

The New & Improved **WINDOWS**

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- ✓ Every **secret** you must unlock
- + Uncover Windows' hidden updates

p40

PLUS

**FIND & FIX
YOUR PC'S HIDDEN
SECURITY FLAWS**

11 safety scans you must run **p50**

£2.20



ed up with Facebook?

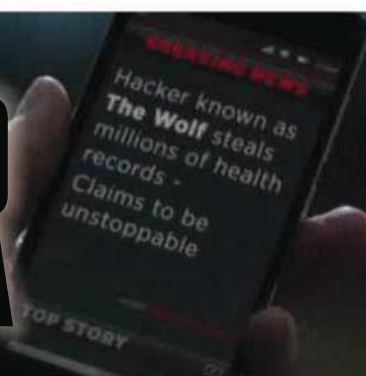
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everyone's switching to **p46**

**Don't bust your
ISP's data limit**

Monitor your bandwidth

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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

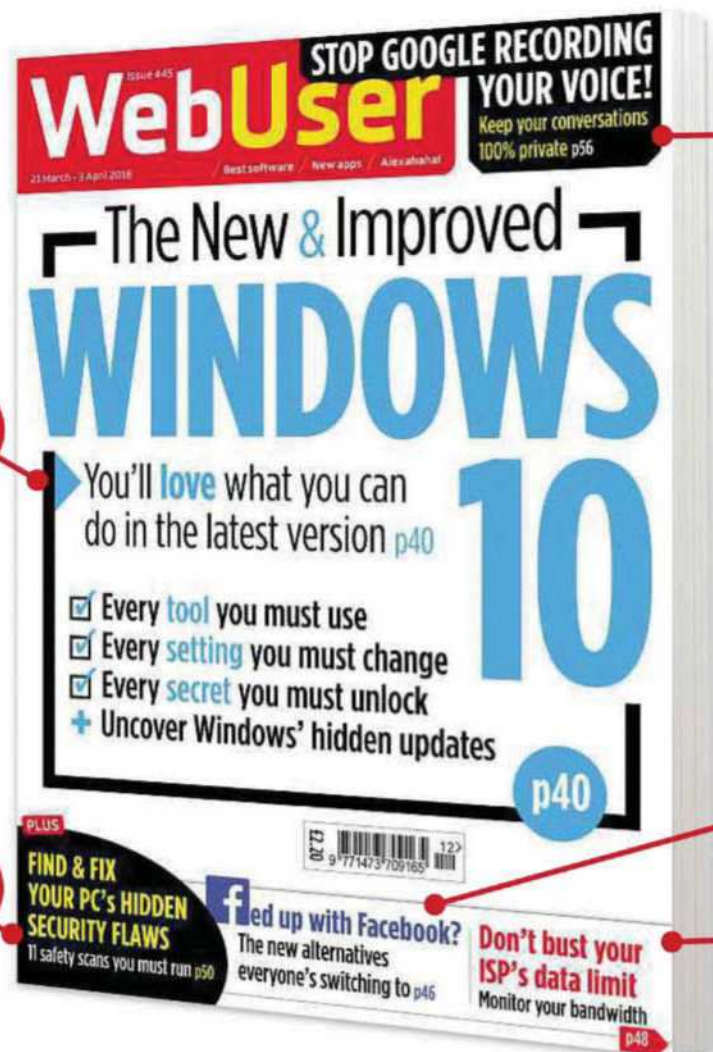
Remember GDPR comes into force 25 May, 2018. Your business needs to be ready.

Crumbs! It's the new Windows 10

It's official: last month, Windows 10 overtook Windows 7 to become the most popular operating system in the world. Equally interesting (to me at least) is that in a recent survey, the chocolate digestive was voted the nation's favourite biscuit (bit.ly/biscuit445). The parallels may not be obvious, but think about it – like a chocolate digestive, Windows 10 takes something plain but functional and makes it more interesting and palatable by applying layers of goodness on top. Naturally, you can't dunk Windows 10 in your tea, but nor will McVities' finest pester you with Cortana.

In this issue's cover feature, we reveal all the latest delights of the Windows 10 Spring Creators Update, which is due for release just after Easter. From the long-awaited Timeline tool to file-sharing over Bluetooth, and improved options for controlling your privacy and printing web pages, there's plenty to look forward to from this sugarcoated update – and for once, Microsoft isn't taking the biscuit!

Robert Irvine, Editor
robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk
[#webuser](https://twitter.com/webuser)



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The New & Improved WINDOWS 10

We reveal the best new features in the
forthcoming Spring Creators Update

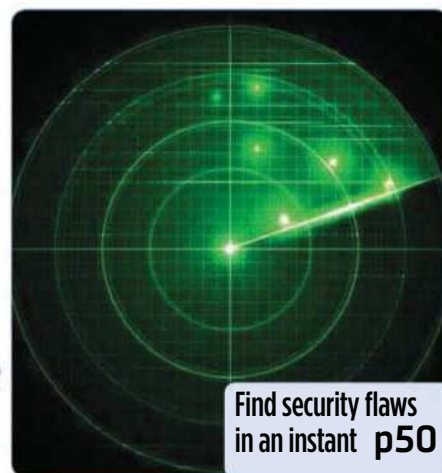
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New phones, old ideas, says Barry



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Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

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What's New Online

Make music in your browser

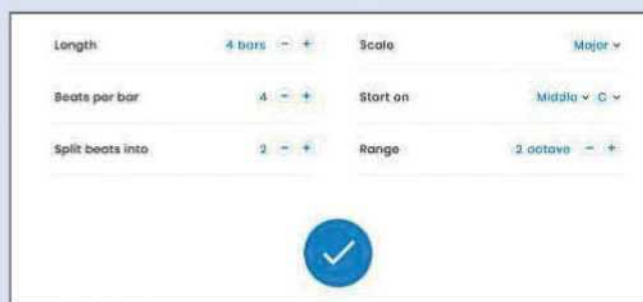
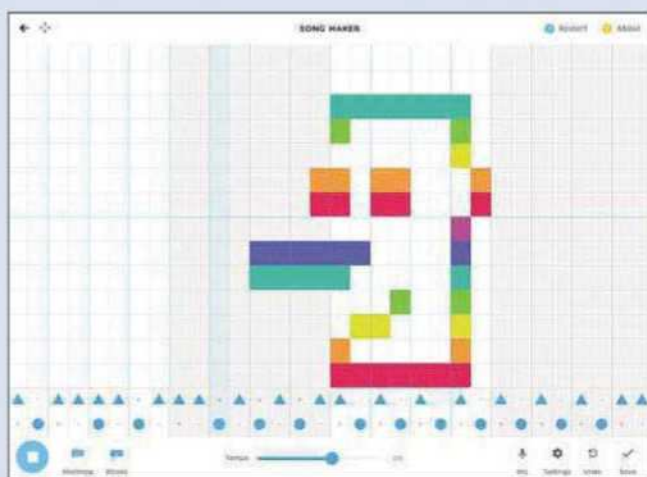
You don't need any musical talent to enjoy playing with Song Maker, the latest Chrome experiment from Google Creative Lab. Run it in your browser, then select two instruments – ranging from strings, synth and piano to conga, blocks and drums – and click the tiles to create a pattern that will hopefully play a pleasant little ditty.

You can choose tiles individually or slide your mouse or finger over multiple tiles depending on whether you're

using Song Maker on a PC or mobile device. It's also possible to adjust the musical notes, rhythm and tempo. Pressing the Settings button lets you change the length of your loop, the number of beats per bar, the scale of your song and the octave range. You can even add a Midi keyboard or hook up a microphone to translate your singing into notes.

When you're finished, click Save to generate a link to share with other people or choose the embed code to place your composition on your web page. Anyone who opens the link can add their own flourishes to your tune, encouraging collaboration and helping you perfect your musical masterpiece.

bit.ly/songmaker445



Make hands-free calls from your Google Home

home.google.com

Google Home smart speakers have offered hands-free voice-calling functionality in the US for a while now, but the feature has been absent for users in the UK. Happily, that's now changed and – as of 7 March – you can make free phone calls via your Google Home or Home Mini.

The new feature allows you to call any number, except emergency numbers, simply by saying "OK Google" or "Hey Google", followed by the person you want to call. This hands-free option is already available using Google Assistant on phones and tablets, as well as from Alexa on Amazon's Echo devices.

Usefully, after your first call, you can set up Caller ID so your own number is visible to the person you're calling, as opposed to it appearing as unknown or private. All calls are made over your Wi-Fi network.

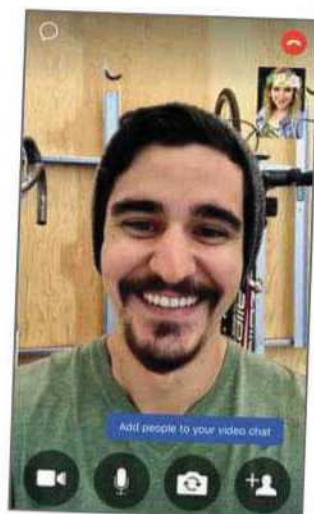


Add friends to ongoing Messenger chats

www.messenger.com

When you use Messenger for an audio or video chat, you typically have two options: to connect with an individual or call up a group. But what if you're having a one-to-one conversation and you'd like to involve someone else? In the past, you needed to hang up and start a group chat from scratch – a cumbersome process that entailed searching your inbox for the relevant people. Now you can just tap the screen and select the Add Person icon.

Once the other person answers, they'll be seamlessly added to your conversation without interrupting the flow of the initial chat. You can invite up to 50 people, although only six can be shown on the screen at a time, and when you've finished conversing, a group chat will be automatically created in your inbox so you can easily call the same people again in future. The feature is available on both iOS and Android.

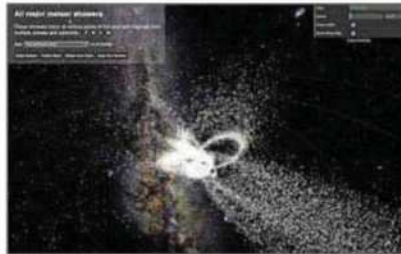


We pick the 10 best things you must do on the web this fortnight

View stunning meteor showers

bit.ly/meteor445

This beautiful browser-based tool tells you when the next meteor showers will be viewable from Earth and shows you exactly how they'll look. Simply select the shower you want to see and it will give you different perspectives as it cycles through the years. You can also toggle the speed and decide if you want to see orbits and the Milky Way.



Turn a 2D map into a globe

www.maptoglobe.com

If you have a 2D map that is (ideally) twice as wide as it is high, try importing it into Map to Globe. As the name suggests, this wonderful online tool turns maps into



stunning 3D interactive globes, letting you alter attributes such as the axial tilt, the sun's position, light intensity and background, as well as the noise, detail and roughness of the finished sphere. Once you're happy with the result, you can save it as an animated GIF. Just select Animations and choose whether you want a left-to-right or a right-to-left rotation.

Explore Harry Potter's History of Magic

bit.ly/potter445

Based on the exhibition Harry Potter: A History of Magic, this collection of items from the British Library features a host of rare books, manuscripts and otherworldly items – from a crystal ball to a broomstick – and explores the Ripley Scroll, which describes how to make the fabled Philosopher's Stone. Learn how the franchise came to be, delve into the history behind the magic classes at Hogwarts, browse sketches by JK Rowling and see magical creatures through the ages.



Tour Disneyland in Street View

bit.ly/disney445

As if to prove it's no Mickey Mouse service, Google Street View has taken a trip to 11 fun-filled Disney theme parks and resorts. You can check out the fairytale castles along with selected rides and attractions, moving your mouse to pan around each location. You can also use Google Cardboard to immerse yourself in the Magic Kingdom without having to face the queues.



NEW VOICE COMMANDS



Find Easter Eggs

Google Assistant has lots of Easter Eggs – hidden commands that elicit funny and unexpected responses. Simply ask: "Ok Google, tell me your Easter Eggs".



Turn Siri off

If your HomePod is picking up commands intended for your iPhone or Apple Watch, try saying: "Hey Siri, turn off Hey Siri" within earshot of the speaker.



Ask what's playing

Bauer-owned radio stations can now tell you the name of the song being played: just say "Alexa, ask [station name] what's playing"; and for the name of the DJ: "Alexa, ask [station] who is on air".



Create Facebook to-do lists

www.facebook.com

You can now create and post public lists in the Facebook Android app, to share anything, from stuff you need to do to places you want to go. Just tap the status update box and select Lists from the options.

Play a map-based Snake

bit.ly/snake445

If you fancy a modern riff on classic retro game Snake, visit Serpent Dash and slither around real maps, collecting fruit and avoiding dead-ends while avoiding your own tail. Locations include Manchester's Canal Street and The Mall in London.

Get a Google domain

domains.google

Google Domains, which helps businesses find and buy domain names, has expanded to the UK. It offers 30GB of file storage, letting you build sites using Blogger, Wix, Shopify, Weebly and Squarespace, and create a custom email address.



Need to Know

Sir Tim Berners-Lee calls for regulation of the web

What happened?

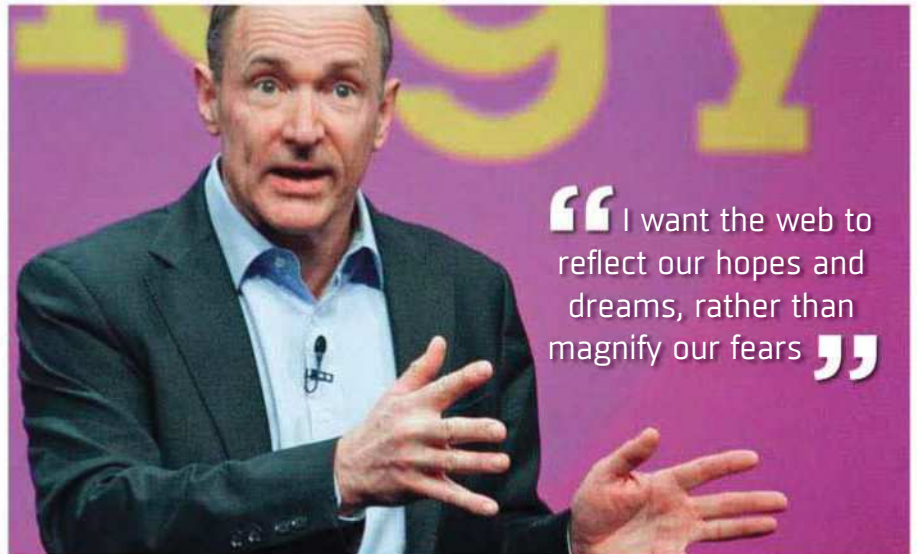
Sir Tim Berners-Lee created the web 29 years ago and he's still working to protect it today. The British inventor expressed concerns about the "weaponisation of the web" and outlined the major problems we need to overcome to wrest our internet back from monopolies and bring it closer to the utopian ideal he envisaged in 1989.

In an open letter to mark the anniversary of the web's creation (bit.ly/berners445), Berners-Lee said: "The web that many connected to years ago is not what new users will find today". Instead of a wide selection of sources, its power has consolidated into the hands of a few tech giants – and those gatekeepers haven't done enough to protect their users or ensure competition and diversity.

These companies' efforts to improve the state of the web have so far failed, and the measures they take have often brought negative knock-on effects. For this reason, Berners-Lee has called for better regulation, to make it easier for tech firms to operate and to keep the web useful for generations to come.

He also wants to bring more people online, noting that many around the world still don't have access to the web – particularly women, poor people and those in rural areas. At current growth rates, the last billion people won't be connected until 2042.

"Today, I want to challenge us all to have greater ambitions for the web," he wrote. "I want the web to reflect our hopes and fulfil our dreams, rather than



Credit: drserg / Shutterstock.com

magnify our fears and deepen our divisions".

His call to arms comes as both UK and US governments target Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, among others, on issues such as the spread of extremism, fake news and social media's impact on mental health. Authorities have threatened to crack down on such companies in the past but have so far failed to take action.

How will it affect you?

What can we do to improve our internet? For a start, we should heed Berners-Lee and support sensible calls for regulation, abandon companies that behave poorly and be careful how we use and spread information.

If you're not happy with Google, then don't use it. The company may seem ubiquitous, but there are other options for free email, search and online video. Don't like behavioural advertising? Use an ad blocker, but also pay for subscriptions. Think we should do more to battle propaganda bots and the spread of fake news? Then report dodgy accounts to Twitter and Facebook, and make sure you're not part of the problem by checking that a story is true before you share it. You may resent the extra effort, when all you want to do is

go online and enjoy the web, but it may be the only way to save the internet.

This careful approach applies to regulation, too. The government has put forward a rash of doomed-to-fail regulatory plans, from age verification to banning encryption. There's no point enforcing laws unless they are good, effective ones.

What do we think?

Sir Tim Berners-Lee deserves a round of applause for his efforts. He's not prepared to rest on his laurels while his creation becomes a monster – instead, he's willing to carry out the difficult, boring work of fighting for standards and arguing with regulators to ensure his grand innovation remains of benefit to us all. So let's heed his warning.

We're not arguing for a return to the days of Yahoo search and Geocities web pages, but the increasing problems of fake news and social-media stress cannot be allowed to proliferate unchecked. The major power-players such as Facebook and Google seem unable or unwilling to stem the tide – hence the call for governments to step in. If they get it right, we could correct the course of the web. If they don't, we can at least be sure Berners-Lee will be on hand to guide us down the right path.



Sir Tim Berners-Lee posted an open letter on his Web Foundation website

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

Cortana 'can be used to hack your PC'

What happened?

You may think you've securely locked your Windows 10 PC, requiring a password for access, but researchers have found a way in via Cortana. Israeli security researchers were able to sneak past the password protection because the voice assistant is always on and listening for its name, even when the computer is otherwise locked down.

According to reports, a hacker could plug in a USB stick with a network adapter, then tell Cortana to launch the PC's browser and go to an unencrypted URL. A hacker could also tell Cortana to connect to a Wi-Fi network they control, simply by clicking a selected network with a mouse.

How will it affect you?

Most of us don't have to worry about this particular hack. To make it work, the researchers needed direct access to the target computer to connect it to a malicious network either via Wi-Fi or USB. When Cortana opens the unencrypted website, it is intercepted by the dodgy network to download and install malware.

Microsoft has since fixed this specific problem by forcing locked Windows PCs to use Bing as a search

engine. Because Bing is encrypted, this version of the attack is halted.

You can turn off Cortana when your device is locked, through Windows 10's settings for the voice assistant. Under the Lock Screen heading, switch off the option to 'Use Cortana even when my device is locked'.

What do we think?

Although this hack isn't likely to affect most of us, it's a scary reminder that new technology – voice assistants, for example – potentially poses new security concerns.

It's worth noting that other security protection would stop this type of attack; if all websites were protected via HTTPS, then this particular route wouldn't have worked. The better the security in our systems, the easier it is to protect new additions, such as Cortana.

See our cover feature on page 40 for more information about tweaking Windows 10 security.



Facebook tests facial recognition in UK

What happened?

Facebook is testing a new feature that identifies photos of you that have been uploaded but not tagged as featuring your face. The site uses facial recognition to spot your mug in an image, letting you know it's been posted.

The feature will let you tag yourself in the photo or "reach out to the person who posted the photo if you have concerns with it," Facebook said. Due to privacy concerns, the technology has been blocked in the UK and Europe for years, but it's set to arrive in May, although you'll have to opt in first.

How will it affect you?

The opt-in comes thanks to a new set of privacy rules called GDPR – the General Data Protection Regulation. These come into force at the end of May and consent for data usage sits at their core.

GDPR rules not only require Facebook to ask for permission before using facial recognition to spot your face in friends'

photos, but to get consent for other features that use your data. Everyone on Facebook in the EU – and that includes the UK, for the time being – will be shown the set of questions and new privacy controls, but the social network is rolling out the questions in waves. That means a friend of yours may see the privacy changes and the new facial-recognition tool before you do. But don't panic – Facebook is legally obliged to ask all of us.

What do we think?

Facial recognition may sound innovative, but the real news is the GDPR-forced privacy checkup. Facebook has stomped all over privacy for years, and is much more keen on opt-outs than opting in. This suggests the law is helping to force the company to put such decisions in the hands of its users, which is good news for online privacy. We've been trained to share online without pause but now we have the opportunity to rethink our privacy assumptions.



Three and Vodafone accused of 'throttling'

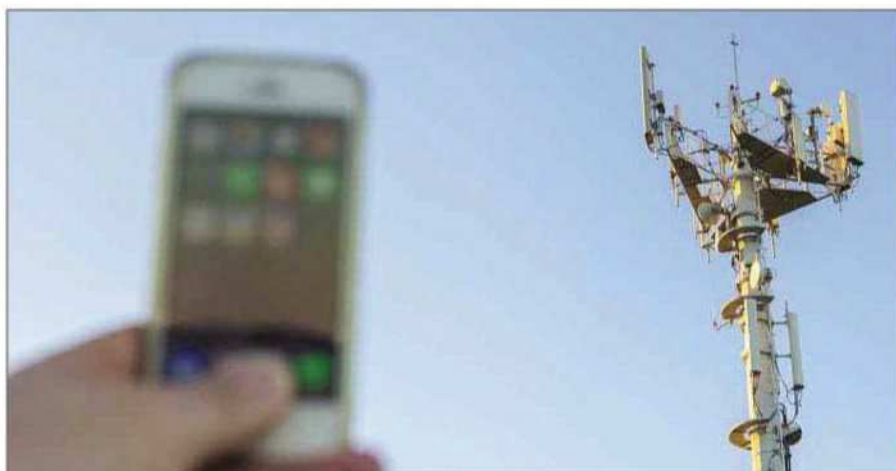
What happened?

