves preferred layouts so you can switch between them easily; and a tool that makes ringtones from tracks in your music collection.

Weekend Project

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





Get started with Bitcoin and other cryptocurrency

Trade physical money for digital. Wayne Williams shows you how to buy and sell Bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies

ou've probably heard of Bitcoin, but not in a good way. Because it's unregulated and untraceable, it's become the digital currency of choice for cybercriminals - when a PC gets locked by ransomware, the demand to free your files is usually requested in Bitcoin.

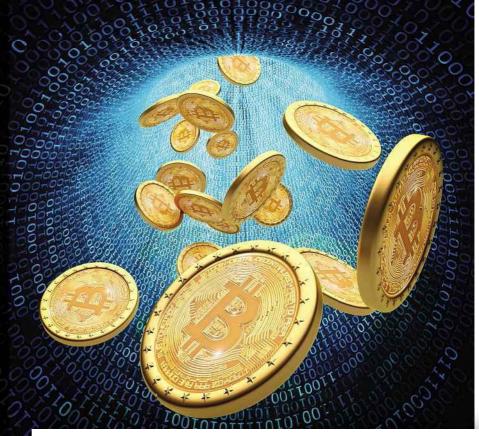
Despite this unfortunate link to cybercrime, Bitcoin is perfectly respectable. Anyone can buy or sell it, including you. And it's not the only such 'cryptocurrency' available to invest in - there are many more, including Ethereum and Litecoin. A list of the most popular ones can be found at

Buying and selling cryptocurrency is easy and you could even make a profit by speculating, though as with any currency transactions, there are risks involved and you'll end up paying fees on your money when you perform exchanges. If you'd rather just spend your profits, there's a useful list of places that accept these currencies at bit.ly/ spend428.

How to get Bitcoin and other currencies

There are three ways to acquire cryptocurrencies. The first is to 'mine' for them using your computer. This is the digital equivalent of panning for gold and you'll probably need to join a mining pool to stand a chance of finding anything. It's also likely to cost you a small fortune in electricity.

The second option is to buy them from



Warning!

Investing in digital currency is not without risk and the cryptocurrency market can be volatile. You might be well up on your initial investment one day, then find its value has been wiped out the next, making it worth less than it was when you started. For this reason, although you are unlikely to lose all of your investment's value, you should only invest money that you can afford to lose. The trick, ultimately, is to view it as a semi-long-term investment - buy when the price looks low and sell the moment the market appears to be at its most buoyant and when you can still make a profit on top of any fees you may incur.

an exchange or a special ATM, which you can locate at coinatmradar.com. You don't get physical money, only digital currency which gets sent to your 'wallet'. This

could be a mobile app, an online wallet, an offline wallet or even a piece of paper.

The third method is to buy shares in a fund that's bought Bitcoins, but this is



The Bitcoin ATM map displays the nearest place to withdraw your cryptocurrency

generally considered a bad idea.

Assuming you choose to go the easiest route, which is to buy them, you first need to decide on an exchange to use. There are a lot to choose from, including Coinbase (www.coinbase.com), Kraken (www.kraken.com), CEX.IO (cex.io) and Bitstamp (www.bitstamp.net). If you find an exchange you like the look of, do a little research before proceeding and



Verification for CEX.IO involves uploading a photo of yourself with your bank card

check to see if it's had any security problems in the past and how those were handled (for example, Bithumb, South Korea's largest exchange, was recently hacked but it promised to fully compensate all affected customers).

For the purpose of this project, we'll use Coinbase. The currency you opt to buy may have some bearing here because different exchanges handle

different currencies and prices can vary, though typically not by much. We'll show you how to get set up with Coinbase and how to make your first transactions in our Mini Workshops below and on page 61.

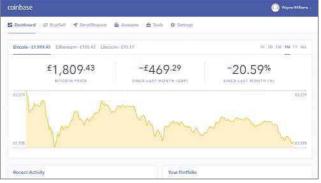
How to buy cryptocurrency

Once you've decided which exchange to buy from, you need to perform a few administrative tasks. First, you need to verify your identity and payment method. This process varies but it may involve uploading a photo of you holding your bank card, or a scan of the front and back of your driving licence. You're probably hearing alarm bells ringing at this stage because it's not something any sane, technologically savvy web user would normally do - which is why it's important to only use a secure, wellrespected exchange. The verification process can take a while, although we were trading within a couple of days of signing up with Coinbase.

The exchanges make good use of 2FA (Two Factor Authentication), so you will need to enter codes sent to your mobile



You don't receive actual coins when trading in cryptocurrency - this is just a visual representation of them

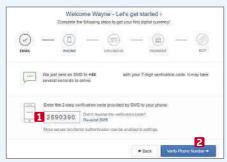


The Coinbase Dashboard displays currency performance. You can switch between currencies and change the timeframe

MINI WORKSHOP | Set up an account with Coinbase



Go to the Sign Up page (www .coinbase.com/signup) and enter your name, email address and a secure password. 1 Tick the 'I'm not a robot' box, 2 agree to the terms 3 and click Create Account. 4 You'll need to verify your email address. The signup screen will automatically recognise the country you're in.



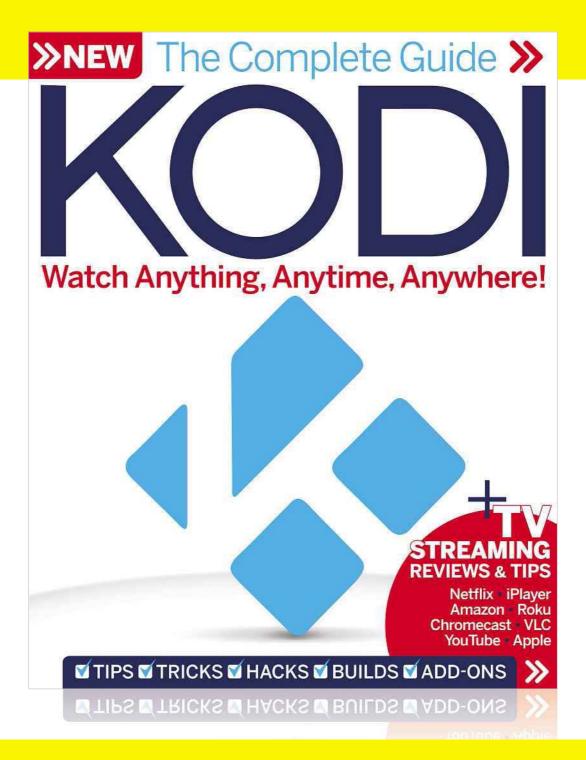
On the next screen, select Individual as the account type. Click Next, enter your mobile number and click Next again. A code will be sent to your phone. When you receive it, enter it into the box 1 and click the blue Verify Phone Number button. 2 Your phone will be used whenever 2FA logins occur.



