

WebUser

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18 - 31 October 2017

/ Best software / New apps / Let's get Physical!

 **STOP
AUTO-PLAY
VIDEOS** p48
Finally – you CAN fix your
biggest irritation online

WhatsApp

The MISSING MANUAL

Incredible things you
never knew it could do **p40** ✓✓



- ✓✓ Free phone & video calls
- ✓✓ Password-protect chats
- ✓✓ Keep your data private
- & Stop people knowing you've read their messages
- ✓✓ Send hi-res photos
- ✓✓ Mute annoying chats
- ✓✓ Don't eat up data



And much more **p40**



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**STOP YOUR ANTI-VIRUS
BLOCKING SAFE SOFTWARE**

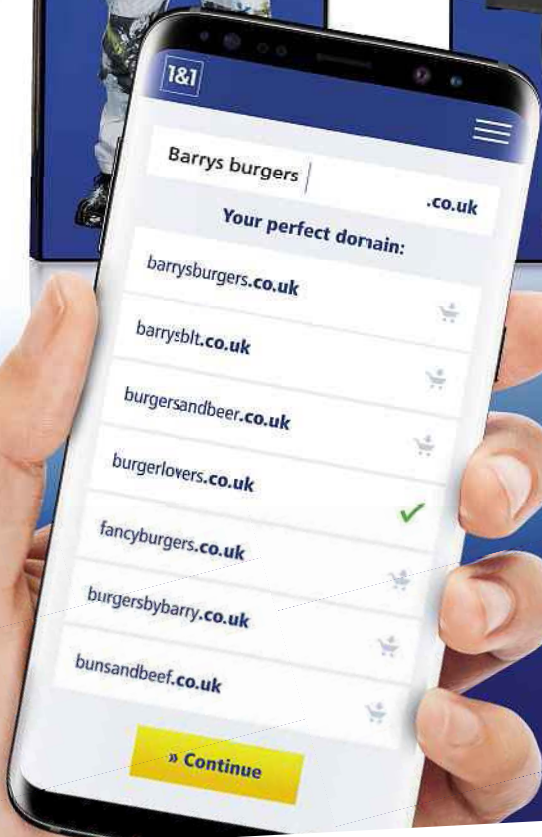
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WhatsApp in your life today?

As with many popular online tools including Google, Facebook, and Netflix – I was a relative latecomer to WhatsApp, suspicious that it might be another tech fad I'd come to just as everyone else was moving on. How foolish I was! Eight years after it launched – and three years after it was bought by Google – WhatsApp boasts more than a billion daily users worldwide. Even the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, who calls WhatsApp's encryption "completely unacceptable", reportedly uses the messaging service, so we've devoted this issue's cover feature to

revealing what's so great about WhatsApp.

From customising your messages and archiving your chats to fixing common annoyances and securing your account, we've packed six pages with every useful tip we could find for the messaging service. Even the most with-it WhatsApp whizzes will learn something new, and those of you still wedded to texts will be tapping that green speech bubble in no time!

Robert Irvine, Editor
robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk
[#webuser](#)



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WhatsApp

THE MISSING MANUAL

Everything you need to know
about the messaging app



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What's New Online

Use less data with Messenger Lite

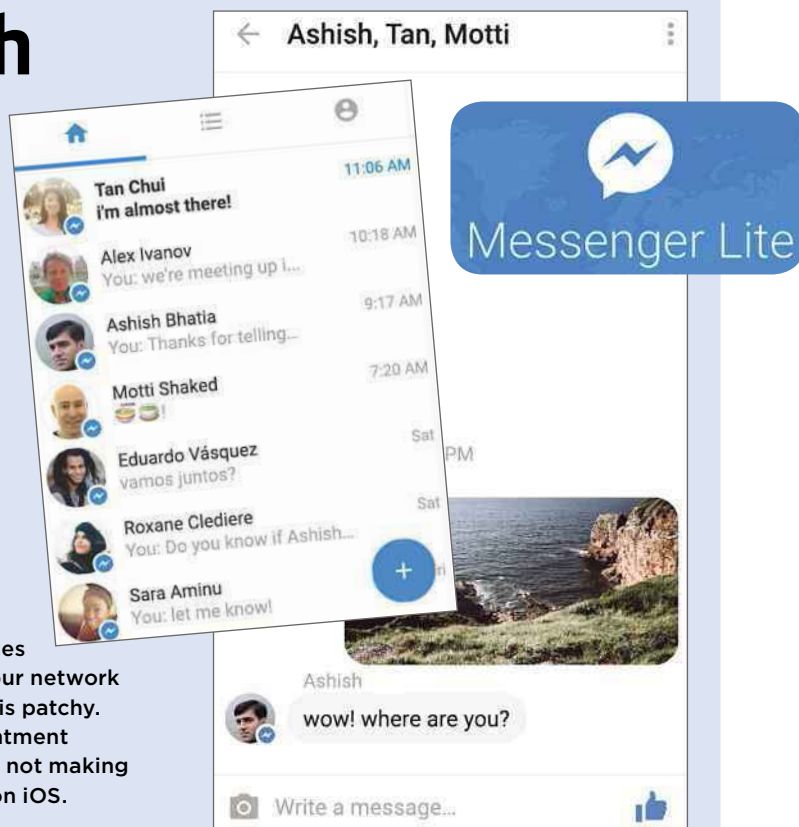
Since Facebook Messenger launched six years ago, the app has introduced a variety of extra features. You can now play games, engage with chatbots, swap videos and share aspects of your life via Messenger Day. However, all these extras eat up data and put a strain on older phones with limited storage and slow processors, and make using Messenger more cumbersome over a slow internet connection.

To tackle this problem, Facebook has finally brought Messenger Lite to the UK after debuting it in 100 mostly developing countries. Just install it on your Android phone or tablet, then log in with your usual Facebook details. You can make free calls over Wi-Fi; send messages, photos, videos and

links; and hold group chats, all without the unnecessary bloat.

Crucially, the app takes up just 10MB of space and uses data very efficiently, making it ideal if you're on a limited mobile plan or just want a faster way of communicating. It also ensures Messenger continues working, even if your network coverage or Wi-Fi is patchy. The only disappointment is that Facebook is not making the app available on iOS.

bit.ly/mlite434



View AR digital-art installations in Snapchat

art.snapchat.com

Think of London's top sights and you may consider Buckingham Palace, the London Eye and Westminster Abbey. But point your phone in the right place in Hyde Park and you'll spot a new one: a giant balloon dog. Created by pop artist Jeff Koons, it's a digital art installation that can only be viewed using the augmented-reality feature within Snapchat. To view the dog, go to the location shown on the website and you'll see a Lens indicator that tells you where to look. Once you've found the location marker, the art will appear on your phone and you can study it in all its glory.

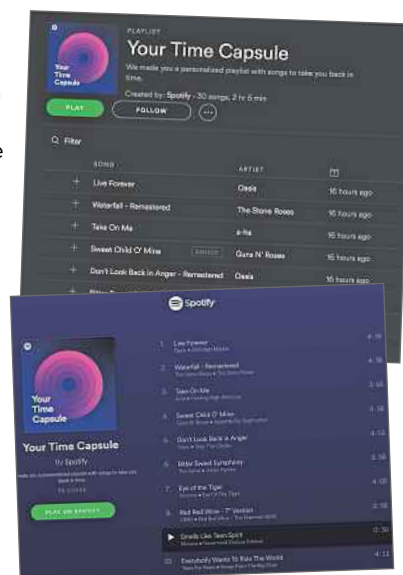
Similar works will also be popping up in Paris, New York, Sydney, Toronto, Rio de Janeiro, Las Vegas, Chicago, Washington DC and Los Angeles. Artists are being asked to submit their art, too.



Revisit the music of your youth

timecapsule.spotify.com

If modern music sounds like a mass of awful noise and you prefer the hits of your youth, then you'll love Spotify's nostalgic new Time Capsule feature. This takes you down a musical memory lane by selecting the songs it reckons you loved back in your teens. To unlock the feature, simply search for Time Capsule in Spotify's desktop or mobile app or go to the above address in your browser. Provided you're over the age of 16, Spotify's algorithms will work out what you're likely to have listened to way back when. You'll then be presented with a personalised playlist of 30 or so songs lasting two hours. We found its choices surprisingly accurate, from Oasis and The Verve to, er, 'Eye of the Tiger'.



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

Check out the UK's music map

bit.ly/ukmusic434

We're not quite sure why famous Georgie Cheryl Tweedy is placed in the North West of England but most of the other artists on this UK music map appear to have rocked up in the right place. Zoom in to see which artists are attached to which region and discover their music genre, most iconic song, weeks in the top 40, number one songs and net worth.



Play Pac-Man with sweets

www.snapchat.com

The pellet-popping arcade game Pac-Man made its debut in 1980 but it's never looked as sweet as this. That's because American chocolate maker Hershey has created a version of the game based on its Reese's Pieces confectionery, which replaces the yellow hero and the chasing ghosts with peanut butter-centred faves. You can play via Snapchat by scanning the Snapcode being promoted on Twitter [@ReesesPBCups](https://twitter.com/ReesesPBCups). Just open the Snapchat app, point it at the code and hold the screen. Alternatively, go to bit.ly/pacman434 in your browser. Swipe or use your mouse to chomp the treats.



See global natural events

worldview.earthdata.nasa.gov

NASA has long let you view natural events from space using global satellite imagery just hours after it's acquired and now it's even easier via its dedicated Events tab. You can speedily locate hurricanes, icebergs, volcanoes and more, and track long-running events across the world by selecting a date. Zoom out from the map to add layers such as place labels and rain rates. What's more, since the URL constantly changes depending on what you're looking at, it's easier to share a specific location with others.



Use superhero emoji in your tweets

www.twitter.com

DC Comics' much-hyped *Justice League* movie opens in the UK on 17 November but you can enjoy a slice of the action today using a new set of superhero emoji that has been released for Twitter. Put a hashtag before the name to see its caricatures, for example [#JusticeLeague](https://twitter.com/#JusticeLeague), [#Superman](https://twitter.com/#Superman), [#Aquaman](https://twitter.com/#Aquaman), [#Cyborg](https://twitter.com/#Cyborg), [#WonderWoman](https://twitter.com/#WonderWoman), [#TheFlash](https://twitter.com/#TheFlash) and [#Batman](https://twitter.com/#Batman).



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5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

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America's famous chain of diners, Denny's, is finally coming to the UK

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

Discover which notable people were born on this day in history

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

It's the start of a new TV season so let Den of Geek steer you towards the best shows

[@rioferdy5](https://twitter.com/rioferdy5)

Follow Rio Ferdinand as he aims to transform from footballer to boxer

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

Get genealogy advice you can trust from *Your Family History* magazine

+ Block 280-character tweets

bit.ly/block434

With Twitter expanding tweets to 280 characters, your feed is set to grow chock-a-block with lengthier prose. Chrome extension Block280 collapses tweets that exceed 140 characters, while letting you read interesting ones in full.

Read Mozilla's online mag

bit.ly/mozmag434

Mozilla's stylish new PDF magazine covers emerging technologies and the internet through a mix of articles, essays and interviews. Learn about the life and death of tech, typography and who controls the web.

Check SNES Mini stocks

bit.ly/snes434

Nintendo is riding a wave of nostalgia by releasing the SNES Classic Mini – a small version of its 1990 console. Stocks of the machine (which includes 21 games) are low but you can check availability via this constantly updated site.

Need to Know

Firefox is reborn with 'twice as fast' Quantum

What happened?

As we reported in our 'Stop using Firefox' feature in Issue 433, Mozilla's browser has slipped in popularity over the past few years, but the new version that's about to arrive may give you reason to switch back.

The battle between the browsers was a two-horse race back in 2008, with Mozilla's Firefox a welcome alternative to Microsoft's Internet Explorer. That year, Firefox held a quarter of browser users, while IE dominated with about two-thirds. Within a few years of launch, Chrome's fast loading times had elevated it to the top spot, knocking Firefox back to a tenth of the market share.

Mozilla is now fighting back with a massive refresh of Firefox's code that it claims will double your browsing speed. The updated browser has already arrived in beta form as Firefox 57, which is a more significant release than it sounds, with Mozilla dubbing it 'Firefox Quantum'. The changes are mostly in the back end, in the engine that powers the browser, but there's also a new interface that ditches Firefox's rounded tabs for a more modern look.

At the same time, Mozilla announced that it will stop supporting Firefox on Windows XP and Vista from June 2018. Chrome has already dropped support for those old operating systems and Microsoft itself no longer supports IE on XP. However, IE8 is still receiving security updates on Vista.



How will it affect you?

Firefox Quantum's great leap forward is that it uses the multiple processor cores that run on many computers. This means that pages load much faster and use less of your PC's memory, so browsing the web with Quantum won't slow down your system like some other browsers do – yes, we're looking at you, Chrome.

The interface is now cleaner and sharper but there's more to the redesign than mere aesthetics: it's been created to work better on touchscreen devices and on larger displays, so Firefox will excel on a wider range of hardware.

For those already using Firefox, one major obstacle to overcome will be the change to extensions.

Older plugins designed for previous versions of Firefox may not work until their developers update them, so it may be worth holding off before upgrading, or checking first on Mozilla's Add-ons site (addons.mozilla.org) to see if a tool you depend on is incompatible with Quantum.

The full, stable version of Firefox 57 will arrive on 14

November but if you want a sneak peek before then, the beta is already available from bit.ly/firebeta434.

If you're still using Windows XP or Vista, it's time to update your operating system. Microsoft no longer updates XP or offers security patches, and running an unsupported browser leaves the door wide open for hackers to access your machine. At the very least, you should upgrade to the latest version of Vista, then you can keep using IE8 to stay safe.

Firefox will continue to receive security patches on both XP and Vista until next summer so there's no need to panic – you've waited this long to upgrade so take the time to back up your machine before you make the switch.

What do we think?

Welcome back, Mozilla – your timing couldn't be better. The open-source developer has explored other projects over the past few years, such as a foray into mobile operating systems, and while those attempts to take on tech giants certainly had some strong points, we're glad to see Mozilla focusing again on Firefox.

Chrome is still a solid browser and Microsoft's Edge has plenty to recommend it, but there's also good reason to switch your browsing away from the US tech giants to a firm that doesn't collect as much of your private data and isn't apparently hell-bent on dominating our lives. For the past few years, switching to Firefox meant using a less capable browser but if Quantum is all it's promised to be, we may no longer need to trade our privacy for a smooth browsing experience.

That may not be a good enough reason for you to switch from Chrome or Edge to Firefox, but more competition in the browser market is good news for all of us. We're delighted to have you back, Mozilla!



Mozilla claims that Firefox Quantum is twice as fast as previous versions of the browser

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

Every Yahoo account affected by breach

What happened?

The massive data breach at Yahoo in 2013 was the biggest recorded hack in history – and it turns out to have been much worse than realised.

Reports last year suggested that as many as a billion accounts were compromised by the hack, but Yahoo has now admitted that every single one of its three billion users was affected by the breach. Yahoo took action to protect all accounts, directly notifying users who were identified at the time as being hacked, forcing password changes and invalidating unencrypted security questions and answers, to ensure they couldn't be used to access an account.

How will it affect you?

If you held a Yahoo account back in 2013, your details were definitely leaked. You may not have used Yahoo's webmail service, but other sites owned by the company, such as Flickr, also require a Yahoo login.

The leaked data does not

include payment cards or bank account data, or passwords in clear text – any passwords leaked would be encrypted or hashed, so it would require substantial effort from hackers to view them. That said, you should update your Yahoo password and change it on any other sites you may have reused it on.

What do we think?

If you're still using Yahoo, it may be time to switch to a new email service. It's taken four years for Yahoo to realise and accept that its entire system was hacked, and this isn't the only major security incident faced by the company – a 2014 breach leaked details of 500 million users. Yahoo is clearly struggling to keep users safe.

No online service is perfect but we all deserve better than this. It's time to back up your emails to your PC, save your contact details, move to a safer provider and, once you're satisfied everyone has your new address, pull the plug on Yahoo.



Ofcom tells ISPs to be more honest



What happened?

Regulator Ofcom is once again cracking down on misleading broadband advertising, in an attempt to ensure customers have a better sense of the speeds they're likely to receive with a new provider.

To help simplify broadband contracts, the regulator has updated its existing codes of practice, which apply to any ISP that has signed up to Ofcom's voluntary set of rules.

Alongside existing rules that ask companies to give customers a range of the estimated speeds they're likely to get, and the right to end a contract without penalty, Ofcom is asking ISPs to share figures on peak-time speeds, which are often slower than average speeds.

How will it affect you?

For most residential users, peak times are between 8pm and 10pm – probably when most of us sit down to watch Netflix or Amazon Prime. If the speed isn't fast enough, you may struggle to stream reliably.

Ofcom also wants to make it easier for customers to leave

a contract if speeds fall below a set minimum. At present, providers have a limited amount of time to fix the situation before customers can walk away. The regulator wants to extend that provision, as well as the wider code, to phone and TV bundles, rather than just broadband-only contracts.

What do we think?

These are all welcome changes, but Ofcom needs to make sure customers are aware that they can walk away from their contracts. The regulator tests ISPs using 'secret shoppers' to check that they are open about speed data prior to signing customers up to a contract, but Ofcom also needs to ensure we know about such changes partway through our contracts. There are plenty of us who don't realise that we can move to a better supplier if we want. Allowing customers to switch providers without penalty will put pressure on ISPs who aren't living up to promises, and ensure we all have the fastest, most reliable broadband we can get.

Google stops letting users peek behind paywalls

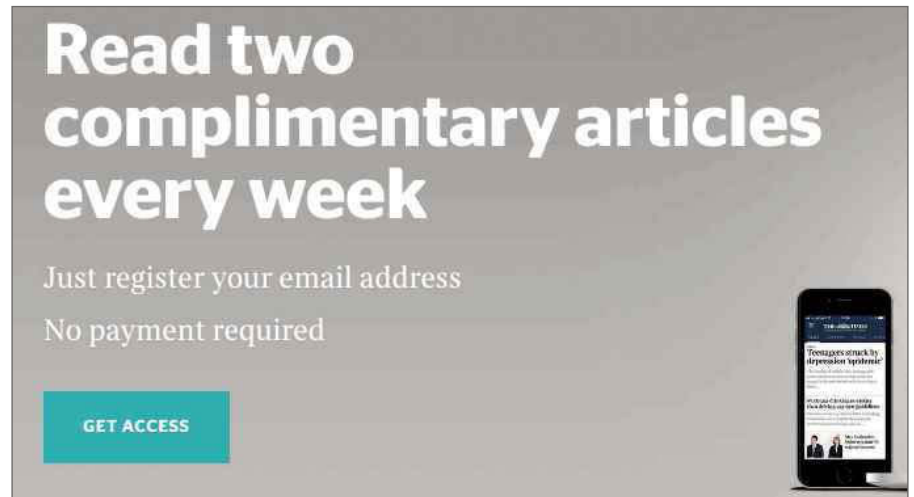
What happened?

Google has ended its controversial policy of requiring publishers to offer at least a few articles for free or risk a drop in their search-results ranking – and has sweetened the deal by sharing user data for subscription sign-ups.

First Click Free was a Google policy that required publishers to offer a set number of articles for free, or risk losing their ranking in search results. Two years ago, to appease publishers who were concerned that Google was giving away their work for free, Google allowed the number of free articles to be limited to three.

That wasn't good enough for some: the Wall Street Journal stopped giving any stories away for free this year, leading to a drop in traffic but a boost in subscribers. Following "months-long experiments" with the New York Times and Financial Times, both of which have paywalls, Google has ditched First Click Free in favour of a new Flexible Sampling policy, which lets publishers decide for themselves the number – if any – of free stories to offer non-subscribers. Google recommends that sites allow 10 free stories each month before imposing a paywall.

The aim is to encourage readers to sign up for subscriptions, suggesting paywalls have beaten out free news, at least for the bigger newspapers.



To make subscriptions easier, Google will share user data with publishers and eventually help news sites offer deals to regular readers.

How will it affect you?

If you regularly visit a site that has a paywall, just to read the allowed number of free articles per month or per week, you may find that things are about to change. This could either be for the better, with more stories available to view for free; or (more likely) for the worse, with a paywall now completely blocking your access. You may even find that, because Google is now sharing user data with publishers, you get

offered a special discount or free trial on a subscription to the site.

What do we think?

We're not big fans of paywalls, but we realise that websites have to earn money somehow, and page-view restrictions are an acceptable alternative to adverts. Google's Flexible Sampling policy certainly seems fairer to publishers, but we hope it doesn't result in more sites erecting paywalls or targeting them at specific users based on data provided by Google. We'd be devastated if Wikipedia or BBC News started limiting us to a few articles a day.



FIRST LOOK

Google Pixel 2 bit.ly/pixel434

For the most part, the Google Pixel 2 is identical to last year's Pixel. Not only is it made by HTC again, but the design has only been slightly tweaked. The power button gets a splash of colour, which makes it a little easier to spot, and while the phone still has a glass panel on its rear, it's now thinner, freeing the rear-mounted fingerprint reader from its glassy prison. It comes in three distinct colours: Kinda Blue, Just Black and Clearly White.

Sound for video and games is improved by the dual front-facing speakers but not everyone will be pleased by the lack of a headphone jack which limits you to USB Type-C headphones or analog headphones with the included adapter.



Inside the Pixel 2, you'll find an octa-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 835 processor and 4GB of memory. The phone comes with either 64 or 128GB of storage but has no microSD slot. Google claims the Pixel 2 has an "all-day

battery", although we didn't have time to confirm this in our short test.

On the back, there's a 12-megapixel f/1.8 camera powered by Google's Imaging Sensor. Google Lens is built in and lets you search the web and your photo library using a picture rather than typing a search query. The camera can also extract information from images, pulling details such as phone numbers, emails and addresses. The Pixel 2's always-on 5in display brings up notifications as usual, but it also has a Now Playing feature that lets you see what's playing in the background.

At first glance, the Google Pixel 2 isn't remarkably different from its predecessor. It may have a handful of new features, but it's difficult to say whether they justify the £629 price tag (or £729 for the 128MB version).



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will Microsoft scrap its Surface laptops?

The death knell is tolling for Microsoft's Surface range if predictions from technology analyst Canals are to be believed. Canals said that Microsoft's CEO, Satya Nadella, is a "software guy, a cloud guy", which means the company's tablet and laptop range is likely to go the same way as its Windows Phone division.

But Nadella's preference for software over hardware isn't the only reason for predictions of demise for Surface. Despite being highly rated by many reviewers, Microsoft has struggled to make money from Surface, and earlier this year the high-end tablets and laptops were branded "unreliable" by a consumer watchdog.

Canals believes the Surface range will be "the first target" in an inevitable cost-cutting drive, and its predictions were backed up by hardware manufacturer Lenovo. "Microsoft is making a lot of money on cloud, making a lot of money on Windows and Office, but losing a lot of money on devices," said Lenovo's corporate president and chief operating officer, Gianfranco Lanci. "Frankly speaking, it is difficult to see why they should keep losing money. For them it is a very difficult exercise to run hardware products business, they need to be careful about every single



detail as the margin on this is so thin."

Over the last three months, revenue from Surface devices has apparently decreased by \$20m (around £15m). As for when the Surface line is likely to meet its end, Lanci suggested 2019 at the latest.

LIKELIHOOD RATING



Microsoft's Surface laptops and tablets are beautifully designed pieces of hardware, but they're also very pricey, so we're not surprised they haven't proved as popular as hoped. With Windows Phone now ditched, we wouldn't be surprised if Surface goes the same way, although it's possible Microsoft may halt its decline by offering cheaper models.



WEBOMETER



WE LIKE...



Messenger integrates Apple Music

You can now discover and play songs directly from Facebook Messenger conversations using the new built-in Apple Music bot. If you're not an Apple Music subscriber, there's a 30-second listening limit on songs.



HMRC blocks dodgy sites

In a bid to crack down on fraudsters, HMRC has blocked one million visits to deceptive websites promoting misleading and costly helpline numbers. Anyone visiting the sites will now be redirected to HMRC's legitimate Gov.uk pages, which provide genuine contact numbers.



WE DON'T LIKE...



Microsoft kills off Windows Phone

Microsoft's Joe Belfiore has admitted that the company will no longer develop new features or hardware for Windows 10 Mobile. However, Microsoft will continue to support the platform with security updates and bug fixes for now.



Phone notifications cause misery

A study by Trent University logged the responses of 50 participants to digital alerts over a five-week period. A third of the notifications triggered negative emotions, with those relating to non-human activity – such as phone updates and Wi-Fi info – having the worst impact.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

IronWire

bit.ly/ironwire434 | From £10

Phone cables aren't designed to last for more than a year, and the amount of pulling, twisting and flexing we put them through means they sometimes don't even last that long. IronWire cables, on the other hand, have been proven to withstand more than 20,000 bends to provide a tough but flexible solution for your phone-charging needs. Formed from a kevlar and nylon braid with 3cm tubing that passes through the charger connectors "for extra protection", IronWire is available in iPhone, Micro USB and USB-C varieties, and is already close to hitting its £2,000 funding target.



Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Apple Macs at risk from bootup bug

Although Macs are widely regarded as much more secure than Windows, Duo Labs has revealed that up to 4.2% of them could be vulnerable to a boot-up bug caused by outdated software.

The security firm analysed 73,000 'real-world' Macs and all updates to the operating system over the last three years to get an idea of how many 'extensible firmware interface' (EFI) updates – which are used to pre-boot Macs – had been released.

It discovered that the EFI had not been updated in many Macs it tested and although some computers had the most recent security patches installed, the pre-boot environment had never been updated, leaving it vulnerable to exploits.

The news is yet another blow to



Apple security. Last month, US security researcher and former NSA hacker Patrick Wardle discovered a zero-day exploit affecting the Keychain within the High Sierra version of MacOS, allowing hackers to access saved passwords without a master key.

Apple said that as a result of Duo Labs' work, it would be reassessing the way it updates machines.

bit.ly/mac434

Equifax breach worse than thought

Equifax has admitted that a further 2.5 million of its customers may have been affected by the massive data breach disclosed last month, taking the total up to 145.5 million. The investigation into how 400,000 Equifax customers in the UK have been affected by the breach has been completed and the information is now being analysed by the firm.

Equifax's systems were reportedly vulnerable since March, but hackers



didn't take advantage of the flaws until May. "The vulnerability remained in an Equifax web application much longer than it should have," said former Equifax CEO Richard Smith. "It was this unpatched vulnerability that allowed hackers to access personal identifying information."

Security personnel noticed suspicious activity on 29 July and ended the hacking on 30 July by disabling the web application. Smith said he was alerted the day after but did not realise the extent of the stolen data. Equifax said there is no evidence the attackers accessed databases located outside the US.

bit.ly/equifax434

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

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



Q Is ransomware a bigger threat than ever?

Peter H Griffiths, Twitter

A Undoubtedly. Ransomware incidents have soared since 2012, with criminals lured by the promise of profit and ease of implementation.

The threat has become stealthier and more destructive, increasingly targeting businesses rather than individuals, where the potential returns are higher.

Last year, the No More Ransom Initiative (www.nomoreransom.org) was launched by the National Hi Tech Crime Unit of the Dutch Police, Europol, McAfee and Kaspersky Lab. Its tools have rescued data on more than 28,000 devices and deprived cybercriminals of an estimated £6.5m in ransoms.

Follow these guidelines to protect your PC from ransomware:

- Back up data regularly.
- Use reliable security



software and keep key proactive detection features – such as Kaspersky Lab's System Watcher – turned on.

- Always keep software updated on all your devices.
- Adopt good 'housekeeping' practices to limit the ability of ransomware to spread and impact data. These include segmenting the network; not automatically assigning admin rights to staff; and

restricting write access to data.

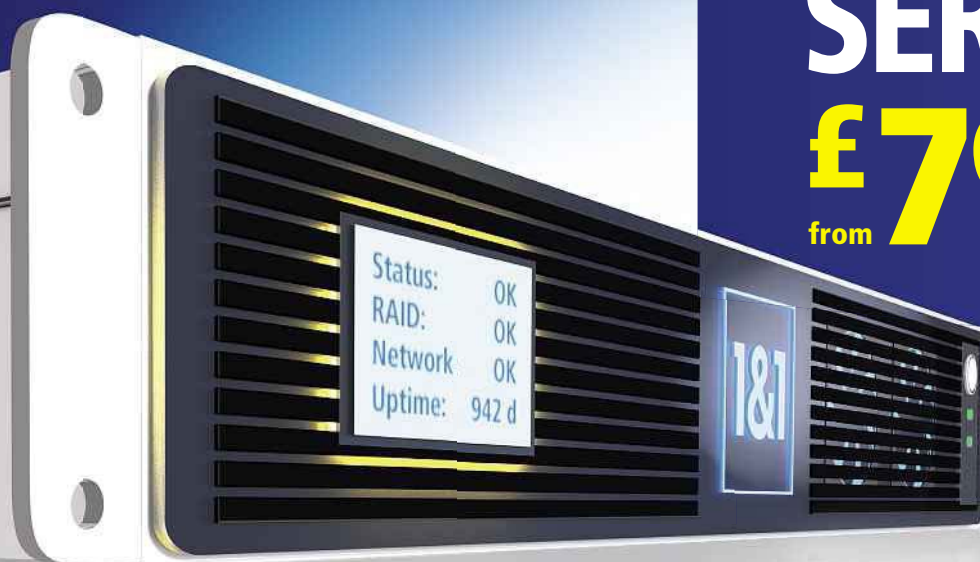
If you're unlucky enough to fall victim to ransomware, don't panic:

- Use a clean system to check the No More Ransom site, where you may find a decryption tool that helps you get your files back.
- Be very wary about paying the ransom. It's no guarantee that you'll get your data back; and every payment cybercriminals receive validates their business model.
- Last, but not least, remember that ransomware is a criminal offence. Report it to your local law-enforcement agency.

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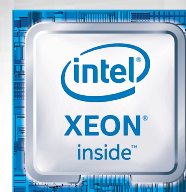
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* Discounted price for a 12 month minimum term contract: 1&1 Dedicated Server XL-32 with HDD, 3 months at £79.99/month, then £99.99/month. Additional charge for SSD storage instead of HDD, £30/month. Setup fee of £49. Prices exclude 20% VAT. Visit 1and1.co.uk for full product details, terms and conditions.
1&1 Internet Limited, Discovery House, 154 Southgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 2EX.

★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

GENEALOGY

NEW

Digital Panopticon

www.digitalpanopticon.org

If you're tracing your family tree or are just curious about the past, this fascinating site lets you browse the records of convicts in British prisons and those transported to the Australian penal colonies. Using tens of thousands of court records from the 18th and 19th centuries, it lets you search for names, offences, sentences and places as well as criteria as in-depth as eye colour, complexion and religion. Click a result to see the crime they were tried for, and the date of their conviction and sentence. You can also display results visually and download data sets. It's a unique resource that proves truly enlightening.

