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- ✓ Never get scam calls
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- ✓ Beat the hated landline tax
- + Best broadband-only deals **p40**

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Invent Your Own Voice
Commands For Alexa **p58**

**6 Ways To Stop Your
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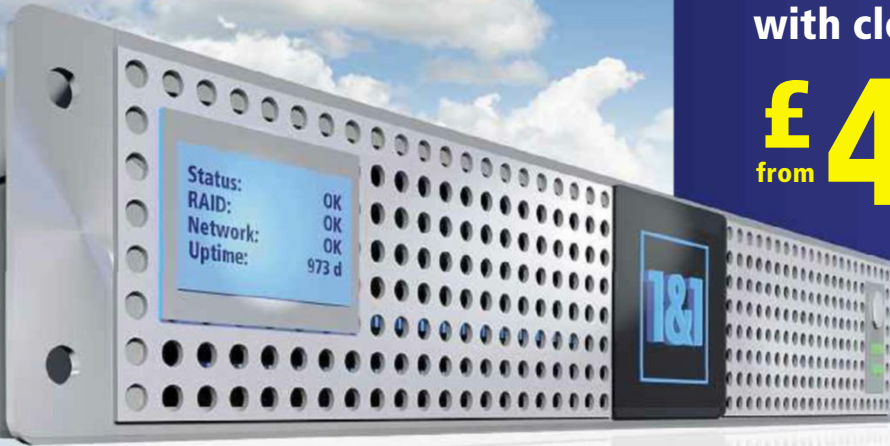
Fix Chrome, Firefox & Edge **p50**

**STOP HACKERS
MINING BITCOIN
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NEW

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1and1.co.uk

Time to tell Buzby to buzz off

It's that time of year when we wail at the annual rise in our energy and council-tax bills, the cost of renewing our TV licence and the apparent reduction in the number of Walkers' crisps in a packet. Yet millions of us still happily pay every month for a service we don't really need – one that infiltrates our walls, invades our rooms and was once propagated by a sinister yellow bird called Buzby. Yes, I'm talking about your BT landline, which may be the most redundant piece of technology in your home.

In this issue's cover feature, we explain how you can cut off your phone line

without going offline, by getting your internet from a separate source. We look at the best broadband-only deals from major and lesser-known providers, round up the latest devices for getting online without a landline, and outline both the benefits and the drawbacks to giving BT the heave-ho. Nobody should be without the web, but nor should we have to pay for unnecessary extras.

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



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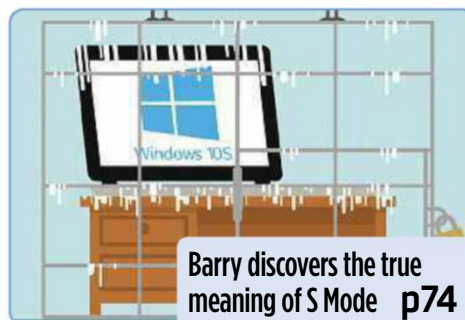
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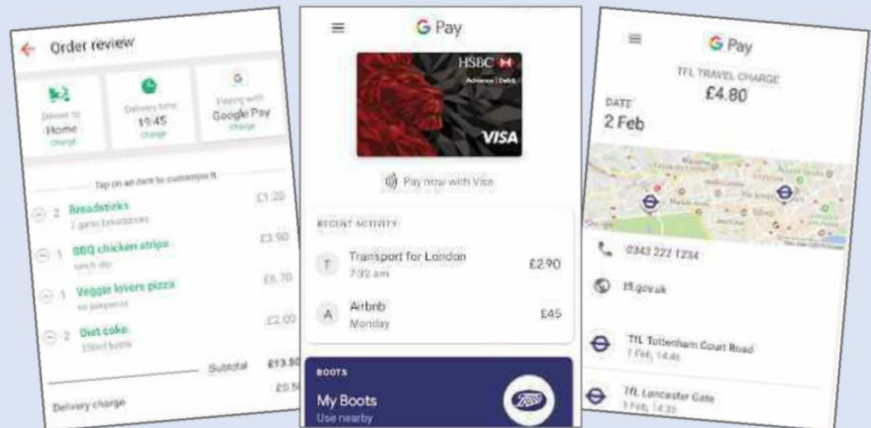


What's New Online

Make cashless purchases with Google Pay

Until now, Apple Pay has led the way in phone-based payment systems, but Google seems determined to catch up. It has now rolled all its payment apps and services into one single Google Pay product, which replaces both Google Wallet and Android Pay. Google hopes it will become the go-to payment method in high-street stores, on the internet and within lots of apps.

To use Google Pay, you need to download the new Android app. Once it's set up with a payment method, you can tap your phone at an NFC terminal in a shop to make a payment or tap a button on websites that read 'Buy with Gpay', Google Wallet or Android Pay.



All your recent purchases appear in a Home tab in the app, while your credit, debit, loyalty and gift cards can be found under Cards.

Google Pay can also be used on the Tube and on London buses, and shows you which nearby stores accept the

payment system. However, if you want to send and request money from others, you'll currently have to use the Wallet app (rebranded Google Pay Send), until this functionality is added to Google Pay. pay.google.com

Unlock the secrets of happiness

secretsofhappiness.co.uk

Have you ever wondered what makes you happy? Then take this online test to find out. Created by a psychology professor from the University of Liverpool in conjunction with the BBC, it runs you through 20 minutes of questions, ranging from how optimistic you feel and how well you concentrate to how much you've been enjoying recent life and queries about your work, hobbies and routines.

Once you're done, it collates the data and offers you personalised tips on how to improve your mental wellbeing and health. You can read the feedback via a unique link sent by email or text. Crucially, the answers are also pooled for important research to see whether the way we interpret life events influences our risk of developing mental health problems. It's certainly insightful and the researchers promise that all data is stored securely and anonymously.



Track Elon Musk's Roadster in space

www.whereisroadster.com

As you may have heard, serial entrepreneur Elon Musk recently launched his Tesla Roadster skywards on board SpaceX's newest rocket, the Falcon Heavy. Sitting in the driver's seat was a mannequin called Starman, who is now zooming around the Solar System on a journey set to last tens of millions of years.



This online tool lets you view Starman's current whereabouts, using data from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory to visualise the location of the car in real-time. It provides continually changing statistics to show the vehicle's distance from Earth, the Sun and Mars, and there's also an animation of the car's future location. Eventually, the site will have a simulated 3D view of the Roadster and some branded merchandise to buy.

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

View Snapchat's Snap map

map.snapchat.com

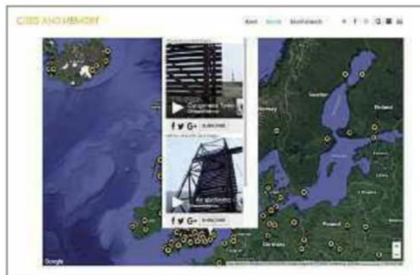
You can now see what users of Snapchat are sharing across the globe – even if you don't have an account. This new map highlights areas where a lot of images and videos are being posted, and displays Snapchat's public content stripped of user-identifiable information. Each Snap can be embedded or copied to a clipboard.



Listen to a sound map of the world

bit.ly/soundmap444

Cities and Memory is a quirky art project that maps the audio of various cities around the globe. Its wealth of field recordings lets you listen to sounds from 73 countries, including birds and planes over Abbey Wood, London, and a Gulf War protest from 1991 in Washington DC. You can also click to hear a second audio file that uses each location's audio to create a 'sonic reimagining' that ranges from abstract noise to ambient music. It's fun to explore and you can contribute your own sounds, if you wish.



Revive Google's View Image link

bit.ly/viewimage444

In a controversial move to clamp down on people downloading copyrighted pictures, Google has decided to remove the View Image button from its search engine. Unfortunately, having to click Visit to go to the website hosting the image is a hassle, so the new View Image extension for Chrome and Firefox (bit.ly/viewfire444) reactivates the function as it was before the change. If you don't fancy doing that, Bing Images (www.bing.com/images) allows direct image downloads, or you can simply right-click a result in Google Images and select 'Open image in new tab'.



NEW VOICE COMMANDS

Get better sleep

If your sleep is frequently disturbed by external noises, put Google Home by your bed and say "Hey Google, play white noise" to tune out and doze off.

Find specific podcasts

Say "Hey Siri, play the podcast [X]" – where X is the name of the podcast – to find it in iTunes. If you like what you hear, say, "Hey Siri, subscribe to this podcast".

Get insulted by Gordon

Enable the new Gordon Ramsay skill ("Alexa, enable Gordon Ramsay") and ask the foul-mouthed chef for his opinion on your dish by saying, "Alexa, ask Gordon Ramsay what he thinks about [X]".

+ Listen to Winamp online

bit.ly/winamp444

The popular music player Winamp launched almost exactly 20 years ago, and you can now play around with a recreated version in your browser, adding MP3s and skins, and fiddling with the equaliser.

Use a particle equaliser

bit.ly/particle444

Give this new Chrome experiment access to your microphone and the colourful on-screen particles will pulsate and morph in reaction to the audio. On-screen controls let you play around with the effect.

Hear the world's creepiest lullabies

bit.ly/lullabies444

Rock-a-bye Baby may sound sinister enough but that's tame compared to some of these weird and wonderful lullabies from around the globe. Death and kidnapping seem to be a common theme in songs from Nigeria to Russia, and this beautifully illustrated map lets you hear renditions of the ditties and read the original and translated lyrics.



Visit Amazon's Treasure Truck

bit.ly/truck444

Amazon's Treasure Truck, which offers special daily deals, is now visiting many more UK cities including Coventry, York, Slough, Reading, Maidenhead, Windsor and Portsmouth. Text 'truck' to 87377 or visit the website.

Need to Know

Social networks are failing to tackle cyberbullying

What happened?

Social-media companies have been accused of failing to protect young people online, amid research that suggests websites and apps such as Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat are damaging mental health. Tech firms are said to have offered only a “tokenistic” response, according to MPs and leading charities.

A cyberbullying inquiry by Alex Chalk, MP for Cheltenham, and the charities The Children's Society and YoungMinds (bit.ly/children444) found that half of young people have been targeted with abusive or threatening messages online. One in 10 youngsters said they logged in after midnight every night, with one respondent saying that social media was “like a drug”. Two-thirds of those surveyed who said they had been cyberbullied admitted that they wouldn't tell their parents. In the most extreme cases, it has pushed users to the verge of suicide.

The Safety Net report quoted a 15-year-old girl as saying that nasty comments are expected online. “I feel like it's something people don't take seriously... but leaving just one nasty comment could really hurt someone.”

The charities called on social-media companies to do more to address such complaints, such as speeding up their reporting processes for cyberbullying and cracking down on abusive users. The calls come amid a heavy backlash against social networks on a wide range of issues, from propaganda bots and fake news to extremist content, and most recently the ‘trolling’ of teenage



survivors of the school shooting in Florida. Whether this pressure ever leads to the end of the “wild west” days of social media remains to be seen.

How will it affect you?

The proposed measures for tackling cyberbullying are a welcome move for anyone whose children or grandchildren use social media (and most do). The charities have called on social-media sites and apps to remove bullying comments within 24 hours and take tougher action against users who break platform rules. Additionally, they called for the government to build online safety lessons into school classes and to force social-media firms to share data on cyberbullying.

The government is currently running a consultation around online safety, so we can expect some ideas soon, though it's worth noting that previous consultations have had little impact. But it's not just up to government to take action. If you have young people in your life, don't just roll your eyes at their Snapchat use – talk to them about their online experience, explaining the dangers and telling them where to ask for help. Keep in mind they may not want to talk to parents and grandparents, as the report shows, so may need an alternative option.

Ironically, recent reports suggest that Facebook is losing ground with younger groups of people, and gaining more users aged over 50.

What do we think?

If social media makes you feel unhappy, why not just stop using it? That's the response many adults may have to the bad experience suffered by young people on sites such as Facebook and Twitter, but while that's good advice and meant well, it's easier said than done, and places the blame in the wrong place. As one respondent told the researchers: “The reaction from adults is just delete your account to stop the bullying, but that's taking something away from that young person's life for something that's not their fault.”

Even setting aside the social implications of ditching a service when all your friends are on it, such websites and apps are designed to be addictive, and even adults have a hard time quitting. Facebook and Snapchat both have a lower age limit of 13, though it's easy enough to sneak past. Such bans should be better patrolled. We don't let children drink alcohol because of the health risks, and social media has a detrimental effect on mental health, according to academic research.

So what can the government, parents and schools do? It's hard to see an easy solution but remember that 10 years ago, most of these sites and apps didn't exist – if we lived without them before, we can certainly do without them again. It would be wise for social networks to remember that, and help fix these problems before we abandon their sites.



The report found that nearly half of young people have been threatened online

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

Sky broadband prices set to climb in April

What happened?

Sky has warned customers that prices are going up from April 1 – and it's not an April Fool's joke. The increase will apply to some broadband packages as well as selected TV packages, with prices climbing by as much as £30 annually.

Sky said that not all customers will see a change to their monthly bills, and pointed out that for some broadband and TV products it's the first price rise for two years. The increases range from 50p to £2.50 more a month, depending on which package you're on.

How will it affect you?

If you're one of those affected, Sky TV Original, Box Sets and Variety packages are increasing by £1.50 a month, while Broadband Unlimited, Connect, Fibre Lite and Fibre capped to 25GB are all reportedly increasing by £1 each month. Many other broadband products will not see a rise.

If your contract price is set for a hike, you can opt to leave Sky and find a new

provider. There's no penalty if you're already outside your minimum contract term.

If you're still on contract, you can cancel without charge if you contact Sky within 30 days of receiving the price increase notification, so keep an eye out for a letter or email. The same get-out clause doesn't apply for TV packages, however.

What do we think?

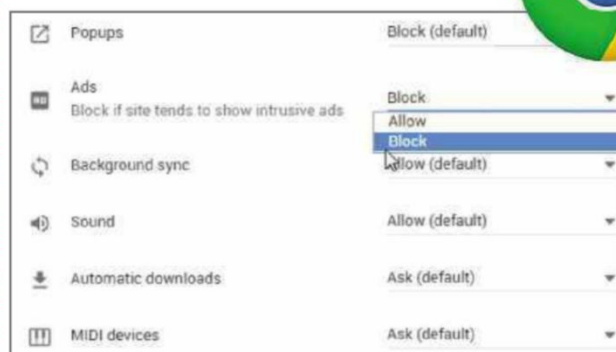
Britain's broadband prices are among the most competitive in the world, but no one wants to pay more – especially when they signed a contract for an agreed monthly cost.

Before getting too upset with Sky (or BT or Virgin Media, who also raised prices recently), it's worth taking a quick look to see if you could get a better deal elsewhere. A good deal on broadband price requires shopping around, even when you think you're locked into a contract.

See our cover feature on page 40 for our guide to saving money on broadband by ditching your landline.



Chrome's ad filter doesn't block ads



What happened?

Google rolled out its much anticipated Chrome ad filter on 15 February – to little discernible benefit.

Many of us already use ad-blocking tools to clean up our browsing experience, but the feature now built into Chrome isn't quite the same. The ad filter targets annoying and intrusive ad formats, such as uninvited pop-ups and videos that automatically play sound, but that doesn't mean Chrome users will stop seeing them. Instead, Chrome will strip out all advertising from websites that overuse such ads, to encourage online publishers to stop displaying them.

How will it affect you?

Chrome users won't see much of a difference on most websites, with Google admitting that only about 1.5% of websites will be affected. If a site uses the odd pop-up ad now and then, it won't be filtered. If it overuses irritating ads – such as large video ads or overlays that use countdowns before you can see the content – then

Google will send the publisher a warning message giving them 30 days to clean up their act. If they don't comply, all ads will be stripped from the website by Chrome.

In other words, if you don't want to be tracked by ad networks online or see any ads at all, you'll still need to use an ad blocker.

What do we think?

Google is smart to encourage better advertising practices, to stop web users resorting to ad blockers and depriving sites of revenue. Reports suggest between a fifth and a third of Brits already block ads, which is a concern for Google because it makes much of its money from online advertising. The bar for which ads are deemed irritating is set by the Coalition for Better Ads (www.betterads.org), of which Google is a founding member, which gives it a lot of power in the online ad market. Hopefully it's using that power to improve advertising formats, rather than further consolidating its market share.

Councils hit by nearly 100 million cyberattacks

What happened?

Over a quarter of UK councils have had their IT systems breached in the last five years, according to privacy campaign group Big Brother Watch (bigbrotherwatch.org.uk). Freedom of Information requests by the group found that 114 councils experienced at least one serious incident between 2013 and 2017, and that local councils across the country suffered around 98 million cyberattacks in total.

This amounts to 37 attacks launched every minute on local governments, with successful attempts potentially giving hackers access to sensitive and personal information, said Big Brother Watch in its 'Cyberattacks in local authorities' report (bit.ly/report444).

The group's research also revealed the councils' failure to report data losses and breaches, which organisations must do within 72 hours under the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – as well as shortcomings in staff training. Despite human error being the main factor in a successful hack, 75% of local authorities said their staff don't undergo compulsory cybersecurity training.

Jennifer Krueckeberg, lead researcher at Big Brother Watch, said: "With councils hit by over 19 million cyberattacks every year, one would assume that they would be doing their



utmost to protect citizens' sensitive information. We are shocked to discover that the majority of councils' data breaches go unreported and that staff often lack basic training in cybersecurity. Local authorities need to take urgent action and make sure they fulfil their responsibilities to protect citizens."

How will it affect you?

We're so accustomed to hearing about security breaches that this news is unlikely to be a surprise, but that doesn't make it any less worrying. Local councils hold a lot of sensitive data about us, from our bank details for council-tax payment to information about our homes and families, so the revelation that they're not taking the

proper steps to protect their systems against cyberattacks is troubling.

What do we think?

Other than the sheer number of cyberattacks targeted at councils, the most alarming aspect of Big Brother Watch's report is how little is being done to safeguard against these threats, despite human error being the main factor in successful hacks. We understand that local authorities have limited budgets (despite the planned rise in Council Tax next month), but cybersecurity should now be of the utmost importance to any official body that deals with sensitive information. Hopefully, councils will work to improve their practices as soon as possible.



FIRST LOOK

Matrix PowerWatch www.matrixindustries.com

The Matrix PowerWatch's unique selling point is that you don't have to charge it – ever. Thanks to a built-in thermoelectric generator (TEG), the watch converts your body heat into energy, so you'll never be subjected to the maddening experience of glancing down at your wrist and finding your trusty timepiece is about to run out of juice – a daily occurrence with smartwatches such as the Apple Watch.

The TEG recognises the difference in temperature between your skin and the watch's casing – the greater the difference, the more energy it generates. Glance at the device to check these temperatures and, by turning the crown, you can see the

'real-time power' that's being generated. If you remove the watch from your wrist, it will automatically enter Power Save mode after 45 minutes and turn off the screen. When fully charged, Matrix claims the PowerWatch can remain in this state for one year or more.

However, this feat isn't achieved without compromises. There's no high-resolution touchscreen and it doesn't even display smartphone notifications. In fact, apart from telling the time, all you get is step, sleep and calorie counting, and a stopwatch. At \$230 (£165) including delivery, it's significantly more pricey than a fitness tracker such as the Fitbit Alta (£100).

At 46mm across and 15.5mm thick, the PowerWatch's part-plastic, part-aluminum body feels chunky but cheap. There are two buttons and a crown for navigating the watch's interface, but no



touchscreen. All in all, it feels a bit like a watch designed for a life-size Action Man.

The thermoelectric technology is certainly worthy of attention, but as wearables become more lightweight and power-efficient, it's difficult to see a device as bulky and basic as the PowerWatch proving popular in the long run.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will Android 9 be called Pistachio Ice Cream?

Android 9 is being referred to as Android Pistachio Ice Cream within Google, according to reports. Around this time each year, rumours begin to swirl about what the next version of Google's Android operating system will be called. Since 2009, Google has named its mobile operating system after a sweet treat, in alphabetical order (Cupcake, Donut, Eclair and so on). Last year's release was Oreo, so we can be confident that the next version's codename will begin with 'P'.

But what could the P stand for? There's pecan pie, peanut butter-flavoured chocolate – even pear drops and peppermint creams could get a look in. However, according to Bloomberg, Google's upcoming Android release isn't going to be any of these. Instead, it's being referred to internally as 'Pistachio Ice Cream', which



fits both the alphabetical and the dessert/confectionery requirement of Google's naming scheme.

That said, what Google calls its new version of Android internally and what the actual name is on release are frequently two different things. Android K was called Key Lime Pie by Google staff, but was named KitKat at launch, while Android O metamorphosed from Oatmeal Cookie to Oreo.

LIKELIHOOD RATING ✓✓✓✓✓

Pistachio Ice Cream is a bit of a mouthful (pardon the pun), but that doesn't mean Android fans should dismiss the name completely – after all, version 4 of the mobile OS was called the less than snappy Ice Cream Sandwich.

However, it's worth considering

other options as well: maybe it could be Pecan Pie or Peppermint? Or what about Petit Four – the internal codename for Android 1.1? With the new operating system not expected to launch until August, there's five months of sweet-tooth speculation to go!



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Surface Charge

bit.ly/surface444 | From £179

If you like to keep your phone on your bedside table overnight, you'll appreciate the idea behind Surface Charge. This 'intelligent furniture' charges your gadgets wirelessly and its handcrafted Scandinavian design means it complements your décor, too. It supports all Qi wireless-charging standards, and up to three devices at a time, and uses Foreign Object Detection to ensure that stray metals such as keys don't interfere with the charge. Each desk also comes with two receivers that bring wireless charging to non-enabled gadgets. The team hopes to raise £50,000 by 11 March.



WEBOMETER



WE LIKE...



Google Lens coming to Photos

Google has announced that its Lens tool, which uses image-recognition algorithms to identify objects, will soon be added to its Photos app for Android and iOS. Previously, Google Lens was only available on Pixel phones.



BT told to share telegraph poles

Ofcom has said BT must make it easier for rival internet providers to use its telegraph poles, so they can deliver faster internet speeds to more of the UK using fibre cables rather than traditional copper phone lines.



WE DON'T LIKE...



Microsoft Word used for cryptojacking

Hackers have reportedly used Microsoft Word's online-video feature to hijack users' computers with cryptojacking scripts so they can mine for cryptocurrency. See our FAQ on page 38 for more about cryptojacking.



Russia behind Winter Olympics hack

US intelligence agencies believe that Russian hackers were responsible for a cyberattack against South Korean computers during the 2018 Winter Olympic Games. The hackers made it look as if North Korea was behind the attack.



Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

New Meltdown and Spectre flaws discovered

Researchers have discovered new ways that hackers could exploit the Meltdown and Spectre flaws, which potentially go beyond the security concerns that have had companies scrambling to patch Intel and AMD processors.

The exploits have been discovered by a team from Princeton University, in collaboration with Nvidia. Dubbed MeltdownPrime and SpectrePrime, the flaws are able to take advantage of modern processor designs that prioritise speed and efficiency over security.

The researchers managed to prove their theory on an Apple MacBook using a 2.4GHz Intel Core i7 processor. The good news is that the



researchers believe software patches addressing the original Meltdown and Spectre flaws will be enough to deal with the Prime variants, although hardware manufacturers will still need to tweak their designs to prevent future problems.

Meltdown and Spectre are referred to as side-channel attacks that exploit computers' processor architecture. Meltdown effectively breaks the mechanism that allows instructions to access the system memory at random; while Spectre tricks the processor into assigning instructions to predefined memory locations that a hacker can exploit.

bit.ly/spectre444

Facebook apologises for authentication bug

Facebook has revealed that a flaw with its two-factor authentication that meant some users were sent notifications by text message was a bug. In a blog post, it said: "The last thing we want is for people to avoid helpful security features

because they fear they will receive unrelated notifications. It was not our intention to

send non-security-related SMS notifications to these phone numbers, and we are sorry for any inconvenience these messages might have caused."

Some users who experienced the bug also discovered that when they sent replies to the notifications asking them to stop, their messages were posted to their Facebook walls. Two-factor authentication, or 2FA, is used to add an extra layer of security to online accounts. When you log in using a username and password, a second, unique code is generated, usually sent by SMS, to stop anyone else from accessing your account.

bit.ly/factor444



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 How worried should we be about smart meters being hijacked by hackers?

Luke Barrett, via email

A Today's homes include a proliferating number of smart devices,

which provide extra convenience because they can send data automatically: in the case of smart meters, data on our energy consumption.

But if smart meters are open to attack from cybercriminals, this should concern us all. Even if there are no personal financial details at stake, a criminal could falsify a bill, which could lead to a customer paying extra. The energy company would receive the correct payment and would be none the wiser about the surplus payment skimmed off by the criminals. This raises the question –



who gets the most out of these smart devices? The benefit for energy companies is clear: they don't need to send someone to read the meter, or wait until the customer does so. But for a customer who can already log in and check their bill at any time, there is very little

benefit in having a smart meter. The convenience is all on the side of the power company, while consumers bear the risk of having these devices infiltrated.

This is extremely worrying, given that the government plans to roll out these devices across the country – which would essentially leave every homeowner or energy user vulnerable to attack. Unless customers can be sure that the smart meters are secure, what's the incentive to install them?



BEND YOUR REALITY

AG352UCG

AG352QCX

QHD

nVIDIA
G-SYNC

200Hz

Adaptive
Sync

35"

AOC
GAMING

aocgaming.com



@aoc_gaming



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@aocgaming

SCAN

OVERCLOCKERS UK

amazon.co.uk

★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

SPACE

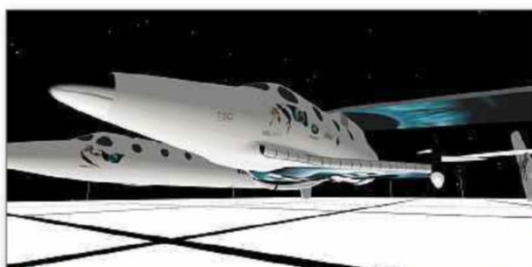
RELAUNCH

Virgin Galactic

www.virgingalactic.com

It's unlikely that many of us will be able to afford a suborbital spaceflight in the near future, so Virgin Galactic's relaunched site could be the next best thing. The homepage has a rather retro vibe but it successfully showcases the cutting-edge tech of the company's space fleet, offering a 360-degree tour in your browser and the potential for stunning VR on your phone. You can read facts about the spaceships, watch videos and view in-depth descriptions, technical diagrams and info about the purpose, mission and vision of the company. Easy to navigate and lavishly created, Branson's ambitious project is certainly a five-star experience.

Our rating



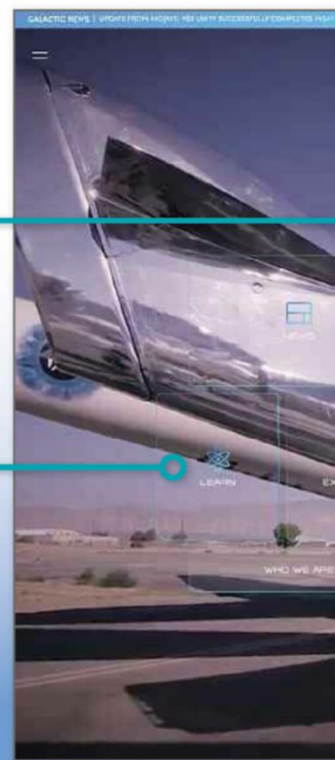
EXPLORE

Drag with your mouse to look around the spacecraft or view it in VR on a phone



INFORMATION

Learn more about the vehicles and the process of becoming a Virgin astronaut



ACTIVITIES

Get Outside

bit.ly/walks444

Based on the ITV show *Britain's Favourite Walks*, this impressive new section of the Ordnance Survey website certainly goes the extra mile. It compiles the top 100 walks in the country as voted for in a poll of more than 8,000 enthusiasts and allows you to view the mapped routes, alongside details of their length and the time they're likely to take you. Each printable walk is concisely described and rated for its difficulty, with strolls broken down into areas of the UK. You can jump straight to a region to view the hikes or select a route from the large map. You can also feast your eyes on stunning scenery and share the walks on Facebook and Twitter.

