WIPE YOUR HIDDEN

Issue 430

23 Aug - 5 Sept 2017

Best software / New apps / 1,500 tabs in 15 secs!

- X What you've watched
- Where you've been
- What you've searched for
- What you've bought p46

Open any format on your PC, phone & tablet p38

- ✓ Photos, videos, music, docs
- Extract audio from videos
- Rip and fix scratched CDs
- Watch Apple videos on Android
- Convert without losing quality & much more **62.10** 9 771473 709158 34 page 38















Southpaws rejoice! p48

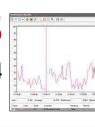
NEW PRIVACY BROWSER

STAY ANONYMOUS **ON YOUR PHONE p56**

So you can watch ANYTHING

WHICH PROGRAMS SLOW YOUR PC? p54

This graph shows you





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











Convert yourself into an expert

ew things cheer me up like reading news stories about quirky conversions. The couple who converted an old post van into a luxury mobile home! The London phone box converted into a tiny coffee shop! The lavender aftershave converted into a beard of bees! Well, maybe not the last one, but you get the idea: you can convert pretty much anything into anything if you have the tools and the knowhow.

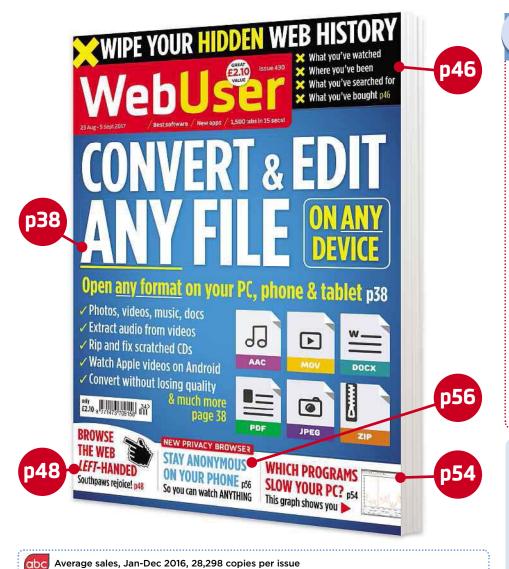
In this issue's cover feature, we apply the concept of creative conversion to your files, so you can free them from the constraints of their current format and enjoy them on

any device. Our amazing conversion tricks include turning printed documents into digital ones using your phone, ripping scratched CDs to MP3s and compressing photos without compromising their quality.

Also in this issue, we address the problem of bias towards right-handed users in computers and phones by rounding up the best software and hardware for converting your devices to the left.

Robert Irvine, Editor robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk #webuser





Things you'll learn this issue

How to try the new beta version of Microsoft's webmail service, Outlook.com

How to back up the contents of a USB stick as soon as you plug it into your PC page 28

How to record, edit and Share your own screencasts from within your browser

page 30

page 6

How to reprogram your keyboard to make the keys do useful new things

page 58

How to stop Facebook How to stop , according targeting you with adverts based on your activities

page 68

Subscribe to Web User!

Never miss another issue - subscribe at subscribe.webuser.co.uk



FREE
PC REPAIR
TOOLKIT!

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Turn to page 62 for
special subs offers

ISSUE 430

23 AUG - 5 SEPT 2017









IN DEPTH Articles on the latest tech topics

- **36** FAQ
 - Clearink, a new electronic-paper screen display
- 38 COVER FEATURE
 CONVERT & EDIT ANY FILE

Open any file format on your PC and devices

44 File-copying tools

The best free tools with useful extra features

46 Delete your hidden history

Wipe data to protect your privacy

48 Make the web left-handed

The right tools for left-handed browsing

REVIEWS Apps, sites and products on test

14 Best New Websites

Dan Dare relaunches, and cats in pubs

20 Group Test

We test seven network-attached storage (NAS) drives and reveal our best buy

26 Best Free Software

Kaspersky's latest antivirus tool

30 Best New Browser Tools

Discover the latest features in Firefox

32 Best Free Apps

Explore Google Earth on iOS









FAVOURITES Must-read regulars

What's New Online Discover the new Outlook.com beta

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 Buvs Our pick of the best new products

50 Broadband Deals Find the best-value package for you

51 Take a Screen Break More emoji song titles to guess



71 Inbox

Tell us your views and opinions

74 Page 404

Alexa worries are all talk, says Barry

Practical WebUser

Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

52 Workshop 1 The latest tools in Paint 3D

54 Workshop 2 Use a hidden Windows tool to solve your PC problems

56 Workshop 3 Boost web privacy with Firefox Focus

57 Workshop 4 How to back up your drivers

58 Weekend Project Create you own keyboard shortcuts

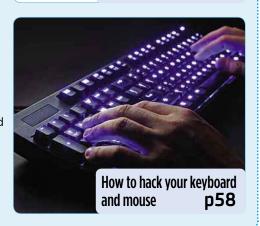
64 Web User Masterclass Top tips for editing PDFs

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





EDITORIAL

Group Editor Daniel Booth Editor Robert Irvine Technical & Reviews Editor Andy Shaw Staff Writer Edward Munn Art Editor Laurence Hallam Production Editor Miki Berenyi Editorial Tel: 0203 890 3890 for technical and buying advice

ADVERTISING

Tel: 0203 890 3846 Group Advertising Manager Charlotte Milligan **Deputy Advertising Manager** Alexa Dracos

ADVERTISING PRODUCTION

Group Production Manager Stephen Catherall, 0203 890 4050 Production Executive Lawrence Brookes 0203 890 3794

Marketing Manager Rachel Hare Marketing Production Manager Gemma Hills

MANAGEMENT

Tel: 0203 890 3890 Managing Director John Garewal MD of Advertising Julian Lloyd-Evans Commercial and Retail Director David Barker CFO/COO Brett Reynolds Chief Executive James Tye Company Founder Felix Dennis

SYNDICATION AND USE OF LOGOS

Syndication Senior Manager Anj Dosaj-Halai Tel: +44 (0)203 890 3816 Email: anj_dosaj-halai@dennis.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING

Web User is available for licensing overseas.

Licensing & Syndication Assistant Nicole Adams Tel: +44 (0)203 890 3998 Email: nicole_adams@dennis.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS Tel: 0330 333 9493

Email: subscriptions@webuser.co.uk You can manage your existing subscription through www.ManageMyMags.co.uk. This should be your first port of call if you have any queries about your subscription. A subscription to Web User for one year costs £42.99 for UK subscribers, £90 for Europe and £146 for the rest of the world. Call 0330 333 9493 to get the next issue, delivered free to your door.

Printed by Wyndeham Bicester, Oxon Distributors Seymour 020 7396 4000

PERMISSIONS

Material may not be reproduced in any form without the written consent of the publisher. Please address such requests to: John Garewal, Dennis Publishing, 31-32 Alfred Place, WC1E 7DP

While every care was taken preparing this magazine, the publishers cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of the information or any consequence arising from it. All judgments are based on equipment available to Web User at the time of review. 'Value for money' comments are based on UK prices at time of review. Web User takes no responsibility for the content of external websites whose addresses are published in the magazine.

© Copyright Dennis Publishing Limited. Web User is a trademark of Felix Dennis.

A DENNIS PUBLICATION Web User is published fortnightly by Dennis Publishing Ltd, 31-32 Alfred Place, WCIE 7DP. Company registered in England. Material may not be reproduced in whole or part without the consent of the publishers ISSN 1473-7094





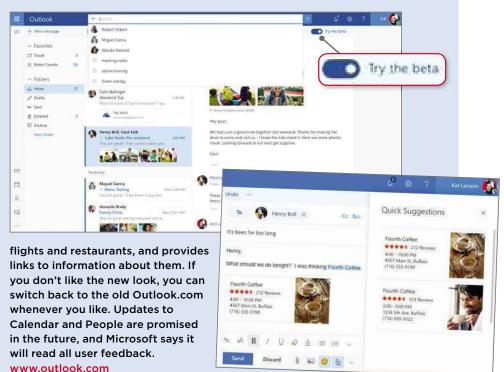
What's New Online

Try the new Outlook.com beta

icrosoft is relaunching Outlook.com and it wants to know what you think about the revamped webmail service. To find out, it has introduced a beta version that you can access by toggling a switch in the top right-hand corner of your inbox. If you can't see it, replace '/owa/' in the Outlook.com web address with '/mail/', press Enter and the new interface should appear.

As well as a fresher look, its new features include speedier searching (with a new search box across the top of the page), file and photo previews that appear to the right of conversations, and easy access to emoji and GIFs. Images you send or receive are now all saved in one place and you can personalise your inbox to help you find friends and other people more quickly.

There's also a new Quick Suggestions feature, which detects keywords such as football clubs,



View the web from a decade ago



tenyearsago.io

A decade is a lifetime in internet terms. Back in 2007, Twitter was still in its infancy and Pinterest, Snapchat and Instagram didn't even exist. We did have YouTube, Reddit, Amazon, the BBC, Apple and IMDb, however, and you can see exactly how they looked back then by visiting Ten Years Ago. Click any of the 15 logos and you can go straight to that company's decade-old homepage, courtesy of the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine (web.archive.org). You can marvel at how cluttered YouTube looked and how cramped the pre-iPlayer BBC site (above) was. You'll also see Apple showing off the first iPhone and an Amazon site that makes no mention of the Kindle - the groundbreaking e-reader wasn't launched until November. All the content linked to on the site is refreshed each day.

Find items you've saved in Google

www.google.co.uk

For a while now, Google has let you save images from its search results and keep a log of places and travel itineraries from Maps. Finding these items again hasn't always been easy, though, especially when you're browsing on your phone or tablet. Thankfully, a small change to the user interface has made life easier. Tap the three-line hamburger icon in the top left-hand corner of the mobile version of Google.co.uk and select Saved to see everything you've asked Google to keep. You can then choose an item to open it in the appropriate app. Other options added to this menu include Home, which takes you to the search engine's homepage, and Settings, which has moved from the bottom of the page. Selecting Help opens a page of FAQs and some handy troubleshooting tips.



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

Explore Dante's Inferno

bit.lv/dante430

Whether you're studying the first Cantica of Dante's Divine Comedy or you're simply curious, this Chrome experiment takes you into the Inferno like nothing else before. By clicking around a beautiful illustration of the depths of Hell, you can read lines of the poem and visit Wikipedia to delve deeper. You can also explore using a list of Cantos and learn more about Dante's characters.



Commemorate **Passchendaele**



bit.ly/pass430

To mark 100 years since the Battle of Passchendaele, the Royal British Legion has commissioned a series of thought-provoking virtual-reality videos. Best viewed using a Google Cardboard headset (which uses your mobile phone as a screen), these give you a 360-degree view of the realities of war, including the horrors of going over the top. As you watch the grainy black-and-white archive film, interspersed with images, you can listen to first-hand audio accounts and diary excerpts. You can also view footage of the battle on your computer if you don't have a headset.

Send money via

www.skype.com

If you need to send money to friends while talking to them on Skype, perhaps to pay for some tickets or return that fiver you owe them, you can now swipe right in a chat and send the cash through PayPal. Simply select the Send Money option from the list, enter the amount and sign into your PayPal account before tapping Send. A money card showing the transaction

will appear in the conversation thread, and your friend only needs to select the Collect option to receive the money - provided they also have a PayPal

account.



PayPal on Skype

Test your knowledge of Europe

bit.ly/europe430

According to Gocompare.com, many UK residents struggle to identify Slovakia on a map, and 10% even have trouble finding Ireland. You can put your own geographical knowledge to the test by taking this quiz, which asks you to identify 10 European countries based on their outlines and location on a map. Get a perfect score and you'll have beaten more than 90% of Brits.



TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@intlpodcastday

Stay tuned for International Podcast Day on 30 September

@nonleaguedogs

An account dedicated to photos of dogs watching football at non-league grounds

@loneblockbuster

Poignant and funny tweets from the last remaining Blockbuster Video store in the US

@bbcstrictly

BBC Strictly Come Dancing returns to our screens on 9 September

@xfiles2018

FBI special agents Mulder and Scully are due to return for an 11th series of the sci-fi drama

Watch NASA test videos

bit.ly/nasa430

Historic footage of NASA tests can now be seen on YouTube, showing controlled crashes, fledgling technology and rigorous evaluations. The videos on offer include tests of the Apollo 11 moon landing craft and the Mars Rover.

Upload your holiday snaps

bit.ly/lonely430

Lonely Planet hopes to rival Instagram by letting you upload photos and videos of your holiday using Trips, its new iOS app. As well as writing stories to link the snaps, you can follow other people, save favourite tales and search by theme.

Transcribe audio recordings

trint.com

Transcribe audio recordings automatically by uploading the files to Trint, which converts them to text using clever algorithms. It isn't perfect but it's worth a try, and you get 30 minutes of transcription free.

Need to Know

Travel websites to compensate holidaymakers for disasters

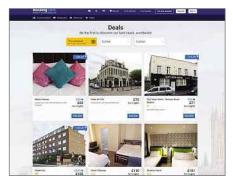
What happened?

The government will force travel websites to compensate customers when their holiday goes wrong, under new regulations designed to increase consumer protection.

Under current laws, travellers who book their holiday online often don't benefit from the same protections as those who book from a traditional travel agent, in what ministers call a "gap in consumer rights". If a high-street travel agent goes out of business while holidaymakers are abroad, they are offered help and compensation under legislation that protects package holidays. Trips that include flights are protected under the Air Travel Organisers Licensing (ATOL), which refunds you if the company goes bust before you leave, and gets you home if it closes while you're away.

These rules don't apply to many online bookings, even though 42% of such holidays are booked through travel sites such as Booking.com, accounting for around million bookings a year. The changes will extend protection to those package holidays too, and hold travel websites "responsible for the entire holiday", even if different companies supply the flights and hotels.

The "gap" between online and offline travel protections is due in part to the fact that sites such as Expedia and Lastminute.com don't curate package holidays themselves - travellers assemble them online to suit their



Sites such as Booking.com will have to compensate customers for problems



needs, and some aspects are offered through third-party providers. These sites deny they're travel agents, but the new rules will hold them accountable for bookings with their partners. This consumer-friendly legislation isn't a British idea, but is required by the EU under the 2015 Package Travel Directive.

How will it affect me?

Reports suggest that as many as half of our holidays aren't fully protected against the travel company going bust, as more and more of us book our trips online. When the proposed law comes into play, more travellers will be protected if the companies they're travelling with go out of business.

Travel websites will also be required to set out your rights when you book a holiday, ensuring that you know what protections you're entitled to. The government is currently consulting over the rules, so the details could change, but thanks to the EU directive, it will come into law by next July. This means your summer holiday will be protected, although your winter trip may not be.

The new laws apply only to holiday sites that let you build your own package rather than select one they have put together. If you book a holiday from a traditional travel agent, you're already protected by ATOL, whether you book it at a high-street shop or online. The issue isn't over whether you choose your holiday from a website or

pay for it online, but between traditional package trips and DIY holidays from sites such as Expedia, where you choose the hotel, car rental and so on yourself.

What do we think?

The holiday protection "gap" highlights the difficulty of regulating online businesses. It makes sense that a travel agent is responsible for getting you home if an airline it books you on goes out of business. After all, the point of buying a package holiday is to take advantage of the company's expertise so you can relax while on holiday.

Book-it-vourself sites are more flexible, but the companies don't curate the holidays. It's easy to see how a gap would develop in these circumstances, because in effect you're acting as the travel agent yourself. However, when the web makes this type of trip easier and often cheaper - than booking a fully planned holiday, it's no wonder more and more people opt for it.

Regardless of the law, companies such as Booking.com and Expedia have a duty of care to ensure their hotel, airline and car-rental partners are responsible and reliable, and to protect their customers if anything goes wrong. We often hear web and tech companies claim to be "platforms", which lets them dodge the regulations that traditional companies face. The new legislation suggests that the government, or at least the EU, doesn't buy the argument.

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

Facebook launches rival to YouTube

What happened?

Facebook is working on a video service that not only shows users' own clips but TV programmes, too. A new Watch tab will appear in the social network's interface that users can open to view TV shows. including those made specifically for the site. This includes short YouTubestyle videos, as well as more traditional television such as sporting events - Major League Baseball already broadcasts one game a week on the site. Facebook says the move is intended to make it easier for users to share programmes and react to them live while watching, although it probably has an eye on lucrative video

How will it affect you?

advertising, too.

So far, Facebook has rolled Watch out to a small group of users in the US, but it says it plans to offer the service more widely soon. It will probably take a while to reach the UK due to licensing issues, although the creators of these short shows and clips won't face

the same challenges as TV programme makers.

When Watch finally arrives, your Facebook news feed will highlight what your friends are watching, so be aware that your every interaction with a video may be broadcast to others. If you make your own video for the new service, Facebook will take 45% of the ad revenue.

What do we think?

There are already plenty of video-streaming services, from Netflix to YouTube, so we're not sure the world needs another one. It's not clear how viewers will benefit from using Facebook Watch rather than sharing YouTube videos in their news feeds. Both options allow commenting and interaction, but only the former lets Facebook rake in ad money. The company needs to pay for its servers somehow, but it must make sure it adds something to the mix, or it will do little more than fill our news feeds with unnecessary updates about who's watching what.



Microsoft Surface branded "unreliable"



What happened?

An American consumer watchdog has warned that Microsoft's Surface laptops and tablets offer poor reliability in their first two years of use. According to Consumer Reports, 25% of Surface-branded devices suffered from breakages or other technical faults within two years of purchase, leading the watchdog to withdraw its "recommended" status. Microsoft's breakage rate was higher than those of most other brands, it said.

Microsoft denied the report, saying its own return and support rates show that its devices last longer than similar hardware. Consumer Reports' data was based on details of more than 90,000 devices bought since 2014, with owners reporting frozen machines and unresponsive touchscreens.

How will it affect you?

Consumer Reports said the survey applied to the most recent Surface Pro and Surface Book, and that the faults affected devices with detachable keyboards as well as standard clamshell designs. The watchdog's own tests gave Microsoft Surface devices high scores for battery life, performance and value, but said it was clear that reliability was an issue. Anyone shopping for a new device should bear this in mind, although Microsoft refutes the report.

What do we think?

Microsoft's Surface devices are lovely pieces of hardware, but for the relatively high price, we need more than just good specs and nice design. Most people expect their laptop to last longer than two years, so PC makers -Microsoft included - need to consider longevity. Few tech reviewers do long-term tests, so we only get an idea of how good a laptop is when it's brand new, making this Consumer Reports research very welcome. We hope the watchdog shares figures on a wider variety of devices so that consumers can get a better idea of which manufacturers make the most reliable products.

.....

UK broadband is slower than 30 other countries

What happened?

The UK is in 31st place for average broadband speeds across the world, according to new global figures that place it behind countries including Estonia, Thailand, Hungary and Macau.

The data, compiled by Cable.co.uk from more than 63 million internet speed tests, shows that the UK lags behind a significant number of other nations, with an average broadband speed of just 16.51Mbps. Chart-topper Singapore's average connection speed is over three times faster than the UK's, at 55.13Mbps. At this speed, lucky internet users can download a 7.5GB file in less than 20 minutes, while UK residents have to wait more than an hour for the download to complete.

Many of the countries that benefit from faster average speeds are Asian nations, including Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, which have reputations for advanced technological capabilities. The United States also ranks higher, as do many of Britain's eastern European neighbours. Slovenia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic all enjoy faster internet speeds on average, despite having a combined gross domestic product (GDP) figure that's around 10 times smaller than the UK's, according to World Bank figures.

Even in 31st place, however, the UK is firmly in the top 20% of countries



when it comes to internet speeds, and benefits from faster connections than France, Luxembourg, Italy and even the Republic of Ireland. It's also significantly ahead of Yemen, which sits at the bottom of the table with an average speed of less than 1Mbps.

How will it affect you?

If you're thinking of moving abroad or taking an extended holiday, it's useful to know that there are 30 countries in which you can enjoy faster broadband than here in the UK. At the same time, some of our near neighbours are even slower, so we should be grateful for small mercies. Of course, your actual broadband speed may be significantly

faster or slower than the national average, as Barry Collins explained in his column in Issue 428 (bit.ly/ webuser428).

What do we think?

There's been a lot of discussion recently about the great variation in broadband speeds across the UK, so it's interesting to compare our local figures with global ones. Before we start packing our cases and heading off to Estonia or Macau, though, we should bear in mind that the poor broadband speeds in many rural areas will have brought our national average down. Hopefully, by the time the next survey comes out, we'll have climbed the ranks.



Asus ZenFone AR bit.ly/asus430

At first glance, the Asus Zenfone AR looks like a difficult product to sell. It costs an eye-opening £800 and it doesn't even come with the latest generation of processor - and yet it's an intriguing device. It's the first phone to be certified for the Google Tango augmented-reality (AR) and Google Daydream virtual-reality (VR) platforms, and as such it represents an important step forwards for this technology.

Hype aside, the ZenFone AR is a pretty standard Android smartphone. It's a big device, with a 5.7in Super AMOLED display, runs Android 7 Nougat and has a Snapdragon 821 processor with 6GB of RAM. Its main selling point is the rather complicated



camera cluster on the rear of the phone. This consists of two camera lenses (one for capturing image data, the other for capturing motion), an infrared laser autofocus sensor and an infrared depth-sensing camera, and offers an impressive resolution of 23-megapixels. It's these three cameras when used together that unleash the Tango experience. The phone uses its sensors to place digital objects in real-world scenes and to bring the real world into the digital arena. On one level, it's pretty frivolous. There are various games you can try that place virtual elements on nearby surfaces, including Scalextric-style tracks on the floor. More practical apps are also available to download from the Google Tango app, however. For example, you can measure items in the distance without a measuring tape, and aim the camera at walls, floors and ceilings to create a quick floor plan.

The question, then, is whether anyone would pay £800 for a phone just to use these apps. The answer is probably no. It's an interesting demonstration of a very intriguing new technology, but without the killer app to complement it, you're better off concentrating on getting the best phone you can for your money, rather than an expensive one that currently offers little more than novelty value.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is BBC iPlayer adding voice control?

The BBC and Microsoft are reported to have created a version of the iPlayer that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to provide voice controls. The experiment lets users sign into BBC services by providing a 'voiceprint' and choose what they want to watch by speaking to their TV.

Cyrus Saihan, head of digital partnerships at the BBC, said the AI software would recognise a user's

voiceprint by identifying certain vocal characteristics, such as tone, modulation and pitch. The software would then process the information and match it to a voice sample stored in the cloud. After training the computer, he said, a user could log in by saying their name and a pass phrase.

The internal prototype of the software allows users to select programmes using their voice, Saihan explained. "For example, saying 'BBC, show me something funny' brings up a selection of comedy programmes. If you say 'BBC, what's going on in the world?', the BBC News channel turns on and starts playing. Saying 'BBC, put EastEnders on for me' starts the latest episode playing," said Saihan. He pointed out that so far they have only built "a proof of concept" and that the experiment is still at the early stages of development.



Saihan also alluded to possible future uses of the software, highlighting that if a family were sitting together in a room, the TV could automatically detect the voices of each family member and suggest programmes that were suitable for all of them to watch together.

•-----

LIKELIHOOD RATING **JJJJ**

Although the voice-controlled iPlayer is only at the experimental stage, the ubiquity of voice assistants such as Alexa, Siri and Cortana makes it a logical progression for the BBC's streaming service, and puts a new spin on the practice of shouting at the TV!

What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Million Mile Light

bit.ly/million430 | From £11

Two years ago, the Million Mile Light - a safety light for runners, powered by movement rather than batteries - proved an enormous hit on Kickstarter, raising more than £50,000. Now the creators have updated the device so that everyone from dog walkers to schoolchildren can enjoy its portable luminescence. The 'next-generation' light is more sensitive, drawing power from even the slightest motion. It's also more stylish and more durable, and "will even survive a washing machine", according to its creators. Make your pledge now while early-bird stock lasts.



WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Sky rewards its loyal customers

Sky has launched Sky VIP, a brand new scheme designed to reward existing Sky TV and broadband customers with treats including preview screenings of new

films, prize draws and tickets to sporting events.

4G broadband to arrive on the Tube

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has announced plans to boost the capital's digital connectivity by

bringing faster broadband to homes and

workplaces, and 4G connectivity to the London Underground.



WE DON'T LIKE...

Rats bring down the internet

Rodents left residents in South London without broadband after chewing

through fibre cables. The rat problem affected Sky and TalkTalk customers, some of whom were left without

a connection for two days.

Amazon shuts down LoveFilm

Subscribers to the movie rental service Lovefilm By Post, which Amazon bought in 2011, will no longer be able to hire DVDs



and Blu-ray discs from 31 October. It's being closed due to "decreasing demand".

Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Solar panel hack could take down the grid

Hackers could exploit a recently discovered flaw in solar panels to overload energy grids and cause power cuts, according to new research. Dutch researcher Willem Westerhof found 17 vulnerabilities in solar power inverters - the hardware that converts the energy gathered by solar panels into electricity that the main grid can use.

Many of these inverters are connected to the internet, which means hackers could potentially target them and control the flow of power remotely. Westerhof was able to demonstrate the hack on two inverters produced by German supplier SMA during a field test near



Amsterdam, "If an attacker does that on a large scale, that has serious

consequences for the power grid stability," Westerhof told the BBC.

SMA said that the vulnerabilities affected only four of its models, and that all its other devices adhere to the latest security standards. It urged users to change their default passwords when the devices are installed.

bit.ly/solar430

Another Chrome extension injected with adware

The developer of a popular Chrome extension has warned users to update to the latest version after hackers managed to hijack the plugin, injecting ads and potentially running malicious scripts on the victim's browser.

Chris Pederick, author of the Web Developer for Chrome extension (bit.ly/ webdev430) warned users that he'd fallen victim to a phishing scam, and that his admin credentials had been stolen. Hackers were able to modify the extension to a version containing a



bundled script command and send it to more than a million users.

Once installed in a user's browser, the extension would run JavaScript code to inject adverts into web pages. It's thought that this was the main purpose of the attack, but the author admits that the malware could have performed more sinister actions, such as reading passwords entered into web fields. There is currently no evidence of this happening, however.

The hack follows a similar attack on the Chrome extension Copyfish, which was also hijacked by adware.

bit.ly/chromehack430

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: **Darren Guccione, CEO** of Keeper Security (keepersecurity.com)



What tricks can I use to create strong, memorable passwords? Mike Funkel, Twitter

The easiest way to remember your passwords is to use the same one for everything, but that's also a fast route to disaster. If a successful phishing attack

captures your password and studies have found that as many as 97% of people can't tell a phishing email from a legitimate one - the attacker essentially has the keys to the kingdom.

While it's probably OK to use the same password for sites that don't store personal information, you should use a different secure password for every situation where your identity or financial details could be compromised.

When people are asked to change their passwords, they often comply by changing a single character, such as '12' to a '13'. Password-guessing programs are wise to this and can sniff it out. A variation of

Tacking a '!' to the end of your current password is the oldest dodge in the book

this practice is to tack a '!' to the end of your current password when asked to include a non-alphanumeric character. That's the oldest dodge in the book and password crackers are aware of it. Non-alphanumeric characters should appear within the password, not at either end.

Avoid using the names of relatives, celebrities, football teams, pets or any other common terms in your passwords, Passwordcracking software looks for the most common combinations, such as Yoda123. Adding a string of characters to a common name is not protection enough either. Password crackers know this trick and cycle through combinations of common names and numbers until they hit the right one. The only safe password is one that's made up of a random - or seemingly random set of characters.



OVERCLOCKERS UK

SCAN computers

amazon.co.uk



Best New Websites

Festival 2017

200

Hotels Available

Temperature

High

Low

Site of the Fortnight

Off Peak

offpeak.io

Going on holiday during peak times can be expensive and crowded, so it pays to know when the best time is to travel. Off Peak lets you scour 53 cities worldwide and offers a wealth of data, including graphs that show you the cost of a night's stay and your chances of finding a room. You can see average temperatures for up to 11 months and discover when city-wide events are taking place. You can also book hotels and apartments, select check-in and out dates and view available accommodation through Expedia. The site is in beta and there's no information yet about flights or exchange rates, but we can really see it taking off.

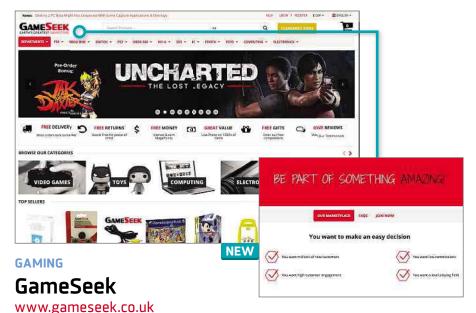
Our rating



see details of any major events that are taking place in your chosen destination



that day. The median is the middle value as the 50th percentile.



GameSeek's website has certainly moved up a level. Not only has the online retailer unveiled a more mobile-friendly design, but it has introduced a new Marketplace that lets third-party sellers (including individuals) flog their gear through the store. As well as significantly increasing the number of products on sale, the site hopes to entice visitors with its community features, including game-related news and competitions. Customers can build up cash-earning points by writing reviews, leaving comments and making videos. For those who just want to buy games, the site's simple navigation, speedy ordering and informative product pages make shopping a blast.

Our rating ****



SPORT

NFL

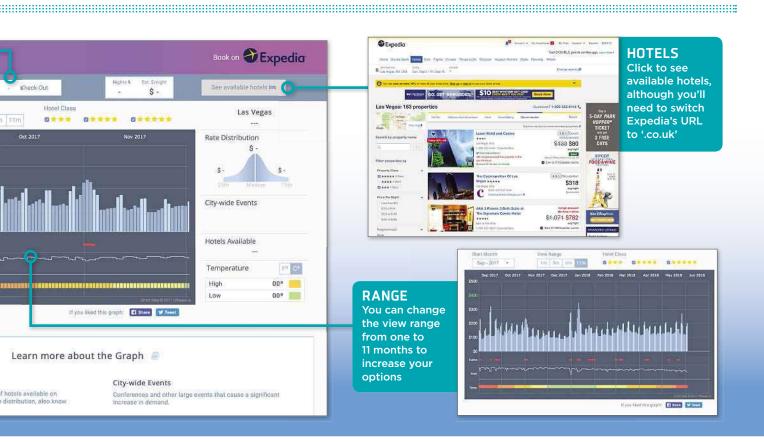
www.nfl.com

The NFL is bringing American Football back to London this autumn, so if you have a passing interest in the sport, you'd do well to check out the relaunch of its official website. Covering the NFL's 32 clubs, it offers news, scores and fixtures along with regular podcasts, highlights of the games, stats, photos and tables. You can also sign up for personalised news on your favourite team, buy merchandise in a section that caters for UK shoppers and even grab a season pass to watch live games. If you really know your stuff, there's an online fantasy league game that you can get stuck into.

Our rating



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





POLITICS

Hamilton 68

dashboard.securingdemocracy.org

This intriguing site claims to track Russian propaganda in near-real time by monitoring the tweets of 600 Twitter accounts, each of which is "linked to Russian influence operations". The aim is to build an overall picture of trending hashtags, top topics and well-used domains to show how Russia is seeking to influence public opinion. Put together by a former FBI special agent and expert in disinformation, the site offers an explanatory tour, an FAQ and a blog that contextualises the data. As you can expect, Hamilton 68 has already got people, and especially the media, talking.







Cats on Tap

www.catsontap.org

As if there weren't enough photos of cats on the web already, along comes this site, which sounds as if it was conceived over a few beers. It gathers images of friendly felines prowling bars, pubs, off-licences and breweries, as well as cats posing with pints. The site comes off the back of the popular Twitter and Instagram hashtag #beercat, and as well as enjoying the latest images on social media, visitors can study a map of working cats worldwide and buy T-shirts, beer glasses and stickers from the shop. It's nicely done and tongue-in-cheek, and it won't leave you "feline" disappointed.

Our rating





CRIME

West Midlands Police

www.west-midlands.police.uk

The thin blue line is fast becoming the thin blue online now that West Midlands residents can report crimes through this relaunched police site. Victims can choose from a list of crimes and answer a series of yes-no questions before filing a complaint through an online form, and the service promises to process web reports as it does phone calls. You can also track a case's progress, find details of local police services and view advice for different situations. While we'd prefer to see better signposting of appeals and crimes caught on camera, we like the way the site focuses on helping victims.

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





The Hideaway **Experience**

www.thehideawayexperience.co.uk

This site, which offers luxury five-star breaks for couples who want to get away from it all in Scotland, is currently limited to just a handful of private "hideaways" in Dundee, but it promises to add more in the coming months. As it is, it makes a great attempt at enticing you to book, with well-shot photos, gushing descriptions and extras to make your stay that bit more special. We like the simple booking system, which even lets you order food packages, and the clear menu makes finding the various sections a breeze. There's also a comprehensive FAQ and the beginnings of a useful blog.

Our rating





POLITICS

State of Wales

stateofwales.com

Aiming to promote, in its own words, "an unashamedly nationalist platform", this site explores the issues surrounding a possible declaration of independence for Wales. Even its author admits this idea is far from mainstream, but the site offers interesting articles about a potential currency, the road to Brexit and the various issues the project would face. As its written by just one man, it's essentially a blog - and an infrequently updated one at that. It's well laid out, though, and readers are invited to comment, which leads to lively discussions. We like the way it sets out its objective clearly, and it's easy to navigate and search.

Our rating





FASHION

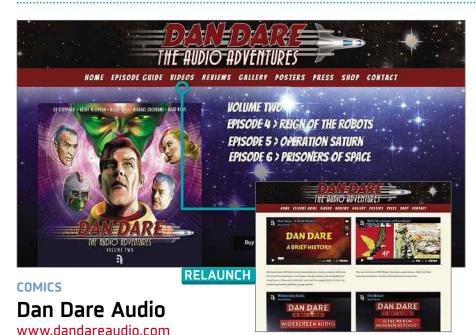
George Cox

www.georgecox.co.uk

British shoemaker George Cox has never dipped its toe into the retail waters of the web until now, but in deciding to offer its shoes direct, it looks likely to leave its footprint on the high-end market. The site lists various types of shoes for men and women, all of which are nicely described and accompanied by images. We particularly enjoyed reading about the art of shoemaking and stepping back in time through the long, illustrated and interesting history of the company. You can also look through photos of the shoes being worn, download the latest catalogue in PDF format and sign up to a newsletter.

Our rating





Despite being one of the great British sci-fi icons, Dan Dare is often overlooked. Now the legendary Eagle comic character has been brought back to life in a series of compelling audio dramas that you can buy through this stylish site. As well as volumes one and two of the new series, it offers some wonderful videos outlining Dare's history and the work that has gone into creating the stories. You can also enjoy a gallery of artwork and photos of the actors voicing the dramas, view posters and read reviews. It's expertly done, with easy navigation and updates through Twitter, but we'd have liked to see more about the characters and the world they inhabit.

Our rating





BBC Media Action

mediafordevelopment .bbcmediaaction.org

Created by the Beeb's international development charity, this digital guide seeks to explain how the media can make a positive difference to people's lives. It shows how helpful messages are broadcast following disasters, how information can assist in conflicts and how radio and TV can improve health. You have to be really motivated to work your way through the large chunks of text on each page, but there is plenty of video and audio to keep you busy. There's certainly an abundance of resources on offer, from online courses to details of specific projects.

Our rating



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

New tool for Search Console

When you're trying to fight your way to the top of Google's search results. the company's Search Console (bit. lv/qoosc430)



is a treasure trove of useful information. Google is redesigning the service and adding a new tool called the 'Index Coverage report'. This will show you how many of your site's pages have been indexed and explain why some may be missing, with tips on how to fix the problem. Index Coverage is at the beta-testing stage at the moment but will be added to the free suite in the near future. For more information see the Google blog at bit.ly/goob430.

Profit from Amazon's international sites

Amazon recently launched its OneLink scheme, which makes it easier for affiliates to earn commission on links to products from Amazon's international stores. Until now, if you wanted to attract clicks from the United States or Canada, you'd have to host a separate Amazon ad. Now you can host a single advert and Amazon will send the traffic to the appropriate shop, depending on where the visitor is located. There's more information to help you set it up at bit.ly/onel430.

Deal of the Fortnight

Free Virtual Servers (www. freevirtualservers.com) is offering private domain registration for £4.99, which stops your name and address being published online as the domain's owner.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Lucas Kowalski. WordPress Developer, Wholegrain Digital



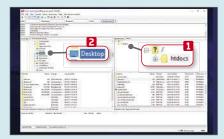
(www.wholegraindigital.com)

I'm intrigued by the beta tools in WordPress and would love to try them out. Is it too risky to do this on my main website? It's only a personal site so it's not a disaster if it goes down occasionally.

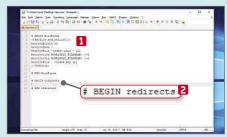
Dave Berkeley, via email

Testing WordPress's cutting-edge features is fun, but bear in mind that they're still in development, which means they may include bugs and security vulnerabilities and may not work with your plug-ins. I'd recommend trying them out in a development environment on your PC rather than on your site, because then you can play with them without taking any risks. It's your website, so the decision is yours, but if you try new tools on your site, back it up first.

If your site changes and you need to redirect visitors from one page to another, search engines such as Google recommend using what's called a 301 redirect, which helps ensure traffic is passed on to the new site smoothly



To set up a 301 redirect, you need to edit your .htaccess file, which is usually in your website's root directory. (If you can't find it, contact your web host). Use an FTP tool such as FileZilla (filezilla-project .org) to download the file from your root directory 11 to your Desktop. 2



Open the '.htaccess' file in a text editor such as Notepad++ (notepadplus-plus.org). If there's already text in the document, 11 click the space under it and add your redirects at the end. We've added comments (denoted by the '#' symbol) 2 before and after the line we're editing to help us remember what it does if we go back to it later.



Type RedirectPermanent followed by a space. Then type the path and filename of the page you're redirecting from, then the path and filename of the page you're redirecting to. 1 If it's on a different domain, add the domain name of the new page, too. 2 Save the file and upload it to your site, overwriting the old file.

CREATIVE



Scan & Win a SoundblasterX Katana! T & C apply



SOUND **PRO-GAMING**

KATANA

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





RECOMMENDED

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

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

A small, beautiful-looking soundbar that delivers good audio for under £300 99



REACTIVE COLORS

24-bit / 96 kHz Digital Audio

150W PEAK

POWERFUL 150W PEAK, HI-RES 24-BIT/96KHZ AUDIO

With integrated sound card/DAC



















USB, Optical-in, Bluetooth 4.2, USB flash drive, Aux-in, Mic-in, Headset

DOLBY AUDIO*

DOLBY DIGITAL DECODING

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



TRI-AMPLIFIED. ONE-PIECE DESIGN

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



5-DRIVER DESIGN

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





BLASTERX ACOUSTIC ENGINE FOR PC

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



We test and compare the latest products

NAS drives

We test seven network storage drives that can do anything from backing up your PCs to streaming video to your TV

etwork-attached storage (NAS) drives are so called because they were originally designed to provide storage space for all the devices on your network. Like smartphones, however, NAS drives have moved on to become mini computers in their own right. That's why you should think of your NAS not just as somewhere to back up your files or store your videos but as a home server that can do all that plus host websites, act as a media centre and become your own cloud-storage service that you can access even when you're away from home.

Here we compare the best two-bay NAS drives. We'd avoid singledrive devices if you can afford to, because only dual-drive systems can use RAID (redundant array of independent disks) tools to create a mirror image of your data on two drives. With this system in place, if one drive fails, you can replace it with a new one and you won't have lost any data. The prices quoted are for NAS enclosures without hard drives installed.

HOW WE TESTED

To test the speed of each device, we installed a standard pair of identical drives and used the CrystalDiskMark benchmark (bit.ly/crys430) to measure how quickly it could transfer files. Most of the devices were fast enough that their speed was limited by the Gigabit Ethernet interface rather than their own performance, but some fell a little short. We also considered each device's features and options when deciding whether or not they're good value.

GOLD

Synology DS216j | £161.13 | Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/syn430

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

The Synology DS216j may look more at home next to your washing machine or freezer than your PC, but its shiny white case contains an extremely versatile device. It has one Ethernet port and a USB port, although it's hidden at the back and there's no button to automatically copy the contents of anything you plug into it.

It runs the full version of Synology's latest DSM 6.1 operating system, which means you get all the features of the pricier Synology NAS drives in a cheaper package designed for home users. The operating system provides a rich, window-based web interface with an extensive range of companion apps for Android and iOS. It integrates with every major cloud storage service and offers easy remote access, either through Synology's QuickConnect website or using dynamic DNS.

The suite of network services includes Synology's Photo Station image server, a security hub for controlling two IP-based security cameras and Apple's iTunes and Time Machine. If you're technically minded, you can use the NAS to host an email server, a web server, a wiki or a WordPress blog. It'll even host web development tools such as Drupal, Joomla and Ruby.

That's an impressive range of options, so it's unfortunate that the DS216j isn't powerful

enough to do all these things at once. Its modest 1GHz, 32-bit Marvell processor is fine for basic networking and file copying but it isn't even as powerful as the chips in most modern smartphones. It also comes with just 512MB of memory, and this can't be upgraded, which means it will struggle if you try

to do too much at once. This also makes it too under-powered to run a Plex server (www.plex .tv), which some of the other NAS drives can use to stream video to other devices. However, Synology has developed its own VideoStation app, which has been optimised for the hardware and can deliver 1080p H.265 video to DLNAcompatible devices or to Synology's own app.

VERDICT

The Synology DS216j is fantastic value. It comes with stacks of tools and features that give it a lot of flexibility, and it can do most of the things other NAS drives can do, including the more expensive models. The trade-off is that Synology has sacrificed a little power, and the lower-end components place limits on some of its functions. We think this is a fair compromise when you consider how affordable the hardware is.

Qnap TS-251A | £263.52 | Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/qnap430

FEATURES ★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★

EASE OF USE ★★★☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★☆☆

The TS-251A crams a lot into its compact two-bay frame. As well as a standard USB 3 port, its front panel provides a microUSB 3 port and an SD card reader. The NAS can connect. wirelessly to other devices to transfer files over Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, which makes consolidating all your media files simple, no matter which device



they're stored on. At the back you get two Ethernet ports, two HDMI sockets and a brace of audio jacks.

The Intel Celeron N3060 processor is powerful enough to drive two 4K video streams, so this NAS would make a fine living room media server. It even comes with a remote control.

More importantly, the TS-251A handles the basics well too, with support for cloud storage services and a wealth of apps. You can even install Linux and run the device as a PC. It's a bit light on memory, with only 2GB installed, but you can expand this to 8GB if you need to.

VERDICT



This is a more powerful NAS than our Synology Gold Award winner and can do a lot more, but it's also much more expensive. If money is no object and you want a device that can do almost anything you can think of, this is the one to buy.

Buffalo LinkStation 520 | £88.55 |

Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/buff430

FEATURES ★★★☆☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★☆☆ EASE OF USE ★★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★ Web<mark>Us</mark>i BRONZE AWARD

Our other award winners offer a wealth of features, but they're overkill if all you want is somewhere to store files. The LinkStation 520 is boxy, with just two activity lights for communication - one for its own drives and one for the single rear-mounted USB port. The only other external feature is an Ethernet port.



The LinkStation 520's no-frills media-serving features can handle the essentials, including iTunes and DLNA, so for a device that costs less than £100 (without drives) it's a bargain. It's cheap to run, too, with low-power components that consume less energy than the other devices we tested.

VERDICT

locally or over the internet.



The LinkStation 520 doesn't win our Bronze Award for great looks or flashy features but it's a compact, efficient NAS box that's great value. If you've already got some spare hard drives, it's an incredibly cost-efficient way to get started.

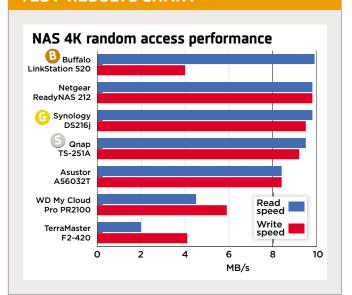
BEST OF THE REST

Netgear has a reputation for producing great-quality networking equipment, and the ReadyNAS 212 (********| bit.ly/net430 | £229.94) is no exception. Its sturdy metal enclosure protects the drives you put in it, and it has 2GB of memory, which should be more than enough to handle almost anything you need to do with your NAS device. However, this abundance of features makes the drive quite expensive, working out at £70 more than our Gold Award winner and only a few pounds less than the more versatile Silver Award-winning Qnap TS-251A.

TerraMaster is a new name in NAS drives, with devices that are designed and manufactured in China and sold exclusively in the UK through Amazon. The TerraMaster F2-420 (**** | bit.ly/terr430 | £259.99) is expensive for an empty two-bay drive, although this is partly because it's crammed with extras, including a quad-core processor and 4GB of memory. It's nicely designed, too, but you'll need to get out your toolbox to access the drives and it was a little slow in our performance tests.

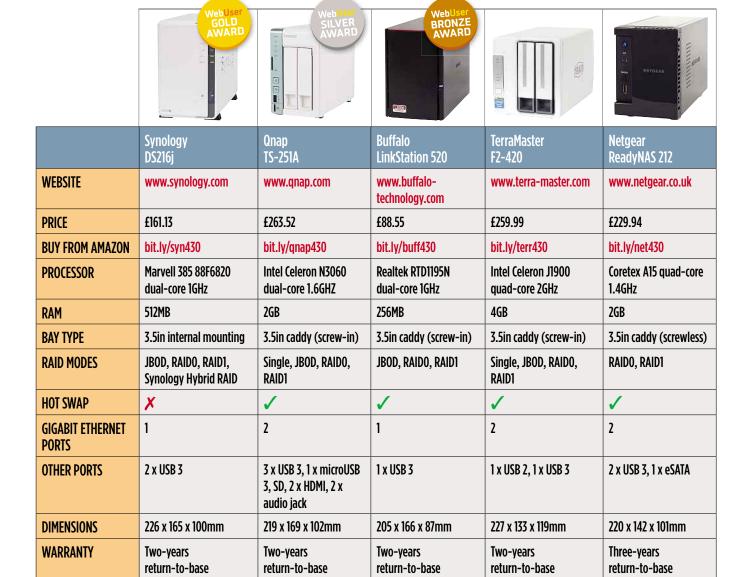
The Asustor AS6302T (***** | bit.ly/asust430 | £421) is brand new and wasn't widely available at the time of writing, so keen retailers haven't started knocking chunks off its recommended price yet. However, the high price is unlikely to come down by much because the NAS is powered by a dual-core Celeron processor and comes with 8GB of memory straight out of the box. It's packed with features and has loads of ports for connecting it to other devices, but you could buy our Gold Award winner complete with hard drives for the same price.

TEST-RESULTS CHART



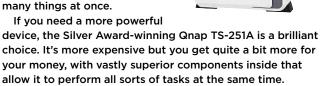
The second-most expensive two-bay NAS drive we tested is the WD My Cloud Pro PR2100 (**** | bit.ly/wd430 | £374.99). This has the specifications to justify the price, with a quad-core processor and 4GB of memory. You can use it as a standard NAS to store your valuable files, but it also operates as a server, either sending video around your network using Plex or running websites powered by WordPress or Joomla. The extra memory means it can run all this and more without any performance problems.