Our rating



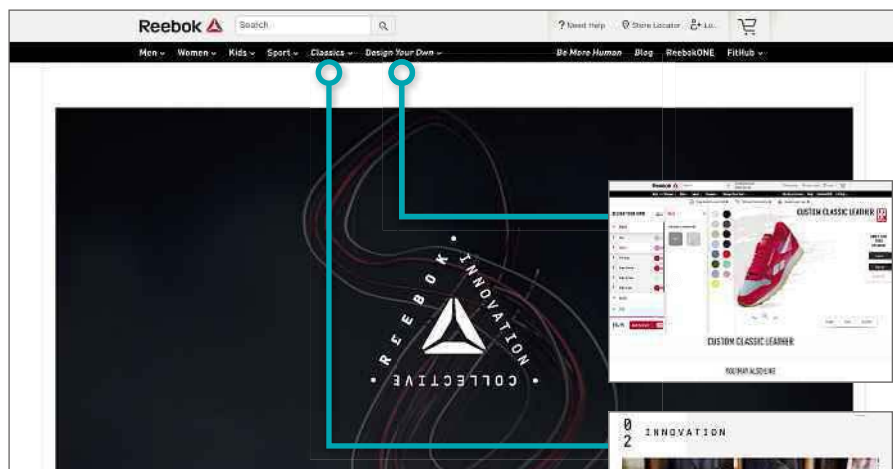
SEARCH

You can search for convicts using criteria including transportation dates



EXPLANATIONS

In-depth background material helps you make sense of the records



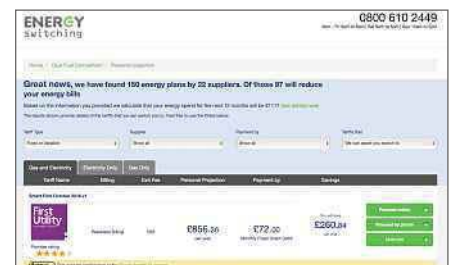
FOOTWEAR

Reebok Innovation Collective

bit.ly/reebok434

Sportswear brand Reebok has had a tough few years but it's putting its best foot forward by focusing on technology as well as comfort. This site introduces you to its latest innovations, showcasing its new textiles and fabrics, and detailing the stories behind some of its cutting-edge products, such as a lightweight space boot. As you scroll down the page, you'll see a mix of video, images and words together with a chance to buy some of brand's most recent arrivals. You can also stay notified of the latest Reebok news and try a cool feature that lets you design your own trainers.

Our rating



ENERGY

Energy Switching

www.energyswitching.co.uk

Energy prices are on the rise so now is the perfect time to consider switching. This site, like several others, compares your current energy deal with market rivals, but what makes it stand out is its simple form that asks for little more than your current supplier and tariff, usage requirements and payment method. We like that the clearly laid-out results include useful info such as supplier exit fees. With highlighted savings, the ability to proceed online or by phone and a button for more information about tariffs, it's certainly a site to bookmark for the discerning consumer.

Our rating



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



BACKGROUND
Learn interesting details about life in London and Australia prior to 1900

CONVICT STORIES
Read about 29 convicts sentenced at the Old Bailey between 1780 and 1913



TRAINS

South Western Railway

www.southwesternrailway.com

Having taken over the franchise once operated by South West Trains, South Western Railway has steamed ahead with this new site. Neatly designed and easily navigable, it puts ticket purchasing at its heart, although its clumsy ordering system has your eyes flitting back and forth between the information you're asked to enter and the booking summary. Despite that, there are lots of welcome features including Nectar points, live travel updates and a Be Inspired button suggesting interesting destinations to visit.

Our rating



GARDENING

Garden Museum

gardenmuseum.org.uk

The Garden Museum – “celebrating British gardens and gardening” – has launched a bright new site that digs deep, discovering what its visitors want and delivering it in spades. To that end, you get a solid feel of what to expect when you visit in person, thanks to large, clear photos, videos of some of the collection and crucial information such as opening times, prices and directions. We love that the café section includes a full menu and that the What's On page lets you buy event tickets online. The FAQ is wonderfully comprehensive and there's an email newsletter, too.

Our rating



HOLIDAYS

National Trust Holidays

bit.ly/trust434

Fancy bedding down in a cottage, bunkhouse, bothie or tent in a picturesque part of the UK? Then check out National Trust Holidays, where you can find the perfect getaway. Search results show the price of accommodation and any potential restrictions, and let you choose flexible dates and filter by facilities and accessibility. The property listings are accompanied by tasteful photos and professional write-ups, along with helpful at-a-glance details, although navigation requires a lot of scrolling. There's no review system, but you can share listings on social media.

Our rating



BACK ISSUES 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





HEALTH

NHS 24 Scotland

www.nhs24.scot

Created by Scotland's national telehealth organisation, this site does a fine job of outlining the services it has to offer. It introduces you to the 111 service and grants you access to the National Service Directory, letting you enter a place or postcode to find the contact and location details of anything from A&E and dentists to GP practices and opticians. It also highlights Smokeline, carer information and its Breathing Space service for anyone feeling anxious or depressed. Getting around the site is simple and there are a range of accessibility functions for visually and hearing-impaired people.

Our rating



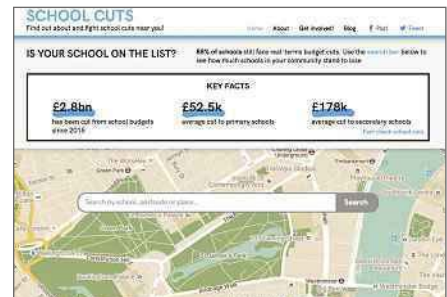
HOME

The English Home

www.theenglishhome.co.uk

Not content with coming up with new ways of doing up your home, this home-design site has had a pleasant makeover of its own. Packed with inspiration and mainly focused on interior decoration, it makes good use of bold, eye-catching imagery to showcase the latest trends. It also pulls photos from its Instagram feed and has a speedy search engine that makes light work of finding what you're after. We were pleased to see a wide range of Buyer's Guides and decorating tips, as well as ideas from leading designers, many of whom helpfully recommend specific companies and products for you to seek out.

Our rating



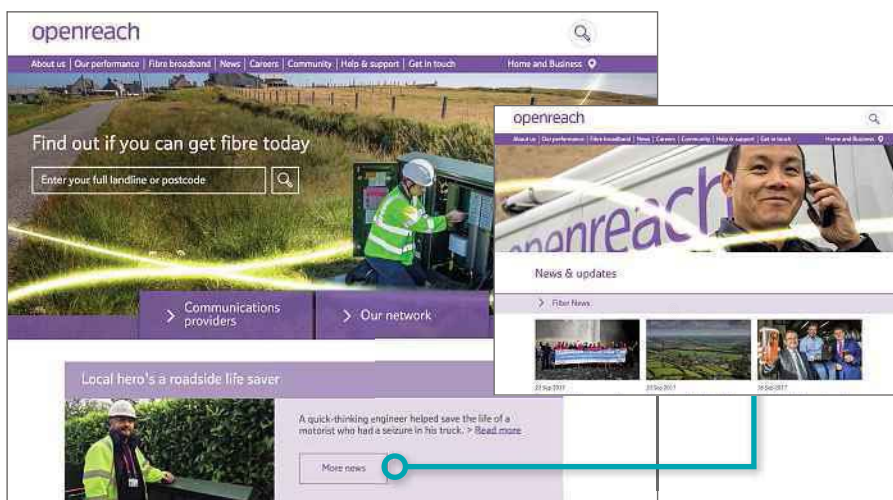
EDUCATION

School Cuts

www.schoolcuts.org.uk

The Department for Education has accused this site of publishing "misleading analysis" but, nevertheless, School Cuts is an intriguing resource for anyone concerned about education. Backed by a host of unions, it lets you search by school, postcode or place to see how much money is being lost, both in total and per pupil. You can also discover how many teachers a school has lost and read some key facts. All the information is sharable on Facebook and Twitter but, sadly, we had to stop short of awarding full marks because some links don't work and the blog hasn't been updated since May.

Our rating



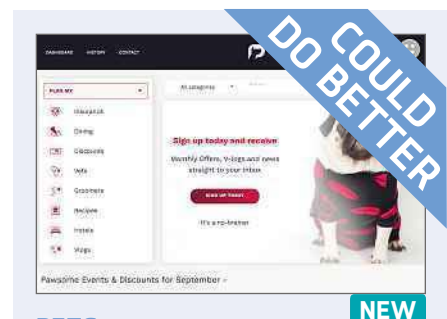
TELECOMS

Openreach

www.openreach.co.uk

All mention of BT has been removed from Openreach's revamped site, after the two companies went their legally separate ways. Openreach has also taken the opportunity to add some flourish to its online offering, delivering a performance dashboard that makes it easier to get help and support and a handy search engine that lets you discover if you can get fibre broadband in your area. This lists all the ISPs that offer the service as well as details about your exchange. You can also learn more about the different types of broadband and check your line for network problems, although this feature could be made more prominent.

Our rating



PETS

Plan Pooch

www.planpooch.com

Plan Pooch is barking up the right tree with its all-in-one approach to caring for your canine. Working with a host of big names from Pets at Home to Petplan, it offers insurance comparisons and discounts while helping you find dog-friendly services and holidays. You can find vets, groomers and suppliers by entering your postcode but, annoyingly, you need to register and there are often no listings for an area. Our insurance enquiries yielded just one result – and clicking details took us nowhere. A little "ruff" around the edges, then. ■

Our rating



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Edge adds CSS Grid compatibility

CSS Grid is a new way of using CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) to lay out web pages, providing a flexible way to position elements on a website. In Issue 421 (bit.ly/webuser421) we mentioned that CSS Grid works with Chrome and Firefox. Since then it's picked up Safari, and now, with the Fall Creators Update, it also works in Microsoft Edge. There are online tutorials to help you learn the basics but we're rather fond of Grid Garden (cssgridgarden.com), which uses a game to make the learning more fun.



Alexa, can I program you?

If you've dabbled in JavaScript and have a bit of programming skill, Codecademy (www.codecademy.com) reckons you're ready to learn how to create voice-activated software for Amazon's Alexa. It's offering a course on programming an Alexa app that's split into two parts: Build Your First Alexa Skill; and Create Your Lambda Function (a service for programmers hosted on Amazon's servers that runs modest programs for free). You can find out more about the course by going to bit.ly/alex434.

Deal of the Fortnight

Pac Web Hosting (www.pacwebhosting.co.uk) is offering '.co.uk', '.uk' and '.org.uk' domains for £5.06 per year, for both new customers and renewals.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Barnaby Puttick,
Director, My Hosting
Bubble (www.myhostingbubble.com)



Q My webhost wants to charge more to make my site secure (HTTPS). Is it worth it?


Matt van der Willik, via email

A Sites secured via HTTPS need an SSL certificate that secures the connection by encrypting data between the browser and the web server. If your site transmits any kind of sensitive or personal information, such as passwords, email addresses, credit cards and the like, then an SSL Certificate is expected.

Prices for SSL vary according to the level of validation that's required. Many web-hosting providers, including My Hosting Bubble, now offer free certificates using 'Let's Encrypt SSL'. This only offers domain-level validation but that's often more than sufficient for the majority of sites.



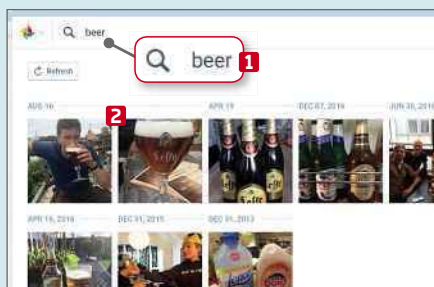
MINI WORKSHOP | Get photos for your WordPress blog straight from Google Photos

WordPress: www.wordpress.com |  10 mins | WordPress site and Google account

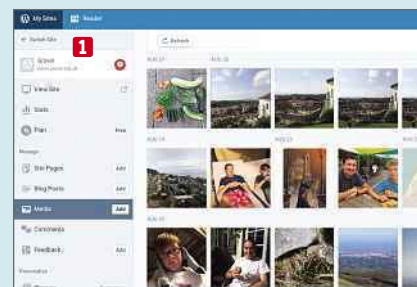
If you use photos from your phone to illustrate your WordPress blog, you can connect your blog's media straight to Google Photos, so that uploading and accessing your images is fast and automatic



1 Go to the position in your blog post where you'd like to add an image from your Google Photos. Click the 'Insert content' button and select the WordPress logo. **1** Choose 'Photos from Your Google library' **2** and select the photos you want. Click the Insert button.



2 One of the great things about Google Photos is that your pictures are sorted and tagged automatically. WordPress can access this information so just type anything into the search box **1** and Google will filter your photos appropriately. **2**

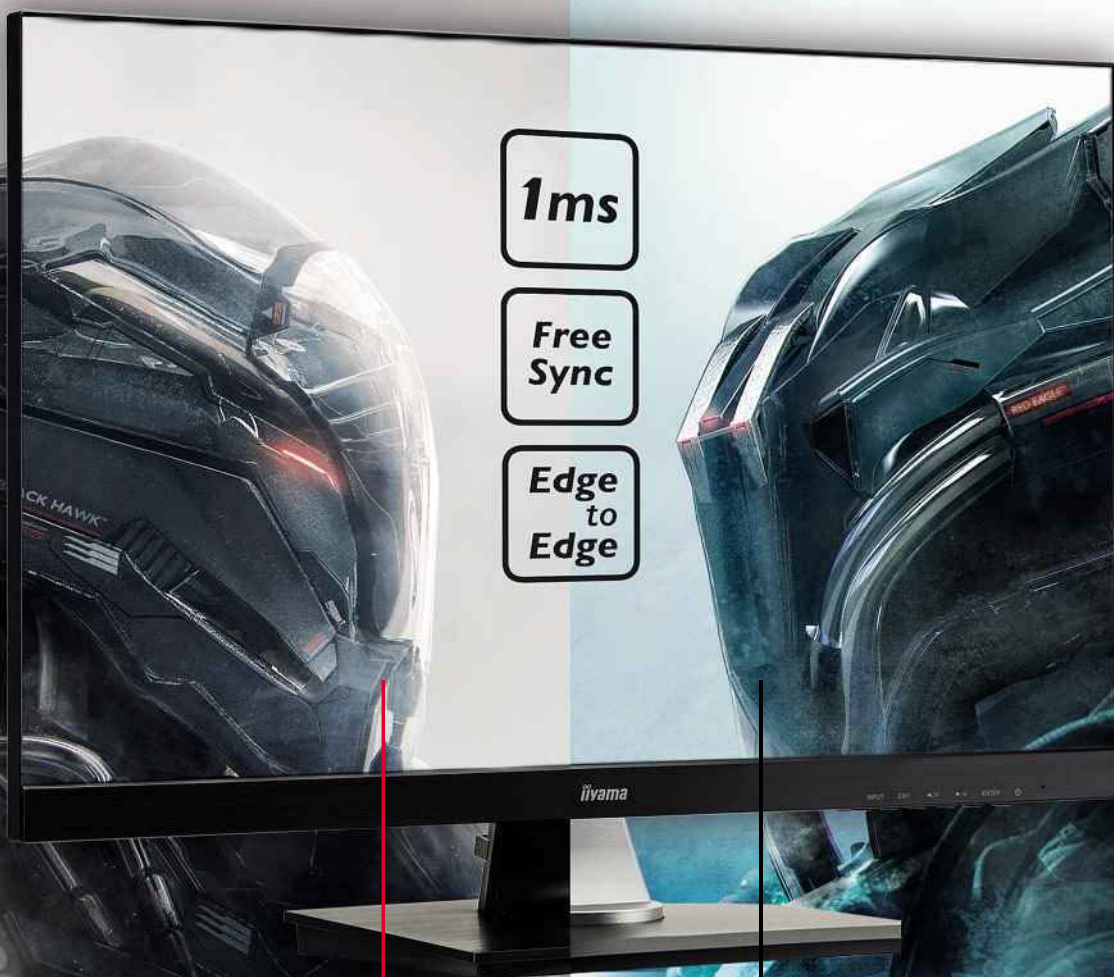


3 You can also add Google Photos integration to a self-hosted WordPress installation but this isn't available through the usual Dashboard interface. Instead, you must have the Jetpack plugin installed (jetpack.com) and access your site from the WordPress.com dashboard. **1**

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What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight

NETFLIX

Watch *Stranger Things* Season 2

From 27 October

When *Stranger Things* appeared on Netflix last July, few people predicted how popular the retro sci-fi-horror series would prove with viewers and critics alike, and Season 2 could be one of the streaming giant's biggest successes yet. Set in the Eighties, in the fictional town of Hawkins, Indiana, the first season focused on the disappearance of a young boy amid paranormal events and the efforts of his friends – and a psychokinetic girl called Eleven – to find him.

The second season is set a year after the first and involves the characters trying to return to normal while also “exploring the bigger mythology”. Winona Ryder returns as Joyce Byers, the missing boy's mother, but the producers have been tight-lipped about what else to expect, aside from saying “it gets pretty crazy toward the end”.

Every episode of Season 2 debuts on Netflix on 27 October – just in time for a Halloween binge-watch – and you'll be able to read reviews on our sister site, Den of Geek (www.denofgeek.com).

Stream classic BBC TV shows for free

When the ill-fated BBC Store launched two years ago, many viewers complained about having to pay again for programmes they'd already funded through the licence fee. The store closes on 1 November and has been sort-of replaced by a new iPlayer category called From the Archive (bit.ly/archive434). This offers more than 450 shows from the BBC vault to stream for free on your computer, mobile device or television.

Current highlights include early David Attenborough documentaries from the Sixties; Kenneth Williams exploring his

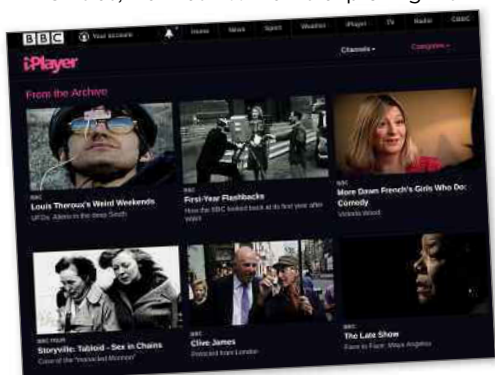
comic roots; *Face to Face* interviews with Martin Luther King, Dame Edith Sitwell and Tony Hancock; and an episode of “influential quiz show”, *Bob's Full House* from 1987. More programmes will be added in due course, with some content available to watch until 2025.



violence and surprise plot twists galore. You can watch it live and on catch-up on Sky Atlantic, via Now TV.

Catch up with *The Apprentice* From 4 October

With Series 13 of the *The Apprentice* well underway, be sure to check out BBC iPlayer's dedicated website for the show (bit.ly/apprentice434) to see exclusive footage of Lord Sugar and his clueless candidates. As well as catching up on recent episodes, which are available to stream for two months – twice as long as usual – you can watch each candidate's audition, view highlights from previous series, apply for free tickets to spin-off programme *You're Fired* and much more.



Watch *The Walking Dead* Season 8

From 23 October

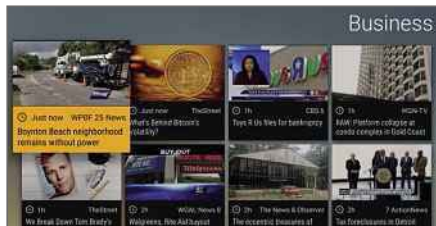
With an extended running time of 67 minutes, the season premiere of the post-apocalyptic series is sure to feature shuffling zombies, grisly



We reveal what's new on Netflix, BBC iPlayer, Amazon Prime Video and other streaming services

Stream the news in Plex

Staying abreast of the news these days is no easy feat, especially when it requires interrupting your streaming, so Plex has come up with a welcome solution. Following the company's acquisition of news service Watchup, it has launched a new feature called Plex News (bit.ly/plexnews434), which lets you stream the headlines from more than 190 news sources worldwide, including CNN, Sky News and CBS News, as well as regional content. Plex News will be rolling out to all users of the streaming service, starting with Plex Pass subscribers, and is supported on Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV, Roku, Android and iOS, with other platforms to follow. The feature is ad-supported and completely free to all.



Buy Amazon 4K films for less

If you wouldn't dream of watching a film at less than maximum resolution,

Streaming across the pond

What's new in the US that we want over here



YouTube's live TV-streaming service, YouTube TV (tv.youtube.com), is now available on selected Android devices in the US. It features all the main US networks – NBC, ABC, CBS and Fox – and their subsidiary channels such as Bravo, Syfy and Disney, as well as YouTube's own Red service, which offers original content and music videos. Shows can be recorded to a cloud DVR (cloud digital-video recorder) to enjoy later. The new YouTube TV app for Android (bit.ly/youtubetv434) is, of course, compatible with Google's Chromecast for streaming to your television.



Will it come to the UK?

Possibly, but at \$35 (£26) per month for 40 channels (with a one-month free trial), it may have trouble luring customers from Sky, Virgin Media and BT TV.

you'll be pleased to hear that Amazon Video has significantly reduced the price of its 4K Ultra HD films and TV shows. Previously, these cost as much as £24 – more expensive than the equivalent 4K Blu-rays – but they're now priced from a considerably more reasonable £3.99 and generally cost around £5.49. The problem lies in finding them,



because Amazon doesn't have a dedicated section for Ultra HD content. Hopefully the launch of its new Fire TV with 4K UHD support (bit.ly/firetv434) will improve the situation.

Readers' Streaming Helpdesk

Email us your TV-streaming queries at webuser@dennis.co.uk

Q I am passionate about watching ATP Tennis, which is currently shown on Sky Sports and Eurosport, but I understand all this is moving to Amazon Prime, which I'm told is some sort of streaming service on the internet. My location has limited broadband speed of around 3-4Mbps, so streaming is very up and down. For this reason, I don't own a smart TV and, besides, I generally record most tennis to watch at my leisure via my Sky box. Have I lost my beloved tennis for ever?

Peter Northrop

A You can watch ATP Tennis online at Tennis TV (www.tennistv.com), the official channel for the ATP World Tour,



which offers live streams of more than 2,000 singles and doubles ATP matches. This also offers apps for Android and iOS, which let you stream over Wi-Fi from your phone or tablet to your TV via a Chromecast. Watching live matches and full replays requires a subscription, which costs £9.99 per month or £89.99 year, but you can watch highlights and classic tennis action for free in the FreePlay channel.

Unlock Klingon subtitles for Star Trek

Netflix has added what is possibly the geekiest Easter Egg we've ever seen to its new *Star Trek: Discovery* series: the ability to view subtitles in Klingon. Yes, the dialogue for every episode has been translated into the alien language, for you to *laD 'ej tlv* (read and enjoy) as you watch. To unlock the Klingon subtitles, just click or tap the Dialogue speech-bubble icon and select that option from the list.



Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

Apple iPhone 8 Plus

Jonathan Bray looks at one of the new generation of iPhones

The arrival of the latest iPhones has been met with the customary fanfare and fuss, and we've had our hands on one of the first to launch – the new iPhone 8 Plus. We've not yet had a chance to review the £999 iPhone X (which isn't available until November) or the £699 iPhone 8, but we suspect that this model hits the sweet spot between price and features.

The cheapest 8 Plus is £799 (so not cheap at all) and comes with 64GB of storage. The 256GB version will set you back £949.

Design

On the face of it, the iPhone 8 Plus and iPhone 7 Plus are virtually indistinguishable: all the external components are in precisely the same locations, both are dust- and water-resistant and both have a Force Touch fingerprint-sensor Home button and

(unfortunately) no 3.5mm headphone socket.

Flip the phone over, though, and there are some obvious differences. The back of the 8 Plus is all glass, flat across most of its glossy surface with a slight upward curve at the edges and no sharp chamfer to dig into your palm. It's too early to say how robust or scratch- and shatter-resistant it is, but we'd recommend buying a case.

The phone can be charged wirelessly (it conforms to the Qi standard) but the extra glass makes it noticeably heavier than the 7 Plus, weighing 205g – that's 17g more than its predecessor.

Display

The iPhone 8 Plus's 5.5in IPS display improves slightly on the iPhone 7 Plus's in our tests. Peak brightness reaches 553cd/m² (candles per square metre) with a full white screen in the browser, 1,365:1 contrast



ratio and spot-on colour accuracy; where the iPhone 7 Plus achieved 520cd/m² and a contrast ratio of 1,350:1. It can't better Samsung's recent screens, though, which reach higher peak brightness levels, use AMOLED panels and smash the iPhone 8 Plus out of the park when it comes to contrast.

The big development on the iPhone screen is True Tone, which measures the colour temperature of the ambient light and matches the white balance of the colours on-screen. This means your brain doesn't have to keep readjusting when you

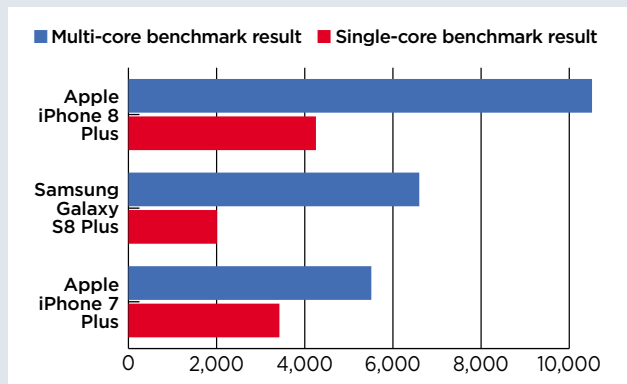
look away from the screen and back again, resulting in more natural-looking images and less eyestrain.

Performance and battery life

The iPhone 8 Plus has seen significant improvement in its performance. The new hexa-core A11 Bionic chip is so good that it batters not only its predecessor but also the Samsung Galaxy S8 and all its Android flagship buddies into submission – see our benchmark results chart, left.

Battery life is decent but not wildly impressive. That's perhaps because Apple has

Performance results



iPhone Options

There's now a bewildering selection of iPhones to choose from, including new and old models. Here's our guide to what's available

iPhone X, £999

To get the latest innovation from Apple, you'll have to fork out nearly £1,000. It's a beauty, though, with a screen that occupies most of the device and a range of new technologies. As Apple's cutting-edge device, it's the most future-proof of all its phones.



iPhone 8, £699

The iPhone 8 is not only considerably cheaper than the iPhone X, it's also smaller, so it fits more comfortably in your pocket. However, it lacks the Plus model's brilliant dual camera and it's still pricey when compared to many similar-sized Android phones.

Older models

You can still get your hands on the iPhone 7 (£549),

iPhone 7 Plus (£669), iPhone 6 (£449) and iPhone 6 Plus (£549). Their design is the same as the iPhone 8 so the cheaper price essentially equates to a reduction in performance, and Apple will be ending support for them sooner.

If you prefer a smaller device, you can still get the brilliant iPhone SE (£349), which has the same performance as the iPhone 6 but in the discontinued iPhone 5S's case.

taken advantage of the extra efficiency of the A11 chip to reduce the size of the battery. It's now a 2,675mAh (milliamp Hour) unit, which is smaller than the iPhone 7 Plus's 2,900mAh unit.

Here, the iPhone 8 Plus's rivals have a clear upper hand. In our video-rundown battery test, which we run at a set screen brightness of 170cd/m² with the phone in flight mode to ensure a level playing field, the iPhone 8 Plus lasted 13h 54mins before giving up. That's a long way behind the Samsung Galaxy S8 Plus and OnePlus 5, which both last well beyond 20 hours.

Wireless charging is an added convenience, though, especially because it's compatible with lots of chargers, including Ikea's Selje nightstands and Varv lamps.

Cameras

A pair of 12-megapixel cameras adorn the back of the phone: one 28mm, the other a 2x telephoto 56mm lens – very similar to the iPhone 7 Plus's. The main difference is that the telephoto camera is now optically stabilised, so it performs better in low light.

HDR (high dynamic range) is now enabled permanently and there's an enhanced Portrait mode, which lets you apply lighting effects to portrait photos that have blurred backgrounds. This works very well, giving you the option to change the look of your portraits both before and after you've taken them.

Video quality is remarkably good, too. You can capture in 4K at up to 60fps (frames per second) and the stabilisation



is superb, working as well on the telephoto lens as it does the regular one.

The front-facing camera is a 7-megapixel unit no different to the iPhone 7 Plus's. It takes highly detailed selfies and, although there's no front-facing flash, the screen can be used to flood your face with light, which improves shots taken indoors.

PRODUCT INFO

Apple iPhone 8 Plus

Price: from £799

Buy from: www.apple.com/uk

SPECIFICATIONS

- Hexa-core, Apple A11 Bionic processor
- 3GB of RAM
- 5.5in 1,920 x 1,080 pixels IPS Screen
- 7 megapixels front camera, 12 megapixels rear camera with quad LED flash
- 64GB or 256GB storage
- 802.11ac Wi-Fi
- Bluetooth 5
- 4G wireless data
- iOS 11 operating system
- 158 x 78 x 7.5mm
- 202g

FOR

- ✓ Great cameras
- ✓ Wireless charging
- ✓ Incredibly fast

AGAINST

- ✗ Same old iPhone design
- ✗ Expensive
- ✗ Heavy

BETTER SCREEN AND BATTERY

Samsung Galaxy S8, £544.95

bit.ly/sam434



MORE AFFORDABLE

Apple iPhone 7 Plus, £669 bit.ly/iph0434



OUR VERDICT



We haven't yet reviewed the £999 iPhone X but we'll hazard a guess that of the three new iPhone models, the iPhone 8 Plus represents the best value for money. However, that doesn't make it the best phone available for the price.

The Samsung Galaxy S8's performance may not be as fast as the iPhone 8 Plus's

but it's not far off, and it's cheaper and has a better screen. It doesn't have dual cameras but its single camera is at least as good as the iPhone 8 Plus's main camera, its battery life is longer and it has microSD card expansion to add storage space. We also think the Galaxy S8 looks nicer, too.

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

However, the iPhone 8 Plus is still one of the best phones Apple has ever produced, and for Apple diehards, it offers the best value of the new range.

Apple TV 4K

Jonathan Bray tests Apple's latest streaming device, which lets you watch 4K content on your TV

A 4K TV (with a maximum resolution of 3,840 x 2,160 pixels) can cost as little as a few hundred pounds these days, so if you're looking for a new streamer, it makes sense to buy a 4K device which will be ready for action and compatible when you next upgrade your TV set.

The latest Apple TV device, announced at the same time as the new iPhones (see page 22) has been upgraded to 4K. However, it's not just the hardware that's been given a boost – 4K movies have now been introduced to the iTunes store and Apple has pledged to keep 4K content at the same price as HD, while converting existing iTunes purchases to 4K for free. If you've paid for any video content on iTunes, this is

a huge bonus.

The device itself is the same size and shape as the previous year's model – its sleek black lines only interrupted by the power, Gigabit Ethernet and HDMI ports. The box provides dual-band 802.11ac Wi-Fi and comes with either 32GB or 64GB storage, which is designed to be used for apps rather than movies.

The Siri remote hasn't changed much, either. Its six buttons provide quick access to core functions such as Siri voice commands, volume and play/pause, with a clickable, swipeable touchpad.

Set up and apps

The device is simple to set up and use. It works out what resolution it needs to provide by checking with your TV and, if you have an iPhone nearby, it will grab your Wi-Fi password and sync any iTunes purchases. With a few more clicks, it'll show off your iCloud photos, too.

You can use the buttons on the remote to browse, but it's even easier to use Siri's voice search tool, which works from the homepage across multiple services, or within individual apps where you can dictate keywords directly into the search field.

Our main disappointment with Apple TV is the limited range of available apps. This is improving, but Netflix and recent addition Amazon Video are still the only 4K options, and its UK catch-up services are very restricted, with no built-in All 4, Demand 5 or ITV Hub apps.