Telecoms regulator Ofcom is investigating whether mobile networks Three and Vodafone have broken net-neutrality rules in the UK by 'throttling' web traffic on their networks. Specifically, the investigation will examine if Three has slowed down particular types of traffic, both in the UK and abroad, and whether some of its tariffs violate net-neutrality rules by preventing customers from using their data allowance to tether their phones.

The watchdog will also investigate whether Three's practice of selling different data plans for specific devices is in accordance with regulations. Three said it would "work closely" with Ofcom to address these concerns.

Similarly, Ofcom plans to investigate whether Vodafone's 'passes', which offer unlimited bandwidth for specific network activities – including streaming music and video – lead to unfair throttling of traffic across its network. Vodafone is also being investigated about exceptions to its passes, whereby certain functions within apps are not included within an unlimited allowance.

Vodafone said it is "very disappointed" about the investigation, claiming it does not throttle speeds in the UK or abroad. It did, however, admit to optimising bandwidth for customers who use video passes, to guarantee quality.



How will it affect you?

To ensure their networks run efficiently, mobile providers can use "reasonable measures" to manage the bandwidth they allocate to customers, but they are required to be transparent about such policies. Under EU regulations that came into effect in April 2016, ISPs and mobile networks must "treat all internet traffic on their networks equally, and must not give preferential treatment to any particular sites or services". So if you believe your web access is being deliberately slowed by your provider, you have cause to complain to Ofcom.

What do we think?

Net neutrality is a term we've heard a

lot about in recent months after the FCC voted to repeal the rules that prevent US internet providers from blocking or throttling particular traffic on their networks. While many of us may take for granted that we're unaffected by that landmark decision, Ofcom's investigation into Three and Vodafone suggests that the UK isn't exempt from net-neutrality concerns.

We think all customers should be treated equally and fairly by their network providers, and that we should get the service we pay for without sneaky traffic throttling behind the scenes. If the allegations against Three and Vodafone prove to be true, then we hope Ofcom holds them to account.



FIRST LOOK

Nokia 1

www.nokia.com

Nokia's big comeback has only just entered its second year, but its range of phones already covers every possible price bracket, and they don't come more affordable than the Nokia 1. Priced at just \$85 (£61), this simple handset runs a new, low-power version of Android called Android Go and seems designed for someone who's never owned a smartphone.

Considering its ultra-low price, the Nokia 1 looks and feels remarkably smart. Its rounded design is coated in a matte finish, which grips well, with a rear camera plonked in the centre of the back cover. As with Nokia's classic phones, you can take off the plastic back panel and replace the battery, which – incidentally – lasts a full day



on a single charge.

The Nokia 1's 4.5in, 854 x 480 display might not look like much but its colours are vibrant and the screen allows for wide viewing angles. Inside the phone, however, there's little to shout about: a 1.1GHz processor accompanied by only 1GB of RAM and a not-so-generous 8GB

of storage (expandable via microSD).

As for its cameras, the Nokia 1 has a 5-megapixel shooter on the rear with an LED flash and a 2-megapixel selfie snapper on the front. This may have been impressive a decade ago but it's way below par compared to today's smartphone cameras.

Finally, let's talk about Android Go. This special version of Google's mobile operating system offers a suite of Google apps, including Maps, Gmail and YouTube, and has been optimised for devices with 1GB of RAM or less. This means that, despite its lacklustre internals, the Nokia 1 can run your favourite tools without any problems.

Overall, the phone is certainly an interesting prospect and could be the ideal handset for someone who hasn't yet made the jump to smartphones and the wonderful world of Android.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is Alexa laughing at Amazon Echo users?

Reports have emerged about Amazon's AI assistant, Alexa, developing an unnerving new skill: randomly chuckling to itself without any apparent prompting.

Amazon has acknowledged the problem and is fixing it by disabling the phrase "Alexa, laugh". The company thinks that a number of Echo devices were being prompted to laugh after mishearing the request, so Amazon will change it in favour of "Alexa, can you laugh?".

"We are also changing Alexa's response from simply laughter to 'Sure, I can laugh,' followed by laughter," an Amazon spokesperson told The Verge (bit.ly/alexa445).

Footage of Alexa amusing itself has surfaced over the past few weeks. On 23 February, Twitter user @CaptHandlebar posted a clip of an Amazon Echo cackling unprompted. "I thought a kid was laughing behind me," he noted. Another Twitter user reported that Alexa started laughing just as they were getting ready to sleep: "my Amazon Echo Dot let out a very loud and creepy laugh... there's a good chance I get murdered tonight".

For a company that's still trying to convince people to let an always-listening AI assistant into their homes, random creepy laughter probably isn't the best move. Then again, maybe some unpredictable vocal responses from Alexa would make it feel more like

HA!
HA!
HA!

a real-life housemate than a emotionless machine: a curt "tsk" every now and then, a yawn during a long string of commands or a sigh after yet another request.

LIKELIHOOD RATING



Amazon says the chuckling issue only happens in "rare circumstances" and the fix should stop "false positives" from occurring, so don't expect hysterics from Alexa any time soon. It appears the sound of Echo-ing laughter has been silenced, at least for now.



WEBOMETER



WE LIKE...



WhatsApp extends delete option

WhatsApp now gives you more than an hour to 'unsend' messages you regret. Previously, the app's 'delete for everyone' option only worked up to seven minutes after sending but this has been extended to 68 minutes.



Google Assistant gets more helpful

Google is allowing third-party manufacturers to add their own commands to its virtual assistant, to make the app more relevant and useful. Currently, Google Assistant is limited to tasks based on universal commands.



WE DON'T LIKE...



Mac malware on the rise

Mac malware increased by 270% in 2017 on the previous year, a report by Malwarebytes revealed. Four major Mac threats, including the OSX.MaMi virus, were uncovered in the first two months of 2018 alone.



Giphy upsets social networks

A racist GIF caused Snapchat and Instagram to remove integration with popular GIF service Giphy. Snapchat said: "We have removed Giphy from our application until we can be assured that this will never happen again".



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Mu One

bit.ly/muone445 | From £45

While our phones get slimmer and smarter, their chargers remain bulky and inconvenient, especially when travelling abroad. Mu One suffers none of these problems – not only is it the thinnest charger in the world, measuring just 14mm, but it can be used in more than 200 countries. It offers 45W of power with fast-charge technology, which makes it suitable for all smartphones, tablets and laptops with Micro USB, Lightning and USB Type-C connections. The team has already far exceeded its £20,000 goal, with funding closing on 27 March.





Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

GitHub suffers largest-ever DDoS attack

GitHub has weathered the biggest DDoS (distributed denial of service) attack in history, according to reports, yet the site suffered just 10 minutes of downtime. The code-sharing resource was subjected to a colossal 1.35 terabits-per-second surge in traffic when unknown hackers attempted to take the platform offline. The attack was foiled by Akamai Prolexic's anti-DDoS protections, which GitHub automatically activated shortly after detecting the spike in traffic.

"We understand how much you rely on GitHub and we know the availability of our service is of critical importance to our users," said GitHub site reliability engineering manager Sam Kottler in a blog post detailing the incident. "To note, at no point



was the confidentiality or integrity of your data at risk."

The attack was called off by the perpetrators after just eight minutes, which may indicate that the incident was merely a test of the hackers' capabilities. This isn't the first time GitHub has been the victim of a DDoS attack – the company was also hit by an attack in 2015, which is believed to have been orchestrated by the Chinese government. bit.ly/github445

Charities warned about cybercrime threat

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has warned about the growing threat of cybercrime on UK charities, encouraging them to take action against criminals and protect themselves from attacks. As a result of its research, the organisation has released a guide (bit.ly/ncsc445) that offers advice to help charities protect themselves against cybercrime. The advisory suggested that



charity staff may be more likely to fall victim to attack because they're generally more trusting, and could be "socially engineered into clicking on 'dodgy' links" in emails.

Charities are just as likely to be hacked as regular businesses because they hold information of interest to criminals, such as contributor payment details and other confidential data, and deal with large sums of money. However, there is an extra risk for charities because if a theft occurs, however big or small, it could tarnish the charity's reputation, potentially discouraging funders from donating money.

bit.ly/cyber445

Credit: Aztec Images / Shutterstock.com

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
James Southworth,
co-founder at National
Online Safety (www.nationalonlinesafety.com)



Q My older kids are wise to parental settings on shared devices. How do I ensure they are being safe online?

Claire S, via email

A Talking about these issues can be awkward for

parents and a sensitive topic with older children, but it's important they are aware that everything they do over the web is captured forever and could come back to haunt them. Creating a family agreement that sets clear expectations to ensure safe internet use can help start a conversation between you and your children. Make sure your agreement works for everyone in the family and that it reflects the needs and interests of all ages.

Q My children are mesmerised by 'toy-unboxing videos' on YouTube. How can I be sure they

don't watch something they shouldn't?

Evan Palmer, Twitter

A There are several settings and tools designed to keep YouTube fun and enjoyable for everyone. Restricted Mode is an optional setting you can activate to screen out 'mature content' that you don't want your children to see. Go to YouTube in your browser, click your account icon in the top-right corner and select Restricted Mode.

The YouTube Kids app is aimed at children aged three to eight years-old, and you can sign in with

your Google account to create customisable profiles for your children. With this app, you can also choose whether to turn search on or off, set a timer to limit how much time a child spends on the app and block videos or channels you don't want your child to watch. You can also set it to clear the history.





BEND YOUR REALITY

AG352UCG

AG352QCX

QHD

NVIDIA
G-SYNC

200 Hz

Adaptive
Sync

35"

AOC
GAMING

aocgaming.com



@aoc_gaming



@aocgaming



@aocgaming

SCAN

OVERCLOCKERS UK

amazon.co.uk

★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

NURSING

NEW

Qni Heritage qniheritage.org.uk

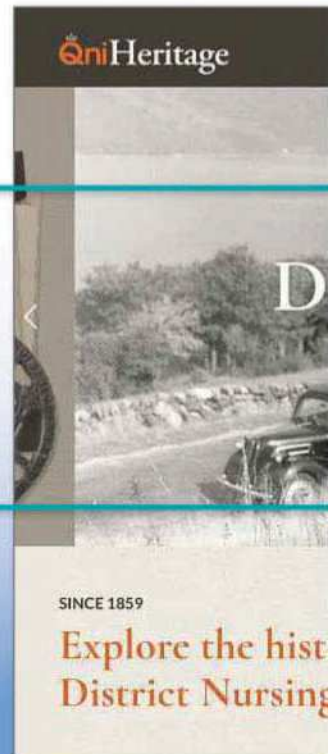
England employed its first district nurse in 1859 and this fascinating website lets you explore 160 years of community nursing history. It's a rich and stunningly presented resource of stories, artefacts, films and photographs taken from the Queen's Nursing Institute's archive. Although the timeline appears to peter away from comprehensive coverage of the QNI's beginnings, there are in-depth looks at key figures, the two World Wars and the Institute itself. There are also lots of recipes and exam questions from old Queen's Nurses' magazines, along with contemporary audio and enlightening pre- and post-NHS video.

Our rating



PROFILES
Read about Florence Nightingale and William Rathbone who developed home-based nursing

RECIPES
Try some nutritious ration recipes including fricassee of tripe and potato eclairs



VIRTUAL REALITY

BBC Virtual Reality

www.bbc.co.uk/virtualreality

Not long ago, virtual reality was being written off as yet another fad but the BBC is continuing its experiments with VR and the results are impressive. This website brings together seven Beeb-made programmes, including the newly created documentary *Damming the Nile*. This journey can be watched via YouTube on Google Cardboard, but most of the other shows are exclusive to VR headsets such as Oculus Rift and Samsung VR. Even so, such restrictions are clearly flagged and there's a great guide to VR for newbies. Every show provides a full synopsis and trailer along with download and streaming options, making this a comprehensive and user-friendly site.

Our rating



MONEY

Great British Coin Hunt

bit.ly/coin445

Coin hunters got so excited when the Royal Mint unveiled 26 new 10p coins celebrating the Best of British, its website was forced to set up a queuing system to control visitor access. Now that things have calmed down, you can buy individual coins or order the whole lot using the simple search box and choosing a finish (standard silver for £35 each or uncirculated standard for £2). Add frames, a case or an album, then go through the efficient checkout process. Alternatively, you can manually hunt for the coins in your loose change and log each one in the free iOS and Android app.

Our rating





IMAGES
The Gallery is full of Victorian and war-era photos, cartoons and old adverts



NHS 70

Given the current challenges faced by the NHS, it's heartwarming that our nation's health service is turning 70 on 5 July. We can expect lots of anniversary events to pay tribute but this celebratory site also injects a dose of practicality, explaining the importance of giving blood and joining the organ-donor register, while providing guidance on how to use NHS services wisely. It also describes the service's history and glimpses its future while explaining how to take better care of yourself or become a volunteer. The site is a bit text-heavy but it certainly shows the good work being done.

Our rating



Learn With Google AI

Google aims to make artificial intelligence and machine-learning resources more accessible with this new site. Aimed at both advanced techies and clueless newbies, it offers information and exercises, as well as a look at the latest applications for AI research in real-world problems. Play around with the filters, tell the site your level (researcher through to “curious cat”) and check out the machine-learning recipes, workshops, glossaries and tips. There’s also a free “machine learning crash course” (bit.ly/crash445) that’ll take you about 15 hours to complete.

Our rating



TechCrunch

This new version of the TechCrunch website is currently only available to 10% of its readers, but it shows a bright future for a site that busies itself with the industry-end of tech. Navigation options have been moved from the top of the screen to the side, removing News and adding Startups, Apps and Gadgets – thus highlighting the importance of these channels. Headlines are now bolder and there are fewer columns, so the stories are centre-stage and have room to breathe. The result is a less cluttered, more accessible offering that doesn't overwhelm and works well on mobile.

Our rating



BACK ISSUES DISC 2017



2017 Back Issues Disc

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




RELAUNCH
WALKING

Isle of Wight Walking Festival

isleofwightwalkingfestival.co.uk

Since 1999, the annual Isle of Wight Walking Festival has encouraged tens of thousands of people to ramble across England's second most populous island. The website lists nearly 100 walks that are on offer this year, breaking the routes down by region and highlighting the challenges they pose. Handy icons make it easy to find the ideal walk, graded from an easy "one" to a strenuous "five". Click a walk to view its start time, length and duration along with price and registration details. To help you plan your trip, there's a newsletter, travel guide and a link to accommodation.

Our rating


RELAUNCH
SINGING

Phoenix Singers of Shrewsbury

www.phoenixsingersshrewsbury.co.uk

Despite limited funds, one of Shropshire's longest-running choirs has hit the high notes with this great-looking (and sounding) website. Visitors can tune into the latest news and upcoming events, see a photo gallery of past performances and rehearsals, check out details of its library of music and get a flavour of what the choir is all about and how to become a member. Booking tickets is made easy via a prominent button on the homepage and links to its YouTube channel let you hear the choir in action.

Our rating

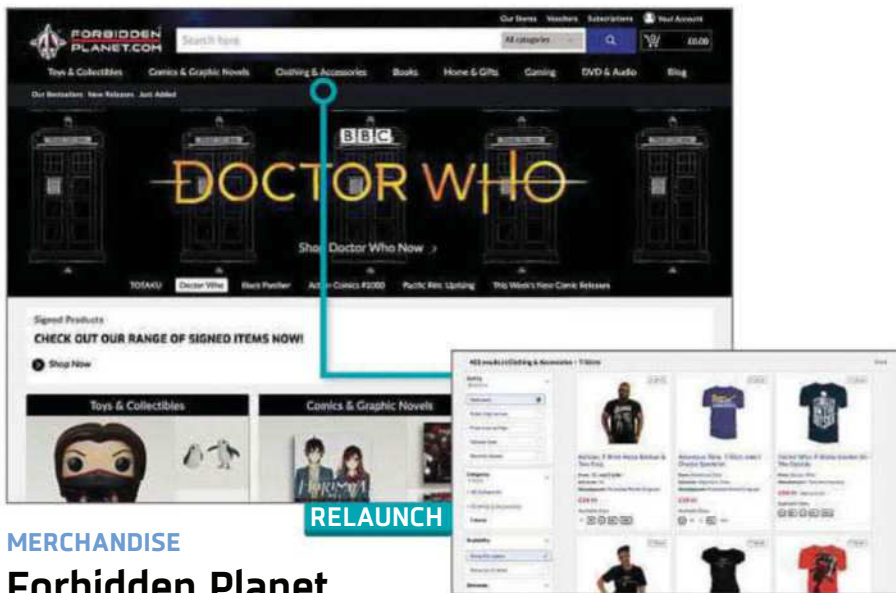

RELAUNCH
NEWSPAPER

Birmingham Live

www.birminghamlive.co.uk

Read all about it: the *Birmingham Mail* newspaper has separated its online and print teams and with that has come a change of name and design for its website. Unfortunately, first impressions are disappointing. An overpowering banner advert initially sits on top of a dominant, wide, main story image and you then have to scroll to see the headlines – continuing to move down the homepage for what seems like forever to view the lot. As you do, the design flips between two, three and four columns, sending your eyes everywhere. Still, there's lots to read, watch and view, and its football coverage is solid.

Our rating


RELAUNCH
MERCHANDISE

Forbidden Planet

forbiddenplanet.com

The famous emporium of all things geek has burst out of its skin to reveal a bolder-looking website that makes it even easier to browse and buy toys, collectibles, clothes, books, games and gifts. Making far better use of the width of your browser, this beta site has an improved search engine that's packed with suggestions, alongside new navigation filters and a clearer page layout that gives products more breathing space and allows for greater detail. There's also a lively blog packed with posts, competitions and events. We like how Forbidden Planet now draws your attention to its bestsellers and that the site has been optimised for mobile devices.

Our rating


NEW
HEALTH

Keep Fit Eat Fit

www.Keepfiteatfit.com

This site claims to offer a new concept in health and fitness with daily bite-size exercises that can take as little as five minutes. There's no expensive gym or kit and, free trial aside, plans start from just under £10 a month. For this you get three professionally shot fitness videos a week, access to a portal tracking your progress and healthy recipes. On the downside, you can only access unlocked routines for a month and one of the two recipes we found required a dressing that cost a staggering £19.19 from its own shop. The blog is worth a look, though.

Our rating



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

New browser tools in Blisk

Blisk (blisk.io), the web browser with additional tools for web builders, has just launched a new version with some useful improvements. One of the best things about the browser is its ability to preview your site on a variety of mobile devices, and this has been improved in the latest version with a 'mobile only' view.



It also has a new set of toolbar buttons in the bookmarks bar, so you can access its various functions without having to hunt them down in menus.

Learn SEO by email

Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.uk) has launched a free course that aims to teach you how to improve your website's search-engine optimisation. The two-week course – which you receive via eight emails, sent every other working day – promises to equip you with plenty of handy skills, with tips on optimising HTML, getting backlinks and writing the best copy. You can sign up at bit.ly/hiseo445.

Heart's previous email courses have tackled copywriting (bit.ly/hicw445) and social-media strategies (bit.ly/hism445).

Deal of the Fortnight

Fasthosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk) is offering a year of Ignite web hosting for £3 per month, which includes 10GB of storage, two 1GB databases and a free domain.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Nick Akam,
CTO, Easy Internet
(www.easy-internet.co.uk)



Q Is getting links from other websites still important to rank in search engines? Should I spend time finding people who will link to me?

Frank Brompton, via email

A Yes, this is still an important part of search-engine optimisation (SEO) because external links continue to be used as a ranking signal by search engines. However, don't overdo it because you could end up being penalised. Social-media mentions are also becoming an important aspect of SEO. The main thing is for any links to appear natural and not merely inserted to increase SEO. Vary the words used to link to your site and keep the links on topic, by getting links from sites with a similar subject area to your own.



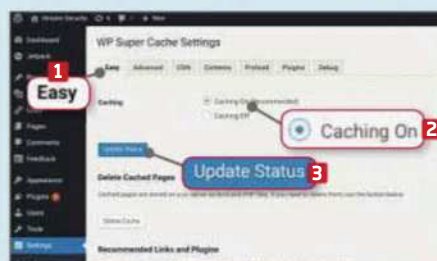
MINI WORKSHOP | Cache your WordPress website to give it a speed boost

WP Super Cache: bit.ly/wpssc445 | 10 mins | WordPress website

With every visit to your WordPress site, the database creates the page from scratch. If your pages don't change very often, speed things up with a caching tool, which saves a snapshot of the page that loads much quicker



1 WP Super Cache is a good-quality cache plugin created by Automattic, the team that makes WordPress itself. Log into your WordPress dashboard and click Plugins, then Add New. **1** Search for 'WP Super Cache', **2** click the Install Now button, then click Activate. **3**



2 Click Plugins, find WP Super Cache and click the Settings link. Caching is switched off by default. To turn it on, go to the Easy tab, **1** click the Caching On button, **2** then click Update Status. **3** If you want to check that it's working, click the Test Cache button that appears.



3 Click the Advanced tab. **1** To see your site without caching (so you always see the latest version) tick 'Don't cache pages for known users'. **2** It's also recommended that you select 'Compress pages so they're served more quickly to visitors', **3** which should further speed up your site. Scroll down and click Update Status.