You now need to supply identification. Choose the type you have - Passport, Driver's License or Photo ID. 11 If you don't have any of those, click the link. 2 You can choose to take the photo and upload it using either a webcam or mobile camera. Once that's done, you will need to supply payment details.

mage: Allexxandar/Shutterstock

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Buy now from Amazon:

bit.ly/completekodi

(or search for 'Kodi guide' on Amazon)



To ensure your account is secure, you may need to upgrade its 2FA method

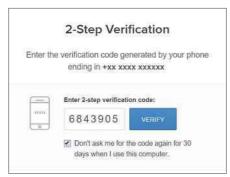
phone whenever you have to verify your identity or you log in on a new device.

You can buy currency with a debit or credit card, or via a bank transfer. Setting up a bank transfer takes a little longer because you're allowed to buy larger amounts so the process is more stringent.

Where to get a wallet

Currency from an exchange is stored online in a wallet that's created for you. Each currency type is stored in a different wallet, and you can also choose to use an existing wallet, if you have one. There's a page on the Bitcoin site (bit.ly/ bcwa428) that lists the many different ones on offer, and Ethereum has its own (www.ethereum.org). You can also get multi-currency wallets (bit.ly/wall428) that let you store different currency types in one place.

The benefit of using your own wallet is that you're fully in charge of it - if your exchange gets hacked and your currency



You may need to enter 2FA when logging into your account from an unrecognised PC

is stolen, it won't affect you if you've already transferred your purchases. You can buy and sell from a private wallet, and transfer currency to and from it, too.

It's vital that you secure your wallet with a strong password. Bear in mind, though, that if you forget or lose this, then you'll have no way of gaining access to your money.

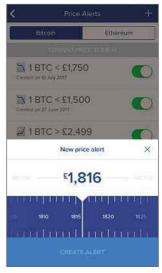
Set up notifications

Buying and selling cryptocurrency for profit is largely about timing, so it's worth setting up notifications in the Coinbase mobile app (bit.ly/bcapp428), which alerts you when your coin of choice hits a particular high or low.

In the app, tap the bell icon in the top-right corner. On the Price Alerts screen, select the currency type (Bitcoin or Ethereum), then tap the plus symbol in the top-right corner and use the slider to select a price.

You can select multiple price points if

Getting alerts about major currency changes will help you to buy or sell at the right time



you wish, which can help you determine the best time to buy or sell.

How volatile are cryptocurrencies?

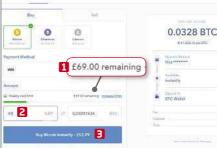
The value of cryptocurrencies has gone up and down significantly in the past few years. To give you an idea of how volatile the market can be, in June 2017, Bitcoin was worth over \$3,000 and Ethereum around \$400. By the middle of July, Bitcoin had dropped to \$2,300 and Ethereum to below \$200. That might seem like quite a drop, but at the start of the year, Bitcoin was priced at around \$970 and Ethereum at \$8.

No matter how low the price gets, it can seemingly always go lower. But if you wait long enough, the value should eventually start to rise again.

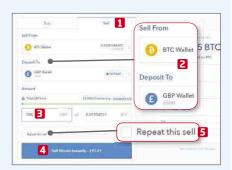
MINI WORKSHOP | Buy and sell cryptocurrency



Once you're set up, you can begin to buy currency. Click the Buy/Sell tab 1 and choose the type of currency you require from Bitcoin, Ethereum or Litecoin. 2 The current price for each one is shown under its name. Select the payment method to use B if you have more than one.



If you're using a card to buy currency, you have a weekly limit of £325. If you're making payments from your bank, you can make purchases up to £9,000 - potentially even more. The amount available to spend is shown. 11 Enter an amount 2 and click the Buy button.



Selling currency is a similar process. Click the Sell tab 11 and choose which wallet to sell from and deposit to (in EUR or GBP). 2 Enter an amount 3 and click Sell. 4 You can repeat that transaction on a regular basis, if you wish. 5

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Step 1 Search for *Web user* via the search box in the Shop tab

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Choose whether to create an optional **Zinio** account

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V

Web User Masterclass

VLC is a popular free media player that has loads of useful extensions. Our experts show you how to get the most from it

Give VLC a new look

he simplest way to customise VLC (www.videolan.org) is to apply a new skin. This changes the way the player looks and makes the basic interface more exciting. Go to bit.ly/skin428 and browse the skins by date, downloads or ratings (click the relevant link to re-order the list). Click a skin to view it and, when you find one you like, click the download link. Use Explorer to move the downloaded VLT file to:

C:\Program Files (x86)\VideoLAN\VLC\ skins

Open VLC and select Tools, then
Preferences. Select 'Use custom skin' on the
Interface tab and click Choose to select the
VLT file. You have to restart VLC to see the
new skin in place. While in Skins mode,
right-click an empty part of the Play bar and
select Interface, then 'Select skin'. All the skins
are listed and you can just click one to apply it.



Select a skin for VLC player to give it an exciting new look

Listen to the radio

Listening to internet radio in VLC is much more convenient than going to a station's website, particularly if you like to hop between stations. To install the add-on, go to the Tools menu and select 'Plugins and extensions'. Click the 'Find more addons online' button and search for Tuneln Radio. Select it, click the Install button and restart VLC.

TuneIn Radio is very easy to use. Just select it in the Internet section of the sidebar (use the 'Toggle playlist' button in the bar at the bottom if you can't see it) to display a list of radio categories, such as Music, News, Talk, Sports and



Tune into hundreds of radio stations with one click using the TuneIn Radio extension

so on. Double-click a category to open it and dig down to find what you want. For example, double-click Local Radio, then double-click your nearest city, then double-click a radio stream to begin playing it.