You can use AirPlay for music and video, so even



“Our main disappointment with Apple TV is the limited range of available apps”

if the selection of apps doesn't cover your favourite service, you may still be able to stream it to your TV from another device, but while All 4 can be streamed in this way, both ITV Hub and Demand 5 are blocked.

Unfortunately, we found the resolution and quality of All 4 through AirPlay was low, and it's irritating that, having spent this much on a streamer, you can't use it to stream, for example, *The Great British Bake Off* in HD.

PRODUCT INFO

Apple TV 4K

Price: £179

Buy from Apple:
bit.ly/aptv434

SPECIFICATIONS

- 64-bit A10X Fusion processor
- 32 or 64GB app storage
- Gigabit Ethernet
- Dual-band 802.11ac Wi-Fi
- HDMI 2.0a3
- 98 x 98 x 35mm
- 425g

FOR

- ✓ 4K resolution
- ✓ Free upgrade for existing iTunes movies

AGAINST

- ✗ Expensive
- ✗ Limited catch-up services

OUR VERDICT



If you've ever bought movies on iTunes, the Apple TV 4K is a tempting prospect because your existing purchases will automatically be upgraded to the higher resolution. However, the device's UK catch-up options are disappointing and you'll

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

need to pay for subscriptions to Netflix or Amazon to get streaming 4K content.



AG352QCX

35" ultra-wide curved gaming monitor with **200Hz**

- 2560 x 1080 @ 200 Hz
- 4ms
- MVA Panel
- DVI, HDMI, Displayport, USB 3.0

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OVERCLOCKERS UK

SCAN
computers

amazon.co.uk



Web User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE

BUDGET TABLET

Amazon Fire HD 8

£89.99 from bit.ly/fire433

Tested: Issue 433

Excellent battery life, superb build quality and decent performance make this an excellent 16GB tablet for the price. It's worth paying the extra £10 for this ad-free version, too.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 1.3GHz MediaTek MT8135 processor ■ 1.5GB memory ■ 16GB storage (expandable to 256GB) ■ 8in 1,280 x 800 pixels screen ■ 2-megapixel rear camera ■ Fire OS ■ 214 x 128 x 9.7 mm ■ 369g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

NEW!



BUDGET PHONE

Samsung Galaxy J5 (2017)

£219 from bit.ly/sams432

Tested: Issue 432

Samsung's updated Galaxy J5 does everything you could ask of a budget phone. Battery life is top-notch, the screen is rich and vivid, and its camera quality is excellent.

KEY SPECS

Octa-core 1.6GHz Exynos 7870 processor ■ 13-megapixel front and rear cameras ■ 2GB RAM ■ 16GB storage ■ 5.2in 1,280 x 720-pixel screen ■ Android 7 ■ 146.2 x 71.3 x 8mm ■ 160g ■ Two-years return-to-base warranty



HYBRID LAPTOP-TABLET

Lenovo Yoga Book

£548.97 from bit.ly/lenw431

Tested: Issue 431

The Yoga Book laptop-tablet hybrid genuinely feels like a step forward, with its virtual keyboard and fantastic writing surface that makes it an exceptional note-taking device.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 2.4GHz Intel Atom x5-Z8550 processor ■ 4GB memory ■ 64GB storage ■ 10.1in 1,920 x 1,200-pixel screen ■ 1 x Micro USB port ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ Windows 10 ■ 256 x 170 x 9.6mm ■ 690g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty



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 225.5mm ■ 880g ■ Two-years return-to-base warranty



SSD

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



SOFTWARE & SERVICES

INTERNET SECURITY

Kaspersky Internet Security 2018

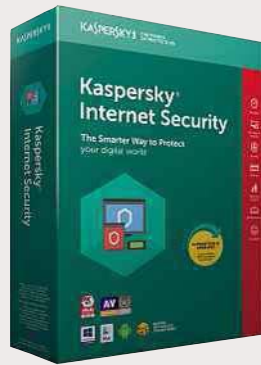
£19.95 from bit.ly/kaspersky2018

Tested: Computeractive Issue 493

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

KEY FEATURES

Antivirus and firewall tools ■ Protects online shopping and banking ■ Identity and privacy tools ■ Dangerous-website alerts ■ New software updater ■ Secure-connection VPN ■ Advanced ad-blocking system ■ Multi-device version ■ Compatible with Windows 10



Web User Gold Award winners

HOME-SURVEILLANCE SOFTWARE

Ivideon

Free from bit.ly/ivid433

Tested: Issue 433

Simple to set up and use, Ivideon is ideal for monitoring one or two cameras and lets you store footage for 24 hours.



PDF READER

Sumatra PDF

Free from sumatrapdfreader.org

Tested: Issue 432

Sumatra's simple, user-friendly interface doesn't overwhelm you with unnecessary features. It's one of the fastest PDF readers available.



PASSWORD MANAGER

Sticky Password Premium

From £19.95 per year from

www.stickypassword.com

Tested: Issue 431

Packed with features, this password manager is very secure and good value for money.

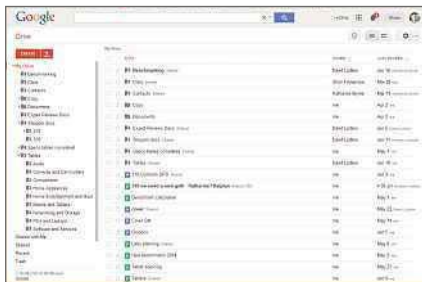


ONLINE STORAGE

Google Drive

From free from drive.google.com

Tested: Issue 389



Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage with the option to buy more if you need it. The Windows software integrates seamlessly with Explorer, so saving and syncing files is like keeping them in any other PC folder.

KEY FEATURES

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

FILE-COPYING TOOL

TeraCopy

Free from bit.ly/ter430

Tested: Issue 430

TeraCopy is very easy to use and offers lots of useful features. Its handy shortcuts make regular copying tasks much faster.



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.



WEB USER BACK ISSUES DISCS

Search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon

EVERY ISSUE FROM
2014 TO 2016



Best Free Software

SYSTEM UPDATER

Driver Booster 5 Free

bit.ly/driver434

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

File size: 17.1MB

Having old, incorrect or broken hardware drivers installed on your PC can lead to problems. Windows – especially Windows 10 – does a good job of ensuring you have the correct, up-to-date drivers installed, but if you want to be certain that's the case, you can use Driver Booster to check for you.

This free software scans your system for old or missing drivers, and presents you with an easy-to-understand list of its findings. You can then update individual drivers – or the whole lot – with a single click. There's no catch,



and the process is quick and painless.

The latest version of the program only supports drivers that have passed the WHQL (Windows Hardware Quality Labs) test, so they should be safe, and all downloads are now performed over a more secure HTTPS connection. A new driver-compression algorithm means downloads complete much quicker, too.

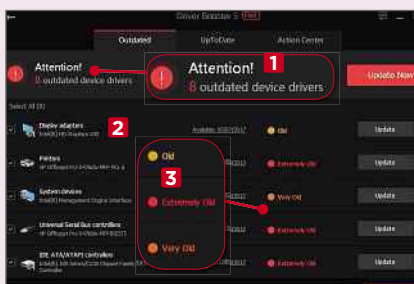
Driver Booster's interface has been updated and the software now comes with some useful tools that you can use to fix common problems, such as lack of sound, network failure and poor

resolution. It can also clean up after unplugged devices and provide you with detailed system information. Should you encounter problems after updating your drivers, you can use the System Restore option to roll back the changes.

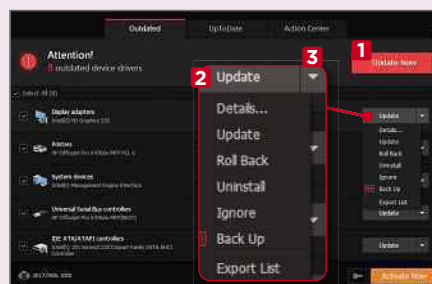
If you require more features, the paid-for Pro version of Driver Booster, which costs £20.51 a year for three PCs, has a database that's 200% larger. This offers more than one million drivers and delivers faster downloads, automatic updates and the ability to back up and restore drivers.



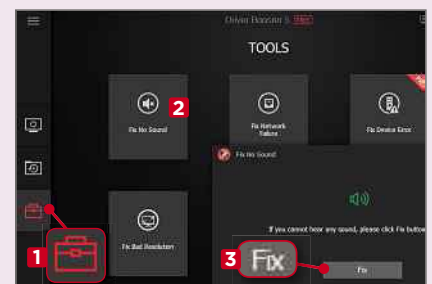
MINI WORKSHOP | Update your drivers using Driver Booster 5



1 Run Driver Booster and it will automatically scan your system and present you with its findings (you can rescan at any time). The banner at the top **1** provides a summary of the number of device drivers available to update, with the detailed list below. **2** Each item is colour-coded depending on how old it is. **3**

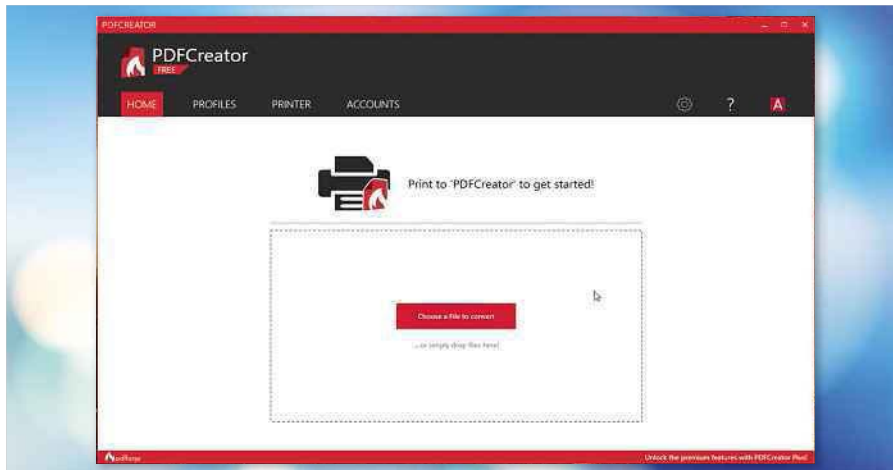


2 You can replace all problem drivers by clicking Update Now. **1** Alternatively, click the Update button next to an item **2** to install the latest version for it. Click the down arrow next to the button **3** to view the driver details, update it, roll back, uninstall it, ignore it or export the list for later viewing.



3 Once that's done, go back to the main screen and click the toolbox icon in the small sidebar on the left. **1** This provides tools for fixing common PC problems, such as lack of system sound. **2** Click the tile you require and a troubleshooter will open. Driver Booster will then detect and fix the problem. **3**

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



PDF TOOL

PDFCreator 3

www.pdfforge.org

Min requirements: Windows Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 28.8MB

There are lots of ways you can turn files and documents into PDFs. PDFCreator is one of the more advanced free solutions and lets you print a PDF from almost any application. It provides a wealth of settings that let you customise your document to your heart's content. The latest version introduces a new interface and a profile-settings option, as well as accounts for improved workflow. Be sure to decline the bundled junk during installation.



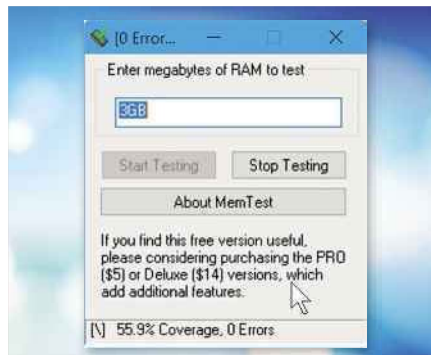
BROWSER TOOL

Browser History Spy 5

bit.ly/bhspy434

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 3.8MB

This useful tool lets you instantly view and recover your internet history. It works with all major browsers including Firefox, Chrome, Opera and Internet Explorer, and detects the relevant history database file based on your browser's current configuration. This major update is fully Windows 10 compatible and sports an updated interface, and can now automatically sort history by date.



MEMORY TOOL

MemTest 6

bit.ly/mem434

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 16.5KB

Problems with your PC's memory can lead to freezes or crashes. MemTest is a tiny program which runs a series of tests looking for faults with your computer memory. To use it, you first need to enter the amount of memory to test. Although the latest version has been optimised for PCs with more than 4GB of memory, you will need to launch multiple instances of the software to test it all.

New Windows Apps

Paint.NET

bit.ly/paint434

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 58.5MB

The popular image editor is now available as an app for Windows 10. Unlike the desktop version, it's not free and currently costs £4.19, though there is a free trial available.



Torrent Gear

bit.ly/tgear434

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 3.4MB

This BitTorrent client for Windows 10 is designed to be easy to use, which also means it lacks some of the advanced features typically found in desktop torrent clients.



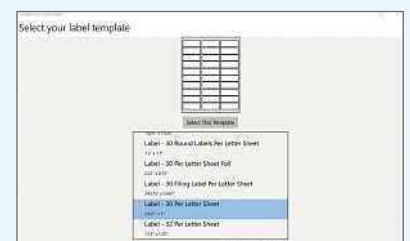
SimpleOne Label Maker

bit.ly/label434

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 23.1MB

This free app lets you create and print your own labels. It supports mailing labels, address labels, and square, round and oval shapes. You can print single labels or full sheets.



ANTI-MALWARE TOOL

Bitdefender Ransomware Recognition Tool

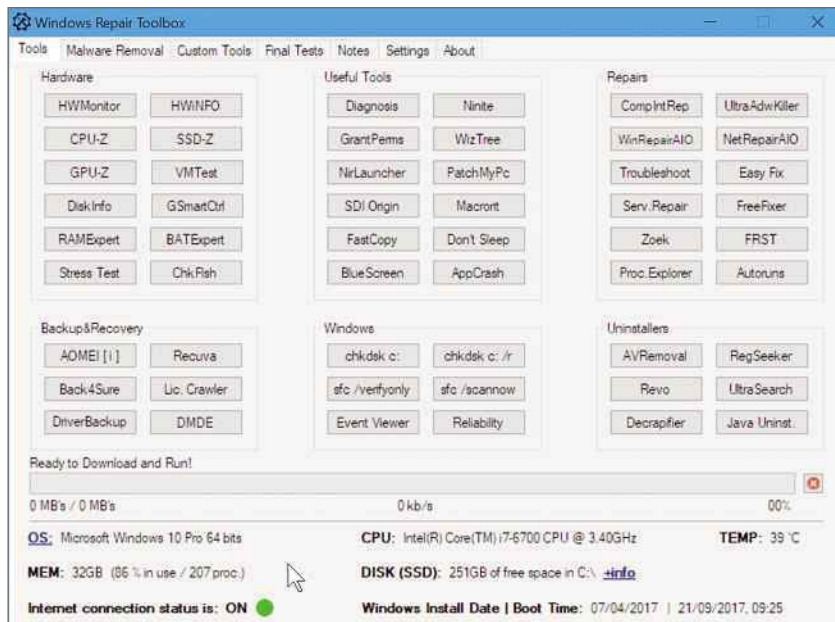
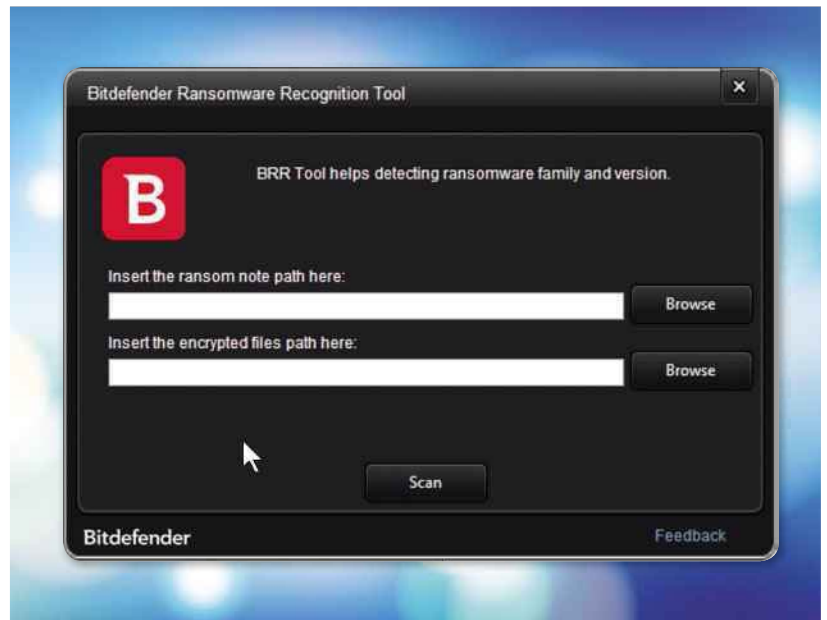
bit.ly/bitdefender434

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

File size: 11.3MB

As you are no doubt aware, ransomware is one of the nastiest forms of malware around. It hijacks your system, encrypts your personal data and then demands a fee to (possibly) unlock it. If you're lucky, there may be a free way to get your data back, but you'll need to know the name of the ransomware you've been hit by. This is where Bitdefender's free Ransomware Recognition Tool comes in.

Run the program and enter the location of the ransom note or some encrypted files. It will then attempt to identify the ransomware and link to any available tools that may be able to unlock your files for free.



SYSTEM TOOL

Windows Repair Toolbox 2

windows-repair-toolbox.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 3.5MB

Windows can go wrong in lots of different ways but thankfully, there are plenty of tools you can use to solve whatever woes you're having. Windows Repair Toolbox offers an easy-to-use front end for a large selection of freeware tools, sorted into categories such as Hardware, Useful Tools, Repairs, Backup and Recovery, Windows and Uninstallers. Just click a button for any tool, and it will download and run.

There are tabs along the top of the interface that give you speedy access to malware-removal programs, custom tools (to which you can add your own), testers, notes and settings.

VIDEO EDITOR

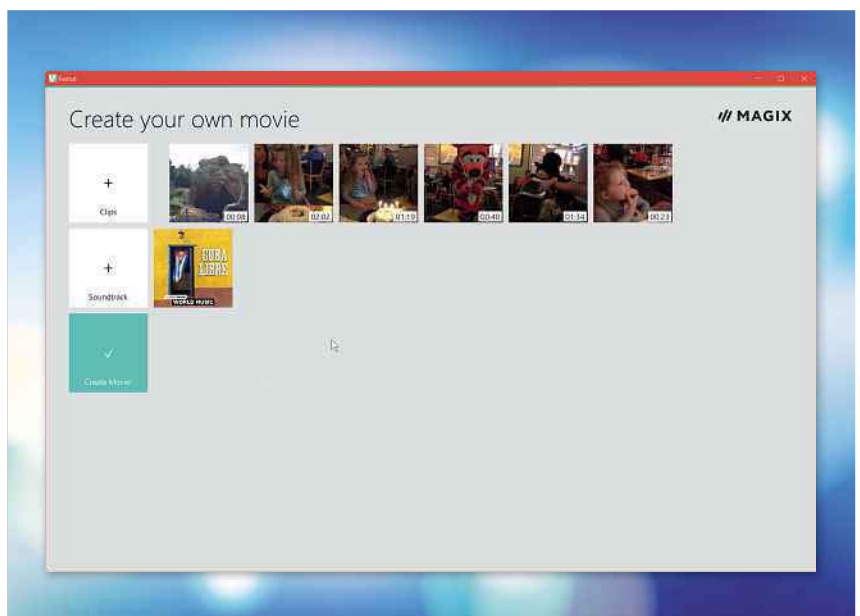
Magix Fastcut

bit.ly/fastcut434

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 241MB

Fastcut, from German software developer Magix, is a simple video-creation tool that turns a collection of clips into a movie in just a couple of mouse clicks. Click Start, select some clips to add, then click the Soundtrack button and choose some music. Nine tracks are available for free, and you can buy additional ones from the store (sadly, you can't add your own music). Finally, click Create Movie to preview the results.

The video is cut to match the soundtrack and if you're happy with it, you can export your film in MP4 format. See our feature on page 46 to see how Fastcut compares to similar tools.





GAME

Crowd Control

bit.ly/crowd434

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10 or MacOS **File size:** 28.2MB

In this rocking arcade game, you play a crowd-surfing guitarist. Left-clicking speeds up your movement, helping you to travel further, while right-clicking causes you to jump, hopefully up and over the security guards who are out to stop your fun. It's quite tricky to play, and at times the randomness makes it not entirely fair. But hey, that's rock and roll for you!

Don't install...

Photopainter

www.eusoftware.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7
File size: 2.8MB

Want to pay \$30 (£23) for a program that hasn't been updated for 10 years and may not even work in Windows 10? We thought not. Photopainter is a tool that lets you create works of art and retouch photos using its "natural-media digital painting tools" but with so many free art programs out there, why would you bother?



...Install this instead

Fotowall

bit.ly/foto434

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10 or Linux
File size: 10.1MB

Fotowall lets you create original art, wallpapers, postcards and covers. Just add some content, such as images from your computer or the web, live video from your webcam and/or text, and then play around with it. You can reposition the items; rotate, resize and caption them; add borders; apply filters and effects; and change the background colours. There's also a feature called 'wordcloud' that generates a collage of words from any text file. Your creations can be saved as an image, wallpaper, PDF or SVG file, or as a poster. You can also send them straight to your printer.



UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



SECURE BROWSER

Tor Browser 7.0.6

bit.ly/tor434

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10, MacOS or Linux
File size: 50.9MB

As we explained in Issue 432, Tor Browser safeguards your privacy on the web by using the Tor network to disguise where you're browsing from. The latest version updates both Firefox (the browser it's based on) and Tor, and fixes some security bugs.



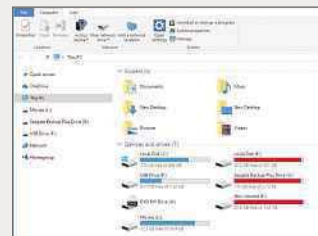
HARD-DRIVE TOOL

WizTree 3.12

antibody-software.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 2.9MB

WizTree is a speedy drive analyser that provides a visual representation of the files and folders that take up the most space in a nominated drive. The latest version fixes a problem with names not being displayed correctly if they contained certain characters, and also adds new translations.



FILE MANAGER

Clover 3.3.9

ejie.me

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8/10
File size: 5.9MB

Clover is a tab-based alternative to Windows Explorer that lets you jump between multiple open folders and bookmark your favourite locations. This update improves Clover's start-up speed and fixes a problem with false positives, as well as bookmark crashes in Windows 10.



SYSTEM CLEANER

CCleaner 5.35

www.piriform.com/ccleaner

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 9.4MB

Due to a recent hack (which we reported in last issue's News section), the popular system-cleaning tool has been updated for a second time this month. The latest version ensures all future builds get signed with new Digital Signatures. ■

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Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

Measure your privacy exposure online

It's impossible to go on the web without someone or something trying to track you – usually advertising servers and analytics tools. Most of these trackers are harmless but they still invade your privacy, so it's useful to know which websites are the worst for spying on your online activities. Step forward uBO-Scope (bit.ly/uboscope434), which measures your 'privacy exposure' on every site you visit. This is presented as a score showing the number of third-party connections that could potentially track you. Click a cell in the toolbar panel to see the name of the tracker and its prevalence across other sites you've visited today – for example, Google Analytics appeared on 67% of sites.

If you're using a reliable content blocker, such as uBlock Origin (from the same developer), you should have a low exposure score. Try turning it off to reveal the full horror of hidden trackers on the current page. The uBO-Scope add-on is also available for Firefox (bit.ly/ubofire434).



Control Chrome using quick commands

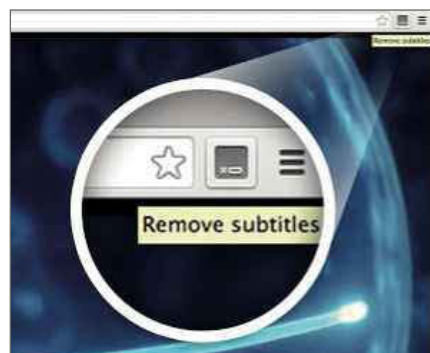
There are lots of keyboard shortcuts that work with Chrome, but aside from the most common – Ctrl+C, Ctrl+F, Ctrl+Shift+T – the majority are easily overlooked. A new Chrome extension called Cato (bit.ly/cato434), which has nothing to do with the Pink Panther's manservant, provides a simple alternative to shortcuts and a relief from endless mouse clicking. It lets you perform dozens of everyday tasks by clicking its toolbar button and typing a letter that appears in the desired command. For example, type c and you'll be given one-click options to copy the URL of the current page, change the tab you're viewing, show all available commands and more. Cato is quick and



easy to use, and you can customise the colour and size of its background and text to suit your taste and needs.

Forcibly turn off subtitles on Netflix

If you use a VPN to watch Netflix films and TV shows outside the UK (which is naughty, but let's not be naïve), you may find your view obscured by subtitles that can't be turned off in the usual manner. This often happens in regions where the first language isn't English and you're forced to watch content with text on the screen. Unsubtitle for Netflix (bit.ly/unsubtitle434), as you can guess from its name, lets you turn off the unwanted closed captions simply by clicking its toolbar button. Naturally, it won't work when the subtitles are part of the actual show or movie!



Block online adverts using flowers

One drawback to using an ad blocker (other than depriving content creators of essential revenue) is that it leaves gaps in websites, and makes them look bare. Green Gallery Green Screen



(bit.ly/green434) solves this problem by replacing banner ads with sumptuous pictures of flowers or, to be more precise, floral art "designed by world-famous creatives". The images include rugged roses from tattooist Henk Schiffmacher and "avant-garde 3D flowers" from design label Pigalle. As with other ad blockers, you can whitelist sites on which to disable the add-on or turn it off altogether. It's a blooming good idea, although we found the botanic replacements rather repetitive.

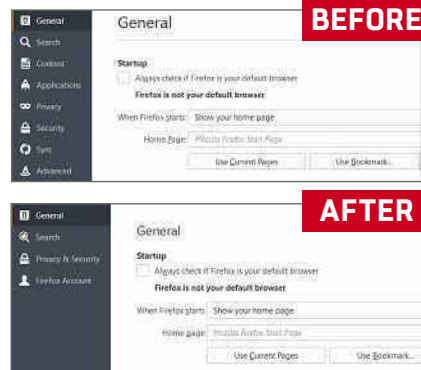
This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more



FIREFOX

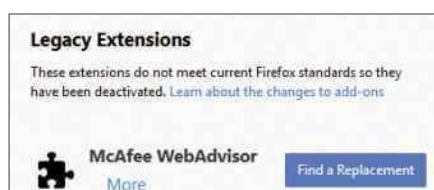
Restore the old Options page in Firefox 56

In last issue's 'Stop using Firefox' feature, we had a bit of a moan about Mozilla's "if it ain't broke, let's fix it anyway" attitude to its browser, and if you've poked around the latest version (56), you'll have spotted a prime example in the form of the redesigned Options page (also known as 'about:preferences'). Formerly organised into eight sections, there are now only four: General, Search, Privacy & Security and Firefox Account. Fortunately, for those of you desperately scrolling around to find specific settings in the new streamlined layout, there is a workaround that restores the former design, at least until you're ready to embrace the future (ahem). Type `about:config` into the address bar, press Enter and agree to the warning. Search for the preference 'browser.preferences.useOldOrganization', double-click it to change its value to 'true' and the Options page will revert to its old design. Changing the value to 'false' will slim it down again to its new look.



Find replacements for outdated add-ons

Also in our last issue, we warned that on 14 November, when Firefox 57 is released, you won't be able to use many of your favourite add-ons unless they've been upgraded to WebExtensions. To address this problem, Mozilla has added the option to find replacements for your 'legacy' add-ons that work in the updated browser. Open the Add-ons Manager in Firefox 57 and click 'Show legacy extensions' to see a list of 'deactivated' add-ons that are no longer supported, accompanied (where possible) by 'Find a Replacement' buttons. Click this to open a collection of similar tools, which you can sort by name, popularity or the date the add-on was upgraded to a WebExtension. These can be installed in the usual manner. We looked for an alternative to McAfee WebAdvisor and were recommended uBlock Origin, Privacy Badger and – rather bafflingly – Emoji Cheatsheet.



Get inspired on your New Tab page

In this time of uncertainty for Firefox (yes, we'll stop going on about it soon), we're delighted that one of our favourite Chrome extensions, Momentum, now has an unofficial version for Mozilla's browser called Momentum Dashboard (bit.ly/momentum434). This works in exactly



the same way, customising your New Tab page with beautiful photos and inspirational quotes, displaying the time and weather for your location, and greeting you by name every morning, afternoon and evening. Momentum also lets you set a goal for the day to keep you focused, create a to-do list and then tick off tasks as you complete them. And yes, it is a future-proofed WebExtension.

OTHER BROWSERS



Search securely using StartPage

The privacy-focused search engine StartPage (www.startpage.com) delivers speedy and accurate results from Google and other providers, but without harvesting your data or tracking you. StartPage Search Extension (bit.ly/start434) brings these benefits to Opera, letting you search the web using StartPage either by typing sp into your address bar and



pressing Space or by right-clicking highlighted text on a page and choosing 'Search StartPage for...'. You can turn search suggestions on or off in the add-on's options and block results from specific search engines including Bing, Yahoo and Yandex.



Install Grammarly in Edge

The latest extension to become available for Microsoft's Edge browser is the popular spelling and grammar checker Grammarly. This brilliant tool prevents you from making embarrassing mistakes on Gmail, Facebook, Twitter and virtually anywhere else you write on the web. It scans your text for common grammatical mistakes, underlines them to show you where you've gone wrong, suggests corrections and provides detailed explanations for your errors. To use Grammarly in Edge, create a free account at www.grammarly.com, then install the add-on from the Windows Store (bit.ly/grammarly434) and sign in.



Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight

SECURITY

Avast Security

www.avast.com/android

 (varies)

The Android app variously known as Avast Mobile Security (on Avast's website), Avast Antivirus & Security (on the Google Play Store) and Avast Security (on its own home screen) has brought in a brace of new features – but only one, Photo Vault, is free(ish).

Photo Vault lets you protect your sensitive photos by encrypting them with a PIN. It's fairly easy to set up (see our Mini Workshop, right), but it's not perfect. Encrypted photos remain visible in cloud-based backup apps such as Google Photos, and the free version of Avast Security only lets you lock 10 photos. For unlimited encryption, you'll need to fork out £1.89 per month (or £7.49 per year) via an in-app purchase.

The two other big new features, App Locking and Power Save, are both for paying subscribers only – though you do get a free 14-day trial.

With Avast's latest research revealing that Android phones and tablets were targeted by 1.7 million attacks per month in the second quarter of 2017 – up 40% on 2016

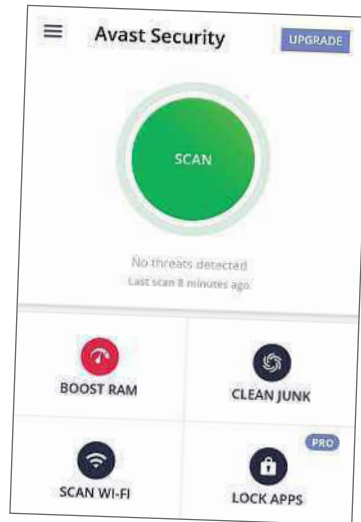
(bit.ly/avstats434) – we're pleased to note that the app's malware-scanning functions have been improved without being locked behind a paywall.