Group Test NAS drives



OUR VERDICT

The Synology DS216j won our Gold Award because it offers great value for money. It's as crammed with features as Synology's more expensive NAS drives but comes in a very affordable package. The only downside is that it's slightly lacking in memory and processor power, but that's not a problem as long as you don't try to do too



GOLD

NARD

Anyone who wants to buy a network storage device without spending a lot of money on features they may never use should opt for our Bronze Award-winner, the LinkStation 520. If you already have a couple of spare hard drives, this is the cheapest way to get a dual-bay NAS drive up and running.

CHOOSING DRIVES FOR YOUR NAS BOX

All the NAS devices tested here accept 3.5in SATA hard drives, which are the standard type fitted in desktop PCs. You can use smaller 2.5in laptop drives instead, but you may need an adapter. There's little point in using fast SSDs because transfer speeds are limited by the Gigabit network. SSDs are more energy efficient and quieter than regular hard drives, too, but they're a lot more expensive.

To create a RAID setup, where one drive mirrors the other for maximum data protection, it's best to use two identical drives of the same capacity. You can still use any spare drives you have, but the amount of data you can back up safely in a RAID system will be limited to the capacity of the smallest drive.

Some drives, such as WD's Red series, are specifically designed to run in NAS devices. A busy office NAS may benefit from these more robust drives, but any drive should suffice for home use, so look for a good deal.

Even with RAID enabled, NAS drives aren't infallible, so don't rely on them as your sole backup method. There's always a chance that a NAS could develop a fault that wrecks both drives. Disasters such as fire or flood could destroy a NAS drive, and if you're burgled, a thief could easily take a fancy to your expensive-looking box.

From Apple to Zeiss, and everything in between



For exclusive subscription offers and trials, visit: magazinedeals.co.uk/tech

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

₩eb User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE

NAS DRIVE

Synology DS216j

£161.13 from bit.ly/syn430

Tested: Issue 430

The DS216j is a great-value network storage device with lots of features that make it incredibly flexible. It's not the most powerful choice, but it can do most of the things other NAS drives can do, including pricier models.

KEY SPECS

Dual-core 1GHz Marvell Armada 385 32-bit processor ■ 512MB DDR3 memory ■ 2 x drive bays (drives not included) ■ 20TB (2 x 10TB drive) maximum capacity ■ 165 x 100 x 225.5 mm = 880g = Two-years return-to-base warranty

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.lv/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

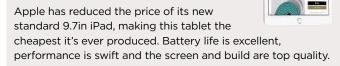
4,800 x 1,200dpi maximum print resolution ■ 1,200 x 2,400dpi maximum scan resolution ■ 250-sheet input capacity ■ 100-sheet output capacity ■ Double-sided printing = 802.11n Wi-Fi = 530 x 398 x 304mm = 16.9kg

TABLET

Apple iPad

From £339 from bit.ly/ipad424

Tested: Issue 424



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



KEY SPECS

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

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 I Unlimited storage I 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 SITE BUILDER

Wix

Free from www.wix.com

Tested: Issue 429

Wix's website-creation tools are brilliant, with lots of templates

and innovative features that make creating your site a breeze.

ONLINE VIDEO EDITOR

YouTube Editor

Free from www.voutube.com/editor

Tested: Issue 428

This editor's easy-to-use tools and

direct connection to the biggest video-hosting site in the world make up for shortfalls in its interface.

ONLINE IMAGE EDITOR

Pixlr

Free from pixlr.com

Tested: Issue 427

PixIr is a sophisticated image

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



ANDROID CALENDAR

Google Calendar

Free from bit.ly/googlecal426

Tested: Issue 426

This perfect combination of usability

and features makes organising your schedule incredibly easy.

STREAMING MEDIA RECORDER

ActivePresenter

Free from bit.ly/active425

Tested: Issue 425

ActivePresenter does a great job of

capturing streaming video and has an exhaustive set of tools.

INTERESTED IN MAGAZINE STANDARDS?

If so, IPSO, the regulator of magazines and newspapers, is looking for people to join their Readers' Advisory Panel. The panel - which will meet three times a year-will support IPSO's work and give readers the opportunity to share their views on media issues. No experience is required, just an interest in editorial standards. IPSO will cover travel expenses and pay you £200 for every meeting you attend.

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

Best Free Software

ANTI-VIRUS TOOL

Kaspersky Free

bit.lv/kasf430

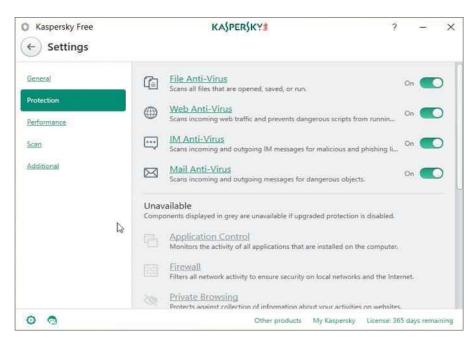
Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10

File size: 146.6MB

Kaspersky has produced lots of paid-for antivirus programs over the years, but although it also offers a selection of free tools, including a security scanner, software updater and system cleaner, it has never provided an entirely free anti-malware solution. Until now.

Kaspersky Free is a fairly basic antivirus tool, perhaps because the company doesn't want to detract from its commercial products. It can protect you from malware, network attacks and phishing scams, and includes a bundled onscreen keyboard to thwart keyloggers, but it has none of the advanced features you'll find in rival free security software such as Avast. The upside to this simplicity is that the program won't tax your PC's resources, which means it could be ideal for safeguarding older computers.

Kaspersky Free has one other handy bonus feature, however, which is the Kaspersky Secure Connection VPN. Powered by Hotspot Shield, this VPN secures your internet connection and makes it appear as if you're browsing



from somewhere else. It's a welcome enough extra but it suffers from one significant drawback, which is that it limits you to a measly 200MB of traffic a day. That means it's fine for a brief spot of general browsing, but you won't be able to download any files. You can't manually change the location of the servers it routes your connection through, either.

Should you require a more generous traffic allowance, you can pay \$4.99

(£3.83) a month or more for a subscription. If you want some of Kaspersky's more advanced security features, you'll have to upgrade to the company's full antivirus products. Trial versions are available if you want to try before you buy.

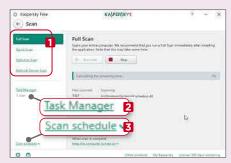
Kaspersky Free isn't officially available in the UK yet, so we've provided a link to the program on Downloadcrew. Make sure you don't click an advert on the page by mistake.



MINI WORKSHOP | Safeguard your PC with Kaspersky Free



1 Straightforward. From the main Kaspersky Free's interface is very screen you can update the malware database 11 and then run a scan, 22 The banner at the top **1** tells you whether or not your computer is protected, and clicking the Details button 4 opens the Notification Centre where you'll find additional information.



If you opt to scan for malware, you can choose between running a Full Scan, a Quick Scan, a Selective Scan (where you drag and drop suspicious items into the program window) or an External Device Scan. 11 The Task Manager 2 shows you what the program is doing, and you can schedule Quick or Full scans. 5



Raspersky Secure separate module to the main Kaspersky Secure Connection is a program. You can toggle the VPN on and off 1 but the virtual location is selected automatically (usually the Czech Republic, in our experience). 2 If you want more control, you'll need to upgrade. The program tells you how much traffic you've used so far. 5

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



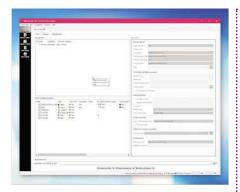
BACKUP TOOL

HDClone 7

bit.ly/hdclone430

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 44.1MB

HDClone lets you back up any fixed or portable drive, which is useful if you want to move your Windows installation from your hard drive to an SSD, for example. You can also create a full drive backup that you can use to restore your system in the event of an emergency. The free version caps the copy rate to 30MB/s and can only clone drives, not partitions. To remove these restrictions you'll need to buy the full version of the program, which costs from £18.



VIDEO TOOLKIT MKVToolNix 14

mkvtoolnix. download

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10 or Linux **File size:** 16.9MB

Matroska Multimedia Container (or MKV as it's commonly known) is a powerful file format that can store numerous video, audio and subtitle tracks and associated metadata. MKVToolNix lets you open any MKV file and make changes to its contents, such as removing unwanted subtitles, for example. The new version improves the interface and adds a number of powerful features and enhancements.



VIDEO TRIMMER

VidCutter 4

bit.ly/vidcut430

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10, MacOS or Linux File size: 63.1MB

VidCutter lets you quickly trim scenes from your home videos and save them without any loss in quality. Simply drag a video to the window to preview it, and choose the start and end points to trim it. Every edit you make appears in the Clip Index sidebar for easy access. You can change the order of your clips and combine the finished selection into a single MP4 file for easy sharing.

New Windows Apps

MegaPrivacy (beta)

bit.ly/mega430

Min requirements: Windows 8+/10 File size: 26.7MB

This is the official app for the Mega cloud storage service. Use it to search, store, download, stream, view, share, rename and delete your files. It's currently in beta.



Animotica

bit.ly/anim430

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 26.1MB

Animotica is a simple video editor that lets you combine video clips and photos together with transitions in between. You can rotate and scale videos, adjust colours and images, and apply effects.



IrfanView64

bit.ly/irfan430

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 7.39MB

This 64-bit Windows 10 port of the popular free image viewer lets you view thumbnails and slideshows, perform batch conversion and cut, crop and edit your images. You can also change the colour depth and add effects and watermarks.



Best Free Software

BACKUP TOOL

Paragon Backup & Recovery 16 Free

bit.ly/paragon430

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 75.8MB

Paragon Software made the commercial version of Backup & Recovery 16 temporarily free for users last year. If you missed out on that great offer (which we told you about in Issue 406 of Web User), the good news is that there's now a permanent free version.

Backup & Recovery 16 Free lets you back up your entire system, selected partitions or individual files to a local or networked drive. You can schedule backups, create recovery discs and more. The software also offers a few flexible restoration options, although it doesn't support incremental backups, so you'll need to run a full backup every time.





SYSTEM TOOLKIT

.....

Windows Repair 4

bit.ly/winrepair430

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 File size: 36.3MB

Windows Repair is designed to help you overcome problems with Microsoft's operating system and fix common frustrations such as Registry flaws, file permission errors, update issues and damaged system files. Version 4 is a major update and includes an overhauled interface and controls, the ability to launch more tools directly from the system tray (as well as the option to boot directly into safe mode), and a new repairs preset feature. Many of the repair tools have been updated, too, and performance has been improved throughout.

Windows Repair is completely free to use, but a Pro version with extra features is available to buy for \$24.95 (£19.13).

FILE-COPYING TOOL

USB Capture

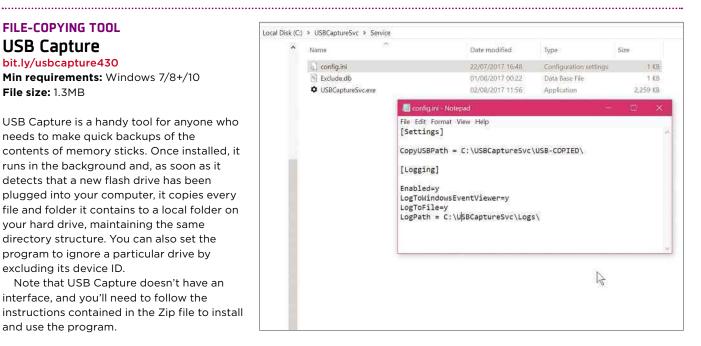
bit.ly/usbcapture430

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10

File size: 1.3MB

USB Capture is a handy tool for anyone who needs to make quick backups of the contents of memory sticks. Once installed, it runs in the background and, as soon as it detects that a new flash drive has been plugged into your computer, it copies every file and folder it contains to a local folder on your hard drive, maintaining the same directory structure. You can also set the program to ignore a particular drive by excluding its device ID.

Note that USB Capture doesn't have an interface, and you'll need to follow the instructions contained in the Zip file to install and use the program.





GAME RetroHot

bit.ly/retrohot430

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+/10 or MacOS File size: 27.8MB

Based on SuperHot - a recent firstperson shooter in which time moves only when you do - RetroHot takes this idea and combines it with an old-school aesthetic that's reminiscent of Wolfenstein 3D or Doom. As with those old games, you have to use the keyboard, but mouse controls may be added in a future update.

Don't install...

Pirate Browser

www.piratebrowser.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 29.7MB

This browser from the people behind The Pirate Bay was originally designed to beat internet censorship by allowing you to access blocked websites, particularly those linking to torrent files. Legal concerns aside, it's no longer supported so don't be fooled into downloading the browser, because it may no longer be safe to use.



Tor Browser

bit.ly/torbrowser430

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10,

...Install this instead

MacOS or Linux File size: 51.8MB

Tor Browser is the best way to safeguard your privacy when you're browsing the web. It's based on the same engine as Mozilla Firefox and uses the Tor network to disguise your location. The latest version allows the Firefox engine to use the multiprocessor mode for faster performance. It also updates the NoScript add-on, which blocks dangerous scripts, and HTTPS Everywhere, which forces websites to use their secure versions. Tor is completely legal to use and, as well as helping you stay anonymous online, it protects against malware and lets you access blocked content.





UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



IMAGE VIEWER

FastStone Image Viewer 6.3

www.faststone.org

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 6.6MB

This photo browser, editor and converter is packed with powerful features. The updated release gains a video player and improves the rendering quality of annotations in the Draw tool. Support for high-bit rate MP3s in the Slideshow has also improved.



SCREEN TOOL

F.lux 4.42

justgetflux.com

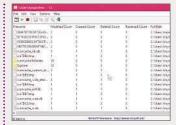
Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10,

MacOS or Linux

File size: 742KB

F.lux changes your screen's hue intelligently to match your environment and the time of day, making everything easier on the eyes. The updated release lets you opt into beta builds through a new About box and includes major fixes for Hue lights (White Ambiance).



FOLDER MONITOR

FolderChangesView 2.11

www.nirsoft.net

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 67KB

This tiny tool from the prolific developer NirSoft monitors any drive or folder on your PC, and shows every file as it's modified, created or deleted, all in real time. This version gains a new 'Start As Hidden' option that, when active, starts monitoring your folders instantly.



BOOTABLE USB CREATOR

Rufus 2.16

bit.ly/rufus430

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

or Linux

File size: 939KB

Most operating systems, including Windows and Linux, can be downloaded in ISO format. Rufus can write these to a bootable USB flash drive. The new version alerts you when the process has finished or goes wrong, and warns you when an ISO is broken.

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



Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

Enter website usernames automatically

Chrome's auto-fill settings mean you never need to worry about remembering a password for a website because the browser stores and enters it for you as soon as you start typing your username. But what if you can't remember your username? This eventuality is addressed by a new feature in the latest version (v60) of the browser. Happy 60th, Chrome - you can now apply for a free bus pass in some parts of the UK!

This welcome improvement to auto-fill detects when you click the password field and enters your username automatically.

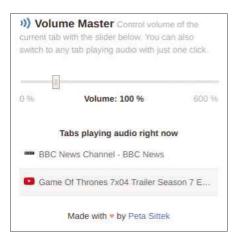
What's more, on pages where Chrome usually fails to detect the username (or email address) field, another new feature - called the 'username-field discovery heuristic' - will identify the box that most closely resembles the password field and auto-fill your username there.

To ensure your auto-fill settings are turned on, go to Settings, open Advanced settings and check the options 'Auto-fill settings' and 'Manage passwords' under 'Passwords and forms'.



Easily control the volume of vour tabs

Chrome's volume controls are disappointingly basic - it shows you which tabs are currently playing audio and lets you silence them by rightclicking and choosing 'Mute tab'. Thankfully, there's now a much better option for web users who like to listen as they browse in the form of a new extension called Volume Master (bit.ly/ volume430). This simple but useful tool lets you control the sound emanating from multiple open tabs via a single panel. You can use the slider to boost the volume of the current tab by up to 600% or take it down to silence; and



click the title of another tab to increase or decrease its noise level instantly. It's an effective way to deal with sudden loud adverts and videos that make you jump out of your skin.

Record and edit personalised screencasts

There are plenty of tools that let you record what's on your screen to create a video tutorial, but these how-to 'screencasts' can feel impersonal and even be confusing, as the viewer watches your mouse cursor move about, clicking and moving items like it's got a life of its own. A brilliant new add-on called Soapbox (bit.ly/soapbox430) puts a friendly face on video tutorials by letting you record yourself on your webcam at the same time as the screencast. This means you can add an introduction, emphasise an important

Screen Capture - Dimensions

Screen Capture - Frame rate

Screen Capture - Video bitrate

10 ▼

1.5 Mbps ▼

Actual Dimensions (1280x1024) ▼

point, make smoother transitions between different sections of the guide and form a more intimate connection with your viewers.

Simple editing tools let you display the webcam and screencast side by



side or switch between the two as required; trim the start and end of your video for a professional introduction and conclusion; and choose a custom thumbnail to represent it. You can also choose the colour of the player and track how many times your video has been watched. You don't even need to download the finished screencast, but can share a link by email or on social media to your video on

Soapbox's hosting service Wistia (wistia .com). It's free to create and edit up to three screencasts a month, although these carry Wistia branding. The price leaps to £75 a month for more screencasts and no branding.



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



FIREFOX

Experience the best new features in Firefox 55

It's fair to say that the last few releases of Firefox haven't exactly gripped the imagination, focusing mainly on under-the-bonnet tweaks and bug fixes. So hurrah for Firefox 55, which gives the browser a kick up the tail end in features and performance. Highlights include:

• The ability to open more than 1,500 tabs in just 15 seconds. This is according to a Mozilla developer rather than our own tests, and does seem rather excessive on the tab front - but still useful to know!





- New settings to tweak the browser's performance on the Options/General tab. These let vou use hardware acceleration when available and increase the number of content processes Firefox uses, for a potential speed boost.
- Search with any installed search engine directly from the address bar - not just the search box - by clicking its logo. Firefox also now suggests search terms by default when you start typing a query.
- Move the sidebar that shows your bookmarks,

history and synced tabs to the right-hand side of the browser by clicking the down arrow

next to its title and choosing 'Move Sidebar to Right'.

• Adobe Flash content is now click-to-activate rather than auto-playing and only allowed on secure sites.

Mozilla also tested a new screen-capture tool in some beta versions of the browser, but we haven't yet seen this in ours.



Try new Firefox tools before everyone else

If the additions to Firefox 55 mentioned above don't light your fire, Mozilla has just added three new experiments to its Testpilot website (testpilot.firefox.com),



which lets you try features that could end up in future versions of the browser. The first of these is speechrecognition tool, Voice Fill. Long available in

Chrome, speech-recognition lets you search the web using only your voice. Click the microphone icon in the search box - Google, Yahoo and DuckDuckGo are supported - and speak your query.

Another experiment, Notes, simply adds a notepad to the sidebar so you can jot down your thoughts as you browse and sync them across devices. It's very basic, though, and a long way from Pocket, which Mozilla integrated

with Firefox two years ago.

More useful is the snappily named Send. which lets you upload and encrypt large files (up to 1GB) to



share online. When you upload a file, Send creates a link that expires after one download or 24 hours. Unlike other Test Pilot experiments, Send doesn't require an add-on and can be used in any browser at send .firefox.com.



OTHER BROWSERS

Export your Opera bookmarks

For all its innovation and useful tools, Opera was missing a longstanding feature of Chrome, Firefox and even ropey old Internet Explorer: the ability to export your bookmarks as an HTML file. So we're delighted to announce that version 47 of the browser finally adds this useful option. This makes it easy to back up your favourite websites for safekeeping, and also lets you import them to another

browser, should you so wish (there's no shame in being a browser bigamist, after all). To export



your bookmarks in Opera, open the bookmarks manager by pressing Ctrl+Shift+B or by clicking the main menu and choosing Bookmarks, 'Show all bookmarks'. Select 'Export bookmarks', type in a name for the backup file and click Save. Simple as that!

Block all GIFs in Vivaldi

In Issue 428, we revealed how to block annoying animated GIFs in Chrome by installing an extension called Gif Jam (bit.ly/stopper428). The ever-clever Vivaldi has now been updated to offer the same functionality as a built-in option, so you don't even need to bother with an add-on. Just click the 'Toggle images' icon on the

status bar at the bottom of the browser and when the menu opens, select Never under Load Animations. Alternatively,



you can choose to play GIFs only once rather than having them repeat indefinitely.



Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight

GEOGRAPHY

Google Earth for iOS

bit.ly/earth430



Google Earth just keeps getting better. The incredible virtual globe used to be a hefty PC program that cost £300 for its Pro version, but now it's free, with no in-app purchases and no subscription fee. You don't even have to sign in, and it works on your phone and tablet, too.

The developers have redesigned the iOS app, bringing it in line with the web tool (earth.google.



com/web) and Android app (bit.ly/earthdroid430).

The new Voyager feature takes you on multimedia tours of notable places, so you can 'Explore New York City' or take a 'Grand Tour of Italy', or explore topics such as 'Land Art from Above' and Futuristic Architecture. The tours have been made in collaboration with organisations including the BBC and NASA. For a guided tour of Voyager, see our Mini Workshop, right. The steps also work in the Android app.

Google Earth has an I'm Feeling Lucky button that you'll actually want to use. Tap the dice icon to transport yourself to a random location. Wherever you land, the app provides



Knowledge Cards full of information from Wikipedia and other sources. You can even snap and send a 'Postcard' screenshot. If you'd rather explore on your own, tap 3D and stroke the screen with two fingers while gasping in amazement.

The update adds support for 64-bit devices. That may sound like a boring detail, but it will save Google Earth from iOS obsolescence, because the new iOS 11 won't support 32-bit apps.

The only downside to Google Earth is that it needs a web

connection to work properly. You can cache certain content to view offline, but support for this is limited, as you'll discover if you ever try to use it when your Wi-Fi is playing up.





UPDATED

MINI WORKSHOP

Take a virtual guided tour in **Google Earth**

Install and launch Google Earth, and press Skip to go straight to the main screen. To visit a random location and learn about it from Google's Knowledge Cards, 11 tap the 'I'm Feeling Lucky' dice icon. 2 Tap it again to go somewhere new. To snap and send a 'Postcard' screenshot, press the camera icon. **B** To launch Voyager, tap the ship's wheel icon. 4



The Voyager screen opens on a selection of Editor's Picks. 1 Swipe up to see more, or tap the tabs to explore by category, including Travel, Culture and Nature. 2 Press a Voyager tile (such as Natural Treasures, created by BBC Earth) to launch that tour. B On the screen that opens, tap Explore, or tap 'x' in the top-right to close it.



You're now on the first stage of your chosen tour. Tap the video 11 to play it in full screen, then tap the 'x' to go back. To zoom into the location being discussed, press the paper plane icon. 2 To go to the next stage of the tour, tap the bottomright arrow. 🖪 If you want to see a list of all stages, press the three dots then 'Table of Contents'. 4



You can tap any one to jump to that stage.

Our rating



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

UPDATED

PHOTOGRAPHY

Adobe **Photoshop** Lightroom

bit.ly/Irdroid430 bit.ly/Iriphone430 bit.ly/Iripad430

4.1 9.3

The free mobile versions of Adobe's excellent photo-editing tool are now more

powerful than ever, making their Desktop PC counterpart, which costs a tenner a month, look rather like a rip-off. All three versions of the app have received significant updates. The iPhone and iPad apps now have a new selective brush tool and Details tab, while the interface of the iPad app has been redesigned. The Android app,

meanwhile, has been completely rebuilt, which should make it much faster and easier to use.



Our rating



VIDEO

Rheo bit.ly/rheo430 **1**0

The videos that YouTube recommends can often be wide of the mark, but now a former Apple employee has created Rheo, an app that's designed to

offer a personalised feed of videos you'll actually love. You'll have to help it get to know you first, of course. Browse and search the app's channels and videos, which are sourced from all over the web, then tap the emoji to tell Rheo how you feel about them. You can even record your reactions using

the front camera on your iPhone or iPad. The more you use Rheo, the better its suggestions get.