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 UltraClear 4K Ultra HD

40" 4K curved display
(BDM4037U)

MISCO
a Systemax business
ebuyer.com

amazon.co.uk

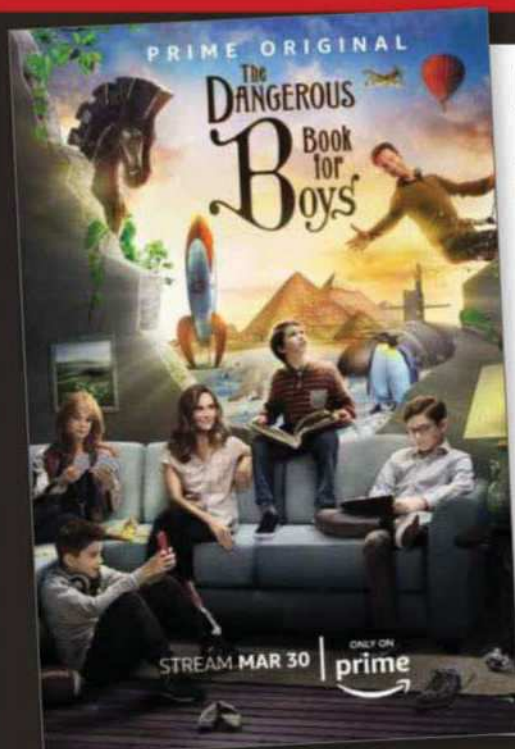
BT Business Direct

PHILIPS



What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight



Discover *The Dangerous Book For Boys*

From 30 March

The Dangerous Book For Boys may have a title that sounds like a Cub Scouts guide, but this new Amazon Prime comedy – inspired by a popular 2007 British book – was co-developed for the streaming service by *Breaking Bad* actor Bryan Cranston.

The six-part series focuses on Wyatt (Gabriel Bateman) and his brothers, Dash (Drew Powell) and Liam (Kyan Zielinsky), who are reeling from the death of their father (Chris Diamantopoulos). Hoping to bring her sons a bit of joy, their grieving mother (Erinn Hayes) hands Wyatt an heirloom in the form of a copy of *The Dangerous Book For Boys*. However, in a *Jumanji*-like manner, the how-to book transports Wyatt into a fantasy world in which he is somehow reunited with his late father, who teaches him the practical life skills that the book bestows.

The Dangerous Book For Boys' classification as an "adaptation" pushes some limits, since its source material – a tongue-in-cheek guidebook that teaches young men real-life skills such as building a tree house and tying knots – has no real plot to adapt. The book came to Cranston's attention when his *Breaking Bad* co-star and on-screen wife, Anna Gunn, gave him a copy, telling him: "This reminds me of you!". Check out the official trailer for the series at bit.ly/dang445.



N Feast on the *Santa Clarita Diet* Season 2

From 23 March

A horror-comedy about an estate agent who becomes a flesh-eating zombie might not be to everyone's taste, but the first season of *Santa Clarita Diet* attracted generally positive reviews and now it's back for a second course. Starring Drew Barrymore as the cannibalistic main character, the series focuses on the Hammond family, whose suburban lifestyle is turned upside down when Sheila is infected by a virus that turns her into a hungry member of the undead. The new series picks up where the story left off, as the number of missing people in Santa Clarita starts

to pile up and is no longer going unnoticed. The premise may sound rather unpleasant, and the show has been criticised for its gory scenes, but it's leavened with a healthy dollop of sharp humour. You can watch the official trailer at bit.ly/santa445.

N Lock Netflix shows with a PIN code

Netflix has offered parental controls for a while, which use a 'maturity level' filter to prevent children from viewing unsuitable content. Now, however, you can also block access to specific TV shows and films, by requiring would-be viewers to enter a four-digit PIN code.

Mike Hastings, director of enhanced content at Netflix, said: "We understand that every family is different, and that parents have differing perspectives on what they feel is appropriate to watch at different ages. PIN protection provides families with an additional tool to make decisions they are comfortable with."

Additionally, Netflix will display maturity levels more prominently, so you can see a show's rating

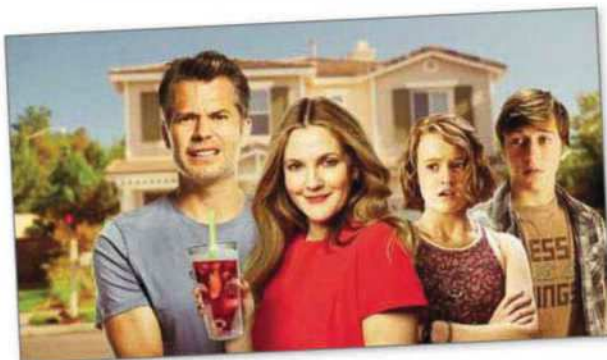


when you select Play and stop your family being exposed to anything nasty.

View captions on live YouTube streams

YouTube introduced automatic captions in 2009, since which time the site has auto-captioned more than one billion videos. It is now using live automatic speech-recognition (LASR) technology to bring automatic captions to live streams, giving creators a cheap and easy way to make their broadcasts accessible to more people.

Other changes include the option for creators to add location tags to their mobile live streams and video uploads,



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



and for viewers to replay chats once a live stream has finished.

Catch the new Idris Elba series *In The Long Run*

From 29 March

The term "Sky One comedy" is no longer the oxymoron it was a few years back, and *In The Long Run* certainly looks very promising. Created by and starring Idris Elba, the series is loosely based on the actor's childhood growing up in 1980s East London.

The *Luther* star plays family man Walter Easmon in the comedy,



alongside *Holby City* actor Jimmy Akingbola as his wayward brother and comedian Bill Bailey as his neighbour. As with most Sky One shows, *In The Long Run* will be available to stream live and on catch-up via the Now TV Entertainment Pass, which costs £7.99 per month with a one-month free trial.

Stream Oscar winner *Icarus* online

Available now

Winner of the Academy Award for Best Documentary feature at this year's Oscars, *Icarus* is an eye-opening investigation into the shady world of illegal doping in sport. Director Bryan Fogel sets out to chronicle a guinea-pig experiment in which he takes

Sky Q to offer Netflix for free

Sky and Netflix have teamed up to bring the streaming service to Sky Q, as well as Sky's Now TV devices, including the recently launched Smart Stick. All new and existing Sky customers will be able to access the Netflix app from their Sky Q menu soon, including Netflix's Ultra HD shows and films. This means you no longer have to switch to a separate source to watch Netflix on your Sky TV, and can use Sky's built-in text and voice search to find content.

If you're an existing Netflix customer, you can either sign into the app with your current login details and continue to pay a separate monthly fee, or move to the Sky TV bundle that comes with Netflix for free, as part of the overall package.



performance-enhancing drugs to win an amateur cycling race, when he happens upon a major international doping scandal after a chance meeting with renegade doctor Grigory Rodchenkov, the head of the Russian anti-doping laboratory. The Netflix Original documentary alleges that Russia orchestrated state-sponsored fraud, conspiring to cheat the Olympics for decades, with the controversial claims leading to threats against Rodchenkov's life. It's fascinating stuff, especially in light of recent news stories. Watch *Icarus* now at bit.ly/icarus445.



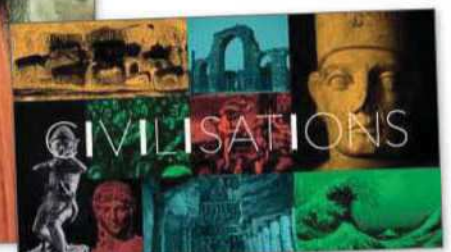
Watch the whole of *Civilisations* now

Available now

The BBC has taken the unusual (if rather Netflix-like) step of putting every episode of its new history-of-art series *Civilisations* on its iPlayer streaming service at the same time. This means you can binge-watch all nine instalments now, instead of waiting for them to be broadcast every Thursday. Not only that, but the series will remain online for a whole year, rather than the standard 30 days.

Civilisations is presented by Simon Schama, Mary Beard and David Olusoga

and traces the development of visual culture around the world over thousands of years. Enjoy it now at bit.ly/civil445.



Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

Budget HD monitors for under £150

We test four affordable monitors with Full HD resolution

If you want the best, most cutting-edge monitor that money can buy and aren't cowed by the cost, there are plenty available that provide razor-sharp resolutions of 4K and beyond. However, if you're fine to stick with a lower resolution, you can get some incredible bargains on a standard Full-HD screen. Although you don't get the benefit of the highest pixel counts, these screens are still perfectly capable of producing good results for a fraction of the price.

The four models we've reviewed here are all priced under £150 (one is even less than £100) but still have many of the features you'd expect to see in more expensive models.

HOW WE TESTED

We tested each monitor with a calibration device called a colorimeter, which uses its own software to measure a range of information about the colour, brightness and contrast each monitor can achieve. We measured this using only the monitor's default settings and with presets available on the monitor's menu, because most people don't have their own calibration equipment to help them make further adjustments.

BenQ GL2580HM | £109.99 | Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/benq445

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

Of the four monitors in this test, the BenQ is the least suited to gamers. Its refresh rate is significantly lower than that of the other three models, peaking at 60Hz, and it's the only one that doesn't provide support for AMD FreeSync – a special technology that eliminates choppy frame rates on PCs that contain compatible graphics hardware. But there's still a lot to like about this monitor if you only need it for general PC use, rather than high-powered games.

The BenQ's slim 1.5mm bezel (the edge of casing that surrounds the screen) not only makes it well suited to a multi-monitor setup but also means the 24.5in screen looks bigger than it is. The solid base is decorated with a subtle diamond-shaped pattern, which adds to the impression of quality design, while the back of the stand can be removed for easy cable management. There are HDMI, DVI and VGA connections, but no DisplayPort,

and the OSD (On Screen Display) features quick navigation with sensibly designed menus.

The BenQ delivered solid results in our tests, producing good colour accuracy. The viewing angles are fine, and it put in a decent performance in our uniformity tests, varying by just 3.1% across the panel. However, the screen's contrast and black-point figures are less impressive: its contrast ratio of 791:1 is much lower than the 1,103:1 scored by the Acer, and its black point of 0.35cd/m² is similarly middling. These results

reinforce the point that the BenQ isn't a gaming monitor, and fine details could be lost in dark shadow.

We'd advise you to steer clear of the built-in colour modes available from the menu and stick to its default settings, unless you have access to a colorimeter you can use to make further adjustments.



VERDICT

★★★★★

The BenQ's stylish slim bezel and attractive design are matched by its solid performance and good-quality colour display. However, it's not suited to serious gamers because its refresh rate is a bit slow, which means fast-moving objects may look a little blurry, and its dark contrast isn't strong enough to handle the detail in shadowy nooks and crannies. It's an excellent display for everyday PC use, however, and a bargain at just under £110.

AOC G2460VQ6 | £129.97

Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/aoc445

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



The AOC monitor didn't work as well straight out of the box as the BenQ Gold Award-winner, but with its sRGB preset mode selected, the monitor displayed a commendable 96.8% of the sRGB colour standard, and provided impressive results in the other colour tests we performed (see our chart, below). This extra hurdle of fiddling with the preset options makes it less convenient than the other monitors in this test, but you can at least still get good results without access to a colorimeter.

It's not all good news, though. The AOC's 706:1 contrast ratio is middling in this group and its OSD is slow and confusing, but gamers will appreciate the monitor's support of FreeSync, and we like the overall design. Factor in the generous input selection of DisplayPort, HDMI and VGA, along with a pair of 2W speakers, and it's a good option for gamers on a budget.



VERDICT

★★★★★

There's some tweaking involved in getting the best results from this monitor but its pre-programmed setting makes this easy enough. The build quality and selection of video inputs are good but the contrast is disappointing.

Acer KG221Q | £99.99

Buy from PC World: bit.ly/ace445

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



The Acer KG221Q is the cheapest monitor in this group and the only one to cost less than £100. This is reflected in its smaller 21.5in screen and plain design: there's no brushed-metal effect, just glossy plastic and thick bezels.

The stand wobbled when we prodded the OSD controls, which are themselves sluggish and unresponsive.

However, its image quality is surprisingly good, with a contrast ratio of 1,103:1, which was the best of the four screens we tested – both dark and light areas are detailed and distinct in games and movies. It also has reasonable colour accuracy, recreating 93.5% of the sRGB colour standard.

If you have a compatible graphics card, this model supports AMD's FreeSync technology. We'd have liked to see a DisplayPort or DVI to accompany the HDMI and VGA inputs, but it's a tolerable sacrifice for the price.



VERDICT

★★★★★

There's not a lot in the price difference between these monitors but this cheapest model of the group is smaller, less attractive and has fewer video inputs. However, its contrast is excellent and the colour reproduction isn't bad, either.

Iiyama G-Master Black Hawk G2530HSU-B1

Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/iya445 | £115

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

On paper, this looks like the perfect budget gaming monitor. A 24.5in screen with slim bezels and support for AMD's FreeSync technology make a compelling combination. It's also the only screen in this Group Test with USB ports (2 x USB 2) alongside the generous allocation of HDMI, DisplayPort and VGA inputs.

The sturdy base is finished with a brushed metal pattern, while the small OSD is one of the most responsive on test, with sensibly organised options.

Some of the colour results were very good, particularly the colour temperature, which proved to be the best result straight out of the box without any further tweaking. However, it struggled with contrast. Our colorimeter couldn't get a consistent result from it, but in general use, its black points weren't as dark as the other screens we tested, making games and films look washed-out.



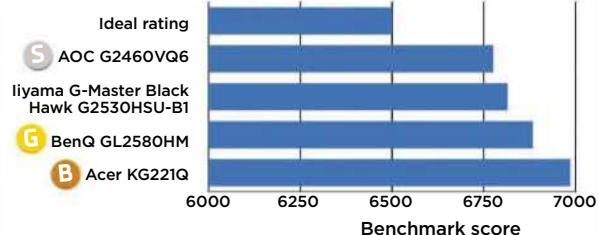
VERDICT

★★★★★

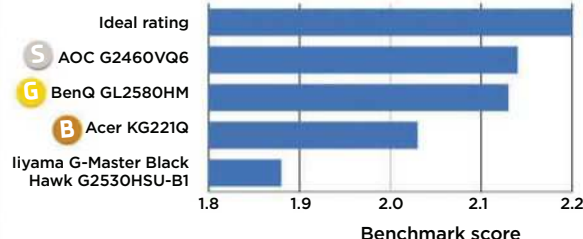
It's a shame that the contrast on this screen was unreliable because much of the rest of it is very convincing. We liked the inclusion of USB ports, which none of the other models have, and it offers a good range of video inputs.

TEST-RESULTS CHARTS

Colour temperature







Gamma



Using our colorimeter, we tested the quality of each screen by measuring its colour temperature and gamma ratings. Ideally, the colour temperature should be 6,500K and the gamma should be 2.2. The charts above show which screens came closest to these ideal scores, to give you an idea of the models that produce the best results. This doesn't include any adjustments made with a colorimeter, which may improve the monitors further but would require access to this specialist tool.

Group Test Budget HD monitors

				
	BenQ GL2580HM	AOC G2460VQ6	Acer KG221Q	Iiyama G-Master Black Hawk G2530HSU-B1
WEBSITE	www.benq.co.uk	eu.aoc.com	www.acer.com	iiyama.com
PRICE	£109.99	£129.97	£99.99	£115
BUY FROM	bit.ly/benq445	bit.ly/aoc445	bit.ly/ace445	bit.ly/iiya445
SCREEN SIZE	24.5in	24in	21.5in	24.5in
RESOLUTION	1,920 x 1,080 pixels	1,920 x 1,080 pixels	1,920 x 1,080 pixels	1,920 x 1,080 pixels
SCREEN TYPE	TN	TN	TN	TN
REFRESH RATE	60Hz	75Hz	75Hz	75Hz
CLAIMED RESPONSE TIME	2ms	1ms	1ms	1ms
INTERNAL SPEAKER	2W mono speaker	2 x 2W speakers	2 x 2W speakers	2 x 2W speakers
USB PORTS	X	X	X	2 x USB 2
VIDEO INPUTS	DVI, HDMI, VGA	DisplayPort, HDMI, VGA	HDMI, VGA	DisplayPort, HDMI, VGA
DIMENSIONS	557 x 426 x 175mm	531 x 407 x 215mm	508 x 406 x 189mm	557 x 401 x 197mm
WEIGHT	4.4kg	3.8kg	3.4kg	4kg

OUR VERDICT

Our favourite screen in this group of sub-£150 monitors is the BenQ GL2580HM. Its refresh rate and contrast may be too low for demanding games but it produces great colour and will make Windows dazzle. It also looks far more expensive than it is. We gave it our Gold Award.

If you're a keen gamer, however, consider the Silver Award-winning AOC G2460VQ6 instead. You have to go into its menus to get the best results, but this can be achieved with a preset, so it's not difficult.

If price is your primary concern, the Acer KG221Q costs less than £100 and wins our Bronze Award. Its design is less sophisticated than the other monitors in this test but don't let its cut-price looks fool you – it's a surprisingly good screen. ■





IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE GAME

GOLD PHOENIX™

Immerse yourself in the game with a 32" curved monitor featuring 144Hz refresh rate.

Imagine yourself sitting in front of a 32-inch curved panel. The screen size and the curved design make it easy to perceive all the action happening on the screen. Nothing disturbs your attention so you can fully enjoy the feeling of being pulled in by your favourite game.



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MONITORS  GAMERS



Web User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE

MONITOR

BenQ GL2580HM

£109.99 from bit.ly/benq445

Tested: Issue 445

NEW!



This BenQ monitor's stylish slim bezel and attractive design are matched by its solid performance and good-quality colour display. However, it's not suited to serious gamers.

KEY SPECS

24.5in screen ■ 1,920 x 1,080-pixel resolution ■ 16:9 aspect ratio ■ 16.7 million colours ■ 50-76Hz refresh rate ■ 1,000:1 native contrast ■ 2ms response time ■ HDMI, DVI and VGA ports ■ two 1W speakers ■ 42.6 x 55.7 x 17.5cm ■ 4.4kg

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

SOFTWARE & SERVICES

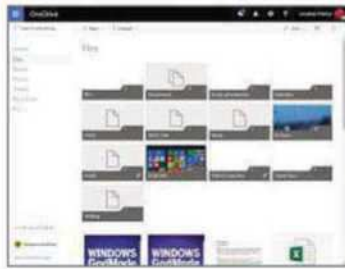
CLOUD-STORAGE SERVICE

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

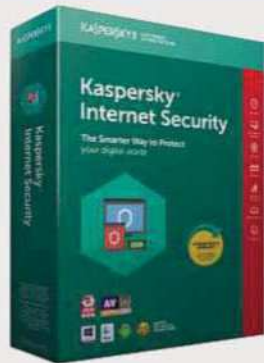
INTERNET SECURITY

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

IMAGE EDITOR

Paint.net

NEW!

Free from www.getpaint.net

Tested: Issue 444

Paint.net sets the bar as the best free image editor around. It has no ads or premium features, just all the tools you need to make your photos look great.



WI-FI SCANNER

Acrylic Wi-Fi Home

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 needs updating, but it works well and has lots of 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.



WEB USER BACK ISSUES DISCS

Search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon

EVERY ISSUE FROM
2014 TO 2017



Best Free Software

SYSTEM CLEANER

BleachBit 2

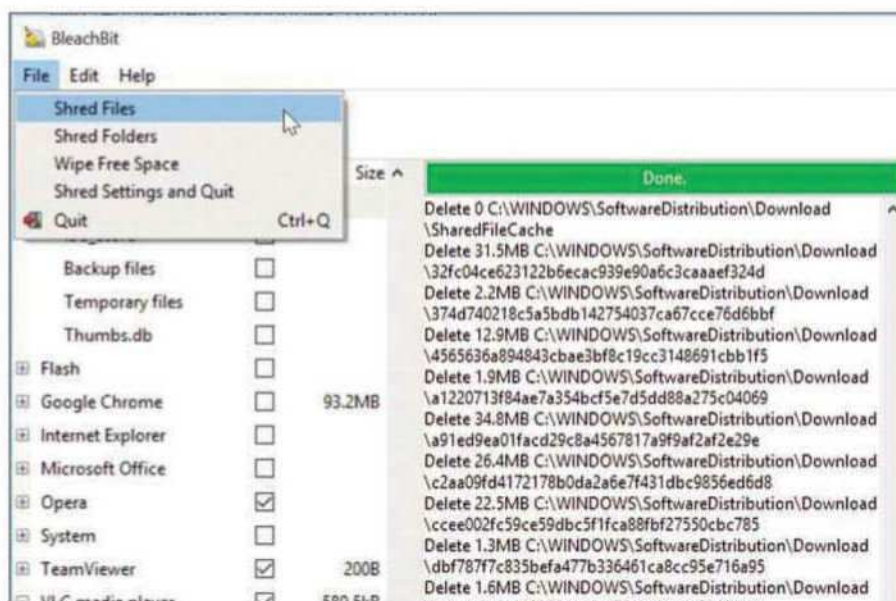
www.bleachbit.org

Min requirements: Windows XP/
Vista/7/8+/10, MacOS or Linux

File size: 8.6MB

Piriform's CCleaner (both the company and the program are now owned by Avast) is by far the best known free system cleaner, but it's not the only one. BleachBit is an excellent, open-source alternative that can remove junk files from your PC, free up space and also protect your privacy by securely shredding personal files, thus preventing anyone from recovering them. The program is very easy to use – you just select the areas to target, click Preview to see the results and click Clean to remove the selected items.

First released back in 2008, BleachBit has been in development for 10 years and has finally hit the version 2.0 milestone, its first update in two years.



This release uses HTTPS encryption in the update checker, so nobody online can identify you, and introduces support for drag and drop.

There are more cleaning options

in the new version, including improvements specific to each of the supported platforms – Windows, Linux and MacOS. In the case of Microsoft's operating system, BleachBit is better at wiping files and will restart Explorer when cleaning thumbnails.