The main Scan button checks your devices for intruders such as rootkits and fake apps, while the Scan Wi-Fi button checks your router. There's also a free Boost RAM tool for killing background processes; and a Clean Junk tool to round up 'unnecessary files'.

The adverts and upgrade prompts are annoying, and the notifications that plague your home

screen are positively infuriating. But that's par for the course from a free antivirus app and Avast Security is less of a drain on your battery and system resources than many of its rivals.

UPDATED



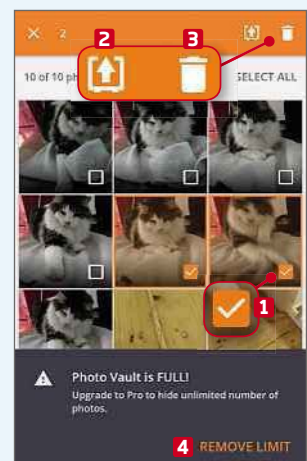
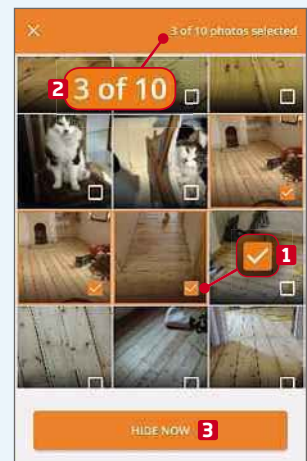
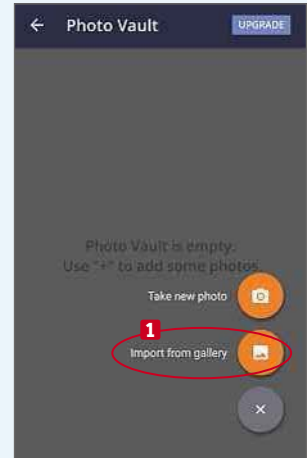
MINI WORKSHOP

Protect your sensitive photos using Avast Security

1 Install and launch Avast Security. Tap Get Started, then Continue With Ads. Tap the menu icon, then select Photo Vault and press the plus symbol then 'Import from gallery'. **1** Tap your email address to select it for PIN reset, choose a PIN by tapping four digits, then tap again to confirm. If you have a fingerprint sensor, tap 'Set it up' to use it instead of a PIN, or Not Now to skip.

2 The Vault Image Picker screen opens automatically. You'll have to enter your PIN next time – or, indeed, to open Avast Security at all. Swipe up through your photos and select up to 10. **1** Tap to tick, then again to untick – long-pressing does nothing. You get a tally at the top showing how many you've selected. **2** Select Hide Now to encrypt ticked photos and save them to your vault. **3**

3 The Photo Vault screen now opens, displaying your PIN-protected photos. Press a photo to view it. To decrypt photos and restore them to your device's gallery, tick them **1** then tap the Export icon. **2** The bin icon deletes them from your device completely. **3** To buy an in-app upgrade and encrypt unlimited photos, tap Remove Limit. **4**



Our rating



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

SCIENCE

BBC Pandemic

bit.ly/bbcpan434

 4.4  10

2018 is the centenary of the Spanish flu outbreak that killed 100 million people worldwide. If you think a similar catastrophe is unlikely today, you'd be wrong – flu pandemic still tops the UK government's Risk Register of threats. The BBC's latest citizen-science project aims to predict the spread of the next deadly outbreak by tracking users' approximate movements over a 24-hour period. All data is collected securely and anonymously, and the results will feature in a major BBC Four documentary next year.



Our rating



PRINTING

Printt

printtapp.com

 4.3  9

You don't have to own a printer or a computer to print for free – just install this app by clicking the download links at the bottom of the website's FAQ. Printt was created for students but you don't have to be in education to use it – although you do need to register, then endure small ads on your printouts. It's easy to use – just upload your documents and print them using any Printt-enabled printer, which you can locate by using the app's map. If and when Printt expands beyond the UK, it could prove very handy if you need to print something while you're on holiday.



Our rating



CUSTOMISATION

Computer Launcher

bit.ly/launcher434

 4.1

Turn your phone or tablet into a mini Windows 10 computer (sort of), using this redesigned app that replaces your default Android launcher with a fully operational Desktop. One tap opens a Start Menu that contains all your apps and live shortcuts, while another opens an Explorer-type file manager for navigating your files. There's even a Recycle Bin. The app demands umpteen permissions during installation, including file access and device history, and it takes a while to master. But it's certainly got the "wow" factor.



Our rating



SHOPPING

Sainsbury's SmartShop

bit.ly/sainsdroid434

bit.ly/sainsios434

 4.1  8

"Unexpected item in the bagging area" may soon become a distant memory (hooray!) if self-scanning apps catch on. Sainsbury's is testing the idea with SmartShop, which lets you scan barcodes as you shop, then pay securely via your phone, skipping the checkouts altogether. It's still in limited testing stage – hence our miserly score – but it's already been rolled out to 50 Sainsbury's branches following a trial in London, so it seems to be faring well, and presumably hasn't triggered a wave of shoplifting. You can install the app now and register your interest, then be notified when SmartShop arrives at your local store.



Our rating



HOME ASSISTANT

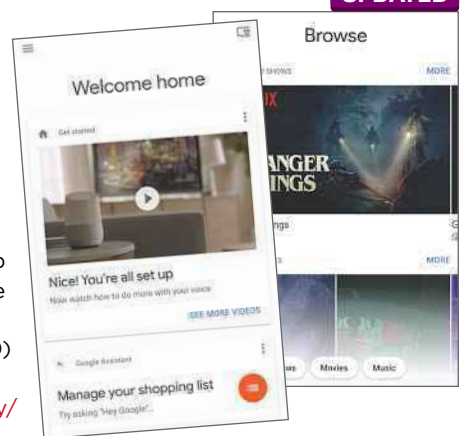
Google Home

bit.ly/ghdroid434

bit.ly/ghios434

 (varies)  9.1

Google has redesigned its home-assistant app to coincide with the launch of its Pixel 2 phone (see page 10) and Google Home Mini speakers (bit.ly/ghmini434). The Discover section offers 'cards' that help you connect to your Chromecast and Google Home devices, which you can then control using your mobile. The other section, Browse, replaces the old Watch and Listen tabs, and is useful even if you don't have any Google hardware. Tap it to control your installed media apps such as iPlayer Radio, Spotify and, of course, Google Play Music. The update also adds tags for easier browsing, and a Night Mode that lowers the volume after dark.



Our rating



5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

MAPS

OS Maps

bit.ly/osmaps434

Price: £19.99 per year

4.4 9

The brilliant OS Maps app from Ordnance

Survey now includes augmented reality (AR) for paying subscribers. Pan the landscape with your device's camera to get an overlaid guide to what's there – even offline.



SYSTEM TOOL

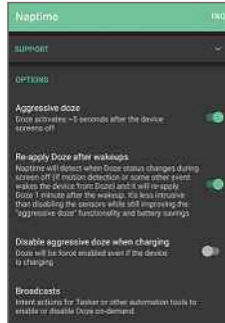
Naptime X

bit.ly/nap434

Price: £2.09

4.4 (varies)

Dramatically extend battery life by letting this app automatically disable all sensors and background processes when your Android screen goes off. You can whitelist apps and set Naptime to suspend while your device is charging.



MUSIC

Bebot Robot Synth

normalware.com

Price: £1.79 (Android), £1.99 (iOS)

2.2 8



This fantastic touch-controlled mobile synthesiser is finally available on Android after gaining fans – including US band The Flaming Lips, who use it on stage – on iOS.

WEATHER

Hurricane Impact

bit.ly/hurrdroid434

bit.ly/hurriod434

Price: £3.59 (Android), £3.99 (iOS)

4.4 9

Track the global progress of hurricanes using live webcams, statistics and expert insights from HurricaneTrack.com. The design of the app is a little old-fashioned but we rather like it.



PHOTO EDITOR

Affinity Photo for iPad

bit.ly/affipad434

Price: £19.99

10.3

Get high-end editing tools without having to pay for an Adobe-style subscription. Features on offer include HDR, panorama creation and photo merge, and the app supports multiple photo formats. Optimised for the new iOS 11.



OS Maps



Naptime X



Bebot Robot Synth



Hurricane Impact



Affinity Photo for iPad



Don't install...

Reverse Phonic Rhymes

bit.ly/rhymes434

What rhymes with 'train'? Drain, crane, plain Jane superbrain. Not hard, is it? But this app – whose Google Play Store blurb declares



“don't waste your time, use this app to find your rhymes”, thereby proving how rubbish it is at rhyming – has other ideas. Near the top of its absurd list of matches is, wait for it: 'Gaetan_ Duchesne'. Followed, darkly, by 'crotch_chain'. It couldn't find any rhymes at all for 'Web User'. What a loser (schmooser, chooser, bruiser, boozier).

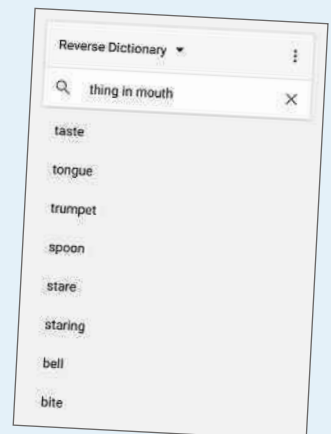
...Install this instead

Reverse Dictionary

bit.ly/reverse434

4.0.3

Do you find that more and more words get stuck at the tip of your, oh, you know, mouth, um – tongue? This free new app will ride to your rescue. Simply enter a description to get a list of matching words. There's also a Sounds Like tool for finding rhymes and homonyms – which, unlike Reverse Phonic Rhymes, actually works – plus a Spelled Like tool for completing those fiendish words you're not sure about (such as 'homonyms', in our case). It's not perfect – we'd love to see full dictionary definitions of words when you tap them. But it's fast, intuitive and easy to use, with no ads or fees to get in the way. ■





Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your browser by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you guess our magazine emoji and solve our word puzzle?

**WIN A
WEB USER
MUG!**

Email your answers to
webuser@dennis.co.uk
- one correct entry
will win a
Web User mug



CAN YOU GUESS THE MAGAZINES FROM THE EMOJI?

1



2



3



4



5



6



WEB USER WORD PUZZLE

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

- 1 Oscar-winning US actor and queen of the workout (4,5)
- 2 Solitaire card game
- 3 *Ursus Maritimus*, native of the Arctic circle (5,4)
- 4 Capital of Belize
- 5 Myanmar river
- 6 New York airport (2,7)
- 7 Strong black coffee served in tiny cups
- 8 Boomtown Rats singer and charity campaigner (3,6)

1							
	2						
3							
	4						
5							
6							
	7						
8							

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 6

Acronis True Image 2018 (1 PC)

The 2018 version of Acronis True Image includes major updates to the program's backup and recovery capabilities, and is the first backup software to use artificial intelligence-based technology to actively protect data against ransomware. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'acronis' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.acronis.com and follow @Acronis on Twitter.



**WORTH
£34.99
EACH**

WIN 1 OF 4

CyberLink PhotoDirector 9 Ultra

The new version of CyberLink's award-winning photo software adds several new 360-editing tools. There are also new features for making timelapse videos and animated GIFs. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'photodirector' in the subject line. For more info, visit www.cyberlink.com and follow @CyberLink on Twitter.



**WORTH
£79
EACH**

FAQ

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

The Physical Web

How on Earth did that dog just send you a message?! It must be the Physical Web. **David Crookes** explains Google's latest wheeze

What is the Physical Web?

The Physical Web (bit.ly/physical434) was created by the team behind Google Chrome to let you interact with real-life objects and locations using nothing more than the browser on your phone. The idea is that you receive information simply by walking past an object that's broadcasting a URL, including notifications, directions and location-specific advice, putting potentially useful content at your fingertips when you're out and about.



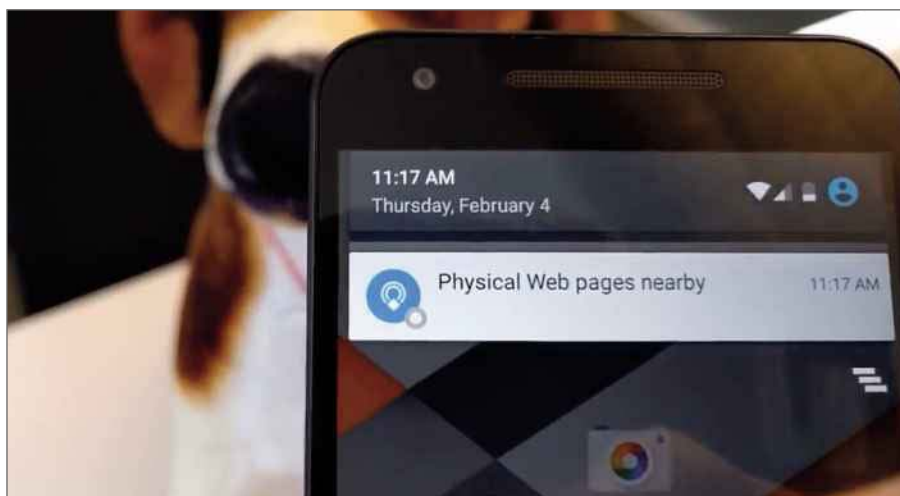
Interact with physical objects without anyone thinking you've lost the plot

How does it work?

For an item to broadcast a URL, it needs to be fitted with a small beacon – more specifically, a Bluetooth Low Energy radio, which beams a short-range signal that your phone can recognise. Provided you've activated the Physical Web on your device by turning on Bluetooth, you'll be notified that the beacon wishes to communicate. You'll then be directed to a web page where you can interact with the object or location – without having to download an app.

Can you give me any examples?

Yes. Imagine you're standing outside a cake shop. A beacon can send a signal to your device directing you to a page containing a half-price discount voucher. Likewise, a parking meter could send a URL to your phone that lets you enter your payment details online. If you're viewing a poster advertising a band



Pay a parking meter easily without resorting to swearing and violence

you like, a beacon could point you in the direction of the tour dates. Similarly, a movie poster could direct you to local cinema times.

Google even suggests that tiny beacons could be fitted on pets: should your dog get lost, you can make the beacon broadcast a URL that tells passers-by where the pooch is from so they can guide it safely home.

How is it currently being used?

As well as being used in museums for audio guides, the Physical Web is making its mark on transport. The MyStop project (mystop.proxama.com), for example, delivers notifications to passengers by placing beacons at the front of buses. When passengers open the notification, they can view up-to-date travel information.

And there's plenty of fun to be had, too. As we explained in last issue's What's New Online, when you visit the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, you can interact with a host of resident creatures (talesofthepark.com). Get close to one and a notification directs you to a web link, so you can chat.

Isn't this just the Internet of Things?

Yes and no. The Physical Web builds on the Internet of Things, adding another layer. In that sense, it's comparable to the relationship between the internet and the world wide web: the internet is the infrastructure and the web is the method



Ask Shadow Blade about bat detectors and where to find the Olympic Park toilets

we use to interact with it. Here, the Internet of Things is the underlying infrastructure and the Physical Web is the friendly face. The aim is to make the latter the 'search engine of the world'.

Why does it use old-fashioned URLs?

Google says URLs let any developer use the Physical Web because they are "decentralised" and not wrapped up in a specific ecosystem. This ensures the Physical Web is kept open, making it more attractive to developers and manufacturers. Indeed, everything from the beacons to the scanners to the proxies used to filter URLs is open, and it will always remain that way.

So has Google set the standard?

To a large degree, yes. The Physical Web uses the open-beacon format, Eddystone (bit.ly/eddy434), which has been adopted by a number of beacon manufacturers including Kontakt.io and Onyx. The system limits URLs to 17 characters due to the packet-size restrictions of Bluetooth, but developers can get round this by using URL shorteners. Eddystone is certainly more flexible than Apple's rival system, iBeacon (bit.ly/ibeacon434), which only works with iOS devices, and is app-based rather than web-based.



No, this isn't a runaway keyboard button. It's a Physical Web beacon

Will the Physical Web drain my battery?

That's feasible, but Google is fully aware of such concerns. As such, it has taken steps to lessen the impact by only having your phone scan for nearby beacons when its screen is on. Google also says we needn't worry about the beacons running out of juice any time soon. Since the Physical Web uses Bluetooth, which is very energy efficient, the beacons can last for many years, even though they broadcast about three times a second.

Does it work on both iOS and Android?

Yes, the Physical Web can be used on both. If you're running Android KitKat (4.4) or above, you just need to have Bluetooth and Location turned on.

You'll also be able to receive Nearby Notifications alerting you to available URLs. To activate the option in Chrome for Android, go to Settings, Advanced, Privacy and set 'Physical web' to On.

If you're using iOS, you'll need to have Chrome installed, then turn on Bluetooth, add the Chrome widget and opt into the Physical Web.

You can see a full set of illustrated instructions for both mobile operating systems at bit.ly/mobile434.

How secure is the Physical Web?

That's a very good question. The main security concern is that you could be spammed or directed to a malicious URL when you walk past a beacon. It is also possible that you may tap through to a spoof address and end up entering personal information such as bank details. Someone up to no good could even place an illegal beacon next to a legitimate one, making it difficult to figure out which is the correct one. These are issues that need to be tackled should the Physical Web take off, as it is expected to do.

Isn't Google addressing these concerns?

It is. Google says it has implemented several security measures, including



The Fathom Hub can identify sneaky and suspicious beacons nearby

always broadcasting URLs over secure HTTPS connections. It also uses a proxy service that can filter malicious URLs and give lower priority to less useful web addresses. We should also point out that you don't interact with the beacon itself: the beacon simply broadcasts the URL and everything after that is conducted via Wi-Fi or your mobile connection, from which point you should exercise the same caution as you would with any web communication.

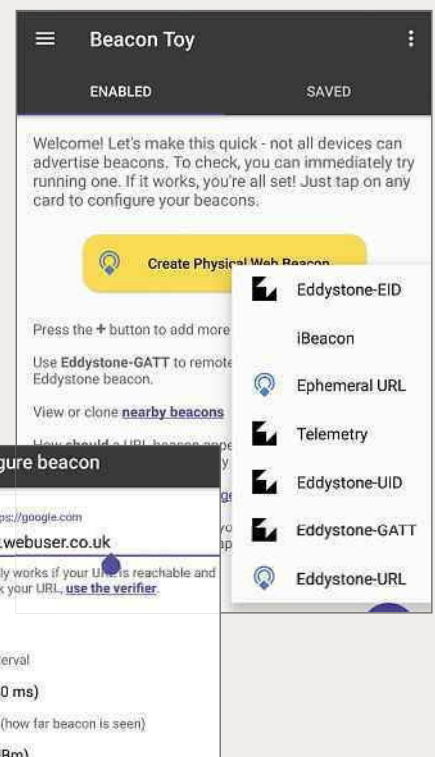
Some beacon manufacturers are working on improving security. Fathom (www.fathomsys.com), for example, has added a layer of security that can detect unexpected beacons close by. We'd be very surprised if we didn't see stories about Physical Web security breaches in the future, though.

CREATE YOUR OWN BEACON

You don't need to buy a beacon to broadcast URLs via the Physical Web. It is possible to send links using Windows, MacOS and Linux, although it requires some tinkering and technical know-how.

The easiest method is to use an Android app called Beacon Toy (bit.ly/toy434), which lets you broadcast Physical Web URLs from your phone. To do this, launch the app, click the blue '+' button and select Eddystone-URL. Enter the web address you want to broadcast, select the broadcasting interval and transmit power (or leave these settings as the defaults), then tap the tick icon.

Your Eddystone beacon will then broadcast the URL to anyone who has the Physical Web enabled and walks past you - or gets within a range of up to 100m, depending on the power you select.



WhatsApp

The MISSING MANUAL



COVER
FEATURE

WhatsApp isn't just for sending messages – it now lets you make video calls, share files and much, much more. **Edward Munn** reveals everything you need to know about the free messaging app

More than a billion people across the world now use WhatsApp every day, having moved away from boring and expensive text messaging. But because the service is constantly adding new features, it can be hard to keep up with everything it can do, so in this WhatsApp special, we help ensure that you're getting the most from your messages.

We provide clear, step-by-step instructions on how to use its best

features, such as video calling and WhatsApp Web, and offer tips on how to beat its biggest annoyances – by silencing incessant group chats, blocking spam and decluttering the homepage. We've also included a range of hacks to help you find and share everything faster.

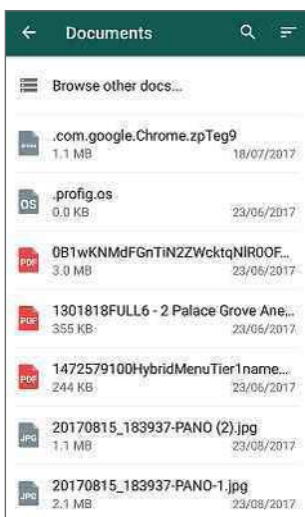
Finally, we offer tips on security and privacy, and tackle all your burning questions about the service such as whether it's genuinely secure and if you'll ever have to pay to use it.



SHARE EVERYTHING FASTER

Send any file (including hi-res images)

In the past, WhatsApp only let you send PDFs and media files, but you can now send any file type, which makes it a great alternative to sending attachments in emails. To send a file,



Use the Document option to share images without compression

tap the paperclip icon in the chat and choose Documents.

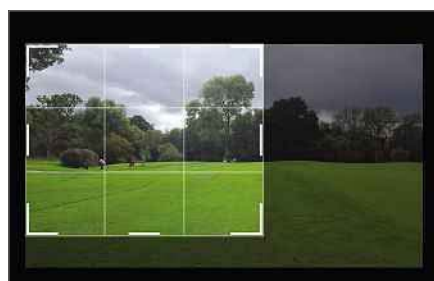
A list appears of documents on your device, which you can sort by name or date. Pick the file you want to send and it'll appear in the chat for your recipient to download.

To send an image at full resolution, pick 'Browse other docs' to browse all the files on your device.

WhatsApp lets you choose which details you want to share for each person.

Edit photos before you send them

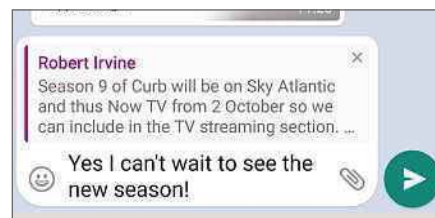
Sharing photos and screenshots is simple enough, but sometimes you might want to crop an image before you send it. WhatsApp lets you do this without having to install additional photo-editing apps. Just tap the paperclip icon, select Gallery and choose the photo you want to send. Next, tap the crop icon and drag the markers to highlight your selection. Tap Done and swipe up to add filters, stickers and text, or to draw on the image. There's an Undo button to remove the changes if you're not happy with the results.



WhatsApp lets you crop photos before sending them

Quote old messages in a chat

Sometimes it takes a while to respond to messages, by which time a group conversation may have drifted to a totally different subject. In these cases, you can quote the exact message



Quoting the message you're replying to avoids confusion

you're responding to by long-pressing it and then tapping left arrow on the toolbar. The quoted message appears in a pop-up window so you can compose your response below it. When you tap the Send button, your message appears directly below the quote and the name of the user, so there's no ambiguity about who you're responding to.

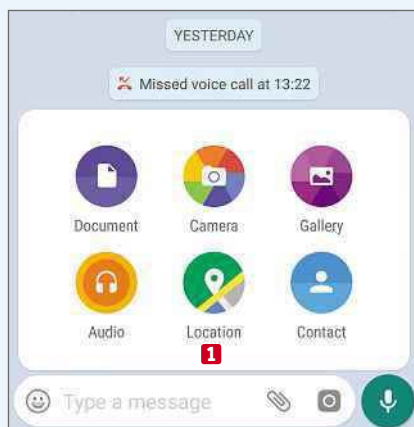
Share your location with other people

If you've ever tried meeting someone in an unfamiliar place, you'll know how difficult it can be to explain where you are using a vague description of your surroundings. Thanks to WhatsApp's location-sharing feature, you'll never need to do this again. To share your location in a chat, tap the paperclip icon and select Location. Approve any permissions that the app asks for, then tap 'Send your current location'. When the recipient receives your location, they can tap it to launch Google Maps and get directions to find you.

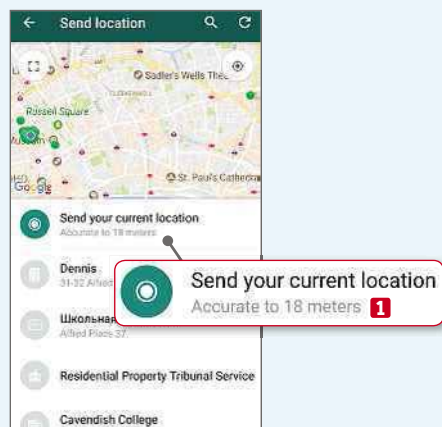
See our Mini Workshop below to find out how to use this feature.



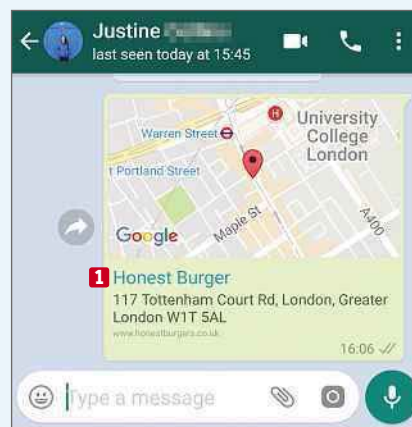
MINI WORKSHOP | Share your current location with a friend



1 Open a chat with the person you want to share your location with. Tap the paperclip, choose Location **1** and approve any permissions the app requests. A page loads showing your current location on a map.



2 Below 'Send your current location' WhatsApp shows how accurate your current fix is – 'Accurate to 18 metres', **1** for example. Tap this or choose a suggested business or place name from the list below.



3 If you can't see the name you're looking for, tap the Search icon and enter an appropriate search term. Select the best result **1** and it'll appear in the conversation for the recipient to open in their default maps app.



CUSTOMISE YOUR CHATS

Change your wallpaper

WhatsApp lets you change the



Select No Wallpaper for a minimalist look

wallpaper displayed behind your chats. Just open the menu within a chat, tap Wallpaper and pick an image from your Gallery or WhatsApp's Wallpaper Library. If you'd prefer something plainer, try the Solid Colour or No Wallpaper options. Note that changing the wallpaper only affects your own chats and not your recipients'.

Make your messages stand out

To add more impact to a message, why not format it in bold? To do this, simply surround the words you want to appear in bold with asterisk (*) symbols.



Place stars around your words to turn them ****bold****

You can also surround a word (or words) with underscore (_) symbols to convert it to italics; or with tilde (~) symbols to add a strikethrough.

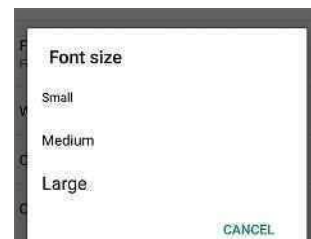
Assign notification tones to groups

You can set custom notification tones for your group chats, so you instantly know if you've received a message from a particular set of friends – without needing to look at your phone. Open a group chat, tap the menu button and choose 'Group info', then tap 'Custom notifications' and tick the box to 'Use custom notifications'. You can then pick from a range of notification tones;

choose whether your phone vibrates or not; and decide whether it displays a pop-up notification.

Change the font size

To change the font size in WhatsApp on an Android device, open its main menu and tap Settings, then Chats and Font Size. Here, you can choose from Small, Medium or Large text. On an iPhone, WhatsApp uses the system font size. To change this, open 'Display & Brightness' from your iPhone Settings, then tap Text Size. You can make the text even larger by opening Settings, General and Accessibility, then tapping Large Text.



WhatsApp displays messages as small, medium or large text



FIND EVERYTHING FASTER

Pin important WhatsApp chats

If you find that important conversations are often pushed down the screen by



Pin chats to keep them at the top of the page

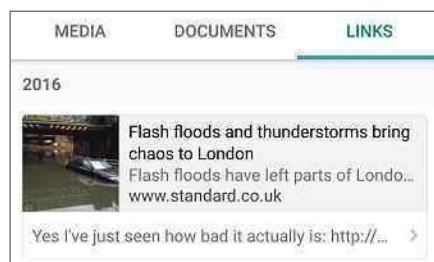
unimportant group chats, you can pin your favourite conversations so they're always easy to find. To do this, long-press the chat you want to keep near the top and tap the pin icon. To unpin a chat, long-press it again and select the pin icon with a strike through it.

Bookmark important messages

When someone sends you information such as an address or telephone number, scrolling through reams of messages to find it again can be annoying. To avoid this, bookmark the message by long-pressing it and tapping the star icon. When you need it again, select 'Starred messages' from the main menu to view all your bookmarked messages.

Find every link you've ever shared

If you're looking for a link in a message that you didn't star, use the following



Open the Links tab to see all the URLs that have been shared in that conversation

trick. Go to the appropriate chat and tap the three-dot button. Select Media, then Links to scroll through a chronological list of all the links shared between you and that contact. You'll also see tabs for Media and Documents, which make it easier to find files you've shared with that contact.

Add chat shortcuts to your home screen

You can add a home-screen shortcut to your favourite chats, for quick access. Open the chat you want to add a shortcut for, tap the menu button, then select More and 'Add shortcut'. An icon appears on your home screen, which you can move to a chosen position.



Add chat shortcuts to your home screen for faster access

WILL I EVER HAVE TO PAY FOR WHATSAPP?

Earlier this year, thousands of WhatsApp users were targeted by a scam asking them to pay to continue using the service. The trick seemed plausible because the app only became free to use in 2016 (prior to which you had to pay a small fee after the first year). Thankfully, there's no indication that WhatsApp has any plans to start charging users, so if you ever receive such a message, simply delete it. There are no plans for it to introduce ads, either. Instead, WhatsApp is expected to eventually monetise the service by introducing a dedicated app enabling businesses to communicate with their customers. This should make it much easier to contact customer services for banks, airlines and online shops from one place.

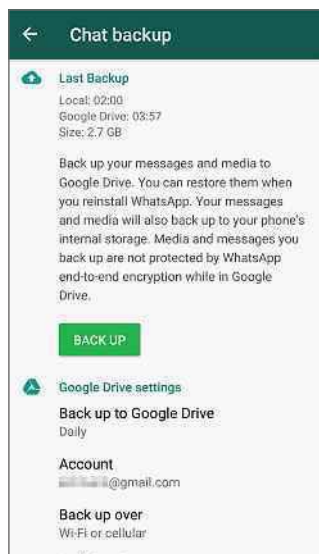


STAY SAFE AND ANONYMOUS

Back up chats and media files

These days, you can back up pretty much anything on your phone to the cloud, and WhatsApp chats are no exception. To set WhatsApp to back up to Google Drive, open the app's main menu and select Settings, Chats and 'Chat backup'.

Tap 'Back up to Google Drive' to choose how often the app saves backups; or select the green Back Up button to back up immediately. Select a Google account and tap 'Back up over' to specify whether WhatsApp can perform backups over 'Wi-Fi or cellular' or only Wi-Fi. If you want to include

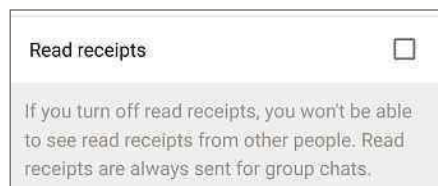


Back up your files and media to Google Drive

videos in the backup, tick the appropriate box. When you get a new phone, you can restore WhatsApp chats from your Google Drive backups

Stop anyone knowing you've read their messages

If you'd rather people didn't know when you've read their messages, you can turn off the option that tells them. From WhatsApp's Settings menu, select Account and Privacy, then untick the box for 'Read receipts'. Bear in mind that if you turn this feature off, you won't be able to see when other people have read your messages either.