Our rating



NEW

RateBeer www.ratebeer. com



Fancy a beer? Great, but which one. and where? RateBeer can help you answer both questions, because it not only rates beer



but also offers crowdsourced verdicts on pubs, bars, breweries and shops that sell beer. Its searchable database includes details of more than half a million brews, and you can post reviews, save favourites and create a personal beer history. The app's tone is more sober than you might expect, with an emphasis on craft beers and traditional ales that's unlikely to have

lager lager". Our rating

anyone shouting "lager

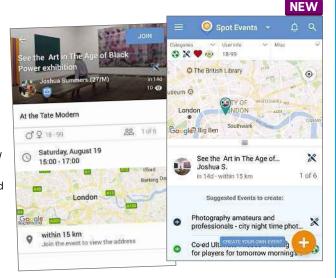


EVENTS

Spot

spotapp.jo **4.1** 8

Put on an event or find one in your area (or anywhere else) using this new app created by Oren Peli, the man who directed the Paranormal Activity films. That may seem like an unexpected career move, like Stephen King launching a pizza-delivery service, but Peli actually started as a video animator, so app development isn't too much of a leap.



Spot lets you create and find events in four categories: Sport, Singles, Hobbies and Community, and you can sign up for any event simply by tapping its map marker followed by Join. The only trouble is that the app has hardly any events in the UK at the moment. Like any social tool, Spot needs to attract enough users to make it work properly, but it has huge potential and is completely free.





Our rating



GET THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID

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



Discover how to:

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

Order it now from Amazon at bit.ly/androidbook2016

Best Free Apps

APPS

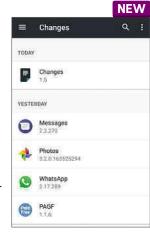
Changes

bit.ly/changes430



This app lets you browse and search the 'changelogs' of your Android apps to see their update history and find out what features have been added and when. Swipe up to scroll through all changes by date, or tap the Search icon to jump to a particular app. You can 'ignore' an app by tapping its name in the list to open its details, then tapping the

eye icon. Changes was in beta testing at the time of writing, but it's stable, fast and accurate, and will soon include even more options, such as the ability to save favourite apps, search within changelogs and configure notifications.





Our rating



VIDEO

Loopsie

bit.ly/loopdroid430 bit.ly/loopios430



Cinemagraphs are photos that have a single moving element (such as the dog's tongue in this screenshot taken from Loopsie's intro screen), and they're the latest craze in DIY animation. Loopsie lets you create your own cinemagraphs by shooting a short video while keeping your device still, then drawing around the moving

cough up a £1.69 in-app purchase.

part you want to keep. The app stabilises the rest of the image to create a GIF-style loop. You have to choose your subject carefully - a waving flag in a still garden, for example - and your animation is slapped with a Loopsie watermark unless you



NEW

YOU DECIDE

HDOGGO

WHAT TO

Our rating



APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

SOCIAL

Fella

bit.ly/fella430

Price: 89p



Fella is a fast, efficient third-party tool for accessing your Facebook account and Messenger messages. You can also add customisable wrappers for a more colourful touch.

NOTES

Whink

whinkapp.com

Price: £4.99



Take notes by scribbling with your finger or a stylus, then export the results as PDF documents. Whink supports audio notes and online backup, too, and you can even scribble on your photos.

BOARD-GAME COMPANION

Scrabble Score Platinum

bit.ly/scrabble430

Price: £1.99



Leave this excellent companion app to work out your Scrabble







scores and deliver verdicts on the accuracy of your words so you can devote more time and brainpower to playing the game.

ASSISTANT

Assist Me

bit.ly/assistme430

Price: 79p



This simple new app is a handy one-tap launcher for Google Assistant, Android's new Cortana-style voice assistant. Assist Me also works with Samsung's Bixby voice assistant.

TRAVEL

Three Peaks Yorkshire

bit.ly/3peaks430

Price: £1.99

1 5

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has redesigned and relaunched the Android version of its app, which now offers a visit planner along with Ordnance Survey maps and detailed descriptions of all the best routes.





Whink

Scrabble Score Platinum

Assist Me

Three Peaks Yorkshire











UPDATED



Best New Mobile Games

NEW

ARCADE

Lab Escape

bit.ly/lab430





You're an unstable specimen, a bizarre freak of nature that should be confined to a lab under the watchful eyes of scientists. No, we're not being rude. We're explaining the premise of Lab Escape, a game in which you help your lively specimen break out of confinement and devour its enemies. The more meat your creature eats, the stronger it becomes, which allows it to select 'mutations' such as immunity against attacks, raining meat from above and hooking your nearest enemy with your tongue. Cute graphics and eclectic

Our rating

mutations make this

game lots of fun to play.



SIMULATION

Sky Tram Simulator

bit.ly/skytram430

4.0.3



There are simulation games for virtually every form of transport train, bus, plane, truck, boat - but we have to admire the blue-sky thinking that came up with this one, which puts you in control of a cable car. You may question the appeal of such a game. After all, sky trams don't offer much flexibility of movement. However, the game's creators keep things interesting by dangling your car above vast, beautiful landscapes that include snow-topped mountain ranges, rugged canyons and, somewhat bizarrely

in terms of realism, a dinosaur park. The sky really is the limit.

Our rating



: CASUAL

NEW

Dumb Ways to Die

bit.ly/dumbdroid430 bit.ly/dumbios430

4.1 6



Dumb Ways to Die began as an Australian rail-safety campaign for Metro Trains before taking on a life of its own as a popular mobile game in which you try to stop "charmingly dumb" characters meeting a grisly demise. Challenges include sewing up an open wound, swatting killer wasps and standing back from the edge of the platform, each of which takes seconds to complete. The latest update adds three new mini games and further customisation options for the characters you

collect through your life-saving endeavours. It's addictive, although the ads are annoying.



Our rating



X Don't install...

Yahoo Search

mobile.yahoo.com/Search

Considering all the bad luck Yahoo has suffered lately, it seems almost mean to kick the company while it's down, but this search app for Android and iOS simply isn't very good, especially compared with the fast,



accurate results of Google. It's basic, with no way to filter search results by useful criteria, and its best feature, which lets you display localised search results in a list or on a map, is only available in the US. We also had trouble getting the voice-search feature to work properly.

...Install this instead

DuckDuckGo Search & Stories

duckduckgo.com/app

👘 (varies with device) 🌑 🤋

Not everyone likes Google, especially those of us who don't want our searches tracked and filtered. DuckDuckGo (duckduckgo. com), the search engine with a silly name and a serious attitude to privacy, is our favourite alternative and its mobile version is just as good as the website. The app doesn't store cookies, log your user information or store your IP address, and it can't share any data with advertisers because it doesn't know anything about

you. It draws its results from hundreds of sources, including news websites (hence "stories"), and sorts them by the number of times they've been clicked and shared. There's no 'filter bubble' based on who it thinks you are, either, which means you get results that are impartial but still relevant.







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

Our guide to Clearink

Is this a new chapter for e-readers and tablets? David Crookes looks at a new technology that could revolutionise the way we read

What is Clearink?

Clearink is the name of a new kind of electronic-paper display for mobile devices. It's being heralded as a viable alternative to the current electronic ink (or e-ink) screens. Created by a company called Clearink Displays (clearinkdisplays .com), the technology seeks to improve the screens used by e-readers such as the Kindle and other mobile devices, and those who have seen it say it could prove revolutionary.

Why is it interesting?

Aside from the fact that the display is just as friendly on the eyes as an e-ink screen, Clearink is also capable of running video - in colour. It can display text and animations on the same page, and run video on a full screen, making it more versatile than e-ink. At the same time, it offers the same low-power consumption as e-ink and it can be used outdoors in direct sunlight. Clearink won the Best in Show during Display Week 2017 (bit.ly/display430) for its videocapable e-paper.

How good are its video capabilities?

Not bad by any means, although it has a way to go before it can match the LCD and OLED technology used by current and forthcoming phones and tablets. The initial displays will have a resolution of 212dpi, but they'll be limited to just 4,096 colours (putting Clearink on a par with



Clearink promises to be easy on the eyes and claims to extend battery life

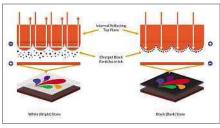


the 16-bit high-colour technology of yesteryear) and the refresh rate will be only 33fps (frames per second). That's higher than a Kindle, though, and as the tech improves so will the possibilities.

How does Clearink work?

As with e-ink. Clearink uses a principle called electrophoresis, which allows thousands of capsules to be arranged to form characters that look as sharp as a printed page. By applying a voltage, the capsules are moved around a fluid while the pixels are switched on and off, forming images and words on the screen.

However, whereas e-ink uses black and white capsules to show words and



Clearink works in a clever way, as you can see from this diagram

images on the screen, Clearink only needs the black ones.

How is colour created then?

The company says this is achieved by overlaying an LCD colour layer. This means that it needs more power than a monochrome reflective ePaper display but it also makes it possible for Clearink devices to display colourful animations and videos, and lets you have moving images on the same page as text.

Are the screens vibrant?

The colours can look a tad washed out but Clearink says the screens aren't aiming for the standard of LCD or OLED,



Clearink screens offer better quality than standard e-readers

WHERE COULD CLEARINK TECHNOLOGY BE USED?

IN SCHOOLS

Clearink CEO Frank Christiaens says there are growing concerns that children are damaging their eyes by spending as much as five hours a day staring at screens. "Clearink is the same as reading a book, it is like paper," he says. "And people have been reading paper for thousands of years."

ON WRISTS

One of the abiding problems with smartwatches is battery life, and the company says that using Clearink instead of OLED and e-ink allows not only for power savings but the ability

to display content from the internet. play videos and get great visibility when worn outdoors.



IN SHOPS

We are going to be seeing electronic shelf labels become commonplace in British supermarkets



(with the prices displayed on them even fluctuating depending on the time of day or year you are shopping). Clearink is eyeing this market with its lower-power, highly readable, bistable (see right) screens.

IN CARS

Clearink has noted the rising popularity of in-car displays and it says its technology would offer a display that could be cheaper than LCD. Since the screens have high brightness and don't wash out when they are under direct sunlight, they'll remain visible in all weather.



Clearink hopes to create eSchoolbooks for children to use

e-readers (bistable means energy is used to change an image or text but not to hold it on the screen).

Can I get a Clearink device now?

Not yet. The technology is still at the prototype stage but it does hope to have a video version available for the public to use by the end of the year, with a bistable version potentially rolling out next year. It seems more reluctant to promote a monochrome display, perhaps because this would directly compete with the Kindle and the huge market share currently held by Amazon's device.

disturbing our sleep. It's no surprise that manufacturers such as Apple have been looking at ways to remove blue light from our computer, phone and other device screens, each of which emit significant amounts of it.

Does that make the screens easy on the eyes?

even though they offer the same solid

response times. Instead, they want their

displays to be as good as printed paper

and they are quick to point out that the

whites offer 83% reflection, which is

almost double what e-ink can deliver.

Very much so - Clearink emits no ultraviolet or blue light so it offers the same benefit as e-ink screens. This is very timely given recent efforts to try and reduce or eliminate the amount of ultraviolet and blue light emitted from the displays we spend so long staring at. There is widespread worry that such screens are damaging our eyes.

Why is blue light dangerous?

These rays have short wavelengths and lots of energy and they penetrate to the retina. This has been shown, over time, to damage light-

sensitive cells, increasing the risk of macular degeneration (an eye condition that can cause blindness). Blue light is also understood to affect our circadian rhythm,

The blue light from your phone can damage cells in your eyes

How will it improve battery life?

By opting not to backlight the display, battery savings of between 80% and 90% can be achieved compared to LCD. Long-lasting power is a big selling point of Clearink, making its displays not only perfect for use in schools - the company hopes to produce eSchoolbooks - but also opening up the possibilities for them to be used in developing countries where conservation of power is vital.

What devices is Clearink creating?

As well as eSchoolbooks for the education market, the company's website shows Clearink displays in use

on smartwatches, smartphones and tablets. The screens can stretch

to larger sizes, which means laptops could also benefit from the technology. You'd certainly be able to view apps and web pages as well as ebooks, animation and video on a Clearink display. Indeed, Clearink is concentrating its efforts on video

displays rather than 'bistable' devices such as straightforward

Will the devices be expensive?

They shouldn't be, since only one pigment is used, which makes them less costly to manufacture than current displays. Clearink also only needs three sandwiched layers whereas e-ink requires more and LCD at least half a dozen. When the devices go into mass production (they can be manufactured in existing LCD factories), the costs should be brought down even further.

Haven't we seen this kind of thing before?

Of course. Other companies have worked on e-ink alternatives. The most promising has been Liquavista (liquavista.com). which was founded as a spin-off from Philips in 2006. Acquired by Samsung in 2011 and then sold to Amazon in 2013, it specialises in creating colour displays with a long battery life that aren't impacted by bright lights. But we've yet to see it used in any device.



Liquavista is another e-ink alternative but it has yet to be used in a consumer device

CONVERT & EDIT ANY FILE ON ANY DEVICE

FILE CONVERSION SPECIAL ISSUE



Having the wrong file type shouldn't stop you opening photos, videos and documents. **Edward Munn** reveals the best tools for converting files so you can work in any format on any device



Cs, smartphones and tablets are equipped to open and edit all manner of files, from AAC to ZIP. From time to time, however, you may find that you can't open a file that you've transferred from one device to another or received from someone else.

If a friend sends you a RAW image file, for example, you may struggle to open it if you don't have specialist software. Similarly, if you transfer a video that uses Apple's M4V format to your Android phone, you probably won't be able to play it. In this feature, we show you how to convert

problematic files quickly on any device so you can continue to use them wherever you are.

We also show you how to perform conversions that you might not have known were possible, such as transforming printed photos and documents into digital files that you can edit, and extracting the audio from videos so you can listen to songs using your favourite music player.

If that's not enough conversion for you, turn to our Web User Masterclass on page 64, where we look at the best tools for converting and editing PDF documents.











Convert & Edit Any File



¥

PHOTOS

Convert any image file to any format

It's frustrating when you receive a file from someone in an unusual format that you can't open on your PC. The quickest way around this is to convert the troublesome file to a different format using a web tool such as BatchPhoto Espresso (batchphoto.com/espresso). This excellent free app lets you convert JPEG, TIF, PNG, BMP, GIF, JP2, PICT and PCX files to most popular formats and it includes tools that help you crop or rotate the image and apply a range of effects and other useful adjustments.

If you'd rather convert your files offline, or you have a file in a format that BatchPhoto Espresso doesn't support, try the brilliant XnConvert (bit.ly/xnconvert430). It recognises more than 500 image formats, including RAW files from DSLR cameras, and can convert them to a choice of 70 file types. It's available as a portable program, so you don't have to install it on your PC, and offers more than 80 operations during the conversion process, including transformations, adjustments and



BatchPhoto Espresso lets you convert and edit most popular image formats

effects. See our Mini Workshop below to find out how to use XnConvert.

If you have an image that you can't open on your Android phone or tablet, try Image Converter (bit.ly/image430). It's supported by ads but it can convert between a wide range of formats and even lets you resize, crop and rotate your files in bulk.

Scan and enhance old prints with your phone

Google's PhotoScan app for Android (bit.ly/photoscana430) and iOS (bit.ly/ photoscani430) makes it quicker and easier than ever to give your old prints a new lease of life by converting them into editable, digital versions. Install the app, open it and then simply point your phone's camera at a photo and tap the shutter button. The app instructs you to move your device between four dots on the screen (without tilting it) so it can capture multiple shots to remove any glare. You can't scan multiple images in a single shot with PhotoScan as you can in Photomyne (photomyne.com), but it produces impressively high-quality digital copies of your snaps.

To speed up the process, the app crops your scans automatically (although you can adjust this manually), corrects perspective and enhances the colours and contrast levels. You can turn the glare-removal tool off if you're less worried about quality. We achieved the best results by rotating our phone to match the orientation of the photo we were scanning, and using natural light

PhotoScan automatically removes glare and corrects wonky perspective when scanning old prints



instead of the flash. Once you've finished scanning, tap Save All, which saves the scans to your device and also uploads copies to Google Photos, where you can use the built-in editing tools to tweak them further.

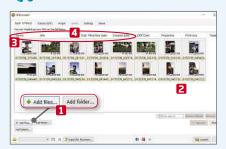
Microsoft's OfficeLens (see page 42) is primarily a document scanner, but it also has a basic photo mode, which is handy if you prefer to keep your scans in OneDrive rather than Google Photos.

Downsize photos quickly for faster uploads

Uploading lots of high-resolution photos to the web can be tedious if you have a slow internet connection. Bulk Resize (bulkresizephotos.com) makes the job much less painful by letting you reduce the size of multiple images at once, and you don't even have to install any software. "But hang on," you might be thinking, "won't I have to upload all my

ď

MINI WORKSHOP | Convert and edit image files using XnConvert



Once you've installed XnConvert (bit.ly/xnconvert430), run it and click Add Files or Add Folders 1 to select the images you want to convert. Alternatively, you can drag and drop images into the list. 2 To remove a file from the list, select it and click Delete. You can sort your files by Name, 5 Size 4 and Created Date.



Open the Actions tab and click "Add action". Here you'll see sub-menus titled Image, Map, Filter and Misc, which offer a variety of transformations and effects. Any action you choose appears in the left column, 1 and Before and After tabs 2 show you how the action will affect your images. Use the left and right arrows 5 to view a different image.



Repeat the process to add as many actions as you want. Then click Output 1 and choose an output folder for your converted files. 2 Use the drop-down menus to choose the file and naming formats. 1 You can also select from a range of Options, including 'Delete original' and 'Keep original date/time attributes'. Finally, click the Convert button.



Making your photos smaller before you upload them reduces the time it takes

images to the website to resize them?". Unbelievably, you won't. The web app performs all the conversions on your PC, making the process as fast as possible. Specify the level of reduction by entering a percentage, the length of the longest side or an exact size into the simple interface. Click the Pro options if you also want to choose the quality of the image or convert your files to PNG or WebP format. If you're uploading the pictures to your own website and you want to protect them with a watermark, Bulk Resize lets you do this too.

Compress images without losing quality

You may want to compress some photos to send in an email, for example, without compromising their size or quality. Several online tools can do this, including the excellent TinyJPG (tinyjpg .com), which, despite its name, can handle PNG files as well as JPEGs. Drop up to 20 images onto the site (observing the size limit of 5MB per file), and it intelligently reduces the file size and shows you how much space you've saved. Alternatively, try Optimizilla (optimizilla.com), a similar site that also handles up to 20 files in both formats. Note that you have to upload your images to use these sites, so you won't save any more time than if you'd uploaded them directly to Facebook or Google Photos, but you will maintain the picture quality.



TinyJPG reduces file sizes without significantly compromising quality

▶ VIDEOS

Download and convert videos from the web

HD Video Converter Factory (bit.ly/ hdvid426) is a handy free tool that lets you download videos from YouTube and other video-hosting websites such as Vimeo. Once downloaded, you can trim, crop, merge and convert your video files from one format to another. The free download is actually a cutdown version of a paid-for product, which means there are a few restrictions to be aware of,

including a maximum resolution of 720p for your conversions. However, the software is very easy to use: simply click Download Video, copy the URL of the video you want to save and paste it into the appropriate box, then click Analyze. When it has finished, you can choose a resolution and file format from the drop-down menu and click Download. You then can convert the video using the options on the screen.

It probably goes without saying that you should only download copyrightfree videos or those that you have permission to download (although if you keep them for personal use only, it's unlikely that anyone will find out).



Downloading videos from YouTube is easy with HD Video Converter Factory

Rip unprotected DVDs to your hard drive

With its friendly interface and integrated downloader, Freemake Video Converter (bit.ly/freem430) is another useful tool for downloading and converting videos from the web but it's also great for converting videos to and from DVD. It might attempt to install additional software during installation, but you can avoid this by opting to perform a custom installation and unticking any PUPs or adware that appear on the setup screen.

To rip a DVD, click '+DVD', choose the DVD folder (VIDEO_TS) or the drive that contains the DVD disc. The tool then lets you choose which 'titles' you want to save. Click OK and pick



Freemake Video Converter lets you choose the output quality for videos you rip from DVD

the audio track and subtitles you want to use from the drop-down menus. Next, select an export option from the bottom of the screen. For most options, a pop-up will appear that lets you choose the resolution for your exported video, 'Same as source' is selected by default but you can change this to HD 1080p, HD 720p, TV Quality and Mobile Quality. Alternatively, click 'Add your preset' to enter your own custom settings. Finally choose where you want to save the video files, then click Convert to start the process. It's worth pointing out that Freemake adds a splash screen to the beginning and end of your converted video unless you pay to remove the branding.

TEncoder Video Converter (bit.ly/ tencoder430) is another great free tool for ripping videos from DVD, and it's completely free of adware, although its interface isn't as simple as Freemake Video Converter's.

Convert Apple videos to play on Android devices

If someone sends you a file from an iPhone, iPad or Mac that you can't play on your Android phone or tablet, one of the easiest solutions is simply to install a player that recognises a wider range of formats, such as MXPlayer (bit.ly/ mxplayer430) or HD Video Player (bit.ly/hdvideo430). If it's just one file, however, and you'd rather keep your default video player, you can convert the video using Audio/Video Converter for Android (bit.ly/converta430). This excellent app supports an impressive range of input files, including M4V, MOV, ASF, AVI, DIVX, FLV, M2V, MKV, MPG, OGG, OGV, RM, RMVB, WEBM, WMV, DV4, GIF and can convert them to a range of formats that Android's video player can handle.

To convert a video, choose it from the app's list of files on your device and tap the pink conversion button. Next, select the conversion profile you want





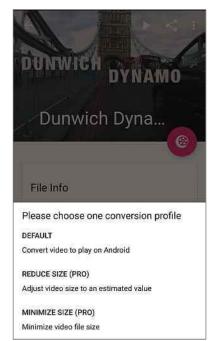






Convert & Edit Any File





Convert Apple videos to a universal format using Audio/Video Converter

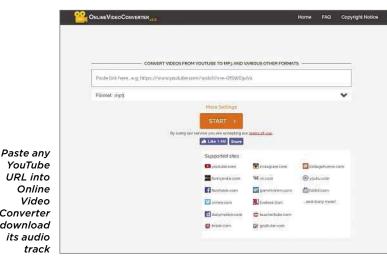
to use. The default option for Apple files should be to 'Convert video to play on Android', but you can use the Manual option if you want to set the video resolution, audio quality and so on. Some presets are only available in the Pro version of the app, which costs £1.99. Tap the three-dot button, choose 'Convert and save to' and select a folder in which to save the output file.

To convert videos from Apple's file formats on your PC, try using Freemake Video Converter, which we mentioned in the previous tip. Alternatively, if you don't want to download any software, you can use the brilliant Cloud Convert (cloudconvert.com) - see the box at the top of page 42.

Extract the audio from video files

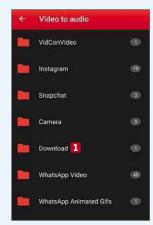
If you have a video of a concert or live performance and you want to listen to the soundtrack on your smartphone, you could just leave the video playing to itself in your pocket, but a better option is to convert the soundtrack to an audio file. To do this with Audio/Video Converter for Android (see the previous tip), select the 'Audio Only' option during conversion. Another option is to use the Video to MP3 converter (bit.ly/vidm430), which has a dedicated 'Video to audio' function as well as options to trim video and audio files. See our Mini Workshop, right, to find out how to use this tool.

You can also extract the audio from videos on the web and save them as MP3 files using the free program 4K YouTube to MP3 (bit.ly/youtube430). Because Google doesn't want people to download protected music from YouTube, you won't find any apps in the Play Store that let you copy content from the video site on your Android device, but Online Video Converter (bit.ly/online430) should work. Unlike some sites, it lets you select the audio quality manually, and you can convert videos to AAC, WMA, M4A or FLAC as well as MP3 format. If you really want to use an app rather than a website, you'll have to enable the option to install apps from Unknown Sources in Android's settings and then install Tube Mate (tubemate.net). Make sure you install it from a known source, though, because there are many fake versions of the app online that contain malware.