Never lose your place

There are a number of reasons why you might want to stop playback and continue it later today, tomorrow or even next week. Sometimes you don't have time to watch a long movie, or you begin watching and something comes

up and you need to quit VLC. If you use VLC to listen to audiobooks, you almost certainly won't want to listen to a whole book in one session.

Resume Media is a handy extension that stores the current position of what you're playing, then lets you continue whenever you want. It can also be used to make a list of your favourite scenes in

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.

a movie, bookmark sections of an audiobook and so on.

To install it, open VLC and go to Tools, then 'Plugins and extensions'.



Resume Media places handy bookmarks in the video you're watching, so you don't lose your place

Click 'Find more addons online' at the bottom. Search for Resume Media and click the Install button (you can also install it manually from bit.ly/res428).

Restart VLC and begin playing audio or video. When you decide to stop, go to the View menu and select Resume Media. Click Play, then Position, then Done. This adds the title and position of the currently playing or paused media. You can repeat this if you want to store more positions in the current audio or video, or start watching something else and store a stop point in that, too.

Click the Tables button and you'll see 10 tables in which to store play positions. You could organise your saved stop positions by using separate tables for different films, or by having one table for video and another for audio - whatever you like.

The next time you open VLC, go to the View menu and select Resume Media. Select the table (if necessary), click the media and click Play to continue from the saved point. There's no need to open the audio or video file because it will open automatically. Moments Tracker (bit.ly/momt428) is a similar tool that's also worth considering.

Remove playlist duplicates

If you have loads of music in your library, it's not uncommon to accidentally add the same track twice when you create a playlist. Playlist Cleaner solves the problem by scanning the current playlist and automatically deleting any duplicates.

This extension must be installed manually. Go to bit.ly/plcl428 in your browser and click the Files tab. Download the file and move it to:

C:\Program Files (x86)\VideoLAN\ VLC\lua\extensions

Restart VLC and select a playlist in the sidebar. Click 'Cleans orphaned and duplicates tracks from the playlist' on the View menu. If any duplicates are found, Playlist Cleaner will tell you how many it's removed.



Playlist Cleaner add-on finds and removes duplicate tracks from your VLC playlists

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Play playlists from YouTube

'Youtube playlist' is a great add-on that lets you play your favourite YouTube content in VLC. Go to bit.ly/ytp428 and select the Files tab below the image. Click the file to download it, then move it to:

C:\Program Files (x86)\VideoLAN\ VLC\lua\playlist

When you want to play a YouTube playlist, open a browser and go to YouTube. Right-click a playlist in your library and select 'Copy link address'. In VLC, press Ctrl+N, click in the box and press Ctrl+V to paste in the URL you copied. Click Play to finish.

The first item on the playlist begins playing straight away but you can stop it and go to the playlist in the usual way: just right-click and select View, then Playlist; or press Ctrl+L. The videos on the playlist are displayed and double-clicking one plays it. Click and drag an item up or down the playlist to change its position. Once an item has been played, its duration appears in the playlist.



Add YouTube playlists to VLC and watch them in the player

Log vour listening

VLC Song Tracker (bit.ly/vlcst428) logs all the music tracks that you listen to in VLC, recording the Date, Time, Title, Artist, Album, Genre, Comments and Disk Location to a file. This info could be interesting and useful if you want to look back and see what you were listening to at a particular time. Download the extension and move it to:

C:\Program Files (x86)\VideoLAN\ VLC\lua\extensions

Restart VLC, then switch on logging by selecting VLC Song Tracker on the View menu. Repeat this if you ever decide that you want to switch it off again. The list is saved as a CSV (comma-separated values) file, which

is a common format for saving lists and is recognised by lots of programs. It can be loaded into Excel, for example, which will let you search the information, sort it by any attribute, print it and so on.

Find out more about your media

Info Crawler is a handy extension for VLC that lets you get more information about a piece of music or video that's currently playing. Download the file from bit.ly/ic428 and move it to:

C:\Program Files (x86)\VideoLAN\ VLC\lua\extensions

Restart VLC and begin playing something, then go to the View menu and select Info-Crawler.

A small Content Info window opens. What's displayed will depend on whether you're playing a video or music. With music, for example, you'll see the title, album and artist, and one or all of these can be selected. Below is a list of search options, including

> Google, wiki, song rating and lyrics. Tick the items you want and click search.

> A browser window opens and performs the search, showing the results on separate tabs. It's a great tool if you're after information or want to sing along with the lyrics, see the music video for a track, get album information and so on.

Some of the search options are different if you're watching a video, such as searching for

information at IMDB (www.imdb.com). which provides quick access to cast details, reviews and trivia.



Use the Info Crawler extension to perform searches on the playing media

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

Choose how to clean up your PC

Which disk-cleanup tool do you recommend for Windows 10? In the past I used CCleaner (bit.ly/ cc428) with Windows 7. Is CCleaner compatible with the Creators Update?

Pete Harris, via email

If you have an old version of CCleaner, it's important that you update it before using it. According to Piriform, CCleaner v5.31.6105 or later supports Windows 10 Creators Update. It is a good tool for experts who know what they're doing but it must be used with care. Back up your PC before trying it so you can undo your actions if anything goes wrong.

We'd recommend using Windows' built-in tools instead. Click Start, open Windows Administrative Tools and choose Disk Cleanup. Tick all the options and click OK. You can recover



Use Windows 10's 'Storage sense' hard drive cleaning tools to remove junk files

even more drive space by clicking the 'Clean up system files' button. Tick all the items in the next list and click OK.

Windows 10 Creators Update also has an extra cleanup tool that works automatically. Press Windows+i to open Settings and click System. Select Storage and switch on 'Storage sense'. This cleans the hard drive automatically whenever necessary. Click the 'Change how we free up space' link, switch on the two options and click 'Clean now'. We found that this recovered several gigabytes of hard-drive space by deleting junk files.