You can turn off read receipts but the block works both ways

Change who can see your private information

From the Privacy menu in WhatsApp's Account Settings, you can also choose who is allowed to see your personal information, including your profile picture, status and when you were last online. For each option, you can choose Everyone, 'My contacts' or Nobody.



Choose who can see your profile photo

you won't be able to see when any of your contacts were last online.

Add two-step verification

Two-step verification adds another layer of security to your account by asking for a six-digit PIN to verify your phone number on WhatsApp, whenever it's installed on a new device. To turn it on, open Settings, then Account and select 'Two-step verification'. Tap Enable and enter your PIN, then tap Next and enter it again to confirm. Tap Next once more and you'll be asked to enter an email address, to which you can send a link that'll reset your PIN if you forget it.

Password-protect WhatsApp

WhatsApp has no built-in password protection for your chats, but you can add a layer of security on an Android phone by installing a third-party app such as AppLock (bit.ly/applock434). This handy app lets you keep snoopers at bay by locking apps with a password, PIN or fingerprint.

You can add another layer of security by enabling Advanced Protection, which stops persistent spies from uninstalling AppLock.

It's a good idea to use 'My contacts' in most instances, otherwise anyone with your phone number can see when you were last online. It's also worth pointing out that setting the 'Last seen' option to 'Nobody' means

Get alerted when someone changes device

You can set WhatsApp to alert you if a chat's end-to-end encryption key has changed. This normally indicates that the recipient has reinstalled WhatsApp or transferred it to a new device, so you can simply ask them to confirm that they know why a new key has been issued. To enable the feature, open Settings, tap Account and Security and make sure that 'Show security notifications' is turned on.



Security notifications tell you if a recipient changes their device

Stop people reading your message notifications

If you have an iPhone, you can receive notifications for new messages without displaying their content on screen. Just open the app's Settings menu, tap Notifications and toggle the switch for Preview to off. You'll now see the name of the contact in your notifications but not the message.

On Android phones, there's no option to block previews from WhatsApp, but you can block WhatsApp notifications altogether by opening Android Settings, then selecting Apps and WhatsApp. Toggle 'Block all' to On and you'll never get caught out by messages appearing on screen. On some Android devices, such as our Samsung Galaxy S6, you might also find options to 'Show silently' or similar, which blocks previews but still displays notifications.

HOW SECURE IS WHATSAPP?

Some messaging apps only encrypt messages between you and them, but

WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption (which it uses whenever possible) ensures that only you and the recipient of your message can read what is sent. Even your voice calls are encrypted, and you can easily check if you're protected by opening the appropriate chat, tapping its menu button and selecting 'View contact'. Swipe up and you should see a padlock with the words 'Messages to this chat and calls are secure with end-to-end encryption. Tap to verify.' When you tap this option, a unique number appears, which should match that on the recipient's device. Don't worry, this isn't the actual key – that's always kept hidden.

Encryption

Messages to this chat and calls are secured with end-to-end encryption. Tap to verify.



The padlock symbol shows that your conversation is encrypted



MAKE WHATSAPP LESS ANNOYING

Silence annoying group chats

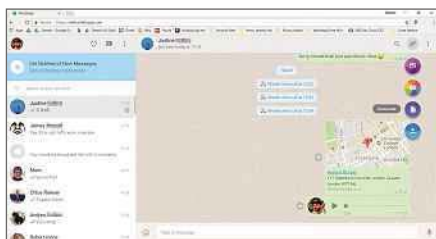
If you're often distracted by WhatsApp group chats, try muting them. Open the offending chat, tap the three-dot button in the top-right corner and select 'Mute notifications'. You can silence the chat for eight hours, one week or one year, and untick 'Show notifications' to stop notifications appearing. If you change your mind, simply select the menu button again and choose Unmute.

You can also mute conversations with individuals by opening the appropriate conversation, tapping the menu button and selecting 'View contact'.

Send messages from your PC

Unlike other messaging apps such as Facebook Messenger (messenger.com) and Telegram (telegram.org), you can't install WhatsApp on more than one device, which is annoying if you don't have your phone to hand. One solution is to use WhatsApp Web, which lets you send messages and files from your desktop browser (provided your phone is switched on and has an internet connection).

To use the tool, open the app's main menu and select WhatsApp Web. Next, visit web.whatsapp.com in your browser and use your phone to scan the QR code that appears onscreen. All your chats will be displayed on the page, and you can search or start new chats and send photos or videos. If you select the 'Keep me signed in' option, you should be able to access your WhatsApp chats even if you leave your phone at home. You can sign out by tapping the WhatsApp Web menu on your phone and choosing Log Out.



WhatsApp Web lets you type messages and send files from your PC

Block abusive contacts and spam

If a WhatsApp contact is being a pest or acting abusively, you can block them completely. Tap the chat's menu button, select More, swipe up and choose Block. Tap Block when WhatsApp warns you that you will no longer receive calls or messages from that person. If you've received a message that appears to be spam, you can report it by choosing 'Report and block'.



Block abusive contacts so they can't send you messages or see when you're online

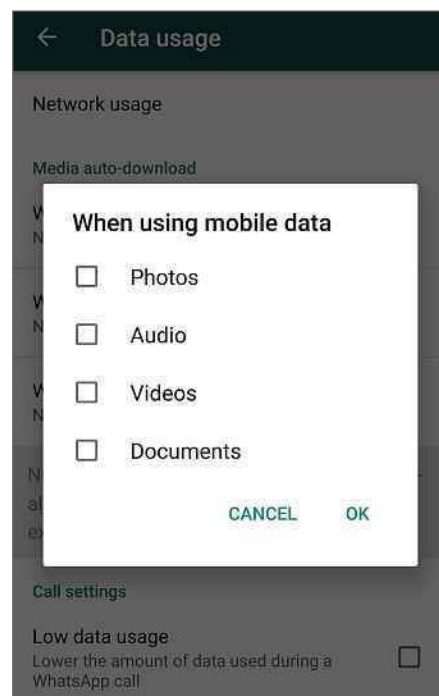
Clear clutter by archiving old chats

Like your email inbox, WhatsApp quickly becomes cluttered if you don't keep it tidy. The easiest way to ensure your messages are organised is to archive old chats, which removes them from sight without deleting them. To archive a chat, long-press it in the Chats view, then tap the icon that resembles a down arrow in a folder. Archived chats reappear in the main view when you receive a message from that contact, or you can find them by swiping up to 'Archived chats'.

Stop WhatsApp using all your data

WhatsApp doesn't consume much of your data allowance if you only use it to send and receive text messages, but if you share lots of photos and videos with your friends, it'll chew through a substantial amount. Indeed, WhatsApp accounted for an impressive 900MB of mobile-data usage on our phone during September alone.

To stop this happening, set the app to



WhatsApp lets you stop photos and videos auto-downloading using mobile data

only download media over Wi-Fi. Open the main menu, choose Settings and tap 'Data usage'. Under 'Media auto-download', you can allow different types of media to download on mobile data and Wi-Fi. Below this, there's also an option for 'When roaming', so you can ensure that you don't rack up a large mobile bill when you're abroad.

Try turning on the 'Low data usage' option to reduce mobile-data usage during voice calls.

Download images and videos to your PC

If you want to transfer photos and videos that you've been sent on WhatsApp to your PC, use WhatsApp Web (see above) to connect WhatsApp to your browser, then open a chat, click the photo or video you want to save and select the Download button. You can use the left and right arrows to browse media that's been shared previously in the conversation (including files that you've sent).



You can browse all previously shared photos from WhatsApp Web

COMING SOON: UNSEND MESSAGES

One of the most frustrating things about WhatsApp – and many other messaging apps – is that there's no way of 'unsending' messages that you've sent in haste or by accident. Happily, this feature has been included in the beta version of the app since April 2017, and we hope it'll make its way to the stable release soon. In the beta app, you have up to five minutes to cancel your message, after which it's sent for good.



GO BEYOND MESSAGING

Make free voice calls over Wi-Fi

WhatsApp lets you make free voice calls whenever you have a Wi-Fi connection, which is handy when you're abroad and don't want to pay expensive roaming charges. Even when you're not connected to a wireless network, the feature can be cost-effective if your phone contract is geared towards free mobile data rather than free phone calls.

To call someone using WhatsApp, simply tap the phone button at the top of the chat. If you've never called a contact before, go to the Calls tab and tap the phone button to find them. You can find a log of all your previous calls on this tab and call someone again with one tap.

Make a Skype-style video call

Only a year ago, you needed a dedicated app such as Skype to make video calls from your Android device. Now, you can make free video calls directly from WhatsApp, simply by opening a chat with the appropriate person and

tapping the video camera icon next to their name and last-online status.

For even faster calling, tap the contact's profile photo in the Chats tab and press the video-camera

icon that appears. Video calls are logged with normal voice calls on the Calls tab.

Send a voice message

We seem to receive fewer voicemails than ever these days, which isn't

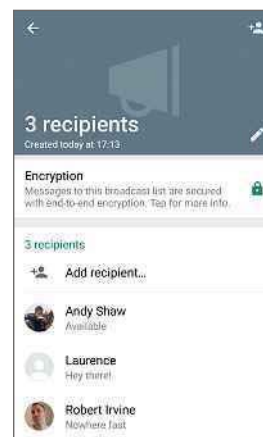


Voice messages appear alongside normal messages in a chat

surprising because picking them up is such a hassle. However, WhatsApp lets you leave audio messages (without waiting for a contact's phone to ring out), which work in the same way as visual voicemail, letting you skip backwards and forwards and replay them as many times as you like. To send a voice message, just press and hold the microphone icon in the appropriate chat for as long as you need to speak. You can cancel the message by swiping immediately left.

Share important news with everyone

If you've got some important news to announce, WhatsApp's Broadcast feature lets you send a message to several of your contacts in one go. Open the main menu, then choose 'New broadcast' and choose who to share your news with (only people who have your phone number in their contacts list will receive the message). Next, tap the tick and compose your message. You can attach photos or videos as with a normal chat.



Broadcasts are a great way of sending the same message to lots of people

Tap the menu button and select 'Broadcast list info' to delete or edit the broadcast list.

Share a self-destructing story

Like Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook, WhatsApp lets you share content that disappears after 24 hours. To add one of these 'stories', tap the Status tab and select 'My status'. Swipe up to choose a photo or video from your Gallery, or use the shutter button to capture media directly in WhatsApp. You can add a caption, stickers and text, or draw on the image. Tapping the envelope icon shares it with everyone in your contacts list. Long-pressing a story and tapping the trash icon deletes it before the 24-hour self-destruct deadline.



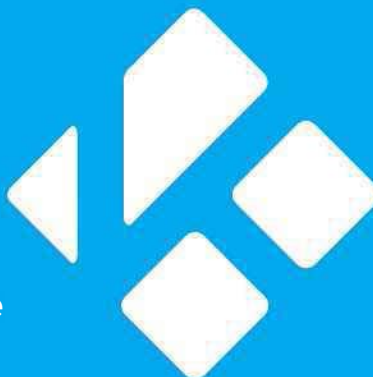
Stories let you show your friends what you've been doing

NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 1 November 2017

KODI'S BEST
NEW TOOLS

Discover the latest legal add-ons and exciting enhancements in the media-streaming software



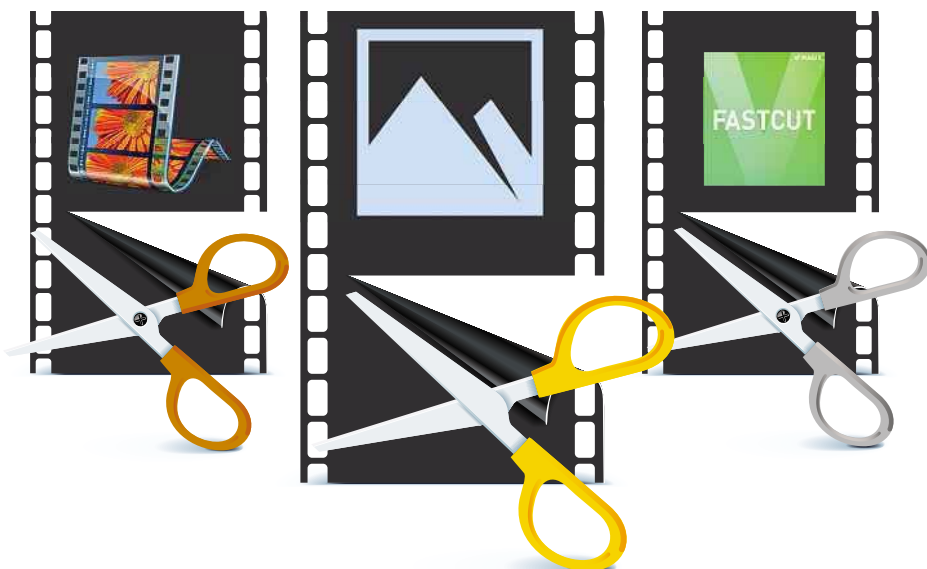
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Best automatic video-editing tools

Shooting video is easy but setting aside time to edit your footage can be a chore. **Andy Shaw** finds the simplest ways to create quick, no-hassle video montages that spare you any effort and are a pleasure to watch



Microsoft Photos | bit.ly/phot434 | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser
GOLD
AWARD

What we liked:

One of the enticements promised by Microsoft for the Autumn Creators Update was a new app called Story Remix which, it claimed, would cut together photos using a simple timeline and add all manner of amazing options such as 3D animations and explosive special effects. Since then, the concept has been toned down considerably – it now has a much reduced set of features – and instead of being an app in its own right, it's buried so deep in Windows 10's preinstalled Photos app that you could easily miss it.

It's well worth digging out, though, because although it doesn't deliver the dynamic (and, some would say, excessive) tools that Microsoft originally promised, it manages to provide an arguably more useful function: a simple video clipper that trims your collection of videos into a fast-paced montage with cheerful background music.

There are manual tweaks you can carry out to improve your film: add a simple title to the beginning; reselect parts from longer videos that you want to include (the software doesn't appear to be that good at choosing the highlight of a clip by itself); add colour

filters to make dull weather look brighter or footage look older; and add pan and zoom effects to still photos. You can also choose the accompanying music, either from your own collection or using Microsoft's 12 tracks, which are designed to adjust to the length of your movie (though only if it's relatively short).

How it can be improved:

Having got our hopes up by hyping Story Remix, Microsoft has now hidden it away like an embarrassing secret. To find it, go to Photos, Albums and choose to create a new album, then select the videos you want to include. You'll see a

small Edit button, which you click to make your changes. We'd also like the software to be better at choosing the best bits of clips automatically.

OUR VERDICT

Considering this tool essentially chucks together your home videos with no effort on your part, it's remarkably efficient at producing something watchable. And because it's already in your Photos app, you don't even have to install it!

Magix Fastcut | bit.ly/fc434 | ★★★★★

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

WebUser
SILVER
AWARD

What we liked:

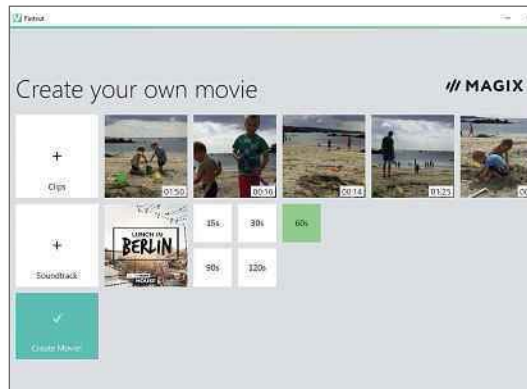
This is the first time that commercial software developer Magix has brought out a free video-editing tool.

It's essentially a stripped-back version of its Pro software, with fewer editing options, designed to provide a simple three-step process: import your video clips; choose a soundtrack; then create and share your video.

We like the way Magix Fastcut takes a long clip and cuts it into several shorter ones, effectively chopping up longer scenes into shorter, edited moments. It doesn't always manage to choose the best bits of footage but it did a surprisingly solid job on our test videos. However, if you want to have more control over how the clips get trimmed, you'll need to upgrade to the Pro version for £39.99.

How it can be improved:

The software is restrictively simple,



so you'll have to just like what it creates, or lump it. You can't reorder your chosen videos or adjust the length of time they last, and you're forced to add music to your project, whether you want to or not, which isn't much good if you'd like to hear the original footage.

OUR VERDICT

Given the right situation, Fastcut is a great little tool, but its simplicity makes it very inflexible. It lives up to its name but it's not perfect.

Windows Movie Maker | bit.ly/wmm434 | ★★★★★

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

WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD

What we liked:

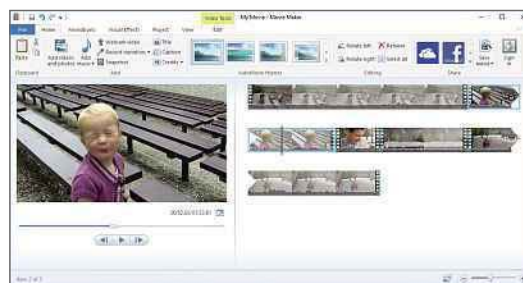
Microsoft stopped supporting Windows Movie Maker in January, but it still works well in Windows 10 and is available to

download for free as part of the Windows Live suite from places such as Major Geeks (bit.ly/wmm434).

It's designed to perform a full manual edit rather than an automated one, but it's also able to string some selected clips together, drop a soundtrack over it and hope for the best. It even has a handful of video templates to add titles and credit rolls without any fuss and, while it doesn't manage this as well as the other two award winners, it provides you with a lot more tools to tweak your video further, should you want to.

How it can be improved

What this software won't do is choose sections of your clips – you'll have to do that yourself. That inevitably means that your video is likely to be longer and



more boring because you'll never be as ruthless at cutting your own footage as an automated process. Don't hold your breath for this to change, though, because Microsoft has washed its hands of the software.

OUR VERDICT

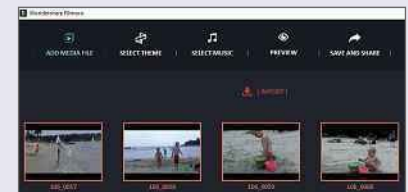
We're still mourning the passing of Movie Maker, which reminds us of the glory days of Windows 7, but despite Microsoft's neglect, the software still stands up and it continues to be one of the best free tools for editing videos.

BEST OF THE REST

Wondershare Filmora

bit.ly/film434

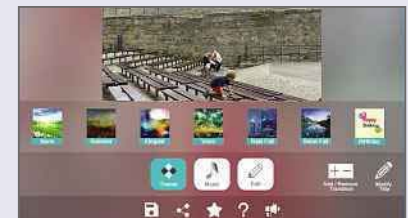
This free version of a paid-for program has tools for manually editing your footage but includes a quick-editing option you can use if you don't want to go the whole hog. However, we found the quick option did an appalling job of creating our video, choosing rubbish clips, ignoring half of what we pointed it to and still having the cheek to stick a massive Filmora watermark over it. Very disappointing.



Movie Maker: Free Video Editor

bit.ly/mm434

Cynically named to cash in on anyone looking for Microsoft's discontinued program, this ad-supported horror is available from the Windows Store. We found it frustrating to use and far from worthy of its user reviews, which have somehow provided it with three out of five stars – three more than it deserves.



Apple iMovie

bit.ly/imov434

Unlike Microsoft's abandoning of Movie Maker, Apple continues to develop its bundled video editing-tool for MacOS. While it's a fully-featured editor, it also creates short semi-automatic movies from your clips. However, they're heavily templated to look like movie trailers, which we felt made our footage look charmless and clichéd.



Stop **autoplaying** on any device

Don't let autoplaying videos and adverts drive you to distraction.

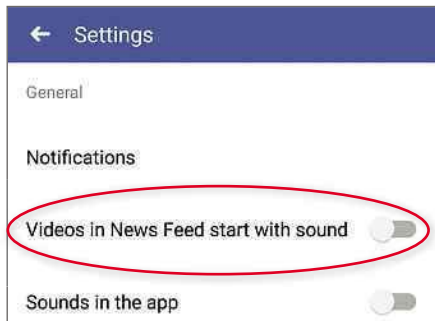
Robert Irvine reveals how to silence the noisy nuisance – for good



Disable noisy autoplaying Facebook videos



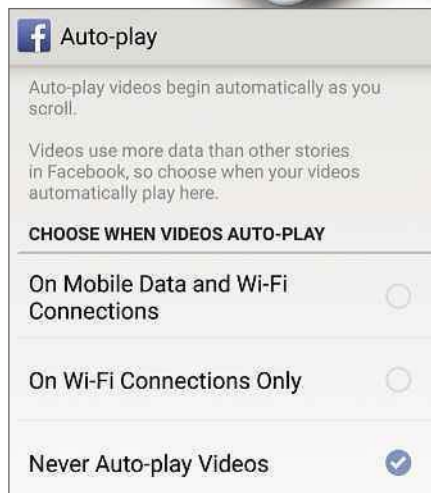
As our columnist Barry Collins noted in Issue 431, Facebook's "infuriating decision" to have videos automatically play with sound has turned it into the equivalent of a "crappy novelty birthday card". Who wants to be browsing their news feed on the bus, in the doctor's waiting room or during a boring speech, only for their phone to blast out ear-splitting audio from an irritating advert, 'hilarious' prank video or poorly recorded gig? Nobody, that's who.



Avoid embarrassment by turning off Facebook's noisy autoplaying videos

Fortunately, there is a way to silence this noisy nuisance. On your Android phone or tablet, open the menu in the top-right corner of the Facebook app, swipe down to App Settings and switch off the option 'Videos in News Feed start with sound'. To stop videos autoplaying completely, tap Auto-play on the Settings screen and select Never Auto-play Videos.

On iOS, tap the More menu in the bottom-right corner of the app, go to Settings, Account Settings, select



Turn off autoplay altogether to make your news feed much less annoying

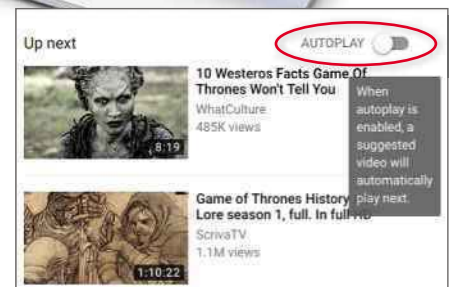
'Videos and Photos' and toggle the switch for 'Videos in News Feed Start with Sound' to Off. You can also turn off Autoplay completely.

On the Facebook website, videos autoplay silently, but even this can prove annoying. To stop it, click the down arrow in the top-right corner, select Settings and click Videos. Click the drop-down menu next to Auto-play Videos and select Off.

Stop YouTube playing videos automatically



YouTube has two forms of autoplaying videos: those that begin when you load a YouTube page; and those that play automatically once you've finished viewing the current video. The latter type is more annoying, because you probably have better things to do than sit around watching 'suggested' videos

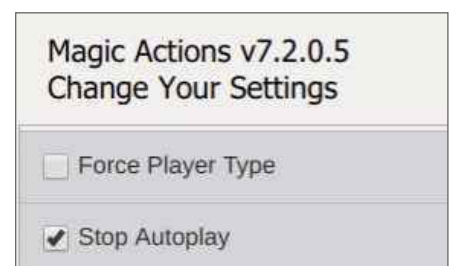


It's easy to stop YouTube trapping you in a never-ending binge-watch

all day. Luckily, it's easy to turn it off. On the YouTube website and apps, just slide the Autoplay option above the 'Up next' list to the 'off' position.

If you want to stop all YouTube videos starting until you click 'play', we recommend the brilliant Magic Actions for YouTube (bit.ly/magic434), for Chrome, Firefox and Opera. This feature-packed extension gives you total control over your YouTube viewing experience, and its handy 'Stop Autoplay' setting prevents videos from playing automatically.

Annoyingly, the latest version of Magic Actions doesn't display its Options page until you disable your ad blocker, but it's still a fantastic free tool.




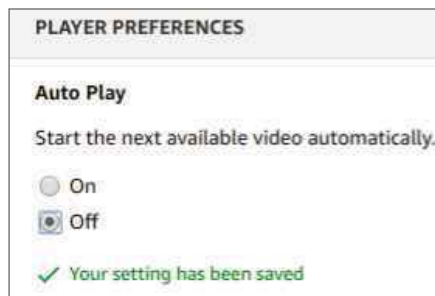
Use Magic Actions to prevent YouTube videos from playing automatically

Prevent streaming services from autoplaying

Netflix has a feature called Post-Play that automatically plays the next episode of a TV show when you finish watching the current one. This is a great way to 'binge watch' series because you don't need to manually select the following episode, but in other circumstances, Post-Play is more of a hindrance than a help – if you've specifically chosen to watch a show out of sequence, or you really need to go to bed!


To turn off this feature, go to the Netflix website, click your name in the top-right corner, select Your Account and click 'Playback settings'. Under Preferences, deselect the option 'Play next episode automatically' and click Save. This setting will also be applied when you watch Netflix on your mobile device or smart TV.


 Amazon Video's Next Up feature autoplays episodes in the same way. To turn it off, go to the Amazon Video Settings page (bit.ly/amazon434), scroll down to Player Preferences and set Auto Play to Off.



Don't want to watch a whole TV series in one go? Then turn off autoplay

Block autoplaying content in your browser

 Chrome once had a useful setting to stop plugins playing video, audio and adverts automatically, but this was removed in version 55 – possibly to placate advertisers who don't want their content frozen. However, there is now an option to stop HTML5 content autoplaying, which achieves similar results. Type `chrome:flags` into your address bar, press Enter and use Ctrl+F to find the entry 'Autoplay policy'. Click the drop-down menu next to this, select 'User gesture is required for cross-origin iFrames' and restart Chrome.

 To block auto-playing media in Firefox, type `about:config` in the address bar, press Enter and confirm that you'll be careful. Search for the preference 'media.autoplay.enabled'

WILL GOOGLE AUTOPLAY OR PAUSE?

Google has exhibited a rather contradictory attitude towards autoplaying content.

On the one hand, it's been testing 'video previews' – six-second clips that play automatically – in its search results on both desktop and mobile. These only display when you're connected to Wi-Fi and only play audio when you click them, but they've already been described as "one of the most annoying features ever" (bit.ly/annoying434).

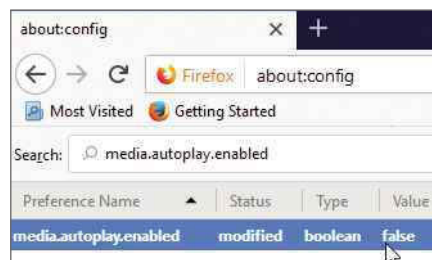
On the other hand, in a recent post



on its Chromium blog (bit.ly/chromium434), Google said: "one of the most frequent user concerns is unexpected media playback, which can use data, consume power and make unwanted noise", before going on to outline its plan to make autoplay "more consistent".

Essentially, this

means that from Chrome 64 onwards, videos will only play automatically without sound or if the user has shown an interest in their content. Sounds to us like Google wants to autoplay its cake and eat it!




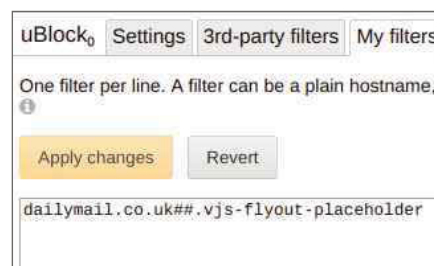
Firefox has a hidden setting that lets you disable auto-playing media

and double-click it to change its value to 'false'.

If you only want to mute the sound for autoplaying videos, install Silent Site Sound Blocker for Chrome (bit.ly/silent434) or Mute Sites By Default for Firefox (bit.ly/mute434).

Filter autoplaying videos on Mail Online


 The world's most popular news site, Mail Online (dailymail.co.uk), assaults you with autoplaying 'flyout' videos when you scroll past the video players embedded in articles. If this gets on your nerves as much as it does ours, there is a simple trick that blocks the flyouts while

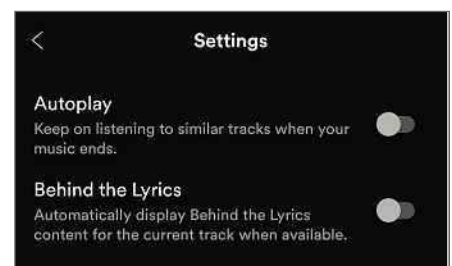


Create a filter for Mail Online flyout videos to stop them annoying you

allowing HTML5 content on other sites. Open your ad blocker (assuming you have one – uBlock Origin and Adblock Plus are the best options), go to the filters section and create a new filter to block the element `dailymail.co.uk##.vjs-flyout-placeholder`. Save this and when you next browse Mail Online, videos will only start when you click to play them.

Stop Spotify playing songs automatically

 When you reach the end of an album, playlist or selection of tracks on Spotify, the streaming service automatically plays similar songs "so the music never stops". However, there are plenty of times when having the music stop would actually be rather a good thing, so here's how to disable autoplay. In the Desktop version of Spotify, click the down arrow in the top-right corner, select Settings and scroll down to Autoplay. Switch the setting 'Autoplay similar songs when your music ends' to Off. In the Spotify apps for Android and iOS, go to Your Library (or Your Music), Settings, Playback and turn off Autoplay there. ■



Tell Spotify to shut up when you've finished listening to selected songs

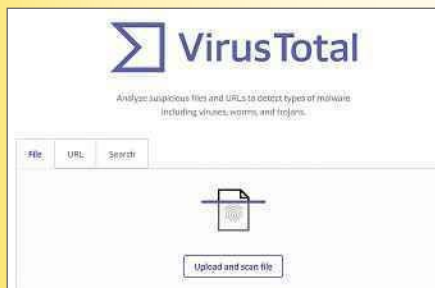
Spot and stop false positives

Sometimes even the best security tools get it wrong. **Wayne Williams** explains what to do when overzealous defences flag, block and filter innocuous 'threats'



Get a second opinion about a threat

Sometimes, security software such as Avast, Malwarebytes or Kaspersky flags a program as being infected, when it's actually perfectly clean – an error known as a false-positive (because it's falsely identified as a positive threat). If you're in any doubt – perhaps you read about the download in a reputable internet magazine – you should seek a second opinion from VirusTotal (www.virustotal.com).



This powerful online service (owned by Google) lets you upload a suspicious file, or copy and paste a potentially malicious URL, to check for threats using more than 60 popular antivirus scanners and URL-blacklisting services. If the item comes up clean, or is only flagged by a couple of engines, then it's safe to install.

If uploading a file sounds like too much hassle, the free program Winja (bit.ly/winja434) provides an easy-to-use front end for VirusTotal that lets you use it like a standard antivirus scanner.