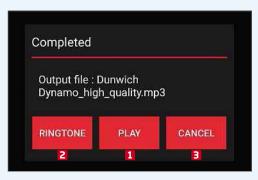


Open Video to MP3 (bit.ly/ vidm430) and select Video to Audio, Browse 11 to find the video from which you want to extract the audio and tap it. The app offers you a choice of Advanced and Simple modes.



Tap Advanced and choose whether to save the audio in MP3 or AAC format. 2 You can also opt for variable bitrate (VBR) or constant bitrate (CBR) El and tweak the audio quality further using the slider and drop-down Bitrate menu. 4





Tap Convert, and once the app has extracted the audio track, a pop-up will appear that lets you play it 11 or set it as your ringtone. 2 Tap Cancel, 5 then select Output from the app's main screen to locate your converted files. Tap a file's three-dot menu if you want to trim it or share it with others.

URL into Online Video Converter to download its audio

DOCUMENTS

Convert printed documents to editable text

There's nothing more annoying than losing an important document on your PC. When this happens, it's a relief to find an old printed copy, but typing the whole thing out again is a real chore. Thanks to Microsoft's excellent OfficeLens app for Android (bit.ly/officea430) and iOS (bit.ly/ officei430), it's never been easier to convert your printed documents into editable digital copies. Simply select the app's Document mode and use its automatic framing to capture the appropriate section.

Like Google's PhotoScan, the app then crops the scan automatically and fixes its wonky perspective. However, the magic really happens when you tap the button to save it and tick the option to convert it to a Word file. Your scan is then saved to OneDrive, and when you open it, you'll notice that it contains both the original photographs and an optical character recognition (OCR) conversion of the text it contains.



Scan documents with OfficeLens to turn them back into editable DOCX files

CONVERT ANY FILE WITHOUT SOFTWARE

If you don't want to install any software on your computer, you may prefer to use an online conversion service. Our favourite is CloudConvert. This simple site can convert between more than 200 file types, including audio and video files, documents, images, ebooks, Zip files and spreadsheets. You can perform up to 25 conversions a day for free (premium subscriptions start at \$8 a month) and there are advanced options for most conversion types, so you can choose a codec



CloudConvert lets you perform 25 free conversions a day

for audio and video files or resize images, for example. CloudConvert lets you convert files stored in Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive and Box without having to download them to your PC first. There's an iOS app (bit.ly/ cloudc430) too, and the website works quite well on Android devices.

· •

The scans aren't always perfect, but tidying up a document that has a few errors in it is much quicker than typing it out again from scratch. You can correct those bits that the app doesn't get quite right by reading them directly from your original scans. The app is also an excellent place to keep digital copies of receipts and business cards, and there's even a mode for capturing whiteboards in meetings and classrooms.

Text Scanner (bit.ly/text430) is another lightweight Android app that converts your scans to editable text. It's impressively accurate and you don't need a Microsoft OneDrive account to use it. You can also use Google Drive on your PC to convert an image to editable text. Simply right-click the file in Google Drive, then select 'Open with' and Google Docs.

Open and edit Office files in Google apps

Office files are easy to convert into Google Docs, Sheets or Slides, and you don't need to install any extra software. First, upload the file to Google Drive, then right-click it and choose 'Open with' followed by Google Docs (or Sheets or Slides). You can then edit the file in Google Docs. When you've finished working on it, choose File, 'Download as' and select DOCX from the menu to convert it back to a Word document.

This method should suffice if you edit Office files only occasionally, but if you want to be able to open and edit DOCX files with a single click (and without having to convert them to Google Docs first), you should install the Office Editing for Docs, Sheets and Slides extension for Chrome (bit.ly/ office430). Once you've added the extension, open an Office file and click File. You should see "Office Compatibility Mode" in this menu.

Office Compatibility Mode is included with the Android and iOS apps for Docs, Sheets and Slides by default, which means you can edit Office files simply by opening them in the appropriate app.



Right-click a Word file and select 'Open with' to convert them to Google Docs

EDIT GOOGLE DOCS OFFLINE

Google Docs, Sheets and Slides are great alternatives to Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint, but what do you do when you don't have an internet connection? In fact, you can create, view and edit files offline in all the Google apps on your PC, phone or tablet.

On your computer, open the Google Docs, Sheets or Slides home screen, select the three-line menu in the top-left and choose Settings. From here, activate the Offline option and install the Google Docs Offline extension (bit.ly/offline430). Now when you lose your internet connection, you can still open Google Docs from the Apps shortcut in your browser



Google Docs lets you save individual files offline

and work on any recent files. To make sure a specific file is always available offline, right-click it and enable the switch for 'Available offline'.

To edit a file offline in Google Docs on your Android or iOS device, open Google Drive and locate the file, then select More and tap 'Available offline'. You can find all your offline files by opening Drive or Docs, tapping the main menu and selecting Offline.













Convert & Edit Any File





MUSIC

Rip scratched CDs with perfect results

Exact Audio Copy (www

.exactaudiocopy.de) is an excellent free tool that not only lets you rip your CDs as lossless FLAC or WAV files, but also reads every sector of the CD at least twice to verify that the data it has copied is correct. If you have lots of scratches on your old CDs, this program will re-read the sections that contain errors up to 82 times, so you can be confident it'll do a better job than any other ripping tool. If after all that, Exact Audio Copy still isn't sure that the audio stream is correct, it'll tell you where the read errors are, so you won't need to listen to every track yourself to identify troublesome sections. It's not the fastest ripping tool available, but it should help you copy your CDs with the greatest accuracy, and it has a built-in sound wave editor that you can use to remove any pops, clicks and other glitches that get past its checks.

Convert FLAC files to listen to on any device

The disadvantage of ripping CDs to a lossless format is that you may not be able to play them on every device you own. Even if your smartphone can play



You can convert FLAC files to MP3, WAV or WMA with FreeRip

lossless files, their huge file sizes can make them an impractical choice. You can store many more MP3s of the same songs than lossless FLAC files, for example, and the difference is barely discernible unless you're listening in a quiet environment with expensive headphones. FreeRip Basic (www .freerip.com) is an intuitive CD ripper that also supports audio file conversions including FLAC to MP3.

If you already have FLAC files on your smartphone and you want to convert them to something smaller, Audio/Video Converter for Android (which we also mention in our earlier tip about converting Apple video files bit.ly/converta430) is the perfect tool for the job.

Timbre (bit.ly/timbre430) is another excellent app that lets you convert both audio and video files, and you can use it to cut and join your files too.

Convert text to speech

As well as converting between most types of video and audio file. Timbre (see above) includes a feature that lets you convert text into spoken words. This impressive tool is handy if you want to add a commentary to a video or spoken instructions to a website without having to record your own voice. The app uses your phone's built-in text-tospeech engine, so you simply type or paste any text you want to use and Timbre will convert it to speech that you can export as an audio file.



Use Timbre to convert text into speech and export it as an audio file

*** * * O · S

Exact Audio Copy lets you remove pops, clicks and other imperfections from your audio tracks

NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 6 September 2017

TIPS AND TRICKS

Unlock the best secret tools and content in our complete guide to the world's favourite streaming service

OINSTALL WINDOWS 10 S

Try a faster version of Microsoft's operating system

O PASSWORD MANAGERS

We review the best alternatives to LastPass

O SPEED UP SHUTDOWN

How to make your PC turn itself off automatically

SUBSCRIBE TO WEB USER AT SUBSCRIBE.WEBUSER.CO.UK

Best free file-copying

tools

Copying files in Windows isn't just about pressing Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V.

Andy Shaw compares five copying tools to Windows File Explorer



TeraCopy | bit.ly/ter430 | ★★★★

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

What we liked:

WebUser GOLD AWARD

TeraCopy is designed to speed up the process of moving files to, from and around your PC. In our tests we found that while it doesn't accelerate the raw speed of transferring files

in Windows 10, its clever interface streamlines the process. This means you'll spend less time interacting with your PC before and after copying, particularly if you regularly copy files to and from the same places.

The software is designed for simplicity. Its interface looks sparse when you first launch the program, consisting of nothing more than an invitation to drag the files you want to copy straight into the window, and an empty progress bar.

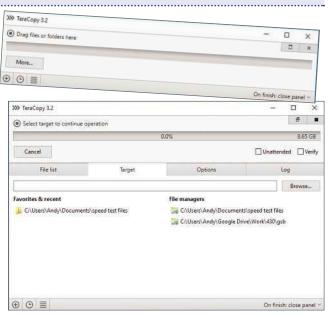
Once you've dragged your source files across, the window expands, opening the Target tab. This is well laid out, with a browse button at the top. Alternatively, you can select a folder from one of the two lists below, with 'Favorites & recent' on one side and 'File managers' (which links to any folders that are open in an Explorer window) on the other. We were pleasantly surprised by how often this system placed the folder we needed at our fingertips.

You can set TeraCopy to take over automatically whenever you copy files, although TeraCopy's speeds in our tests (99MB/s when copying large files and 55MB/s for small files) were slower than if we'd simply copied in Windows 10 (110MB/s for large files and 57MB/s for small). Speed isn't the only consideration, though. If you do a lot of copying, TeraCopy has a stack of other useful tools, from the ability

to pause and resume copying tasks to finding and reporting damaged files.

How it can be improved:

Performance isn't the main selling point for any of the tools on test, because none of them could beat Windows 10's file-copying speed. Rather than seeing this as a shortcoming, though, we should probably just be pleased that Microsoft now provides faster copying speeds as part of the operating system.



OUR VERDICT

A good file-copying tool should be easy to use and add lots of useful features, and TeraCopy ticks both boxes. It won't speed up the actual copying process in Windows 10 but its handy shortcuts will help you perform regular copying tasks much more quickly overall.

Unstoppable Copier | bit.ly/unst430 | ★★★☆

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

What we liked:

Unstoppable Copier was a very popular tool back in the Windows 7 days, and its no-frills interface provides a lot of information about your

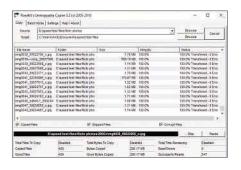
copying tasks as you perform them. It's particularly good at reporting problems, with banks of boxes across the bottom of the screen that tell you how many problem files it encountered during the copying process.

To start copying files, you have to select the source and target folders using the two Browse buttons at the top, although you can also drag and drop files and folders directly onto these boxes if you already have them open in Explorer. Press the large Copy button to start the process, and detailed analyses will appear below.

Unstoppable Copier was one of the fastest at copying large files, which it did at a speed of 22MB/s. That's still slower than Windows 10, however.

How it can be improved:

This was the slowest tool in our test for



copying small files, transferring our folders of photos at 41MB/s. It doesn't help that the program hasn't been updated since 2010, which means it has never been optimised for Windows 8, let alone Windows 10.

OUR VERDICT

Unstoppable Copier is excellent at reporting file corruption and any other problems it encounters when reading or writing, so it's ideal if file integrity is your main concern. The interface is easy to use, if rather dull, but the program has fallen behind its rivals thanks to a lack of updates.

FastCopy | bit.ly/fast430 | ★★★☆☆

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



What we liked:

FastCopy's name harks back to earlier times. when it could outperform

Windows' own copying tools for speed. Windows 10 has caught up since

then, though, so now the name seems a little redundant.

Its still a sophisticated copying tool, however, and it comes in a very small and compact interface. Click the Source and DestDir buttons to tell the software what to copy and where, or simply drag files and folders straight from Explorer.

One of FastCopy's key benefits is the drop-down menu that lets you manage the fine details of the copying process, particularly for controlling the dates of files. Most copies of files are given a new date based on the fact that you've just created them, but if you're making a backup, for example, you may want your copies of files to have the same



date as the originals. Fine tweaks like this are easy in FileCopy.

How it can be improved:

The program's website hasn't kept up with the times and still claims that FastCopy is the "Fastest Copy/Delete software on Windows" - a bold

statement and one that, frankly, wasn't borne out in our tests. In fact, this tool was the slowest of the lot when transferring our large video file, which it managed at just 76MB/s, and was second slowest when transferring smaller files, with a speed of 51MB/s.

OUR VERDICT

FastCopy is a bold name given this tool's mediocre performance in our tests, but we like the fact that it's compact and gives you greater control over copying. The interface could be easier to use, though.

BEST OF THE REST

UltraCopier

bit.ly/ultr430

UltraCopier installs itself in the notification area of your taskbar and takes over the copying function from Windows, although you can

switch this on and off by left-clicking its icon. It was also one of the fastest tools we tested (104MB/s for large files and 56MB/s for small files), but it still couldn't beat Windows. However, we



found the interface clunky compared with TeraCopy.

ExtremeCopy Standard (Portable)

bit.ly/ext430

ExtremeCopy was nothing special in speed terms, copying large files at 81MB/s and small files at 53MB/s,

which put it in the slowest half of this group for both tests. You can install it in a handy portable version, though, and it's easy to use, with drag-and-drop

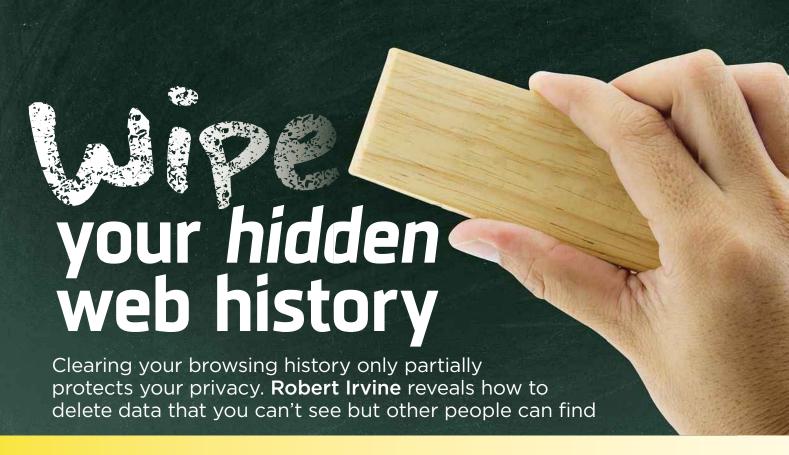


source and destination selection.

Windows 10 File Explorer

In previous versions of Windows, copying tools like those we've reviewed here performed better than Windows' own copying function by using multiple streams and clever caching techniques to speed up the process. Since then, Microsoft has been honing its own copying tools, and now Windows 10 has well and truly caught up. As a result, all the other tools we reviewed here were slower than Windows File Explorer in our tests. File Explorer doesn't have any of the extra features the other tools provide but if you simply want to copy files as quickly as possible, you can do it without having to use any other programs.





Delete your Netflix viewing history

There's nothing on Netflix that's likely to frighten the horses, but you might have watched the odd film or TV show on the streaming service that you'd rather other people didn't find out about: Killer Klowns From Outer Space, perhaps, or Fifty Shades of Grey.

Netflix keeps a record of everything you've viewed, so anyone who shares your account can call up your history to snigger or gasp at. To see it for yourself, either hover over your profile name and select Your Account, then scroll to the bottom of the page and click Viewing Activity, or go straight to www.netflix.com/viewingactivity. We found that even after we'd cancelled our Netflix account, we could still access our My Activity page by Googling 'Netflix history' (presumably because the Netflix cookie was still in our browser).

How to wipe it:

Fortunately, it's very easy to remove specific entries from your Netflix



Remove unwanted entries and entire series from your Netflix viewing history

viewing history by clicking the 'X' next to each one. If it's a TV show, you'll also be given the option to remove the whole series. Note that it can take up to 24 hours for details of the deleted items to disappear from all your devices.

......

Stop YouTube storing what you watch

Unlike Netflix, YouTube doesn't hide your viewing history away. It's all there under the History link in the left-hand menu. If you haven't checked yours lately, have a look now, and you're sure to be surprised by the sheer volume and variety of videos you've watched over the past few weeks, months and years. We'd also wager that some entries will make you cringe, including silly clips you played after a few glasses of wine and videos you abandoned after a few seconds of unpleasantness.

How to wipe it:

To wipe the slate clean, either click the 'Clear all watch history' button at the



Clear your entire YouTube watch history in one go or remove specific videos

top of the page or delete embarrassing and incriminating videos individually. You can also search for a specific video to remove, and stop YouTube recording what you watch in future by clicking 'Pause watch history'. While you're there, you can also review and delete every comment you've ever posted.

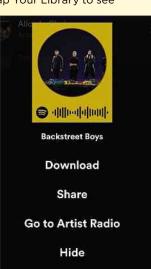


People used to be able to get the measure of your musical tastes by rifling through your record or CD collection.

Now they can achieve the same result by perusing your Spotify listening history. All the nosy parker needs to do is open the Spotify app on your phone or tablet and tap Your Library to see

vour personally curated playlists and Recently Played list of artists, albums and songs. Do you really want your colleagues to know you were grooving down to Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep over

the weekend,



Foil Spotify eavesdroppers by hiding entries in your Recently Played list

Wipe your hidden web history

or that you've compiled a selection of your favourite Justin Bieber songs? Even worse are Spotify's social features, which share details of what you're listening to with your Facebook friends.

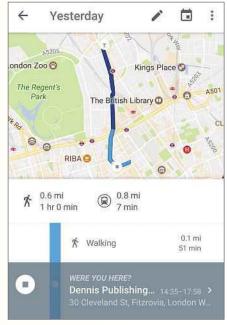
How to wipe it:

Spotify offers several ways to protect your privacy, but - ironically for a music-streaming service - it keeps them pretty quiet. First, you can remove entries from your Recently Played list by tapping the three-dot icon next to them and choosing Hide from the bottom of the menu. Annoyingly, you can't clear them all in one go. Second, tap the Settings (cog) button in the top-right corner and, in the Social section, select Private Session to stop Spotify sharing details of what you're listening to with all and sundry. Also ensure the 'Show on Facebook' option is switched off. Finally, you can make a specific playlist invisible to others by pressing it and choosing Make Secret from the menu.



If you allow your phone to track your location, it can provide you with useful information such as accurate maps and local details. You may feel less comfortable about the fact that, by default, it also secretly stores details of everywhere you go. This means anyone who picks up your handset can instantly see where you've been, including exact addresses and even how long you spent there before moving on somewhere else (which it also records). That's not ideal if you've been sneaking off to the pub or you're having an affair!

To see what your Android phone is leaking about your travels, launch Google Maps, open the main menu



Your phone records everywhere you go and how long you were there

and tap 'Your timeline'. Here you'll find a list and a map showing everywhere you've been over the past day, week, month and longer. On an iPhone, go to Settings, Privacy, Location Services, System Services and tap Frequent Locations to see where you've been recently and the places you visit most often.

How to wipe it:

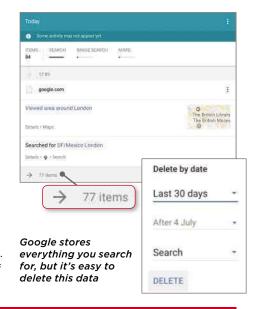
You can erase Google Maps data for a specific day by opening the three-dot menu in the top-right corner of your timeline and choosing 'Delete day'. To wipe your footprint more thoroughly, select Settings and tap 'Delete all Location History', then set Location History to Off to prevent future stalking. On iOS, tap Clear History and switch off Frequent Locations.

Delete your search history from Google

Google retains details of everything you've searched for while logged into your account. Although the search giant claims that "Only you can see this data", this isn't strictly true because anyone who hops on your computer and goes to myactivity.google.com can see exactly what you've been looking for online. Deceptively, Google mentions only a few search terms on the main page, but click the number of items and your entire search history will be revealed to anyone who's interested.

How to wipe it:

To clear a particular day's search history, click the three-dot icon and choose Delete. Alternatively, select 'Delete activity by' in the left-hand menu and blitz the search data for a specific time frame. To stop Google storing your searches in future, click 'Activity controls', and move the slider next to Web & App Activity to Off. ■





HIDE ITEMS YOU'VE BOUGHT FROM AMAZON

In our 'Fix the worst flaws in your favourite sites' feature in Issue 428 (bit.ly/webuser428), we explained how to delete your Amazon browsing history so that no-one knows what you've been looking at in the online store. However, this won't clear your order history, which anyone can see instantly by clicking the Orders link in the top-right corner of any Amazon page. If that person is particularly devious (and nosy), they could use a new Chrome extension called **Amazon Order History Reporter** (bit.ly/amazon430) to list every item you've bought from Amazon,

and find out how much you've spent, year by year and in total.

How to wipe it:

The bad news is that you can't delete your Amazon order history, because the store treats it as a transaction record, just like your bank or credit card company. The good(ish) news is that you can stop people seeing a specific item you've bought by clicking the Hide Order button next to it. You can hide up to 100 orders, although annoyingly they still show up in search results. Hiding items also stops them being detected by Amazon Order



You can't delete items from your Amazon history, but you can hide them

History Reporter (although it's actually a pretty handy tool for personal use!).

Browse the web EFT-HANDED

Southpaws shouldn't feel left out online. Wayne Williams rounds up the best tools and devices to make using your PC and phone lefthanded more comfortable

Move your browser's scrollbar to the left

Scrollbars are usually on the right-hand side of your browser for the benefit of right-handed web users, but they don't have to be. The Scrollbar Anywhere extension for Chrome (bit.ly/sba430) lets you scroll pages from any point on your screen as if the scrollbar was under your pointer. With the

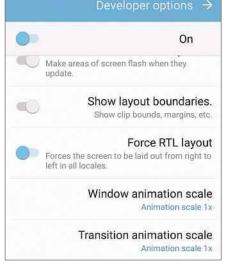
extension installed, simply click and hold the mouse button you've selected for the purpose and move the mouse to scroll.

Firefox has a hidden option that lets you move your scrollbar from the right to the left side of the window without having to install any add-ons. Type

about: config into the address bar, press Enter and click the 'I accept the risk!' button. In the search box at the top, type layout.scrollbar.side. Double-click the 'layout.scrollbar.side' entry that appears below, and change the value from 0 to 3. Click OK to confirm this and restart Firefox. If you want to move the scrollbar back to the right, simply reverse the process.



Move the scrollbar in Firefox to the left-hand side of the browser



Unlock your phone's right-to-left mode for more comfortable use

Customise your phone for your left hand

If you have trouble using your Android phone in your left hand, you can activate a hidden right-to-left mode that flips everything on the screen, including the direction you swipe. Before you can use it, you must enable Developer Options. Go to Settings, About Phone and scroll down to the Build Number. Tap this seven times, and you'll see a

> message telling you that you're now a developer congratulations! Go back to the Settings screen and you should see a new 'Developer options' menu towards the bottom. Scroll down to the Drawing section and enable the 'Force RTL layout direction' option (you need to be running at least Android 4.4

KitKat to do this). Android will make the switch immediately.

This right-to-left change also affects the stock apps that came pre-installed on your phone, making them much easier to use with your left hand. However, third-party apps are likely to behave as they did before the change, so while this is a step in the right direction, it isn't a perfect solution.

Install left-handed mobile apps

There are lots of apps both for iOS and Android that make life a little bit easier for left-handed phone and tablet users. Searching in the Apple App Store or Google Play for 'left handed' will bring up numerous suggestions (not all of them relevant, it must be said) including replacement keyboards, calculators, guitar tutorials and tuners, games and many more. To save you having to sift through them all, AppCrawlr has rounded up some of the best lefthanded apps for iOS (bit.ly/acios430) and Android (bit.ly/acand430).

Android users may be particularly interested in Left Handed Auto Rotate Free (bit.ly/lhar430), which optimises your phone's auto-rotate feature specifically for left-handed use. By adjusting autorotate's sensitivity, the app stops articles you're reading suddenly flipping from portrait to landscape orientation.