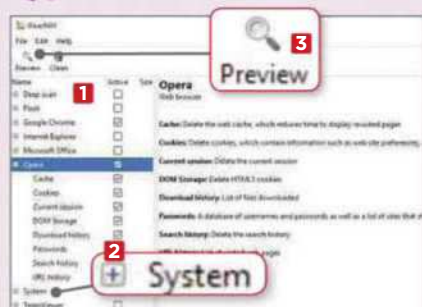
The update also fixes the

option to delete locked files, and improves detection of running processes. The smaller installer is less likely to generate false positives in your antivirus software, too.

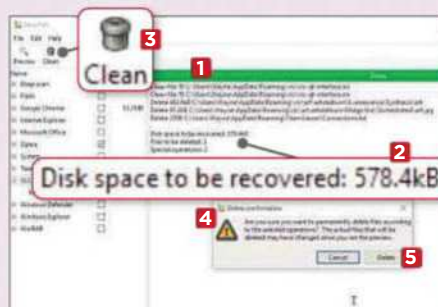
BleachBit doesn't come bundled with all the bonus tools found in CCleaner – there's no Registry cleaner or Startup manager, for example – but if you just want a quick and efficient cleaning tool, then it's definitely worth a look. There's a portable version available, too (see our Weekend Project on page 58 for further portable recommendations).



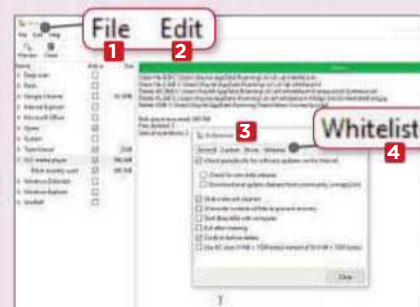
MINI WORKSHOP | Spring-clean your PC using BleachBit



1 Select the areas you want BleachBit to clean by ticking the boxes. **1** Click the plus sign next to a section to expand it. **2** This will let you target specific areas, such as your browser's cache, cookies or history. Next, click Preview **3** to scan these selected areas for junk to remove.



2 You'll be shown a list of items to be cleaned. **1** BleachBit will also show you how much space will be reclaimed afterwards. **2** Click Clean **3** to delete those files. Read the warning that appears, **4** then click Delete **5** to perform the removal. A summary screen will show you what was cleaned.



3 The File menu **1** lets you shred files or folders (so they can't be recovered afterwards), wipe free drive space and quit the program. The Edit menu **2** lets you customise how the software behaves. **3** The whitelist tab **4** lets you specify any files or folders you want BleachBit to avoid cleaning.

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



SYSTEM UPDATER

Patch My PC 4

patchmypc.net

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 1.6MB

This handy free portable tool scans your system looking for old versions of installed programs and lets you update them instantly. Software is marked in green (up to date), red (in need of updating) or black (no longer installed). Apps in need of updating are selected automatically, and you can fetch the latest versions by clicking the Perform Updates button. The new version of Patch My PC features a number of design changes and improvements, and supports many more programs.



VIDEO CONVERTER

500th Video Converter

bit.ly/500th445

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 14.2MB

It may not actually be the 500th video converter, but the latest program from developer Glorylogic is one of the lightest and easiest to use. It can convert videos to and from all the major formats, including AVI, MOV, MKV, WMV, VCD and MP4, and extract audio to MP3, WAV, OGG, FLAC and WMA formats. It can burn videos to CD, DVD and Blu-ray, and supports batch conversion and extraction.



SYSTEM TOOL

Task ForceQuit Pro 2

bit.ly/forcequit445

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 7.5MB

You can kill problematic programs using the Windows Task Manager, but Task ForceQuit is potentially safer. Simply scroll down the list of programs and click the relevant button to make the software Restart or ForceQuit an entry. You can also restart Explorer.exe, or restart or shut down your PC. When installing the program, make sure you untick the 'Saver's Fund' option and click 'Skip and ignore saving others'.

New Windows Apps

Annotation for PDF Pro

bit.ly/anno445

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 23.76MB

Annotation for PDF Pro is a simple PDF editor that lets you add comments or text, and highlight areas of a document. The app supports Windows Inking, and lets you save and share edited files.



Coini

bit.ly/coini445

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 66.16MB

If you invest in cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin or Ethereum, you can use Coini to keep track of your portfolio. It supports all the major cryptocurrencies and pulls its data from CoinMarketCap.



Code of War

bit.ly/codewar445

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 503.6MB

Code of War is a third-person online multiplayer game that looks and plays like Counter-Strike. It's free to play, but spending real money will buy you a distinct advantage.



SYSTEM TOOL

SysHardener

bit.ly/syshard445

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10

File size: 5.7MB

By default, Windows is fairly secure, but SysHardener lets you lock it down much tighter. This free tool gives you control over every aspect of the operating system's security settings, and you can toggle features on or off as required. Functions are listed by group, and include User Account Control, Windows Security Tweaks, File Type Associations, Vulnerable Software Tweaks and Windows Firewall.

There's no detail provided about what each option does, so you may have to investigate further before disabling or enabling a feature. It will, however, alert you to any potential problems. SysHardener also provides direct access to Windows' own System Tools.



SYSTEM TOOL

Auslogics Windows Slimmer

bit.ly/slimmer445

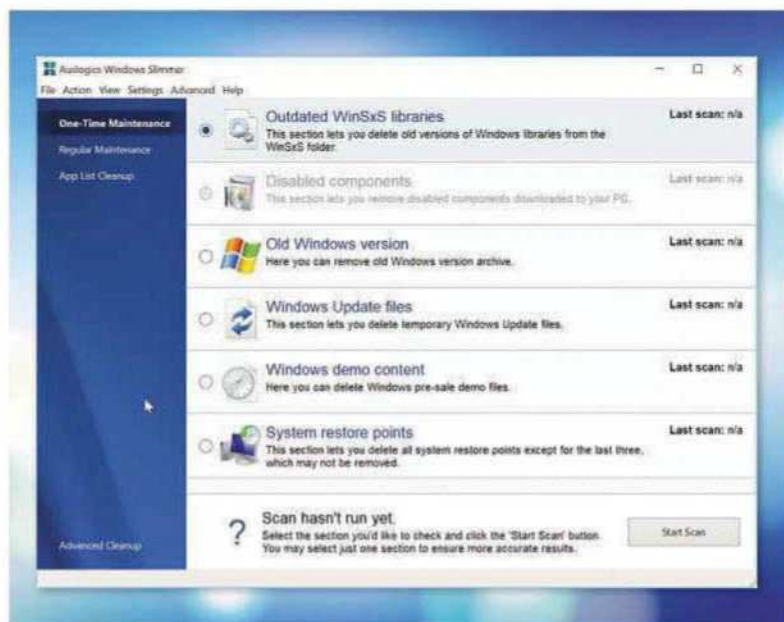
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 12.3MB

Windows Slimmer identifies and removes junk from your PC, offering three cleaning options: One-Time Maintenance, Regular Maintenance and App List Cleanup. With One-Time Maintenance, you select a section to check - options include 'Old Windows version', 'Windows Update files' and 'System restore points' - and click Start Scan. Check what it's found, then click Start Cleanup.

Regular Maintenance is similar but offers different sections, such as Recycle Bin and Temporary Folders.

Be sure to decline the bundled junk and unwanted system changes during installation and look out for a workshop about Auslogics Windows Slimmer in our next issue.



PASSWORD MANAGER

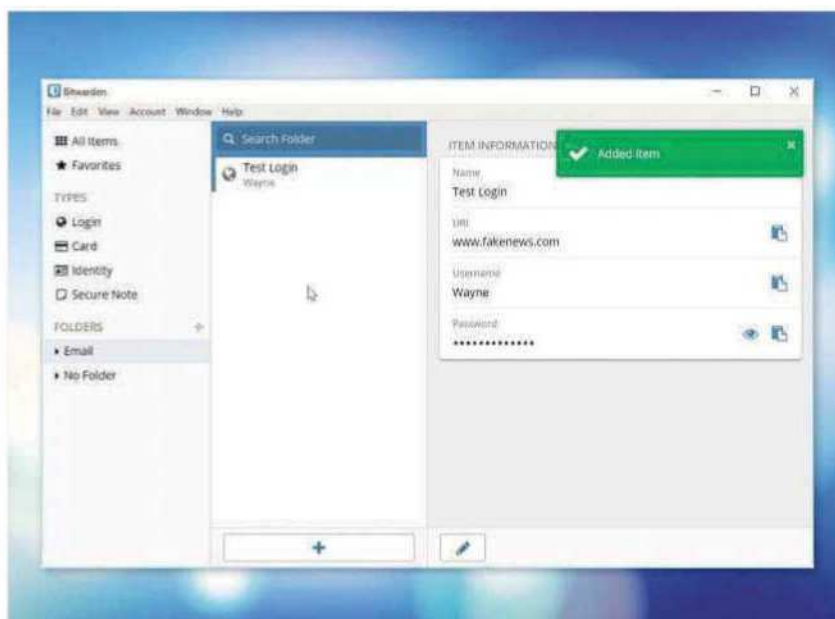
Bitwarden Desktop

bit.ly/bitw445

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10, MacOS or Linux **File size:** 574KB (installer only)

If you struggle to remember your different login details, a password manager is a must. Bitwarden has been available as an extension for all the major browsers for a while, and there's also a web version, as well as apps for iOS and Android. It's now available as a desktop application for Windows, MacOS and Linux, which works in much the same straightforward way as the web version.

As well as storing passwords, BitWarden can generate secure ones, and you can manage your logins in folders. It can also store card details, identity info and secure notes, although some features require a subscription, which costs from \$1 (72p) a month.





GAME

Cosa Nostra

bit.ly/cosa445

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

File size: 40.9MB

Clearly inspired by mobile card game Reigns (in which you rule a medieval kingdom by making a number of simple choices), Cosa Nostra puts you in the shoes of a Mafia Don. How you respond to each situation that arises will affect the state of your money, men, respect and the police.

Don't install...

Bvckup

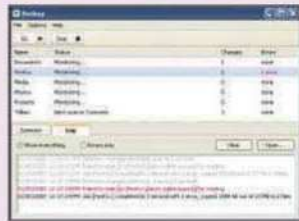
www.bvckup.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 478KB

This free backup tool continuously monitors your folders for changes and updates their backup copies when the originals are modified. It's conveniently small and light, and lets you schedule backups for fixed intervals, but it hasn't had an update for several years, so we wouldn't recommend trusting it with your important files.



...Install this instead

FBackup

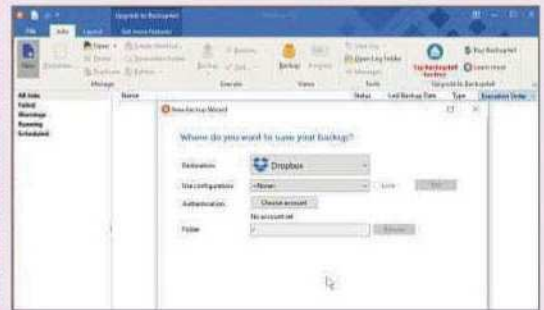
www.fbackup.com

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

File size: 78.7MB

This powerful backup program is incredibly easy to use. Simply click the New button, give your backup a name and an optional description, then click Next and choose a save destination for the copy. This can be a local or networked drive, CD or DVD, or Google Drive or Dropbox cloud storage. Once you've chosen what you want to back up, pick a method – either Full or Mirror, which only backs up files that have changed.

You can password-protect your backup, and schedule future ones to save you having to perform them manually.



UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



AUDIO EDITOR

Audacity 2.2.2

www.audacityteam.org

Min requirements:

Windows 7/8+/10, MacOS or Linux

File size: 19.3MB

Audacity is a superb free multi-track audio editor that can import, improve and mix music files. This update adds drop-out detection when recording, and improved zooming with the mouse wheel. It also fixes a number of bugs.



IMAGE ANNOTATOR

iPhotoDraw 2.5

www.iphotodraw.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 25.6MB

This program lets you annotate your photos. You can add captions, measurements, watermarks, name tags, objects and more. The new release adds extra shapes (parallelogram, trapezoid, block arc) and lets you draw lines with more styles. There are new highlighting tools, too.



MONITOR TOOL

SunsetScreen 1.28

bit.ly/sunset445

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 774KB

The highly customisable SunsetScreen changes the colour of your monitor display in the evenings, reducing the harsh glare and the 'blue light' it produces. The most notable aspect of this updated version is that the tool no longer requires installation – you just download and run it.

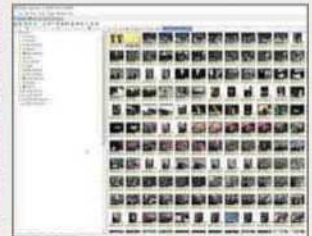


IMAGE VIEWER

XnView 2.44

www.xnview.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 5.4MB

This powerful photo viewer and converter handles most image types (and supports more than 500 formats), and has a wealth of tools for fixing and enhancing photos. Version 2.44 prevents the monitor from powering off during a slideshow and fixes a number of bugs. ■

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



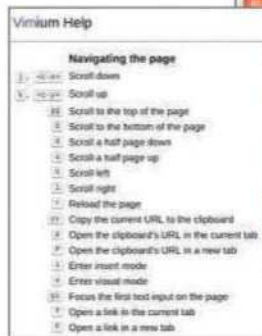
Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

Navigate web pages without clicking

Browsing the web without a mouse is like trying to drive a car without a steering wheel, but all that pointing and clicking takes its toll on your wrist and fingers, and can lead to repetitive strain injury. A new Chrome extension called Vimium (bit.ly/vimium445) offers a handy solution to this problem by letting you navigate web pages using only your keyboard. Just press the F key and yellow bubbles appear over every link, text field, image and other clickable element on the page. Each of these contains a keyboard shortcut that you can type to jump to the relevant item. Pressing O opens a link in a new tab, J and K scroll up and down, R reloads the page, and there are many more useful tricks – type ? to view the full list of shortcuts. You can switch back to your mouse at any time, and disable Vimium on sites that use their own keyboard shortcuts, such as Gmail.



Add Speed Dial to your New Tab page

Some extensions for transforming your New Tab page simply display the time and weather in front of a scenic photo, but Chrome Speed Dial (bit.ly/speed445) gives you much more control over how the page looks and works. As its name suggests, it brings the Speed Dial feature from Opera and Vivaldi to your new tabs, providing one-click access to all your favourite websites and letting you easily add more shortcuts by right-clicking a page and choosing 'Pin to Chrome New Tab'. Clicking the three-dot icon in the top-right corner of a tile lets you edit or remove the bookmark and open the page in a new tab or private window. You can also adjust the size and number



of tiles in the layout settings, change the default search engine (to DuckDuckGo, for example) or hide the search box altogether. Best of all, Speed Dial

Count the words in online articles

Whether you're trying to keep within your Twitter tweet limit or you just want to know how many words are in a particular online article, Word Counter Plus (bit.ly/counter445) is a useful little tool. Simply highlight and right-click

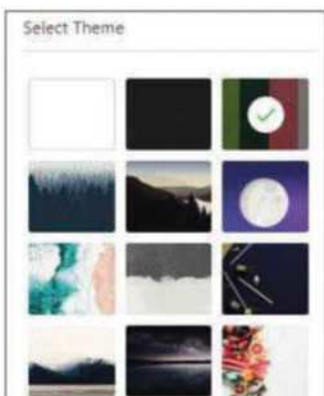


a block of text, select Word Counter Plus and the add-on will tell you the number of words and characters, the average word length and the longest word used in the selection. It works with webmail messages, too, but not in Google Docs.

Control Chrome using your voice



Chrome lets you search the web using your voice via its "OK Google" command, but if you want to make the most of hands-free browsing, you should try Anna Assistant (bit.ly/assistant445). Grant this extension access to your microphone and you can ask the personal assistant to perform all manner of tasks for you, simply by saying "Hey" followed by your request. Anna's tricks include opening a web address, taking a screenshot, playing a YouTube video and finding a location on Google Maps. You can even ask it (or should that be 'her'?) to tell you a joke.



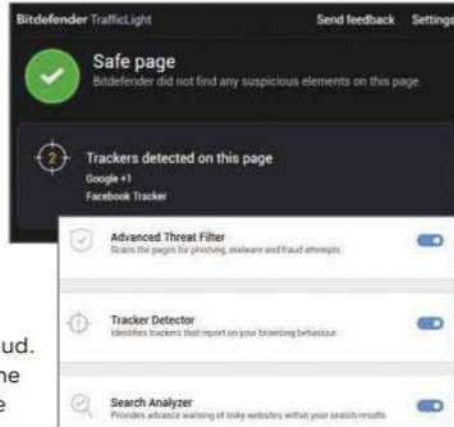
This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more



FIREFOX

Avoid dangerous sites and search results

Bitdefender has created a WebExtension version of its TrafficLight security tool (bit.ly/traffic445) to make it compatible with the latest version of Firefox. Its colour-coding system tells you whether the site you're visiting is safe (green tick) or dangerous (red cross), and rates search results in Google, Bing, DuckDuckGo and others in the same way, based on threats such as malware, phishing scams and online fraud. TrafficLight also detects and displays the names of trackers it's discovered on the current page – although, annoyingly, it doesn't let you block them. The updated tool introduces a whitelist feature that lets you exclude specific sites from Bitdefender's checks. It's not a particularly sophisticated tool, but it works quickly and unobtrusively.



Search across all open tabs

You may already know that pressing Ctrl+F opens a search box that lets you find a particular word, name or other text on the current page, but if you want to find something in a hurry you should install Search Multi Tabs (bit.ly/multi445). This new Firefox extension



places a sidebar in the browser that lets you search across all your open tabs – both their content and their titles. Cleverly, it tells you exactly where

on each tab you can find matches for your search term, with the option to highlight them for easy reference, and lets you click a result to jump straight to it. You can hide and display the sidebar via Firefox's View, Sidebar menu, and choose to make searches case-sensitive and whole-word-only.

Restore missing options to Google Images

As we mentioned in last issue's What's New Online, Google recently removed

the 'View image' button from its image-search results, apparently as a way to tackle copyright infringement (although not a very effective one, in our opinion!). At the same time, it also dropped the handy 'Search by Image' option, which let you look up a picture to discover more about its subject and origin, claiming that most people now access the feature through the search bar of Google Images. If you miss either or both of these options, the good news is that you can get them back by installing View Image Resurrected (bit.ly/view445). Not only does this add-on restore the missing View Image button and 'Search by Image' link to their rightful place, but it adds two useful new options for copying and downloading images.



OTHER BROWSERS



Set an image as wallpaper

Vivaldi has added a new feature to make the browser even more customisable. Its latest beta version (Snapshot 1.15.1104.3) introduces Window Background Image, which lets you decorate the browser with the 'wallpaper' of your choice. To access the new feature, go to Settings, Themes and you'll see Vivaldi's default pattern (more will be added soon). Select the option Show Window Background Image, then click the Select File button to upload an image from your hard drive – Vivaldi suggests textures, patterns or images without too much "visual noise".



Skip Edge's download prompt

When you click a download link in Edge, the browser asks what you want to do with the file: open it, save it or cancel the download. Although this can prove useful when you click a link accidentally, it also slows you down, so you might prefer to disable the prompt.

To do so, click the menu button in Edge, select Settings, then scroll down to Advanced Settings. Choose View Advanced Settings, go to Downloads and set the option 'Ask me what to do with each download' to off. Files will now be downloaded directly, without a prompt.



App of the Fortnight

EDUCATION

BBC Civilisations AR

bit.ly/civardroid445

bit.ly/civarios445

 7.0  11

NEW



To tie in with its current series *Civilisations*, the BBC has launched its first ever augmented-reality (AR) app – and it's absolutely brilliant. Essentially, it turns any environment – home, workplace, street – into a living museum, where you can explore historical artefacts from around the world.

The BBC 2 show, which is still airing and available on iPlayer (see What to Watch Online, page 21), is a follow-up to Kenneth Clark's landmark 1969 series, (also available to view at bit.ly/civtv445) and explores the history of human creativity. The accompanying app lets you examine many of the artefacts and artworks featured in the series up close, using the power of AR to make them magically appear in front of you. Dozens of cultural treasures from around the world – including the Rosetta Stone, an Egyptian mummy's sarcophagus and Rodin's *The Kiss* – can be summoned and explored as if they were physically present.

The realistic-looking, life-size 3D models can be examined from every angle and you can move, scale and rotate them, too. Each item comes with a ton of useful information, as well as interactive elements that let you reveal secrets, such as discovering hidden layers beneath Renaissance masterpieces or restoring ancient artefacts to see what they would have looked like when they were created. You can even take photos of the objects, placed in the environment you are viewing them in. Should you wish, you can disable the AR element and just view the

3D models.

Currently, the *Civilisations* app features more than 30 treasures to view, but further objects will be added via future updates.



Our rating



MINI WORKSHOP

Explore cultural history with Civilisations AR



1 Open the app and point your device towards a well-lit, flat area – a floor or a table, for example. We found that the app works best in landscape mode, so turn your device on its side. Now move your device around slowly until it detects a surface. When it does, you'll see a large white circle. Tapping this will make a 3D image of the planet Earth appear **1** and you'll hear a welcome message.



2 Spin the globe by swiping left and right. Tap one of the yellow dots to display a summary of the artefact it represents, then tap the artefact's icon to make the item materialise in front of you. Swipe left and right to turn the artefact around, or press and hold to move it to a different position. Pinch with two fingers to make the item bigger or smaller – a zoom scale is displayed underneath **1**.



3 There are three icons along the bottom of the screen. Tapping the book icon **1** opens text for you to read about the artefact. Selecting the camera icon **2** lets you take a picture. Tap the torch icon **3** and move the torch's 'spotlight' over the artefact to reveal hidden options, such as spoken descriptions and an X-ray mode that lets you look inside the item. Tap the globe **4** to select another artefact.