Run software blocked by Windows

Windows Defender SmartScreen springs into action if you try to install unknown software from an unrecognised source, and sometimes tries to block programs from smaller, lesser-known developers. The error message in Windows 10 informs you that "Windows Defender SmartScreen prevented an unrecognised app from



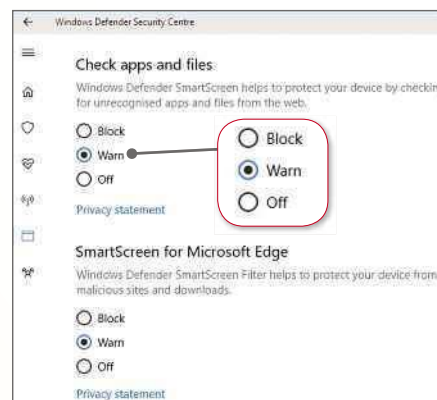
a 'Don't run' button with seemingly no way around this block. However, if you're completely sure the program in question is safe, you can force Windows to run it. Click the 'More info' link under the error message, then click the 'Run anyway' button that appears. Windows will install or run the software with no further warnings.



starting. Running this app might put your PC at risk." It then provides

You can also grant a program permission to open before you run it. Right-click the EXE file and select Properties. In the Security section at the bottom, tick the Unblock box, then Apply and OK. You will now be able to run your program.

If you find that SmartScreen regularly blocks programs you want to install, you can disable the feature altogether. Type **Windows Defender** into the search box and launch the Windows Defender Security Centre. Click 'App and browser control' and, under 'Check apps and files', change the setting from 'Warn' to 'Off'. This page also lets you disable SmartScreen in Microsoft Edge.



Find out what other users think

If a program you've already installed is causing problems with your security software – such as your firewall blocking its access to the internet – one of the best ways to check it for malware is by using Should I Remove It (bit.ly/should434). This handy free tool scans all your installed programs, then provides you with a list that ranks them in order of how highly it recommends that you uninstall them. Programs flagged red represent a potential security risk and should be removed



immediately, while green ones are safe to keep.

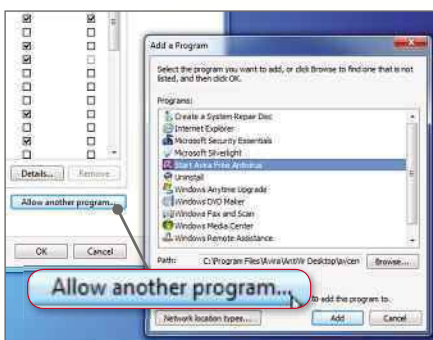
You can visit the Should I Remove It website for a full explanation of the program in question and how many other users have removed it. Bear in mind that just because other people remove a piece of software, it doesn't mean it's bad – they may simply have found a better alternative.



Tweak your security settings

If your antivirus software has gone as far as quarantining a program you've downloaded, it's usually possible to unblock it – but we don't recommend doing so. If there's even the smallest shred of doubt, you should leave the 'infected' file where it is and follow your security software provider's official procedure for querying a potential false positive (see our last tip, 'Report false positives'). That way, you'll know that the file has been verified by experts before you run it.

If, on the other hand, a program you know to be safe is being blocked by your firewall, then it's possible to unblock it. Instructions for doing so will depend on the firewall you're using. In Windows Firewall, for example, click 'Allow programs [or apps] to communicate through Windows Firewall', then 'Change settings' and select the program you want to unblock.



Deselect bundled junk automatically

A lot of freeware programs come bundled with unwanted extras these days, which may – rightly or wrongly – trigger alerts in your security software. Provided you have your wits



about you when installing a program, you can usually spot and reject these extras (choosing the 'Custom' install option rather than the 'Recommended' choice is always advisable), but an easier way is to use Unchecky (unchecky.com). This free tool runs in the background and monitors all installations, automatically rejecting and unticking any extras and offers that are nothing to do with the main program.

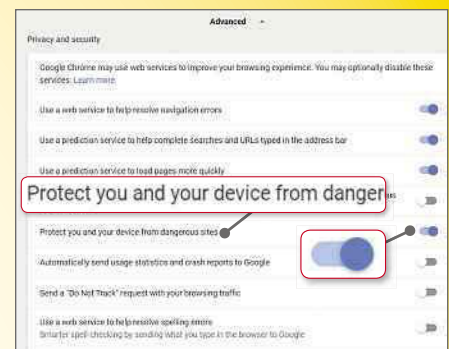


Stop Chrome blocking safe websites

Chrome automatically blocks websites that contain "dangerous and deceptive content" – typically malware, scripts or phishing links. It's usually very efficient but when, occasionally, a harmless site gets blocked by accident, you can bypass the warning to access the content you want.

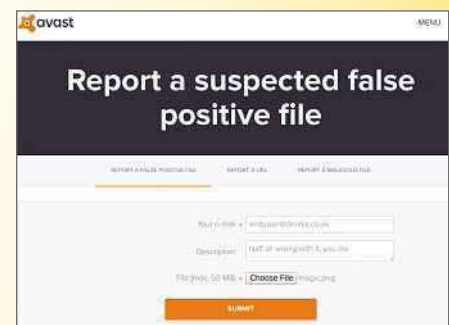
To view a blocked website, click the Details link and select 'Visit this unsafe site'. The page should then load. Google will attempt to strip out any unsafe content, but if you want to see the entire site, click the Content Blocked icon at the right of the address bar and select 'Load full site'. To download an "unsafe" file using Google's browser, click the top-right menu button, open Downloads, locate the file you want and select 'Recover malicious file'.

Finally, if you want to disable these alerts entirely, Go to More, Settings, click Advanced and under 'Privacy and security', toggle the switch for 'Protect you and your device from dangerous sites' to Off.



Report false positives

You can help anti-malware companies reduce the number of false positives their software flags up by reporting files that are erroneously identified as threats. Most security software developers provide a way for you to submit files, so they can avoid misidentifying them as malware in future. Sophos, for example, has a form you can access at bit.ly/sophos434. Avast (which also owns AVG) lets you report a suspected false positive at bit.ly/avastfp434, while Symantec's form can be found at bit.ly/symantec434.



IOBIT VS MALWAREBYTES

Earlier this year, web users who downloaded IObit's Advanced SystemCare 10 found that Malwarebytes Anti-Malware wrongly identified the software as a potentially unwanted program (PUP) and removed it. Excluding Advanced SystemCare from Malwarebytes scans made no difference, the 'threat' was still detected and deleted. After these false positives were identified, IObit said it "initiated a self-inspection of its programs" to eliminate the causes, and accused



Malwarebytes of engaging in "vicious competition".

Other popular programs that have been mislabelled as malware include file-sharing tool Pushbullet, privacy scanner PrivaZer, image editor Zoner Photo Studio and even the essential Windows system file 'user32.dll'.



Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Blend two photos together with Image Inc

Give the subject of your photo an entirely new setting by using another photo's background

Image Inc: bit.ly/iminc434 | ⌚ 20 mins | 🖥️ XP, Vista, 7, 8 10

Image-editing software not only provides the tools for perfecting your images, it also lets you play around and get creative with them. Making composite images by using layers and blending together elements from different pictures can breathe new life into your snaps.

Adobe Photoshop has the tools you

need but it costs a small fortune, so if you want to achieve similar results for free, use Image Inc instead. It's very easy to master – just load two images and pick a suitable mask to blend them together, then use its fine-tuning options to refine your work. You can even stack multiple overlays to create more advanced images.



1 Start by loading the images you want to blend together. Click Load to import the base image, **1** then navigate to the file you want to add. It will appear as a thumbnail **2** and in the preview window on the right. Next, click Load for the Overlay image. **3** It will overwrite the base image entirely.



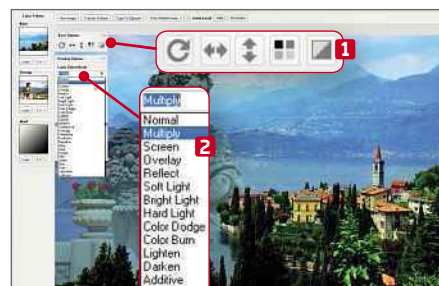
2 Next, click the Load button under Mask **1** and pick one you want to use. **2** The default selection of available masks is located at C:\Cybia\Imagelnc\Masks. As soon as you add the mask, the two images will be blended together. **3** You can zoom in and out of the result using your left and right mouse buttons.



3 You can change the mask by clicking the Load button and selecting a different one, or by clicking Edit. **1** Select the latter option and you can use the drop-down box to pick a Gradient Preset. **2** Options include Linear, Diagonal, Radial, Diamond, Reflected, and None (Clear). We've used Linear.



4 The Mask options window also offers some simple editing tools that achieve interesting results. You can rotate the mask in 90-degree steps, **1** flip it horizontally **2** or vertically, **3** convert the image to greyscale (if using your own masks – the defaults are already greyscale), **4** and invert the mask. **5**



5 The same editing options are also available for the base image, **1** and the overlay edit lets you choose a different Layer Blend Mode, **2** including Normal, Multiply, Overlay, Reflect, Colour Burn, Glow, Hue, Saturation and Lightness. The differences range from subtle to striking.





COPY TO CLIPBOARD

Click this button to save the blended image to your clipboard, ready for pasting into another program

SAVE MERGED IMAGE

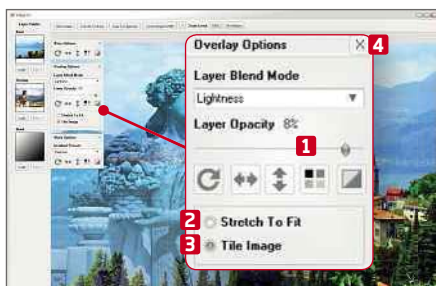
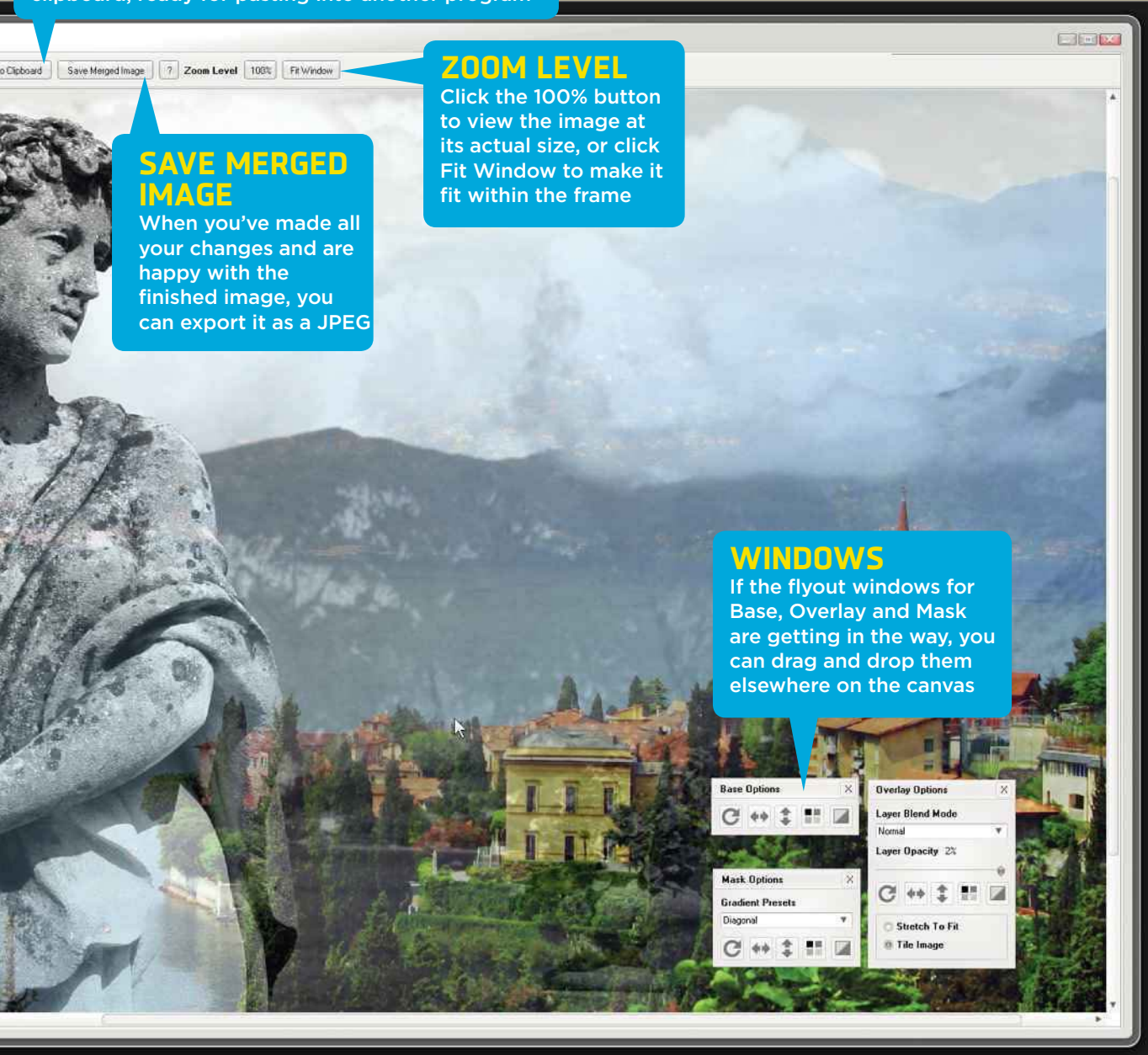
When you've made all your changes and are happy with the finished image, you can export it as a JPEG

ZOOM LEVEL

Click the 100% button to view the image at its actual size, or click Fit Window to make it fit within the frame

WINDOWS

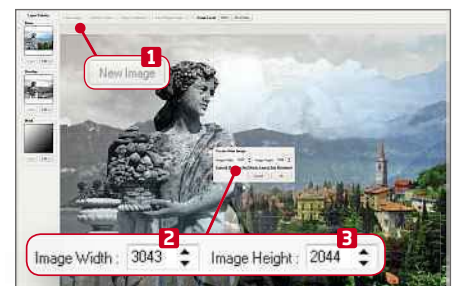
If the flyout windows for Base, Overlay and Mask are getting in the way, you can drag and drop them elsewhere on the canvas



6 You can also adjust the Layer Opacity using the slider. **1** The overlay image can be stretched to fit (if, for example, you're applying a portrait overlay on top of a landscape base) **2** or tiled across the screen. **3** The Edit windows stay open until you click the 'X' **4** to close them.



7 If you're satisfied that your simple blended image is now complete, you can add more images to your creation if you want. Click the Transfer To Base button **1** and the current blended image will become the new base. You can now load your next overlay.



8 If you want to start work on an entirely new blended picture, click the New Image button. **1** In the window that opens, you can set the image width **2** and height. **3** The current overlay and mask layers will be retained, but you can load a new base, and then change the other choices as required.



Sync any folder across all your devices



Resilio Sync: bit.ly/resi434 | ⌚ 20 mins | 🖥️ Windows 7, 8, 10 🍏 MacOS 🤖 Android

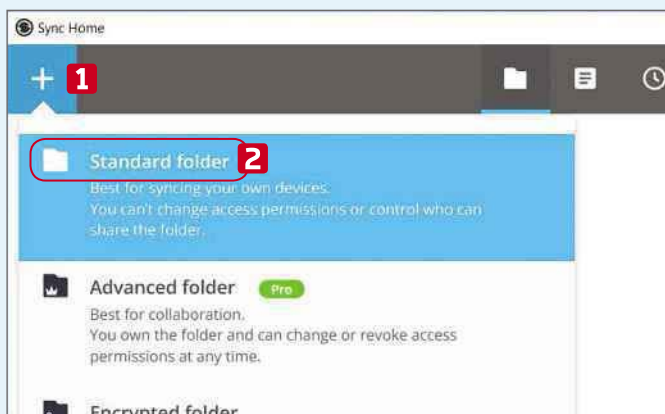
Free cloud-storage services such as Google Drive and Dropbox make it easy to sync files and folders between your devices. However, syncing large files is slow, because you need to upload everything to a server before it can be downloaded on another device, and storing your important files in the cloud comes with the risk that they could end up in the wrong hands.

Resilio Sync solves both these problems by syncing files directly between devices using peer-to-peer technology. There's no need to set up an account because syncing is initiated using links and QR codes, and the free tools let you perform all the usual actions: backing up folders from a smartphone or tablet to your PC; sharing folders with your friends and family; and syncing folders between multiple devices. The Resilio Sync mobile app even includes Selective Sync, which lets you browse a folder's contents without having to download every file to your phone.

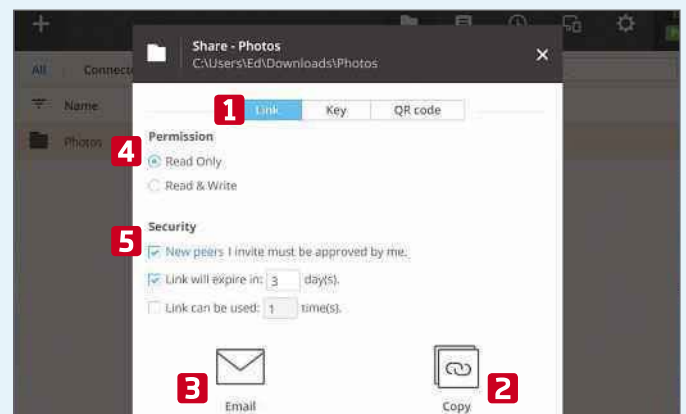
EXPERT TIP

Edward Munn says

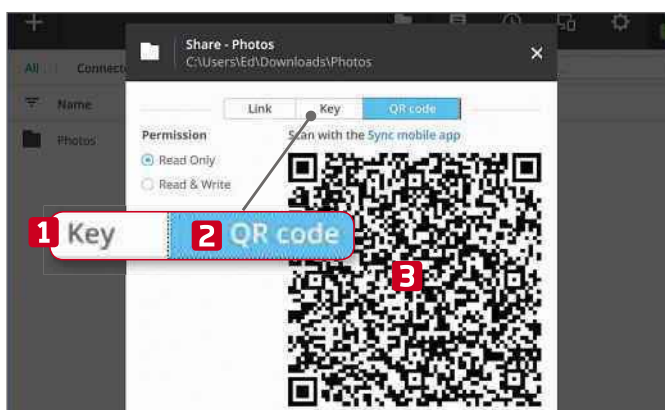
Resilio Sync lets you link two or more devices to make syncing folders between them even faster. You'll need to buy a one-off licence for \$59.99 (around £45), which also enables the Selective Sync feature on your PC and lets you change permissions at any time.



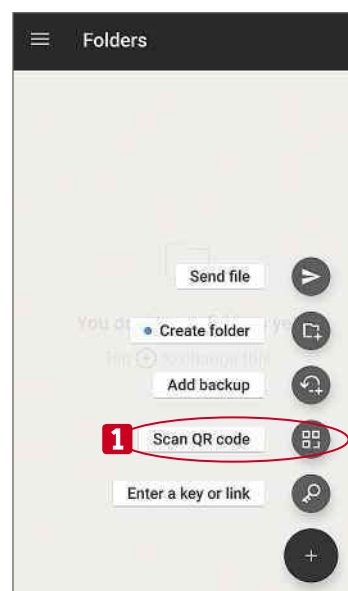
1 Download and install Resilio Sync and follow the instructions on screen to set it up. Click the + button **1** and choose 'Standard folder', **2** then pick a folder that you want to sync to another device. Once you've chosen it, click Select Folder.



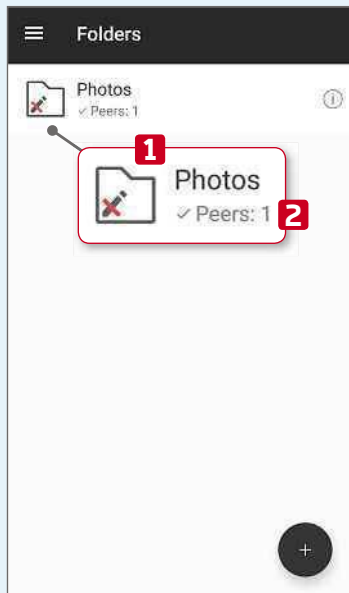
2 A pop-up appears providing a number of options for syncing the folder to other devices (or sharing it with other users). The Link tab **1** lets you copy **2** or email **3** a sharing link. There are also options to choose the recipient's permissions, **4** and pick who has access to the link and for how long, **5**.



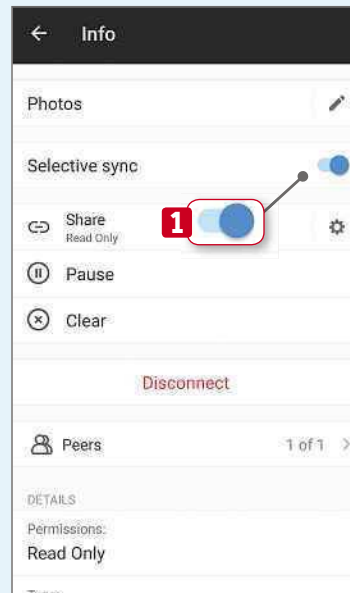
3 Clicking the Key tab **1** lets you copy syncing keys with Read & Write or Read Only permissions, which work in much the same way as the sharing links. The 'QR code' tab **2** lets you scan an on-screen QR code **3** using your phone to start syncing the folder.



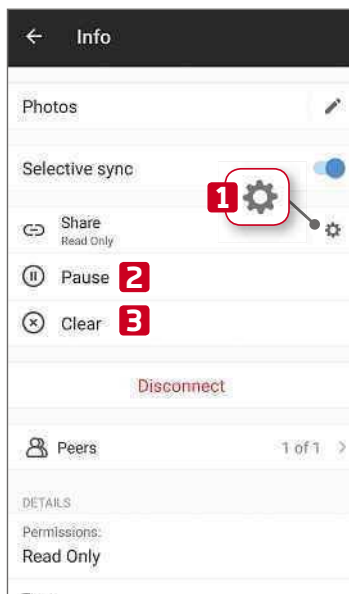
4 Download and install Sync on your phone or tablet and follow the instructions on screen. You don't need the username you entered on your PC. Next, tap the '+' button and select 'Scan QR code' **1** to scan the QR code displayed on your PC.



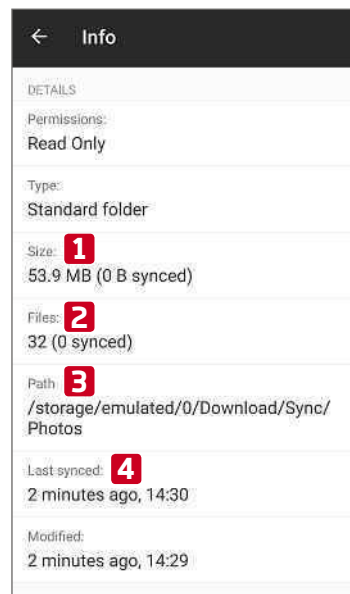
5 After scanning the code, the folder appears on the Sync's main screen, **1** showing the number of 'peers' who also have access to it. **2** You can browse its contents by tapping it, then tapping individual files to open them. Note that when 'Selective sync' is enabled (as is the case, by default), you can only open files if your PC is switched on and connected to the internet.



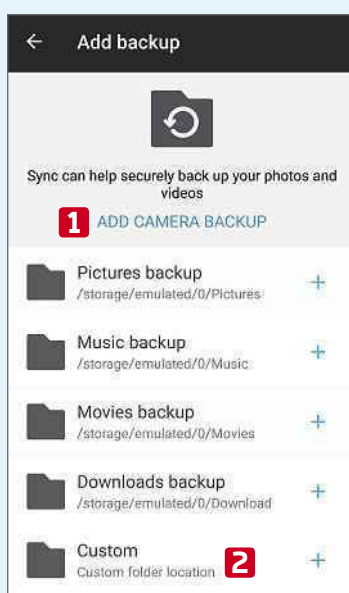
6 If you open a file with 'Selective sync' enabled, it'll remain downloaded and the app will automatically sync it to reflect changes made by other devices or users. To make sure a folder's contents are always downloaded to your smartphone or tablet, tap the 'i' next to it and disable 'Selective sync'. **1**



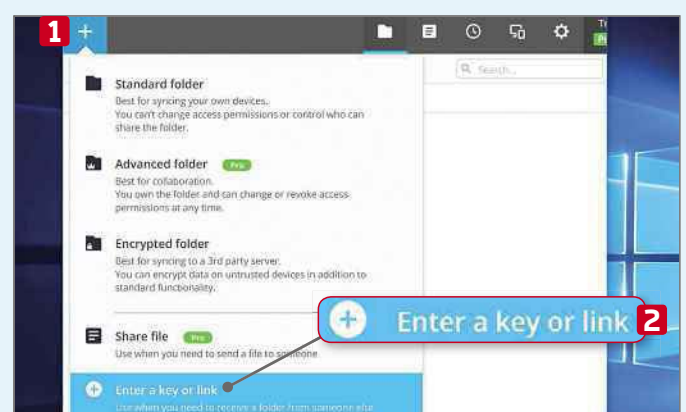
7 To share the synced folder with another device or recipient, simply tap the Share cog in this menu. **1** You can prevent changes you make from being synced to other devices by tapping Pause. **2** The Clear button **3** removes downloaded files from your device without affecting copies on other devices.



8 Conversely, tapping Disconnect stops the folder from being synced to other devices while still leaving downloaded files on your device. To view further details about the folder including its size, **1** number of files **2** and location, **3** swipe further up the page. You can also see when the folder was last synced. **4**



9 To back up photos or other files to your PC, tap the '+' button and choose 'Add backup'. You can then choose 'Add camera backup' **1** or tap Custom **2** to select another folder of your choice. A window appears letting you copy or send the appropriate sharing link.



10 On your PC, tap the Resilio Sync '+' button **1** and choose 'Enter a key or link'. **2** Paste the sharing link to open a window that lets you choose where the backup files are saved. Click Connect and, if necessary, approve the link from the mobile app. Your files will begin backing up.



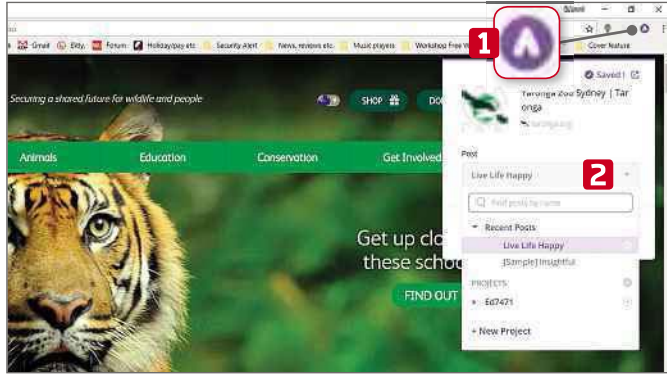
Bookmark and annotate your favourite web pages

Additor is a handy bookmarks manager for Chrome that's particularly useful for research. It offers comprehensive organisation tools to sort all your related links into appropriate Projects with subcategories (Posts),

and includes tools for highlighting interesting sections of a web page; adding comments for your personal reference; and inviting other people to collaborate on Projects with you.



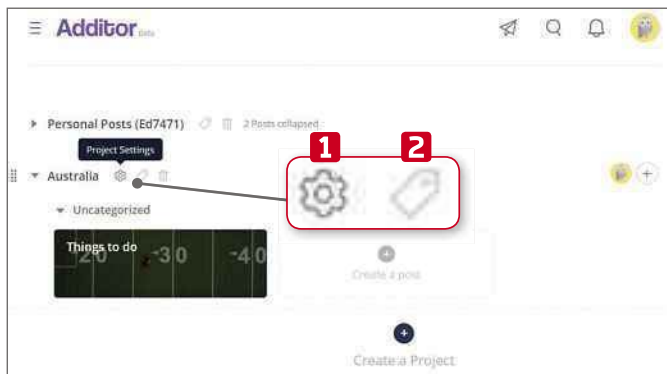
Additor: bit.ly/additor434 | ⌚ 10 mins | 🌐 Chrome



1 Install the Additor Chrome extension and follow the instructions on screen to set up an account. Next, open a web page you want to save and click the purple Additor icon. **1** Click the drop-down menu **2** to organise your saved web pages (also called cards) into projects and posts.



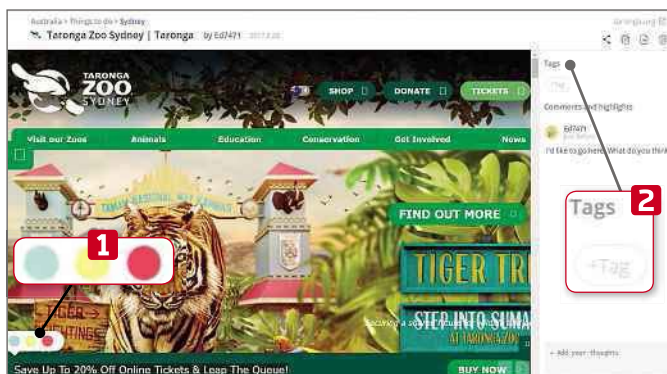
2 Click New Project **1** and use the '+' icons **2** to create posts within your new project. Below the drop-down menu, you can add comments and tags to make the page easier to find again. Open a new tab, then click the Additor icon to open its Home page.



3 All your projects and posts are listed. Clicking a project's cog icon **1** opens its settings, with options to add a description or invite others to collaborate with you. Selecting the Tags button **2** lets you view all the tags and tagged cards that appear in that project.



4 Click a post to open it and you'll see options to add a description **1** and category. **2** All the web pages you've sorted to a Post are listed on the 'My items' column. **3** Name the Post's main section (and give it a description), then drag any appropriate cards to that section.



5 Hover your cursor over the card and icons appear that can be used to add notes or comments. Clicking the card opens Additor's viewer. From here, you can select passages to highlight in a colour of your choice **1** or add comments and tags **2** from the sidebar.



6 The icons in the top-right corner let you share the page and copy, move or archive it. Click Back and you can add new sections to the Post using the '+' button. **1** To add other items such as PDFs and notes, click the black '+' button, **2** which turns into an 'x' when clicked.

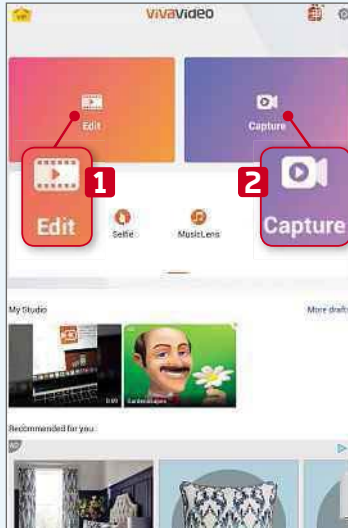


Convert your Android videos to slo-mo

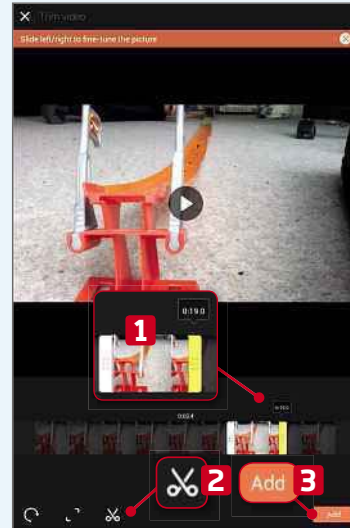
Some phones come with a slo-mo option on their cameras. This means that you can record video at an increased frame rate so, when you play it back, the action appears slowed down. If your phone doesn't have this

VivaVideo: bit.ly/viva434 | 10 mins | Android 4.0.3

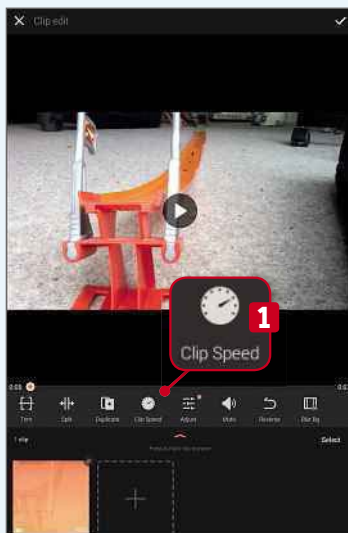
option, you can use VivaVideo to get the same effect. This video editor is free to install and can slow down (or speed up) your regular video footage.