Make your phone auto-rotate to suit your left hand not your right

Personalise Windows 10 for left-handed use

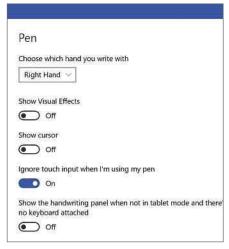
It's easy enough to operate Windows 10 left-handed if you have a touch screen, but less so if you use a keyboard and mouse. Microsoft's supposedly state-ofthe-art operating system doesn't offer many options for improving the situation, but you can make a simple change to your mouse. Click the Start button followed by the Settings cog. In the menu that opens, click Devices and choose Mouse in the left-hand pane. From here you can switch the primary mouse button from left to right, which means you can use the right button for all your main pointing, clicking, highlighting and dragging-anddropping activities, and your left button to open the context menu (which you can now call the left-click menu).

In older versions of Windows, click Start, type mouse into the search box and click the Mouse option. Click the Buttons tab, and from there you can swap the primary and secondary mouse buttons.



Switch your primary mouse button from left to right in Windows 10

If you use a digital pen to perform your pointing and clicking in Windows 10, you can make this more comfortable by letting the operating system know that you write with your left hand. In Settings, Devices, click Pen & Windows Ink and, in the drop-down menu under



If you use a pen with Windows 10, tell it which hand you write with

BUY A LEFT-HANDED KEYBOARD AND MOUSE

A small number of hardware manufacturers make dedicated keyboards and mice for left-handed users. In the case of keyboards, the QWERTY and Function keys are the same as on a standard keyboard, but the numeric keypad shifts from the right- to the left-hand side, with minus, plus and Enter keys on the outside edge. There may be other changes too. Searching for 'left-handed keyboards' on Amazon brings up a selection to choose from. The top-rated option is the Black Left-Handed Keypad Keyboard from The Keyboard Company (www.keyboardco.com), priced at £41.59.

As you'd expect, left-handed mice are a different shape to their righthanded counterparts and should be more comfortable to use. You can also buy 'ambidextrous' mice that can be used comfortably in either hand, although you'll need to swap the buttons in Windows (see tip on the left). As with keyboards, you'll find a selection to buy on Amazon, or you can visit Posturite (www.posturite.co.uk) to view southpaw-friendly devices.



'Choose which hand you write with', select Left Hand. Note that this option is only available if Windows knows you have a compatible pen.

Finally, you can move the taskbar from the bottom of the screen to the left-hand side (or the right-hand side, if you prefer), which might make it easier to reach, as well as freeing up vertical space on a widescreen monitor. Right-click the taskbar, untick 'Lock all taskbars', then click and drag the taskbar and pull it up to the left side. Once it's in place, you can lock it there.

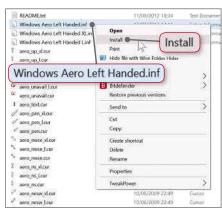
Switch to a left-handed mouse cursor

Microsoft provides a wide selection of cursor styles in Windows, but for some unknown reason it doesn't offer a left-handed one with a cursor that points to the right. Fortunately, you can find suitable cursor packs elsewhere, such as on DeviantArt (bit.ly/ Ihcursor430). To install and use one of these, click the download button and open the archive. It's a RAR file, so you'll need to use a program such as 7-Zip (www.7-zip.org) to open it. There are three types of cursor

available: regular, large and extra-large. Find the .INF file for the one you want, right-click it and

select Install. Once you've done that, go back into Mouse Properties and you should be able to select your new cursor there. If not, click Browse and the Cursors folder will open. Go into Windows Aero, Windows Aero Left Handed, then select 'aero_arrow.cur' and click Open. 'Windows Aero Left Handed' should now appear as a scheme for you to select.

This trick works in all versions of Windows, but in Windows 10 you'll need to click the 'Additional mouse options' link in Settings to make the change. You should find that you get used to the new cursors guite quickly, but if not, simply select one of the other styles to switch back.



Install left-handed mouse cursors that are tailored to southpaws



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	unlimited	£252.00
4	Wirgin media	Virgin: Broadband	£40.00 (£27.00 for 12 months)	12 months	50Mbps max speed	unlimited	£324.00

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 10 August 2017.



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

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



BEST EVER PC SHORTCUTS -

Do everything much, much faster

- Office 2007 support ends: what to do
- Master Outlook's superb new tools
- Remove duplicate photos from your phone

PLUS: Run Windows faster by installing it on an SSD

On sale Weds 30 August

Subscribe at www.getcomputeractive.co.uk

^{*} 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 song-title 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 GUESS THE SONG TITLES FROM THE EMOJI?



WEB USER WORD PUZZLE

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

- Lead singer of The Monkees (4,5)
- Pasta dish made with egg, pancetta, parmesan and spaghetti
- Largest of Jupiter's moons
- 4 Snoopy's feathered friend, from the Peanuts cartoons
- Stanley Kubrick film, 1960, starring Kirk Douglas
- Silver non-magnetic metal element, atomic number 13
- Seaside town in Lancashire
- Wimbledon 2017 quarter-finalist, beaten by Berdych

1					
2					
	3				
4					
5					
6					
7					
	8				

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 3

Pinnacle Studio 21 Ultimate

Pinnacle Studio 21 Ultimate is packed with powerful new tools and updates to improve your video editing dramatically. These include a redesigned interface to speed and simplify your workflow and new Paint Effects to transform your movie into a storybook-like motion animation. To enter, email your details to

webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'pinnacle' in the subject line. For more info visit www.pinnaclesys.com and follow @corelsoftware on Twitter.



WIN 1 OF 4 Creative Halo portable Bluetooth speaker

The Creative Halo speaker has a front panel that pulsates with a multiEACH

coloured light show. Choose from 12 mesmerising patterns, which you activate by pushing a button on the speaker or using a dedicated app. To enter, email your details to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'halo' in the subject line. For more info visit https://uk.creative.com and follow @creativelabs on Twitter.

WORTH

£59.99



Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Try the new tools in Paint 3D

Paint 3D, the new Windows 10 art app from Microsoft, has been updated with several new and improved tools. Here's how to use them

Paint 3D: bit.ly/paint430 | 🕒 20 mins | 🛒 Windows 10

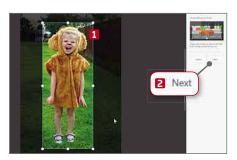
icrosoft is dropping its Paint program from future versions of Windows, although you can still get it by downloading it from the Windows Store. The reason given by the software giant is that it wants to focus on the newer Paint 3D. This app lets you create, load and manipulate 3D models, as well as paint and draw in 2D, just as

•••••

you can in Paint. Paint 3D has been updated to include Magic Select, and new Line and Curve tools, so make sure you have the latest version of the software installed. Type store in the Windows 10 search box and press Enter. In the app that opens, click your account profile picture next to the search box, then 'Downloads and updates' and 'Get updates'.



One of Paint 3D's more impressive features is Magic Select. This intelligently draws around items in a photo so you can copy and paste them elsewhere - transporting your kids from the back garden to the Taj Mahal, for example. Drag a photo to Paint 3D 🗓 and click the 'Magic select' button.



Magic Select needs to know what you want to cut out from your photo. To point it in the right direction, focus in on the object, then click and drag the handles 1 until the box closely surrounds the target area. When that's done, click Next 2 and Magic Select will go to work.





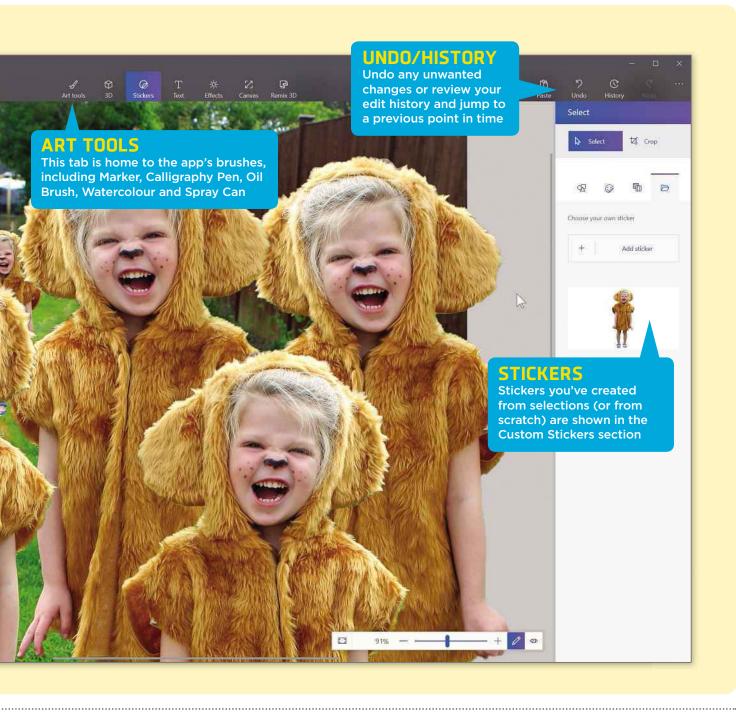
If the objects you've selected stand out from the background, the tool should automatically select them for you. However, it may miss part of an object, such as the shoes in this example; 11 or include part of the background or another object that you don't want.



To add anything that's missing from the selection, click the Add button 🚺 and draw a line inside the area you want to include (don't try to draw around the missing part). To get rid of unwanted selections, do the same with the Remove button. 2 You may need to make multiple changes. Click Done.

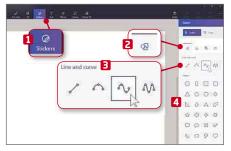


You can resize the selected object using the handles at the corners and sides, 11 and manipulate it in 3D with the buttons around the outside of the box. 2 You can also create a sticker from the object **B** and cut, copy, paste, delete **4** or flip it. 5 The app will try to intelligently fill in any missing background.

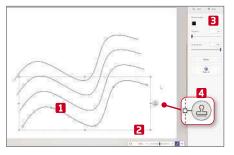




The scene you've created can be manipulated in 3D. Click the 'View in 3D' button 1 in the zoom box. Zoom in and out with the slider, 2 and click and drag with the left mouse button to change the 3D view. Click and drag with the right mouse button to move the scene around.



The new Line and Curve tools are found under the Stickers tab. 1 Select this and click the Shapes tab 2 in the sidebar on the right. You'll see the Line and Curve options at the top, **E** with a selection of Shapes 4 below. Click a line style to draw something on your canvas.



Manipulate the shape of the line by clicking and dragging the various points. 1 Use the handles in the surrounding box 2 to resize the line. The sliders and boxes in the sidebar let you change its colour, thickness and opacity. 1 To add the line to your canvas, click the stamp button. 4



Use a hidden Windows tool to solve your PC problems

Resource and Performance Monitor | 🕒 20 mins | ಶ Windows 7, 8, 10

Windows PC can work reliably for years, but there are countless niggling problems that can develop over time, and diagnosing and fixing them can be frustrating and time consuming.

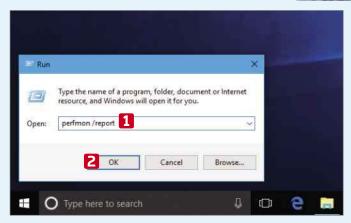
Fortunately, help is at hand from Windows Resource and Performance Monitor, which can track down problems and suggest potential fixes. It can be used in two ways: the first half of our Workshop (Steps 1-5) shows you how to create system health reports that point out problems; the second half looks at live monitoring of your PC's components, which can tell you if you're running out of memory or if processor usage is too high, and displays live charts showing the various processes. When there is a problem with your PC, run Performance Monitor and see what it reports.



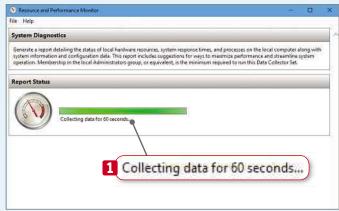
Roland Waddilove says

[ssh] v.2 Logged in

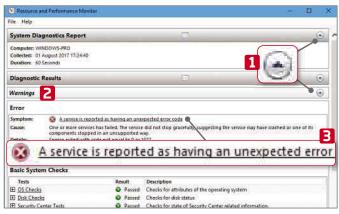
Performance Monitor has a related system-monitoring tool that goes a lot further in tracking live data from the CPU, disk, memory and network. Run it from the home screen of Performance Monitor by clicking Open Resource Monitor (see Step 6). It's like Task Manager on steroids and is a powerful tool for keeping tabs on the live activity of different parts of your PC. Expand the sections and explore the tabs.



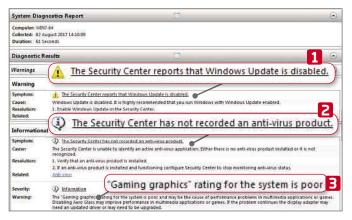
Performance Monitor can be run on its own, but let's start off by using it to create a useful diagnostic system report. To do this, you have to type a command into a command-prompt window or from the Run box. Press Windows+R to open Run, type perfmon /report 1 and click OK. 2



The Resource and Performance Monitor window opens. The Performance Monitor records activity on your PC for one minute. 1 During this time, you should perform as many different tasks as you can, such as opening a browser, reading email, opening Paint or Notepad, accessing the Start menu and so on. Keep going until the report appears.

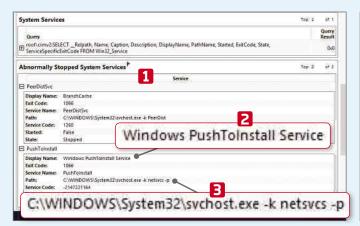


The System Diagnostics Report appears in a window showing multiple sections. Click the arrow 1 on the right of each section to expand it. Look under Diagnostic Results, Warnings 2 to see if there are any problems. Our example shows an error with some services. Don't panic, though, because minor errors can be ignored.

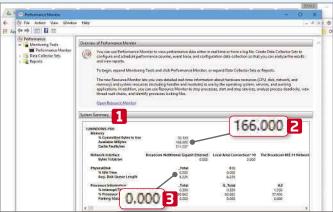


Different PCs produce different results. This example shows a Windows 7 PC that has some serious faults. It reports that Windows Update has been disabled 1 and advises to enable it in the Security Center. Also, no security software has been detected, 2 which definitely needs fixing. Less seriously, its graphics performance is poor.

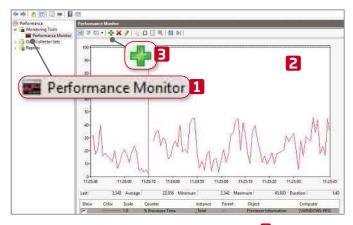




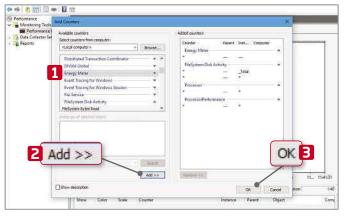
Back in Windows 10, we had problems with services, so we expanded the sections for Software Configuration and Abnormally Stopped System Services. 1 Expanding each item shows the details, such as the service name 2 and path to the program. 1 It may give clues about the problem but not all are serious and some can be ignored.



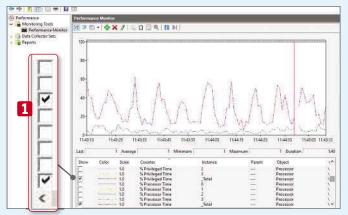
Run Performance Monitor from the Start menu; or press Windows+R, type perfmon and press Enter. System Summary 1 shows live information. On this PC, lots of open Chrome tabs have used nearly all the memory. 2 When memory is this low, the computer is likely to freeze. It's also keeping the hard drive busy, showing zero idle time. 3



Select Performance Monitor in the sidebar 1 to display a live chart. 2 This shows the recent processor activity over the past few seconds, which constantly redraws to show the change over time. Run a program, switch back to Performance Monitor and see the change in the chart. Click the plus button.



Many of the PC's components can be monitored using 'counters'. Select a counter from the list on the left 1 and click the 'Add >>' button 2 to add it to the list on the right. Some counters contain multiple sub-items and double-clicking a counter displays what they are. Click OK 1 to continue.



Adding one or more counters can make the chart very cluttered. You should filter out any items you don't need so you can clearly see the important data. Clear the ticks in the Show column 1 until there are only two items ticked. To look at a different attribute, tick its box but clear other boxes to stop the chart getting too confusing.



Charts can be displayed in a variety of formats and the Chart button lets you switch from one to another. Our example shows a live bar chart of CPU counters where the bars rise and fall as computer activity changes. Some of the cores here are reaching 100% usage, which means the PC is working flat out.



Stop websites tracking you on your phone

irefox Focus is a dedicated privacy browser from Mozilla that automatically blocks ads and stops websites tracking you, which in turn blocks annoying targeted advertising. It also makes it easier than ever to delete your browsing history and any cookies you've picked up, so no one else will be able to see the web pages you've visited. You can set Focus as your default browser, too.



Firefox Focus: bit.ly/ffocus430 | @ 10 mins |

Android 5.0+



Install and open Firefox Focus, skipping the introductory screens. Enter a URL, tap Enter and wait for the page to load. If the connection is encrypted, a padlock is clearly displayed alongside the URL. Tap the three-dot button to display the number of trackers that Firefox Focus has blocked. 1 If blocking has stopped the page loading properly, tap the switch 2 to turn off tracker blocking and the page will reload automatically.



You'll need to re-enable tracker blocking manually. Firefox Focus doesn't save your web history as a list you can access, but you can revisit pages you've viewed during the current session by tapping your device's Back button. Tapping the bin 1 deletes this history and any saved cookies. Alternatively, open the notification tray and tap the option to 'Erase browsing history'. 2



You can use the address bar to perform searches - just type your search term and tap Enter. The default search engine is Yahoo but we'll show you how to change it in Step 4. Tap the three-dot menu for basic controls including Refresh and Forward, 11 along with options to share the page 2 or open it in the regular Firefox app **B** or another browser. 4

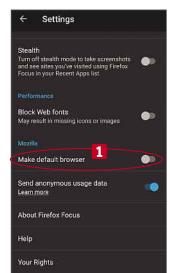


Tap Settings and you'll see that Yahoo is set as the default search engine. Tapping it lets you change this to Google, DuckDuckGo, Twitter, Wikipedia or Amazon. On the Settings page, you'll also see that ad trackers, analytics trackers and social trackers are blocked by default. 2 You can enable the option to 'Block other content trackers' El but this comes with the caveat that it might break web pages.

Block other content trackers May break some videos and Web pages



By default, Stealth mode is switched on. 11 This stops you from being able to take screenshots in the browser and also prevents websites you've viewed from being visible in the app thumbnail that appears in the list of recent apps. Below this, you can enable the option to 'Block Web fonts', 2 which makes pages load faster but, again, can result in some websites not loading properly.



The last option in the Settings menu lets you set Firefox Focus as your default web browser. 11 This can be handy if you want to use the browser to open links from other apps that you're unsure about. If you decide that you want to save a bookmark or simply keep a record of it in your browsing history, you can do so by using the option to open it in another web browser (see step 3).



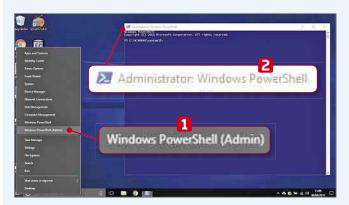
Back up your drivers

eeping your drivers up to date takes a lot of hard work. Windows is reasonably good at the basics, but many of us will have spent further time and effort downloading and installing updates and looking for drivers that are more

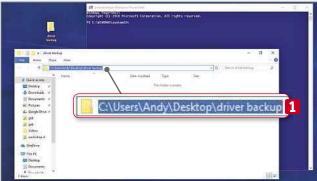
compatible. Then, if you ever need to reinstall Windows, you have to start again from scratch Unless, that is, you use this Workshop's simple trick for backing up and restoring your drivers.



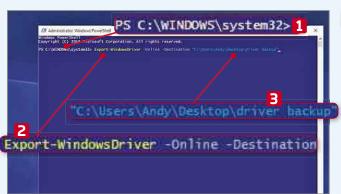
Windows PowerShell | 🕒 5 mins | 🚛 Windows 10



Right-click the Start menu and choose 'Windows PowerShell (Admin)'. 1 If you can't see it, open the Start menu and type powershell. When it appears in the list, right-click it and choose 'Run as administrator'. PowerShell is a command-line interface that opens in its own window.



Make a folder to keep the backup in. Ours is on the Desktop but you should put yours somewhere safer, such as an external drive. Open the folder in Explorer and click to the right of its name in the address bar to see the full path. 1 Press Ctrl+C to copy it to the clipboard.



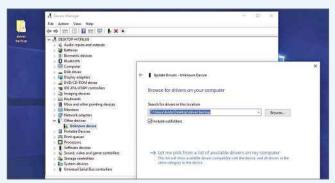
At the PowerShell command prompt, 11 type Export-WindowsDriver -Online -Destination. 2 Leave a space at the end, and press Ctrl+V to paste the location of the backup. If your folder has a space in its name, as ours does, put the path in double quotes.



If you've had to reinstall Windows or you want to restore a previous, more stable version of a driver, the easiest way is to use Device Manager. Open the Start menu and start typing device manager. • When that option appears, click it 2 to run it.



You can usually tell if there's a problem with a driver because it will have a warning triangle over it. 11 Right-click on it and choose 'Update driver'. Because you know where your backup is stored, click 'Browse my computer for driver software'. 2



Copy and paste the address from Explorer as you did in Step 2 when you created the backup, or click the Browse button and find the folder manually. Make sure there's a tick in the 'Include subfolders' box. Click Next and Windows will install the driver.

Weekend Project

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





Hack your keyboard and mouse

Wayne Williams shows you how to reprogram the superfluous buttons on your keyboard and mouse so they do useful new things



Program your keyboard using the supplied software

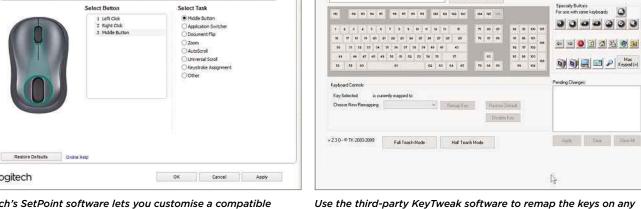
Many modern keyboards come with special buttons that let you do things like adjust your PC's volume, brightness and contrast, control media playback, launch favourite programs, zoom in and out of the screen and more. If your keyboard has additional keys like these, there's a good chance those functions have already been assigned to them. Pressing

the calculator key, for example, should open the Windows calculator, while tapping a volume key should increase or reduce its sound level. Keys of this sort should work as soon as you plug in the keyboard, but there may be other keys that don't do anything when you press them because your computer doesn't have the software they require.

If your keyboard came with a CD or DVD, install the software that's on it. If it didn't (or you don't have a CD or DVD drive), visit the manufacturer's website. This project was written using a Microsoft Wireless Comfort Keyboard 5000, and you can download an official Mouse and Keyboard Centre for this and other Microsoft products from bit.ly/wcd430. This enables all the additional keys and lets you change what some of them do.

Other keyboard manufacturers may have something similar for their own





Logitech's SetPoint software lets you customise a compatible keyboard, mouse or touchpad

keyboard, including some special buttons

products. Logitech (support.logitech .com), for example, provides a couple of programs, including SetPoint, which lets you customise the Function keys and hotkeys. Gaming keyboards have lots of extra buttons ready for you to remap, and you can assign these to do anything - it doesn't have to be game-related.

In our Mini Workshop, below, we show you how to customise a Microsoft keyboard using the official software. Even if your keyboard is made by someone else, the process will probably be broadly similar.

Use other software

Not every keyboard has dedicated customisation software designed for it, especially the built-in keyboards on laptops, but that doesn't mean you can't make changes to them. There are third-party programs available that do

much the same job. Obviously, because these programs aren't designed for use with a particular make and model of keyboard, they don't offer the same degree of flexibility. However, they let you change the function of many of the standard keys.