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

DIARY

Stories

bit.ly/stories445

 5.0

This attractively designed journal presents your past activities in a timeline. It lets you track your moods and allows you to add people, hashtags, images, location data and more to your entries. Stories also lets you organise your entries into books, which is very handy if you want to collate your thoughts on a specific subject – perfect for collecting recipes, for example, or keeping a reading diary. It's also possible to generate statistics based on weekly averages. Stories is currently in beta, so expect the odd glitch when using the app.



Our rating



PRODUCTIVITY

Otter

bit.ly/otter445

 4.4

Transcribing – typing up voice notes, meetings, lectures and other spoken recordings – can be excruciatingly dull, especially if you're not a fast typist. Otter takes the pain out of transcription by using AI to automate the process almost entirely. Just tap the microphone icon to start recording and, when you've finished, the recording will be analysed and converted into editable text. It's not always 100% accurate but making a few quick edits to correct the odd word is a lot less bother than having to type the whole thing up yourself.



Our rating



BUSINESS

Bing Places for Business

bit.ly/bing445

 4.3

Running your own business these days means carefully maintaining how your company appears in online searches, but that shouldn't stop with Google. Millions of people search the web with Bing, so managing your listings on Microsoft's search engine is important, too. This new app from Microsoft lets you add photos, update your hours of business, improve your listing visibility and more. The app is still in development, so some functions (such as adding your listing to Maps) take you to an external web page.



Our rating



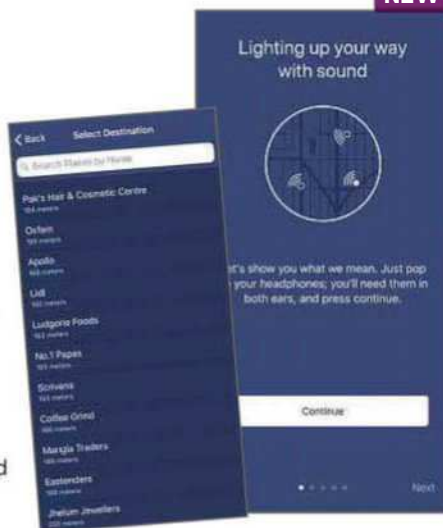
NAVIGATION

Soundscape

bit.ly/sounds445

 10

Soundscape is a brilliant new iPhone app from Microsoft that aims to help partially sighted and blind users navigate their environment and locate places they want to visit, using a 3D sound environment to build a mental picture of the world around them. Headphones are required and, once you've selected a nearby 'beacon' (location), you can put your phone away and listen to the audio clicks that come from the direction of your destination. The app warns you as you near roads and keeps you updated on how far you have yet to travel, but you'll also need to use your existing mobility skills.



Our rating



SOCIAL MEDIA

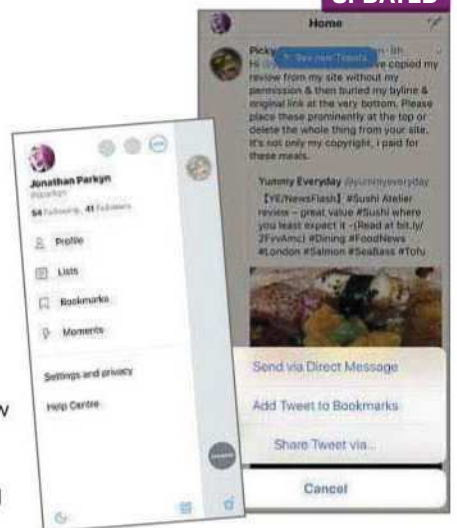
Twitter

bit.ly/twitdroid445

bit.ly/twtios445

 varies  9

A recent update introduces some interesting new tools for users of Twitter's mobile apps. The most significant difference is that you'll now find a new 'share' icon underneath tweets – just tap it to reveal its options. You can quickly send the poster a direct message (DM); select 'Share Tweet via' to send the tweet via email, text message or other means; or, most useful of all, choose to 'Add Tweet to Bookmarks'. Bookmarking tweets is completely new to Twitter – you can now access these at any time by tapping your account icon and selecting Bookmarks.



Our rating



5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

CALENDAR

Home Agenda

bit.ly/agenda445

Price: £2.29

 5.0

This elegantly designed calendar widget allows you to be punctual *and* stylish by displaying upcoming appointments as a semi-transparent list on your home screen.



NOTES

Draw On Screen

bit.ly/draw445

Price: 89p

 4.0

Lots of apps let you annotate PDFs or photos, but Draw On Screen lets you annotate *anything* – your home screen, app pages, whatever's on your screen, basically. Take a screenshot to save your annotation.



VIDEO

Air

bit.ly/air445

Price: £3.70 per month

 8

Smartphones are much more convenient for capturing home movies than camcorders, but they have limited storage.

Air offers unlimited 4K or HD video cloud storage for a monthly fee.

GAME

Gorogoa

bit.ly/gorogoa445

Price: £4.99

 9.3.5

This beautiful, inventive puzzle game presents you with a grid of four illustrations, which you manipulate to reveal hidden secrets. Can video games be art? Gorogoa's stunning visuals are proof to the positive.



GAME

Alto's Odyssey

bit.ly/alto445

Price: £4.99

 10

Another arty game, Alto's Odyssey is the follow-up to the brilliant Alto's Adventure. This endless runner has you on a snowboard, sliding and soaring your way through beautiful landscapes.



Home Agenda



Draw On Screen



Alto's Odyssey



Air



Gorogoa

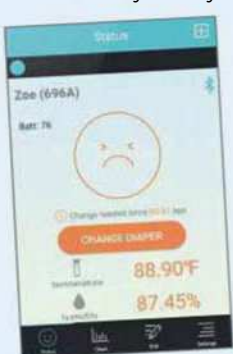


Don't install...

Opro9 SmartDiaper

bit.ly/diaper445

There's a whole industry of unnecessary products aimed at first-time parents, but this one takes the proverbial urine – literally. The idea is that you buy an Opro9 SmartDiaper



wearable Bluetooth humidity sensor (around £45 from bit.ly/sensor445) and place it inside your baby's nappy. Connect the sensor to the app and it will alert you every time your baby has a wee, notifying you that it's time for a nappy change.

...Install this instead

Baby Tracker

bit.ly/babydroid445

 4.1

Infinitely more practical for parents with newborn babies, this activity tracker – free for Android users – allows you to monitor feeding times, sleep patterns, nappy changes and more, and lets you view charts and statistics to monitor the progress of your baby's development over time.

Annoyingly, you can't get this app from the iTunes App Store – the nearest equivalent for Apple users is the also useful Best Baby Tracker (bit.ly/babyios445). The only drawback with both apps is that you'll need to enter the data manually – but at least you won't have to stick an overpriced sensor anywhere weird! ■






















Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your browser by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you guess our Disney 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 DISNEY FILMS FROM THE EMOJI?

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1   | 2   |
| 3    | 4    |
| 5    | 6     |



GUESS THE TECHNOLOGY YEAR

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

1 Music-streaming service Spotify launches in the US, after proving popular in its native Sweden and the UK.



2 Steve Jobs, the co-founder and CEO of Apple, dies of



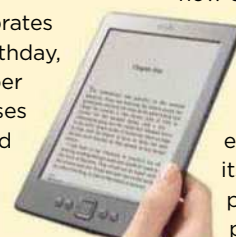
complications relating to pancreatic cancer, aged 56.

3 Google takes on Facebook with its own social network, Google+. It's still



going today, rather surprisingly.

4 Email celebrates its 40th birthday, while the number of web users rises to 2.1 billion, and the number of websites to 555 million.



5 Amazon reveals that ebooks are now outselling physical books, and its Kindle e-reader is its most popular product.

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 5 Kitsound Cube DAB radio

Kitsound's Cube DAB radio charges your phone as you snooze. When you're awake, connect your device and play music through the finely tuned three-watt speakers. The LCD display is dimmable. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'cube' in the subject line. For more info, visit www.kitsound.co.uk and follow @KitSoundUK.



**WORTH
£39.99
EACH**

WIN A... D-Link Outdoor Wi-Fi Camera

D-Link's new Full HD 180° Outdoor Wi-Fi Camera (DCS-2670L) monitors your home's exterior whatever the weather. Its powerful 180-degree f/2.0 panoramic lens enables you to see a wider area, in more detail, with just one camera. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'd-link' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.dlink.com and follow @DLink_UK.

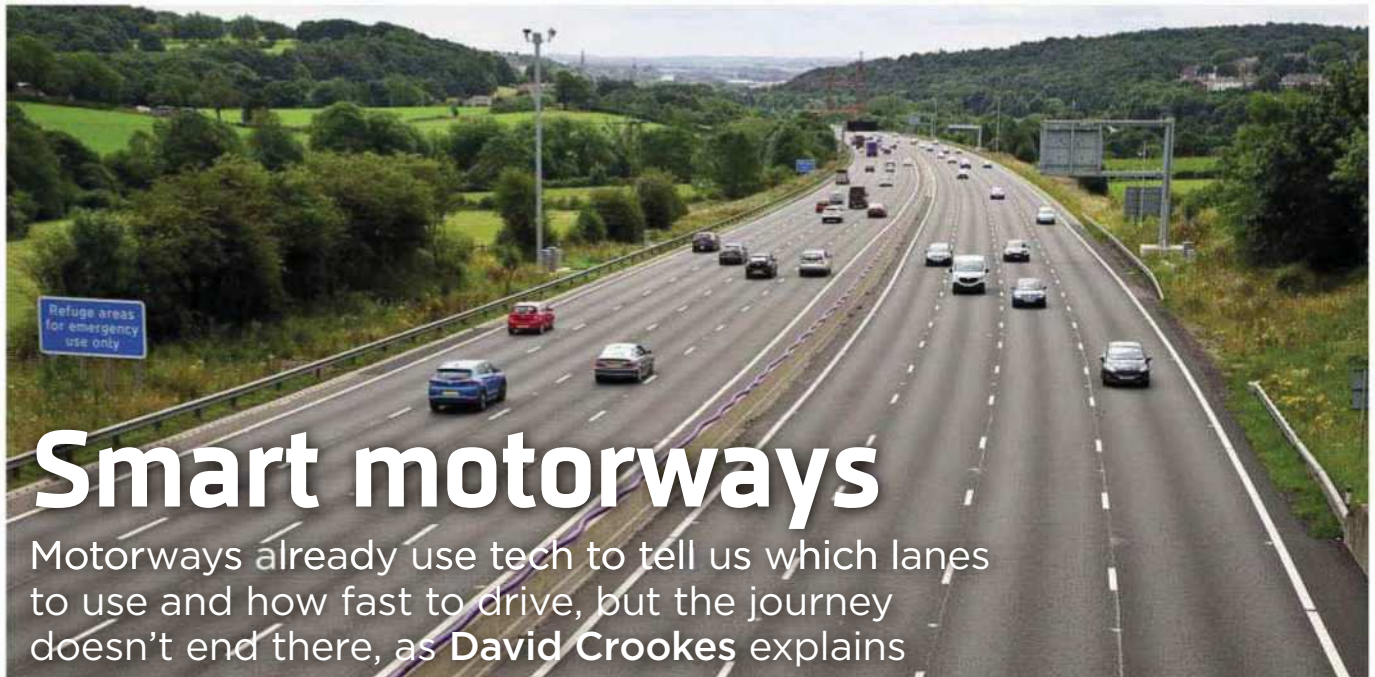


**WORTH
£169.99**



FAQ

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



Smart motorways

Motorways already use tech to tell us which lanes to use and how fast to drive, but the journey doesn't end there, as **David Crookes** explains

What are they?

Smart motorways are sections of our fastest highways that use real-time technology to control the flow of vehicles. Introduced in 2006, when they went by the less buzzy name of 'managed motorways', they can vary the speed limit and allow for the temporary opening of hard shoulders to prevent congestion. Soon, however, they could also be communicating directly with individual drivers and detecting potholes.

What do they look like?

On the face of it, smart motorways look like any regular motorway, only with the addition of electronically lit signs on overhead gantries. These display the current speed limit for a particular stretch of road, but they can also instruct motorists to use the hard shoulder – to keep the traffic flowing – or warn them not to use a particular lane.



Smart motorways tell you the speed limit to adhere to – even when they're empty

Where are they located?

The first stretch of smart motorway was on the M42 in the West Midlands but there has been a rapid expansion since. Today, the main smart motorways are based around London (on the M25, M1, M3 and M20), Bristol (M4 and M5), Birmingham (M6, M42 and M40), Manchester (M60, M62) and other parts of Northern England (M1, M62), while Scotland has one stretch of smart motorway, on the M9.

So not that many, then?

Not really. Although England already has around 236 miles of smart motorway – all operated by Highways England (www.gov.uk/highways) – there are more than 4,300 miles of motorway in total so the current figure accounts for less than 5%. That is set to increase, however, with £3bn being invested in upgrading existing motorways by 2020.



Seemingly never-ending roadworks are the price to pay for smart motorways

One reason why the smart motorway network is not more extensive is that it takes a lot of time to upgrade standard highways. For example, a huge chunk of the northern section of the M60 has been permanently down to 50mph since July 2014, with roadworks causing major annoyance for drivers.

Are all smart motorways the same?

No. There are actually three different types of smart motorway in operation in the UK today and the key distinction between them is how they use the hard shoulder. Controlled motorways, for example, have variable speed limits but retain the hard shoulder for breakdowns and emergencies. Some smart motorways have a 'dynamic' hard shoulder that's used at peak times to increase the traffic flow, while others make permanent use of the hard shoulder as a regular driving lane.

However, the basic principles remain. Sensors are positioned on the road to automatically monitor how many vehicles are travelling along it. If they register a significant increase in cars and lorries, the regional traffic control centre is alerted. Staff then decide on the optimum speed that will keep traffic flowing without intermittent stops and starts. The operators also use roadside cameras to look out for incidents and determine which lanes need to be opened or closed.



Highways England plans to make motorways much smarter

Hang on, that doesn't sound particularly 'smart'!

Granted, there is still human involvement, but smart motorways are set to become even smarter in the future with Highways England planning to lay around 700 miles of high-speed 5G broadband fibre optic cables along the busiest motorways so that live travel information can be beamed to car dashboards (bit.ly/highways445). Costing an estimated £30bn, the scheme will recommend speed limits and potential diversions for most motorways between London, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester and Leeds. However, this technology won't be introduced before 2030.

Guess it won't sort out the potholes, though?

Funny you should say that. Highways England is hoping that technology fitted in cars will spot potholes and automatically transmit the information to the agency so it can schedule repairs. Sensors in the road will also check for concrete degradation and vibration caused by construction so potential problems can be tackled early.



Traffic drones could soon be used to monitor and manage our roads from above

Couldn't they just use an eye in the sky?

There is indeed a plan to use drones to monitor roads and improve response times. A report by Highways England says it is already currently testing drones to inspect structures and they could also be used in a first assessment of incidents.

How do I know what to do on smart motorways?

Just look out for the signs. A number in a red circle indicates the legally enforceable speed limit, while a red X above a lane tells motorists to vacate it as soon as its safe to do so. If you see a solid white line, then you're free to use the hard shoulder. A broken white line indicates a lane that's running normally. Another electronic sign may use words to alert you of problems ahead, such as "destruction, slow down".

What if I break down?

If the hard shoulder is in action, the advice is for drivers to pull over as normal. But if it's being used for live traffic, motorists are expected to use emergency refuge areas located every 1.6 miles, instead. To help drivers spot



If your car breaks down on a smart motorway, pull into a special orange area

these areas and to discourage their use in non-emergency situations, a trial is underway to colour them orange to make them more visible. Other potential stopping points are motorway services, a slip road or even a verge, if it's safe.

How are these rules enforced?

More cameras are positioned along the route, keeping an eye on the road and on drivers. They're active all day, every day, and can even record and fine motorists breaking the 70mph limit if that is in force, resulting in a minimum £100 fine and a three-point penalty.

And are people getting caught?

Too right! Last year, in a section of the M1 between Tibshelf services and junction 29A at Duckmanton, four cameras captured 8,382 drivers. This, in combination with statistics suggesting 1,000 drivers each week are being issued tickets on roads with variable speed limits, has led to accusations of revenue-raising (one of those caught on the M1 was going at 128mph so not everyone is undeserving).



Speed cameras are in force to catch not-so-smart drivers

But is it all worth it?

Highways England bosses reckon so. Congestion on the motorways and major road networks in England alone is estimated to cost £2bn each year, and that's set to rise as traffic intensifies. Another bonus is a reported fall in the number of accidents on smart motorways. Personal injury accidents on the M42, for example, are shown to have halved, while improving journey reliability by 22%. Police in Derbyshire also say they've been called out to fewer crashes at a particular junction: before the smart motorway, there had been 124 collisions and a year later just 52. So maybe it's not such a dumb idea, after all.

KEY FEATURES OF A SMART MOTORWAY

USE OF SENSORS

Sensors are placed at the roadside to inform the motorway control room about current traffic flow

MONITORING CAMERAS

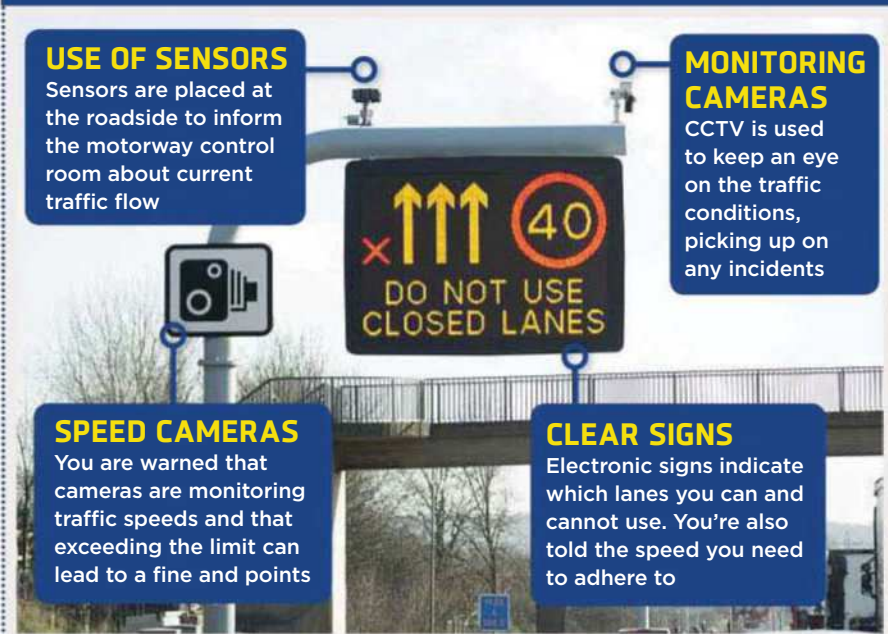
CCTV is used to keep an eye on the traffic conditions, picking up on any incidents

SPEED CAMERAS


You are warned that cameras are monitoring traffic speeds and that exceeding the limit can lead to a fine and points

CLEAR SIGNS

Electronic signs indicate which lanes you can and cannot use. You're also told the speed you need to adhere to



Credit: Highways England



The New & Improved WINDOWS 10

COVER
FEATURE

Windows 10 is about to get a whole lot better. **Wayne Williams** highlights the most useful and intriguing new features in the forthcoming Spring Creators Update

When Microsoft announced that Windows 10 would be the “last version” of the operating system, many of us were sceptical about whether it would stick to its word. Nearly three years on, we’re now accustomed to its ongoing six-monthly update schedule, although it’s fair to say that the last big one, the Fall Creators Update released in October, was pretty underwhelming.

Happily, the next release – rumoured to be called the Spring Creators Update and codenamed Redstone 4 – looks more interesting, introducing some welcome

improvements, fixing longstanding problems and tweaking Windows 10’s settings for the better. At the time of writing, the release date had yet to be confirmed, but we expect it to be sometime in April. Because we are members of Microsoft’s Insider Programme, we’re able to bring you this exclusive preview of the update.

In this feature, we round up the best new tools, most notable changes and secrets to unlock in the Windows 10 Spring Creators Update. We also reveal which settings you really must change, and explain how to avoid problems when upgrading to the new version.

BEST NEW TOOLS TO TRY IN WINDOWS 10

Return to previous Windows tasks using Timeline

Your web browser remembers every web page you visit, which makes it easy to return to a site you've previously looked at. Wouldn't it be great if your operating system could do the same and remember the different tasks you've been working on?

Windows 10 already remembers your 15 most frequently accessed folders and 20 most recently opened files, but its excellent new Timeline feature (which was originally intended to be part of the Fall Creators Update) gives you the ability to view all the apps and files you've been working on across your various Windows devices.

In future, Timeline will even work with Microsoft's many iOS and Android apps, and possibly apps from third-party developers, too. It also shows you all the web pages you've visited in Microsoft's

Edge browser – though not, sadly, in any other browsers (at least, not yet).

The Spring Creators Update also adds a new Activity History Settings page to Windows 10, which lets you select the accounts that appear in Timeline, so you can include the whole family or select specific users. Additionally, Cortana can now suggest activities from Timeline that you might like to resume.

If you're worried about Timeline compromising your privacy, you can delete all activities from a given hour or day directly from the right-click menu. If you're not bothered, there's also a new Settings option that lets you sync your activities to the cloud for what Microsoft describes as a "seamless cross-device experience". Your Timeline will only show four days of activity until this option is enabled.

Although the feature is currently limited to specific programs and apps, Microsoft plans to increase support over time, significantly improving Timeline's usefulness. Find out how to use this new tool in our Mini Workshop, below.