Our rating



NEW

CYCLING

Close Pass

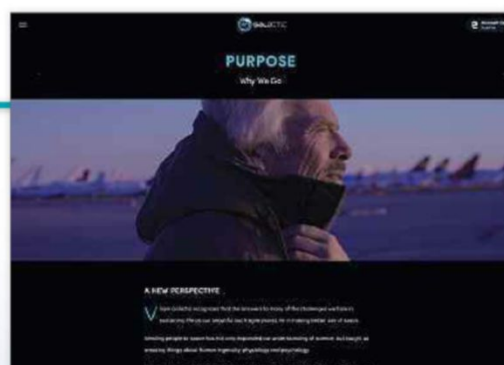
closepass.cc

Even if you're not a cyclist, it's easy to imagine how scary it feels when a car gets dangerously close to your bike. Steven Piper was so fed up with being nearly knocked off the road, he set up this site to encourage bikers to record close passes and capture the extent of the problem. He's hoping the crowdsourced data could be used by local authorities to tackle blackspots and by cyclists to avoid particular routes. But although we like the idea, we found manually scouring a map for locations to pin with a date and time felt clumsy. It's crying out for a street-search facility.

Our rating



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



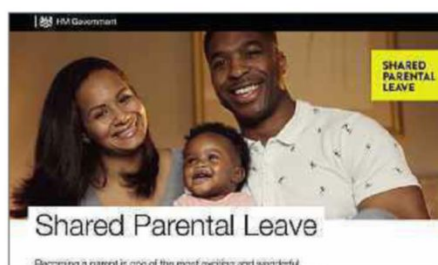
VISION

Virgin explains its vision for Galactic and offers the latest news and updates



MEDIA

View stunning photos and a series about the people making spaceflight a reality



PARENTING

Shared Parental Leave

sharedparentalleave.campaign.gov.uk

Introduced in 2015, shared parental leave allows couples to take up to 50 weeks of leave between them, but as this new site explains, only 2% of parents who qualify do so. Cue lots of help and advice, with detailed information for parents and employers, and lots of testimonials from real-life couples who have benefited. All the content is contained on a single, clearly designed page with an FAQ, videos and examples of ways to take leave. There are also links to factsheets and an eligibility checker, but the latter is a clunky multiple-page Word document.

Our rating



GAMING

Headup Games

headupgames.com

Headup Games is best known for its Bridge Constructor series, but it has also created lots of other fun titles, each listed on this relaunched site. You can filter the games according to the platform they're on – from Android to Windows – and check out the regularly updated news section, screenshots, trailers and links to its Twitch and Mixer channels. You can also chat with fellow gamers on its Discord channel. Because the site is centred only on Headup's games, you need to be a fan to get long-term enjoyment from it, but it works well as a shop window for its products.

Our rating



HOMEWARE

Leaping Foxes

www.leapingfoxes.co.uk

Run by someone with an obvious love for hand-printed fabrics and rural wildlife, this delightful website does a fine job of promoting and selling the well-crafted homeware items created by Leaping Foxes and other like-minded companies. Simple navigation allows you to quickly view all the well-explained items, which can be filtered by price and colour. Although the blog needs more time spent on it, the owner is active on Instagram, where she regularly showcases the latest designs. The simple checkout process and email newsletter should also encourage buyers.

Our rating



BACK ISSUES DISC 2017



Our **2017 Back Issues Disc** containing all 26 issues from last year is now on sale from Amazon

For more information, visit bit.ly/wudisc17 or search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon

You can still buy our **2016 Back Issues Disc** from bit.ly/wudisc16





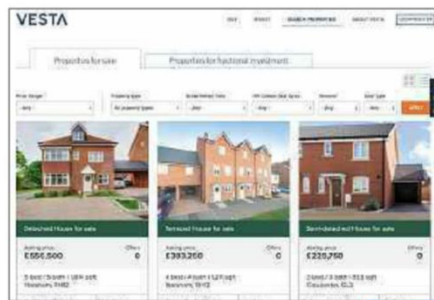
LIFESTYLE

Livingetc

www.livingetc.com

Designed by the bods behind the interiors magazine *Livingetc*, there are plenty of inspiring images adorning the pages of this site. They give you ideas for your bedroom and living room, but veer towards the aspirational, with photos of dressing and powder rooms (no, us neither). The lengthy pages can feel a little exhausting, with too much white space, endless scrolling and images sometimes taking a while to appear, but the photography is top-notch and the shopping section is packed with appealing design classics. Also, the style area has a nice range of designer profiles and the search engine is speedy.

Our rating



PROPERTY

Vesta

www.vestaproperty.com

The concept behind Vesta Property is not a new one. It lists homes with tenants in place, so landlords can continue making money until they're sold, and buyers can earn income right away. By focusing solely on such properties, the site makes them easier to find, letting you search by price, type, gross rental yield and HPI growth, and instantly see the rents per annum and the number of offers for each available house. Since it's early days, there are only a few houses listed and you have to register with the site to view the properties in depth. It does, however, make life for existing tenants easier, since they don't need to move out.

Our rating



GAMBLING

Paddy Power

www.paddypower.com

Paddy Power, the betting company that isn't afraid to crack jokes and troll a few sport stars, has unveiled a new-look site – and we're betting you'll rather like it. Not only does it make it quick and easy to find appealing punts, it also offers clearly displayed odds, prominent links to various sports and even a UK and Ireland filter on the horse-racing page. Just as importantly, the My Accounts and My Bets sections have been improved to better manage your transactions, and there's a new range of options to control the amount of cash you're willing to lose over time. You can also read tips on betting within your limits.

Our rating



RELIGION

The Archbishop of York

www.archbishopofyork.org

The Church of England seems to be on a mission to improve its web offerings. Having already relaunched churchofengland.org (reviewed in issue 438), it's now given the websites of the Archbishops of York and Canterbury (www.archbishopofcanterbury.org) a new lease of life. Both adopt a similar clean look, with a large photo, lots of information about the men and their roles, and news of their activities, with a handy link to switch between the two sites. But they are also personalised: you can learn about John Sentamu's typical day, read a Q&A, get a flavour of Justin Welby's speeches and see an overview of Lambeth Palace. Holy satisfying!

Our rating



SHOPPING

Patria

www.patriagb.com

Patria is a crowdsourcing site that offers a small range of luxury fashion designs that are 100% British-made. You choose the items you like and pay for one-off bulk production, with 10% of the profits going to military charities. The site is certainly simple to use: just click an item to see how well it's funding and how long is left, then click Commit. The items are well described but there's no indication of how many units are being made, and the homepage seems more keen to emphasise the site's process and philosophy than showcasing its items.

Our rating



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Find the right colour scheme

Choosing the right colour scheme for your website is a challenge if you're not a skilled designer, but there's a science to matching colours and Adobe's Colour Wheel website (bit.ly/colo444) can help. Choose the colour rule from the drop-down menu on the left, then use the colour wheel to locate your preferred base colour



(or type the RGB or HEX value into the bottom, if you prefer). The other colours are set for you. If you're not keen on the results, try moving the colours around the wheel or choosing a different rule.

Free PHP-coding tool

If you want to tinker around under the hood of your WordPress website, it's worth learning a bit of PHP – the programming language that the content-management system is built on. You can edit PHP files in Notepad but it's better to use a development environment, which lets you lay out your code properly and mark it up so you can read it more clearly. CodeLobster (www.codelobster.com) is a free program designed specifically for PHP, and includes an integrated debugger to root out errors.

Deal of the Fortnight

GoDaddy is offering '.uk' and '.co.uk' domains for 1p for the first year, as long as you sign up for two years. Subsequent years cost £9.99

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Hristo Pandjarov,

WordPress and SEO Specialist at

SiteGround (www.siteground.com)



Q I'd like to create a website but I don't know where to start. Should I build it in HTML or use some kind of site builder?

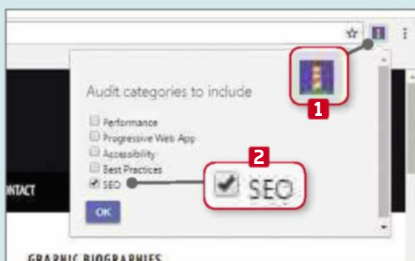
Ralph, via email

A More than 29% of all sites on the web are now built using WordPress. It's a great system for complete beginners, and you can either host on a website (wordpress.org) or have WordPress host a site for you (wordpress.com). There are some beautiful themes and useful plugins to provide endless possibilities. Even without its many extensions, you can easily build a basic website made up of a few pages. If you want to launch your site quickly and seamlessly, SiteGround has a great option for one-click installation to help you start your WordPress site in no time at all.



MINI WORKSHOP | Let Google help improve your search-engine optimisation
Lighthouse: bit.ly/liho444 |  10 mins |  Chrome browser

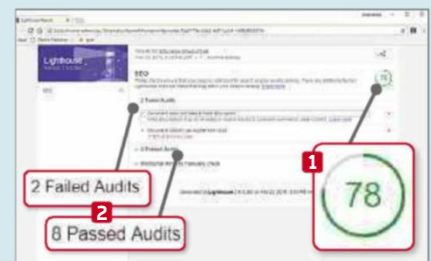
Google's website-auditing tool Lighthouse now includes SEO (search-engine optimisation) tips. It's always worth listening to free advice from Google about your site's ability to rank on its search engine



1 To get Lighthouse, go to bit.ly/liho444 in Chrome and install the add-on. Once it's installed, click the icon **1** and select Options. You'll see a list of 'Audit categories to include'. You can run them all if you like, but in our screenshot we've selected the new SEO tool **2** and deselected everything else.



2 Click OK, then 'Generate report'. The website will be shrunk to the left side of the screen **1** and the add-on window will run through a series of tests. **2** Leave it to do its business – it might take a couple of minutes. When it's finished, the results will open in a new window.



3 Your site's overall score out of 100 is displayed **1** with a colour indicating its success. Below, you can see which audits you passed and failed. **2** Click the arrows to reveal more information, which should help you fix any problems. Some of these may be simple and speedy fixes that take little effort but make a big difference.





Ultra Wide-Color

with 4K in an immersive design

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

innovation ✨ you



UltraWideColor



CurvedDisplay



4K Ultra HD UltraClear 4K Ultra HD

40" 4K curved display
(BDM4037U)

MISCO
A Systemax Business
ebuyer.com

amazon.co.uk

BT Business Direct

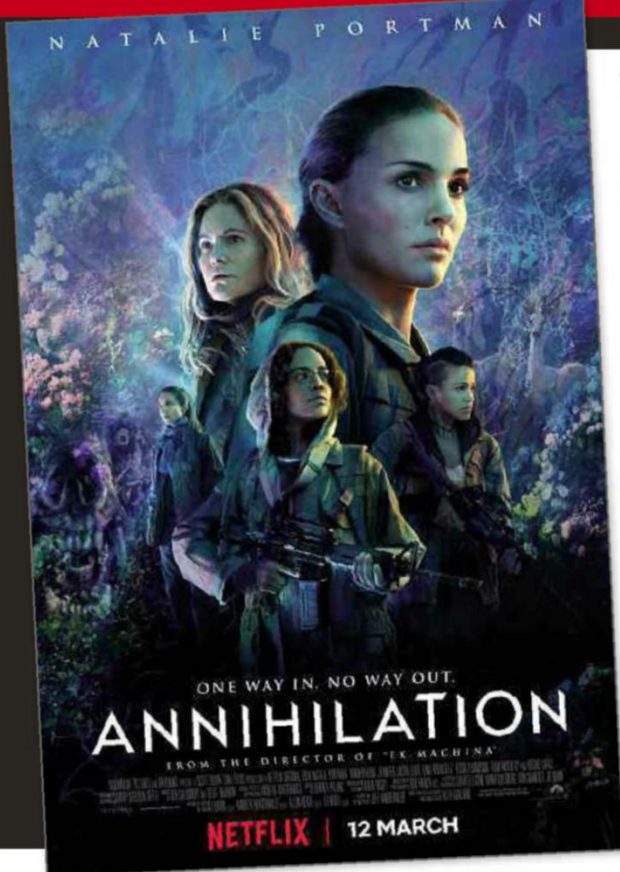
PHILIPS



What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight

NETFLIX



Watch Netflix film premiere *Annihilation*

From 12 March

Netflix surprised a lot of people last month when – with no fanfare – it released the third movie in the *Cloverfield* series. *The Cloverfield Paradox* was snapped up from Paramount for a rumoured \$50m after the film studio decided against releasing the movie in cinemas. That's not the only new Paramount picture that Netflix has got its hands on, either. *Annihilation*, the second movie from writer/director Alex Garland (whose directorial debut, *Ex Machina*, was a critical hit) is also debuting on Netflix in the UK. Paramount will still be releasing the film on the big screen in the US, Canada and China, but due to a dispute over the final cut (which producer David Ellison reportedly described as “too intellectual” and “too complicated”), it will be on the streaming service everywhere else. The science fiction/horror film stars Natalie Portman (*Thor*, *Black Swan*) as a biologist investigating “the shimmer”, an ominous and expanding rainbow-patterned barrier in the Florida swampland.

While reviews of *The Cloverfield Paradox* were mostly scathing, reviews of *Annihilation* have been much more positive, with The Guardian awarding it four stars out of five (bit.ly/greview444).

You can watch the official trailer for the movie at bit.ly/annihilation444.



Catch *Sneaky Pete* Season 2

From 9 March

We very much enjoyed the first season of *Sneaky Pete* when it arrived on Amazon at the start of 2017, so we're looking forward to the next instalment. The American crime drama follows con-artist Marius Josipovic (played by *Avatar*'s Giovanni Ribisi), newly released from jail, who adopts the identity of his ex-cell mate to avoid a ruthless mobster who he once ripped off

(played with just the right amount of menace by *Breaking Bad*'s Bryan Cranston). Using his new identity, Marius “reunites” with his cell mate's estranged



family, but it doesn't take long for his old life to catch up with his new one.

Season two of the show (which, incidentally, was co-created by Cranston) picks up where the last one left off, and there's a trailer for it available to watch at bit.ly/pete444.

N Marvel at the second season of *Jessica Jones*

From 8 March

The highlight of season one of *Marvel's Jessica Jones* was unquestionably David Tennant's (*Doctor Who*) sinister turn as the psychopathic Kilgrave, a man with the ability to make anyone do whatever he wants. There's some uncertainty as to whether he'll make any kind of reappearance in the new series or not, but this time around the focus is very much on Jessica Jones (played by *Big Eyes* star Krysten Ritter). The private eye, with Marvel-grade super-powers, is still as angry as ever, and we wouldn't have her any other way. Check out the trailer for the new season at bit.ly/jjones444.



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



UKTV Play now available for Roku and Now TV

UKTV's catchup app lets you watch shows from channels such as Dave, Yesterday, Really and Drama, including a number of original programmes. The app is now available for Roku devices, including the Roku-powered Now TV, and will be included on all new hardware. If you already own a Roku product you can find the app in the Film & TV category in the Roku Channel Store. Now TV owners can download it from the App Store.

Announcing the move, Richard Williams, general manager of UKTV Play said: "We're always striving to give viewers easy access to the shows they love and want, on as many platforms as possible. UKTV Play offers instant access to so many brilliant programmes and with four brand new UKTV Original shows recently announced - *Judge Romesh*, *Jon Richardson: Ultimate Worrier*, *Inside The Vets* and *Cop Car Workshop* - and even more in the pipeline, viewers will have plenty of new shows to watch on Now TV and Roku in 2018 and beyond."



Stream the Paralympic Winter Games

From 9 March

If you've enjoyed watching the Winter Olympics this year, the good news is that the sporting action isn't over yet. The Paralympics run from 9-18 March

and will feature up to 670 athletes (a 24% increase on the 539 that competed at Sochi in 2014), competing in 80 medal events across six sports: alpine skiing, biathlon, cross-country skiing, ice hockey, snowboard and wheelchair curling.

The official mascot of the PyeongChang 2018 Paralympic Winter Games is Bandabi, an Asiatic black bear who symbolises "strong will and courage" - clearly the perfect choice.

You'll be able to stream the games live on the Channel 4 website (bit.ly/paralive444) and catch up on All 4. Watch a trailer for it at bit.ly/para444.

Watch Nailed It From 9 March

Ever watched *The Great British Bake Off* and thought to yourself, 'you know what would make this better - if it was filmed in America and filled with people who don't know how to bake!' If so, then *Nailed It* is for you. The idea is that a group of amateur bakers attempt to recreate a cake masterpiece, aiming to win a \$10,000 prize. A trailer at bit.ly/nailed444 will give you a taste of what it's all about.



Get charmed by Benji From 16 March

In America, Benji is a well-known, well-loved canine hero who has starred in a number of movies over the years, including *Benji* (1974), *For the Love of Benji* (1977), *Benji at Work* (1980) and *Benji: Off the Leash!* (2004).

Now, Netflix is bringing back the lovable doggie in a new, original movie, the first in what is intended to be a whole series of Benji adventures.

Set in the modern day, the film takes place in New Orleans and follows two kids who befriend the orphaned, scruffy stray. If you want to find out more, and don't mind spoilers, there's a trailer to watch at bit.ly/benji444.

Premier League rights



Premier League

There have been lots of rumours that Netflix, Google and Facebook were readying bids for the TV rights to the Premier League but it seems as if - at the time of writing, at least - Sky and BT will be the ones to snap up the rights for live games played between 2019 and 2022. This makes a lot of sense, especially as the companies recently agreed to offer each other's programmes - including sporting packages - to their respective users. This would be a case of history repeating itself as combined, the two media giants paid a record £5.1bn for three seasons back in 2015.

It's believed Amazon could still tender a bid for one of the less attractive packages (bit.ly/premier444).

Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

Zyxel Multy X

We test a new mesh router that outperforms every model we've ever tested



Mesh routers are a relatively new way of solving the perennial problem of weak Wi-Fi. Such systems consist of two or more units – each one a router in its own right – using a strong, dedicated connection to create a series of seamless hotspots around your house. The aim is to provide blanket coverage for the entire property, rather than the traditional router system which amplifies the signal from the entry point of your internet connection, producing diminishing returns as you move further away from the main router

and the original signal grows weaker as walls, ceilings and floors act as obstacles.

A spate of mesh routers was released last year, and we reviewed the Netgear Orbi in Issue 415 (bit.ly/issue415), the BT Whole Home in Issue 419 (bit.ly/issue419) and the Google Wifi in Issue 423 (bit.ly/webuser423).

Design and performance

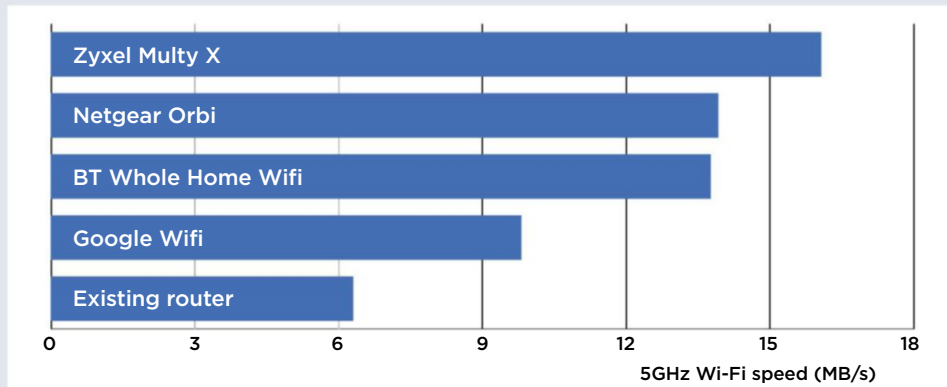
A few months on, Zyxel has joined the fray with its Multy X. Compared with BT's stylish discs and Google Wifi's dinky cylinders, Zyxel's bulging Multy X modules look a bit cheap. With a sizable footprint of 236 x 178mm, they take up more shelf space than their rivals. However, these nodes are large for

a reason: each one crams in a dedicated 4x4 antenna array to boost the connection between the two units, providing a huge theoretical bandwidth of 1,733Mbps. Alongside are separate 2x2 arrays to connect with your individual Wi-Fi devices.

In practical terms, this means that communication between the nodes is faster and stronger, with more reach, than most other mesh systems. In our test house, we were able to connect the primary unit to the modem in the living room, place the other one in a far distant utility room at the rear of the

“A generous four ports on each unit mean you can attach up to seven wired devices without needing any extra hardware”

Mesh speeds compared



We tested four mesh routers and our current router in five rooms around a typical house. This chart shows the average overall download speed on the 5GHz network

house, and still – according to the signal meter that’s built into the Multy X smartphone app – enjoy a “perfect” connection between the two.

This translated into some seriously impressive wireless coverage. No matter where we roamed in and around the house, we enjoyed the kind of blazing speeds that had previously only been attainable when sitting right next to our existing router. Even on the slower 2.4GHz band, the connection topped 5MB/s almost everywhere in the building.

This alone is enough to earn the Multy X a warm recommendation, but there’s more good news. Most mesh units only provide two Gigabit Ethernet ports, which isn’t enough for a system that aims to replace your router. The Multy X shows how it should be done, offering a generous four ports on each unit, so you can attach up to seven wired devices without needing any extra hardware. It’s a shame, however, that the units’ USB 2 ports don’t currently do anything – it would be an asset if you could connect an external hard drive, for example – but Zyxel says the connector is “reserved for future usage”, and we suggest you don’t hold your breath.

Simple tools and useful extras

Unlike some of its rivals, splitting the 2.4GHz and 5GHz wireless bands into separate

networks is as easy as flipping a switch in the Multy X app. By default, the 5GHz network is distinguished by having a ‘speed’ suffix for its SSID, but you can change it to whatever you like. The parental controls are very simple to use and let you schedule internet access for single devices or groups.

Another bonus is that the Multy X system works with Alexa. If you have an Amazon Echo device, you can verbally instruct it to disable the guest network, test your internet speed or temporarily suspend internet access. Sadly, you can’t reboot the router with a voice command but if your internet is glitching, Alexa probably won’t be working anyway.

Considerations

The Multy X gets a lot right, but it also has a few foibles. You’re stuck with a custom IP range (196.168.212.x) which is frustrating if you prefer to set up your IP addresses how you like them. And, like Google Wifi, you can inspect your connected devices but you can’t blacklist any that

shouldn’t be there. You can cut off their internet access but they can still talk to other devices on your network.

Be warned that while the smartphone app is capable, it’s also irritatingly slow: as you tap around its various pages, you’re frequently left staring at a spinning wheel for five seconds or more while the app scans the nodes for whatever information it needs. You can’t even work around the issue by using the web interface, because there isn’t one – if you visit the gateway in your web browser, you will be greeted with a terse “not found” error.

A final caveat is that the Multy X doesn’t operate as a true mesh network – it uses a ‘star’ configuration in which all nodes talk directly to the router. An update is promised this month that will add support for daisy-chained configurations, but if you were thinking of investing in additional units then be warned that, as things stand, they may not extend the system’s range by as much as you might hope.

PRODUCT INFO

Zyxel Multy X

Price: £269

Buy from Amazon:

bit.ly/zymx444

SPECIFICATIONS

- Qualcomm IPQ4019 quad-core processor
- 512MB of RAM
- 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi on 2.4GHz band; 802.11a/n/ac on 5GHz band
- 4 x Gigabit Ethernet ports per unit
- Guest Wi-Fi
- Parental control
- Compatible with Amazon Alexa
- Mobile app supports iOS 9 or better and Android 5.0 or better
- 236 x 178 x 51.5mm
- 890g

FOR

- ✓ Great value for money
- ✓ Brilliant performance

AGAINST

- ✗ Slightly quirky controls
- ✗ Unattractive units

BETTER LOOKING

Netgear Orbi, £287

Buy from Amazon:

bit.ly/net444



MORE UNITS

BT Whole Home Wifi, £185.98

Buy from Amazon:

bit.ly/bt444



OUR VERDICT



As long as you don’t live in an absolutely massive home requiring several chained units to extend your Wi-Fi to far-flung corners, the Zyxel Multy X is a great system. Its two units are

reasonably priced, delivering excellent speeds and impressive coverage. It’s not the most aesthetically pleasing kit, but it’s affordable, effective and the extra Ethernet ports

are a welcome addition.

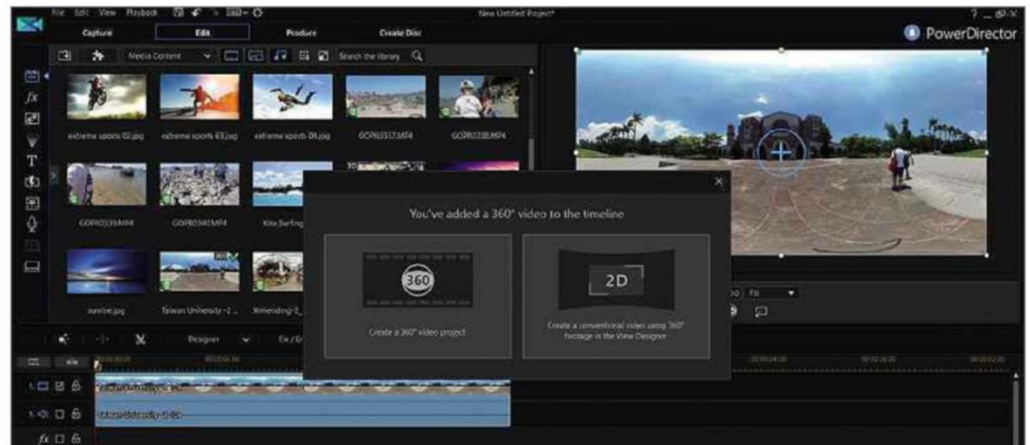
FEATURES	★★★★☆
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
EASE OF USE	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★☆

CyberLink PowerDirector 16 Ultra

The latest CyberLink video-editing software is crammed with powerful tools

Upgrades to video-editing software often introduce the capability to work with a new technology, and this edition of PowerDirector has added tools for editing 360-degree video. Making your own 360-degree film may seem beyond the means of the home-movie enthusiast but there are surprisingly affordable cameras available, such as the Samsung Gear 360 (£219 from Amazon at bit.ly/sams444). When you upload your footage to YouTube, anyone with a smartphone and a cheap headset can explore your videos in virtual reality.

PowerDirector 16's 360-degree support includes a number of useful tools. You can set which direction the viewer starts in, and extract a



2D view to use with standard footage. It can stabilise 360-degree footage, which is impossible with regular 2D-video tools, and comes with a collection of title tools to add text to your videos, which move around as the viewer pans. They can even have motion tracking applied.

The one thing the software lacks is 'stitching' – the process by which footage from the various streams created by a 360-degree camera is brought together to make a fully 360-degree movie. If your camera doesn't do this itself, it should come with its own software, but it would have been good to integrate this process into CyberLink's editing suite.

If creating virtual-reality films isn't your thing, there are other useful new tools to explore. A collage designer has been added for creating rapid multi-clip opening sequences: you simply drag and drop the clips you want to use into the predefined slots, though you don't get any control over how the clips are cropped.

We were particularly impressed with the colour-matching tool, which is extremely useful if you have

footage of the same subject from different cameras or settings. You can select two clips and colour correct one so that it matches the other.

The core sound tools in the software now include 'audio ducking'. This is where the volume of a music soundtrack can be set to automatically fill gaps in a speech audio track. We found the default parameters needed careful tweaking so the volume changes don't sound too abrupt, but it's not hard to achieve good results and is much quicker than carrying

out the task manually.

There are four different versions of PowerDirector 16 – Deluxe, Ultra, Ultimate and Director Suite. The Ultra version is just £43 on Amazon and represents the best value for money. However, it's also worth considering the Director Suite, which comes bundled with PhotoDirector 9, AudioDirector 8 and

ColorDirector 6, providing a wider range of tweaks for serious editors. We'd also advise you avoid the Deluxe version, because it lacks some of PowerDirector's best features, such as the multi-cam editor.



PRODUCT INFO

CyberLink PowerDirector 16 Ultra

Price: £43

Buy from Amazon:
bit.ly/cyb444

WHAT YOU NEED

- Intel Core i-series or AMD Phenom II or better
- 2GB of memory
- 7GB of hard-drive space
- Microsoft Windows 7, 8 or 10

FOR

- ✓ Refined video- and audio-editing features
- ✓ 360-degree video support
- ✓ Great value for money

AGAINST

- ✗ Of most interest to 360-degree camera owners
- ✗ Doesn't stitch 360-degree videos

OUR VERDICT



CyberLink PowerDirector 16 is one of the most powerful video-editing suites available. Our favourite is the Ultra version, because it's packed with tools but remains remarkably affordable. If you want to maximise your options, though, the Director Suite

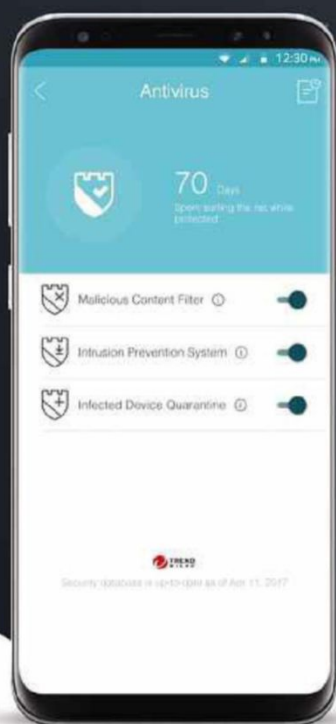
FEATURES	★★★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★☆
EASE OF USE	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★

bundle provides a wealth of extra tools in CyberLink's image editor, advanced audio and colour-grading software.