Version 4. On the General tab, select 'Use the following DNS server addresses'. Enter 8.8.8.8 and 8.8.4.4. Close all the windows and browsers, then try listening to a radio

If it's still not working, type proxy into the search box on the taskbar and click 'Change proxy settings' in the search results. Switch off everything to ensure you're not using a proxy. Try switching off your security software temporarily, too, because it may be interfering with the internet connection. Type **command** into the Windows search box, right-click Command Prompt and select 'Run as administrator'. Type ipconfig /flushdns and press Enter. Hopefully, it will work after that.

HARDWARE

Improve sound volume from a laptop

I'm generally satisfied with my Lenovo MIIX 300 laptop, but its maximum volume is so low as to be almost useless. I've seen plenty of complaints from Lenovo users and others whose PCs use the same Intel SST Audio Device sound hardware. I have tried many suggestions from various forums, such as changing settings, drivers and so on, but with no success. Is there anything I can do to increase the volume? It's better through earphones, but not outstandingly so.

Alan Farr, via email

This isn't a software problem and no amount of tweaking the settings or drivers will make a difference. The

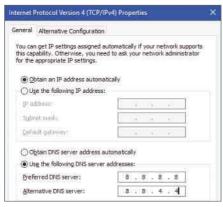


volume with an external speaker

STREAMING

Bring back BBC radio to Windows 10

I am unable to listen to BBC radio programmes on my PC. When I select 'Listen live', I'm told that the programme has finished when it clearly hasn't. The strange thing is that this



If you have an internet problem, try using Google's DNS servers

happens on both my Windows 10 computers: a Dell PC and a Chuwi laptop. However, I can listen on the Chuwi if Luse the Android option and I can also listen on my Android phone. I've tried all the suggestions on the BBC's website, such as emptying the cache, trying a different browser and so on, but to no avail.

Tom Sampson, via email

The first things we'd usually suggest would be to clear the cache, try a different browser and try a different computer, but you've already done those. It's very odd that this problem occurs on two different computers and not on your Android devices, but it may have something to do with the network configuration in Windows. Open the Control Panel and choose 'Network and Sharing Centre'. Click the current network connection, click Properties, then double-click Internet Protocol

device is a Windows tablet/laptop hybrid and is designed to be thin and light, so there just isn't room inside the case for powerful speakers. It's a common problem with tablets and laptops.

The solution is to buy an external speaker. The Lenovo MIIX 300 has a headphone socket and Bluetooth, so you can use wired or wireless speakers. Audio loudness is measured in watts, and a bigger number means louder sound.

Bluetooth speakers start at around £15, but the cheap speakers won't be the best or loudest. Many Bluetooth speakers are battery powered because they're designed to be carried around with portable devices such as tablets and phones, so look for a rechargeable device with a long battery life.

GENERAL PC

Make Windows 10 look more like XP

Windows 10 is very different to XP, and getting to grips with its apps has taken me ages. Is it possible to change Windows 10's interface so it's more like XP or Windows 7? I can get somewhere near it by right-clicking the Start button, but I still have to cope with the dreaded Settings screens that loop confusingly. Also, updating is so unpredictable: suddenly, without warning, Windows takes control and I have to wait ages for it to download and update.

Keith Griffiths, via email

With every update, Microsoft moves more Windows settings to the Settings app. You can't do anything about this, so you'll just have to get used to it. You can make Windows 10 look more like XP, though. Press Windows+i and click Personalisation to set the background picture, colour scheme and lock screen. Search online for 'Windows XP background' to find the original image and lookalikes to download, or use a photo of your own.

You can also customise the Start menu a little and drag the top and right edges to minimise the tiles. To shrink it even more, go to Settings, Personalisation, Start and switch off 'Show more tiles on Start' and 'Occasionally show suggestions in Start'.

There are free tools available that can replace the Windows 10 Start menu with an XP-like menu. Classic Shell (www .classicshell.net) is a popular choice and has just been updated for the Creators



Use Classic Start Menu to give Windows 10's Start menu a retro look

Update. IObit Start Menu 8 (bit.ly/ iosm428) sounds like it should be a Windows 8 tool, but it actually supports all versions of Windows. Also, right-click the taskbar and hide Cortana, the Task View and Windows Ink Workspace buttons to make the operating system more like Windows 7.

SECURITY

Recognise fake PayPal emails

I receive emails from PayPal from time to time and some are obviously fake. Others look real, but I'm worried that if I click the links in them I might get caught by a phishing scam. How can I tell a real PayPal email from a fake?

Ralph Johnson, via email

There are often clues that tell you whether or not an email is genuine. For example, real emails usually include your name, but fake ones rarely do. Real emails have a postal address and unsubscribe link at the bottom, whereas fakes often don't. Real emails usually provide useful information or try to sell you a service, while fakes often tell some tale about a problem you need to fix by clicking a link in the message.

The biggest giveaway that an email isn't genuine is usually in the URL of the link you're urged to click. If you use a browser to access your email from Outlook or Gmail, for example, let the mouse pointer hover over the link and read the URL that appears at the bottom of the browser window. Sometimes it obviously has nothing to do with the company that sent it, such as 'paypal-com.mysite.ru'.

Ignore what comes after the first slash (/) and read it backwards. The important bit is the 'mysite.ru', which obviously isn't PayPal. Real links can also be confusing, though: is 'epl .paypal-communication.com' genuine or not? It is, but it's not obvious.

As a final precaution, never click links in emails. Instead, type the URL of the site you want into your browser and log in from there.

HARDWARE

Avoid keyboard catastrophes

I bought a new desktop PC a few months ago, but I've found that it has an irritating flaw. The keyboard has special keys for Power, Sleep and Wake Up. The Power

kev shuts down Windows and turns off the power, which saves having to click Start, Power and 'Shut down'.

The problem is that this key is right next to the Print Screen key, which I use a lot. If I'm not careful, instead of pressing Print Screen, I accidentally press Power and the computer shuts down. Is there any way to disable it?

R Ford, via email

simple software hack is to open Notepad, type a few characters and then minimise the program. Before Windows shuts down, it closes any programs that are running and,



Don't put up with an annoying keyboard - shop online for a cheap replacement

because you've started an unsaved file in Notepad, it will ask you whether you want to continue with the shutdown or cancel and save your work. So if you accidentally hit the Power key, you can just cancel the shutdown.