Eliminate distractions using Focus Assist

Each major update to Windows 10 has introduced changes and improvements to Quiet Hours, Microsoft's 'Do not disturb' feature. If you're not familiar with Quiet Hours, it essentially lets you specify a period when the operating system won't bother you with notifications, application alerts and



Prevent interruptions in Windows 10 at specific times using Focus Assist

other annoying interruptions – such as at bedtime. However, in the latest version of Windows 10, Quiet Hours is no more. No, Microsoft hasn't scrapped the feature, it's simply renamed it Focus Assist, which it feels is a more fitting name given its expanded purpose, which is to help you concentrate on whatever you're doing, without annoying and unwelcome distractions.

In addition to the new name, Focus Assist performs a few new tricks, such as automatically turning on when you play a game. You can manage and configure the feature through its Settings, found by clicking System, Focus Assist. Right-clicking the Action Centre button in the system tray lets you toggle between three modes (Off, 'Priority only' and 'Alarms only').



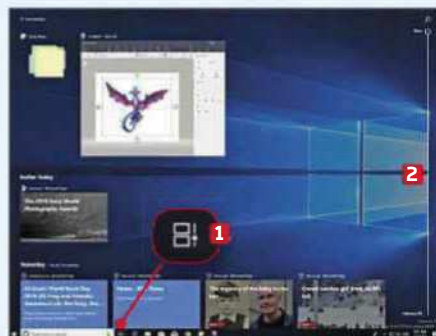
You can clear your Timeline to stop people seeing what you've been doing



MINI WORKSHOP | Discover Windows 10's new Timeline tool



1 Before you can use Timeline, you'll need to turn on the feature. Open Settings and go to Privacy. Click Activity History **1** and enable 'Let Windows collect my activities from this PC' **2** and 'Let Windows sync my activities from this PC to the cloud' **3**. Disable any accounts you don't want to appear in Timeline. **4**



2 Continue using your PC as you would normally, and Windows 10 will remember your activity. When you want to pick up where you left off on a task, click the Timeline button **1** next to the search box (which is where the Task View button was previously) and Timeline will open. **2**



3 Timeline shows apps you've been working in **1** and web pages you've visited. **2** Use the scrollbar **3** to browse through your past history. You can also see all activities from a specific day by clicking the link. **4** If you can't find what you're looking for, search for it. **5** Click an activity to resume it.

WHAT'S BEEN REMOVED FROM WINDOWS 10

HomeGroup sharing

HomeGroup, which was introduced in Windows 7, provided an easy way for users to share pictures, music, videos, documents and printers with other people on their network. These days, this functionality is built into Windows 10 and various apps, making HomeGroup redundant, which is why Microsoft has killed off the HomeGroup service in this newest Windows 10 update, although the user profile used for file/folder/printer sharing continues to work.

Microsoft recommends you use OneDrive and OneDrive Files On-Demand to store and share files instead of HomeGroup. If you prefer not to use the cloud, Windows 10's built-in Share functionality will let you connect to folders and printers over your home network.



Microsoft Reader

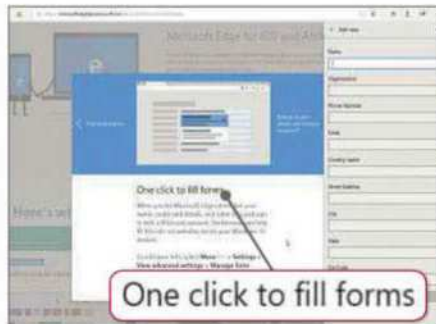
Microsoft first launched Reader back in 2000 as a freeware tool for reading ebooks. The company included the app in Windows 8.1 and made it available as a free download for Windows 10. However, because you can now open PDFs and EPUB books directly in Microsoft Edge (or any other browser for that matter), there's no real need for it. Microsoft announced the decision to retire the tool from February, and Reader will no longer work in the Fall Creators Update, either.

Control Panel settings

Microsoft continues to migrate features from the Control Panel to its Settings app. Elements such as Fonts, Display, Sound and Language are all now accessible through Settings. As well as being able to manage typefaces through the Settings app, you can now buy and download new fonts from the Microsoft Store.

Smarter reading and writing in Edge

Microsoft has been working hard on improving its browser, and it's quickly catching up with the likes of Chrome and Firefox, although it's not quite there yet. Changes in the latest update include a bit of a makeover using Microsoft's Fluent Design language (which is like a modern version of Aero) and the ability to mute tabs.



Edge's improved auto-complete function fills in payment information for you

If you're reading a free EPUB book from the web in your browser, you'll now be able to save a copy so you can pick up where you left off. There are also new right-click menu options for books. The Web Media Extensions package, which adds support for open-source formats (OGG Vorbis and Theora) and was originally an optional extension for Edge, is now included as standard.

In addition, Edge can now save and automatically fill in card information on web-payment forms and there are new grammar tools to check your writing. Edge has finally added a long-requested full-screen reading mode, too – you adjust the text spacing in its reading view, making pages easier to read.

Share files wirelessly with Near Share

Near Share is Microsoft's answer to Apple's AirDrop and lets you wirelessly share files and URLs with nearby PCs

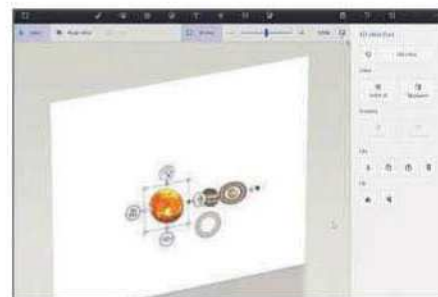


Windows 10's new Near Share feature lets you share files via Bluetooth

and laptops (provided they are running this update of Windows 10) via Bluetooth. The feature can be turned on in the Action Center or under Settings. You will need to have Bluetooth on your computer to see this option.

Easily edit 3D objects in Paint 3D

Microsoft's Paint 3D app, included with Windows 10, made its debut with the Creators Update last year and has just been updated to offer a new 3D View mode that's accessible from the toolbar. This is designed to significantly improve the ease and accuracy of editing 3D objects. It lets you edit from any angle, and orbit, pan and zoom around your 3D creation. You don't need to be using the new version of Windows 10 to access this feature because it will work in the Fall Creators Update, provided you've updated the Paint 3D app.



It's now much easier to examine and edit 3D objects in the Paint 3D app

Get more from the Camera app

The Windows Camera app has also been updated and offers a more personalised experience. It remembers the last camera and scene used, and lets you handle two cameras simultaneously. It also offers more resolution options.



The updated Windows Camera app lets you use two cameras at once

WINDOWS 10 SETTINGS YOU MUST CHANGE

Privacy options

As with all releases of Windows 10, privacy remains a worry so we're pleased that the Spring Creators Update addresses some of our concerns. If you perform a clean install of the updated operating system, you'll be able to use the new setup screens to configure the privacy options and get everything exactly how you want it. If you're performing a straight update, you'll be able to make the same changes by going to Settings, Privacy.



The Spring Creators Update gives you more control over your privacy settings

From here, you can set various privacy options, such as preventing apps tailoring advertising to your interests, stopping Windows tracking app launches and disabling suggested content in the Settings app. The sidebar



Delete your diagnostic data to remove info Microsoft has collected about you

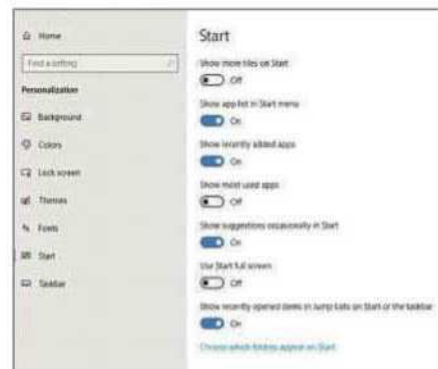
lets you configure settings for speech, inking and typing, diagnostics and feedback, activity and app permissions. You'll definitely want to go into the 'Diagnostics & feedback' section to switch from full diagnostic data collection to basic. The newest version of Windows 10 adds an optional 'Diagnostic data viewer' that lets you

see what data is being collected and sent to Microsoft. A word of warning though – once enabled, this viewer can use up to 1GB of hard drive space.

Also new in this section is the ability to delete diagnostic data previously collected by Microsoft on your PC. Click the Delete button under 'Delete diagnostic data' and a request will be sent to Microsoft. This page also points out that "If you have a Microsoft Account, there may be additional diagnostic data to delete. You can manage and delete any additional data by accessing your Microsoft Account portal". This is definitely worth doing – just visit the portal at bit.ly/msaccount445.

Customise Windows 10's interface

The Spring Creators Update, like all versions of Windows 10 before it, is highly customisable. You can make lots of changes by going to Settings, Personalisation. From here, you can change the Windows wallpaper and the default colour scheme, including having Windows automatically pick an accent colour from your desktop background. You can customise the Lock Screen (see the screenshot below) and apply a different theme to Windows. New themes – which include wallpaper, sounds, accent colours and more – can be downloaded directly from the Microsoft Store.



If you don't like the way Windows 10 looks, you can personalise its appearance

The Start menu can also be customised from the Personalisation Settings page. Options include showing more tiles, showing the app list in the Start menu and turning off unwanted app suggestions (or as we call it, 'advertising'). A new option lets you choose which folders appear on Start. You can further customise the Start menu by clicking the Start button and dragging the tiles around to reorder them. Right-click a tile to remove or

WHAT'S MISSING IN THIS UPDATE

Tabbed interface Sets

Sets, like Timeline, is a new feature designed to help boost productivity. It ensures everything related to what you're working on – including web pages, documents, files, images and slideshows – is accessible in the one application, via tabs. These Sets can be saved, so you can pick up where you left off from elsewhere. However, while an early version of the tool appeared in some of the Insider Redstone 4 builds, Microsoft realised it wouldn't be finished in time to

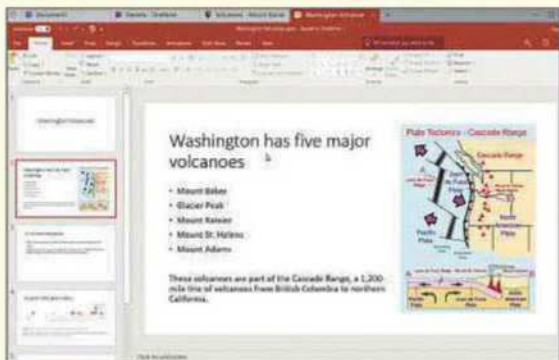
make this release, so it was dropped. It should reappear in the following feature update, due in the autumn.

Cloud Clipboard

Cloud Clipboard is another exciting feature that Microsoft failed to get ready in time for this new Windows 10 update. With this tool, text, images or files you copy will be saved to the cloud ready for pasting into apps on other devices on your network (and possibly over the internet). It will work across Windows 10 PCs, iOS

and Android apps, and Microsoft Office, and will be entirely optional – so if you don't have a need for the feature, you can keep it disabled.

Cloud Clipboard was originally intended to be part of the Fall Creators Update, and while it's expected to show up in Redstone 5, it still may not be ready in time.



resize it, or toggle the live tile functionality on or off.

The Personalisation Settings page also lets you customise the taskbar. There are lots of options, including setting the taskbar to automatically hide, using smaller buttons and combining buttons to make things look tidier.

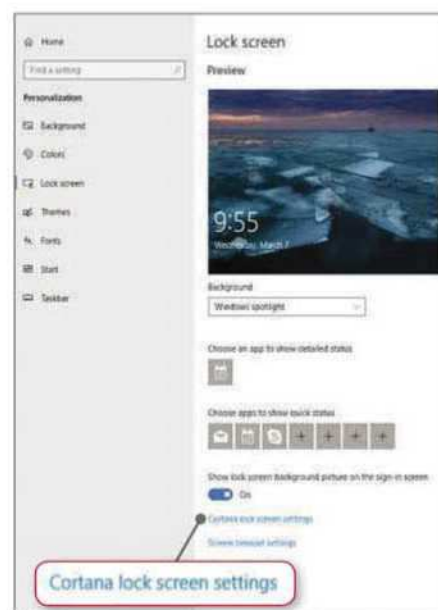
Hack the Lock Screen to suit your needs

The Windows 10 Lock Screen provides a useful degree of security, requiring you to enter a password before you can access your desktop. However, if you find it more of a hindrance than a help, you can disable it by typing `run` in the search box, hitting Enter and typing `netplwiz` in the Run box. Click OK and highlight your account, then untick 'Users must enter a username and password to use this computer' and click Apply. Now enter your password,

confirm it and click OK, then restart your PC and you'll be automatically logged into Windows without needing to enter a password.

If you're happy to keep the Lock Screen in place, the Spring Creators Update introduces some changes that are certainly worth making. Open Settings, go to Personalisation and select Lock Screen on the left. From here, you can select an app to show its detailed status on the screen and pick multiple apps for quick status updates. You can change the type of background you require (Microsoft's Spotlight, Picture or Slideshow) or disable the background image entirely.

It's also possible to interact with Cortana directly from the Lock Screen, but if you'd rather disable this option, click the 'Cortana lock screen settings' link and flick the toggle switch on the next page to Off.



There are now extra options to make the Windows Lock Screen more useful

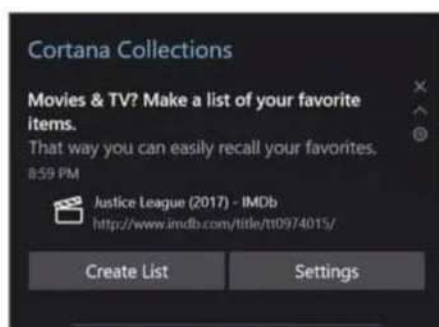
NEW SECRETS TO UNLOCK IN WINDOWS 10

Try Cortana's secret commands

Not everyone uses Microsoft's digital assistant but if you do, you'll be pleased to know that it has been made even smarter in this new update. Cortana will now suggest activities you might want to resume when you switch to other Cortana-enabled devices, such as using specific apps and files. You can enable this feature by going to Settings, Cortana and selecting 'Cortana across my devices'. These are the same activities that appear in Timeline.

There's a useful new Cortana Collections feature that monitors your browsing and lets you create collections of items such as books and DVDs that can be synced across devices with Cortana. Annoyingly, this is currently a US-only feature, so you'll need to wait until it's introduced in the UK before you can use it. It's optional, too, so Cortana won't be recording your browsing if you don't want it too.

Although it's not available yet, Cortana will also be coming to the

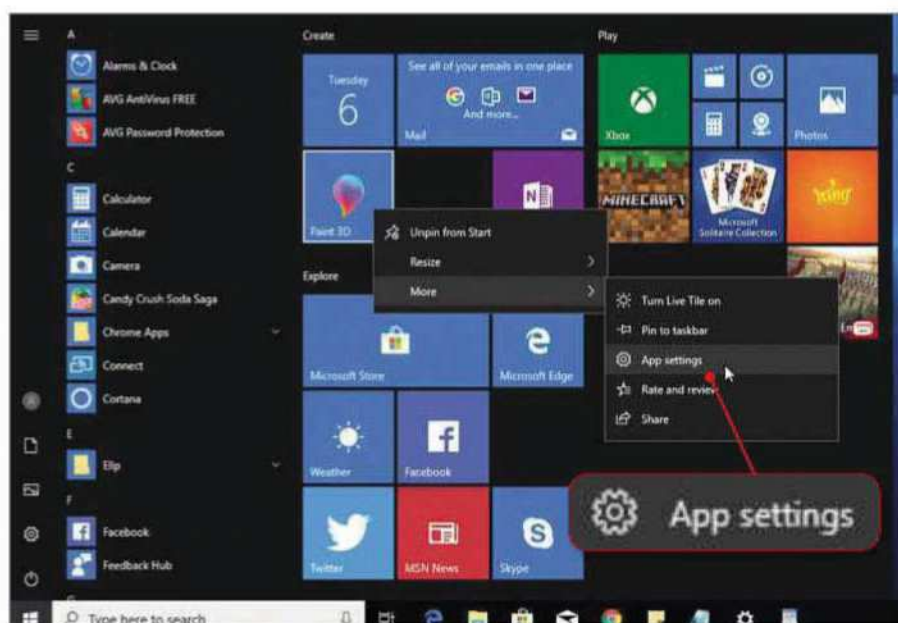


Cortana lets you create collections of items as you browse - if you're in the US

Outlook email and calendar app for iOS and Android in the near future.

Access hidden app settings

You can now access settings for installed apps directly from the Start menu, which saves a lot of time, although the new feature isn't immediately obvious. Click the Start menu, right-click the app you want to customise, go to the More menu and select 'App settings'. This will open the Settings menu for that particular app, and you'll be able to manage permissions (what the app can and can't access on your PC) and change the default app choices.

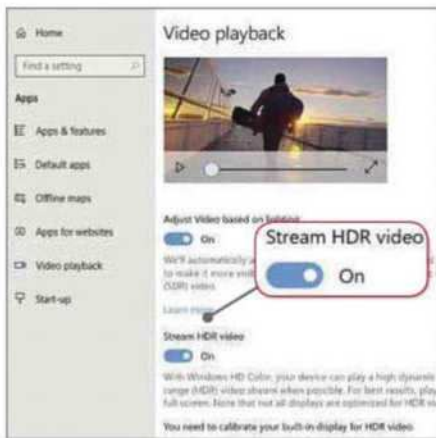


You can now change the settings for apps directly from the Start menu

Boost video quality to HDR

HDR (High Dynamic Range) video offers a more heightened dynamic range (the contrast between the brightest whites and the darkest blacks) and delivers a more detailed, more natural and - well - more realistic result. HDR video support isn't new - Windows 10 has offered it for a while - but in this release, the feature has been made available to more users. If your system is compatible (it may not be), go to Settings, Apps, 'Video playback', where you should be able to toggle the 'Stream HDR video' setting to On.

By default, HDR video uses the full brightness of your screen, so be warned

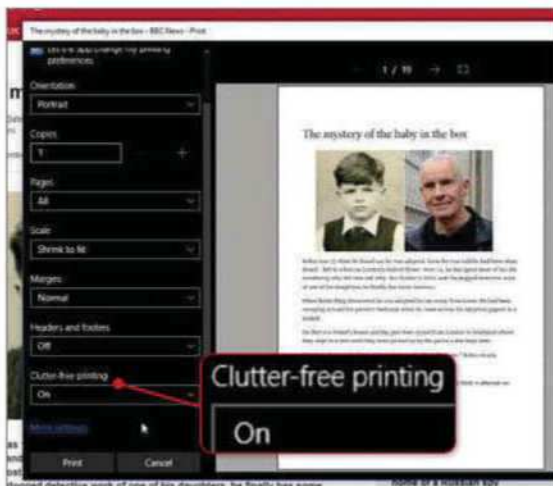


Make videos look more realistic by turning on the secret HDR-streaming setting

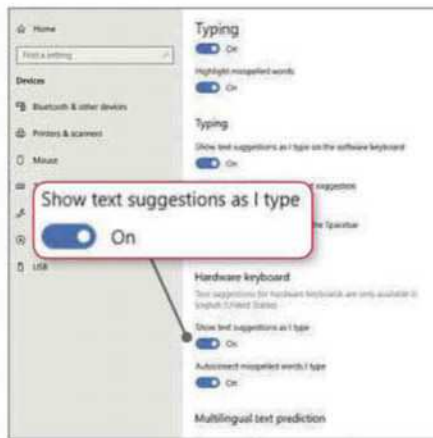
if you're using it on a laptop that it will consume significantly more battery life.

Print web pages without clutter

Edge has a new 'Clutter-free' option that removes ads and other junk from web pages prior to printing. When you go to print a page, you'll see a 'Clutter-free printing' option at the bottom of the left-hand sidebar. When you enable this, the changes will be shown immediately in the preview window on the right.



Save ink and paper by printing pages using Edge's clutter-free options



Get the text-suggestions feature from your phone on your PC keyboard

See text suggestions as you type

When you type on your phone or tablet's virtual keyboard, suggested words appear as you tap so you can pick one and quickly move on to the next word. The Spring Creators Update introduces a similar feature for physical PC keyboards. Like many of the lesser-known new options in this update, it currently only works with English-US, so you need to have this installed and in use before you can enable the function.

To enable the feature, go to Settings, 'Time & languages', 'Region & languages'. Once that's done, go to Settings, Devices, Typing and enable 'Show text suggestions as I type' under Hardware keyboard. There's also the option to 'Autocorrect misspelled words I type'.

Once the feature is turned on, open any text program, such as Notepad, WordPad or Sticky Notes. As you type, you'll see three potential matches appear above, ready for you to select. These update and change as you continue to type.

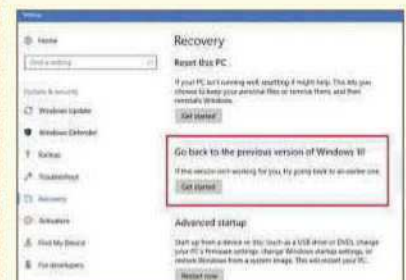
AVOID INSTALLATION PROBLEMS

Previous Windows 10 updates have caused installation woes for some users. Ideally, you should avoid installing the new update until it is offered to your system. You'll see an alert when the update is available, though you can manually install the OS at any time by using the Media Creation Tool (bit.ly/mct445), if you're happy to take the risk.

Back up all your important personal files and use a tool such as CCleaner (www.ccleaner.com) to remove any junk from your system before beginning the upgrade. A clean install will always be less problematic than an upgrade, although it will take a lot longer because you'll need to reinstall your software and copy back all your personal files once the upgrade completes.

Pay careful attention during the installation process and make sure you set up the update exactly how you want it.