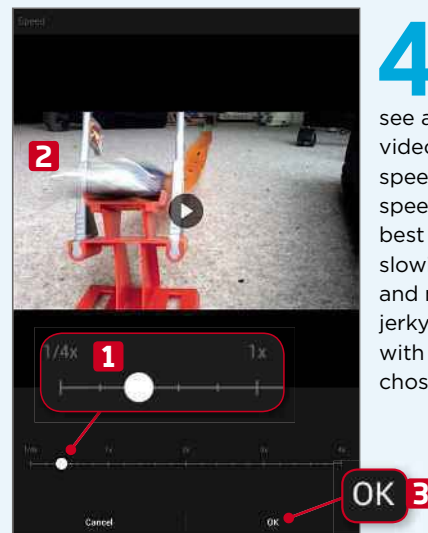
1 We recommend that you get the correct footage before you start applying slo-mo, by recording the video in your camera app in advance. When you're happy with your video, launch the app and tap Edit. **1** Alternatively, you can record a video straight into the app. If you'd prefer to do this, tap Capture **2** instead.



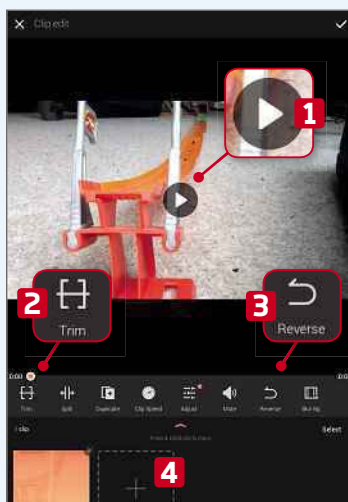
2 Select the video from the list of available options and trim any unwanted sections. Use the sliders **1** to move the start and end of the video to the point you want. Tap the scissors **2** to cut it to the selected length, then tap Add **3** to send the trimmed video clip to the editor.



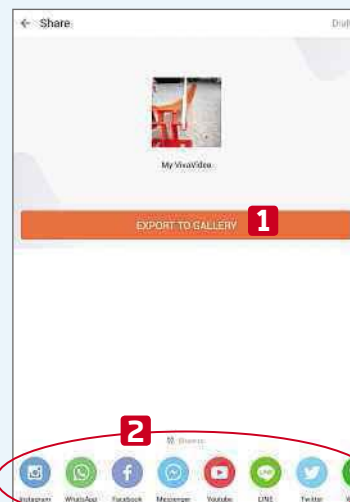
3 On the next screen, tap Next to see a preview of the trimmed video. Tap Edit, then 'Clip edit' and select Clip Speed. **1** You'll see a slider with 1/4x to the left and 1x, 2x and 4x to the right. Push the pointer to the left to apply the slo-mo effect. If you want to speed up the action instead of slowing it down, move the pointer to the right.



4 Each time you move the pointer on the slider bar **1** you'll see a preview of how the video will look at the new speed. **2** Choose the speed that provides the best balance between slowing down the action and making it look too jerky. When you're happy with the speed you've chosen, tap OK. **3**



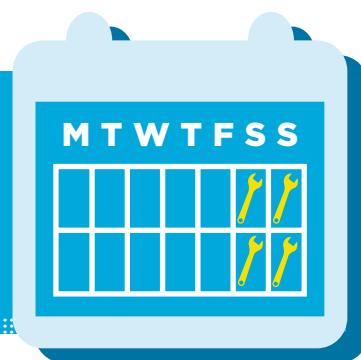
5 You're returned to the 'Clip edit' screen. Preview your video by pressing the Play button **1** and check that you're happy with it. You can still Trim the video from here, **2** or reverse it **3** to make the video play backwards. You can even add another video, **4** perhaps of the same content shot from another angle, to make it look really professional.



6 Tap the tick in the top-right corner and select Share. Press Export To Gallery **1** to send the video to the Gallery, or choose one of the social-media buttons **2** if you just can't wait to share it with your friends. Either way, the video will be converted. If you saved it, you can find it in the Gallery's VivaVideo or VivaCamera folder, depending on whether you chose Edit or Capture in Step 1.

Weekend Project

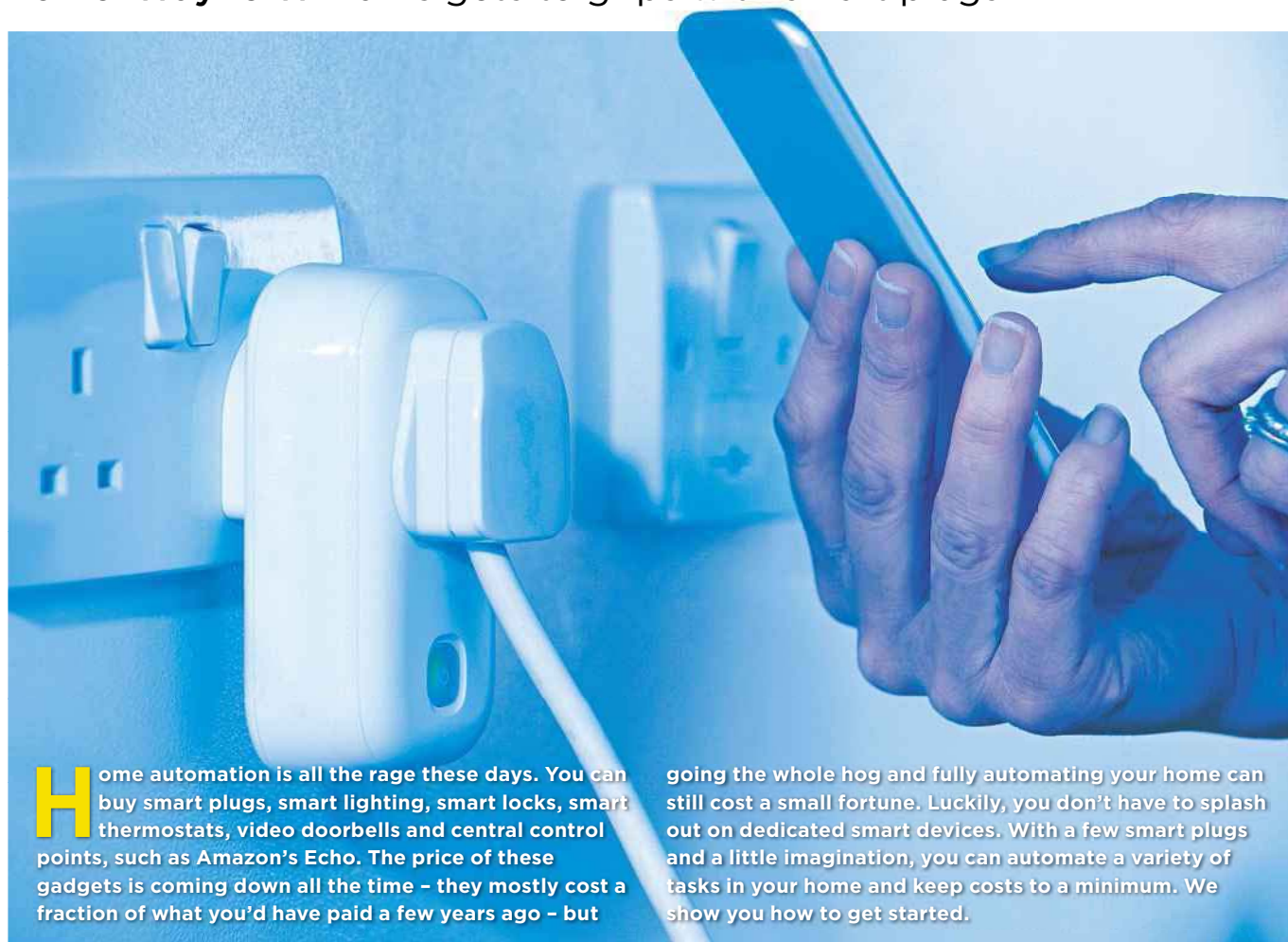
Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance



How to...

Automate your home for less with smart plugs

You don't have to spend a fortune to turn your house into a smart home. **Wayne Williams** gets to grips with smart plugs



Home automation is all the rage these days. You can buy smart plugs, smart lighting, smart locks, smart thermostats, video doorbells and central control points, such as Amazon's Echo. The price of these gadgets is coming down all the time - they mostly cost a fraction of what you'd have paid a few years ago - but

going the whole hog and fully automating your home can still cost a small fortune. Luckily, you don't have to splash out on dedicated smart devices. With a few smart plugs and a little imagination, you can automate a variety of tasks in your home and keep costs to a minimum. We show you how to get started.

What you'll need

Smart plugs are essentially pass-through plugs that fit into ordinary electrical sockets in your home and let you control whatever electrical items you plug into them using an app. They're similar in principle to those mechanical timers that automatically switch your lights on to a schedule when you're away from home, except they offer much more control via the app, and you can tweak their settings

even when out of the house. You can switch them on manually, schedule them to come on (and go off) at a time that suits you, and even control them by voice using your smartphone or, if supported, Amazon Alexa.

You can buy smart plugs from various hardware manufacturers, including

Smart plugs are available from lots of manufactures so feel free to shop around





TP-Link Smart Plug is more affordable than most and can be used with Amazon Alexa



Name your different devices and assign an icon that indicates their purpose

TP-Link (bit.ly/tpli434), WeMo (bit.ly/wem434) and D-Link (bit.ly/dli434). How many you'll need is up to you – it depends on what you want to do and how many devices you want to include.

For this guide, we're using the TP-Link Smart Plug because at £25 on Amazon, it's the cheapest of the bunch and is just as versatile as more expensive rivals. We'll show you how to set up and use a TP-Link device in our Mini Workshops below and on page 61.

Switch lights on and off

One of the most practical uses for a smart plug is to control the lighting in your home. It won't work with your main lights, which are turned on and off via wall-mounted light switches, but it will work perfectly with any plugged-in

table lamps. You can schedule the lights to switch on and go off whenever you like, or control them remotely using an app. This could deter would-be intruders because your home will appear to be occupied, even if you're out at work or away on holiday. Varying the time that the lights come on is even more effective, because someone watching your home may notice if the schedule is too regimented.

Wake up in the morning

If you struggle to get out of bed in the morning, smart plugs can help to rouse you from your slumber. You can use one to turn on the radio or TV at the time you want to wake up, or even switch on a kettle (make sure you fill it with water the night before, though) or coffee maker.

If all else fails, you could also use the plug to turn your lights on, as long as you're not the type to hide under the duvet!

Keep your home safe

You can set smart plugs to switch on security cameras when your home is unoccupied or you're in bed asleep, so they're not running all the time, wasting electricity and recording your own movements around the house. And if you often charge devices such as mobile phones, tablets and laptops overnight, you could use a smart plug to stop the charge after a few hours to ensure your devices don't overheat or suffer battery damage. Alternatively, if you want to be sure of having a full charge when you wake up, have the power go on in the early hours of the morning instead.



MINI WORKSHOP | Set up a TP-Link Smart Plug

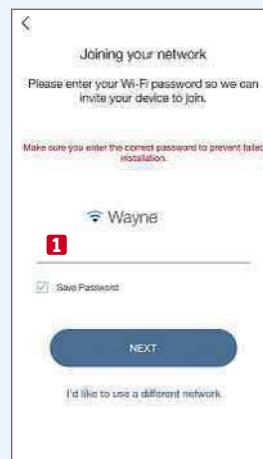
1 To get started, download the TP-Link Kasa app (bit.ly/tpka434) on your mobile device and connect your smart plug to the mains. Launch the app and tap the plus symbol in the top right-hand corner to add your first device. Scroll down and tap the Smart Plug entry. **1**



2 The Wi-Fi light on your plug should turn a solid amber and then, after 15 seconds or so, blink amber and green. Go to your phone's Settings and open the Wi-Fi. Connect to the Smart Plug's built-in Wi-Fi network. Return to the app and enter a name for your new plug. **1** Tap Next. **2**







3 Pick an icon for your plug – there are lots to choose from – and tap Next. You'll now be invited to enter your Wi-Fi password **1** so the plug can join your wireless network. Tap Connect and the plug will be added. Tap Next, then Done, and it will appear in your Devices list. Add any more plugs in the same way.



Broadband Deals

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

	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1		EE: Broadband	£28.50 (£18.50 for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited*	CHEAPEST £222.00
2		TalkTalk: Broadband	£27.00 (£19.95 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£239.40
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4		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

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Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 3 October 2017.

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- How to build a home media server

PLUS: New Windows 10
Update - superb new tools



**On sale
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Christmas lights aren't quite the hazard they're often portrayed as being, but it's always better to be safe than sorry. With the festive season fast approaching, why not rig up a smart plug to control the lights on your tree and manage any external lights that are connected indoors?

Control children's entertainment

As any parent knows, it's no mean feat prying children away from electrical devices such as games consoles, TVs and laptops, but with a smart plug you can set hard restrictions – having the power on these entertainments go off at a time of your choosing. The trick is unlikely to work with older kids who will probably be able to work out that they can simply plug into a socket with no smart plug, but you could add an extra hurdle by also connecting your router to a smart plug, so the internet goes off when you want it to, then comes back on when younger family members are tucked up in bed.

Reduce power consumption

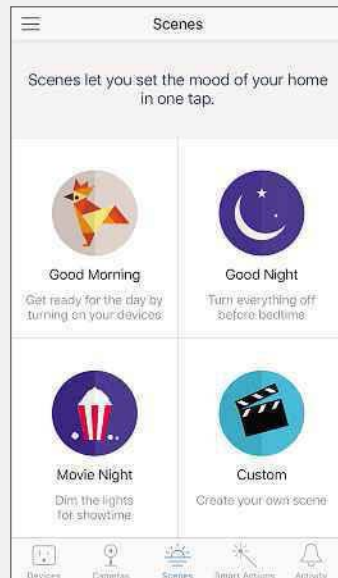
Having smart plugs turn electrical items on or off as required can save electricity, and the TP-Link plugs we're using also have a built-in energy-control feature that analyses each connected device's power usage, then presents this information in the app. This lets you see at a glance just how much energy your connected devices consume, and allows you to adjust your electricity usage accordingly.

Use TP Link's Kasa app

The TP-Link Smart Plug is controlled

using a free app for iOS or Android (bit.ly/tpka434). As well as connecting plugs, you can use it to connect and control Kasa cameras and set 'scenes' for different times of day (Good Morning turns on all your devices, Good Night turns them all off, Movie Night dims the lights, and Custom lets you create your own scene, determining which devices are on or off).

If you also add a smart router, you can have even more control over all your devices. The app also lets you view past activity. ■



Kasa's Scenes section provides control over connected devices



A device's 'Total Runtime' page shows how often the plug is used



The Kasa app lets you allocate an icon for your device

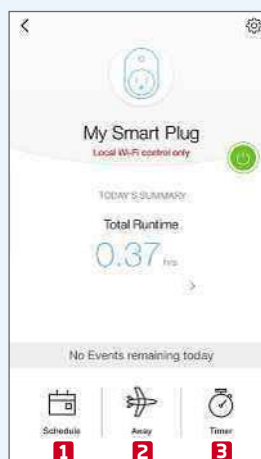


MINI WORKSHOP | Control your devices remotely

1 Once you've got one or more plugs connected to your network, you're ready to start controlling them. Launch Kasa and your list of devices will appear. Select one. You'll be able to turn it on or off simply by tapping the Power button. **1** The total time it's been running will be shown. **2**



2 To create a schedule for the plug – the times when it should switch on or off – tap the Schedule button. **1** If you're going to be away from home, tap Away **2** and you'll be able to set start and end times, as well as the days to repeat this. You can also set a timer. **3**



3 To control your plug remotely, you'll need to create a free Kasa account and verify your email address. When that's done, tap the Settings cog in the top-right corner and enable Remote Control. **1** From here, you can change the device's name and icon, **2** and view the time/location **3** and device info. **4**



NEXT ISSUE

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Web User Masterclass

Unlock the power of iOS 11 on the iPhone and iPad with these great tips from our experts

Turn off wireless adapters

On 19 September, Apple released iOS 11, the latest upgrade to its mobile operating system. The Control Centre has been redesigned and is still accessed by swiping up on your screen. However, you may find you have to swipe twice on an iPad, because if the first swipe doesn't extend far enough it may only summon the new dock.

The functions of the Bluetooth and Wi-Fi buttons have changed slightly. Switching them off in the Control Centre disconnects your iPhone or iPad from any devices it is connected to, such as your wireless router and Bluetooth headphones, but keeps the wireless adapters switched on to allow for quick reconnection. To fully switch off Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, and avoid wasting battery power, you have to open Settings, tap the individual menu options for each connection and toggle the switch to Off.



Even if Bluetooth is switched off in iOS 11's new Control Centre, it's still on in Settings and using power


Customise the Control Centre


In previous versions of iOS, the Control Centre was a simple app that you could summon to access a few basic tools.

In iOS 11, the interface has undergone a noticeable redesign, which can be customised in a number of ways.


Open Settings and tap Control Centre, then Customise Controls. The current controls at the top are the same as in previous versions of iOS, but the More Controls section below offers a long list of extra items that can be added. Press the green plus buttons to add them.

Here are a few of our favourites:


 Do Not Disturb While Driving stops distracting notifications appearing while you're driving. You shouldn't respond to your phone's beeps and dings when you're at the wheel, so tapping the car icon in Control Centre turns them off completely.

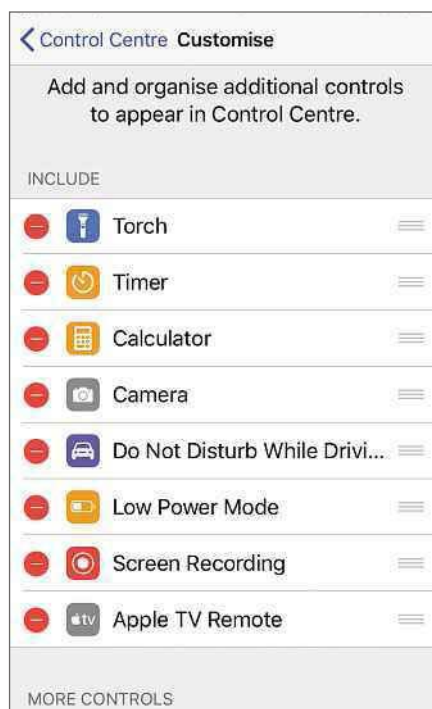
 Low Power Mode adds a battery icon to the Control Centre so you

can maximise the life of your battery without having to wait until the level is really low. It kicks in automatically.

 Screen Recording lets you record what's happening on your screen as a video clip. Press the Record button in Control Centre and it counts down

from three, then starts recording the screen. A red bar appears at the top to show that it's recording. Swipe up to access the Control Centre and press the Record button again to stop. The video is saved to your Photos library. This could be useful if you want to show someone how to perform an action on an iOS device – just record a short video and send it to them.

 Apple TV Remote lets you control the media player from your iPhone or iPad instead of fighting over who holds the remote.



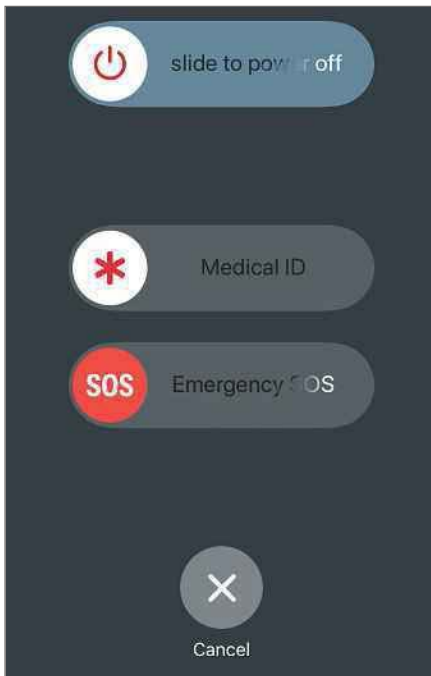
Add extra buttons and features to Control Centre from Settings

Call for help

A new tool in iOS 11 provides a simple way to get help in an emergency, should you ever need it. Open Settings, tap Emergency SOS and turn on the switch. Now, when you are in danger or there is a serious problem of some sort, pressing the power button five times causes the iPhone to emit a siren at maximum volume (it seems louder than normal to us), and a countdown timer appears on the screen.

After a count of three, the iPhone automatically dials the emergency services and notifies your emergency contacts. There is a link at the bottom of the Emergency SOS screen for editing your emergency contact

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.



Press the power button five times in an emergency

numbers. Tap it to add the details for anyone you wish to notify.

If you want to try this feature, make sure you cancel the call before the timer counts down to zero.

Mute messages

There are all sorts of reasons why you might want to shut your messages up for a while, whether they're from a service you're not interested in, a persistent person who isn't giving up or you're in a group chat that's particularly active when you'd prefer not to join in. You can now 'mute' these conversations without affecting other people in the group or even letting them know you're no longer listening.

On the main Messages screen, swipe left over a conversation to reveal two buttons on the right: Delete and Hide Alerts. Pressing Hide Alerts places a tiny crescent-moon icon on the left of the conversation to indicate that its notifications are muted. Slide left over it again and tap Show Alerts to re-enable the notifications.

Save animated GIFs

Animated GIFs have been around for years but they seem to be particularly popular at the moment. In iOS 11, you can save them to your photo library and view them in the Photos app.

If you see a GIF you like on a web page, press and hold it until a menu appears, then select the option to save it. Open the Photos app, select the All Photos album and tap the image. The animation plays and you can enjoy it to your heart's content.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Offload unused apps

If you have an older iPhone or iPad with only 16GB of storage, you may find yourself running out of space. Because any app you own, free or paid-for, is yours forever, iOS 11 can temporarily delete apps to free up space on your device, then reinstall them when they're needed. Go to Settings, press iTunes & App Stores and scroll down to the bottom of the page. Turn on the switch next to Offload Unused Apps.

Use keyboard tricks

In iOS 11, you can take advantage of the larger keys on your iPad's onscreen keyboard by using a feature called Key Flicks. Each key now displays a second character, smaller and in light grey, above the main character. For example, the top row of letters now includes the numbers 0 to 9, so you no longer have to switch to a separate keyboard to type them. To type the main character, you simply tap its key as before. To type the secondary character, press its key and swipe down, then let go.

Typing one-handed on your iPhone – holding the device in your hand and hitting at letters using your thumb – can be a bit of a stretch, but now there's a solution. Press and hold the Emoji button. A menu appears showing three keyboards: the standard version is shown in the centre, flanked by keyboards for typing one-handed with your left or right hand. Selecting one of these moves all the keys over to the left or right so they are easier to reach.



Place the keyboard left, right or centre to suit your typing

Edit screenshots

Holding down the Home and Power buttons together on an iPhone or iPad and then releasing them instantly takes a screenshot. In iOS 11, a thumbnail of your screenshot

appears in the bottom-left corner of the screen for several seconds. If you tap this before it disappears, an editor opens that lets you crop, draw on and annotate your screenshot before saving it. Its tools include a pencil, pen, broad-tipped marker and eraser, and you can add text or sign your name by tapping the plus button in the bottom-right corner. Rectangles, circles, arrows and speech bubbles are available too.



Take screenshots and annotate them in the new editor

Scan QR codes

QR codes are those randomly patterned squares that sometimes appear on products, adverts, posters and other places. They contain information, such as website URLs and other data, encoded in the dots, like a sophisticated bar code.

Previously, you needed a QR-code reader app on the iPhone or iPad to read them but with iOS 11, you can simply point your iPhone or iPad camera at the QR code. There are no buttons or controls to press – the QR code is recognised automatically and a message appears at the top of the screen showing whatever information it contains. For example, if it contains a URL, it may ask if you want to use Safari to visit the website.

Ask the Expert

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



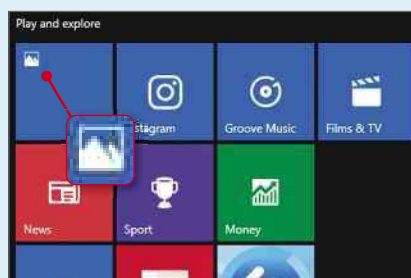
GENERAL PC

Enlarge tile icons

Q I have a problem with a tile on the Windows 10 Start menu. The icon is tiny and appears in the top-left corner. All the other tiles have full-size icons. How do I change the size of the icon on the tile?

Tom Ryan, via email

A From your screenshot, it looks as if the tile is inside a folder. If you drag a tile and drop it onto another tile, you create a folder that can contain multiple tiles. For example, you could place all your games in a Games folder so they occupy just one



Tiny icons on Start tiles are tiles inside folders. Click them and drag them out

tile on the Start menu, and each game will appear as a little icon. But there's no point having a folder for just one tile, so click the folder to show the tile, then click and drag it to a new position among the Start tiles. The empty folder disappears automatically.

of hard-drive space to be safe. You can recover this later by using the Disk Cleanup tool on the Start menu to delete the installation files and backups.

GENERAL PC

Windows 7 not booting

Q When I press F2 on my Packard Bell PC's splash screen to access setup, it makes a shrill sound. Can I download a boot disk instead?

John Keefe, via email

A Pressing F2 opens the BIOS setup on Packard Bell PCs. There is rarely any need to change these and if Windows 7 isn't starting, a better option is to press F8.

If you're using a laptop, you may need to hold down the Fn (Function) key as you press F8. It can be tricky to get the timing right and it won't work if you press it too soon or too late. Switch on the power and press F8 repeatedly to try and catch the appropriate moment.

If you get this right, a boot menu appears. Select Safe Mode and see if Windows starts up. If it does, find Command Prompt on the Start menu, right-click it and run it as an administrator. Type `sfc /scannow` and press Enter to check and repair Windows files.

If Windows won't start in Safe Mode, go back to the boot menu and select Repair Your Computer. Continue to the screen showing Startup Repair and System Restore. Try Startup Repair first and if that doesn't solve the problem, return to this menu and use System Restore to put your PC back to a previous working configuration.

You can download Windows 7 from bit.ly/win434 and use another computer to burn it to DVD.

SECURITY

Get a VPN for free

Q I've been reading about how VPNs make your internet browsing secure so no one can track you, but all the ones I've looked at require a subscription. Are there any free ones?

Sean Fox, via email

EMAIL

Remove pirates from email

Q When I logged into my Outlook webmail account yesterday, I saw a skull and crossbones image and a pop-up message with something about talking like a pirate. I quickly quit my browser, thinking it might be malware, but when I scanned the hard drive for viruses, I didn't find any. Today I logged back into Outlook and everything seems normal. What should I do?

Owen Nolan, via email

A Ahoy, matey! Yo-ho-ho! This is just Microsoft having fun. Since 1995, 19 September has been designated International Talk Like A Pirate Day. It's not as well known as other special days such as April Fools day, but it's still celebrated in the UK, particularly by primary schools.

Clicking the icon would have made

some subtle changes to the Outlook interface, such as adding skull and crossbones icons to the menu bar, changing Search to 'Hunt for', and turning 'new message' into 'firing a salvo'. You'll have to wait until next year to see it again, although Microsoft may pull a different prank next time.

You can read about International Talk Like A Pirate Day at bit.ly/pira434.

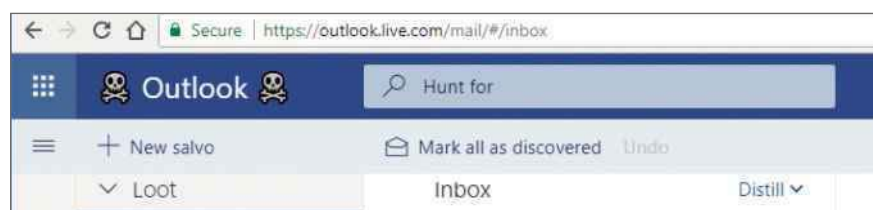
GENERAL PC

Clear space for the update

Q How much hard-drive space do I need to upgrade to Windows 10 Autumn Creators Update?

Steve Gray, via email

A The update is a 5GB download. However, before it installs, your PC makes a backup of the Windows folder, which could be 20GB or more. So in total, you probably need about 30GB



Microsoft doesn't usually prank people, but it celebrated Pirate Day in Outlook



Opera has a useful VPN built into the browser that offers extra privacy

A One of the best free VPNs is the one built into the Chrome browser. Click the icon at the left of the browser's address bar to enable the VPN. The security and privacy applies only to the Opera window, not to other programs such as Windows Mail, but that's fine if you perform most of your online activities in a browser.

Betternet (www.betternet.co) offers a free VPN service, but you have to sit through a video ad before you can connect to the service. Or you could try a free account at Windscribe (windscribe.com), which provides a generous 10GB of data a month. It's enough for private browsing but easily exceeded if you watch online videos or stream music.

GENERAL PC

Fix broken file associations

Q When I double-click a photo in Windows 10, it usually opens in Windows Photo Viewer. I set this up not long after I upgraded to Windows 10. However, sometimes it opens in the Photos app or Paint. Why does it do this and how do I get Windows to use the same program for all my photos? Is there a problem with my PC's Registry?

Paul Nicol, via email

A It's probably not a Registry problem. The most likely reason is that your photos are in different file formats, such as JPEG, PNG, GIF, TIF and so on. You may have set the association between JPEG and Windows Photo Viewer but other extensions could still be set to other programs.

File extensions are usually hidden, which makes it harder to differentiate between a '.jpg' image and a '.jpeg', or any of the other formats. Open Explorer, click the View menu and tick 'Filename extensions' in the ribbon toolbar to display the file types.

Whenever a file opens in the wrong program, quit the program, right-click the file and select 'Open with', then 'Choose another app'. Find the app you

want to use and tick 'Always use this app to open .xyz files'. Eventually all the file types will use the app you want.

GENERAL PC

Block big Windows updates

Q I'm happy with my current version of Windows 10 and don't want to change it for one that may not work. Can I stop major updates like the Creators Update from downloading?

Will Kennedy, via email

A A recent court ruling in Germany said that Microsoft shouldn't force updates on people without asking, but it's not clear if this applies to other countries, too. Currently, there's no



Switch on 'Metered connection' to limit downloads, such as Windows updates

GENERAL PC

Stop low drive-space warning

Q Every five minutes or so, I get a warning that I'm running out of hard-drive space, even though there's plenty available. How can I stop it?

R Smith, via email

A Next time you see the message, check the drive letter. Your hard drive may be partitioned, so while the C: drive may be fine, it could be a partition such as D: that's full, or even a USB drive or memory stick.

If the C: drive is the problem, click Start and run Disk Clean-up (it's under Windows Administrative Tools in Windows 10; or Accessories, System Tools in Windows 7). Click 'Clean up system files'. When the window returns, tick every box and click OK.

No matter which drive or partition is full, you'll need to move some files to another storage device such as a USB memory stick or USB hard drive.

option to switch off Windows Update.