A desktop PC's keyboard is a simple plug-in component, so if you buy a new one and plug it in, it will just work. Prices start at £5 for basic models, so it wouldn't cost much to buy a replacement that doesn't suffer from a poorly placed Power button.



Your Top Tips

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

visit forum.webuser.co.uk

TOP TIP

GENERAL PC

Make notifications last longer

Notifications appear in the bottomright corner of the screen in Windows 10 and I regularly have two problems with them. One is that they disappear before I have time to read them and the other is that I'm notified about things I'm not interested in.

Both can be fixed with a tweak. Go to Settings (Windows+i), 'Ease of Access', then 'Other options'. There is a setting for how long notifications stay on the screen. The options range from five seconds to five minutes.

The unwanted notification I kept getting was telling me that my USB memory stick was low on space. I know it's full and don't need to be told every two minutes. To stop this notification and others, go back to



Set the duration for notifications in Windows 10 in the Settings app

Settings, choose System, 'Notifications & actions' and switch off Windows Explorer. There are lots of other apps listed here, so you can choose which notifications you want to show or hide.

Ryan Lynch, via email

winner WebUs

WEBSITES

Get free ebooks from Amazon Prime

Prime Reading is one of the latest benefits you receive as an Amazon Prime customer. Select Your Prime, then 'Explore all your Prime benefits' and click 'NEW - Prime Reading' at the bottom of the page. Once you find a book you like, just click 'Read for free' to get it on a Kindle, smartphone or tablet. There do not seem to be any restrictions on how many ebooks you can read for free and the Harry Potter books are among the titles you can get your hands on. So far, I have read, The Etymologicon: A Circular Stroll through the Hidden Connections of the English Language and The Science of



Prime Reading offers free ebooks and magazines for your mobile devices

Everyday Life: Why Teapots Dribble, Toast Burns and Light Bulbs Shine. It's worth noting that books you read with this feature do not show in your orders.

FratPark, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

Reduce visual effects

Transparency is a pet hate of mine and I have switched it off in every version of Windows I've had since it first appeared in Windows Vista. It's an option in Settings (Windows+i), Personalisation, Colours. Use the switch next to 'Transparency effects'.

On an iPhone or iPad, go to Settings, General, Accessibility, Increase Contrast and switch on Reduce Transparency. It makes it a bit easier on the eyes.

James Brooke, via email

ANDROID

Get Google Assistant now

I read about Google Assistant being rolled out to all phones running Android Nougat some months ago but with every week that passed, there was still no sign of it arriving on my device. After some



research, I discovered that your phone must not only run Android 6.0 or higher and have version 6.13 or higher of the Google app but, most importantly, it must be set to US English. The Google support page says it'll become available to other versions of English in due course but in the meantime, I thought I'd try changing my phone's language to US English. Within an hour, a notification appeared introducing me to Google Assistant. To change your phone's language, look for

'Language and input' or similar in the Settings menu.

Google Assistant certainly does more than the old Google Now app, but it's worth noting that changing the language has other effects. For



Get Google Assistant by changing Android's language settings

example, I found that Google Calendar started displaying weeks starting on Sunday instead of Monday.

Ed Wright, via email

Turn off Spotify promotions

If you use the free version of Spotify, you may have noticed random songs appearing at the top of the playlists you listen to. Apparently, this is a new 'feature' that's only being rolled out to a small number of users at the moment, but if you are affected by these 'promotional tracks', you can easily turn them off. To find the setting from the Spotify website or software, open Settings and select 'Display options'. You should then find an option to turn off 'Show sponsored songs'. The same setting can be found on the mobile app by opening Settings, Sponsored Content.

Thomas Cameron, via email



ANDROID

Know your pre-installed apps



Recent Samsung phones come with a built-in tune-up tool

bundling a lot of extra software on its phones, which some people complain about. However, some of it is actually quite useful and I've seen people installing apps to do things on their phones that these pre-installed apps will already do they don't realise they've already

Samsung is well

known for

got a tool that does the job!

For example, a tune-up tool is included in Android 7 on all Galaxy S8, S7 and S6 phones, so you don't need to install a separate one to recover storage space and memory and to clear caches. Go to Settings, then Device Maintenance. It analyses the phone and displays a rating out of 100. If it needs optimising, tap the button below or, if there is a problem, press the Fix Now button. It frees up storage space, closes background apps you aren't using and more.

Bob Moore, via email

SECURITY

Let Facebook alert you to suspicious activity

It seems almost every week an online service gets hacked. Could someone gain access your Facebook account? You can get alerts if anyone tries to log in and you can then check your account.

In Facebook, click the little triangle in the top-right corner and click Settings. Select the 'Security and Login' section, then click the Edit button next to 'Get alerts about unrecognized logins'. Select 'Get notifications' and 'Email login alerts'. Look down the 'Where you're logged in' list and click the three dots to remove any devices you are not currently using or don't recognise. You will be alerted if any device or software not on the list logs into Facebook. Keep an eye on it for new devices and apps that are not yours.

Tom O'Neill, via email



Get email alerts whenever a new device or app logs into Facebook

MOBILE

Enable developer options on Amazon Fire

Did you know that you can enable Developer Options on an Amazon Fire tablet, just like you can on other Android devices? To do this, open Settings, then Device Options and tap Serial Number seven times. A pop-up will say 'You are now a developer' and you can tap Developer Options to enable them.

Philip Smith, via email

GENERAL PC

Stop Windows Explorer forgetting view settings

I couldn't get Windows Explorer to remember my view settings for different folders, so I looked up the problem online and discovered that this can be because Windows is limited to saving folder views for 5,000 folders. Thankfully, you can fix this with a Registry tweak, so that your computer remembers the view settings for 10.000 folders.

Open the Registry Editor by typing regedit in the Start menu, then doubleclicking the app. Navigate to the following Registry key:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\ Classes\LocalSettings\Software\ Microsoft\Windows\Shell

In the right-hand pane, right-click and select New and 'DWORD (32-bit) Value'. Name the new value BagMRU Size.



Set Windows to remember view settings for more folders

Now right-click your new entry and click Modify. Select Decimal and type 10000. Click OK and reboot, and the problem should be fixed.