SharpKeys (bit.ly/sharp430) is a simple tool that lets you map one button's functions to another and works by making a small change to the Windows Registry. The developers say it works with Windows XP, Vista and 7, but we had no trouble using it in Windows 10, so we assume it will also run in Windows 8.

SharpKeys is very easy to use, but we should issue a warning here. This program changes almost any key you choose, so act wisely. Certain keys that you think you don't need may actually serve a useful purpose. You may never touch the 'Del' key in day-to-day use, for

example, but you'll need it if you ever have to Ctrl+Alt+Del your way out of trouble. Similarly, some programs use specific keys and key combinations to perform particular actions, and changing the function of one of those keys could mess that up. What's more, SharpKeys has been designed with US-based keyboards in mind, so it may not be fully compatible with British keyboards, and it won't let you remap the dedicated keys on specialist keyboards from the likes of Microsoft and Logitech. We'll show you how to use SharpKeys in our Mini Workshop on page 61.

There are other programs to consider, too. KbdEdit (www.kbdedit.com) is a powerful remapping tool that lets you reprogram any key you like. It isn't free but there are editions to suit all budgets. The Lite version provides basic characterto-key mapping functions and costs €9

NI WORKSHOP | Customise a Microsoft keyboard



Install and run Microsoft Mouse and Keyboard Center. It should identify your keyboard 11 and present a list of customisable options under 'basic settings'. 2 Scroll down the list and select an item you'd like to customise. The corresponding key will be highlighted in blue on an image of your keyboard. 4

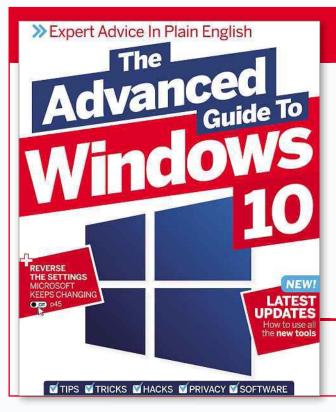


Click an option and the program will take you to the settings page for it. Our keyboard has a Home button 11 that opens the default browser on the home page. We can change this behaviour so that it opens a program, web page or file. 2 Click 'Not yet assigned' 3 and fill in the relevant path.



The software also includes 'appspecific settings' that let you give keys different tasks depending on the program you're using - so the same key might copy text in Word but open a particular website in your browser. Select this, 11 click Add New 22 and choose a program to customise. It will suggest some for you. 🖪

WebUser Bookstore



THE ADVANCED GUIDE TO WINDOWS 10

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

BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON

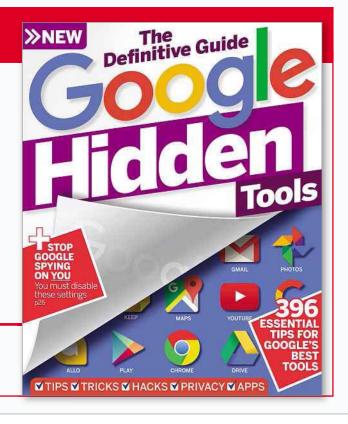
at bit.ly/advancedw10

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO GOOGLE HIDDEN TOOLS

In the new and updated Definitive Guide to Google Hidden Tools, the experts at *Web User* and *Computeractive* lift the lid on Google's most popular services to reveal more than 390 ways to make them even more efficient, useful and tailored to your needs. You'll find clever new add-ons for Chrome, smart hacks for YouTube, and handy tools and tricks for Google Maps, Drive, Gmail and more. It's an essential guide to unlocking the hundreds of secret settings, options and tools that Google offers.

BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON

at bit.ly/defguidegoogle



basic settings app-specific setting:



Try the demo version of KbdEdit before you buy one of the paid-for versions

(around £8), while the Personal edition provides additional features and costs €15 (£13.50). There's also a Premium edition available for €40 (£36), although you probably won't need that. You can download a free demo version from the website to get a taste of what KbdEdit has to offer.

Microsoft's own Keyboard Layout Creator (bit.ly/mskb430) is also worth a look and works on other keyboards besides Microsoft's own. Another editor. KeyTweak (bit.ly/keytw430), works like SharpKeys and can remap the keys on



Microsoft's Keyboard Layout Creator lets you remap the keys on any keyboard

your keyboard by making a simple change to the Windows Registry.

Hack your mouse

If you're planning to hack your keyboard, it makes sense to do something with its long-term partner, the mouse, too. As you can guess from the name, Microsoft's 'Mouse and Keyboard Centre' deals with both peripherals. Select Mouse on the left of the program window and you can change the default actions of various buttons and customise the wheel's behaviour. Most dedicated mouse

You can customise the behaviour of your Microsoft mouse using dedicated software software provides similar options, because there are only so many things

you can change about a mouse.

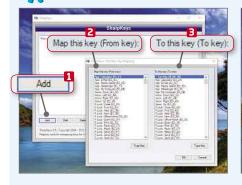
There are plenty of third-party tools for reprogramming mice, too, including X-Mouse Button Control (bit.ly/xmou430), which lets you reconfigure your mouse for Windows and individual applications. WizMouse (bit.ly/wizmo430) is a particularly useful tool that makes the scroll wheel work on any window that's currently under the mouse pointer, whether Windows is focused on it or not.





X-Mouse Button Control lets you customise your mouse to do lots of different things

MINI WORKSHOP | Remap useless buttons with SharpKeys



When you install and run the program, it presents you with a blank box. To remap your first key, click the Add button. 11 You'll see a long list of buttons you can remap 2 and what you can map them to. El You can explore the list to find the key you want, but there's a quicker option.



Click the Type Key button in the From window. 💶 When prompted, press the key on your keyboard that you want to replace. A new window will appear, showing you which key you've selected. 2 Click OK 1 to move to the next stage or click Cancel 4 if you change your mind.



Next, click the Type Key button in the To window and press the replacement key on your keyboard. Click OK and OK again. SharpKeys shows you the change it's about to make. 11 To complete it, click the 'Write to Registry' button 🔁 and log out of Windows or reboot your PC.

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Try Windows 10 S on a virtual PC

On sale Wednesday 6 Sept

SUBSCRIBE NOW!



Subscribe to **Webuser** today and save on the single issue price.

Each issue of **Web user** will be delivered directly to your device each fortnight.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE...

...on an iPad or iPhone

Return to the Web user library

Choose your subscription term and tap twice on the 'price' box

Choose whether to create an optional PixelMags account

Enter your Apple ID password to confirm





...on a Kindle Fire

Kindle Fire subscriptions come with a FREE one month trial.

Tap 'Free Trial Subscription' in the Web user library

Chose your subscription term from the drop down menu on the popup that appears

STEP3 Tap 'Subscribe'





...via the Zinio app

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

Tap the 'Subscribe' button

Choose whether to create an optional Zinio account

Enter your Apple ID password to confirm



Subscribe to Web user today and save on the single issue price



Web User Masterclass

You can do more with a **PDF** than just read it. Our experts show you how to convert, edit and more

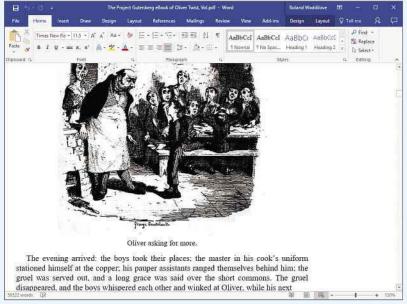


Convert PDFs to Word documents

f you have an up-to-date copy of Microsoft Word on your PC, you can load unprotected PDF files into the program as you would with any other document. It may struggle to interpret sophisticated layouts but most PDFs should convert reasonably well. Fonts and spacing may not look exactly the same, but headings, subheadings, normal and bold text, bullet points and web links are all imported and appropriately converted to editable text.

It also imports the images, but if you want to extract these from the PDF, click File, 'Save as', then set the file format to 'Web Page (*.htm, *.html)'. Wherever you save the HTML file to, a folder will be created with all the images from the PDF stored in it.

Because Word has an option to save any document as a PDF, you can edit and make changes to a PDF by importing it, making the changes, then saving the edited document as a PDF again.



Load a PDF into Microsoft Word, edit it and then save it as a PDF again

Extract text with Chrome

Chrome can be used to open PDFs, as you'll have noticed if you've ever clicked a PDF link in a web page. A file can also be dragged from an Explorer window and dropped on the browser's address bar to view it. As long as the document is not protected, you can extract the text from it by pressing Ctrl+A to select everything, then Ctrl+C to copy it to the clipboard. You can now switch to another program - such as WordPad and press Ctrl+V to paste the PDF's content from the clipboard. The results are far from perfect and most formatting will be lost, but it's a quick and easy way to get the raw text.

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.

Edit PDFs online

If you don't have Microsoft Word installed on your PC, you can use the free online version at office.com instead. Copy the PDF file to the OneDrive folder on your PC, then go to onedrive.live.com in your browser and click the file. Alternatively, go to www.office.com, click the Word button and drag the PDF file into the browser window.

It looks like the online version uses the

same PDF-to-Word conversion process as the PC software because it works very well with straightforward PDF documents. All the headings, subheadings, text, images and links are imported into the online document.

Edit and annotate PDFs

Rather than converting a PDF to another format so you can edit it and then save it again as a PDF, Online PDF Editor (bit.ly/opdf430) lets you edit the PDF directly. Click the button to select a PDF file on your PC and it appears in the browser. The toolbar at the top of the page contains the Text tool, which lets you make changes directly. It's limited to editing the text on a single line, so it's great for correcting misspelt words, changing headings and making other small changes, but



Online PDF Editor is handy for quickly correcting typos and other errors

awkward for editing whole paragraphs.

The whiteout tool lets you erase text and images in the PDF by drawing a white box over them. You can upload and insert images into the document, and draw rectangles and ellipses, which are useful for highlighting items by circling them. When you've finished, click the Save button at the bottom of the page to download the edited PDF.

Add notes to PDFs

You can add hidden notes to a PDF to provide explanations, links, comments and anything else that's related to the document but doesn't need to appear in it. Notes appear as an icon on the page they were created on and are displayed in full when the mouse hovers over or clicks them. Microsoft's Edge browser doesn't display notes but Chrome does.

You can use the free online editor at PDFescape (bit.ly/pesc430) to add notes to a PDF. Click the link to upload a file and select the Annotate tab in the top-left corner. Click Sticky Note in the tools, then click and drag to draw a small box on the page. The note icon is inserted and you can enter a comment in the Sticky Note edit box.

Add as many notes as you want, then click the green download button in the sidebar to save it to your hard drive. It's useful for annotating technical PDFs such as manuals that benefit from reminders and explanations.



Add hidden notes to PDF documents using PDFescape in a browser

Rearrange pages

PDFescape can also be used to delete pages and rearrange them. For example, if you find some information toward the end of a PDF that would be better placed near the start, you can move the page. Go to PDFescape in a browser and click the link to upload a file. Select the Pages tab in the toolbox in the top-left corner and find the Move and Delete buttons. Select a page, click Move and you'll be asked which page number it should be reassigned to. Select a number and your PDF page will be moved into place, shuffling the rest of the pages along. When you've finished, you can download the edited PDF by clicking the download button in the sidebar.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Split PDF files

PDF Shaper (www.pdfshaper.com) works in a different way to the other tools we've mentioned. It keeps all the elements of the original document the same (right down to the specific fonts used) but lets you split files into two or more PDFs.

Download and install the software. run PDF Shaper and click File, then Split. In the Split window that opens, click the plus button and select a PDF file. Click the Options tab and choose to split it into a number of equal files or by pages. For example, you could split a long 30-page PDF file into shorter five-page PDFs. These will contain pages 1-5, 6-10, 11-15 and so on. Click the Process button to begin.

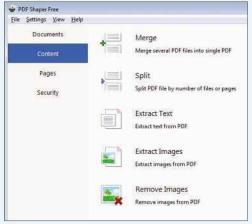
Delete unwanted pages

You may sometimes find pages in a PDF that you don't need, such as blank pages, acknowledgements, adverts for other books or services by the author. These can be stripped out to leave only the pages you need, which can reduce the file's size as well as the number of pages.

Open the PDF in Edge or Chrome and make a list of the pages you want to delete. Run PDF Shaper and select Pages, then click Delete Pages. In the window that opens, click the Add button and load the PDF file. Select the Options tab and type in the pages to delete, separated by commas, such as 3,7,10. Click Process.

Extract from multiple files

PDF Shaper's most impressive feature is that it can extract content from several PDF files and merge them into



PDF Shaper includes useful tools for extracting text and images from PDFs



Split long PDF documents into several shorter ones using PDF Shaper

one. Run the program, select Content, then choose Extract Text or Extract Images. Click Add in the next window and add as many elements from different PDFs as you want. Click Process and choose a location to save the new PDF containing your selected text or images.

Sign PDFs easily

Signing a PDF document, such as a contract or a consent form, usually involves a convoluted process of printing it, signing it and then either posting it via snail mail or scanning the signed document and attaching it to an email. Online PDF Editor (bit.ly/ opdf430) has a useful Sign tool that cuts out the hassle. Click it and type your name to display it in a variety of handwriting fonts, then simply choose the one you want to use.

However, that's not your real signature, so another option is to draw it with a mouse or with your finger on a laptop touchpad or touchscreen. A third option is to upload an image: sign a sheet of paper, scan the signature as an image, upload it to Online PDF Editor and insert it in a PDF document.

PDFescape (bit.ly/pesc430) has a similar tool. Upload your PDF, select the Insert tab in the tools box in the top-left corner and either select Image to upload a scanned image or Freehand to draw on the PDF with a mouse or finger.

Ask the Expert

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



SECURITY

Remove a PC's hardware lock

I downloaded a program called USB Raptor (bit.ly/rapt430), which locks your PC if you remove the associated USB memory stick. Now I no longer need the program, but I can't uninstall it because I can't find it listed anywhere. I've managed to disable it from the notification area but I can't get rid of it completely.

Tony Sharman, via email

A USB Raptor is a software tool that places a file on a USB memory stick and constantly checks that it's there. If you remove the USB stick, the program is unable to find the file and locks the PC. It's a clever tool, and we had no problems when we tried it.

To deactivate it, click the icon in the notification area (on the right of the taskbar) and open the main window.



Clear all the startup options for USB Raptor to disable it

Go into the settings and clear all the startup options on the 'General settings' tab. Also clear 'Enable USB Raptor'. This stops it running now and when Windows restarts.

There's no uninstaller because Raptor doesn't need to be installed: you just open the folder and click the program to run it. The changes you've made should mean Raptor will no longer run, so there's no harm in leaving the program where it is. If you ever find the folder, just delete it.

the blue tick.

Check the properties for each library in Explorer to see which folders it includes. You can use the Properties window to add or remove folders and to set the save location (the ticked folder).

If a library isn't working properly, click the Restore Defaults button at the bottom of the window.

GENERAL PC

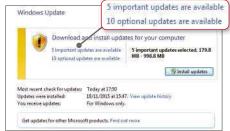
Fix unresponsive programs

I keep getting the Not Responding message and the rotating circular pointer when I use Audacity or read my email. I have to wait for the PC to return to normal, which can sometimes take five minutes or more. Any ideas?

Dan Reddington, via email

Email and audio editing are very different applications, so it's hard to see how one problem could affect both, but it could be related to the audio drivers. Use Windows Update to make sure all updates have been installed. If you use Windows 7, look for a link to show optional updates, then select and install those, too. Download the latest version of Audacity from www.audacityteam.org.

Next, update the drivers on your computer. As you're having problems with an audio program, you should update those drivers first. Click Start or the search box next to it and type Device Manager. When it appears in the list above, click to run it. Expand the 'Audio inputs and outputs' section, right-click each item and select 'Update driver'. Repeat for the 'Sound, video and game controllers' section. It's a good idea to update the 'Display adapters'



Make sure optional updates are installed and not just important ones

GENERAL PC

Clear confusion about libraries

I have a laptop that runs Windows 7 Home Premium but I'm in a muddle with the Explorer filing system. When I place a file in a library folder, I find that it ends up in four other folders, but then

| Dictures Properties | Dictures Properties | Dictures Properties | Dictures Properties | Dictures (Collines) Palatines | Public Protection | Public Protection | Public Protection | Public Protection | Dictures | Dicture

Libraries let you see the contents of multiple folders

I can't find it and
I have to press
Start and use
the Search Box.
I have a large
picture folder but
some of the
pictures end up in
the video folder.

Ernie Hills, via email

A Libraries can be confusing at first, but once you know how they work, they're quite useful. When you open a folder in Explorer, it shows you the contents, which may include files and more folders (called 'subfolders'). If you want to see the contents of two folders, you could open two Explorer windows, but there is an alternative.

You can combine two or more folders into a 'library'. When you open a library in Explorer, you can see the files from all the folders as if they were one. If you have photos in three separate folders, for example, combining them into a library lets you see all the photos in a single Explorer window.

Open Explorer and select Libraries on the left. Right-click a library – Pictures, for example – and select Properties to see the folders in this library. When the library opens, Explorer shows the contents of all the folders as if they were contained in this single folder. One of the folders has a tick next to it. If you save a file or drag and drop it into a library, it will be saved in the folder with



section, too.

Driver Booster Free (bit.ly/ dboost430) is a more powerful program for updating drivers, but make sure you opt out of any extras during installation because you won't need them. Run the program, scan the PC and clear all the selected items. Look for any drivers related to audio playing or recording, and update them one at a time, testing your PC between each update.

GENERAL PC

Make backups faster

I have one main folder on my PC that contains many subfolders, and which I update regularly. The main folder is currently 72GB. Every two to three months, I back it up to an external hard drive. However, this takes a long time and is often beset by problems along the way. Then I have to go through the process of deleting the old backup folders and files. There are other folders and files on my PC that I don't need to keep copies of.

My objective is to have an external drive that is essentially an updated version of my main folder and all the associated subfolders I want to back up, so I don't have to back up everything every two to three months. In other words, I want the process to back up only files that have been added, removed or changed since the last backup. Can vou recommend the best software to do this? I'd prefer to use free software but I'm willing to pay if I have to.

Tim Sharratt, via email

Almost every backup program works this way. First, it makes a full backup that contains a copy of every file, but then subsequent backups add only the files or folders that have changed. If you have Windows 10 or 8, you already have a simple backup tool called File History. Open the Control Panel and click File History. Click 'Select drive' and choose a USB hard drive, then click Turn On. It couldn't be easier.

This saves everything in your Documents, Music, Pictures and Videos folders. If the folder you want to back up is in one of these, File History will include it automatically. There is an option to exclude folders from backups. but you can't add extra folders, and your USB drive must be plugged in and switched on when using your PC. It saves new or changed files every hour, and you won't even notice it happening.

Many companies make even better backup software with plenty of features



Use File History in Windows 10 and 8 to back up your files automatically

that you can tweak and configure. There are several perfectly good free options, such as Backupper Standard (www .backup-utility.com), Paragon Backup & Recovery 16 Free (bit.ly/para430) and EaseUS Todo Backup Free (bit.ly/ todo430). Each can create backups of folders and files, and even make an image of the entire hard drive

MOBILE

Sync Samsung calendars

I'm having trouble syncing the calender on my Samsung Galaxy S5 phone with the Google account on my PC. The process appears to work perfectly between the Galaxy S Planner and Google Calendar, but this isn't reflected in the calendar on my PC.

Gurpreet Bhatia, via email

Quite a few people have reported problems syncing between their Samsung phone and Google Calendar. There's no single fix that works for everyone, so try these solutions one at a time until you find one that works. Before you start, make sure the Google Calendar app is installed on your device and that all your apps are up to date.

Several people found that syncing was disabled when their phone was in power-saver mode. Swipe down from the top of the screen and turn off power saving. You can also disable this in Settings, Device Maintenance, Battery (although menus vary between versions of Android, so look around). Hold down the power button and restart the phone.

If that doesn't work, open Samsung S Planner and press More or the three-dot menu in the top-right corner. Select Manage Calendars. Turn off all calendars and return to the phone's home screen. Hold down the power button to restart the phone, then return to S Planner and enable the calendars again.

Go to Settings, 'Cloud and Accounts', Accounts. If Sync Calendar is off, switch it on. Some people have found that removing their Google Account, restarting the phone and adding it again solves the problem. Press the menu button to remove it, then restart, return to Accounts and add it again.

Resetting S Planner and Google Calendar can also fix syncing problems. Go to Settings, Apps or 'Application manager' and press Calendar, then Force Stop. Press Storage and clear the cache and data. Repeat this for S Planner and restart the phone. Open Google Calendar and it should sync your calendars. Then open S Planner. If your Google account isn't there, add it.

GENERAL PC

Reset a lost password

A student at the training centre where I work password-protected one of our PCs, and now I can't log in. Is there a way to unlock Windows 10?

Noel Lackey, via email

The usual way to log into Windows 10 is to use a Microsoft account, such as Outlook.com email, OneDrive, Xbox Live and so on. If that's how you log into your PCs, use Microsoft's lost-password facility.

Go to bit.ly/pwr430, select 'I forgot my password' and follow the instructions to reset it. You'll be asked to verify your identity, which you can do by text message or an email.



Lost the password to your Windows 10 computer? Reset it online

If that's not possible in this case, you'll need to reset Windows - but be warned that this erases everything. At the login screen, click the power button, hold down Shift and click Restart, Click Troubleshoot and then, on the next screen, choose 'Reset this PC'. There are options to keep your files, delete them or erase the whole disk. You may need to use this last option.



This fortnight, Roland has been tidying his bookmarks after finding that some are so old they no longer link to anything

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

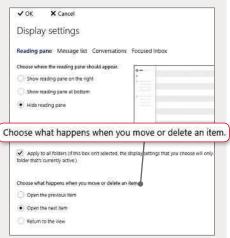


Speed through your Outlook.com inbox

I've discovered a useful Outlook.com setting that saves a bit of time and effort. When you're using Outlook in a browser and you delete an email, vou're taken back to the inbox. You then have to click the next message to read it. However, there's a setting that opens the next email automatically.

Click the cog icon in the bar at the top and select 'Display settings', then 'Choose what happens when you move or delete an item'. Here you have the option to open the previous item or the next one. Choose to open the next one. Now you can go through your inbox reading, deleting and moving messages more easily.

Tom Johnson, via email



Choose what happens after you move or delete an email in Outlook.com

HARDWARE

Transfer data from any hard drive

In Ask the Expert, Issue 427 (bit.ly/ webuser427), John Page asked a question about reusing old hard drives. There is a simple and relatively cheap way to reuse almost any hard drive, which is to connect a piece of kit called a SATA/IDE-to-USB2.0 adapter.

I bought mine a few years ago, so there may be faster versions available now, but you should be able to pick one up for less than £30 (like this one from Amazon, for example: bit.ly/amaz430). They're much less bulky than drive enclosures. I've used mine to recover files from old SATA and IDE drives before formatting the drives and reusing them. I've even installed Linux Zorin on one of

SATA/IDE-to-**USB** adapters let you access anv old hard drive auickly and easily



the old drives so that if I have a major problem with Windows, I can use it to boot up the computer and fix the operating system. I can highly recommend these adapters. They're versatile and portable pieces of kit.

John Hampson, via email

SOFTWARE

Measure broadband usage

I was curious to find out how much data I was using on YouTube, Amazon and Netflix. In previous versions of Windows, I've used Think Broadband's tbbMeter program to do this, but it seems to be unreliable in Windows 10 and the interface looks the same as it did when I used it in Windows XP.

After searching for an alternative, I found GlassWire (www.glasswire.com). It's a beautifully fluid program that works well, and I find that the free version is perfectly adequate for general use. Unlike tbbMeter, it also launches at startup with zero fuss. I really like the way it tracks new processes as they access my network, and the stats are thorough and interesting.

Simon Mellor, via email



SOCIAL NETWORKING

Switch off intrusive Facebook ads

You can't block adverts on Facebook but you can tweak the settings so they're not as irritating. Click the little arrow at the top-right to see the menu, then click Settings, followed by Adverts.