One trick that may work is to set the Wi-Fi in your home to a metered connection, which fools it into thinking that there's a limit on the amount of data that can be downloaded. The Windows Fall Creators Update is a big download, so this may put it off for a time.

Press Windows+i and click 'Network & Internet'. Select Wi-Fi on the left, then click the Wi-Fi connection on the right. Switch on 'Set as metered connection'.

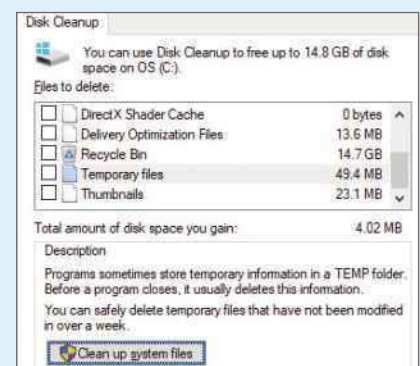
MOBILE

Radio Times replacement

Q The Radio Times Watchlist used to list my favourite programs and their broadcast times for the next few weeks. It was invaluable for programming my DVD recorder when going on a fortnight's holiday, but now it's gone. What can I use instead?

Tamsin Coxen, via email

A Watchlist has been removed from the website but it's still in the iOS and Android apps. If you have an iPhone, iPad or Android phone or tablet, search for 'Discover TV'. There are other good apps and websites, such as TV24 (www.tv24.co.uk) but we couldn't find one that offers listings for more than a week ahead.



Use Disk Cleanup to clear unnecessary files from a hard drive

To stop the message appearing, press Windows+R, type **regedit** and press Enter. On the left, select the key: **HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer**

Then select Edit, New, DWORD (32-bit) Value. Name it **NoLowDiscSpaceChecks** and double-click it, set its value to 1 and click OK. You will no longer receive warnings, so it's up to you to keep an eye on your remaining space.



This fortnight Roland has been struggling with hotel Wi-Fi but found that his VPN solved all his connection problems

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

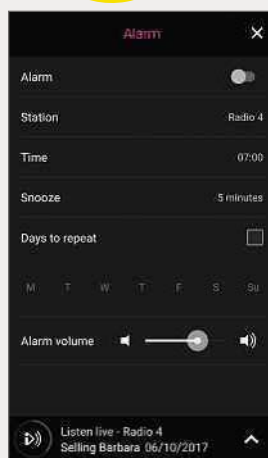
APPS

Wake up to your favourite BBC radio station

I used to enjoy waking up to my alarm clock radio, but I never replaced it when it broke. Since then, I've always used the default alarm app on my phone. However, the other day I realised that you can turn your phone into an alarm clock radio using the BBC iPlayer Radio app (bit.ly/bbcradio434).

Open the app, then select Menu, Clock and Alarm. Here, you can choose the station you want to play; set the alarm time and the days you want it to repeat (if any); and even change how much time the snooze button buys you before the alarm goes off again. Finally, you can set the 'Alarm volume'. I set mine to around half way so it doesn't startle me when the radio goes off.

The BBC iPlayer Radio app lets you set a radio alarm on your phone



An added benefit is that the app's Clock menu gives you the option to set a sleep timer, which is great if you like to fall asleep to your favourite BBC radio station.

Adam Humphreys, via email

Mug winner



All Mail box by clicking More in the sidebar and selecting All Mail. The best part, however, is that if you then receive further messages related to the muted one – if, for example, you're having a conversation with someone by email – they won't appear in the inbox either but will remain in All Messages with the previous message.

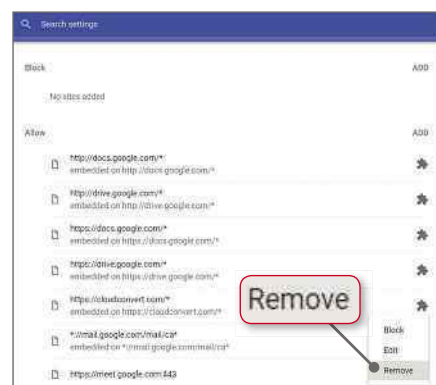
I've never needed to use this feature but it's handy to know it's there if you ever become tired of a conversation, particularly one you're only being cc'd into and don't need to keep up with in minute detail.

Jon Kelly, via email

BROWSERS

Disable Chrome's Desktop notifications

When you log into a website or service for the first time in Google Chrome, the site often asks if it can display Desktop notifications. Once or twice, I've clicked Yes and then regretted it, because I've then been bombarded with pop-up notifications. Fortunately, there's an easy way to turn notifications off again. Simply open Chrome's Settings and scroll down to Content Settings. Click it and select Notifications, then under Allow, you'll see a list of the sites that have permission to display



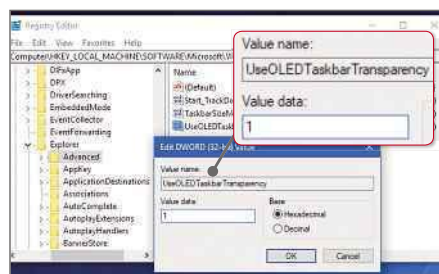
Click Remove to disable notifications for a particular website

GENERAL PC

Make your taskbar super-transparent

The Windows 10 taskbar uses a transparency effect that lets you see your Desktop and any windows behind it. This is most noticeable when you set the taskbar to hide automatically. Open the Settings app, click Personalisation, select Taskbar and switch on 'Automatically hide the taskbar in desktop mode'.

You can also increase its transparency by making a simple Registry tweak. Press Windows+R, type regedit and press Enter. Go to:



Add this setting to the Registry to make the taskbar super-transparent

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced

Right-click in the right pane and select New, followed by 'DWORD (32-bit) Value'. Set the name to UseOLEDTaskbarTransparency and click OK. Double-click this after creating it and set its value to 1.

Now return to the Settings app and Choose Personalisation, then Colours. Turn the 'Transparency effects' setting off, then turn it back on. The taskbar is now twice as transparent as it was.

To return it to normal, Set UseOLEDTaskbarTransparency to zero and toggle 'Transparency effects' again.

Eric Walsh, via email

EMAIL

Mute your email

If you open an email in Gmail (or tick the box to select it) and click the More menu, you'll see an option called Mute. Clicking this option archives the email, which moves it out of your Inbox. You can still access the message from the



notifications. Click the three-dot button next to the site you want to disable and select Remove. When you next load the site, it may ask for permission to enable notifications again. If it does, close the request and select 'Never ask again on this computer' or similar.

Robert Hammond, via email

ANDROID

Find your misplaced phone

I think I may have seen this advice in the magazine before, but I want to remind *Web User* readers how useful Android's 'Find My Device' tool (bit.ly/findmydevice434) can be. Last week, while I was out for dinner, I couldn't find my phone and wasn't sure if I'd left it at home or lost it in the pub we'd visited beforehand. My other half suggested I use the Find My Device app, so I entered my Google email address and password, and within seconds it showed that my device was right where I was standing. I checked my pockets again (more thoroughly this time) and there it was! I blame the glass of wine I'd had, but it's great to know that this app can put your mind at rest if you think you've left your phone somewhere.

Constance, via email

SOCIAL MEDIA

Save Facebook posts

If you see an interesting post in your news feed, such as a link to an article, but you don't want to read it straight away, you can easily save it for later. Click the three-dot menu in the corner and select 'Save link'. I always thought this Facebook feature was fairly obvious but surprisingly few people I've spoken to seem to know about it.

When you want to read something you've saved, click the Saved link in the panel on the left, which has a bookmark icon (if you can't see it, you might need to click 'See more'). You'll see a list of all your saved articles, which you can read when you have the time and delete when you no longer want them. To delete an article, click the three dots next to Share and select Unsave from the menu.

L Short, via email



Save interesting articles on Facebook and read them later

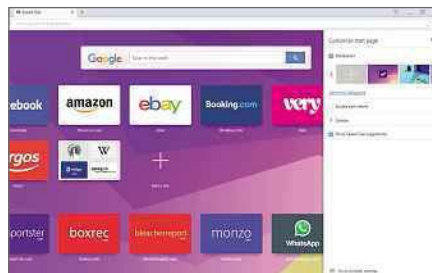
BROWSERS

Customise Opera's 'New Tab' page

If you don't like seeing the 'Speed Dial suggestions' and the Search Box when you open a new tab in Opera, you can easily change it. To get rid of the Speed Dial suggestions, go to Settings, then Browser and untick the appropriate option under 'Start page'. Alternatively, click the 'Customise start page' icon in the top-right corner of the New Tab page, then untick 'Show Speed Dial suggestions'.

You can also get rid of the search box. First make sure 'Show advanced settings' is ticked in Settings, then click the 'Customise start page' icon, untick 'Search box' and it will disappear. There are a few other useful options here, too, including the ability to change the wallpaper on the New Tab page!

Madeline, Web User Forums



You can remove Suggestions from Opera's new tab page

EMAIL

Use Gmail shortcuts

Gmail offers a selection of handy keyboard shortcuts, which are often quicker and easier to use than reaching for the mouse and accessing menus.

Select text with Shift+arrow keys, Shift+Home or Shift+End. Ctrl+A selects all the text. Press Ctrl+B for bold, Ctrl+I for italic and Ctrl+U for underline. Press Ctrl+Shift+5 to cycle through all the fonts and Ctrl+Shift and plus or minus to increase or decrease the text size. Press Ctrl+Shift+8 to turn the current line or lines into bullet points. There are more, but there are only so many you can remember!

Simon Spencer, via email

BROWSERS

Disguise your location

The other day, I was trying to access the US version of a website on my phone, so I enabled Opera VPN (bit.ly/opera434) and set United States as the location. However, I couldn't get the US version of the site to load in Google Chrome – perhaps because I was logged into my Google account. I decided to try Firefox (bit.ly/firefox434) instead, and this worked straight away. So, if you have trouble getting Chrome to work with a VPN, I'd suggest giving another browser a try and see if that fixes it.

Tom Burrows, via email

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

SECURITY

Check you've typed the correct URL

Last week, I was trying to access WhatsApp from my web browser but the page that loaded asked me to click Continue to get to the right destination. Luckily, I noticed that something wasn't quite right so I checked my History and found that I'd typed the URL web.whatsapp.com rather than web.whatsapp.com. If I'd clicked the link, the site might have tried to phish my private details or install malware on my PC. Because of this, I'd like to warn others that if you ever think a website doesn't look right, trust your instinct and don't click anything. It's very easy to hit the wrong keys when typing a web address, and you could be



VirusTotal can scan URLs to check that they're safe

directed to some spurious site that tries to compromise your security.

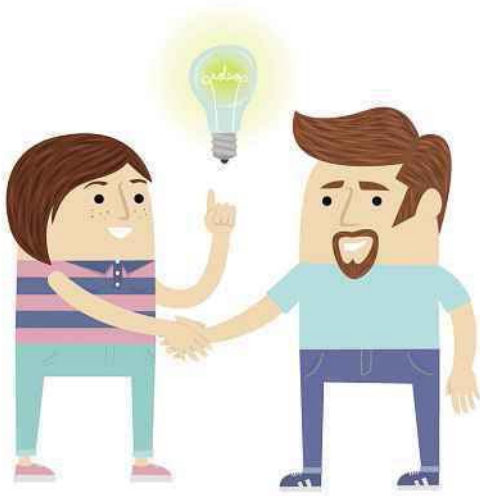
If you're not sure whether a URL someone has sent you is safe, simply search for the website using Google and load it from there instead. You can also try entering the URL at VirusTotal (www.virustotal.com).

Harriet Archer, via email

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?

If so, please send your story to webuser@dennis.co.uk





Readers' Helpdesk

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

GENERAL PC

Why do programs show as 'Not responding'?

Q I keep getting the message 'Not responding' appearing in programs. It usually starts in Firefox, but eventually affects everything and my laptop slows to a virtual standstill.

If I reboot, it's okay again for a couple of days but then eventually starts again. I have scanned the computer with Kaspersky (bit.ly/kas434), Malwarebytes (www.malwarebytes.com) and AdwCleaner (bit.ly/adwc434), and they all came back clean. I am also getting 'Unresponsive script' messages, usually after waking my laptop from sleep, and most of these mention Chrome, although the browser isn't open and I rarely use it. I don't know if these two things are connected or not.

rufford155, Web User Forums

A If you don't use Chrome, then there's no point in having it installed, so I'd uninstall it. That should eliminate the second problem. With regard to the 'not responding' problem, something seems to be using up your memory. It could be one or more of the add-ons in Firefox. Running Firefox in its Safe Mode to see if the problem clears up will point to one or more add-ons, and you will then need to re-enable them one at a time until the problem starts again. If that doesn't do

Name	CPU	Memory	Disk	Network
Apps (4)				
Google Chrome	0.9%	196.0 MB	0.2 MB/s	0.1 Mbps
MiniView 64-bit	0%	17.4 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
Opera Internet Browser (32 bit)	0.3%	19.0 MB	0.1 MB/s	0.1 Mbps
Task Manager	0.6%	16.7 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
Background processes (125)				
Adobe Acrobat Update Service	0%	1.0 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
AEM Agent	0%	13.7 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
Alps Pointing-device Driver	0%	0.4 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
Alps Pointing-device Driver	0%	1.1 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
Alps Pointing-device Driver for	0.1%	0.6 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
AMP WinOFF (32 bit)	0%	0.9 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps

Use Task Manager to see which programs are hogging your memory

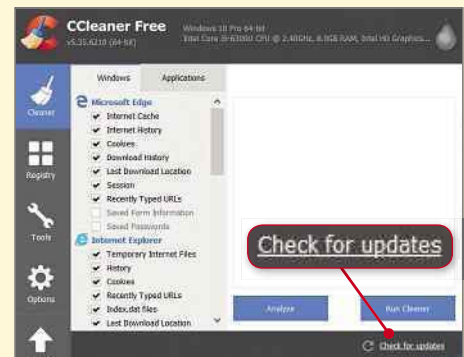
SECURITY

Should I reinstall Windows to clean up CCleaner?

Q I want to download and install a fresh copy of Windows because my PC has got the CCleaner Trojan Floxif. I have fallen at the first hurdle, though, because I don't know if I should reformat my USB stick as FAT32 or NTFS.

boaz, Web User Forums

A There's no need to go to such extreme lengths as reinstalling Windows. You can follow the steps listed on BleepingComputer (bit.ly/floxif434) to remove the Trojan. Alternatively, Avast has said that simply updating to the latest version of CCleaner will remove the 'back door' from your PC. See bit.ly/avast434 for more information. The server that the malware connected to has already been disabled, so it doesn't represent a



Updating CCleaner to the latest version will remove any vulnerabilities

significant threat, even if you do nothing. To reiterate, there's no need to even use a System Restore point, let alone reinstall Windows completely.

Cantrel, scrimper and Sneakybeaky, Web User Forums

the trick, open Task Manager by right-clicking the taskbar and choosing it from the menu. Click 'More details' and see if you can identify the Apps or 'Background processes' hogging your memory.

Cantrel, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

Why won't Windows copy files to the correct folder?

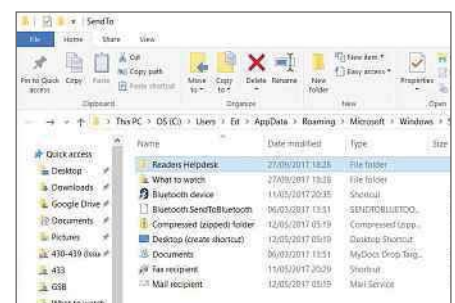
Q I have added a folder called Spares (located within a folder of my holiday photos) to the 'Send to' right-click menu. I've found this really useful for moving files that I don't need. However, now that I've created a second Spares folder within a different folder of photos, all files that I move using the shortcut still go to the first Spares folder I created. How do I get the 'Send to' shortcut to copy files to the appropriate Spares folder?

ERICG, Web User Forums

A You can't expect Windows to know which Spares folder you want to send files to, based on what you're

copying, so you need to create a separate 'Send to' shortcut for each Spares folder. Don't use two shortcuts of the same name or the duplicate shortcut will be automatically renamed with a (2) next to it. If I were you, I'd remove the shortcut you've already made and create folders and shortcuts with more specific names, such as 'Summer holiday 2017 additional images' and 'Winter holiday 2017 additional images', so you don't get confused.

lizzygraham, Web User Forums



Create individually named 'Send to' shortcuts for folders you often send files to



Star Email

Stay safe on eBay using common sense

Regarding eBay scams and how to avoid them: I have been using eBay for many years, both as a buyer and a seller, without any problems. As with buying from anywhere, you have to use common sense and not be drawn into 'too good to be true' bargains. I know people do get scammed but it's quite often down to their own greed or gullibility.

For example, if someone offers a top-of-the-range laptop at a ridiculously low price, it's obviously too good to be true, but a mist descends for some people and even though their brain tells them to be careful, the greed takes over and they fall for the scam.

You should always be suspicious of a newly registered seller, especially



if they are selling direct from China (scammers often mislead buyers about where they are really based). If a listing looks suspicious, then it most probably is.

The only problem I have ever had was when I bought a second-hand graphics card that the seller forgot to pay postage on. It got lost in the post and the seller

refunded me, so it was no problem really.

If you're buying odds and ends and small-value items, you'll probably be safe. You can often find useful stuff that's not easy to obtain elsewhere, such as second-hand books and DVDs. Buying from trusted shops and businesses via eBay is as safe as buying from anywhere else and sometimes works out cheaper than buying directly from

a company's website, because there's often no postage to pay.

As always when purchasing online, do your research properly. Don't just click and buy, check elsewhere first and – in my humble opinion – you will be 99.99% safe on eBay.

scrimper, Web User Forums

Left-handed picture isn't right

I just can't help responding to the picture accompanying your Star Email in Issue 432 on the subject of left-handed web users. The message 'I'm a lefty' is written on a left hand, so therefore it must have been written by someone who is

right-handed! I don't believe for one minute that I am the only reader sad enough to point this out.

John Ryall, Weymouth



Web User says:
Whoops, well spotted John. Maybe the hand in the photo belongs to ambidextrous reader Barry Freeman, the writer of the next letter!

Discipline yourself to use both hands

Regarding your Star Email, I am also left-handed (and left-legged, to boot!). I bought my first computer in 1993 at the age of 53 – a second-hand Compaq 386 with 8MB of RAM. From the start, although it felt alien, I disciplined myself

to use the mouse with my right hand, leaving my left hand free for using a graphics pen. I became quite adept at using both at the same time, scrolling with one and clicking with the other.

Today, I have an Intel Core i7 laptop and use the pen in my left hand and the touchpad with the right. All it needs is a bit of self discipline, with no need for whingeing or inconveniencing others.

Barry Freeman, East Yorkshire



Quiz Answers: Issue 433

1 *The Railway Children*



2 *Goodbye Mr Chips*



3 *Casino Royale*



4 *Blow Up*



5 *The English Patient*



6 *A Cock And Bull Story*



WINNER!

Well done to Kim Hawthorne, who wins a Web User mug



WORD PUZZLE

Rich Text



“ I’m the only one responsible for this, but if I’m taking someone down with me, it’s Microsoft ”

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

I can’t trust CCleaner any more

I am disgusted with the makers of CCleaner for releasing an update to the program that contained malware (Need to Know, Issue 433). Surely a company with as many millions of users as Piriform should have the decency to ensure their software is safe before making it available across the world? That’s just common sense, especially because many of us have our installations of CCleaner set to download updates automatically, so we are immediately put at risk when they are not properly checked.

Luckily, in this instance, I was not one of those infected by the malicious code, but it’s certainly made me reconsider having CCleaner installed on my PC. If this sort of thing can happen once, how can I trust Piriform – or Avast, or whoever’s responsible – that it won’t happen again?

William Whittaker, via email



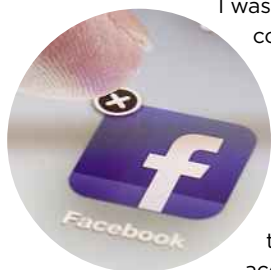
It’s hardly surprising that there are so many accidents these days when young people can’t leave their phones alone for five seconds! Not only are they putting themselves at risk, but they are posing a danger and inconvenience to other people. If I had my way, there would be the same strict controls on walking and texting as there are on phoning and driving – not that many idiots pay the slightest attention to the latter.

I’m not saying that young people shouldn’t use their phones at all, just that they should pay a little more heed to the world around them, so they don’t obstruct and walk into others or get run over. Surely they can wait until they sit down to check their Facebook pages, rather than constantly monitoring them to see who’s ‘liked’ what?

It seems ironic to me that mobile phones were designed as a means of making communication easier, but have turned into one of the most anti-social devices ever invented!

Colin Birch, via email

Facebook causes more problems than it solves



I was amused by Barry’s column in Issue 431 about Facebook’s loud autoplaying videos. But if people are so annoyed by Facebook, then why don’t they just delete their Facebook accounts? The simple reason is because everybody

else is on Facebook, therefore there is this feeling of being alone and losing touch if you delete your account.

However, it seems to me that nowadays Facebook seems to cause more arguments and problems than it solves. One example is when I was trying to find the people I was going to be sharing a flat with (you can connect with your future flatmates through Facebook groups). Someone in the group wrote that I’d probably be in my room while everyone else was chilling together, simply because I was late to joining the group.

I find that as much as Facebook brings people together, it also brings people too close together, which is why problems on Facebook often arise. Why not have a Facebook break in the evenings?



I have now deleted my Facebook account, but have to wait 14 days or so for this to be confirmed.

Gold Master, via email

Never agree to a free SEO offer

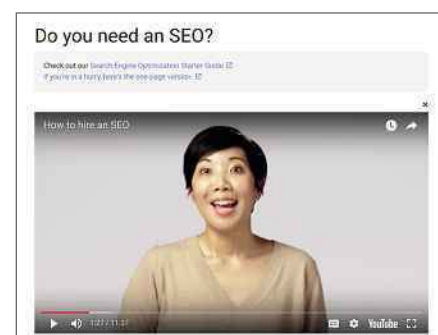
In Build a Better Site in Issue 433, Ray Fielding asks about “free SEO”. It sounds as if the offer he received by email was unsolicited, in other words it’s spam! Rule number one for spam is never to respond in any way whatsoever. No reputable SEO company would send spam. Always remember that “there’s no such thing as a free lunch” and that reputable SEO companies charge money.

Ray asks “what’s the worst thing that can happen?”. Well, if you agree to let a company carry out free SEO, you’re going to give an unknown third party the username and password to make changes to your website. That immediately breaks security rule number one: never disclose your password.

The worst they might do is to use your website to host malware or originate more spam. In that case, your hosting company is entitled to delete your site and cancel your contract with no notice or refund.

Google provides some excellent advice on SEO at bit.ly/googleseo434.

Rob Hindle, via email



Wi-Fi kettle suits me to a tea

I think Martin Fletcher perhaps misunderstands the advantages of a Wi-Fi kettle over traditional tea and coffee machines with timers (Inbox, Issue 433). With the latter, you have to program them ahead to boil your water at a specific time; whereas with a Wi-Fi kettle, you can switch it on whenever you feel parched, and you don’t have to be in the same room or even the same building. I don’t own one



myself but I am considering asking for one for Christmas. As someone who drinks at least five cups of tea a day, it would certainly save me a lot of going back and forth to the kitchen! Although I suppose you still need to pour and fetch your drinks yourself, unless you have one of these robot butlers I keep reading about!

Gavin Hopkins, via email



Thanks for your DVD-writing advice

I was pleased to see my name in Ask the Expert in Issue 432 (bit.ly/webuser432) regarding my query about using an external DVD writer with a tablet while

on holiday. It was good to hear that I was not alone in having problems.

I fully appreciate Roland's comments and you may be pleased to know that after a final attempt with

a DVD writer from Amazon (a Kindle model with a USB 3 port), and using an external power supply, I was successful.

In my original letter, I failed to explain that the main purpose of connecting a writer to my tablet was to play DVD movies from a company called Redbox (www.redbox.com). They have kiosks outside most US supermarkets and other stores where you can hire DVDs for one night for \$1.35 (about £1). Last year, for example, I had *Eye in the Sky* for one evening.

Some of the places I stay in when visiting the States do not provide a DVD player, hence my query. I would never dream of using the writer to copy films.

Thank you again Roland for your response and carry on with the very useful tips that I find on your page.

John Stirling, via email

What you say...

MICROSOFT IS RELEASING OFFICE 2019 NEXT YEAR. WHICH OFFICE SUITE DO YOU USE?

I use Google Docs. I like to edit documents online and not just on my home PC.

Martin Phillip

Google Docs. It's adequate, but not as good as Office 11, which was the last suite I bought.

Iain Kenworthy-Neale

I use OpenOffice, which is just as good as Microsoft Office. It's open source, so it's free.

Brian Brown

Google Docs, because it's free and more unified. I would switch to a more secure version if it was just as good.

Goldmaster @imthegoldmaster

THE NEW FIREFOX QUANTUM BROWSER IS COMING SOON (bit.ly/quantum434). DO YOU PLAN TO USE IT?

Nothing would persuade me to switch from Chrome. I love the syncing between Chromebook, PC, phone and even iPad. I love the seamless Google integration.

Nat Grove

I used Firefox years ago and was a big champion of it, but it became a real resource hog. Now I'm a huge fan of Opera and use it on all my devices.

Eff Clarke

I just installed the beta of Firefox Quantum and it's running a lot smoother than before. It used to keep freezing, which is why I had to swap to Chrome.

David Robinson

I've tried all the popular browsers and none of them can equal Chrome. I have Firefox as a standby.

Geoffrey Boow

A NEW SURVEY SHOWS THAT 79% OF PEOPLE ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE RISE OF FAKE NEWS ONLINE. ARE YOU?

Not at all. Anything of interest I check with the BBC, Sky and Reuters. If the story isn't on there, I know it is fake.

Gavin Green

I am not worried about fake news online, but I am worried about the people that believe it's real and share it with others!

David Batty

I'm not worried at all. I find that BBC and TV news lies more. I can tell fake news when I see it and begrudge being talked to like I'm 10 years old by the mainstream media.

Liz F Lambeth

The only place I read the news is on the BBC website so I am pretty sure it's not fake.

Colin Wallace

COULD YOU EVER USE YAHOO AGAIN AFTER IT ADMITTED ALL THREE BILLION ACCOUNTS WERE HACKED IN 2013?

I'm doing my best to finally remove Yahoo from all my online activity. I thought they were secure. I even had it linked to PayPal. Not now.

Cunningham Hutchison @MrChutchy

Time for Yahoo to join the graveyard with AltaVista, Lycos and Friends Reunited.

Si Mellor

Yahoo has always had poor security. How come it is still in business?

Lance Parkington

I only had a Yahoo account to log into Flickr. I prefer Gmail.

Pamela J Anderson

! Page 404

Barry Collins is sick of his favourite apps being eaten up and spat out by tech giants



Much to-do about nothing

Every so often, of a Wednesday morning, I'll get an email from the estimable editor of this fine organ, saying something like: "Forgotten your column again?" Admittedly, there's only one thing responsible for this occasional lapse of memory and that's yours truly. But if I'm taking someone down with me, it's Microsoft.

In 2015, Microsoft splashed out somewhere in the region of \$150m on the magnificent to-do list app Wunderlist. Beautifully designed, compatible with almost every mobile and desktop platform you can think of and stuffed with useful features, it was easy to see why Microsoft might want to make Wunderlist its own.

The purchase of Wunderlist "further demonstrates Microsoft's commitment to delivering market-leading mobile apps across the platforms and devices our customers use," said Microsoft's spokesperson Eran Megidido at the time. Sadly, this was a 100%, copper-bottomed fib.

Microsoft left Wunderlist to rot. In the

two years since I started using it, not long after that 2015 buyout, I can't recall a single update of note. Most criminally of all, while Microsoft was begging other app makers to create 'Live Tiles' for the Windows 10 Start Menu, it couldn't even be bothered to make one for Wunderlist. And what better use of a Live Tile than as an at-a-glance reminder of the tasks in your to-do list? It's precisely the short snippets of data that the Start Menu was designed for!

Then, earlier this year, came the inevitable announcement. Microsoft was shutting down Wunderlist in favour of a new app, Microsoft To-Do. This new app looked like Wunderlist but was missing half of its most useful features: no sub-tasks, no option to make notes on tasks, no integration with all the calendar apps that Wunderlist supported.

To this day, Microsoft's own Outlook

app will display to-do items in your calendar from the condemned Wunderlist, but not from To-Do. Only Microsoft could fork out \$150m on an app and then spend two years making it worse.

Well, I say 'only Microsoft', but that's not true. All the big tech firms are at it: hoovering up innovative apps that could

“ Only Microsoft could fork out \$150m on an app and then spend two years making it worse ”

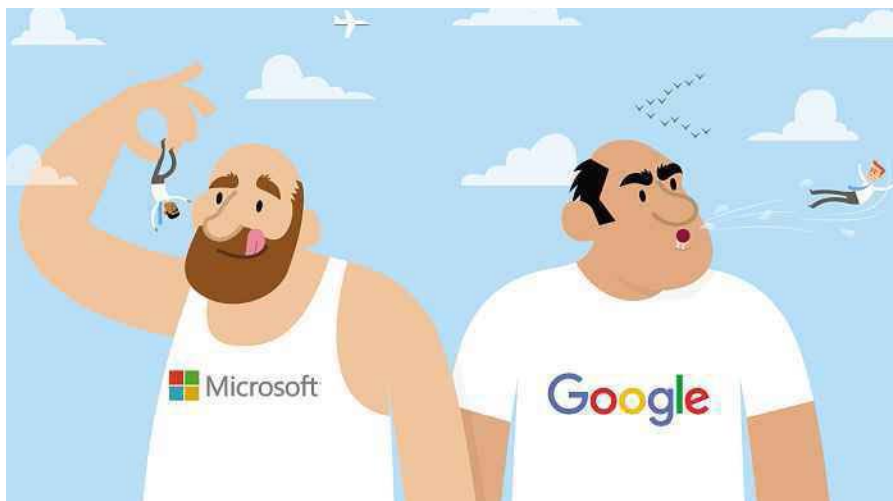
be potential competitors and then either sucking them up into the Borg or closing them down entirely. The Sunrise calendar app (also bought by Microsoft), the

Picasa photo software (Google), the Quickoffice mobile app (Google again) and TweetDeck (Twitter) – all once popular apps that have either been closed or significantly worsened since the big boys got hold of them.

Part of the blame lies with the app makers themselves. Many of these apps are given away for free, haemorrhaging money with no conceivable means of ever making a profit. They're launched with the specific intent of one day being snapped up by Microsoft, Google or any other internet behemoth with wads of cash to chuck around.

And once they've picked up their big cheque, the developers disappear over the horizon, often launching new apps with the specific hope that they too will eventually be snaffled by the giants.

Caught in the crossfire of all this are you and me – the customers. The big shiny corporations don't care if you're a devoted user of the app they've just bought – they'll strip the assets, shut it down and tell you to sling your hook. After all, like buses, there will be another one along in a minute.



ENJOYED THIS ISSUE?

GET THE NEXT ONE EARLY!

Thank you for reading this issue of *Web User* – we hope you found the tips and advice useful. The good news is that you don't have to wait too long for the next issue. If you subscribe to *Web User* by **Monday 23 October (8pm)***, you'll receive it through your letterbox before it's available in the shops!

What's inside the next issue:

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