Lynnette Hammet, Web User Forums

BROWSERS

Calculate in your browser

In Issue 425 (bit.ly/webuser425), Aidan Stone's tip on page 69 explained how to carry out quick sums in Chrome by typing them in the address bar. Just enter the '=' sign at the end of the sum and there's no need to press Enter - the answer is displayed on the next line. The author wasn't sure if this worked in other browsers. I've tried it in Opera, Vivaldi, Firefox, Pale Moon, IE 11 and Yandex and it works in all of them. The only difference is that you need to press Enter in the other browsers for the answer to appear. On the other hand, a calculator pinned to the taskbar is easily available and works quickly too!

Madeline, Web User Forums

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

MOBILE

Improve your phone's battery life

For months, I'd been getting below average performance from my phone's battery. I put this down to the device getting old, because battery life in electronic items deteriorates over time. I then did some online research and learned that I'd probably been at least partly to blame for the battery draining so quickly. An article I read explained that lithium phone batteries perform best at moderate temperatures and drain quickly when either too cold or too warm. My phone used to get quite warm when I used it intensively but I would always carry on with what I was doing. Now, when I feel the device get warm, I put it down for a while and I've found that the battery usage has definitely improved.

It's not always convenient to stop using your phone but if you're just



Keeping your smartphone cool can extend its battery life

playing games or browsing aimlessly, then letting it cool down can keep it going for a bit longer. I'd be interested to hear if anyone else has success with this method, because it definitely seems to have worked for me!

Charlie Davison, 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!

NETWORKS

Why is Ethernet slower on my

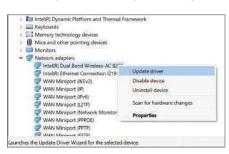
I have just renewed my contract with Virgin and was told I would get 100Mbps download speeds, so I decided to run a few speed tests. All seems as expected apart from on my Windows 7 desktop PC, which only manages 27Mbps, even when it's connected to the router via an Ethernet cable.

jeff3, Web User Forums

I'm on TalkTalk's 38Mbps fibre package and although I get good speeds on my upgraded Windows 10 machines via Wi-Fi, my Windows 7 laptop is quite a bit slower. I put this down to its wireless adapter being too old, but considering your PC is hardwired to the router, I wouldn't expect to see such a drop-off in speed. I'd check to see if there are any driver updates for the Ethernet adapter. To do this, type device manager into the Start menu, run the tool and expand the entry for 'Network adapters'. Right-click the Ethernet connection, select 'Update driver' and follow the instructions on screen to search for a new driver.

Cantrel, Web User Forums

Web User says: It could be, as Cantrel suggests, that older hardware in your Windows 7 machine is to blame for the slower download speeds. You could also try moving the Ethernet cable to a different port on the router to see if that makes any difference. If you're using a



Check that your Ethernet driver is up to date using Device Manager

GENERAL PC

Why won't my PC boot?

When I switch on my computer, Windows won't load. If I press F8 after powering up, a message appears saying: "computer being diagnosed for problems". It sticks on this for about two hours but nothing much happens. Can anyone help, please?

starwind, Web User Forums

If you own or can borrow a Windows CD, use it to boot your PC and choose the option to repair Windows. If not, try shutting down your PC with the power button and restarting it again after 10 seconds or so. Repeat this two or three times to see if this triggers a repair screen that shows advanced boot options. If this works, navigate to and select Command Prompt. Type the following, pressing Enter at the end of each line: bootrec /fixmbr bootrec /fixboot exit.



CHKDSK checks your hard drive and looks for system errors

Now restart your PC to see if it gets past the diagnosis stage. If it doesn't, repeat the process to get back to the Command Prompt. Type bcdedit find "osdevice" and press Enter. Using the partition letter it returns, type chkdsk X: /r, where X is your partition letter. Press Enter.

This scan can take quite a while to run, but it could give you an idea of whether your drive has bad sectors and might even repair it.

> calimanco and Cantrel, **Web User Forums**

very long cable, that could also explain the slower speeds, because long cables can be susceptible to interference.

GENERAL PC

How can I perform a clean installation of Windows 10?

I have a laptop that I upgraded from Windows 8 to Windows 10 but I only have the Windows 8 installation discs that came with it. If I do a clean reinstall, will I be able to upgrade again?

Gruntfuttock, Web User Forums

You can create a Windows 10 installation disc by clicking 'Download tool now' at bit.ly/ windows428, but make sure you read the instructions first. Windows 10 is digitally activated, so if you have upgraded previously, activation should happen automatically when you install Windows 10 again on the same PC. Just choose

'I don't have a product key' when prompted, after which it should activate automatically

An alternative option is to perform a repair install, which won't affect your personal stuff or installed programs. This can be done with the same installation disc from within Windows. Just open Windows Explorer, insert the disc (if you saved it on DVD) or drive (if it's on USB) and run the appropriate setup application.

Cantrel, Web User Forums



You can download Windows 10 installation files from Microsoft for free



Star Email

Mug/

Release the Rottweiler on shoddy service



just love Barry's page - he normally hits the nail right on the head. In his column in Issue 426, he speaks about iPhone apps not working after an iOS upgrade. Technically, I believe you should be able to get your money back because the apps are not fit for purpose and this is covered in the update to the Sale of Goods Act.

I am about to try this out on a company that I downloaded a program from. It cost me £24.99, but crashed and then locked my PC, forcing me to reboot. I contacted the company and was told that my PC was to blame, not their software, and therefore I could not have a refund.

Oh boy, did they get a shock when

I told them that I was a computer engineer by trade, and had been making, installing and repairing PCs for about 13 years. So I said they should cut the crap or suffer the consequences.

I asked my sister who is a solicitor to please write to these idiots (well, got to keep it in the family and it's all free). For your information, the office staff call her the Rottweiler because she always goes for the jugular! She also worked for Trading Standards many years ago, which is very useful, too.

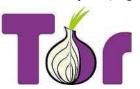
So I am rather looking forward to the next round.

> Grumpyoldman1947, via email

Tor is no shield against ISP spies

I rarely use torrent sites except to seek out, for example, out-of-print books for my research. I customarily use both Tor and CyberGhost for this purpose, following advice from Web User while doing so. I did this recently but left my computer running unattended while I ran an errand.