SEAMLESS, SECURE WHOLE-HOME WI-FI

Antivirus & Parental Controls
Powered by Trend Micro™



Deco M5 Whole Home Wi-Fi System



Antivirus

Protects every connected device from viruses and malware - even the devices that visitors use at your home.



Parental Controls

Restrict content, schedule Wi-Fi access by user or device, view activity reports or pause the internet.



Bandwidth Prioritisation

Quality of Service (QoS) assigns bandwidth to the devices you use the most or prioritises your favourite activities.

deco™



Compatible with the **Deco App**
(available from the Apple App Store
or Google Play)



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amazon alexa



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uk.tp-link.com

twitter.com/TPLINKUK





Web User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE

PC

Palicomp AMD Gravity RYZ1

£799.99 from www.palicomp.co.uk
Tested: Issue 443

This is the best PC we could find for under £800. It's powerful, well built and well balanced, so long as you're happy to use an overclocked processor.

KEY SPECS

AMD Ryzen 5 1600 processor ■ Asus Prime B350M-A motherboard ■ 8GB DDR4 memory ■ GeForce GTX 1060 graphics card ■ 240GB SSD ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 475 x 468 x 230mm tower case ■ Windows 10 Home 64-bit



SMARTPHONE

Samsung Galaxy S8

£506.99 from bit.ly/sams442
Tested: Issue 442

The Samsung Galaxy S8 is a terrific all-rounder. It's fast, looks wonderful, has a superb camera and boasts one of the best screens we've ever seen on a phone.

KEY SPECS

Octa-core 2.3GHz Exynos 8895 processor ■ 12-megapixel rear camera, 8-megapixel front camera ■ 4GB RAM ■ 64GB storage ■ 5.8in 1,440 x 2,560-pixel screen ■ Android 7 ■ 68.1 x 148.9 x 8mm ■ 155g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty



MINI PC

Asus VivoMini

£672.99 from bit.ly/asus440
Tested: Issue 440

With capable performance, generous storage and extensive connectivity, the Asus VivoMini is an impressively versatile mini PC. It's great for use in a home office and usefully offers both a main SSD and a back-up hard drive.

KEY SPECS

Dual-core 2.5GHz Intel Core i5-7200U processor ■ 8GB memory ■ 128GB SSD, 1TB hard drive ■ 6 x USB ports ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi, Gigabit Ethernet connectivity ■ 190 x 190 x 52mm ■ Three-years return-to-base warranty



KEYBOARD

BakkerElkhuizen UltraBoard 940

£79 from bit.ly/bakk438
Tested: Issue 438

The Ultraboard 940 is designed for all your computing needs – desktop, laptop and mobile. It's very comfortable and has a much better build quality than most portable keyboards.

KEY SPECS

Compact form ■ Scissor-switch technology ■ Multimedia function keys ■ 2 x USB 2 ports ■ Wireless ■ Height adjustment ■ Windows, MacOS, Android, iOS ■ 285 x 147 x 19mm ■ Two-years return-to-base warranty



VOICE ASSISTANT

Amazon Echo

£89.99 from bit.ly/echo437
Tested: Issue 437

With its sophisticated speech recognition, Amazon's second-generation Echo proves that smart digital assistants have a bright future, and it keeps getting better and better.

KEY SPECS

Compatible with Fire OS, Android and iOS devices ■ 802.11a/b/g/n Wi-Fi ■ Line-out with 3.5mm cable or Bluetooth ■ 2.5in woofer, 0.6in tweeter ■ 148 x 88 x 88mm ■ 821g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty



HIGH-SPEED ROUTER

TP-Link Deco M5

£229.99 from bit.ly/tpl435
Tested: Issue 435

This is a finely balanced mesh system with good range, although it isn't the fastest router available. However, it's got great additional features including built-in antivirus and powerful parental controls.

KEY SPECS

Mesh-networking kit ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ Combined network of 2.4GHz and 5GHz bands ■ WPA2-AES security ■ 1 x WAN port ■ 2 x Gigabit Ethernet ports ■ 120 x 120 x 38mm ■ Three-years return-to-base warranty



SOFTWARE & SERVICES

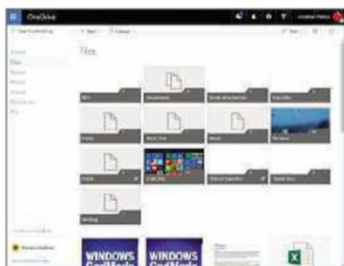
CLOUD-STORAGE SERVICE

Microsoft OneDrive

From free from onedrive.live.com

Tested: Issue 438

If you use Windows 10 or Microsoft Office, then OneDrive is a no-brainer. It's simple to use and already integrated into your PC. Recent improvements have added some excellent new features though we wish Microsoft would increase its free storage allowance. OneDrive also integrates well with both Android and iOS.



KEY FEATURES

5GB free storage ■ Web-based Office Web Apps including Word and Excel ■ 10GB maximum file size ■ Android, iOS and Windows 10 apps ■ Up to 50GB extra storage for £1.99 per month; Office 365 and 1TB of storage from £5.99 per month ■ Files expire after one year of inactivity

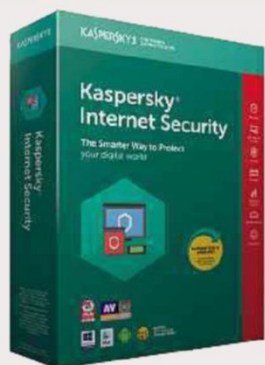
INTERNET SECURITY

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

WI-FI SCANNER

Acrylic Wi-Fi Home

NEW!

Free from bit.ly/acry443

Tested: Issue 443

Acrylic Wi-Fi Home is the free version of a professional tool, but it doesn't feel like a cut-down program and offers virtually all the features a home user will ever need.



EMAIL CLIENT

eM Client

Free from www.emclient.com

Tested: Issue 442

eM Client offers a great balance of simplicity and adaptability. Its familiarity makes it a great replacement for older tools, such as Windows Live Mail.



RADIO APP

Radioplayer

Free from bit.ly/radioplayer441

Tested: Issue 441

Radioplayer is limited to UK broadcasts and its interface could do with updating, but it works really well and is very straightforward to use, with lots of useful features.



START MENU REPLACEMENT

StartIsBack++ 2.5.2

£2.23 from startisback.com

Tested: Issue 440

StartIsBack's familiar look and many customisation options make it the closest equivalent to the now defunct ClassicShell.



PHOTO-EDITING APP

PhotoDirector

Free from bit.ly/phod439

Tested: Issue 439

Easy to use and very effective at enhancing images. It's a free version of a paid-for app but doesn't feel restricted.



WEB USER BACK ISSUES DISCS

Search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon

EVERY ISSUE FROM
2014 TO 2017



Best Free Software

MEDIA PLAYER

VLC Media Player 3

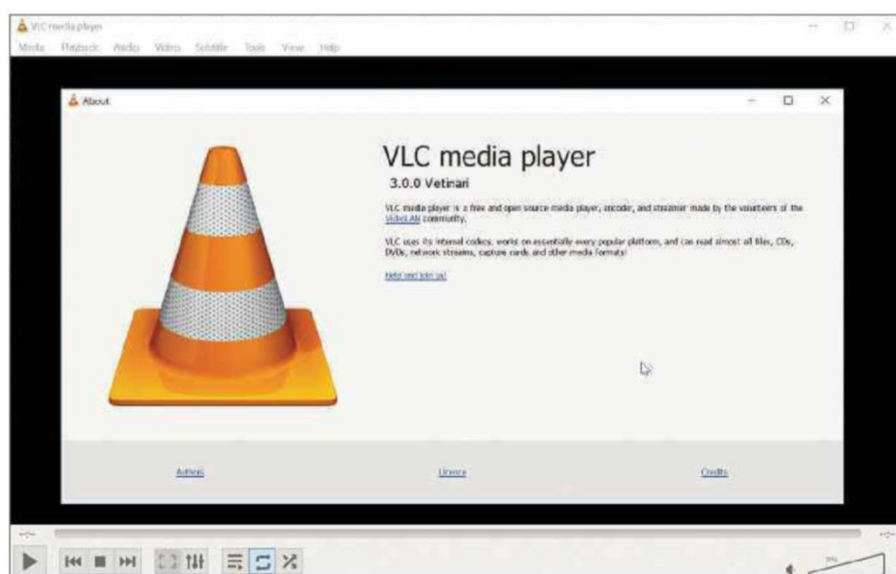
www.videolan.org

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10, MacOS and Linux

File size: 37.1MB

There are plenty of free media players around but few can compete with the excellent VLC. This powerful program can handle all the major audio and video formats without the need to install additional codecs, and also streams content over the internet.

VideoLAN has been working on a new version of VLC for the last three years, but the wait is finally over. The first version of the media player on the 'Vetinari' branch (named after a character from Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series) comes packed with new features and improvements.



The release has been synchronised, too, so no matter which operating system you run VLC on – PC, Mac, Linux, Android, Apple TV or ChromeOS – this is the version you'll get.

The new VLC release doesn't look massively different, but it has plenty of highlights. Hardware decoding is activated by default, which means it's capable of delivering 4K and even 8K playback that's smooth and stutter-free (depending on the quality of your hardware, of course). It also supports HDR10, 360 video and 3D audio,

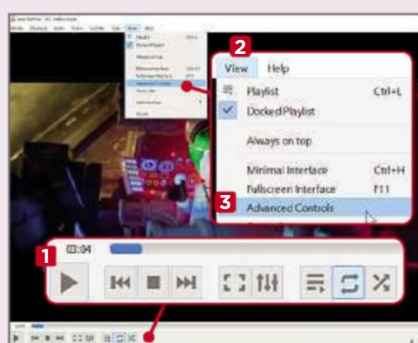
and allows audio pass-through for HD audio codecs.

You can now stream video from VLC directly to Google's Chromecast, even if the format isn't supported natively. Additionally, the media player can handle BD-J (Blu-ray Java) menus, and you can browse networked drives and NAS devices.

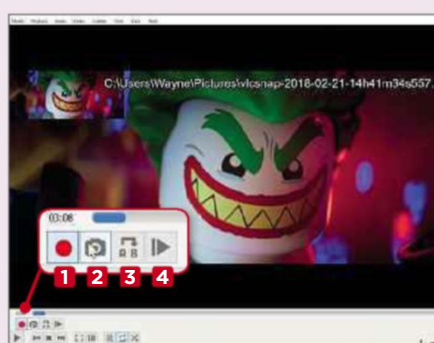
VLC was already the best media player around, but version 3.0 improves it significantly. While testing the new version, we found it more stable than previous releases.



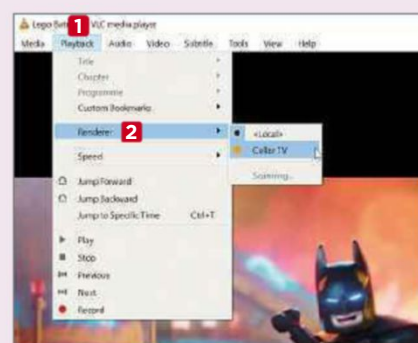
MINI WORKSHOP | Get started with VLC Media Player 3



1 VLC is capable of handling pretty much any media file. Just drag an audio or video file to the window and it will start playing. Use the controls at the bottom to manage playback. **1** There are some advanced controls available, which you can add by clicking View **2** and selecting Advanced Controls. **3**



2 These additional controls let you record playback **1** (which is handy for saving a copy of streaming video), and take a snapshot. **2** Recordings are saved to your Videos folder, while screenshots are saved to Pictures. You can loop from point A to B continuously **3** and move through the video frame-by-frame. **4**



3 One of the most significant new features in VLC 3 is the ability to stream video directly to a Chromecast. You need to have your PC and Google's dongle on the same network for this to work. To locate your Chromecast in VLC, click Playback, **1** select Render, **2** click your Chromecast and start a video playing.

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

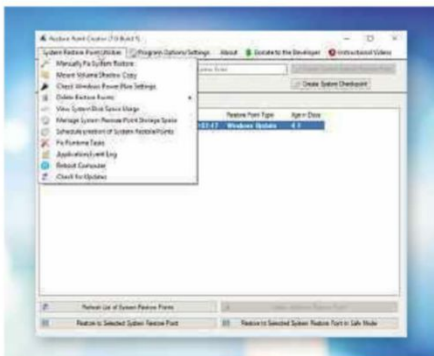


PHOTO EDITOR FireAlpaca 2

firealpaca.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10 or MacOS **File size:** 22.4MB

This tab-based image editor lets you fix problems with your photos, resize or rotate them, and create works of art using different preset and customisable brush types. It offers several powerful features including layers and levels (although there's no auto-levels option). The interface takes a little getting used to, but it's worth persevering with. There's a new, dedicated 64-bit version available, and you can now select multiple layers. Various problems have been fixed in this release, too.



SYSTEM TOOL Restore Point Creator 7

bit.ly/rpcreator444

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 834KB

Windows restore points can save the day if you install a program and it trashes your system, or if your PC gets infected with malware. This portable tool lets you create system-restore points on demand, and restore any selected one – either normally or in Safe Mode. Options include the ability to check Windows Power Plan settings, delete restore points and schedule system-point creation.



GAMES LAUNCHER LaunchBox 8

www.launchbox-app.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10 **File size:** 181MB

LaunchBox is a portable game database and launcher that can handle virtually any game you want to play. Older PC games can be run via the bundled DOSBox and it can also play newer releases – including ones from Steam – and non-Windows games via emulators. This update adds Retroarch Netplay support and boasts better performance, along with a new version of the SCUMM adventure-games emulator.

New Windows Apps

Amazon Music

bit.ly/amazon444

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 64.57

The new, official Amazon Music app lets you stream songs from the service (you will need an Amazon Music Unlimited or Prime Music subscription) and listen to your own music tracks.



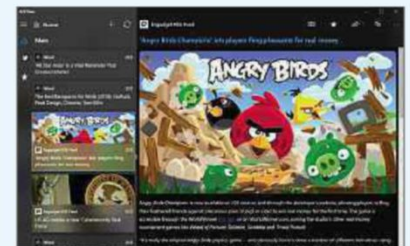
Ark View

bit.ly/arkview444

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 30.5MB

Ark View is a speedy feed reader with Twitter integration. You can use it to read updates from your favourite sites (via RSS) and tweets that interest you.



YATA - Yet Another To-Do App

bit.ly/yata444

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 34.48MB

YATA is a very simple to-do tool. It lets you add tasks to the list and mark finished ones as 'completed'.



That's pretty much all there is to it, but it does support Live Tiles.

NETWORK MONITOR

O&O Syspectr

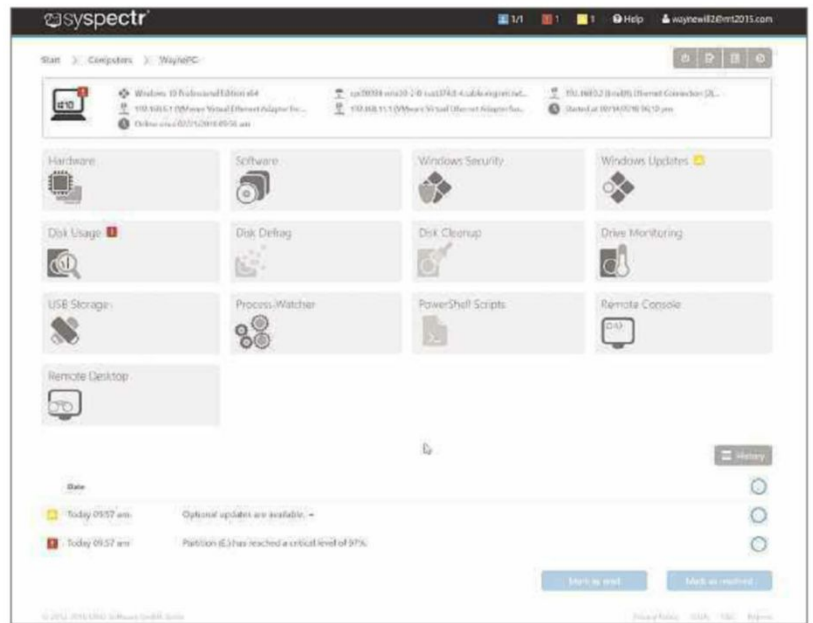
www.syspectr.com

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

File size: 5.6MB

O&O Syspectr lets you remotely monitor and manage PCs over a network. You can check drive health, automatically update software and install new programs, identify unauthorised access and shut down a networked device remotely. It can also tell you what software is being installed on a connected PC, which is handy if you're worried about any programs your children might be installing without your knowledge.

O&O Syspectr automatically alerts you to potential problems with devices and is suitable for any kind of network, from home to enterprise. It used to be a commercial product – priced at €1 a month per PC – but is now entirely free.



VIDEO EDITOR

Bandicut 3

bit.ly/bandicut444

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

File size: 12.4MB

If you have a video you'd like to share – by uploading it to Facebook or YouTube, for example – you might want to do a spot of tidying up first. Bandicut lets you cut out part of a video, split a clip into multiple files, join videos together, merge segments and more. It even lets you extract audio in MP3 format. This latest version of the video editor gains a new, more intuitive user interface and fixes a number of major bugs.

Although you can use Bandicut for free, there are some restrictions. The trimming speed is slower than in the paid-for edition, and the software adds a watermark to the finished video.

SYSTEM TOOL

Folder Colorizer 2

bit.ly/fcolor444

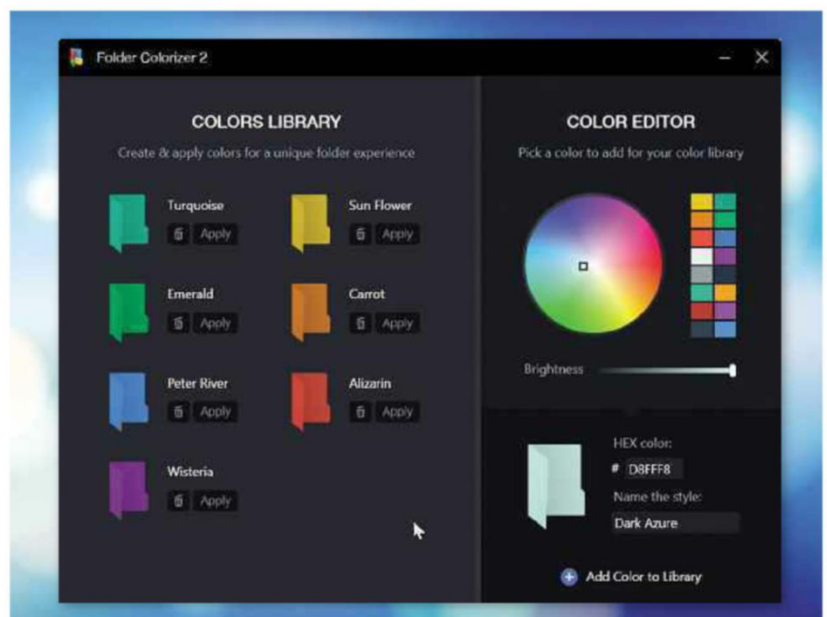
Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10

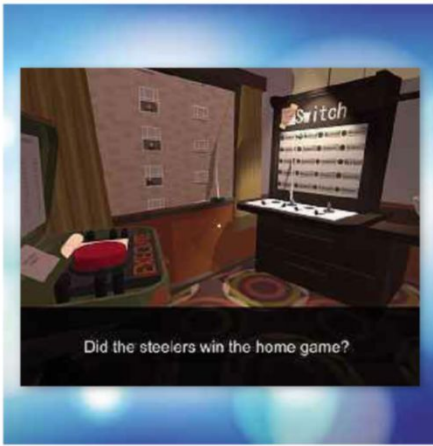
File size: 7.5MB

If you take pride in having an organised PC, this useful little tool lets you change the colour of your favourite folder icons so they stand out from the less important ones. You can make your Documents folder purple and your Photos folder red, for example. To change a folder's colour, right-click it and select your chosen hue from the context menu, or by using the program interface.

The new version of Folder Colorizer has a built-in colour editor that lets you choose from 16 million unique colours, so you can personalise your folders exactly as you please.

Be sure to decline the bundled junk during installation.





GAME

The Golden Tulip

bit.ly/tulip444

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10, MacOS or Linux **File size:** 34MB

Set in Beirut, Lebanon, this adventure game has you playing a Cold War spy stationed in a building opposite 'The Golden Tulip' hotel to monitor the activities of a Russian arms dealer. Your job is to use the equipment at hand to identify and eliminate the threat, helping to save the world from nuclear war. There are plenty of items to interact with and keep you intrigued.

Don't install...

Password Generator

www.binarymark.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 3.6MB

This program for creating secure passwords is certainly packed with features, but it also suffers from an ugly and confusing interface – with a dreadful website to match. Not only that, but Password Generator (also referred to as Random Password Generator) costs a whopping £35.99 per year, when plenty of similar tools are available for free.



...Install this instead

Dalenryder Password Generator

dalenryder.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 1.3MB

Despite its name, Dalenryder Password Generator does a lot more than just come up with new passwords. It's a handy collection of security tools packaged in a smart, intuitive interface. The Quick Password feature instantly creates passwords of between four and 30 characters, which are then stored in the Password Safe in an encrypted vault. There's also a PIN generator that creates PINs of up to 100 numbers, and a Password Lab for generating more complex passwords that include numbers, lower and/or upper case letters and special characters, to make your logins impossible to guess.



UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



VPN SOFTWARE

TunnelBear 3.2

www.tunnelbear.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 or MacOS
File size: 64.7MB

This easy-to-use VPN gives you 500MB of free data every month. The latest release features a completely rebuilt VigilantBear (the tool that blocks unsecured traffic should the VPN fail) and improved reliability. There's also a new program icon.



SYSTEM CLEANER

CCleaner 5.40

www.ccleaner.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 10.7MB

The popular Avast-owned system-cleaning tool gets updated on a monthly basis. This latest version adds a new 'Set aside tabs' cleaning rule for Microsoft Edge, and a warning when cleaning 'Old prefetch data' in Windows. Be sure to decline the bundled junk during installation.



SYSTEM TOOL

Ultimate Windows Tweaker 4.4.1

bit.ly/uwtweak444

Min requirements: Windows 10
File size: 679KB

Ultimate Windows Tweaker offers more than 200 tweaks for Windows 10, sorted into categories including Customisation and Performance. The new version is compatible with the Fall Creators Update and lets you remove the 3D Objects folder.



IMAGE VIEWER

FreeVimager 7.7

bit.ly/freev444

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10
File size: 1.8MB (installer)/4.7MB portable

FreeVimager is a free and speedy image viewer and editor that aims to pack as many features as possible into its tiny file size. This update adds bigger Close buttons (which is handy for touchscreen users) and replaces the menu circles with tick marks. ■

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



Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

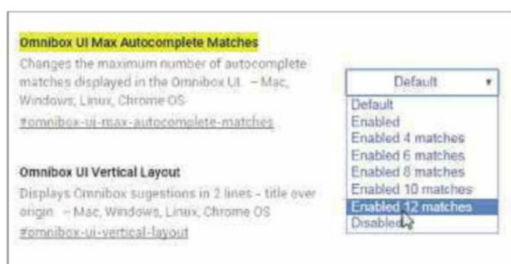
Browse smarter by changing your habits

There are lots of add-ons that try to stop you wasting time online by restricting your access to specific websites, but most prove irritating and get quickly uninstalled. HabitLab (bit.ly/habit444) adopts a more constructive approach to help you build better habits online and “achieve your goals”. Start by selecting which sites you’d like to spend less time on, either from suggested options such as Facebook, YouTube and Amazon or by adding a site manually, then specify sites you’d like to use more – for example, educational resources or the Web User Forums. Next, choose ‘nudges’ to display when you visit a time-wasting site. These include Bouncer, which sets a timer for your visit; Scroll Freezer, which prevents you from scrolling too far down a page; and Feed Eater, which removes the Facebook news feed. You can set nudges to be always on or only active during work hours. HabitLab keeps track of how much time its methods save you each day, and rewards you with ‘time badges’. It’s surprisingly effective, and will make you realise how often you visit certain sites purely from force of habit.

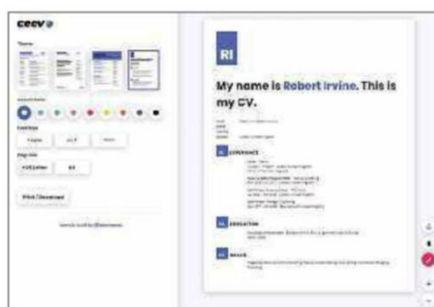


View more suggestions in the address bar

If you enjoyed the ‘Secret Chrome hacks’ feature in our last issue, here’s another one you can try, which changes the number of ‘suggestions’ the browser makes when you start typing a search query or URL into the address bar. By default, you’ll see between four and six suggestions, based on your bookmarks and browsing history, but this hack lets you increase the number to eight, 10 or the maximum 12. To try it, type `chrome:flags` into the address bar, press Enter and look for the entry Omnibox UI Max Autocomplete Matches. Click the drop-down Default menu and choose the number of suggestions you want to see. Alternatively, you can disable autocomplete matches altogether. Restart Chrome for the change to take effect.



Turn your LinkedIn profile into a CV



Lots of us now use the business-oriented social network LinkedIn to share our employment history, educational qualifications and work skills, but most employers still require you to submit a traditional CV when applying for a job. A new Chrome extension called Ceev (ceev.io) saves you the hassle of writing or updating your résumé manually, by generating an instant CV from your existing LinkedIn profile. Simply install the add-on, log into LinkedIn, then click the toolbar button and select ‘let’s do this’. Ceev will convert your profile into a stylish CV, with four themes to choose from and options to adjust the colours, fonts and page size. You can edit the text, and reorder and delete items. Once you’re happy with the result, click Print/

Download. Ceev is free to use, with no need to register for an account (other than your LinkedIn one).

Check how securely you’re browsing

Google has declared war on HTTP sites by announcing plans to mark all of them as ‘not secure’, starting in July. In the meantime, you can check what proportion of sites you visit are HTTP rather than secure HTTPS by installing HTTP vs HTTPS (bit.ly/http444). This keeps count of both types of site as you browse the web; just click its toolbar button to view the numbers of HTTP and HTTPS addresses you’ve visited, and the relevant percentages, and see how they compare.



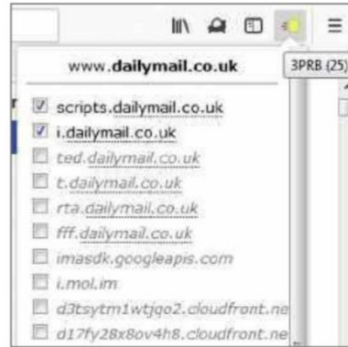
This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more



FIREFOX

Block third-party requests on websites

It's rare these days to visit a website and be connected to that site alone – there are all manner of third-party connections going on in the background, including ad networks, analytics tools, social networks, data trackers and malware domains. Not only do these interlopers threaten your online privacy and security, but they also slow down your browsing, which is why a new add-on called 3P Request Blocker (bit.ly/3prequest444) is tackling them head-on. This tool automatically blocks all unnecessary third-party requests on every website, with the option to whitelist specific domains if you find that pages don't display properly. Additionally, it prevents the loading of unsecure HTTP content when you're viewing an HTTPS site, and blocks potentially dangerous 'file:/' domains. 3P Request Blocker's developer points out that it isn't an ad-blocking tool, but it won't conflict with the likes of Adblock Plus and it is able to block known tracking attempts.



Change the order of suggestions

Firefox 59, released on 13 March, introduces a new option that lets you change the priority of the auto-complete suggestions in the address bar. By default, the top matches are taken from your browsing history, bookmarks and open tabs, with suggestions from your default search engine listed below. It's now possible to reverse the order, if you'd rather search the web than pages you've already visited. Click the 'hamburger' or Tools menu, choose Options and click Search. In the Search Bar section, select the option 'Show search suggestions ahead of browsing history in address bar results' and your suggestions will be reprioritised.



named TrufflePiggy (bit.ly/truffle444) expands this functionality by letting you add lots more options to the right-click menu, so you can instantly search your favourite sites. By default, it includes 14 entries, including Wikipedia, Amazon, Gov.uk, eBay and YouTube, but there are hundreds more sites to choose from – 675, to be precise. To keep things tidy, you can reorder the right-click menu to put the most frequently used items at the top, and create groups of sites with similar themes – for example, shopping or images. Your chosen search engines can also be accessed via the add-on's toolbar menu.