If you run into any problems, you can always roll back the upgrade. Go to Settings, Update & Security, click the Recovery link on the left and select 'Get started' under 'Go back to the previous version of Windows 10'.



NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 4 April 2018



Unlock secret features and beat restrictions in your favourite video-streaming services

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- SANDBOXING SOFTWARE**
Best free tools to protect your PC from malicious programs
- SOLVE YOUR WI-FI WOES**
Find out what's slowing your wireless connection
- STREAMLINE WINDOWS**
Speed up your PC - remove features you don't need

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Better than Facebook?

If you're fed up with Facebook, tired of Twitter and irritated by Instagram, why not join a more interesting social network? **Robert Irvine** looks at five contenders



www.vero.co

What is it?

Vero has received lots of press coverage as "the new Instagram everybody's talking about", but it actually launched back in 2015. It's available for Android and iOS, and topped the charts for both app stores at the end of February.

chronologically, and isn't curated or manipulated in any way; instead, "you see what has been shared with you when it has been shared with you".

Best of all, Vero has no sponsored adverts and claims that it won't sell your information to third parties.

What's the catch?

Vero doesn't use traditional paid-for advertising and plans to make money by charging users an annual subscription fee, although this isn't yet in effect and the cost has yet to be confirmed. The first million subscribers have free access to Vero for life, but many have complained of bugs and outages in the service, which is still in beta.

Is it better than Facebook?

It's certainly great to join a social network that doesn't target you with ads, harvest your data and curate what you see, but Vero doesn't bring anything special to the table. Its surge in popularity can be attributed to unhappy Instagram and Snapchat users seeking a new service, as well as its 'first million for free' offer and the amount of hype.



nextdoor.co.uk

What is it?

Described as "the private social network for your neighbourhood", Nextdoor takes Facebook's local-groups feature and turns it into a standalone website with accompanying Android and iOS apps. It's been around since 2011 in the US and last year took over the UK community site Streetlife, much to the chagrin of many of the latter's million users, who don't like the way Nextdoor displays members' real names and addresses.

Like Streetbank (see opposite page),



Nextdoor is a local site for local people that connects you with neighbours

Nextdoor lets you give away and pick up household items from your neighbours (as well as sell and buy them), but it goes far beyond being a mere online bulletin board. Users can request and offer services such as childminding, dog walking and house sitting; recommend plumbers, cleaners and other tradespeople; share information about transport problems, shopping discounts and crime concerns; post details of lost and found items; or just converse with people in the area and ask them to stop blocking your driveway!

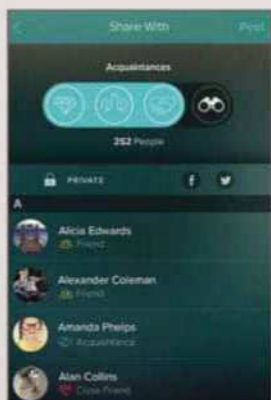
Nextdoor's tidy, Facebook-style interface works well on both desktop and mobile, which makes it easy to post messages, photos and polls, and search for specific info. When you join the service, you're either assigned to the relevant neighbourhood for your address or given the option to create one, and can invite your friends and family – provided they're local. Each neighbourhood has a 'lead' member, who has additional privileges and acts as a group moderator. You're encouraged to build your 'reputation' through recommendations, invites and other interaction.



Your home is marked on a neighbourhood map – unless you hide it



Invite your teacher for a bagel without being targeted by bagel ads



Vero lets you put your contacts into four distinct categories

Similar to Instagram, Vero lets you post photos, videos and messages on your profile, as well as recommendations for music, films, TV shows and books. As with Facebook, you can chat and share content with friends, but Vero gives you a lot more control. When you connect with someone for the first time, be they close friends, acquaintances, colleagues or followers, you designate a category for that person so they only see content aimed at them.

Vero doesn't use algorithms, which means that, unlike Facebook or Instagram, your feed is organised

What's the catch?

To sign up with Nextdoor, you need to verify where you live by providing your phone number or address, which you may find intrusive – particularly as your home is then marked on the neighbourhood map (unless you change your privacy settings). The competitive system of leads and reputations is also a little off-putting.

Is it better than Facebook?

Nextdoor is a great way to get to know your neighbours, but as with any social network (or neighbourhood), it may bring you into contact with disagreeable and annoying members. At least you can see their real names, though this lack of privacy is also one of the site's weaknesses.



What is it?

Whether you need a drill to put up a shelf or you want to get rid of your old sofa, Streetbank connects you with people in your neighbourhood who can help. Launched in 2010, it's since merged with several similar sites and provides an easy way to lend and borrow items, bag yourself useful freebies and offload your old junk – and it's less nosy than Nextdoor.

Streetbank has more than 29,000 active users in the UK, who were sharing "110,826 things" at the time of writing, across categories including Gardening Equipment, Tools & DIY and Tuition (you can offer services as well as products). Registration is free and you earn points for interacting with other members, which help you to climb your community leaderboard.

What's the catch?

There's no guarantee that any Streetbank members will live particularly near you – the site counts neighbours as people living within a one-mile radius, which can be expanded to 10 miles if



Streetbank lets you grab freebies from neighbours and offload your own junk

you live in a rural (or miserly) area. Also, to deter freeloaders, you're required to offer something when you sign up, even if it's only a book or a CD.

Is it better than Facebook?

Streetbank's 'help thy neighbour' approach is a welcome contrast to Facebook's shower of self regard, and rather than merely offering an online platform to connect with people you already know, there's the potential to connect with strangers who you can easily meet up with in the real world.



What is it?

Steemit is more like Reddit than Facebook, with a similar pared-down design and options to 'upvote' and comment on content shared by others. The key difference is that Steemit is a blockchain-based social network, which lets you profit from your participation, rewarding you when your posts get upvoted and for helping to "curate" content by upvoting other people.

Payment is made in a cryptocurrency called Steem (steem.io), which currently ranks 29th for value in the digital currency exchange. Every day, Steemit creates new units of the currency, distributing it to users who can exchange them for real money. It's free to sign up with the site and there are no restrictions on what you post (provided it's legal), with content organised using keyword tags rather than categories. Steemit also has a spin-off site called DTube (d.tube) that lets you share and earn Steem from videos.

What's the catch?

Steemit's anything-goes policy makes its content a very mixed bag, with some posts that are clearly adverts. We're also baffled by how the payment system actually works, especially because there are three different kinds of Steem currency units, one of which can't be cashed in for two years!



Earn cryptocurrency by posting content on the social network Steemit

Is it better than Facebook?

We like the idea of getting paid to post on social media, but Steemit needs better organisation and more rigorous vetting. There are already users selling 'vote packages' to those who want to cheat the system and rake in the Steem.



What is it?

Cookpad is a tasty mix of Pinterest and BBC Food, offering foodies a place to share recipes, tips and photos. It's based in Japan but has offices around the world, and boasts more than two million recipes (around 5,000 of which are from the UK) and 50 million users.

You can search the site and mobile app by ingredient to find a suitable dish; bookmark and print recipes with a single click; and post your own ideas for others to try. The social part comes from users posting their experiences with each others' recipes, including photos – called Cooksnaps. You can also track how many times your recipes have been liked, bookmarked, printed and more. Cookpad is completely free to use, with instructions that are reliably clear and easy to follow, and a friendly, helpful community.

What's the catch?

Cookpad's search results are a bit of a jumble, with no filters to narrow them down by cooking time, dietary requirements or most popular or highly rated. Searching for 'tomatoes', for example, finds more than 32,000 recipes to sift through.

Is it better than Facebook?

Cookpad works in tandem with Facebook – you can sign in through the social network and find out what your friends are cooking – so it's more of a culinary complement than an alternative, and a great place to graze when you're hungry. ■



Get cooking inspiration and share your recipes on foodie social network Cookpad

Monitor your broadband usage with free tools

Want to find out which programs are hogging your bandwidth or stop yourself going over your ISP's data limit?

Jonathan Parkyn has the best tools for the job



GlassWire | bit.ly/glasswire445 | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★



What we liked:

Technically speaking, GlassWire is a firewall rather than a bandwidth

monitor. However, as well as blocking network connections, it can also monitor network usage.

The default view displays a graph showing your network activity in real time. You can change the time scale to Month, Week, 24 Hours, 3 Hours

or 5 Minutes using the options at the right-hand end of the date bar, or click Apps on the left to see which programs are the biggest broadband hogs. If you notice anything odd, move your mouse over the graph and click the camera icon that appears top-right to save a snapshot. Clicking the Usage icon (top middle) provides more stats about incoming and outgoing traffic.

If your ISP imposes a data cap, you can set an upper limit in GlassWire and opt to receive a warning when your usage gets near it. Click GlassWire, Settings, Data Plan, then click Unlock



and tick the box to 'Notify me if this computer uses a certain amount of bandwidth'. Under 'Traffic amount', set a number that's just below your ISP's data cap. Under 'Traffic type', select In, then tick the 'Exclude local network traffic' box and click OK.

Like most PC bandwidth-monitoring tools, GlassWire can only monitor the data usage on the computer you've installed it on. If you use mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets to access the web, you'll need to monitor them separately. Usefully, GlassWire also produces a free Data Usage

Monitor app for Android devices (bit.ly/glassdroid445).

How it can be improved:

After seven days, the free version of GlassWire switches to limited functionality unless you pay for the Basic version, which costs £29.

Thankfully, data-usage monitoring is one of its few features that remains usable for free, but you can only monitor network traffic on one

PC at a time. It's a shame there's no way to automatically tally your total usage across the PC and Android versions. Currently, there's no version of GlassWire at all for iOS devices.

OUR VERDICT

It's not perfect, but if you're monitoring bandwidth usage on a PC or a mobile device, GlassWire provides lots of helpful tools in a well-designed and easy-to-use interface.

BitMeter OS | bit.ly/bitmeter445 | ★★★★★

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

WebUser
SILVER
AWARD

What we liked:

BitMeter OS is a lightweight, open-source tool that runs in the background whenever your computer is switched

on, recording the amount of data that's uploaded and downloaded over your internet or network connection. It doesn't have its own user interface – you need to view its web interface via your browser – but you can fire this up directly from its desktop and Start-menu shortcuts, which are added during installation.

Click the Monitor tab to view a real-time graph of your computer's current data usage or click History to review your past activity – you can produce reports by clicking the 'Export data in CSV format' option.

If you want to make sure you don't exceed any usage limitations, click the Alert tab, then 'Create an Alert' and fill out the form to set up a notification when your network usage goes above a specified amount.



How it can be improved:

BitMeter OS can't tell you which specific applications and processes are using the most bandwidth – it can only provide general information about the amount of traffic passing to and from your PC. There are no accompanying mobile apps either, so you'll need to find another way to monitor smartphone and tablet usage.

OUR VERDICT

It's a basic program, but if all you need is to monitor your PC's data usage and set warnings for when you reach your cap, then BitMeter OS provides a simple way to do so.

FreeMeter | bit.ly/freemeter445 | ★★★★★

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

WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD

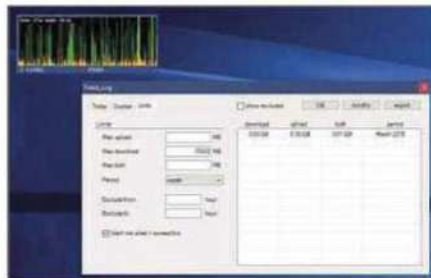
What we liked:

FreeMeter is a small tool that sits in your taskbar's notification area and provides a quick way to access a small live graph of your PC's current bandwidth consumption – both uploads and downloads – in real time. You can customise the appearance of the graph (by tweaking the colours and opacity, for example) as well as the scale used. You can also set limits and warnings by right-clicking either the graph window or the notification-area icon and selecting Tools, then Totals Log. Click the Limits tab to enter your parameters and tick the 'Alert me...' box.

FreeMeter is a portable application – you don't need to install anything, just extract the ZIP and double-click the EXE file to run it.

How it can be improved:

Our main concern with FreeMeter is its age. We couldn't establish exactly when the last version was released but going by the developer's website, it looks like



there hasn't been much activity in recent years. You'll also need Microsoft's .NET Framework 2.0 to run the tool – you'll be prompted to install this when you first run FreeMeter, if you don't already have it. That said, the program still works fine, although some of the text is rather small and hard to read.

OUR VERDICT

FreeMeter is a little long in the tooth and isn't exactly bulging with features, but it's lightweight and portable, so it won't hog your PC's resources or inject any rubbish into your Windows Registry.

BEST OF THE REST

NetWorx

bit.ly/networx445

NetWorx provides tools for monitoring bandwidth usage, fixing quotas and setting excess



usage warnings. A few months ago, NetWorx would almost certainly have been an award winner, but its developers recently decided to stop producing a freeware version of the tool, which now officially costs £19. Unofficially, you may still be able to find the older free version by hunting around online.

PRTG

www.paessler.com

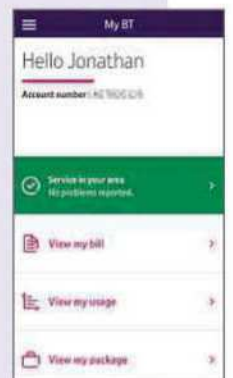
This complex and powerful suite of network-monitoring tools may be overkill for most users, but it's ideal for techies who want to dig deeper and



there's a free version for small or home networks. To get to the bandwidth-monitoring tools, click Sensors, then select your network adapter for live and historic data. It also provides an option to set notifications when traffic has reached a specific volume.

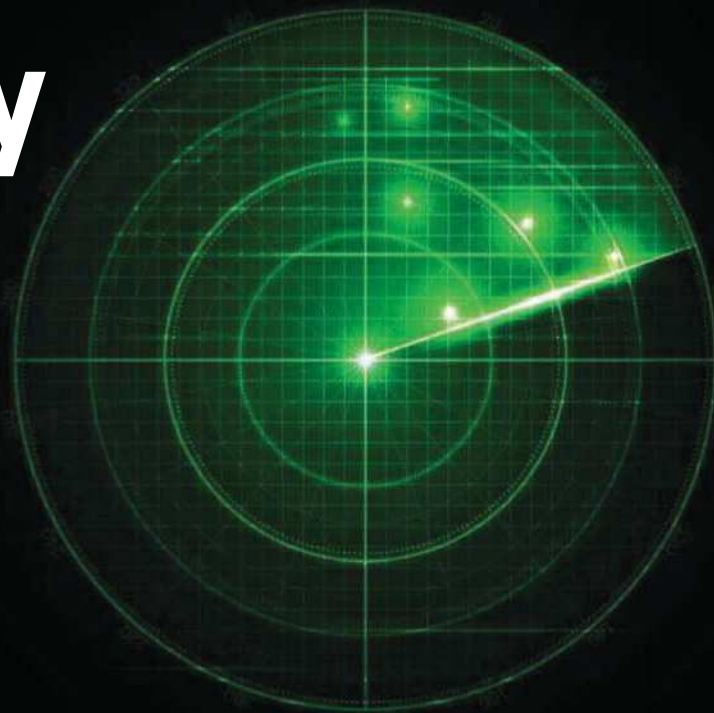
Your ISP's website or app

Many broadband providers offer ways to monitor usage – for example, BT customers on capped deals can log in at home.bt.com, then click View Bill, 'Usage & analysis' or download the Android (bit.ly/mybtdroid445) or iOS (bit.ly/mybtios445) app My BT and tap 'View my usage'. This is free and has the advantage of showing you how much bandwidth you've used across all your devices. However, ISP bandwidth monitors tend not to have any handy extra features, such as usage alerts.



Find security flaws in one click

Sometimes you don't need to run a full security scan to detect a specific vulnerability or threat. **Robert Irvine** reveals how to get answers in seconds



Is your PC protected against Meltdown?

You can hardly have missed the industry-wide panic following the discovery of Meltdown and Spectre. These two serious security flaws affect almost every processor in every device, and potentially allow hackers to steal your data. While patches have been released by hardware and software companies, it's still useful to know if your computer remains at risk.

The easiest way to find out is to download GRC's free InSpectre tool (bit.ly/inspectre445), which is available for all versions of Windows. Open this program and it will tell you instantly whether your processor is vulnerable to Meltdown, Spectre or both, so you can take the appropriate measures to protect it, such as installing the latest updates from Microsoft and your motherboard manufacturer.

If protection against the flaws is already available on your computer, but not enabled, you can click the relevant buttons to turn it on; if not,



Discover instantly if your PC is protected against Spectre and Meltdown

both buttons will be greyed out.

For a second opinion, try Ashampoo Spectre Meltdown CPU Checker (bit.ly/meltdown445), which scans your system to determine whether it's safe from or vulnerable to both bugs. If you get a red warning, click the 'What should I do?' link for Ashampoo's advice on tackling the problem.



Is your browser safe from cryptojacking?

There's been a lot of talk recently about the growing threat of cryptojacking and what you can do to prevent your PC from being hijacked to mine cryptocurrency. If you followed our advice in last issue's FAQ and installed an extension to block coin miners – or have added the NoCoin filter list to your ad blocker – you can find out whether your browser is now safe by using Cryptojacking Test (cryptojackingtest.com).

This one-click test tries to install a (harmless) coin-mining script in your browser, to discover whether or not it's



Test your browser to ensure it's safe from cryptocurrency-mining scripts

protected. Although it warns that your computer may get "loud, hot and slow" during the scan, this is highly unlikely unless you've got a very old machine, and results for the test should be displayed in just a few seconds.

We should mention that the test was created by Opera, which was the first browser to offer built-in protection against cryptocurrency mining. The main gist of its advice is to switch to Opera but that doesn't mean its results are skewed against other browsers – nearly 80% of desktop users have passed the test – although, worryingly, Chrome on our phone failed.



Is your PC infected with malware?

There's no substitute for a full virus scan if you suspect your PC has been infected with malware, but if you want a second opinion that won't clash with your existing security software or take ages to download and set up,



Microsoft's Safety Scanner is a simple, speedy way to remove malware

it's worth running Microsoft's Safety Scanner (bit.ly/scanner445).

This 'disposable' free tool uses the latest virus definitions to detect malware and PUPs (potentially unwanted programs) in a jiffy, and doesn't require installation (although you need to accept a licence agreement). It offers three scans – Quick, Full and Customised – and removes threats automatically, before providing a report of what it's found.

Safety Scanner certainly saves you a lot of clicking and box-ticking, but its lack of real-time protection makes it unsuitable as a first line of defence, and it expires after 10 days to force users to download the most up-to-date version.

Alternatively, there are several online tools that find and remove malware, which require you to do little more than download and run a small 'launcher'. Our favourites are F-Secure Online Scanner (bit.ly/fsecure445) and ESET Online Scanner (bit.ly/eset445), both of which work in any Windows browser and are completely free to use. We're also big fans of VirusTotal (www.virustotal.com), which runs suspect files and URLs through multiple antivirus engines in a single click, so you can see at a glance whether to trust them or not.



Use F-Secure's free online scanner to check for threats via your browser

Is spyware lurking on your PC?

Another speedy tool you can run when you don't have time for a full security scan is SpyDetectFree (bit.ly/spydetect445), which answers two simple questions: 'Am I being spied on?' and 'Am I being monitored?'. The first question is answered immediately and reveals whether unknown processes have installed 'hooks' on your system, which could be used to record your keystrokes and steal your logins, passwords and bank details.

The second question takes 60 seconds to answer and looks for processes on your PC that might be monitoring the titles of windows you open. This might not sound worrying in itself, but when combined with data



Run SpyDetect to check if hidden processes are monitoring your activities

stolen by keyloggers, it could tell cybercriminals exactly which sites you visit and how you log into them.

SpyDetectFree couldn't be easier to use: just click Check Now to perform the two tests. Don't be too alarmed if the program alerts you to something, because the processes it uncovers may have legitimate reasons for monitoring your keystrokes and windows. Click Details to view the results and look up any unknown processes on Google to find out what they are.

Is your browser compromising your privacy?

Even if you've installed an anti-tracking extension and tweaked your browser's settings to lock down your privacy, you may still be leaking personal data – such as your location and the software you're using – every time you go online.



Test your browser to ensure that your privacy protection is proving effective

To ensure that your browser is safe from tracking, it's worth running the free test PanoptiClick (panopti.click.eff.org), from digital-rights group the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF, www.eff.org). Simply click the Test Me button to discover if your browser is genuinely blocking tracking ads and invisible trackers, and if it protects you from 'fingerprinting' – a process that allows websites to identify you and your device from unique information you're inadvertently sharing.

We especially like PanoptiClick's option to 'Test with a real tracking company', which ensures that your privacy tool hasn't whitelisted 'acceptable' trackers by attempting to connect to those networks. ■

SCAN YOUR PHONE FOR THREATS IN ONE TAP

There are dozens of security apps for Android devices – which is just as well considering how frequently Google's mobile OS is targeted by hackers – but some only offer full protection if you pay for it, or else keep nagging you to upgrade.

Our favourite free tool for scanning your phone and tablet for vulnerabilities is Trend Micro's Dr Safety (bit.ly/drsafety445), which protects against ransomware, malware, adware, Trojans and fake apps. Its one-tap Security Threat Scan uses cloud technology to check your device for the latest threats and remove any it finds, while its Privacy Risk Scan alerts you to dodgy apps and unsafe settings.

When you install Dr Safety, you're asked to agree to sending anonymous data to Trend Micro to improve the app's performance, but this is easily skipped and the in-app ads are clearly labelled as such.

A reliable alternative is Avast



Dr Safety scans your phone for security and privacy concerns

Mobile Security (bit.ly/avast445), which similarly checks your apps and downloads for vulnerabilities and malware at the tap of an on-screen button. It's free to use and offers such useful options as scheduled scans, phishing protection and alerts when you receive a malicious URL by text message, with further features available for £1.89 per month.