Yesterday, I received a communication from my ISP (Virgin Media) in the form of



a notice from the 'Get It Right from a Genuine Site' campaign. It appears that another person (I will not reveal who)

downloaded a certain film. As the account is in my wife's name, this is concerning (she was not the downloader and can barely work out how to use Facebook). I immediately found the offending item and removed it.

What is of greater concern, however, is that the circumstances appear to reveal that my ISP actively spies on its users' accounts to a much greater extent than it would have its customers believe. It also suggests that Tor is about as effective as a wet paper bag at concealing users' identities and that CyberGhost is even less use than Tor.

John Lockett, via email

Roaming charges won't be returning

Regarding your news story in Issue 426, 'Mobile roaming charges scrapped in EU': my son Grant is an MP and a quick discussion with him revealed that The Great Repeal Bill due through Parliament shortly will incorporate all the current EU legislation into our UK law. This will include, of course, the abolition of roaming charges so, unless our own government decides to rescind that directive, roaming will remain free 'as is'! The House will then begin going through

this legislation line by line to knock out things that no longer apply or are

unnecessary to the UK, like the European Court's control over our lawmakers and similar.

Tonv Shapps, via email



Quiz Answers: Issue 427 WINNER! 1 Jaws Justin Hudson was the first to email us the correct answers Shining Webt and wins Independence a Web User Day mua Spider-Man **WORD PUZZLE** Back to the Future





Miserden in Gloucestershire is slower than basecamp at Everest! The utter peasants

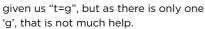
Turn to page 74 to find out what's making Barry mad this issue

*Can you decrypt this: Dvy fhvi rh gsv Imob nztzarmv blf mvvw

Stumped by your secret message

Regarding your 'secret message' on the cover of Issue 426: are you trying to pull a fast one?

Lask because I believe this encoded message is unanswerable in its current context. By that I mean: you have



We do not know what language the code is in, or if it's left-to-right or right-to-left. Is it a phrase from a book or just a quick comment regarding going to the pub for a beer? Mathematically, there could be many answers.

So is this just a way of showing how powerful modern anagrams are?

Jeff Capper, via email

I always look forward to reading Web User, but I was baffled when I tried to decrypt the message on the cover of Issue 426 ("Dvy fhvi rh gsv lmob nztarmv blf mvvw"). I tried an online Enigma decryptor, and fiddled about with the settings, with no luck.

The hint (t=g) seemed to relate to the Caesar cipher, but this appeared to scramble up the message even more. Brute-forcing the message scrambled it, so I tried reversing it. This didn't work, because it removed punctuation, and I couldn't reverse the words without spaces! I'd honestly be surprised if anyone gets it at all!

Jay Layland, via email

Web User says: I'm afraid you both give us too much credit for being expert cryptographers! The message was actually 'encrypted' using a simple backwards-alphabet code, in which a=z, b=y, c=x and so on. As we revealed last issue, the decoded message was: "Web User is the only magazine you need". Well done to everyone who worked it out, and apologies to those of you who were left baffled.

In defence of online surveillance

Might I please respond to John Lockett's Star Email in Issue 426, 'Online surveillance is an abuse of power', which challenges my support for online surveillance (Star Email, Issue 423). The thrust of my argument is the linking by some of privacy and surveillance. I do not believe the two are one and the same. Those believing they are linked appear to deeply mistrust authority, as Mr Lockett maintains we all should. He refers to our 'masters' (clearly indicating governments), whereas I believe such thinking is fundamentally incorrect. In this country,

the electorate are 'masters' and governments are their servants. who can and have been voted out of office.

Mr Lockett asks who decides what is criminal and malevolent. Our

government and its agencies do under the law of the land, giving us all the protection of the courts. Citing instances of journalistic rights under law, as Mr Lockett does, merely illustrates the protection that law gives us. However, it is not for the press to decide guilt or innocence, but to report such after due process of law. I happily accept a journalist's right to protect sources of information, but can this justify withholding evidence of criminality?

Online (and other) surveillance in this country has to be lawfully conducted and it is subject to judicial and regulatory supervision. This I fully endorse and find Mr Lockett's assertion that this is the way to fascism and totalitarianism preposterous in a country such as ours.

Gerry Walker, via email

Will the government decrypt itself?

I trust that if the government bans encryption, it will not be a case of one rule for them and another for us. If they outlaw encryption for us, they should also stop using it. Of course, that will mean no encryption for interdepartmental, inter-embassy, Bank of

England communications and so on, which is going to create a field day for the criminals. Oh well, I guess they know what they are doing - after all, they run the country.

Tony Hawes, via email

Internet speed isn't everything

Although I somewhat agree with Graham Vine's email in Issue 427 that too much emphasis is put on mega-speed internet connections, he should remember that not so long ago we had to struggle with 56K dial-up modems to get online. If BT and other internet providers hadn't realised that this wasn't sufficient and rolled out ADSL and cable across the country, then the web would never have grown and we wouldn't be doing things like streaming music and video, and

constantly checking Facebook. Graham should also remember that

some people, especially in remote areas, still don't have very fast internet connections and would be glad to reach 2Mbps, let alone 200Mbps. Speed may not be everything but without a reasonable connection, you can't enjoy all the delights that the web has to offer. We certainly shouldn't take it for granted.

Roy Page, via email



We must keep the web free and fair

I was interested to read in Issue 427 about the current concerns over net neutrality and that Donald Trump and his corporate cronies are seeking to sell off the web to the highest bidder. Well, forgive me for stating the obvious but the web isn't theirs to sell. The whole concept of the worldwide web, as created by Sir Tim Berners-Lee, was for it to be free and open for everybody, and not to give precedence to the companies with the most cash.

Even Amazon and Netflix, who have









benefit from the loss of net neutrality would be the greedy companies who want to exploit the web - much like America's shameful, moneydriven healthcare system. The web must remain free and fair, or it will be ruined for everyone.

George Friend, via email

Amazon has grown too big for its boots

What a huge disappointment so-called Amazon Prime Day was on 11 July. I expected something like the Black Friday deals the site usually does a few weeks before Christmas but instead it was just an excuse for Amazon to promote and offload its own products. Cheap Echos, Kindle Fire tablets and Paperwhites, and not much else of interest - what an anticlimax after all the hype!