When you install TrufflePiggy, you're given the option to create an account so you can sync your preferences across devices and browsers, but this isn't essential.

Search more sites from your right-click menu

Firefox lets you quickly search for words, names and other text on web pages by right-clicking and choosing 'Search Google [or your preferred search engine] for'. The delightfully

OTHER BROWSERS



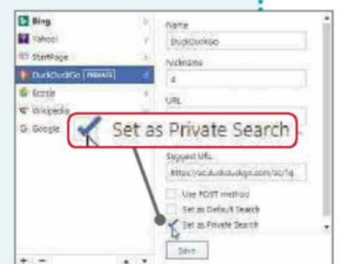
Reset Opera in one click

As we explain in our 'Stop your browser freezing' feature on page 50, you sometimes have to reset your browser and start afresh to reclaim speed and stability. The latest version of Opera, 51, lets you quickly and easily restore your browser to its original state, rather than having to save preferences and reinstall. Just click the Opera button, choose Settings and select Browser in the left-hand menu. Click 'Reset browser settings' and Opera will clear temporary data such as cookies, disable all extensions and restore its defaults, without deleting your bookmarks, passwords and history.



Set a private search engine

Vivaldi's latest 'snapshot' (beta version), 1.15.1094.3, offers the useful ability to set a different search engine for when you switch to private-browsing mode. This is



handy if you want to have, for example, Google as your default search engine, but use a more privacy-focused alternative, such as DuckDuckGo, when you open a private window. To set this up, go to Tools, Settings and click Search. Choose a private search engine in the list, select the option 'Set as Private Search' and click Save.

Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photos Companion

bit.ly/photosdroid444

bit.ly/photosios444

 4.2  10.2

NEW

The biggest advantage of committing exclusively to Google or Apple is that you barely have to put any thought into tasks such as syncing your photos. It's only when you introduce a Windows PC into the equation that things get a bit fiddly. The problem is that a lot of people use their PC as the main repository for storing their photo library and, aside from faffing around with USB cables, there's still no easy way to get the snaps you've taken on your iOS or Android device to appear in Windows 10's Photos app.

At least, there wasn't until the new Photos Companion app from Microsoft came along.

The idea behind Photos Companion is a brilliantly simple one. Basically, as long as your device is connected to the same Wi-Fi network as your PC, you can use the app to transfer photos wirelessly to your computer with a few taps. It's like a cross-platform version of Apple's AirDrop.

There's a little bit of setting up to do on both the PC and the mobile side before you can make the transfer but, by and large, it's all pretty straightforward.

Developed by Microsoft's Garage Project team, Photos Companion makes it very clear from the get-go that it is an experimental app, and we did encounter a few quirks during our tests – for example, you need to close and reopen the Photos app on your PC before you can register the connection to your mobile device (see Step 2 of our Mini Workshop, right). The app has

already been updated several times since its (very recent) launch, though, so we're hopeful that any problems will soon be ironed out.



MINI WORKSHOP

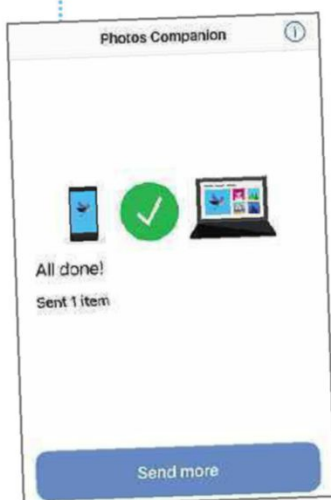
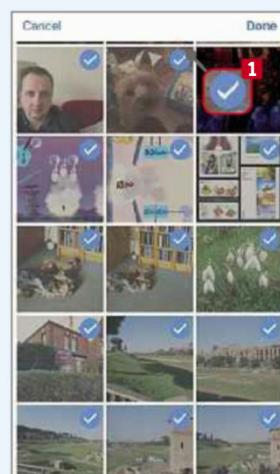
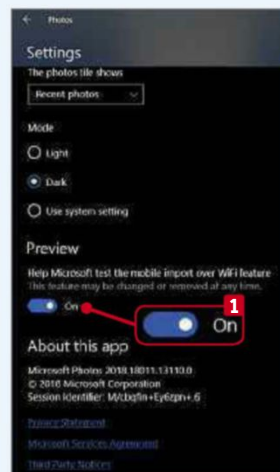
Transfer mobile photos to your PC wirelessly

1 Before you start, double-check that your phone or tablet and your Windows 10 PC are connected to the same Wi-Fi network. Open the Photos app on your computer, then click the three-dot menu in the top-right corner and select Settings. Scroll down to the Preview heading and click the switch to enable the 'Help Microsoft test the mobile import over WiFi feature option.' **1**

2 Close and reopen the Photos app on your PC (otherwise the setting enabled

in Step 1 doesn't seem to register). Click Import **1** and select 'From mobile over WiFi'. **2** A QR code will appear. **3** On your mobile device, open the Photos Companion app and tap 'Send photos'. Allow permission to use the camera if prompted, then point your device's camera at the QR code on your PC's screen.

3 Tap OK if you're asked permission to access your mobile device's photo library, then select the thumbnail for each of the photos you want to transfer – a tick will appear over any images you've chosen. **1** When you've finished selecting photos, press Done and your images will magically arrive in the Photos app on your PC. Whenever you want to transfer photos in the future, just repeat Steps 2 and 3.





Our rating



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

TOOLS

Wehe

bit.ly/wehedroid444
bit.ly/weheios444
 4.4  10.3

We all know that some ISPs throttle bandwidth to certain online services, such as YouTube and Netflix. But it's hard to prove they're actually doing so – unless you have Wehe installed. This clever little app simulates traffic to such services, making it look (to your ISP, at least) as if you're using a real streaming service. Wehe will then automatically detect whether there's any difference in speed and report this to you.

The app is still being developed, so you may encounter the odd glitch.





Our rating



PHOTOGRAPHY

Vimage

bit.ly/vimagedroid444
bit.ly/vimageios444
 4.3  9

Apple's Live Photos bring still images to life by recording a short burst of video, and Vimage puts a slightly different spin on the same idea by adding a layer of animation over an existing still image. You can animate steam rising from a cup of coffee, for example, or falling snow in a wintry scene. Vimage looks impressive but it's somewhat limited – there are a lot of photos that just don't suit the effects. There are also some bugs in the Android beta version, which is frustrating, and removing the watermark costs £2.99.



Our rating



GAME

The X-Files: Deep State

bit.ly/xfilesdroid444
bit.ly/xfilesios444
 5  10

Dust down your 'I want to believe' poster – the *X-Files* is back. If the latest series (currently airing on Channel 5) has whet your appetite, then try this free game. Mulder and Scully both appear (along with other favourites) and you take role of a young FBI agent over the course of five assignments. The hidden-object investigations and other mini challenges are pretty good, but the action can be slow unless you pay for premium energy boosts to speed up progress.



Our rating



DRAWING

Sketch

bit.ly/sketchdroid444
bit.ly/sketchios444
 4.2  10

Sketch – Sony's drawing and painting app – has been available for Android phones and tablets (including Sony's own Xperia devices) for some time, but now the app has finally made the leap to iOS, complete with support for the Apple Pencil stylus (on compatible devices). The app is easy to use and surprisingly full-featured for a freebie, with numerous preset and custom canvas sizes, several customisable pen and brush styles, support for layers and lots of other handy tools. You can import photos and share your finished work on all the major social networks, as well as via your own personal Sketch feed.



Our rating



LIFESTYLE

Thrive

bit.ly/thrive444
 7

It's important to take screen breaks, but it can be hard to tear yourself away from your devices. This app – originally developed for Samsung mobiles, but now in beta for other Android phones and tablets, too – lets you impose sensible restrictions on your screen time so you can reconnect with real life instead. Its default 'Thrive Mode' blocks all apps, notifications, calls and texts for a set period. You can also set daily time restrictions for individual apps or even block all access to your device for a specific period. It's kind of like parental controls, but for grown-ups.



Our rating



5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

PHOTOGRAPHY

Affinity Photo

bit.ly/affinity444

Price: £19.99

 11.2

Serif's answer to Photoshop for iPads just had a major update, adding the ability to capture RAW and HDR shots directly from your device's camera, plus improved support for drag and drop, and more.



EDUCATION

Electronics Toolkit Pro

bit.ly/electronics444

Price: £1.79

 4.1

This brilliant tool for electrical engineers and budding electronics enthusiasts features handy resistor colour-code references, calculators for resistance, voltages, Ohm's law and more.



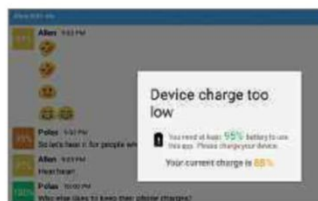
COMMUNICATION

Alive With Me

bit.ly/alive444

Price: 89p

 4.1



The opposite of Die With Me (Issue 442), this slightly silly (but fun) app lets you chat anonymously with others, but only when your device's battery is 95% or above (rather than 5% or below).

GAME

Final Fantasy XV: Pocket Edition

bit.ly/ffxvdroid444

bit.ly/ffxvios444

Price: £19.99

 5  10

The first chapter's free, but it's worth paying for the full version of this game, which boils down the entire epic console title into a brilliant mobile equivalent.



GAME

Game Dev Tycoon

bit.ly/gamedroid444

bit.ly/gameios444

Price: £4.99

 4.1  9.1

Did you ever dream of setting up your own video-game company in the 1980s? OK, so just us, then. Starting off as a lone developer in your garage and working up to cross-console success, this nostalgic, self-referential simulation is huge amounts of fun.



Affinity Photo



Electronics Toolkit Pro



Alive With Me



Final Fantasy XV:
Pocket Edition



Game Dev Tycoon

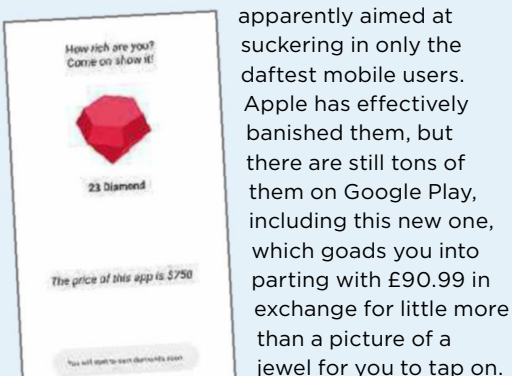


Don't install...

I'm Rich: Diamond Digger 3

bit.ly/imrich444

For those who haven't encountered the ghastly phenomenon of 'I'm Rich' apps, these are basically whopping great scams,



apparently aimed at suckering in only the daftest mobile users. Apple has effectively banished them, but there are still tons of them on Google Play, including this new one, which goads you into parting with £90.99 in exchange for little more than a picture of a jewel for you to tap on.

...Install this instead

Gems of War

bit.ly/gemsdroid444

bit.ly/gemsios444

 4.1  8

Frankly, you'd be better off installing almost anything else. But, sticking with the tapping-on-jewels theme, we'd recommend Gems of War – a brilliant puzzle/role-playing game hybrid that offers some surprisingly deep, nuanced gameplay by adding a level of strategic team building and character development to the familiar gem-matching action. Some tongue-in-cheek humour and a decent art style help elevate it, too. Best of all, you can play for free without ever needing to resort to the freemium content. Gems of War has been around for a while but was recently overhauled, with tons of new challenges, modes, items and more. ■





Take a Screen Break

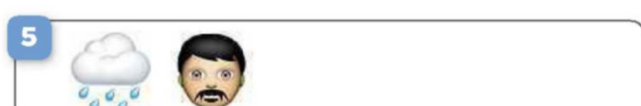
Give your eyes a rest from your browser by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you guess our film-title emoji and work out our web year?

**WIN A
WEB USER
2017 BACK
ISSUES DISC!**

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



CAN YOU GUESS THE FILMS FROM THE EMOJI?



GUESS THE TECHNOLOGY YEAR

Can you work out which year the following tech news stories occurred in? No cheating!

1 Google unveils its free webmail service, Gmail, on April Fool's Day - but only to people who have an 'invite' to sign up.



2 Apple launches a Mini version of its iPod digital audio player. The device is available in five colours and offers 4GB of storage.



3 A computer worm called MyDoom wreaks havoc across the globe, and becomes the fastest-spreading email worm ever.



4 Mozilla takes on Microsoft's Internet Explorer by releasing the first version of its open-source web browser, Firefox.



5 The word of the year, according to the leading US dictionary Merriam-Webster was 'blog', short for 'web log'.



COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 3 Slammers Wireless Headphones

Everyday wireless listening just got more comfortable with these soft-touch over-ear wireless headphones, with padded headband and super soft oval earcups. Swivel the earcups to keep an ear on the world, or escape completely into the sounds you love. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'slammers' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.kitsound.co.uk and follow @KitSoundUK on Twitter.



WORTH
£30
EACH

WIN 1 OF 5 Corel VideoStudio Ultimate 2018

The new version of Corel's VideoStudio Ultimate includes Split Screen Video, Lens Correction, 3D Titling, and enhanced Pan and Zoom tools. A new simplified and streamlined workflow makes video editing easier than ever. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'videostudio' in the subject line. For more info, visit www.videostudiopro.com and follow @videostudio on Twitter.



WORTH
£89.99
EACH

FAQ

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



What is cryptojacking?

Cryptojacking refers to the secret, unauthorised use of your computer, phone or other web-connected device to mine cryptocurrency. It's become hugely popular among hackers over the past few months, providing an easy way for them to earn digital money at the expense of other people's hardware.

How does it work?

Usually, hackers fool you into installing malware by getting you to click dodgy links or by hiding it in innocuous-looking downloads. Conversely, cryptojacking inserts a JavaScript component into a website or an ad displayed on a web page. When you visit a compromised site, the malware runs instantly – without you clicking anything – and forces your device to work for the bad guys.



Malwarebytes has been fanning the flames about the threat of cryptojacking

Does cryptojacking infect my device?

No. Although your PC's processing power is used to mine cryptocurrency, no code is stored on your PC and the mining generally stops when you close the page. We say "generally" because according to Malwarebytes Labs, hackers are now using hidden browser windows – so-called 'pop-under' – that fit under the Windows taskbar and behind the clock (bit.ly/mwb444). This method continues to mine cryptocurrency when you close a web page, but you can spot it by making the taskbar transparent.

What software is being used?

The JavaScript miner that's getting all the attention is called Coinhive (coinhive.com). It's a legitimate tool, designed to be embedded in websites to mine a legal cryptocurrency called Monero (getmonero.org). It's meant to give site owners an alternative revenue stream to online advertising, by getting visitors to mine the digital currency on their behalf. The problem is that greedy hackers are forcing Coinhive on to other people's websites, without permission, and using it to make money.



Websites embedded with Coinhive use your PC to mine for cryptocurrency

What is the miner actually doing?

It's trying to solve a host of fiendishly difficult mathematical problems, the likes of which you've no chance of calculating in your head. With each solution – known as a hash – the person instructing the mining is rewarded with a portion of cryptocurrency. By controlling lots of machines, criminals make more money.

So, is cryptojacking harmful?

Not in the sense that your personal or financial details are at risk. On the whole, cryptojacking is a lesser online evil, certainly when compared to ransomware, but it can still harm your hardware. For example, a cryptomining Trojan called Loapi seeks access to the administrative rights of your Android phone and can put a handset under so much strain that it kills it. There's also a good chance that you will find your computer or device slows on certain websites or lags when you perform an action. Cryptomining eats away at your electricity, too, which could result in a huge monthly bill.

And is the problem growing?

Absolutely. Researchers working for ad blocker Adguard (adguard.com) say cryptojacking scripts were found on more than 33,000 sites last November and that the problem grew by 31% in one month. Security firm Sophos also said Coinhive usage rose during December.



Cryptojacking can lead to a nasty shock when you get your electricity bill

How do hackers embed the code?

In the latest case of mass-cryptojacking, which we covered in last issue's Need to Know section, hackers inserted the Coinhive script into websites' code via an add-on called BrowseAloud (bit.ly/ba444), which is aimed at the blind and partially sighted. They exploited a vulnerability in the tool, which converts website text to audio, resulting in the biggest attack of its kind, affecting thousands of sites and even video ads.

Which websites are infected?

More than 5,000 websites are said to have been illegally infiltrated with the Coinhive script in the latest breach, including the Student Loans company, councils in England, various NHS services and even the UK's data protection watchdog, the Information Commissioner's Office (there's a list of the sites at bit.ly/aloud444). In each case, the hackers were able to mine money from the sites' traffic, but there are also sites that willingly insert Coinhive to make cash for themselves, including The Pirate Bay.

Which video sites were targeted?

As we reported in Issue 442, some YouTube video ads were found to be illegally infiltrated by the codejacking script. According to tech experts,



Thousands of websites were affected by the BrowseAloud cryptojacking attack

the video sites Openload, Rapidvideo, OnlineVideoConverter and Streamango also contained mining software, which had as many as a billion visitors unwittingly generating tokens for Monero.

Are hackers only after Monero?

No. Hackers have also mined for Bitcoin, Litecoin, Iota, Ethereum and Ripple. Monero – billed as being secure, private and untraceable – is understood to be the most popular among online criminals since it can be easily mined using a visitor's CPU (central processing unit).

What's been done about the latest attack?

The National Cyber Security Centre has carried out an investigation, while TextHelp, the creator of BrowseAloud, took its website down while the problem was solved, to stop further visitors to the affected sites being exposed to the cryptomining code. Yet the threat is unlikely to go away. Adguard's research painted a bleak picture when it said six other mining networks were spotted in October and November alone. Coinhive remains the most popular, though.

Can't Coinhive be taken out of business?

Technically, Coinhive is legitimate and



Monero is the cryptocurrency most likely to be mined without your permission

isn't doing anything wrong. The issue is that it's being abused and people visiting sites are unaware of what's happening under the hood. This got a lot of people's backs up and resulted in Malwarebytes and many ad blockers stopping Coinhive's script running on sites.

Is Coinhive doing anything to help?

Coinhive has released new code called AuthedMine that works in the same way as the previous script, but adds a user-consent page. This alerts visitors to the potential for cryptomining and asks them to opt in (coinhive.com/blog/authedmine). "The AuthedMine miner will never start without the user's consent," the company says, and it's asking developers to switch over to the new method. However, given that the *modus operandi* of cryptojackers is to mine surreptitiously, it's unlikely to stamp out the problem anytime soon.



AuthedMine encourages cryptojackers to mine more responsibly

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CRYPTOJACKING

It's no use only sticking to sites you trust, because cryptojacking affects even popular and legitimate sites. Here's how to reduce the risk of falling prey

Check your computer's processes

Open Windows Task Manager (Control+Shift+Esc), click the Processes tab and look for surges in processor usage.



Add sites to an ad blocker
If you suspect a website is



mining – because it slows your system to a standstill – turn on your ad blocker when you visit and ensure the NoCoin filter list is enabled.

Block cryptocurrency mining

There are several browser extensions that block Coinhive and other cryptocurrencies from mining without your consent. For Chrome, Firefox and Vivaldi, there's No Coin



(bit.ly/nocoin444), and for Firefox and Opera there's Mining Blocker (mining-blocker.com).

Keep antivirus software updated

The sneaky nature of cryptojacking means antivirus software doesn't always detect its presence, but keeping your protection up to date will maximise your chances of catching most known threats.



DITCH YOUR LANDLINE!



COVER FEATURE

Why pay £20 a month for a phone line you never use and no longer need to get online? **Robert Irvine** explains why and how you should switch to a broadband-only deal

Not so long ago, living without a landline was like cutting yourself off from the world. Relying exclusively on a mobile was impractical, because calls were expensive and some companies (and people) would only communicate with residential numbers. More importantly, for web users, a landline was essential for 'logging on' to the internet.

Nowadays, thanks to the widespread availability of Wi-Fi, 3G and 4G, it's easy to get online virtually anywhere. A home phone has become not only optional but unnecessary, and more likely to leave you open to cold callers and scammers. So why are broadband users still forced to pay a 'landline tax' just to get online?

In this feature, we explain how you can do away with your traditional phone line, yet still enjoy speedy and reliable internet access around your home. We weigh up the pros and cons of the latest broadband-only deals, look at alternative ways to get online and reveal what to watch out for when you quit your current provider for a landline-free existence.

By following our advice, you could save hundreds of pounds a year. For example, BT's Unlimited Broadband package currently costs £42.99 a month – that's £515.88 a year – but ditching your landline in favour of a broadband-only deal will cut your costs to as little as £19.99 a month. And if you switch to mobile Wi-Fi, you could pay just £5!

YOUR BROADBAND-ONLY QUESTIONS ANSWERED

If you're wondering what the advantages are of ditching your landline in favour of a broadband-only deal, read on as we explain all

Why does broadband usually require a phone line?

Most broadband providers offer services that run on the UK's copper-wire phone network, which is owned and maintained by BT's Openreach division. This includes phone cables, street cabinets and telephone exchanges, and accessing the network requires an active phone line.

Many fibre-broadband services also need a landline, because their cables only run as far as your nearest cabinet – hence the term 'fibre-to-the-cabinet' – and the

connection to your home is completed through copper phone wires.

What are the benefits of ditching my landline?

The cost of line rental typically adds around £18 your broadband bill each

month, whether you use your home phone or not. Most mobile contracts now include more free calls than landline deals, which are often restricted to certain times of day (and week) and don't include calls to mobiles. Many people now prefer to make free calls over the internet using Skype, WhatsApp or

FaceTime, rather than talk into a traditional telephone.

Home phones are also more likely to receive unwanted sales, marketing and scam calls, although of course mobiles aren't exempt from this nuisance. If you want your residence to be 'off the grid',

then scrapping your landline is a good place to start.

Will my broadband be faster without a phone line?

If you switch to a fibre-optic deal, you'll definitely experience faster broadband speeds than you would over a standard BT line. Other options, such as Mobile Wi-Fi (Mi-Fi) may be slower than what you're currently getting but offer much better value (depending on the 'up to' speed you've been paying for).

Can't I just drop line rental from my current package?

That depends on your current ISP. Of the 'big five' fixed-line broadband providers, only Virgin Media offers web access without a landline, through its own fibre-optic network. Some Openreach-based ISPs, including Plusnet, offer broadband-only packages that let you shop around to get your phone services from another provider. However, you still can't forego line rental altogether. If you want to stop paying for a phone line, you'll probably need to change ISP or rethink the way you get online. We'll discuss the best options later in this feature.



Cutting off your landline may affect your credit rating with certain lenders

a fixed address so if you need to borrow money, you'll find some lenders (particularly at the lower end of the scale) are more willing to offer you a loan, mortgage or credit card if you provide that contact method. However, you can still 'fix' your address to satisfy potential lenders by registering your details on the Electoral Roll.

You may have to pay a cancellation fee to leave your current ISP for a broadband-only future, especially if you still have several months left on your contract.

Can I have broadband and TV without line rental?

Virgin Media used to offer this option, but it's now disappeared from its website. We queried this with an 'agent' and were encouraged to go for the full broadband, phone and TV bundle, which makes line rental "essentially free. You don't have to plug in a phone or even use it". We felt this rather missed the point and sounded like a 'no'.

If you're determined not to have a landline, or unwilling to cede control of all your communications to one company, consider getting your broadband and television from separate providers.

Virgin Media offers broadband-only deals but not broadband-and-TV-only



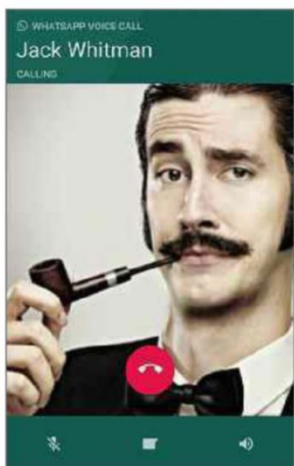
Some ISPs offer 'broadband-only' deals that still require you to have a landline

Can I save money by ditching my phone line?

That depends on how often you use your landline, but ditching your home phone means one less bill to pay because you won't be charged for line rental. Most ISPs offer discounts on bundles that include several services, including home phone, but the cheapest broadband-only deals could halve your monthly outlay.

What are the drawbacks to losing my landline?

Having a landline number ties you to



Many people choose to make free calls through apps such as WhatsApp



Virgin Media offers broadband-only deals but not broadband-and-TV-only



CHOOSE A LANDLINE-FREE BROADBAND PLAN

There are currently only a handful of choices for having broadband without a landline. Here, we compare the main options

BEST FOR SPEED

Virgin Media broadband-only

bit.ly/virgin444



What's good about it?

Until EE launched its 4G Home Broadband last month, Virgin Media was the only fixed-line ISP to offer home broadband without a phone line. Its fibre-optic broadband network operates independently of the national-telecoms network, which is mostly looked after by Openreach, so Virgin Media is able to offer super-fast connections that don't depend on a traditional copper phone line. None of the other big broadband providers comes close to its speeds of up to 300Mbps, which the company credits to its DOCSIS 3 technology (Data Over Cable Service Interface Specification) and "unique insulated cable, with a thicker copper core".

You can choose between a 12-month contract and a more flexible 30-day 'rolling' plan (that can be cancelled within 30 days), with four available speed options – 'up to' 50, 100, 200 and 300Mbps – and no data cap. All Virgin Media Vivid plans include its "fastest ever" Wi-Fi Hub, and let you choose between QuickStart self-install (if your home is already wired for the service) and engineer installation, which may require "a small amount of digging and drilling".



Virgin Media's DOCSIS 3 technology delivers ultra-fast speeds without a phone line

What's not so good:

Virgin Media's broadband-only deals certainly aren't cheap, ranging from £33

to £48 per month, plus an activation fee of £20 and another £65 upfront for a 30-day rolling plan. In fact, its bundles for broadband, TV and phone offer better value, even if you never use your landline. For example, the 50Mbps Player TV option costs £33, the same as broadband-only for the first year; while Virgin Media's cheapest broadband-and-phone deal is priced at only £29 per month for the first 12 months (after which it's £40 a month).

Another downside is that Virgin Media broadband isn't yet available across the UK. Enter your postcode at bit.ly/vmchecker444 to see if you can get it.

BEST FOR COVERAGE

EE 4G Home Broadband

bit.ly/4gee444



What's good about it?

EE officially offers the fastest 4G in Britain (bit.ly/eefastest444), and its new 4G Home Broadband brings its impressive mobile network to your house, promising speeds of up to 76Mbps without a phone line. Following a trial in Cumbria, the service has now been rolled out across the whole country and is specifically targeting web users in rural areas, who have previously been at the mercy of BT.

4G Home Broadband is very easy to set up – just plug in the 4GEE router and activate your account to access the network. It lets you connect up to 32 devices and there's also an optional external antenna for customers with reliable outdoor 4G but variable indoor coverage, although this costs £100 to install.

You can either sign up for an 18-month 4G Home Broadband contract or choose a rolling 30-day plan, with several options to choose from depending on how much data you need. Additionally, if you're an existing EE mobile customer, your monthly data allowance will be boosted automatically by 5GB.



EE 4G Home Broadband offers an external antenna to boost indoor coverage

What's not so good:

You need to be an EE, T-Mobile or Orange customer to get 4G Home Broadband, and it isn't particularly cheap. Prices range from £25 per month for 10GB of data to £60 for 200GB, and the 30-day plans incur an upfront charge of £99.99. On the plus side, you can use the EE app to track exactly how much data you're using.

BEST FOR SIMPLICITY

Three HomeFi

bit.ly/homefi444



What's good about it?

Three's landline-free home broadband is based around a tiny (181 x 126mm) router, made by Huawei, which comes with a 4G SIM card

that you simply pop into the back of the device to get you online.

Three claims HomeFi offers potential speeds of up to 150Mbps, although that's highly unlikely – its most recent average figure was 22Mbps, and a lot less than even that in London (see bit.ly/3speed444). The router's signal has a reach of up to 250 metres, so it should easily cover all areas of your home, without leaving any 'notspots'.

HomeFi lets you connect up to 32 wireless devices at once, and Three conveniently offers free next-day delivery, which makes it a good solution if you need home broadband urgently. You don't need to be an existing Three customer to use the service.