Expand the 'Advert settings' section and you'll see three options, which I set to No, No and 'No one'. These prevent Facebook delivering ads based on your Facebook activities, so it may stop ads targeting you. I also have a section called 'Hide ad topics (test)'. I don't know if this is something everyone has, but it lets me block certain ad topics, such as alcohol and parenting, for example, for six months, a year or permanently. Keep an eye on this section, because new topics are added every now and then.

Phil Lane, via email



Customise the ads on Facebook and hide any you don't like

ONLINE STORAGE

Get more OneDrive space for free

OneDrive provides just 5GB of online storage for free, which is easily filled. However, you can earn more online space simply by inviting other people to use OneDrive. Go to onedrive.live.com, signing in if you need to, and click the gear icon to open the menu, then click Options. Choose 'Manage storage' and



click 'Earn more', which is to the right of Referral Bonus. Copy the link and paste it into emails and messages you send. You get 0.5GB for each person who signs up.

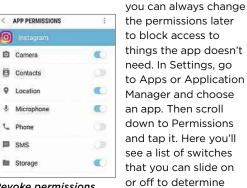
So where can you find people who haven't already signed up for a Microsoft account? Your family is one source. If you share a PC with a partner, get an account each (5GB+5GB+0.5GB). When your kids are old enough to have their own account, invite them, too, and collect the reward. Friends who use Apple Macs are another possibility, because they're less likely to have Microsoft accounts. Send them a link and ask them to sign up.

Len Berry, via email

MOBILE

Customise vour Android permissions

When you install an app on an Android phone, it asks for permission to access all sorts of things. This can be worrying, but



John Burke, via email



for Android apps after what the app can you've installed them

ANDROID

Access frequently used docs from your Home screen

access.

Smartphones are like mini computers that you keep in your pocket, but until a few weeks ago I'd always been frustrated that there was no way to save my



Drive lets you add shortcuts to your files on the Home screen

documents to the home screen, as you can with the Windows Desktop. This changed when I long-pressed a file in Google Drive one day and spotted the option to 'Add to Home screen'. Since then I've used this trick with all the documents I'm currently working on, and organised them in one folder. I find that this makes opening them much faster than

if I had to open Google Drive and then look for the correct file.

Oscar Watson, via email

Tidy your Google Photos

I'm a terrible digital hoarder, so although I love the convenience of being able to back up all my snaps to Google Photos for free, my library is dominated by duplicates, screenshots and other clutter that I don't need. Thankfully, Google recently introduced an archiving tool. much like the one that has set Gmail apart from its rivals since its early days. This means I can now be ruthless and archive all the photos I'm not sure about. Then If I find later that I need one, I

can restore it in an instant. As a result, my Google Photos library is starting to look the way I'd always hoped it would.

To archive a picture, open it, tap the three-dot button and choose Archive. You can archive photos in bulk by



Reserve your Google Photos library for your best snaps and archive everything else

long-pressing a thumbnail, tapping all the other images you want to archive and then tapping the menu button and choosing Archive.

Jasmine Morrison, via email

SECURITY

Avoid scams by using a new email address

Last year I opened a new Yahoo email account specifically for private emails and a few other select uses, such as my eBay and PayPal accounts. If I buy something or visit a website that asks me for an email address, I give them my old address, which keeps my new email account free from spam and dodgy emails. This simple solution has been effective so far, and it's easy to set up.

Now I've taken the idea a step further and opened a secondary bank account to use for buying items on eBay, Amazon and other online shopping sites. I also use it at cash machines, transferring small sums of money to it as and when I need it. This way I'm confident that even if I did fall victim to a scam or fraud, I wouldn't stand to lose much money.

NE5, Web User Forums

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

Avoid being locked out of your Google account

I recently added two-step verification to my Google account to protect my files from hackers. To do this, I went to www.google.com/landing/2step, clicked the Get Started button, entered my Google password and followed the instructions on screen. Two-step verification works by asking you to enter a unique code (which is usually sent to your phone) whenever you log in. This means that even if someone manages to guess your password, they still can't get into your account unless they also have your phone and can enter the correct code when prompted.

The problem with this system is that if you lose your phone, as I did recently, you may not be able to access your own files. Google has an accountrecovery form that you can submit in such cases, but in the meantime vou're locked out of your account, which can be immensely inconvenient.

Since experiencing this, I discovered



Google generates backup codes so you're not locked out of your accounts

that you can add backup phones to your account so that if you lose your main device, you can still receive the codes and sign in. To do this, return to the two-step verification setup page and click Add Phone. Alternatively, on the same page, you can generate backup codes that you can keep with you. I now use both options to make sure I'm never locked out again!

Joshua Phillips, via email

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





Readers' Helpdesk

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

GENERAL PC

How can I remove file associations?

I used WordPad to look at the contents of a DB (database) file recently, but I forgot to untick the 'Always use this program to open this type of file' box and now all my DB files are associated with WordPad. I've looked in the Default Programs area of the Control Panel but I can't see any way of undoing my mistake. Does anyone know how to remove file associations from a program?

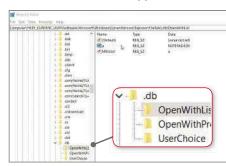
madelvic, Web User Forums

Windows doesn't seem to provide a simple way to remove all associations. It only gives you the option to pick a different program, which I assume is not what you want.

There is a workaround, however. Type regedit into the Start menu and run the Registry Editor when it appears in the list. Then navigate to:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\ Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ Explorer\FileExts

Scroll to the '.db' entry and expand it to show the OpenWithList key. Open it and delete any references to WordPad and MRUList. While you're there, you should also delete the other key, UserChoice, which may also include a reference to WordPad. Once you've done that, go back to the Default Programs area of the Control Panel and you should find that DB files are marked with Unknown Application.



Remove file associations in Windows 10 using the Registry Editor

GENERAL PC

Why has 'Backup and Restore' stopped working?

I use the built-in 'Backup and Restore' tool on my Windows 10 PC, but every time I've selected a backed-up item in the past few days, a message has appeared telling me that the last backup didn't complete. When I click Details, it shows an error code.

I researched the problem online, and one fix suggested that I check the external drive for errors. I did this but no error was found. I even reformatted the external drive but I'm still getting error messages.

The Badger, Web User Forums

Microsoft has announced that it will withdraw Windows 7 Backup from Windows 10 in the Autumn



Backup and Restore will be removed from Windows 10 in the next big update

Creators Update, and advises users to install alternative software. This means you're probably better off forgetting about this tool and installing EaseUS Todo Backup Free (bit.ly/ease430) or Macrium Reflect Free (bit.ly/ macr430) instead. Otherwise any backups you create between now and the Autumn update will eventually become redundant.

> Cantrel, clayto2 and tornado, Web User Forums

If you use Windows 7, you can download a program from Winhelponline (bit.ly/file430) that lets you delete file associations without having to fiddle with the Registry.

> Stewart40 and lizzygraham, **Web User Forums**

SECURITY

How can I wipe my hard drive securely?

I have two hard drives from the Nineties that I want to wipe before disposing of them. I thought this would be a simple matter of plugging them into my laptop's USB port and wiping them using BCWipe (bit.ly/bcwi430). However, a friend explained that the drive wouldn't receive enough power this way, and that I'd need to put them in a hard drive docking station. I don't really want to spend £35 on a device I'll never use again. Is this really necessary?

Talsy, Web User Forums

No domestic program can get rid of everything on a hard drive, which

means your private files could potentially be recovered by someone who has the right tools. If you're disposing of your old drives - and it sounds as if they're too old to be of much use to anyone as storage devices - I would simply destroy them, taking all the necessary safety precautions. I drive a large nail or drill through my disks and then bend what's left and chuck them in the bin. You can also use a hammer to mangle the drives to a point where nobody could get anything off them.

pete.i and mikec1, Web User Forums



Physically destroying a hard drive makes it impossible for data to be recovered



You can let us know your views via:

Star Email

Mug/

Internet speeds are all at sea

ith reference to Roy Page's email in Issue 428 (bit.ly/webuser428), 'Internet speed isn't everything', when I was sailing around the world in my 34-foot yacht a few years ago, I could only dream about internet speeds of 2Mbps. I had an ICOM 802 HF transceiver, which was attached to a pactor modem, a very clever device that allowed me to send and receive data over the HF radio waves. On a very good day, I could get 5,000 bytes a minute, but more often than not it would be less than a 1,000 bytes a minute. Yes "bytes" and yes "a minute".

Nevertheless, we were able to send and receive emails on the yacht and,



more importantly, receive weather information. This came in the form of GRIB (Gridded Information in Binary) files, which use very little data. As long as we only requested weather data for the area we would be sailing through

over the next three days or so, the GRIB file could be as little as 5KB in size. When decoded, it would provide wind symbols (and more if we asked for it), with direction and speed displayed on a digital chart.

The problem of sending and receiving data was compounded by the fact that we might only have an hour or so a day when the atmospheric conditions were suitable for long-range HF use. That said, when we were in the Pacific Ocean and nearly 2,000

miles from any land mass, the system worked well. It's perhaps not surprising that I've never had cause for complaint with the 4-5Mbps I get now.

Tom Sampson, Bridlington

Les face the facts about NHS computer problems

After reading Issue 427's Star Email from "Les" on how to save the NHS computer systems, I felt compelled to write.

I am also called Les, I too have a BSc (in Computer Science and Electronic Physics) and I have worked in IT as a systems programmer for almost 50 years. It is clear to me that Les, BSc and MIAM, knows little about programming. He states that "there is easily enough programmer capability in the world to write new software to replace all NHS legacy systems". While this is possibly true, it ignores two important points: first, that maintaining legacy code is notoriously difficult, even if you have the specifications (and some



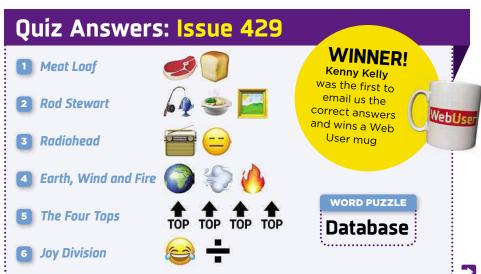
would say especially if you have the original specifications); and second, that reverse-engineering code is technically illegal these days.

Les goes on to say, "it is just a matter of the NHS specifying and tendering out the projects". Would he really want some code monkey writing the new software to interface with the MRI scanner or the heart rate monitor? Does he really think the NHS has anyone who would be able to specify the interface to a proprietary

ultrasound system? Because that's what we're talking about here.

Solving the NHS's computer problems is not simply a matter of rewriting the hospital booking system to run on Windows 10. It would mean rewriting the hundreds of specialised legacy medical systems, many of which could be using embedded systems. In most cases it would be cheaper to replace the system, but for that the NHS needs the budget.

Les, BSc, Ellesmere Port







Inless you ask Alexa how to make a nail bomb, it's unlikely what you say will find its way to GCHQ

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

Three cheers for 3uTools!

I have just installed 3uTools (www.3u .com), as featured in Issue 428. I can't thank you enough for pointing me in the direction of this wonderful software.

After wrestling, unsuccessfully, with the nightmare dinosaur that is iTunes for over a week in an attempt to get the 64-bit version to work on Windows 10, I eventually gave up. I think iTunes has long been the worst piece of software anyone could install. It's difficult to manage, it always creates problems, it takes forever to load and it hogs a huge

amount of system resources.

I recommend that anyone who is looking for an alternative to the nasty iTunes program should try 3uTools - it's just fantastic. Well done Web User. Your magazine never fails to repay the cost of purchase and more.

John Walker, via email

Superior alternatives to Google tools

I enjoyed your article 'Stop using Google' in Issue 428, but I think you played it rather safe with some of your suggestions. For example, while Bing and DuckDuckGo are perfectly acceptable alternatives to Google, they pretty much just replace it like for like. For a real alternative, try using Yandex (www.yandex.com), which offers better search functionality and is more flexible than Google. Alternatively, there's StartPage (www.startpage.com) for improved privacy, Metro5 (metro5.com), which allows you to rate sites, and Carrot (carrot2.org), which 'clusters' results for you. Then there are similarity search engines such as SimilarPages (www .similarpages.com), which finds sites that are similar to any site you specify by providing its URL. Then you've got MillionShort (millionshort.com), which lets you remove many of the top results that other engines give you, so you can

really dig down into the results. These alternatives give people an opportunity to look at search in an entirely different way.

The same goes for news sites. Although Bing News is a good choice, once again



you're just swapping one site for another of the same sort. Why not be more bold, brave and inventive? Try using some of the specialised real-time search engines, such as Infonary (infonary.com), NewsNow (www.newsnow.co.uk) and the fascinating Newsmap (www.newsmap .jp), which displays news results in an interesting visual format based on the type of story and its importance and popularity. There are thousands of search engines out there, and many of them do a far better job than Google and Bing. That's where the real alternatives lie.

> Phil Bradley, author of **Expert Internet Searching**

Google's terms and conditions go much too far

I was interested to read your article 'Stop using Google'. My suspicions of the company were raised as long as seven years ago when a message flashed up on my screen one day telling me that Google needed access to my photographs and private documents. This reinforces your comment that Google seems to think everything on your computer is the company's to do what it wants with.

Needless to say, I refused permission, but the incident prompted me to read Google's Terms and Conditions - all 32 pages of them, if I recall correctly. The document was quite an eyeopener because I discovered that by agreeing to it you were essentially signing your life away. It covered everything under the sun, including the company's right to use one's documents and photos in search results.

The level of intrusion Google said it was entitled to undertake was vast, with far too many elements for me to remember them all now. Two stick in my mind, however: the fact that the company could add and remove items from your Bookmarks and also add and remove names from your Address Book without your permission. On top of that, they were able to telephone your contacts without your permission and without notifying you but at your expense.

At the time, I wrote to the Information Commissioner expressing my concerns over Google's terms and conditions. I received a phone call in response, the

Quintilles Fibody Policy	Terms of Service Technologies, and Penninger 1840 My Accom					
Terms of Service	Google Terms of Service					
Lipdates	sast modified: 30 April 2014 (sees archived versions)					
	Welcome to Google!					
	Thanks for using our products and services ("Services"). The Services are provided by Google Int. ("Cougle"), located at 1500 Amphitheather Parkinsy, Mountain View, CA 94043, United Scates.					
	By using our Services, you are agreeing to these terms. Please read them carefully					
	Our Services are very diverse, so sometimes additional terms or product, including one receivements) may apply. Additional terms will be available with the selvant Services and those additional terms become just of your agreement with on if you are three Services.					
	Using our Services					

upshot of which was that the matter would have to be passed on to the Irish Information Commissioner because that's where Google's European HQ was. However, the Commissioner's office felt that because people had a choice not to use Google, there was perhaps no need for further action. I took this to mean the case had been tossed into the 'too difficult' basket, and that no one was prepared to tackle the behemoth.

It's time someone in a senior governmental position reads through the terms and conditions and brings a case against Google to do something about it.

Enott, via email

Brexit raises roaming uncertainty

I was confused by the letter in Issue 428 entitled 'Roaming charges won't be

> returning'. The fact is that no one knows whether or not they will return. As the

> > letter states, the government could simply decide to stop backing the plan to end roaming. Only staying in the EU would give us any certainty. My understanding is that, in many cases, it's the

government that will decide whether or not to remove our current EU benefits if its repeal bill is passed, not the House of Commons, which represents another loss to our democracy.

What's more, I don't see that removing our legal protections by preventing us from taking cases to the European Court of Justice is a benefit, and the same applies to similar losses, such as the removal of our right to move freely around other EU countries. It would be good to see Web User continuing to highlight the issues with Brexit.

betty, Web User Forums







Give new porn-site checks a chance

I usually agree with Barry Collins, but his column about porn-site checks in Issue 429 left a bad taste in the mouth. In my opinion, anything that helps to stop children accessing adult material on the internet is a good thing, and not something that should be sneered at or dismissed until we've seen if it works.

As Barry points out, the current method, which is to ask visitors to confirm they're 18 or over, is useless, so why not try the more stringent tactic of asking them to enter their credit card details. It's highly unlikely that anyone under the age of 18 will be in possession of a card (at least not legally), and any adults who feel embarrassed about verifying their identity in this manner should perhaps reflect on why they're visiting such sites in the first place.

Barry's suggestion that credit-card



verification serves as "Christmas come early for fraudsters" sounds like little more than paranoid fantasy to me. Something must be done to stem the tide of filth that is polluting young minds, whether

grown-up porn addicts like it or not. Edward Chamberlain, via email

Mesh Home PC is perfect for me

At last, as Etta James famously sang, I have something good to write about. Having used the same hybrid desktop PC for around 12 years, during which it went down three times due to Microsoft downloads, I decided to get a new one.

I only use my PC for internet shopping, writing letters and emails and playing music, so I didn't need anything too elaborate. At £499, the Mesh Home PC in your Best Buys section suited me better than others of around the same price. I just upgraded the power supply. A 1TB

hard drive is about 60% more than I need, but it appears to be the norm these days.

Mesh's customer service and delivery are top notch, and the lifetime-parts warranty gives peace of mind.

> Martin Fletcher, Thorpe Hesley



What you say...

S THE INCLUSION OF AUTO-PLAY VIDEOS IN **GOOGLE'S SEARCH RESULTS** A GOOD IDEA?

No. I have to pay for my download data. I don't wish to see adverts I then have to pay for.

lain Kenworthy-Neale

It may be time to switch to DuckDuckGo (duckduckgo.com). I'm also sick of Facebook ads.

Daniel Roe

Auto-play should be turned off by default, with Google giving the option to switch it on if the user wants it.

Anthony Higham

This seems to be a growing scourge of the internet, not just in Google. I try to avoid Google and use Bing or other search engines.

DL @dlee1

One benefit of using the Firefox browser is that YouTube videos refuse to play, so I think I'll be OK.

IT Tech David @ITTechDavid

PPLE IS DISCONTINUING THE IPOD NANO AND SHUFFLE. **DO YOU STILL USE YOURS?**

.....

No need for one. I have an MP3 player built into my mobile phone that can hold several thousand tracks.

Brian Brown

My S7 smartphone is too heavy so I still use the Nano at the gym. I prefer not to have my work phone anywhere near me when I'm at the gym.

Oliver Webster

A collection of music stored on a player is sooooo 2008! Now that we have mobile phones that can stream music from Spotify over 4G, it's hardly surprising that Apple is killing these devices off. That said. I still have an 80GB iPod Classic in my car.

Lee Dodgson

I still use my 160GB iPod Classic. It's a pity the iPhone never has much space for music, movies and TV.

Lance Parkington

O YOU AGREE WITH DOCTORS THAT PATIENTS IN **A&E SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO** WI-FI (bit.ly/wifi430)?

Yes. It could calm people down and provide a distraction - until the battery goes flat.

Jenny Jacks @JenJacks3

Why? There are enough places with Wi-Fi. We don't need patients looking up their symptoms in a waiting room and telling the doctors they already know what's wrong with them!

Steve Hamilton

Reduce hospital waiting times so patients can get everything done sooner and then go home to use their Wi-Fi.

Davor Prcovich

Yes, as long as there is a block on patients Googling their symptoms.

Alan McClean

RE YOU PLEASED THAT MICROSOFT IS GIVING PAINT A REPRIEVE?

Yes. I still use it to screen-dump errors and parts of a page. I'm glad it isn't being killed off.

Si Mellor

Never used it to "paint" with. I often used it to open and save JPEGs that wouldn't open with Photoshop.

Sir Cumference @Gary_Olsen

Yes, it's perfectly adequate for what I need - taking screenshots. Sometimes simple is best.

Lynn Sharpe

A Page 404

Barry Collins likes that Alexa listens to everything he says - nobody else does

Who cares if voice assistants listen to us?

t's a little-known fact that men's brains are fitted with a 4GB memory chip that's constantly recording background conversations. It's why, when you've got your head buried in The Times crossword and your other half barks: "are you listening to me?", we're able to respond: "Yes, put the recycling bin out and feed the dog at half one" without having actually registered a single word of the original conversation.

Many people suspect Amazon's Echo speakers are similarly equipped. That they're sat there in the corner, like Darth Vader's Pringles tube, secretly recording every last word we utter: conversations with the dog, the wrong answers to questions on University Challenge, the access codes for the nuclear reactor under the conservatory. I've lost count of the number of people to whom I've recommended the Echo, who give a derisory snort and say: "Put a device in my living room that's recording everything I say? No, ta".

In many ways, the fear is understandable. We've all read the stories about webcams and smart televisions being used as bugging devices. We've all seen the pictures of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg

with the little piece of black tape over his laptop's webcam. We've all read the Snowden revelations of mass government surveillance. Only the paranoid

murdered in your own home, scream: "Alexa, my wife is strangling me for not putting

survive, as Intel's Andy Gove said. And let's be clear: the notion that Amazon's speakers could be turned into some sort of bugging device isn't ridiculously far-fetched. Any device with

If you're ever being the bins out"



a microphone and an internet connection is potentially susceptible to hackers. No device is 100% secure.

However, there are a few reasons why I'm not losing any sleep over Alexa grassing me up to MI5, not least because I'm somewhere between Nanette Newman and the Dalai Lama on the list of terror suspects. Firstly, Amazon's Echo devices only record what you say after you utter the 'wake word', which is normally 'Alexa'. So unless you're asking Alexa how to make a nail bomb, it's unlikely what you say

> will ever find its way back to GCHQ.

Ah, I hear you whelp, wasn't there a US murder case where the prosecution wanted access to the accused's Alexa recordings? There

was, and it is indeed true that Amazon stores recordings of what you say after the 'wake' word. If you go to Settings, History in your Amazon app, you can listen to and delete these recordings.

The prosecutors were looking for evidence that might have been captured in the background of these recordings, so if you're ever being murdered in your own home, scream: "Alexa, my wife is strangling me for not putting the bins out", and your other half's looking at a 10-year stretch, at the very least. Still, the chances of these brief audio snippets ever being sufficient to form evidence against you are vanishingly small.

The final reason I'm not bothered by Alexa's eavesdropping abilities is that even the known exploits aren't exactly terrifying. On the day I'm writing this column, news websites are frothing about "Alexa being turned into a snooping device!". Except the exploit itself requires hackers to break into your house, remove the base of the Echo speaker and fiddle with its software. Which begs the question: why not just plant a tiny listening device and bypass the Echo altogether?

If you're still not reassured, lay it on the line with your Echo. Say: "Alexa, I want the truth." Just prepare yourself beforehand: you may not be able to handle the answer.



ROPMORE IN A SER PACE OF **ENJOYED** THIS ISSUE? **GET THE NEXT ONE EARLY!**

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 Friday 25 August (8pm)*, you'll receive it through your letterbox before it's available in the shops!

What's inside the next issue:

COVER FEATURE: COMPLETE GUIDE TO NETFLIX

PLUS:

- Try Windows 10 S for free
- Password managers on test
- Shut down automatically

Search the web without typing

*Don't worry if you miss this deadline you can subscribe to Web User at any time!



Subscribe to Web User today and you'll pay just £19.99* for the next 13 issues - that's a 26% saving on the shop price. As an added bonus, you'll also receive a free gift - a 26-piece PC Repair Kit

Subscribe online at

subscribe.webuser.co.ū

or call now on **01795 592 926**

*Includes FREE DELIVERY

Quote offer code: P1717P



Deco M5 Whole Home Wi-Fi System

Connect to your Wi-Fi seamlessly throughout your home.



TP-Link HomeCare™

Protects devices from viruses and malware, with easy-to-use parental controls. Powered by Trend Micro®.



Easy Setup

The Deco App helps you to locate the ideal spot for each unit.







TP-Link ART™

Adaptive Routing Technology automatically assigns your devices to the best Deco unit and Wi-Fi band.

Available from July 2017 at

amazon.co.uk