What's more, the discounts were only available to Amazon Prime members, or to those people willing to part with £79 for annual membership. I realise that was the point of the day, but not everybody wants to make that sort of commitment. What about some special offers for us casual Amazon customers? Surely the company makes enough money from us to give us the occasional reward?

Like Google, I think Amazon has become a little too big for its boots, spreading into too many different areas and not allowing much room for competition. It must be very difficult for smaller retailers to survive against the corporate might of Amazon.

Nathan Harvey, via email



What you say...

AHOO MAIL HAS BEEN REDESIGNED. DO YOU STILL **USE IT?**

I don't anymore. I got sick of all the adverts and stuff. I now use Outlook because of my Windows 10 laptop.

lori @gadgetgal16

I used to until I got locked out. Despite three contacts with Yahoo, they still won't let me access my account. So fed up with them! Grrr!

Richard Green @CartrefRichard

I only use it as a backup or if I don't trust a site I am registering on, and as a spam trap.

Steve Ellis @gb022621

I thought Yahoo had died a long time ago. I'm a Gmail man with 15GB cloud storage (per account).

Simon Mellor @Simon9Hops

OES IT SURPRISE YOU THAT A THIRD OF FOOTBALL FANS STREAM MATCHES ILLEGALLY (bit.ly/football428)?

The cost of attending matches or watching them on TV is above what the average person can afford. So, along with no live Saturday 3pm broadcasts, it is no surprise.

Derek @dlee1

Surprised that two thirds don't. Sky subscriptions are dreadful value if you're only interested in your own team's games.

aiwacat @aiwacat

It does indeed. I thought it'd be a lot higher than that.

Sir Cumference @Gary_Olsen

They're not fans - they don't support football clubs. They are leeches not

paying to watch the match while wearing fake kit.

Jenny Jacks @JenJacks3

HE GOVT HAS LAUNCHED A £400m FUND TO DELIVER **1GBPS BROADBAND ACROSS** THE UK. MONEY WELL SPENT?

••••••

How about getting everyone up to 24Mbps first, instead of sliding the deadline forever outwards?

Lee Dodgson

They should instead make sure that internet companies are realistic with their advertising. BT offered me 20Mbps. I am lucky if I get half that and most of the time it's intermittent.

Paul Emsley

How many more times are we going to be promised 'ultra fast broadband'? It doesn't exist, it never will.

Steve Hamilton

Bet it won't help people like me on 0.15Mbps in rural Aberdeenshire.

James Fraser Singer

Pay loads more for an intermittent variable speed 'up to' 1Gbps? Erm, no! Gavin Stephen Green

HAT'S THE BEST THING **ABOUT AMAZON PRIME?**

I switched to Prime from Netflix as it offered more benefits like unlimited photo backup, streaming music, free ebooks and free next-day delivery.

Andrew Duerden

Been on Prime for a year. Amazon Music and next-day delivery has more than paid for itself. Amazon Prime Day has good bargains too.

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

I've just recently signed up. Love the same-day delivery (when available) and Amazon Video.

Stuart A Hordern

It's far, far too expensive.

Mike Kuhl

A Page 404

Barry Collins reveals the flaws in Britain's broadband speed league tables

Are you really living in a broadband ghetto?

otten luck, Ryedale. Poor old Purbeck. Rother's in a bother. At least that's what you'd think if you read the latest report from consumer watchdog Which, which identifies the rotten boroughs of Broadband Britain.

Ryedale, Purbeck and Rother were among the 20 local authorities named and very much shamed by Which - the latest in a string in of such headlinegrabbing reports. Last year, for example, it was the aptly named village of Miserden in Gloucestershire that was outed as the poorest place for broadband by Cable.co.uk, racking up an average speed of only 1.3Mbps slower than base camp at Everest! The utter peasants.

The problem with all these reports is that they're complete rubbish. And I'll explain why. Almost all of them are based on results collected by broadband speed-test sites. In Which's case, the results came from a firm called Speed Checker Ltd and, in Which's defence, they collected an awful lot of them - 719,000

The sample's about as

people called 'Nigel Farage'

ahead of an election

speed tests between January and March this year, representative as only polling fastest area, to be precise.

I'm sure you're familiar with such speed-test sites: vou click a button

on the site, it spends a minute or two downloading and uploading test files to measure the speed of your connection and spits out the results. These sites are very useful for testing whether you're getting the speed your broadband provider claims you should be getting, but they're utterly hopeless for gauging the speed of an entire district.

Why? Because they don't measure



the maximum possible speed of your line, they measure how fast your current connection is. Here at home, for example, I upgraded to BT's top-grade Infinity broadband a couple of years ago and generally achieve somewhere between 60-70Mbps for downloads a speed that's roughly twice as fast as

the median download speed recorded in Which's Tamworth in the West Midlands. If I hadn't bothered to

upgrade, however,

and had stuck with ADSL - like the people next door - my average download speed on such sites would be around 4Mbps, which is slower than the median speed of the Orkney Islands, Which's newly Christened 'village of

Unless these surveys take a properly representative sample from each area, the results are almost meaningless.

They don't tell you how fast an area is; they tell you the median speed of a bunch of people on a random assortment of tariffs in that area. What's more, the type of people who tend to visit speed-checker sites are either people suffering from terrible speeds or braggarts like me who want the satisfaction of seeing the speedometer shoot up on their fibre connection. The sample's about as representative as only polling people called 'Nigel Farage' ahead of an election.

So if you were thinking of retiring to Ryedale, but have been put off by Which's damning verdict - don't be. Get an accurate read of the exact speeds a property is expected to reach by punching its telephone number into www.dslchecker.bt.com, You'll get a precise and rather technical breakdown of exactly the speed the line is capable of achieving, not a piece of overextrapolated guesswork.

If you live in Tamworth, stick £5,000 on your property price and hope your buyers don't read this.



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hank you for reading this issue of *Web User* – we hope you found the tips and advice useful. The good news is that you don't have to wait too long for the next issue. If you subscribe to *Web User* by Monday 31 July (8pm)*, you'll receive it through your letterbox before it's available in the shops!

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