Three HomeFi™
No wires, hassle-free, home broadband.

It gives you all the benefits of a broadband connection without the need for a landline. And it's available in over 100,000 homes across the UK.

Enjoy faster broadband speeds for £24 a month.

✓ No installation or activation fees. Just plug and play for the first 12 months.	✓ No need for phone lines or other services. The HomeFi™ router connects to the broadband network via a wireless connection.
✓ Choose from two plans: Standard (up to 40GB) or Premium (up to 100GB) at any time.	✓ No long-term contract. You can cancel at any time with no penalty.

Three HomeFi is easy to set up but limits how much data you can use each month

What's not so good:

Three offers a choice of HomeFi contracts – one month, 12 months or 24 – with prices ranging from £23 to £29 per month, but all its plans have a data limit of 40GB (or 100GB for the most expensive option). This is fine for mobile usage, but may not be enough for home use, where you're likely to be streaming and downloading more. If you want more data, you'll need to buy an add-on, with prices starting at £5 for an extra 1GB. There's also a £59.99 upfront charge for the 30-day contract.

BEST FOR LONDON (and Swindon)

Relish

www.relish.net

Relish

What's good about it?

This 4G service uses an Indoor Hub rather than a landline to deliver broadband speeds of up to 40Mbps. There's no limit on how much data you can use, and it costs £22 per month. You can choose between a 12-month contract and a one-month deal, though the latter charges an extra £70 for the hub. Relish is operated by UK Broadband Ltd, a subsidiary of Three UK, and claims to be the only broadband service that can be delivered the very same day (for a fee – next-day delivery is free). Refer a friend to Relish and you can earn up to £200 in rewards.



Relish Home Broadband Business Broadband Help Premium

Break free from your landline

Welcome to home broadband without the need for a landline. Check your coverage and get your broadband delivered today. In central London for a £20 fee or nationwide for a £70 fee.

✓ Broadband delivered ✓ How it works ✓ View plans & buy ✓ Check coverage

Relish offers landline-free broadband the same day – if you live in Central London

What's not so good:

Relish is currently only available in Central London and Swindon, and its coverage hasn't significantly expanded since it launched four years ago (check if it's available in your area at bit.ly/relish444). Also, recent reviews on Trustpilot (bit.ly/trustrelish444) have complained of disappointing speeds and poor customer service.

BEST FOR VALUE

Hyperoptic

www.hyperoptic.com



What's good about it?

Hyperoptic might not be a household name but it's currently the smartest way to get home broadband without a landline, and claims to deliver speeds over 27 times faster than the UK average (36.2Mbps). Its top plan (£48 per month) offers an amazing 1Gbps for both downloads and uploads, and even




hyperoptic Residential Broadband Business Broadband Digital & Services Three Hyperoptic router

Fall in love with the UK's fastest broadband

The fastest speeds. The best value. The highest rated service.

Download speeds

Dennis Publishing, 52-53, Athol Place, LONDON

Check

Hyperoptic claims to deliver speeds over 27 times faster than the national average

its cheapest deal – which costs a very reasonable £19 a month for the first year, and £22 thereafter – delivers a download speed of up to 30Mbps. There's no data limit, either, and the price includes a HyperHub router and 24/7 customer support.

Hyperoptic works over its own fibre-optic network, "specifically designed for the needs of the 21st century". This means that (unlike Virgin Media), its cables go all the way to your building, rather than a nearby cabinet, with no signal degradation, environmental interference or slowdowns – even during peak times. You can choose between



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR



Deceptive advertising

Some ISPs claim to offer broadband without a phone line, but if you read the small print you'll discover that you still need to pay line rental to BT or another company. Plusnet's 'broadband-only' deals offer a £3.50 discount to customers who switch to its phone service, so aren't really landline-free at all!



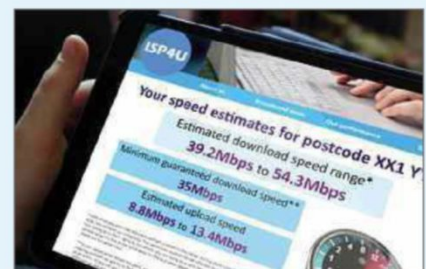
Credit checks

Even without line rental, most ISPs will run a credit check when you sign up for a broadband deal, because they technically own the equipment you're provided with. Virgin Media requires details of your address(es) for the past three years before you can sign up.



Exaggerated speeds

ISPs can no longer get away with making false claims about their broadband speeds, but even 'up to' figures are usually way off what you'll actually receive. Ofcom now wants providers to quote a "minimum guaranteed" speed in their ads, too.



Installation hassles

Even landline-free ISPs charge an activation fee for their service, but you should also watch out for installation fees – especially if there's an option to set up your router yourself for free. In some cases, engineers may need to drill holes in your walls to lay broadband cable.



a no-contract and 12-month-contract deal, and switch from one to the other if you change your mind.

What's not so good:

Unsurprisingly, there's a catch – getting Hyperoptic installed is no easy feat. The broadband service is now available in 30 towns and cities across the UK, spanning 400,000 homes, but the company is currently focusing on multi-dwelling buildings (and small to medium-sized offices) and requires enough residents

to express interest before it will commit to installation. You can register your own interest by entering your postcode on Hyperoptic's homepage and filling in the form. There's a £40 activation fee, and setting up the Hyperoptic socket involves the engineer drilling a small (10mm) hole, usually above your front door, then running the cable inside your property. Regular installations include 10m of surface-mounted visible cabling, so tenants need to secure the permission of their landlord first.



Hyperoptic offers its own fibre-optic network but getting it installed isn't easy

CHOOSE A MOBILE BROADBAND PLAN

You don't need to be on the move to enjoy the benefits of mobile Wi-Fi. Here are the best options for cable-free web access

Rather than relying on a router at home, you can get broadband everywhere you go by using a mobile Wi-Fi – or Mi-Fi – device. These are now offered by all the main mobile networks, and the cheapest plans cost a lot less than a home 4G service, while delivering similar speeds (depending on signal strength). These portable routers run on rechargeable batteries, so you don't

need to connect them to a permanent power source, and some can even charge other devices on the go, such as your phone or laptop.

On the downside, the more affordable Mi-Fi plans usually have tight data caps, which makes them best suited to short-term or light internet use. You should also bear in mind that 4G coverage is patchy in many parts

of the country, so it's worth checking Ofcom's map (checker.ofcom.org.uk) to view availability in your area.

Our chart below shows how the latest 4G Mi-Fi devices from the main networks compare. Most also offer 3G options, as well as old-fashioned 'dongles' that plug into your laptop's USB port – but why go slow when you can fly?

	EE 4GEE WiFi	O2 Huawei 4G Pocket Hotspot Plus	Three Huawei E5573 4G	Virgin Media IMO Go	Vodafone R218 4G
WEBSITE	www.ee.co.uk	www.o2.co.uk	www.three.co.uk	www.virginmedia.com	www.vodafone.co.uk
PRICE PER MONTH	£12-£61	£11-£30	£8-£23	£5-£21	£11-£30
UPFRONT COST	£0-£79.99	£19.99-£107.99	£0-£29	£0 or £39.99	£0-£35
DATA LIMIT	2GB-50GB	2GB-40GB	2GB-20GB	1GB-10GB	2GB-50GB
CONTRACT LENGTH	30 days or 24 months	24 months or pay-as-you-go	30 days or 24 months	30 days or 12 months	30 days or 24 months
EXTRAS	Free EU roaming data	12-month subscription to Microsoft Office 365 Personal	Go Binge streaming (£13+ per month contracts only)	Data rollover, data-free messaging	Vodafone Global Roaming in 50 countries
WI-FI CONNECTIVITY	802.11 a/b/g/n/ac, 2.4GHz	802.11 a/b/g/n, 2.4GHz/5GHz	802.11 a/b/g/n, 2.4GHz/5GHz	802.11 b/g/n, 2.4GHz	802.11 b/g/n, 2.4GHz
MAX NO OF DEVICES	10	10	10	10	5
BATTERY LIFE	20 hours operating time, 180 hours standby	10 hours operating time, 500 hours standby	4 hours operating time, 300 hours standby	6 hours operating time, 300 hours standby	10 hours operating time, 300 hours standby
SIZE	88 x 88mm	168 x 68mm	94 x 55mm	100 x 61mm	105 x 64mm
WEIGHT	168g	200g	75g	140g	102g

All devices offer theoretical download speeds of up to 150Mbps and upload speeds of 50Mbps over 4G

CANCELLING YOUR LANDLINE

Once you've made up your mind to ditch your landline, what steps do you need to follow? Our guide walks you through the process

1 Find out how to cancel

Most ISPs make you call them in person to cancel your contract, rather than letting you do so online, so they can offer you incentives to change your mind. Here are the numbers you need to ring for the 'big five' providers:

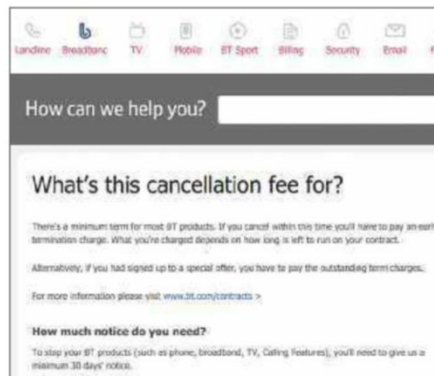
BT – 0800 783 1401

EE – 0800 079 0544

Sky – 03300 413 018

TalkTalk – 0345 172 0088

Virgin Media – 0345 454 1111 or 150 from your Virgin Media phone



You may have to pay a cancellation fee for leaving your ISP early

worth hanging on until you reach your minimum term, unless you can exploit a get-out clause. For example, you won't have to pay an exit fee if you leave within your 14-day 'cooling-off' period after signing up, or if your broadband provider has failed to provide an acceptable level of service. If the cost of your package was increased mid-way through your contract, you can cancel without charge within 30 days of being

notified of the price hike, in line with Ofcom rules.

Most providers now let you hang on to your old router, but double-check if you need to return any equipment or you may be charged for that, too.

3 Sign up with your new provider

Switching broadband used to be a complicated procedure involving MAC codes, but Ofcom's 'gaining provider-led process' has since made the handover much more straightforward. You now only need to contact the provider you wish to switch to, and they will perform the transfer for you. The deals we've recommended in this feature don't require a landline, so you don't need to worry about switching at all. Technically, it's possible – if financially inadvisable – to have two lots of broadband running at the same time.

4 Start a new Virgin Media contract

If you're a Virgin Media customer and you want to get rid of your landline but keep your broadband, you'll need to sign up for a new contract and pay an exit fee for ditching your phone line, if you're still within the minimum term. You should also be prepared for Virgin Media's support to ask why you're cancelling your line rental while they persuade you not to!

5 Recycle your landline phone

There are loads of websites that pay for old mobiles, but very few companies will accept old landline phones, which risks leaving you with a now-redundant blower cluttering your home. Your best bet is to find a local recycling centre that accepts electrical equipment, which you can do using Recycle Now's search tool at bit.ly/recycle444. Select Electricals in the first column and Telephones/Fax in the second, then enter your postcode to find the nearest place to dump your old dog-and-bone.



Dispose of your old landline phone by taking it to a local recycling centre

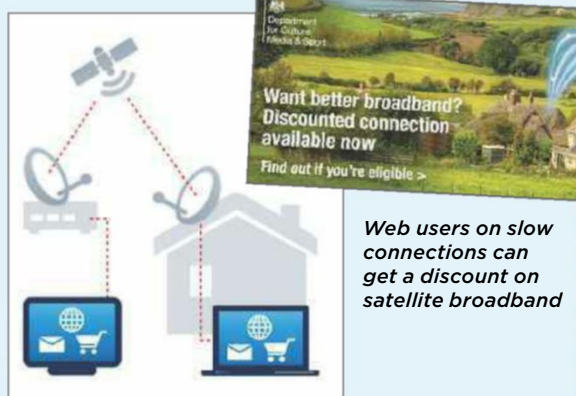
2 Calculate your cancellation fee

If you cancel your contract with the minimum term – for example, within the first year if you signed up for 12 months – you'll probably be charged a termination fee, and will have to give your ISP 30-days notice of your leaving (14 days with Sky), during which time you'll still need to pay. This usually equals the amount you pay per month multiplied by the number of months left on your contract.

If leaving now looks too pricey, it's

CONSIDER SATELLITE BROADBAND

If you live in a remote area where fixed-line broadband is painfully slow or non-existent, and where 3G and 4G signals are patchy, satellite broadband might be your best – perhaps only – option. It doesn't require a phone line, offers widespread coverage (as long as you can point the satellite dish at the satellite, you can get



online) and isn't slowed by obstacles and distances. If you've ever used Wi-Fi on an aeroplane or a boat, you've probably used satellite broadband. It works in the same way as satellite TV in that it receives information to a small dish and transfers that data via a cable connected to a modem in your house. The dish also sends information to the satellite, for a fast two-way connection.

Avonline Broadband (avonlinebroadband.com) offers satellite internet from £19.95 per month, with download speeds of up to 15Mbps and uploads at 2Mbps. On the downside, its packages all have a fixed data allowance (although some don't count data used overnight) and there's a £39.99 connection fee plus an £139 installation charge, as well as the cost of renting or buying the hardware. If that sounds far too expensive, you should consider applying for a subsidy from the Better Broadband Scheme (bit.ly/better444), which offers UK web users savings of up to £350 (£800 in Wales) if their connections are slower than 2Mbps.



TURN YOUR PHONE INTO A WI-FI HOTSPOT

If you don't want to commit to a contract, you can get instant home broadband using your mobile phone. Here's how to do it

The cheapest and fastest way to get home internet without a landline, ISP or even a router is to turn your smartphone into a personal Wi-Fi hotspot. This is much easier than it sounds, although not all devices support 'tethering' and costs vary significantly according to your

mobile tariff, so make sure you check with your network provider before risking any additional charges. For example, Three's Advanced Pay Monthly and SIM plans include Personal Hotspot, but its Essential and Pay As You Go plans require you to buy an add-on.

Create a mobile Wi-Fi hotspot to get internet access wherever you are

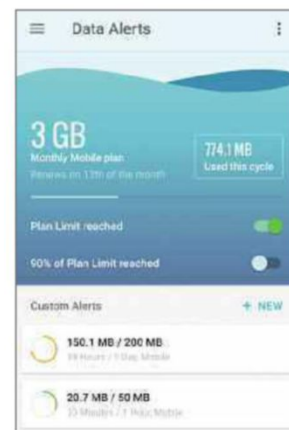
To set up a personal hotspot on an Android phone, go to Settings, 'Wireless & networks', tap More and select 'Tethering & mobile hotspot' (or similar). Next, tap 'Portable Wi-Fi Hotspot' to turn on the hotspot and choose 'Set up Wi-Fi hotspot'. Select 'Show password' to see and edit the network name and password, then use the details to connect to your mobile hotspot from your other wireless-enabled devices.

On an iPhone or a 3G/4G iPad, go to Settings, Cellular, Personal Hotspot and tap the slider to turn it on (if you can't see it, check that Personal Hotspot is included in your mobile tariff). Set a password for your hotspot and you'll be able to connect it from other devices using Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or USB.

Browsing the web on a laptop connected to your personal hotspot uses a lot more data than on a mobile device. To ensure you don't exceed your monthly limit, you can keep an eye on your data use by installing the excellent free Android app Glasswire (bit.ly/glass444), which displays a permanent notification indicating your data usage for a set period and alerts you when you near your limit. Even if you have an all-you-can-eat data plan, you'll still need to ensure you don't breach your mobile network's fair-usage policy. O2, for example, states that "we don't recommend using your phone as a personal hotspot, as this eats up a lot of

data", although it doesn't go as far as blocking the feature. For this reason, a personal hotspot is best used as a stopgap rather than a replacement for home broadband.

You'll also find that tethering causes your smartphone's battery to drain more quickly than usual, so plug it into the mains if you're at home. ■



Glasswire ensures your mobile hotspot doesn't exceed your data allowance

GET SKY WITHOUT A LANDLINE

Sky's broadband and TV bundle requires you to pay for line rental and although you can get all Sky TV channels via its satellite dish, you need a landline to get its catch-up and on-demand TV. The best way around this is Now TV (www.nowtv.com), which lets you enjoy all the delights of Sky TV – including non-Freeview channels, movies and sport – without having to sign up to a lengthy contract with its internet or satellite service. Priced from just £7.99

a month, it can be used with any of this feature's landline-free broadband options to stream both live and on-demand TV to your telly. You can choose between Entertainment, Sky Cinema and Sky Sports passes (the first two offer 14-day free trials), watch more than 300 box sets of shows including *The Walking Dead*, and cancel at any time without penalty. Now TV is available as a streaming stick, set-top box and mobile, console and smart TV apps. Obviously, streaming video uses lots of data, so be careful if your broadband-only deal has a tight cap.

Later this year, Sky plans to make its Sky Q package broadband-only, so even Sky subscribers won't need an unsightly dish stuck to their homes.



Now TV lets you watch all Sky TV channels on a broadband-only deal

NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 21 March 2018

WINDOWS 10

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Does it REALLY work?

We test intriguing tech hacks from the web to discover if they're fact or fiction



Remove scratches using toothpaste

Wayne Williams tries to rescue a scratched smartphone screen using a dab of toothpaste, a cotton bud and a clean cloth

Smartphone screens are a lot more robust than they used to be, thanks to the use of stronger materials such as Gorilla Glass. You need to be quite clumsy and unlucky to break a smartphone screen these days (even a fragile looking iPhone X). We once dropped an iPhone 7 in a busy railway station and accidentally kicked it into a crowd of people, some of whom then walked on it. The result was some footprints on the back (which was protected with a case) but – amazingly – there were no other ill effects.

That said, it's relatively easy for your display to pick up minor surface scratches, especially if you carry your phone in your pocket next to your keys. If you find your screen has some small nicks and abrasions (but no deep gouges or cracks), a trip to the bathroom might just save the day.

OTHER WAYS TO TACKLE SCRATCHES

BAKING SODA

Mix two parts of the powder with one part water, and turn it into a thick paste. Apply it in the same way as the toothpaste.

CAR-SCRATCH REMOVAL CREAM

It removes scratches from car body work, so it could feasibly do the same on a smartphone screen.

BABY POWDER

Swap baking powder for baby powder and follow the same instructions.

VEGETABLE OIL

Oil can be used to temporarily disguise scratches. Only use a very tiny amount because any excess could stain your clothes.



1 Put a small blob of toothpaste on the scratched area – this is a little too much



2 Spread the toothpaste with a cotton bud and rub it in using a circular motion



3 Use a wet cloth to remove any excess toothpaste afterwards

How we tested it

Having tried and failed to drown our smartphone back in Issue 442, we brought it back into service for this test. We scratched its screen using an old school compass and an awl (a pointed metal tool). It took a surprising amount of force to damage the display, but this method was still quicker – and safer – than jamming the phone into a tight jeans pockets along with razor blades and screws, then jumping around.

Once we'd defaced the screen, we set about trying to repair it using toothpaste. The trick here is to use actual toothpaste, not tooth gel. Many

toothpastes are designed for specific results, such as whitening teeth, reducing sensitivity and strengthening enamel, but that doesn't serve any purpose here. We're only concerned with sanding down imperfections on the surface of the screen, so the cheapest, most basic toothpaste will do just fine.

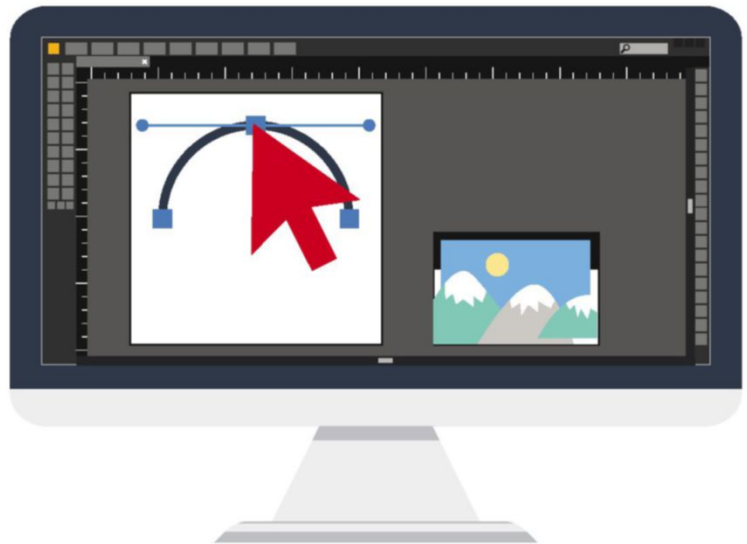
We used a cotton bud to apply a tiny blob of toothpaste to the scratches on our phone, **1** then used that and a lint-free cloth to rub the paste into the 'wounds', using small circular motions. **2** We then moistened the other end of the cloth and wiped away the excess toothpaste. **3**

The result

Toothpaste worked at removing very light – almost imperceptible – scratches, but it did nothing for the larger, deeper marks. As with most of the quick fixes we've tried in this series, the main deciding factor for whether the trick works or not is the depth and severity of the damage. We weren't blown away by the results we achieved in attempting to repair the scratches, but we'll concede that the trick made a difference with the lighter scuffs. The problem is that it's the deeper marks that will most annoy you, and it's unlikely that toothpaste will help in such cases.

Make your photos look amazing – for free

Improving photos and other images needn't be complicated or expensive. **Jonathan Parkyn** compares the best free image-editing programs for your PC



Paint.net | www.getpaint.net | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

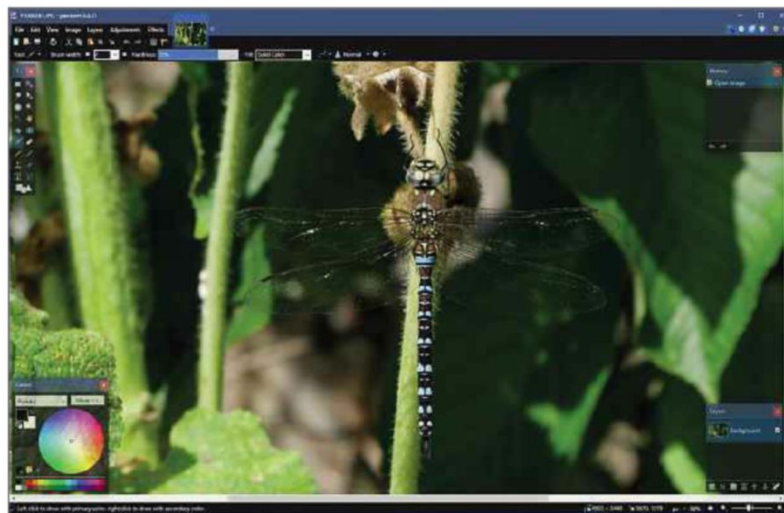
**WebUser
GOLD
AWARD**

What we liked:

We'll freely admit that Paint.net is a long-standing favourite of ours. It's one of those rare free programs that's just brilliant at what it does with no strings attached – no ads, no premium features, no foistware – just all the tools you need to make your photos look great. Paint.net has been around for a while, though, so we were interested to see how it measured up against the current crop of free image-editing programs, and we're delighted to report that it's still worthy of our gold seal of approval.

This is partly down to the solid set of features that it offers. Everything you could want from an image-editing program is here, including a clone stamp, support for layers and loads of high-quality filters, effects and tools, such as a red-eye remover.

This continued excellence is also due, in part, to the fact that Paint.net has such a great community behind it, with plenty of active discussion at



forums.getpaint.net, as well tons of online tutorials, user-generated plugins and more.

But what Paint.net does best of all is provide a workable balance between power and simplicity. There are easier image-editing tools available, but few of them offer anywhere like the breadth of features you'll find in Paint.net. Crucially, it's also intuitive enough to not put off beginners.

It's reassuring to see that Paint.net's developer is continuing to make the program even better, adding a swanky new Dark Mode to the UI options in the

most recently released update (version 4.0.21), along with improved support for high-DPI displays and large (4GB-plus) file sizes, as well as other enhancements.

How it can be improved:

If you're an advanced user, you may find that Paint.net lacks the impressive power of our Silver Award-

winner GIMP. It's also worth noting that, unlike the main version, Paint.net's Windows 10 app (available on the Windows Store at bit.ly/paintapp444) is *not* free – it currently costs £4.19.

OUR VERDICT

Paint.net was a great program back in 2004, when it was first developed as a student's computer science project. Now, nearly 14 years later, it still sets the bar as the free image editor to beat.

GIMP | www.gimp.org | ★★★★★☆
 FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★☆☆

WebUser
SILVER
AWARD

What we liked:

GIMP (short for GNU Image Manipulation Program) is another free program that breaks all 'too good to be true' expectations. Advanced users will find most of the features they might ever need, including exposure controls, levels, curves, layer masks and more, and if you're familiar with Photoshop (the industry standard), you'll find these tools more or less exactly where you'd expect them to be.

The interface aims to please, too – for example, if you don't get on with the floating tool palettes of GIMP's interface, the latest version (v2.8.22) has the option to flip to a more familiar Single-Window Mode via the Windows menu.

If you're looking for a catch, there really isn't one. In fact, the only reason GIMP was pipped to the Gold Award by Paint.net is because it's a little more complex to use and doesn't provide as much hand-holding.



How it can be improved:

GIMP hasn't been updated in a while, beyond the odd bug fix. However, the lengthy list of new features for the latest beta release (bit.ly/gimpbeta444) proves that GIMP has in no way been abandoned.

OUR VERDICT

Playing City to Paint.net's United, GIMP definitely has the edge over its rival in the power and breadth of its features. However, the learning curve is steeper and the software is in dire need of an update.

Pixlr Editor | bit.ly/pixlr444 | ★★★★★☆
 FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD

What we liked:

Okay, so Pixlr Editor isn't technically a program – it's a web app. But apart from running in your browser instead of its own window, it looks and works almost exactly how an image-editing program should.

Pixlr Editor's tool set isn't as expansive as either GIMP's or Paint.net's, but it supports layers, levels, curves and many other abilities that advanced users might need. It's also comparatively easy to use, and provides support at bit.ly/pixlrhelp444.

Being a web app has its advantages. For starters, you don't need to install anything on your PC, which is potentially safer and saves hard-drive space. Chrome users can add Pixlr Editor to the browser as an app (bit.ly/pixlrchrome444), and switching to 'Fullscreen mode' (via the View menu) makes Pixlr Editor feel more like a 'real' program.



How it can be improved:

It's a web app, so you need to be online to use it, which is a problem if you need to tweak an image while you're halfway up Ben Nevis. You also need Flash enabled to run it in your browser, and have to put up with the occasional ad.

OUR VERDICT

Don't write Pixlr Editor off, just because it's an online-only tool. It's got all you need for everyday improvements, including crop, rotate, colour correction and more.

BEST OF THE REST

On1 Effects Free

bit.ly/on1effects444

If you just want to make basic edits and add cool-looking filters that make your photos pop, then On1 Effects

could be the answer.

It's a freebie from a

company

that makes a decent paid-for Adobe Lightroom alternative (On1 Photo RAW 2018), but it offers a surprising level of control over each filter. Also, effects are stackable, meaning you can layer them on top of each other.



iPiccy

bit.ly/ipiccy444

Like Pixlr, iPiccy is an online image editor that you use in your web browser (Flash must be enabled for it to work). Deceptively powerful,

iPiccy's app-style interface is a complete change from



Photoshop – its tools are in tabs down the left-hand side, some of which (including Clone) require you to sign in with a free account. Its collage-making and graphic-design tools are a welcome bonus.

PhotoScape

bit.ly/photoscape444

This handy free tool combines image editing with a photo viewer, batch editor, animated GIF creator and more.

The interface is intuitively organised, and each individual component is accessed via its own tab at the top of the program window. PhotoScape's editing tools are basic compared to our award-winning programs – it's also ad-supported and tries to install Chrome during installation. But our only real beef with PhotoScape is that it hasn't been updated in a while.



Stop your browser freezing



Don't blame the cold weather for your browser seizing up. **Wayne Williams** explains how to diagnose and fix hangs and crashes in Chrome, Firefox and Edge

Identify and remove dodgy add-ons

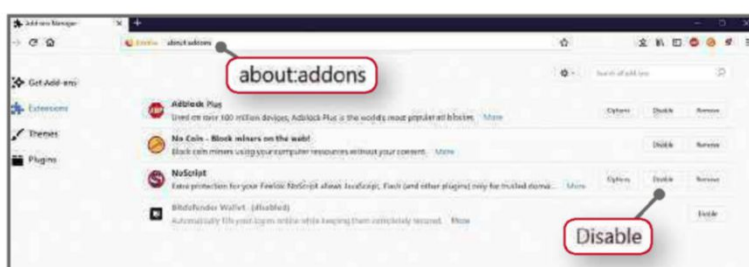
Malfunctioning add-ons are the number one cause of browser problems. If your browser freezes or crashes regularly, your first step should be to find out which add-ons you have installed so you can remove any you don't need.

In Firefox, type `about:addons` into the address bar. A list appears, which you should check to see what you have installed. Disable or remove any you don't want from this screen. In Chrome, go to `chrome://extensions`. Untick the Enabled box next to an add-on to disable it, or click the bin icon to remove the extension completely.

If you're not sure which add-on is the cause of your problems, try running your browser in 'safe mode' – that is, without any add-ons running and using the default settings. If the browser stops crashing, you should be able to track down the culprit by a process of elimination. To run Firefox in safe mode, click the three-line menu button in the top-right corner and go to Help (or just click the Help menu if you have it displayed), then select 'Restart with Add-ons disabled'. In the box that opens, click the Restart button.

Running Chrome in incognito mode disables add-ons automatically. Press `Ctrl+Shift+N` to open a new incognito window and see if that fixes your problems.

Check which add-ons you have installed to find out what could be crashing your browser



Reduce your browser's memory usage

Browsers consume a lot of memory, especially when you have lots of tabs open. If your computer doesn't have much RAM to begin with, you may find that opening lots of tabs slows down your browser significantly or causes it to crash. A simple way to stop your browser using too much memory is to close and restart it occasionally. Right-click the taskbar and select Task Manager, then select your browser in the list and click End Task. When you restart your browser, it should offer you the chance to restore all the tabs you had open when you closed it.

Another way to cut down on memory use is to install The Great Suspender for Chrome (bit.ly/tgs444). This unloads, parks and suspends open tabs (apart from the one you're viewing), to stop



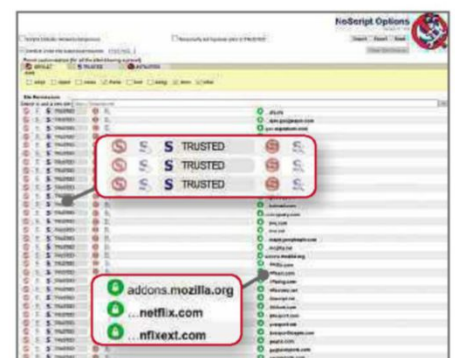
Use The Great Suspender to stop tabs consuming memory in the background

them guzzling resources in the background. You can also set tabs to suspend automatically after a specific period, with the option to whitelist any you want to keep active, such as the tab containing your Gmail, for example. Alternatively, you could try OneTab (www.one-tab.com) for Firefox and Chrome, which converts all your open tabs into a list. This frees up memory, and you can relaunch any tab by clicking its link.

Disable unnecessary scripts

Unwanted scripts can cause all sorts of browser problems, including hangs and freezes. NoScript for Firefox (noscript.net) and uMatrix for Chrome (bit.ly/umatrix444) block plugins such as JavaScript, Java, Flash and more so they can't run without your permission. Both add-ons make it easy to allow scripts to run on sites you trust. To use NoScript, simply click the icon when you're on a website and choose between Trusted, Untrusted and Temp Trusted.

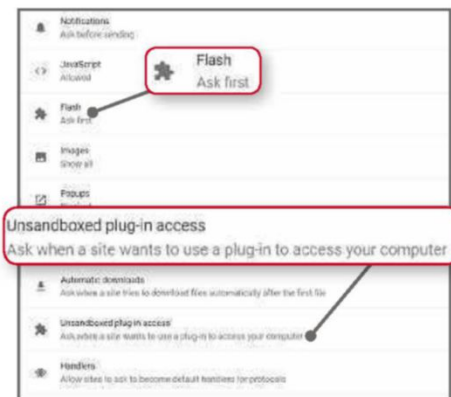
With uMatrix, you can click buttons to enable or block elements such as cookies, images, media, scripts and frames so that web pages load faster and your browser works smoothly.



Disable unwanted scripts on web pages to stop them freezing your browser

Disable troublesome plugins

Most current browsers automatically disable potentially dodgy plugins but there's still a chance that one could slip through the net or be reactivated and cause trouble, so it's worth checking them manually. In the past, you could access Chrome's plugins by typing `chrome://plugins` into the address bar, but Google has disabled this option. Instead you need to type `chrome://settings/content` to access the relevant page. From here, you can manage Flash and JavaScript, and instruct sites to ask for permission whenever they want to use a plugin.



Make sure plugins are disabled in your browser to prevent problems

To manage plugins in Firefox, type `about:addons` into the address bar and press Enter, then select Plugins on the left. The drop-down menu beside each plugin lets you choose from 'Ask to Activate', Always Activate or Never Activate. You can also choose how automatic updates should be handled.

Block cryptocurrency miners

Cryptocurrency miners are a modern scourge. Some websites, including Salon (www.salon.com), give visitors who use ad blockers the option to help fund their content by devoting some of their PC's processing power to mining.



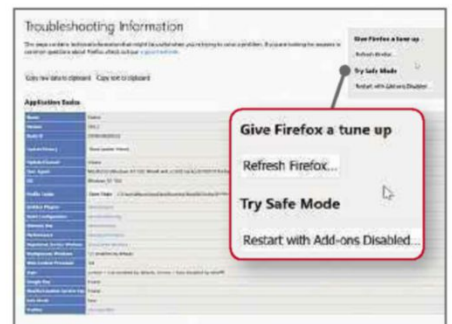
Block cryptocurrency miners so they don't freeze and crash your browser

Other, less-scrupulous sites mine cryptocurrency in the background without asking visitors, which can make your browser slow down or even crash.

Malwarebytes (www.malwarebytes.com) blocks known cryptominers, as does the No Coin browser extension (bit.ly/noc444), which is available for Chrome, Firefox and Opera. You can pause the add-on if required, or temporarily whitelist a site if you need to allow mining to access it. See our FAQ on page 38 to find out more about the growing cryptomining trend.

Reset or reinstall your browser

If you've tried everything we've suggested and your browser is still freezing, you may need to reset or reinstall it. Doing this in Firefox is very easy, but make sure you back up your browser profile first because this contains all your passwords, bookmarks, open tabs and more. Launch File Explorer, go to `%APPDATA%\Mozilla\Firefox\Profiles\` and copy any profile folders you find there to your Desktop. To reset Firefox, click the three-line menu button, choose Help and select Troubleshooting Information. Click the Refresh Firefox button. If that fixes the problem, you don't need to worry about restoring your saved profile folders. If it doesn't work, uninstall



If freezing problems persist, try resetting Firefox to start afresh

Firefox, then reinstall it and copy the saved profile folders back to where you found them. You'll need to close Firefox before you can do this.

To reset Chrome, open the menu and go to Settings. Type reset into the search box at the top and click Reset when it appears in the results. In the box that opens, click Reset.

To refresh Edge in Windows 10, click Start and open Settings. Open the Apps section and locate or search for Microsoft Edge. Click it and choose 'Advanced options'. The window that opens gives you the option to Repair or Reset Microsoft's browser.

The latest version of Opera is very easy to reset – see page 33 for details. ■



Repair or reset Edge if the browser keeps hanging in Windows 10

BEWARE OF TECH-SUPPORT SCAMS

Perhaps the best-known tech-support scam is when you get a call claiming to be from Microsoft, offering to remove a virus from your PC. *Web User* readers will be wise to this trick, but criminals are turning to ever more sophisticated methods.

Malwarebytes recently reported that scammers are using a trick to freeze browsers, including Chrome, Firefox and Brave (bit.ly/scammers444). When you visit a scam site, a message appears

claiming that your ISP has blocked your PC to stop a virus stealing your data. You can't close your browser in the usual way, although you can do it via the Windows Task Manager (press `Ctrl+Shift+Esc` to launch it). The message includes a fake number for Microsoft and urges you to call it to unlock your PC. It should go without saying that calling scammers is a bad idea. You can combat this menace by using NoScript or uMatrix to disable scripts from unknown sources.





Scan multi-page documents and turn them into a single PDF

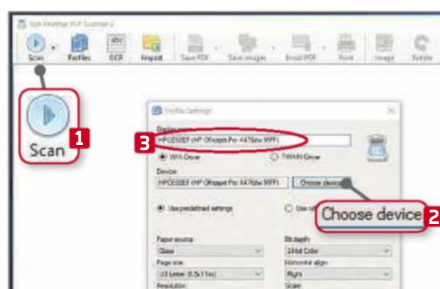
Scanning lots of pages usually results in multiple files, but NAPS2 offers a much tidier solution

NAPS2: www.naps2.com | 20 mins | XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10

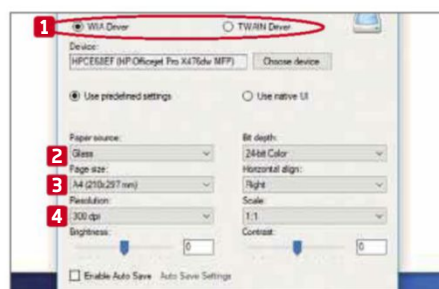
NAPS2 is a tiny program that lets you scan multi-page documents and turn them into a single PDF file. It has several other useful tricks up its sleeve, too, such as the ability to save scans as JPEG, PNG, TIFF and other image file types. You can rotate, crop and rearrange your scanned images, and adjust the brightness and contrast

to improve their quality. There's even an optical character recognition (OCR) tool for extracting editable text from your scans, which recognises more than 100 languages.

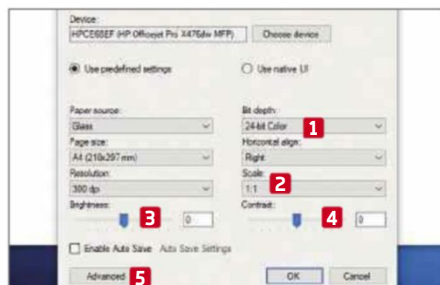
NAPS2's well-designed interface makes it very easy to use. You need a scanner or a multi-function printer with a built-in scanner to use it.



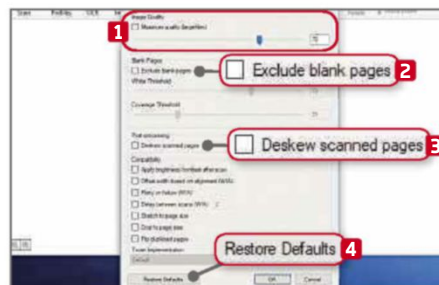
1 Launch NAPS2 and click the Scan button. **1** This opens the Profile Settings window. Click 'Choose device' **2** and, in the Select Device screen that opens, select your scanner, then click OK. NAPS2 fills in the 'Display name' **3** if you like.



2 NAPS2 supports both WIA and TWAIN scanner drivers. The default option should be fine, but you can switch to whichever works best with your scanner. **1** The software also lets you change the source of scans, **2** set the page size **3** and adjust the resolution. **4**



3 If you're scanning plain text, change the scan bit-depth from '24-bit Color' to 'Black & White' to get better results. **1** The Scale control **2** lets you increase the size of smaller documents. You can also adjust the Brightness **3** and Contrast. **4** Click Advanced **5** for further options.



4 In Advanced settings, you can select Maximum Quality (which results in larger file sizes) **1** or use the slider to manually adjust the quality. You can also exclude blank pages **2** and straighten skewed pages **3** automatically. If your scans don't come out as you intended, click Restore Defaults **4** and try again.



5 The program starts scanning your first page as soon as you close the Profile Settings window, so make sure everything is ready. A thumbnail of the scan appears in the window. **1** Click the Scan button to copy the next item, and repeat the process until you have digitised all your pages.

OCR

The OCR tool lets you create searchable PDFs, and supports more than 100 languages

ZOOM

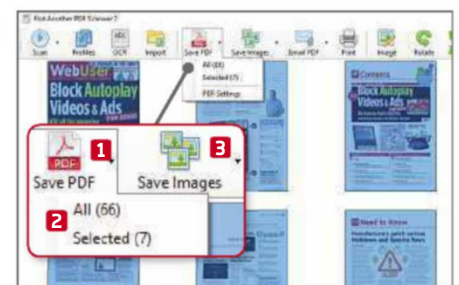
Use the magnifying-glass icons to change the size of the thumbnails



6 You can click and drag your scans to reorder them, or select multiple pages and use the Move Up and Move Down buttons **1** to change their position in your document. If you select a page and click Image, **2** you can view it, crop it and adjust the brightness, contrast, saturation and more. **3**



7 Double-click a scanned page to open it in a preview window. You can click the arrow buttons to move between pages **1** or the zoom icons to zoom in and out. **2** Other tools let you crop **3** and make adjustments before exporting the scan as a PDF. **4** You can also delete any pages you don't want. **5**



8 When you're ready to export your pages as a single document, click the Save PDF button. **1** Click the arrow to choose between exporting all or only selected pages. **2** Alternatively, click Save Images **3** to export all or some of the scans as an image. Select the format you require in the 'Save as Type' box.



Get a free, anonymous and unhackable Swiss email account

ProtonMail: protonmail.com | 20 mins | Any browser



EXPERT TIP

Andy Shaw says

ProtonMail provides total anonymity, because you're not asked for any personal information when setting up an account. It doesn't keep IP address logs, so there's no data to connect your computer with any incoming or outgoing emails. The service is free but limited to 500MB of storage and 150 emails per day. If you need more, you can upgrade to the Plus service for €4 (around £3.50) a month.

It's a shock to discover how insecure email is. Most email is unencrypted, which means anyone from a hacker to your ISP could intercept your message as it zips from sender to recipient, and your address can easily be traced back to you, because it's most likely linked to your ISP or a free service, such as Google, that routinely collects vast amounts of data, from where you live to what you buy.

ProtonMail is a free, anonymous, fully encrypted email service, developed by a group of boffins from CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research, mostly famous for its Large Hadron Collider) and MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). You can set up the service with a minimum of personal information and encrypt your email so that no one except the intended recipient – not even the people at ProtonMail – will be able to read it.

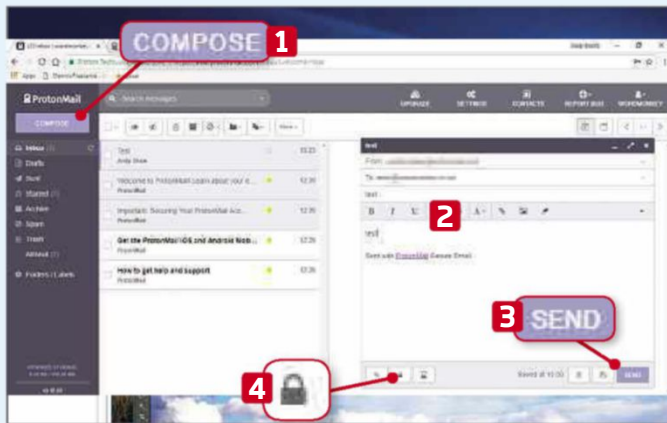


1 Go to mail.proton.com and choose to sign up for a free account. Choose an email address (something@protonmail.com) **1** and a password. **2** This isn't stored anywhere else and will never be revealed to anyone. You can provide another email account **3** to help reset your password, but this makes it less anonymous.

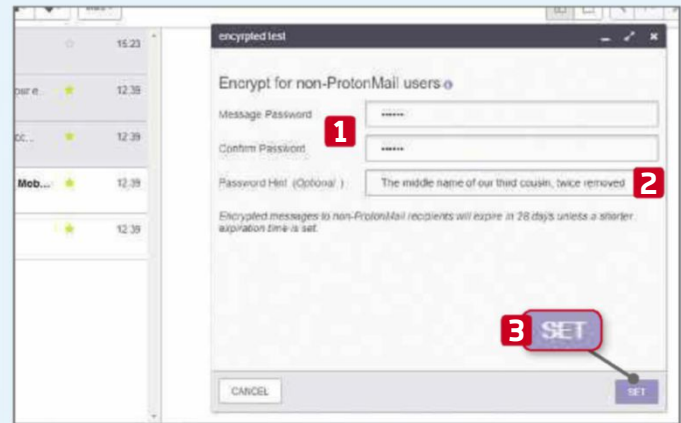
2 Once that's done, you only need to choose your 'Display name', **1** which is what appears in the 'From' field when people receive and read your email. By default, this is set to the word you chose as the prefix of your email address, but you can change it to your full name if you want people to know who you are.

3 Messages sent to other ProtonMail users are automatically encrypted from the moment you send them to the moment they are opened, without needing any passwords. If you can, get your recipient to sign up for a free account, too. **1**

4 Anyone familiar with webmail will be able to find their way around ProtonMail. Standard email organisation folders are listed on the left. **1** New incoming messages appear in the Inbox, **2** with the latest messages appearing at the top. Select a message and you'll see the body of the email on the right. **3**



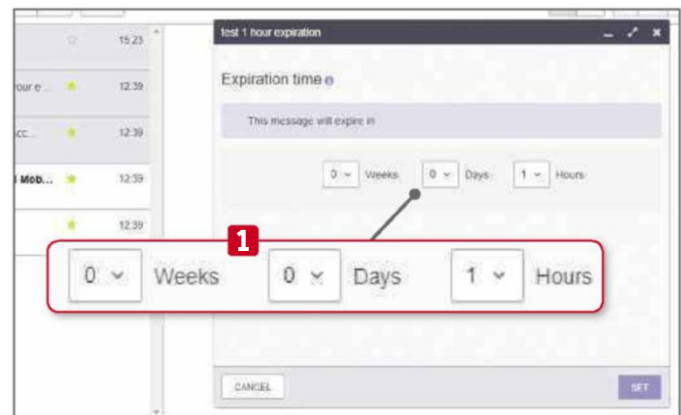
5 To send a message, click Compose, **1** then fill in the address of the recipient and type the email's subject and body as normal. **2** Click the Send button. **3** This will send a basic email that non-ProtonMail users can read as normal. To send an encrypted mail, click the Encryption button. **4**



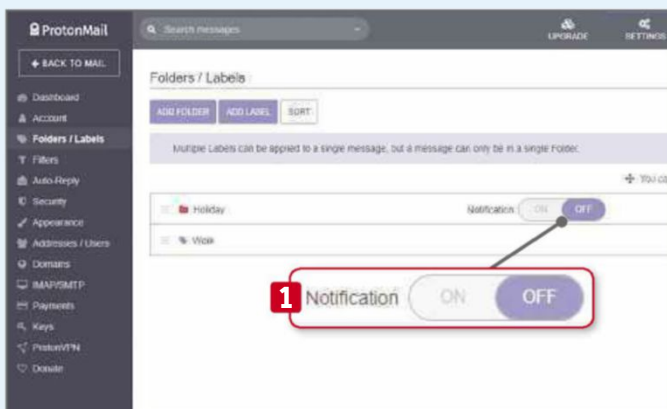
6 You're invited to enter a message password and confirm it by typing it again. **1** If you want, you can add a hint, **2** to remind the recipient of the password or give them a clue to what it is – make it something only they will know the answer to, such as 'your daughter's nickname', rather than 'capital of France'. Click Set. **3**



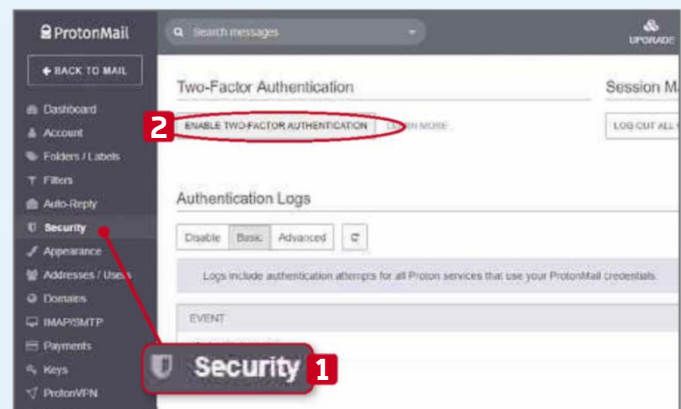
7 The recipient will receive a cover note, explaining that they have a ProtonMail message from your email address **1** with a button to click through to the message. **2** This will take them to a page where they must enter the password to gain access to the message.



8 Encrypted messages automatically expire after 28 days, at which point they disappear forever. You can change the duration of the expiration from one hour to five weeks. **1** Messages set to expire have to be encrypted. Once a message expires, the recipient will still have access to the cover note but not the message it linked to.



9 The service can use folders (as Windows does) and labels (as Gmail does). A message can only be filed in a single folder, but it can have more than one label applied to it. Click 'Folders / Labels' to add new ones. You can set a folder to send a notification if a new message appears in it. **1**



10 To make your email hack-proof, switch on two-factor authentication. You'll need to have your phone with you in order to sign in, using one of the apps listed at bit.ly/twfaau444. Click Settings, Security, **1** then click Enable Two-Factor Authentication. **2**

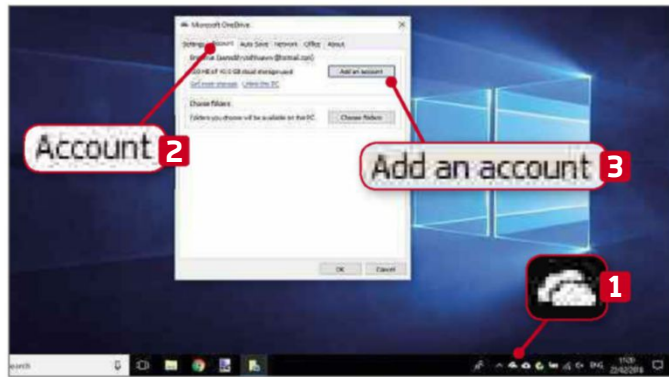
Sync desktop and documents across all your PCs

If you have separate PCs for work and home, navigating your shortcuts on the different desktops can be confusing, and it's frustrating when the folders and files you need aren't on the computer you're currently using. OneDrive can sort this out by

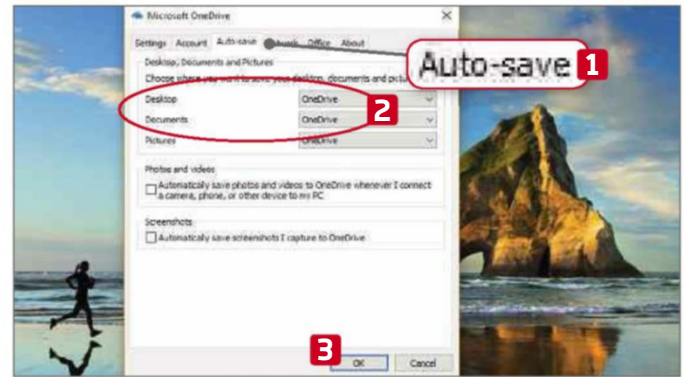
storing your desktop and documents in the cloud and syncing them with any PC you sign into. Any changes you make on one PC are reflected everywhere else.



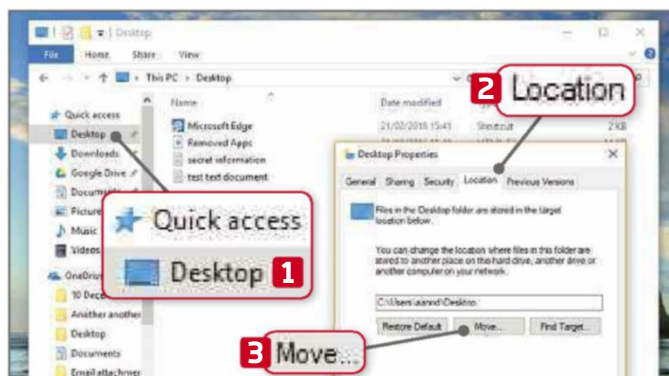
OneDrive: onedrive.live.com | 10 mins | Windows 10



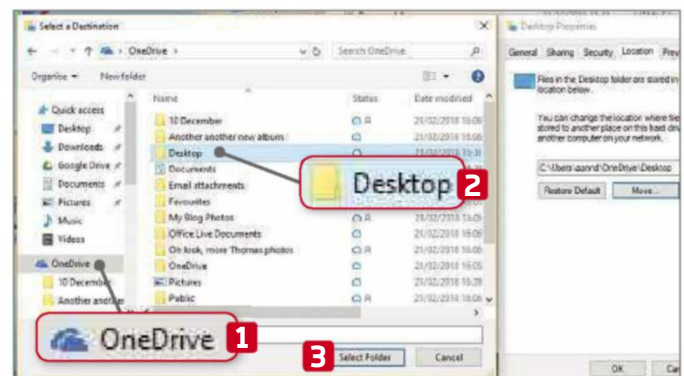
1 Right-click the OneDrive icon in the notification area **1** (if it's not there, type onedrive into the search bar to find and open it). Choose Settings in the context menu and, if you aren't already signed in, click the Account tab **2** and click 'Add an account'. **3** Sign in with your Microsoft account.



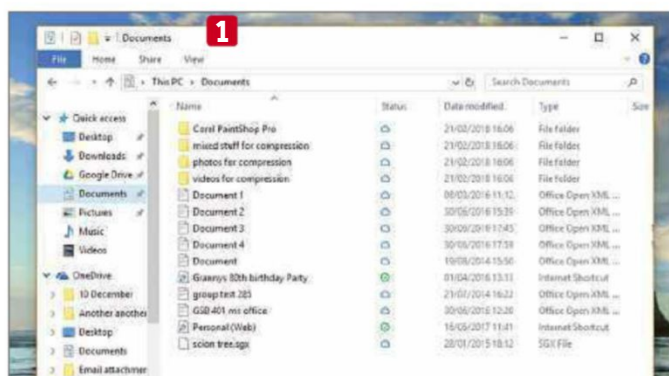
2 Still in the settings, click 'Choose folders' and select any OneDrive folders you want to always sync with your PC. Make sure the Desktop and Documents folders are ticked. Click 'Auto-save' **1** and set the Desktop and Documents options to OneDrive. **2** You can switch photo storage, too. Click OK. **3**



3 You also need to tell Windows that you'd like to use these folders as the default storage for your desktop and documents. Open File Explorer and right-click Desktop in the 'Quick access' section. **1** Select Properties and click the Location tab. **2** Click the Move button. **3**



4 In the 'Select a Destination' window, open the OneDrive drop-down menu **1** in the left-hand panel and click the Desktop folder. **2** Click Select Folder **3** and click OK. Windows will ask whether you want to move all the files from the old location to the new location. Click Yes.



5 Check that the Documents folder is syncing by following the same process as Steps 3 and 4. If you have an existing OneDrive account with files in it, you might find that some of the files in the cloud service don't automatically download to the PC. Open the folder in Explorer. **1**



6 Explorer's OneDrive folders have a Status column with an icon showing where the file is stored: a green tick **1** means it's saved on the PC; a blue cloud **2** means it's only online. Right-click a cloud and choose 'Always keep on this device' **3** to ensure the file is always synced.

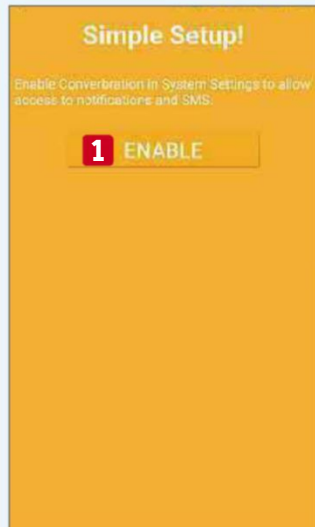


Find out what's in your messages without looking

When a new message arrives, Android alerts you with a sound and a burst of vibration. You know you've got a new message but you don't know anything else about it. Converbration provides extra info by

Converbration: bit.ly/conv444 | 10 mins | **Android 4.4+**

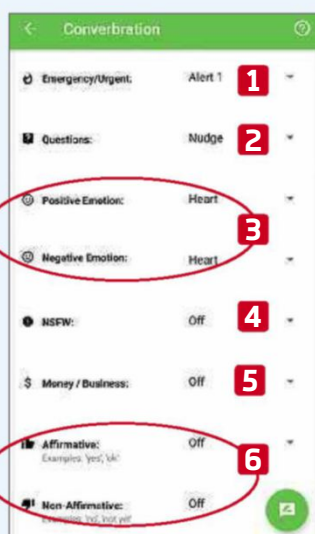
delivering smart vibration-based notifications, which tell you the length and importance of the message, and even offer clues about what might be in it.



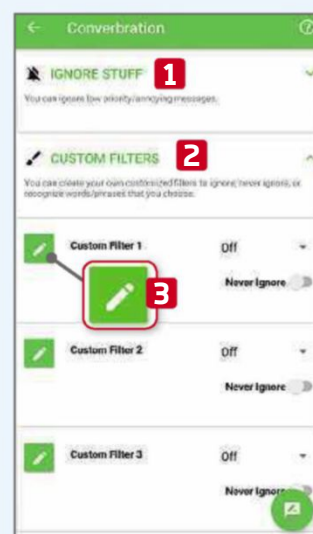
1 Install the free Converbration app on your phone. When you first run it, you need to grant it permission to access your notifications and messages. Tap the Enable button, **1** then – on the 'Notification access' screen – flick the toggle next to Converbration to On.



2 You're shown a brief overview, then taken to the main screen. Tap the Settings button, then tap Notification Style. If you prefer sound to vibrations, you can select that option. **1** Custom **2** provides a vast number of customisation choices. We'll stick with Quick **3** for ease.



3 Next, select the Context & Emotion category. Here, you can choose the different vibrations for urgent messages and emergencies, **1** questions, **2** positive and negative emotions, **3** NSFW (Not Safe For Work), **4** messages related to business and money, **5** and Yes or No responses. **6** As you set each one up, you'll feel the vibration your phone will use to convey the message content.



4 The Ignore Stuff screen **1** lets you ignore low-priority or annoying messages. You can specify phone numbers to always or never ignore. The Custom Filters section **2** lets you create filters to ignore or recognise specific words or phrases. Tap an Edit button **3** to set one up.



5 Sleep Mode lets you set a period during which Converbration ignores all incoming messages. Use the switch to turn the feature on or off. **1** You can opt to allow urgent messages, though. **2** Set the Start and End times. **3** Finally, open System Settings. **4**



6 Here, you can enable or disable Converbration, **1** use it with a smartwatch **2** and override your phone's built-in Mute function. **3** The corner button **4** lets you test your settings. Converbration offers 500 free notifications per month. If you need more, you'll have to upgrade to a paid-for plan, from 89p.

Weekend Project

Get to grips with some serious tech tinkering to boost your computer and other devices



How to...

Create your own Alexa skills without coding

Wayne Williams shows you how to make your own Alexa skills for the Amazon Echo using a simple web-based drag-and-drop tool

You expect innovative new product ranges from the likes of Apple and Google, but Amazon surprised everyone when it launched the Echo in the US back in 2014. The smart speaker arrived in the UK two years later, introducing us to its digital assistant Alexa, who could do everything from answering questions to creating playlists.

Since then, Amazon has rolled out a number of new, more advanced Echos; increased Alexa's abilities via 'skills'; and even added her to other Amazon products, such as its Fire tablets and TV devices.

One of Alexa's most useful features is that you can customise it by adding skills of your own. This usually requires a spot of coding, but for this issue's Weekend Project, we'll explore an easier way to make and publish your own skills.



"Alexa, how do I make a skill?"

The easiest way we've found to create your own skills is by using Storyline (getstoryline.com). This new web-based app lets you use a visual drag-and-drop interface to build skills in a matter of minutes. The website offers a selection of videos that show you how to get started. You'll need to sign into the service, which you can do by connecting your Google account. Once that's done, you can begin

building a skill.

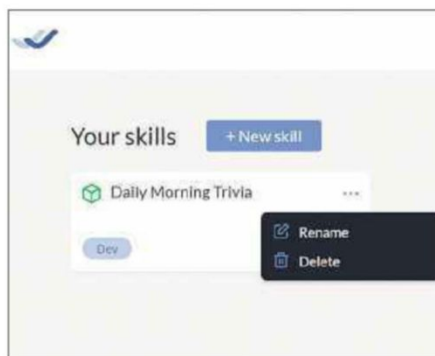
Storyline is so simple to use, you can easily put together something on the fly, but it's better to have a clear idea of what you're trying to achieve, and the sort of interaction you want to occur between Alexa and the user. We'll show you how to take your first steps in our Mini Workshop, opposite. Follow this to set up your blank canvas, then return to the next section for more information.

Five basic tools

The five tools mentioned in Step 3 of our Mini Workshop, right, let you build up an interaction. You begin with Alexa saying something and asking some questions, then add potential replies. Because it's harder to guess what a person might say, you can add as many different responses as you like, to cover all the possibilities you can think of. These are turned into separate blocks, in which you can then



Test a skill directly in your browser. Select the start point in the drop-down menu



Access your skills on the Project page. Click the ellipses to rename or delete a skill

10 SKILLS YOU CAN ADD TO ALEXA USING STORYLINE

Daily Trivia Quiz – Alexa provides interesting trivia on any topic you name

On This Day In History – A roundup of what's happened in previous years

Today's News Headlines – Keep abreast of what's going on in the world

Podcast – Have Alexa play an audio podcast or read something aloud

Choose Your Own Adventure – Multiple-choice adventure game

Daily Affirmations – Have Alexa make you feel better about yourself

Kids Court – Ask Alexa which of your squabbling children is right

Sound Effects – From clapping to canned laughter, Alexa can respond however you would like it to

20 Questions – What animal, vegetable or mineral is Alexa thinking of?

Language Learning – Have Alexa translate words you say into a language of your choosing

include new Alexa responses to create a tree-like structure of interaction.

Since you can't possibly guess everything a user might say, you can use the 'Handle unexpected user reply' tool to create a new block and add a response for Alexa that will kick in whenever the user says something other than the replies you've already added. You can have Alexa say something along the lines of "I'm sorry, I don't understand" and connect that block to an earlier step to repeat the original question.

You should now be ready to start building up your skill. See our Mini Workshop on page 61 to get started.

Skills can be previewed at any time to make sure they're coming together as you'd hoped, and you can fine-tune them, adding different steps and blocks. Skills can be as simple or as complicated as you like.

When you've finished building your skill, you can deploy it to your Echo. To do this, you need to connect your Amazon account (the one that's linked to your Echo). You need to have an Amazon

Developer account, too (if you don't already have one, you can sign up by going to developer.amazon.com).

The deployment process is very straightforward and, once completed, you can try it out on your Echo by saying "Hi Alexa, open [skill name]" (replacing [skill name] with the name you gave to your new skill).

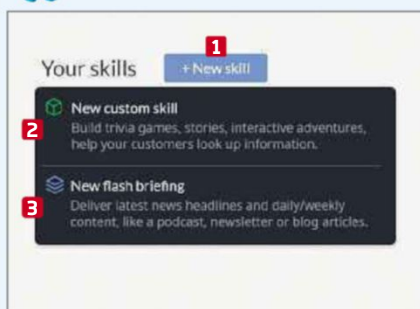
Add a newflash briefing skill

Creating a news skill is similar to building a custom skill, but there are different options available. Before you can create one of these skills, you'll need to connect Storyline to your Amazon account and create a Developer account.

Back in Storyline, enter a name for the Flash Briefing and select your language. Start by choosing a date (most likely the current day) and click the 'Add post' button. Enter a title for the new skill and select a post type. This can be Text (Alexa reads something aloud) or Audio (she plays an audio file). If you select the former, a box will open into which you can paste or type the text to read. In the



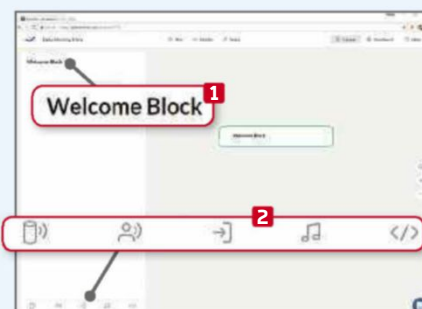
MINI WORKSHOP | Get started with Storyline



1 On the Start page, click the '+New skill' button. **1** You now have two options: you can create a 'New custom skill' **2** (which includes trivia games, stories and the ability to look up information); or a 'News flash briefing' **3** (news headlines, newsletters or podcast content). We'll opt to build a custom skill.







2 Give your new skill a name. The default suggestion is 'Daily Morning Trivia', so stick with that for the time being. Set your language to 'English (UK)' and click Start. You're faced with a mostly blank canvas, with a Welcome Block in the centre. **1** You can drag this around and zoom in and out.



3 Double-click the Welcome Block to open it in the sidebar. **1** There are five tools available to build up the skill: 'Add what Alexa says', 'Add what user says', 'Handle unexpected user reply', 'Add short pre-recorded audio' and 'Add JSON API request'. **2**

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2		Sky: Broadband	£28.99 (£20.00 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£240.00
3		EE: Broadband	£28.50 (£21.50 for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited*	£258.00
4		Virgin: Broadband	£48.00 (£29.00 for 12 months)	12 months	50Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited*	£348.00

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

* Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 23 February 2018.

Ofcom

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

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

**SNEAK
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Storyline's Flash Briefing option lets you can catch up on the news, or anything else that interests you

You'll need to fill in a lot of details before you can make your skill available in the Amazon App Store

case of the latter, you need to enter a URL for the audio file. You're limited to a maximum duration of 10 minutes.

When you're ready, click Save and go to alexa.amazon.com or open your Alexa app if you have one. Click Skills on the left, then click the Your Skills link at the top right. Your News Briefing skill should appear, along with any others you created previously. Select it, then click the Enable button on the next screen.

You can try out the new skill by speaking the suggested phrases ("Alexa, what's my flash briefing?" or "Alexa, what's in the news?") to your Echo. Multiple posts can be created and added for the same day, which is handy if you want to include a selection of stories or "on this day in history"-style briefings.

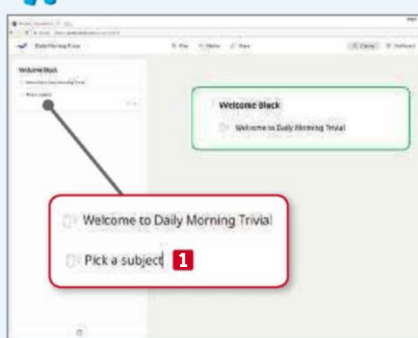
When you've finished building your

skill, click the Publish button to save it to the Amazon App Store, so other Echo users can install it. The skill will need to pass certification to ensure it's suitable for inclusion in the store and meets the Alexa policy guidelines ([amzn.to/2Ca1XWc](https://amazon.to/2Ca1XWc)). You need to fill in some information, such as the category and subcategory, any testing instructions, the countries and regions it's suitable for, and short and full descriptions.

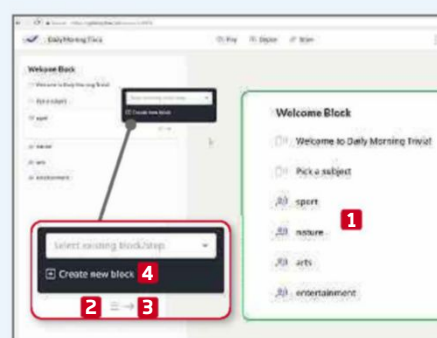
You won't be able to make any changes once your Alexa skill is undergoing the certification process, so you should test your skill fully before submitting it. If you do spot an error after publishing, you can withdraw the skill from the certification process and resubmit the corrected version afterwards. ■



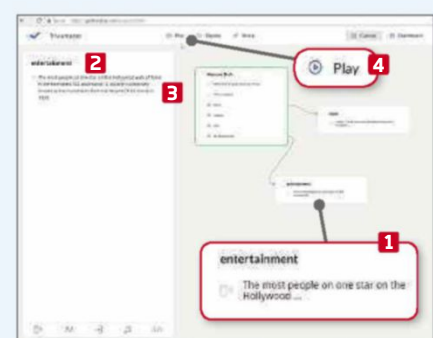
MINI WORKSHOP | Build your first skill



1 Double-click the Welcome Block and, in the sidebar, click the 'Add what Alexa says' button at the bottom. In the box that opens, type (or paste) the first thing that you want Alexa to say. **1** If you want it to say more than one thing, just repeat the process. Next, click 'Add what user says'.



2 Add as many responses as you can think of. In our example, we're listing trivia categories. **1** Select the first of your user responses. You can add synonyms for that answer by clicking the menu button. **2** Clicking the arrow **3** lets you connect this reply to a separate block. Click 'Create new block'. **4**



3 Storyline will create a new block connected to the Welcome one. **1** Select it and that block will open in the sidebar, **2** ready for you to add your responses. **3** Click the Welcome Block to select another user reply and create a new block for it. Click Play **4** to test your skill in the browser.

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Create the ultimate portable USB toolkit

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Web User Masterclass

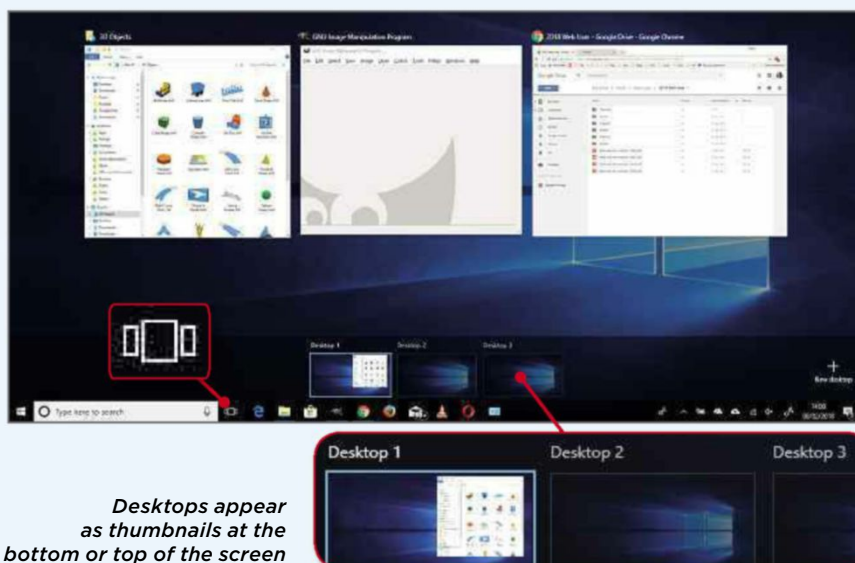
Our experts show you how to use **virtual desktops** to expand the screen space available to apps and windows

Add a virtual desktop in Windows 10

When your desktop becomes so cluttered with open windows that it becomes a struggle to find the one you want, one solution is to spread out across more desktops. In Windows 10, hold down the Windows and Control keys and press D to add a new desktop. All your open windows and apps will disappear, leaving a clean desktop for you to open more windows and apps.

Click the icon to the right of the search box to see all your desktops displayed as thumbnail images. You can then click the one you want to use.

A quick way to switch from one desktop to another is to hold down Windows+Control and press the left or right arrow keys.



Desktops appear as thumbnails at the bottom or top of the screen

Move windows between desktops

If you have too many windows open on a single desktop, click the Task View icon to the right of the search box. All the windows on the current desktop are shown and each one can be clicked, dragged and dropped onto one of the other desktop thumbnails to move it.

Alternatively, right-click a window in Task View and select 'Move to' followed by a desktop. You can also make the window appear on all desktops, or create a whole new desktop.



Drag a window to a desktop thumbnail at the bottom of the screen

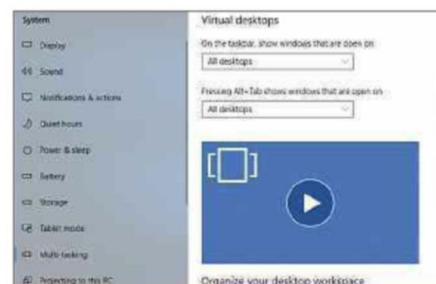
for example, have a web browser open on one desktop, Word or WordPad on another, and a game on a third one.

There are some useful options for showing or hiding icons in the taskbar, and when switching between apps. Press Windows+i to open the Settings app and click System. Select Multi-tasking in the sidebar and look for 'Virtual desktops' on the right.

If you often have more than 20 windows open at a time, you may want to set the taskbar to show only the icons for windows on the current desktop, so your taskbar isn't too cluttered. However, if you don't tend to go overboard with open windows and

want to easily access any program regardless of which desktop it's running on, set 'On the taskbar, show windows that are open on' to 'All desktops'. Clicking an icon in the taskbar then automatically switches to the desktop that contains that particular window or application.

Instead of clicking taskbar icons to switch between programs and windows, you can hold down the Alt key and press Tab. Keep pressing Tab to cycle between windows, then let go when the window you want is selected. In Settings, you can choose whether to show all windows on all desktops when you press Alt+Tab, or only windows on the current desktop.



Configure the 'Virtual desktops' options in Windows 10's Settings

Configure options for 'Virtual desktops'

The 'Virtual desktops' tool in Windows 10 lets you have different programs and windows on each desktop. You could,

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.

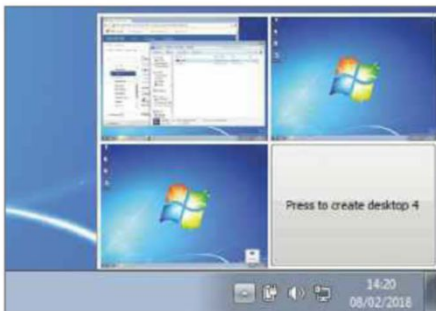


Virtual desktops in Windows 7

'Virtual desktops' is built into Windows 10 but not Windows 7. However, there are tools you can use to bring virtual desktops to older versions of Windows.

Microsoft has its own solution called Desktops (bit.ly/msdt444). This program doesn't have all the tools you get with Windows 10's version, but it's very small and compact, and requires little hard drive space or memory, so it's great for running on old hardware.

Download it, unzip it and double-click the program – you don't have to install anything. Click the icon in the taskbar to show the current desktop and click the tiles to create up to three more.



Desktops by Microsoft adds up to four virtual desktops to Windows 7

Switch desktops in Windows 7

When you run Microsoft's Desktops program, it displays the Options screen, which lets you configure hotkeys and set the software to launch automatically when Windows starts. You can also access the Options by right-clicking the taskbar icon.

The default hotkeys are Alt+1 through Alt+4, with each number taking you to one of the four available desktops. You can also switch by left-clicking the taskbar icon. Click the up arrow if it is hidden, then click the icon to display four thumbnail images of the desktops.

When you launch a program, you need to make sure you are in the desktop you want because there's no way to move a window from one desktop to another (other than closing the program, changing desktops and then restarting the program).



Choose a keyboard shortcut for switching desktops in Microsoft's Desktops

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Dexpot desktops

Dexpot (www.dexpot.de) works with older versions of Windows, such as 7 and 8. It's more feature-packed and customisable than the Desktops tool and is free for personal use.

When you run the program, it looks like nothing is happening, but look carefully and you'll see icons appear on the left and right sides of the taskbar. Click the left icon to see the four desktops listed. Select one by pointing and clicking. You can also use the keyboard shortcut Alt+1, 2, 3 or 4.

Move apps between Dexpot desktops

Unlike Microsoft's Desktops tool, Dexpot lets you move windows from one desktop to another. Right-click the title bar of a window and hover the mouse over the option for Dexpot. In the menu that opens, hover over Move and select the desktop you want to move the window to.

This menu also contains Copy, which lets you clone a window to another desktop, so the same program is open on more than one desktop. The Close option lets you close a window on the current desktop; or on all other desktops, so it's only open in the desktop you're using. Transparency lets you make windows transparent, from 0% to 100%.

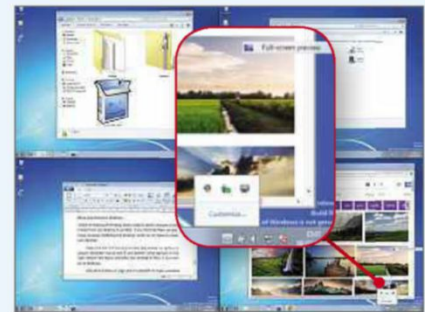


Right-click the title bar to move a window with Dexpot

View Dexpot desktops

Right-click Dexpot's icon at the right-hand end of the taskbar (it may be hidden in the pop-up icon panel) and select 'Full-screen preview'. This splits the screen into quarters to show the four desktops. You can see each desktop's apps and windows, and switch to any desktop by clicking it.

Another option in this menu is Windows Catalog, which lets you cycle through your open windows



Select 'Full screen preview' to show all the desktops on one screen

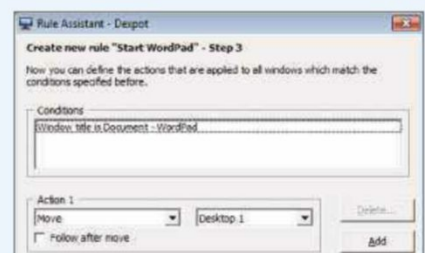
by clicking the arrows at the top. Stop when you reach the window you want and click it to switch to the desktop that contains it.

The Desktop Manager option displays four desktop icons in the bottom-right corner of the screen, which you can use to select a desktop. Desktop Preview opens a panel split into four for selecting desktops. It lists the apps on each desktop and slides out of the way when it's not being used. Desktop Windows opens a window that lists all the open windows on each desktop, so you can switch to a particular window or desktop simply by clicking it.

Dexpot desktop rules

Dexpot lets you create rules that are automatically applied to windows. For example, you could create a rule that always opens a certain program or window on a specific desktop.

Right-click the right-hand Dexpot taskbar icon and select Desktop Rules. Click Assistant, enter a name for the rule – such as Start WordPad – and click Next to create a blank rule. Select Window Title for the condition and enter the window title below. If the window is already open on the desktop, drag the target icon and drop it on the window to automatically add the title text. Click Next and select an action, such as Move, then choose the desktop to move it to.



Create rules that move windows to a specific desktop

Ask the Expert

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



SECURITY

Remove persistent unwanted programs

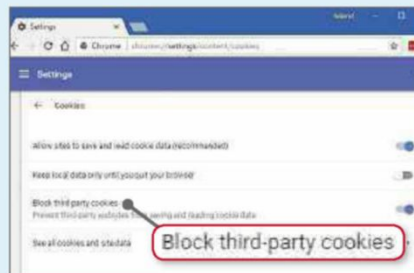
Q Every few days, I scan my PC with SuperAntiSpyware (www.superantispyware.com), and every time the same potentially unwanted programs (PUPs) appear. How did these pests get on my PC, and is there a way to block them before they download? I've included a log from the SuperAntiSpyware scan.

Adrian Scales, via email

A Some of the items listed in your log are cookies, which websites and adverts store in your browser as you navigate the web. They're not a security risk but some people don't like them because advertisers and other sites can use them to track what you're doing online.

To block cookies in Chrome, click the menu button, select Settings and scroll to the bottom of the page that appears. Click Advanced and select Content Settings in the 'Privacy and security' section. On the next list, click Cookies. You can block all cookies, but this may stop some sites working.

There's a Block list and an Add button to stop specific websites



Block third-party cookies in Chrome to enhance your privacy

storing cookies, but setting it up properly would be overwhelming. A partial solution is to enable 'Block third-party cookies', which lets sites you visit leave cookies so that they work properly, but blocks them in adverts so they can't track you.

Are you using the free version of SuperAntiSpyware? The full version blocks PUPs and malware in real time. Malwarebytes (www.malwarebytes.com) also blocks PUPs, but again you need to pay for the full version for the best results.

PUPs are often bundled with optional extras when you download and install free software from the web, but you can usually opt out if you read the installation screens carefully. Always scan your computer for PUPs and malware after installing any software.

security software such as Windows Defender, for example, to catch problems that Defender might miss.

Antivirus programs don't always block potentially unwanted programs (PUPs). Security companies place them in a different category to viruses, which are always harmful. PUPs tend to be marketing programs, which some people (though no one we've ever met) could conceivably find useful.

In our experience, Malwarebytes has always been good at detecting and removing PUPs and other unwanted programs, but you shouldn't use it on its own. Either keep the free version on your PC as a clean-up tool or use the full version for real-time protection alongside your antivirus software.

GENERAL PC

Reclaim drive space

Q My Asus Zen Notebook has an i5 6200U processor, 8GB of memory and a 256GB SSD, which is divided into two equal partitions. The C: partition contains the operating system, while the D: partition contains everything else.

The C: drive was filling up with emails, documents and photos, so I moved the photos to the D: drive and performed a clean installation of 64-bit Windows 7 Professional. When I restarted my PC, the C: drive had only 6.75GB of its 93GB left. Six of the eight folders on the C: drive take up 7.5GB, but my User folder contains 15GB of files, and the Windows folder takes up 70GB. When I opened the Windows folder, I found numerous subfolders that are either empty or contain only a few megabytes of data, but no Windows.old file.

Where has all the space gone, and how can I reclaim it? I've reinstalled Windows several times but always with the same result. I can't work out how to get rid of this hidden or non-existent data.

Ian Read, via email

A A clean install takes up around 20GB of space, so you should have around 70GB free (not 6.75GB). We suspect you have installed Windows over itself. This replaces Windows'

SECURITY

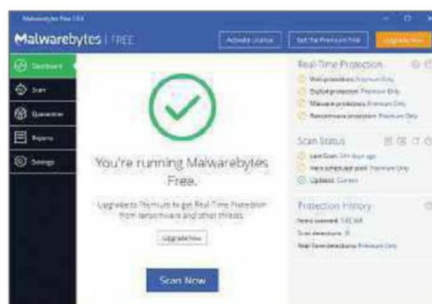
Use Malwarebytes as intended

Q I recently read an article that tested several popular antivirus and anti-malware programs. Malwarebytes (www.malwarebytes.com) came last and was rated as very poor at stopping malware. Do you think this test is fair? Should I get rid of Malwarebytes and subscribe to the article's top-rated performer, Bitdefender, instead?

Chris Bagley, via email

A We haven't seen the article, so we can't comment on its findings, but Malwarebytes isn't like most antivirus

software and should be used as an additional layer of security rather than your PC's sole means of defence. You can run it in conjunction with other



Malwarebytes aims to catch the problems other security software misses



Name	Size	Allocated	Files	Folders	% of Parent	Last Modified
C:\	315.3 GB	315.3 GB	474	64,930	100%	07/02/2018
224.8 GB	224.8 GB	224.8 GB	241	25,838	71%	06/02/2018
195.4 GB	195.4 GB	195.4 GB	241	26,819	86%	06/02/2018
48.4 GB	48.4 GB	48.4 GB	23	2,621	21.3%	06/02/2018
103.4 MB	103.4 MB	103.4 MB	434	1,907	1.2%	06/02/2018
13.1 MB	13.1 MB	13.1 MB	88	85	0.0%	06/02/2018
2.7 MB	2.7 MB	2.7 MB	62	97	0.0%	06/02/2018
1.3 MB	1.3 MB	1.3 MB	8	9	0.0%	14/02/2017
0 Bytes	0 Bytes	0 Bytes	1	0	0.0%	28/08/2017
0 Bytes	0 Bytes	0 Bytes	0	0	0.0%	28/08/2017
0 Bytes	0 Bytes	0 Bytes	0	0	0.0%	28/08/2017
481.0 MB	481.0 MB	481.0 MB	105	26,028	13.4%	07/02/2018
172.2 MB	172.2 MB	172.2 MB	34	13	3.3%	07/02/2018
73 GB	73 GB	73 GB	856	5,494	2.4%	07/02/2018

Use TreeSize to see which folders are occupying the most space on a hard drive

system files with original versions, but doesn't remove files and junk that have built up, so it won't recover any space.

When you install Windows, it asks what type of installation you want to perform. Select 'Custom (advanced)' for a clean install that wipes the partition. Choose a partition to use – the 93GB partition in your case. Click 'Drive options (advanced)' and you'll see an option to format it. This deletes everything on the hard drive and recovers the most space.

Make sure you have your Windows licence code ready because you may need to enter it during installation. Also, back up any files you want to keep and store them elsewhere.

If you don't want to erase everything or reinstall Windows, use TreeSize Free (bit.ly/tree444) to see what's taking up all the space on your hard drive. Run it, click the first icon in the toolbar and select the C: drive. Allow it to scan your PC and then browse the results.

If you're really running out of space, you can compress everything on your hard drive without affecting your files or programs. Open Explorer, right-click the (C:) drive and select Properties. On the General tab, tick the box 'Compress this drive to save disk space'.

You can also run Disk Cleanup from the Properties window. When the window appears, click 'Clean up system files'. Wait for it to finish scanning, then tick all the items and click OK.

MOBILE

Force Google to recognise the Android version

Your article on Files Go (Issue 440, bit.ly/webuser440) says the app works on devices running Android 5.0 and above, but when I try to download it from the Play Store, I'm told that it's 'Not compatible' with my Samsung Tab A. I have the same problem when I try to download the Edge browser and Cortana, both of which should work.

Christopher Clayton, via email

There could be many reasons why an app isn't compatible with a device, but Android and the Google Play Store never tell you what the problem is. Try opening Settings on the device and find the display settings. Some top-end devices let you select screen resolution and change it from HD+ to WQHD+.

If that doesn't work, open Settings, Apps and select Google Play Store. Press Force Stop, then go to Storage and press Clear Cache followed by Clear Data. Restart the device. This resets the store app, which sometimes makes the incompatibility message go away.

WEBSITES

Back up a blog

My WordPress blog has been getting over 200,000 visits per year for the past three years, but no one ever makes a PayPal donation for the content they've been enjoying. Now the price of my web hosting is going up from \$30 to \$100 a year, so I've decided to put my effort into creating digital books for Amazon's Kindle instead. This is paying off, because I have already sold copies.

I'd like to take my content offline and back up all the writing I've done to a CD or DVD, but my host won't send me the data. Is there a way I can do it myself?

Adrian Bonnington, via email

Before you close your WordPress blog, consider whether there are other ways you could profit from it. For example, 200,000 visits could earn



Save the contents of your WordPress website by exporting it

£200 from displaying adverts through services such as Google AdSense (www.google.com/adsense) which would more than cover your hosting costs. There are also affiliate schemes, where you promote a product or service and receive a percentage of any sales.

WordPress has a built-in tool to download the complete contents of a site. Select Tools in the sidebar, then Export. The tool creates a file that you can save to your hard drive. If you decide you want to put it back online, you can use the Import function to upload it to a new WordPress site.

There are several plugins available that let you back up WordPress sites, including UpdraftPlus and Duplicator. To install them, go to Plugins in the sidebar and click Add New.

You should also shop around for a better web hosting deal, because there are some that cost less than \$100 a year. Many hosting companies will move your site for free, too.

GENERAL PC

Is Windows 8 still lurking on my PC?

While defragging my hard drive, I found an item called 'Windows 8 OS (c:)', which I can't delete and isn't shown in my list of programs. Windows told me it was on the hard drive – last run 19/01 19.51, current status OK, 0% fragmented – after I'd carried out a defrag by clicking the Optimise button. How do I delete it?

Derek Wellings, via email

It sounds as if you previously had Windows 8 installed on the hard drive, and the name of the drive wasn't changed when you upgraded to Windows 10. Open Explorer, right-click the C: drive and select Properties. You'll see the name of the hard drive



The name of a hard drive appears at the top of the Properties window

at the top of the General tab. Does it say 'Windows 8 OS'? If it does, then no space on the disk is being used by Windows 8 so you don't need to worry about deleting anything.

It's possible to change the name of the disk in this Properties window, but we wouldn't recommend doing so because it could cause problems.



This fortnight Roland has switched back to OneDrive, having previously abandoned it for Google Drive

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



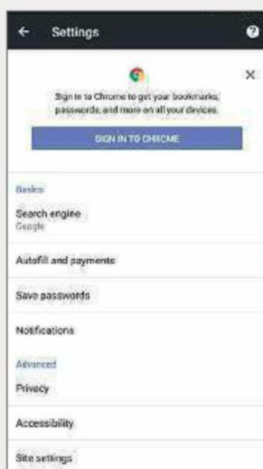
TOP TIP

ANDROID

Ad-free Chrome browsing

Google doesn't want you to block ads because the search engine makes a significant proportion of its income from advertising. However, someone has built a version of Google's Chromium browser for Android that works just like Chrome, but which automatically blocks all adverts, all the time. It's brilliant!

The browser is called Bromite and you'll need to sideload it to your mobile device because, for obvious reasons, it isn't available in the



Bromite is a Chrome-based Android browser that aims to block all advertising

Google Play Store.

You can download it from GitHub at bit.ly/brom444.

The interface is just like the regular version of Chrome, but you should notice a complete absence of advertising. It also blocks click-tracking, so companies can't trace you as you move from one website to another.

I'm all for putting up with ads on my PC, which has the space and bandwidth to incorporate them, but I'll be using Bromite on my phone from now on.

Charlie Finch, via email

Mug winner



SOCIAL NETWORKING

Protect your Facebook account

When you log into a website or app using your Facebook account, you often

grant permission for that website or app to have access to your data without really giving it a second thought.

The screenshot on the left shows Microsoft's website requirements for logging in via Facebook. It asks for my basic info, my

Friends list, my posts, my date of birth and more. It's a real privacy invasion!

However, it's easy to stay in control of who has access to what and remove any websites or apps from Facebook accounts you no longer use or trust. On the iOS Facebook app, tap the menu button, choose Settings, Account Settings, Apps, and finally tap 'Logged in with Facebook'. This list shows all the websites and apps that are authorised to view your profile and personal information.

If you've never seen this setting before, you may be alarmed by the number of entries, but it's easy to get rid of anything that you feel is overstepping the boundaries. You can perform the same action from the website – just click the drop-down menu and choose Settings, then Apps.

Simon Mellor, via email

BROWSERS

An alternative to fussy Firefox

Firefox Quantum doesn't permit the installation of the Tab Mix Plus add-on

(bit.ly/tmp444), which appears to be a major issue for many users. I was concerned by this, too, but have resolved the problem by installing the Firefox-based browser Pale Moon (www.palemoon.org).

Pale Moon is very customisable, much faster than Firefox and still lets you use Tab Mix Plus. I now have it set as my default browser.

George C Griffiths, via email



Pale Moon looks and acts like Firefox, and will also run the Tab Mix Plus add-on

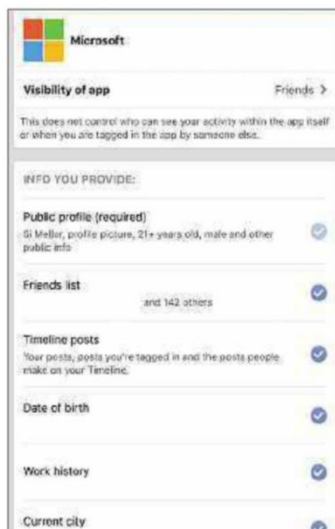
SECURITY

Add KeePass to your browser

KeePass (keepass.info) is a fantastic free password manager that stores your passwords safely and securely on your PC. However, because it's a Windows program, it can be a bit clunky at getting your passwords to the places you need



Access your KeePass passwords from your browsers



Some Facebook apps request an extraordinary amount of unnecessary information



them – namely, your browser.

To solve the problem, try a Chrome add-on called KeePass Tusk (bit.ly/tusk444). The process works by saving your secure KeePass data in the cloud, using an online storage service such as Google Drive, OneDrive or Dropbox. You can then show the Chrome add-on where you keep your password file, and it will use the information to find the password you need, when you need it.

You don't need to have the KeePass software installed on the computer you're using, so you could even use it to access KeePass-protected sites on a Chromebook.

Arthur Moorhouse, via email

EMAIL

Listen to your email

Did you know that Outlook.com can read out your emails, so you don't need to look at your screen? It's not worth it for short emails but having a long message read out means you can do other things while checking your mail.

Select a message in your inbox, click the three-dot menu icon and select 'Show in immersive reader', then click the Play button at the bottom. The cog icon on the right lets you choose between a male or female voice, and set the reading speed.

Phil Wright, via email



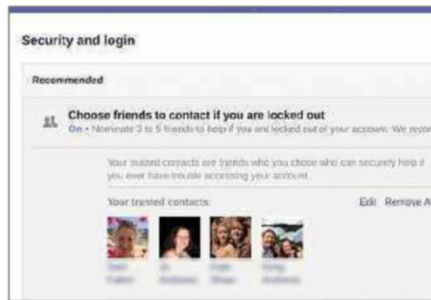
If your emails are long, get Outlook.com to read them out

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Choose your trusted Facebook friends

I was exploring the settings in Facebook and found myself in the 'Security and login' section, which you can access from the main drop-down menu by clicking Settings. It has an option to get help from friends when there's a problem with your account and you can't log in.

I went through the setup and added three friends – you can choose between three and five. They may or may not ever be needed – it will depend on the problem and whether you can access your email or phone.



Select friends to help you if you are locked out of Facebook

Bookmark the Facebook support page at bit.ly/fbtc444, which tells you what to do if you can't log into Facebook and how these friends can help.

Ross Woods, via email

GENERAL PC

Know your function keys

I haven't seen a list of function key actions in Web User, so here is mine.

F1 Get help – Click the desktop in Windows 10 and press F1. Your browser opens and searches Bing for 'how to get help in windows 10'.

F2 Rename a file – Select a file on the desktop or in Explorer and press F2 to rename it.

F3 Search – In Chrome, Edge, Explorer and possibly other programs I don't know about, pressing F3 opens Search. Sometimes F3 searches for the next

occurrence of a search term.

F4 Various – In Edge and Explorer, F4 jumps to the address box. However, Alt+F4 also closes most programs down.

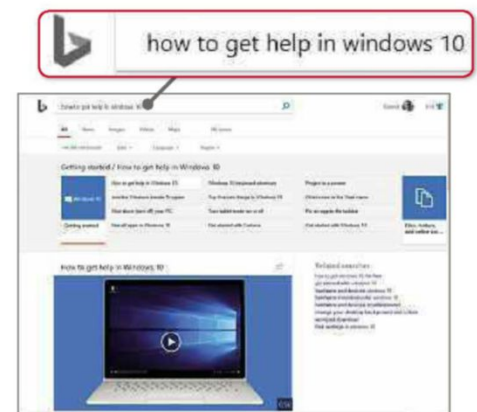
F5 Refresh – In web browsers and Explorer windows, F5 refreshes and updates the screen.

Alt + F8 Show password – When you're logging into Windows, you can check what you've typed in the password box with Alt+F8.

Shift + F10 Right-click – Select something and press Shift+F10 to bring up the context menu, as if you'd right-clicked it.

F11 Chrome help – Quick access to Chrome's Help Centre.

Eric Walford, via email



Press F1 in Windows to search Bing for Windows 10 help

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

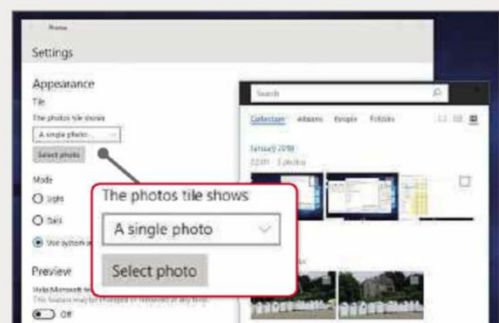
GENERAL PC

Control the Photos app Live tile

We had an awkward situation the other day when a photo I had taken on my phone of an item I wanted to buy for my wife's birthday appeared in the Start menu while she was using the PC. I hadn't even purchased it and the element of surprise was already lost!

It happened because my phone photos sync with my PC, and Microsoft uses its Live Tile system to keep the picture on the Start menu fresh and interesting. Since spoiling my wife's birthday surprise, however, I've found that it's possible to change the image to a permanent picture, so there's no risk of exposing secret photos to the Start menu.

Open the Photos app, click the menu button and choose Settings, then scroll down to Appearance. Under Tile,



Choose a new photo to become the Live Tile for the Windows 10 Photos app

a drop-down menu lets you choose from 'Recent photos', which is where the photo is selected, and 'A single photo', which lets you choose the photo you want. Click the latter option, then 'Select photo' and choose an image from your collection.

Eric Franks, via email

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?

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



OFFER OF THE FORTNIGHT

Kaspersky Internet Security 2018 - on sale now

Our sister title *Computeractive* is now selling the 2018 edition of the award-winning antivirus Kaspersky Internet Security at a special discount for readers

WHAT'S NEW IN KASPERSKY 2018:

- ✓ Blocks infections that strike as your PC boots
- ✓ Improved notifications for hacked websites
- ✓ Faster startup and update times
- ✓ Stops viruses modifying files on your computer



**SINCE WINDOWS 10 LAUNCHED 15,870 READERS
HAVE BOUGHT KASPERSKY SOFTWARE
FROM THE SOFTWARE STORE**

One PC for one year NOW ONLY £19.99*

Normally £34.99

Buy it on our Software Store at bit.ly/kaspersky1pc

Three PCs for two years NOW ONLY £39.99

Normally £79.99

Buy it on our Software Store at bit.ly/kaspersky2018

* while stocks last

**WINNER OF THE PAST NINE COMPUTERACTIVE
ANTIVIRUS TESTS**





Readers' Helpdesk

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

SECURITY

Uninstall IrfanView to update

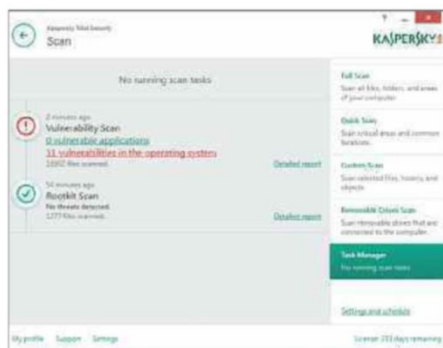
Q I have run Kaspersky's Vulnerability Scan (www.kaspersky.co.uk) and it has identified installed program IrfanView 32-bit version 4.40 (www.irfanview.com) as among the nine vulnerable applications installed on my Windows 10 64-bit desktop PC. The solution offered by Kaspersky was to update to the latest version of IrfanView (64-bit version 4.5), which I have done.

I'd now like to uninstall version 4.40 but it's not showing up in my 'Add or remove programs' tool. CCleaner's Uninstaller tool doesn't list it as present among my installed programs and neither does Revo Uninstaller Pro. So how do I uninstall it?

cromwell1230, Web User Forums

A I ended up fixing this myself! I reinstalled version 4.40, then went to 'Add or remove programs' where I saw 'IrfanView 32-bit (Remove Only)'. I clicked it, which brought up the dialogue box to uninstall it and the old version isn't bothering me at all now.

cromwell1230, Web User Forums



Kaspersky's security software scans for vulnerable programs on your PC

IOS

Switch to a new iPad

Q I have found various methods for transferring the content of my old iPad to a new iPad. The obvious way is to make a backup of the old iPad in iTunes

SECURITY

Control Malwarebytes settings

Q I have been using the free version of Malwarebytes (www.malwarebytes.com) for some time, running regular scans at least once a month. It always reports about 40 PUPs (potentially unwanted programs) which I quarantine.

What I find really annoying is the insistent pop-up window indicating that the premium trial has expired and that I should upgrade. Can I get rid of this message or is it the price I have to pay for free scanning?

If my only alternative is to delete the whole program, is there another one that's as good at dealing with my PUP problem? CCleaner (www.ccleaner.com) doesn't seem to pick up on them.

Blotmice, Web User Forums

A I use the free version of Malwarebytes and my nag message isn't particularly insistent. If you go into the software's Settings menu, you can reduce the time that messages are displayed for to just three seconds.



Minimise the length of time that pop-ups appear in the Settings of the free version of Malwarebytes

If that doesn't work, try uninstalling the software and reinstalling it. You can then turn off the premium trial straight away by going back into the Settings and finding the Account box.

It might be more prudent to run a full scan at least once a week, and run the Threat scan as often as you like. It sounds like you're getting regularly reinfected, if you're seeing the same 40 PUPs each time you scan. Try running Malwarebytes' Adwcleaner for a more aggressive clean. You can download it from bit.ly/mbadw444.

george29, Web User Forums

and then use the software to transfer this backup to the new device. Has anybody done this before, or is there an alternative method that can be recommended?

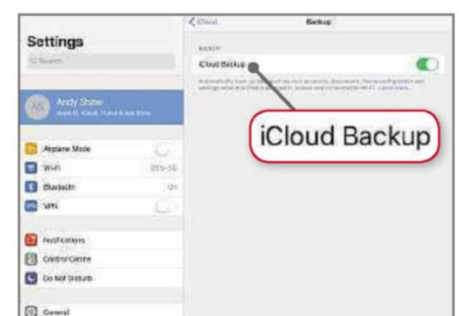
davord48, Web User Forums

A If you want to transfer the content from one iPad to another, without the need for a computer with iTunes installed, you can back up to an iCloud account instead. On your old iPad, go into the Settings app, tap your name, select iCloud then 'iCloud Backup' and ensure that it's switched on.

On your new iPad, sign into your iCloud account with your Apple ID and password. When you're asked, choose a backup from the available options. You'll find more help with this on Apple's support page at bit.ly/ipad444.

Note that this process might take a while to complete because everything has to first upload from one iPad to the cloud, then download from the cloud to the new device.

Sneakybeaky, Web User Forums



To easily move content to a new iPad, switch on iCloud Backup on your old device

Star Email

Mastering a new browser takes time

In a letter entitled 'Vivaldi and Opera were non-starters for me', your fairly regular correspondent Martin Fletcher of Thorpe Hesley (Issue 442) complained that Vivaldi has no start page. In fact, it does. Vivaldi's start page displays various 'speed dials' that you can delete or add to as required. You can set the browser to show this page when it launches by going to Settings, Startup and setting Start Page as your homepage. Alternatively, you can open one or more pages and set those to open when you launch the browser – go to Settings, Startup, Startup Pages and either tick 'Use current pages' or add the relevant web addresses. Setting your start page in Opera is a similar process – just go to Settings, Browser, 'On startup'.

As for bookmarks, you can easily import them into Vivaldi and Opera by clicking the menu button and choosing Bookmarks, 'Import Bookmarks and Settings'. This means that, contrary to Mr Fletcher's claim, both browsers allow you to import bookmarks from Firefox. When I originally installed these browsers, I exported my bookmarks from Firefox as HTML and imported them that way.

Both Vivaldi and Opera have comprehensive Help menus, which offer plenty of information on how to use the browser. Just press F1 or go to either help.vivaldi.com or help.opera.com.

From what Mr Fletcher said in his letter, I'm not surprised that he wasn't impressed with Vivaldi or Opera! It takes time to get used to anything new and this applies to browsers, too. You need to find out what features the browser has, how

to set its options to suit your needs and a lot more. If you're not prepared to invest a bit of time and effort in getting to know your new browser, or any other program, then it's best to stick with what you're used to.

Madeline, Web User Forums



ScanTransfer steams through copying

I tried using ScanTransfer (scantransfer.net), as recommended in Best Free Software in Issue 442, to copy images from my iPhone to my desktop PC. It worked so quickly that I had to check the download folder to make sure the photos were there.

This will save me having to use the clumsy iCloud service on my PC or email the photos to myself. I take on-the-fly photos of a Heritage Steam Train restoration project, so this excellent tool will be very helpful.

Meester Chris, Web User Forums



The downside of Virgin Media's upgrade

Anyone thinking of accepting the free upgrade from the Virgin Media Tivo box to the new V6 box should consider a few things the company doesn't make clear.

The new V6 box must be connected to your router or Super Hub. A three-metre Ethernet cable is supplied, but if the router or Super Hub is further away, you will need to buy your own Ethernet cable. Failing that, you can connect it to your home network over Wi-Fi. Whichever method you use, your TV service is now provided over the internet as opposed to cable. This means that if your router or Super Hub develops

a fault and needs to be replaced, it may result in a two- or three-day outage while you wait for a new one.

In the past, these outages only affected your internet connection



Quiz Answers: Issue 443

- 1 Facebook
- 2 SoundCloud
- 3 YouTube
- 4 LinkedIn
- 5 Airbnb
- 6 BBC iPlayer

WINNER!
 Well done to Paul Bunday, who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc

WORD PUZZLE

Image map





(whether wired or wireless) but now your TV service will also be unavailable during that period. That's why I have decided to stick with my Tivo box until I am forced to change – which, according to Virgin Media's customer service department, won't be for at least two years.

George C Griffiths

There's no need for foul abbreviations

Can I say that I am surprised and disappointed by your use of the term 'WTF' in your 'What's new from Google' article (bit.ly/webuser442). I must confess that I was a little puzzled by the abbreviation, so I checked what I presumed was text speak, only to find that it actually meant 'What the F**k'.

Is this really necessary? Having taught IT in a boys' school for over 15 years, few things surprise me. I sought to maintain the standard of no foul language in my classroom and in classwork, so I think that the use of WTF in your magazine is unnecessary and a bit too close to the mark. Does seeing yourself on Street View warrant an Anglo Saxon expletive? Is this abbreviation so much part of the way you express yourself as to pass through editing unnoticed? Does your office have a swear box? Perhaps it should.

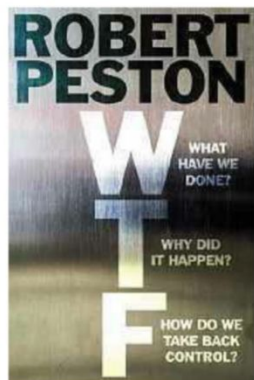
T King, via email

Web User says: We're sorry that you were offended by the 'WTF' in our Google cover feature – it certainly wasn't our intention. We're aware that the abbreviation can be interpreted as including an expletive, but these days

it's commonly used both online and off as an expression of incredulity, and can equally stand for 'what the flip?' (bit.ly/whatflip444) or 'what's this foolishness?' (bit.ly/foolish444).

As an example, the respected political journalist Robert Peston recently published a book

with the title *WTF* (bit.ly/peston444), so we considered the abbreviation fair game for inclusion in our feature.



What you say...

SMARTPHONE SALES FELL LAST YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER. WHY?

Great improvements used to be made every year. Now manufacturers struggle to find things to tempt people with. My Samsung Galaxy S7 is two years old, but there's no reason for me to upgrade.

Andrew Duerden

Everyone has one. They only replace it if it breaks, gets lost or is damaged.

Iain Kenworthy-Neale

They are running out of 'must upgrade' features. A 2016 phone is perfectly adequate for most people.

Chris Armstrong

Price and features are not in line with previous expectations. Why fork out £800 for minor updates?

Stephen Perry

MAPLIN IS LOOKING FOR BUYERS TO STAVE OFF ADMINISTRATION (bit.ly/maplin444). WHY IS IT IN TROUBLE?

They were great when they produced a full catalogue but then they couldn't be bothered anymore. People went online to browse. I now shop on Amazon and eBay.

Cheyvonne Bower

I guess if you wanted to pay £20 for a cable, then Maplin was the place to go. I shopped there a few times, until I realised you could get the same things cheaper in other shops and online.

George McPhail

They're pretty bad at mainstream stuff and their advice is usually awful.

Carl Peto

I went to Maplin's once for a Sony Vaio adapter and they wanted £55. I got one in the end via Amazon for £20. Boom!

Neil Wiperman

DO YOU STILL HAVE A LANDLINE?

I use Skype with a SkypeIn number. No line rental, just a subscription to Skype to keep the number active.

Small Biz Geek @SmallBizGeekUK

Yes, but only because it is tied to our contract. The only calls we get are from cold callers trying to part us from our money.

Charscot Wanderers @Charscot

I ditched mine years ago and use Skype. People think they are calling a landline number and get charged as if they are. I'm with Virgin broadband so I don't need a landline.

Eff Clarke

Landline is incoming only. I have BT Infinity 2 with 70Mbps speeds. I use Sky mobile with roll-over data, but make most calls through WhatsApp.

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

HAVE YOU NOTICED CHROME BLOCKING MORE ADS SINCE IT ADDED A BUILT-IN BLOCKER?

I've noticed some sites recognising that an ad blocker is being used, then asking me to disable it.

David P-Smith

I use a VPN DNS to block *all* ads on my PC, including Chrome. And I'll be sticking with it whatever Chrome brings out. Chrome's offering is not enough.

Sir Cumference @Gary_Olsen

Exactly whose ads would Google (who basically built their business model on selling ads) be blocking? It's hypocritical, and allows Google to dictate to companies how they should conduct their business.

Jarrod Ushkowski

! Page 404

Barry Collins finally discovers the hidden meaning of Windows 10 S



Now we know what the 'S' stands for

Well, that's one mystery solved. I spent the past year wondering what the 'S' in Windows 10 S stands for and now I finally know: Shambles.

Microsoft is reportedly abandoning Windows 10 S as a separate version of Windows 10, which makes this the second time in recent years that it's given up on an edition of Windows that only lets you install apps from its own Store. Remember the risible Windows RT? No, neither does anyone else.

Microsoft will instead continue flogging this dead horse in the guise of 'S Mode'. This will allow either the user or the PC manufacturer to effectively flick a switch and block installation of anything that doesn't come from the Windows Store. If you want to switch S Mode off and run normal Windows, you can – except if you buy Windows 10 Pro, which for some unfathomable

reason makes you pay extra to fully unlock your operating system. I wouldn't get too outraged over this, because no PC manufacturer in its right mind will risk infuriating customers by forcing them to pay another £50 for full-fat Windows when they first fire up their PC.

Why can't Microsoft make a Store-only version of Windows work? After all, every app you install on an iPhone, iPad or Android device has to be installed through the relevant app store.

The problem is one of legacy. One of the great strengths of Windows – and one of its biggest weaknesses – is that you can install almost anything, from

a program written by the bloke next door to monitor pigeons landing in his back garden, right through to Adobe Photoshop. When people get a Windows 10 device home and discover that they can't install either Pigeon

Fancier 2.0, Photoshop or one of the other gazillion apps out there, they get frustrated and start hitting things. Often, the poor Saturday lad in Currys PC World.

“High on price, low on quality. Not a great tagline for a store you're attempting to force people to use”

The quality of the Store also leaves a lot to be desired. At the time of writing, the top paid-for app is Paint.NET – a fantastic, lightweight art package, but one that's free to download if you go to getpaint.net. I'm delighted the wonderful developers are getting some reward for their work, but that kind of thing leaves people feeling cheated. Meanwhile, the 'top' free app is China Daily HD, a woefully designed version of the Chinese newspaper. High on price, low on quality. Not a great tagline for a store you're attempting to force people to use.

What's more, Microsoft has done a terrible job of defining both RT and S, and has completely failed to explain their benefits. The names themselves are confusing: what do RT and S actually mean to a computer buyer? If the feature had been promoted as Secure Mode – a version which prevents the kids downloading any old trash they've found on their Minecraft sites, and that spares you from ransomware and other nasties – more people might be inclined to go with it.

As it is, S Mode is destined for another potential definition for that mysterious S: the scrapheap.



Illustration: Andrew Torrens

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What's inside the next issue:

COVER FEATURE: WINDOWS 10'S BEST NEW TOOLS

PLUS:

- Create a portable rescue kit
- Stop Google recording you
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AND...

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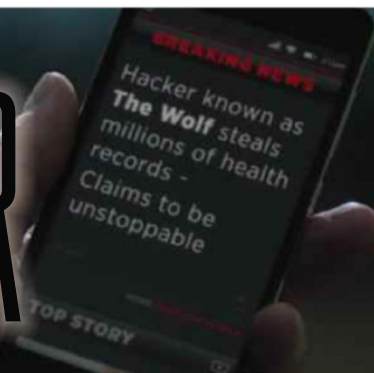
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THE FIXER



Device Security

Defend your network with printers that are always on guard.

Only HP printers can stop an attack the moment it starts and HP Enterprise models can self-heal with unique security features.

Continuous monitoring

Detects and stops attacks within memory or outbound requests and forces a reboot to initiate repairs.

Check settings

This security fleet management solution checks and fixes device security settings in a reboot.



Load BIOS

In reboot, HP Sure Start detects and prevents the execution of malicious code and self-heals the BIOS.

Check firmware

Helps ensure only authentic HP code is loaded into memory and will reboot and notify IT if compromised.



Data Security

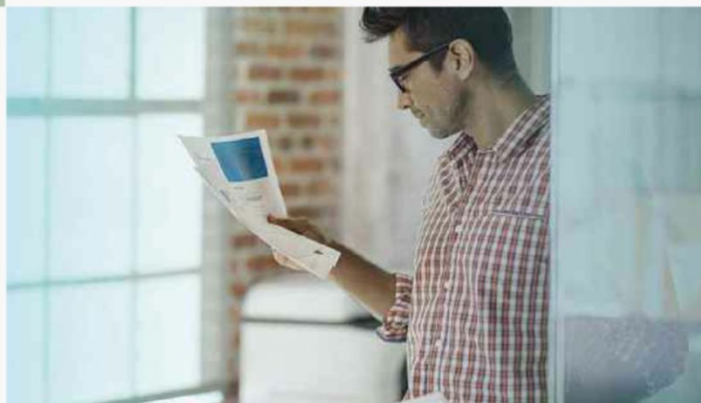
23%

of respondents were leaving data vulnerable to be read if intercepted.

Document Security

91%

of visual hacking attempts were successful and 11% occurred at a printer output bin.



Contact our B2B sales team @ebuyer - 01430 433780

For more information on HP Enterprise printer security go to www.ebuyer.com/hp/fixer

Remember GDPR comes into force 25 May, 2018. Your business needs to be ready.