Edit your mobile photos in Windows 10's Photos app

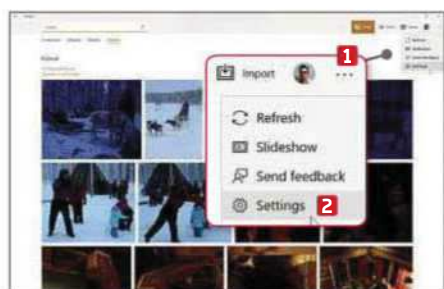
Microsoft Photos has a new Companion app for your mobile and some excellent new tools. Here's what you need to know

Companion Photos: bit.ly/photos445 | 20 mins | Windows 10

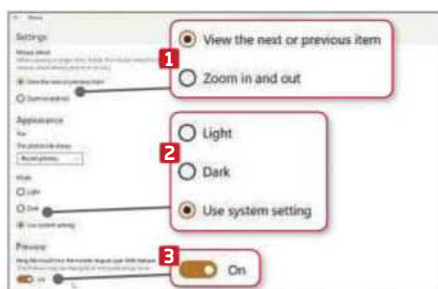
Microsoft Photos is the free image/video viewer and editor that comes with Windows 10.

Microsoft's new Photos Companion app, which we reviewed last issue, lets you easily send pictures directly to your PC from any iOS or Android device. The app is a fantastic addition, given that most of

us now use a mobile phone as our primary camera. However, you need to be connected to the same Wi-Fi network as your PC to use it – unfortunately, the app doesn't let you beam images over the internet. In this Workshop, we show you how to use the Companion app and explore some of Photos' best new tools.



1 There are a few ways to import images into Photos, but we'll focus on the Companion app. Download it for Android (bit.ly/pcan445) or iOS (bit.ly/pci445). Make sure your phone and PC are connected to the same Wi-Fi network, then open Photos on your PC, click the three-dot menu **1** and open Settings. **2**



2 You can set how the mouse wheel behaves **1** and customise the look of Photos, switching between Light, Dark and System Setting mode. **2** Under Preview, use the toggle to set 'Help Microsoft test the mobile import over WiFi feature' to On. **3** When done, close and then reopen Photos on your PC.



3 Go to Import **1** and select 'From mobile over Wi-Fi'. **2** A QR code will appear on screen. This is used to receive images. Open the Microsoft Photos Companion app on your mobile device and tap the 'Send photos' button at the bottom of the screen. Grant the app permission to access your camera.

4 Scan the QR code with the Companion app and grant it access to your device's photos. You'll be presented with thumbnails of the images and videos on your phone. Tap the thumbnails of any images you want to transfer, **1** then tap Done in the top-right corner. **2** Your selection will be sent straight to your PC.



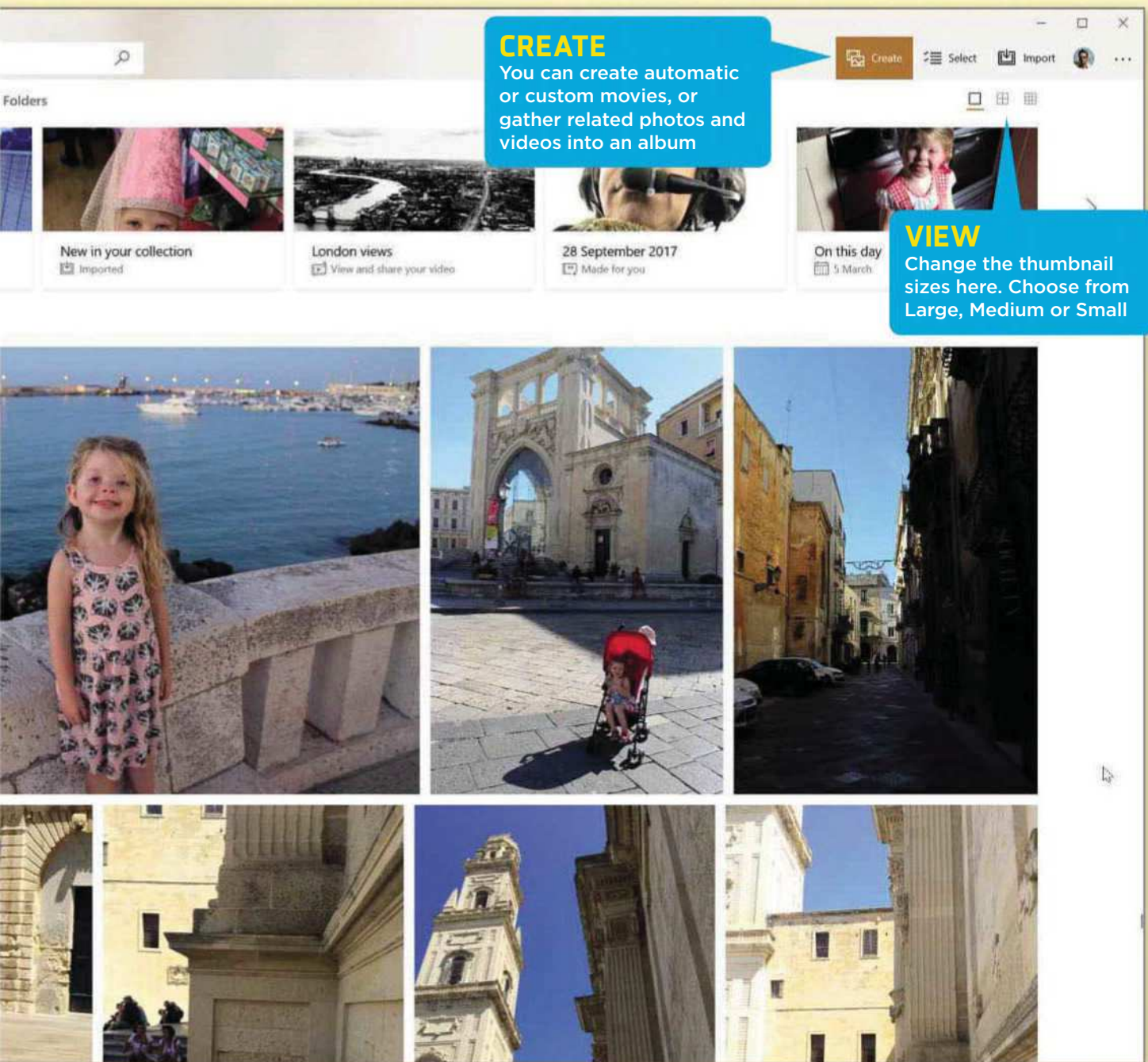
5 In the Photos app on your computer, go to Collection **1** to see the images you've just sent. **2** They should only take a few seconds to transmit. Right-click an image for options to share it, add it to a creation, view a slideshow, copy the picture, remove it from your favourites or delete it. **3**

PEOPLE

Click this link to view everyone in your photos. You can see how many pictures each person appears in, and view them all

DATE

Click the date above a photo collection and you can choose to view a different month or year from a list



6 Click a photo to view it, then click the Edit & Create button and select Draw. This new option lets you write or sketch on your image. Select a tool (ballpoint pen, pencil, calligraphy pen or eraser), **1** then click the arrow underneath a tool to change the ink colour **2** and brush size. **3**



7 There's a brilliant new tool in the very latest version of Photos called 'Choose a star'. This lets you highlight a specific person in a number of videos and pictures, and create a new video built around them. Click the Create button **1** and select 'Automatic video with music'. **2** Choose the items to add.

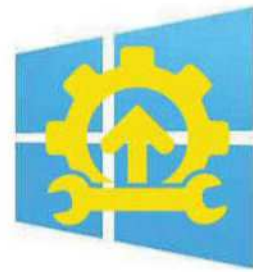


8 Click Create and enter a name for your project. The Photos app will create a video for you. Click Play **1** to view it. You can remix it if you're not happy with the result, **2** or edit it yourself. **3** Choose a 'star' from the offered faces **4** and the video will be remade to focus on that person instead.



Don't miss Windows 10's hidden updates

Windows Update MiniTool: bit.ly/wumt445 | 20 mins | Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10



EXPERT TIP

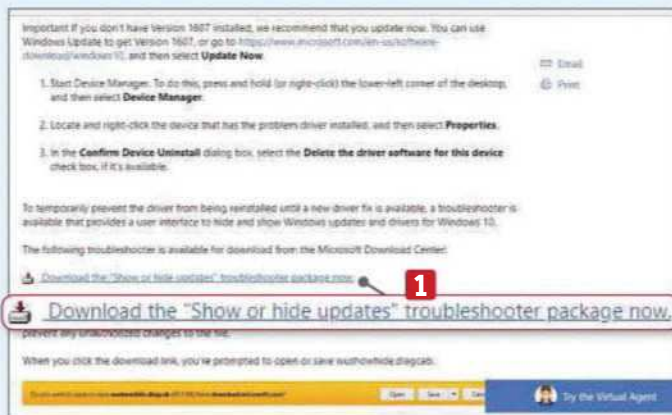
Andy Shaw says

To check the source of an update in Windows Update MiniTool, select it and click the 'Copy direct file download link' button, which sits to the right of the other icons and looks like two documents. Paste it somewhere temporarily, such as Notepad. You can then look at the URL to check it comes from a legitimate address, such as windowsupdate.com.



When Windows 10 moved the Windows Update tool from the Control Panel to the new Settings app, we lost a load of useful options including an entire section of optional updates. These used to include updates for hardware drivers and programs – such as Office – as well as the basic Windows updates. They provided a more convenient and nuanced way to keep your PC maintained and up to date without having to search for updates individually or wait for them to be included in the next full package of a major Windows update.

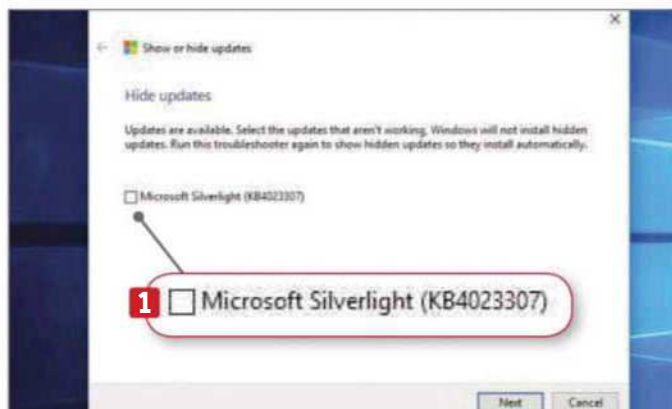
Although the optional updates have disappeared from view, they're still there. In this Workshop, we show you how to seek them out using a Microsoft tool, so you can download them manually and then use another free tool to install them.



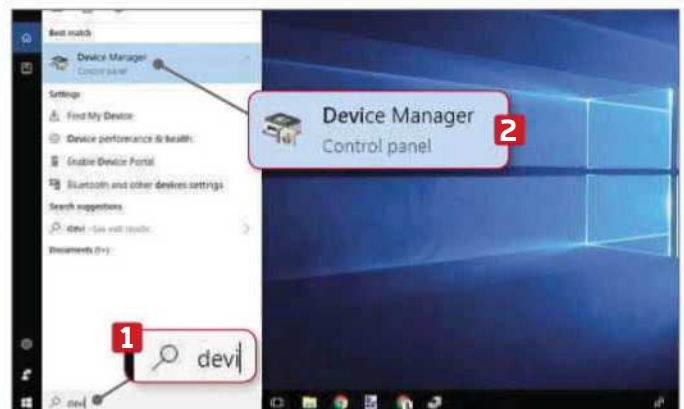
1 If you just want to see what updates you might be missing, so you can decide whether to take things further, Microsoft has its own tool for the job. You can get it from a Microsoft support page at bit.ly/trou445. Scroll down the page and click the link 'Download the "Show or hide updates" troubleshooter package now'. 1



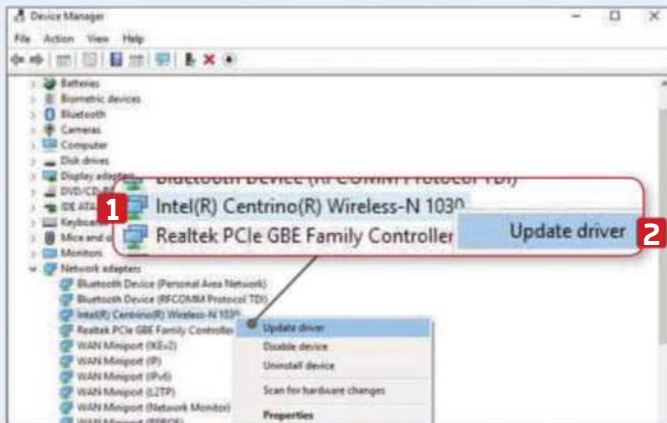
2 The file is portable, so you don't have to install it – just double-click its icon 1 to run it. Click Next and the program will scan your PC looking for missing updates. When it's finished, click the option to 'Hide updates'. 2



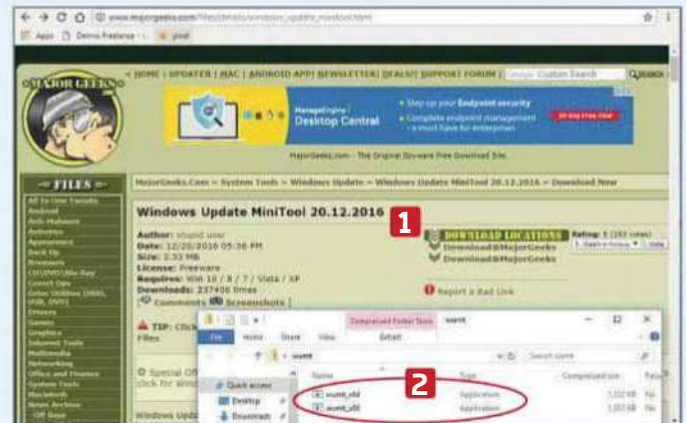
3 The next screen shows you which, if any, updates are missing from your PC. 1 Unfortunately, you can't install the updates from here – this is just a guide that lets you know what might be out of date.



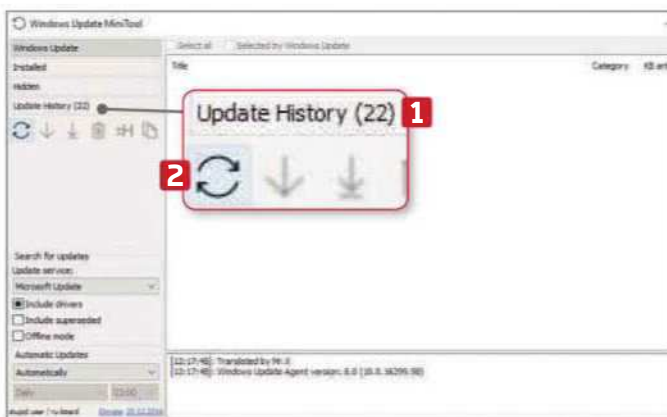
4 If any of the missing updates are for hardware devices, you can manually update them from the Device Manager. Start typing device manager into the search box 1 and click the option when it appears in the menu. 2



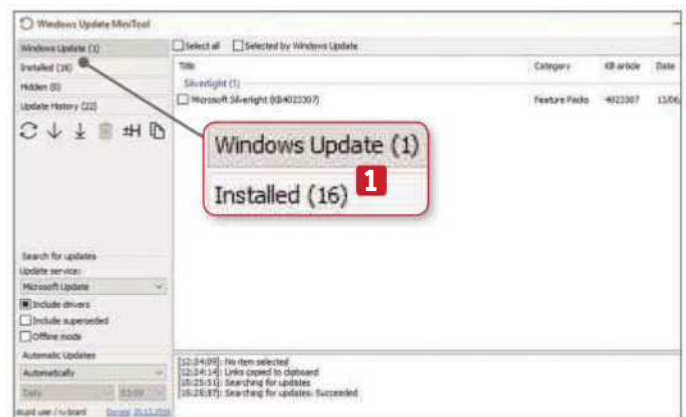
5 Find the device that the pending update refers to – you'll have to work out what type of device it is and open the appropriate section. Right-click the relevant device **1** and select 'Update driver' **2** from the list of options. The PC will find, download and install the update.



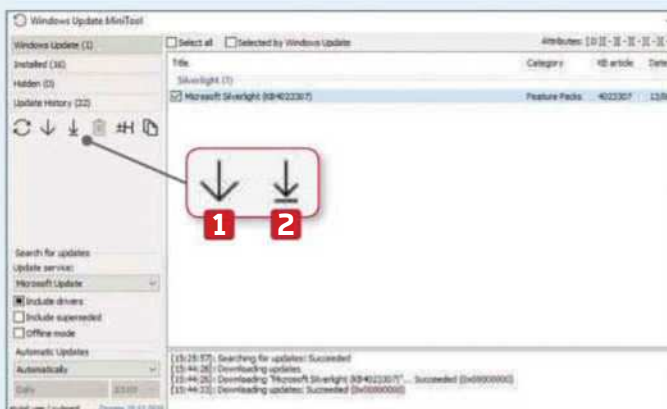
6 If you'd rather use a program that will download and install the missing updates for you, try the Windows Update MiniTool, which you can download from Major Geeks at bit.ly/wumt445. **1** This downloads a compressed file containing both 32- and 64-bit versions. **2** Extract and run the correct version for your PC.



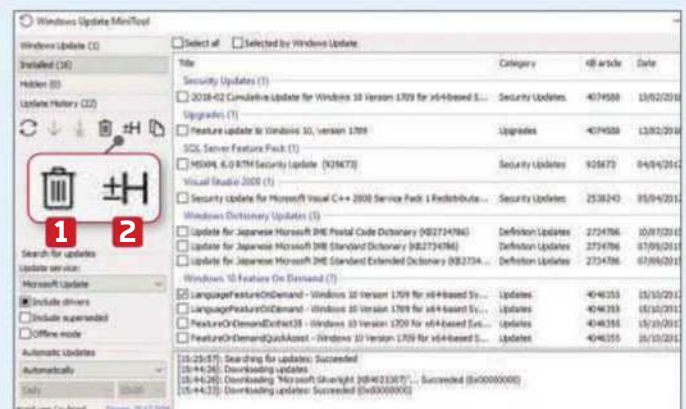
7 Double-click the extracted file to run it – it's portable and doesn't need installing. When you first run it, only the Update History section **1** will have anything in it. Click the 'Check for updates' button **2** to launch the scan.



8 Once it's finished scanning, you should notice that the Windows Update and Installed sections display numbers next to them. **1** Click Windows Update and you should find that it includes the same optional updates that you saw while scanning with the Windows tool in Step 3.



9 Tick the box next to an update you'd like to install – do them one at a time if you want to check they work before moving on to the next one. Click the 'Download only' button **1** to check the file is available before you try to install it, or click 'Install updates' **2** to go straight to installing it.



10 If an update is causing you problems, you can use Windows Update MiniTool to uninstall it and hide it from future updates. Tick the box next to the problematic update and click 'Uninstall updates'. **1** To ensure it isn't reinstalled, select it and click 'Hide updates'. **2**

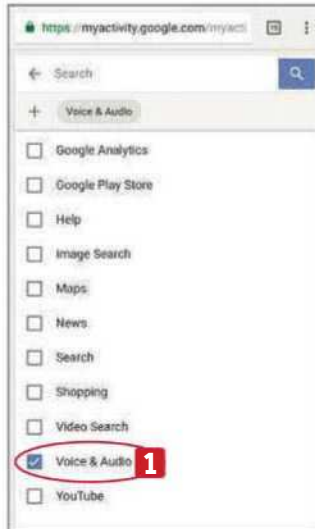


Stop Google recording you on Android

Google accesses your Android device's microphone to listen out for the 'OK Google' command, along with any other voice commands you might use, and stores a digital recording of them. You can easily find and delete these

Android settings | 10 mins | Android

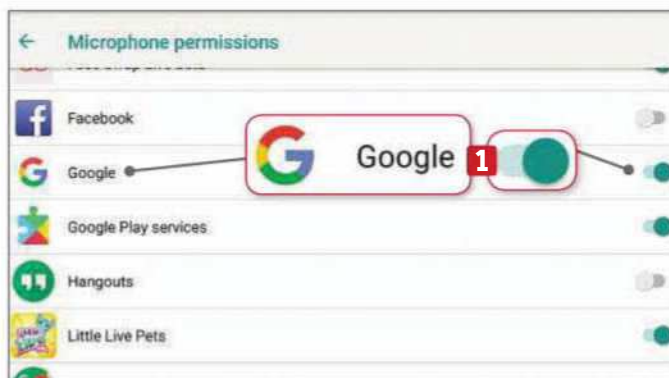
recordings and, if you don't trust Google's claim that it won't eavesdrop and record your other conversations, you can tweak the settings to make sure it can't listen to you at all.



1 You can listen to everything that Google has recorded so far by going to the Google My Activity page ([bit.ly/activity445](https://myactivity.google.com/myactivity)). Click 'Filter by date & product' and untick everything under 'Filter by Google product'. Tick 'Voice & Audio' **1** and tap Search. You can listen to all the recordings Google has made.



2 The first way to stop Google recording you is to disable the OK Google feature. Open Settings on your device, scroll down and select the Google option. Under Services, tap Search, then Voice. Select the Voice Match (or OK Google) entry, and disable the 'Say "Ok Google" any time' option. **1**



3 Another method is to revoke its access to your device's microphone. In Oreo, open Settings and select Apps, App Permissions. You'll see a list of grouped permissions. Select Microphone, locate Google and toggle its access off. **1** You may need to go through 'Apps settings' in older Android versions.



4 You can also disable the Google Assistant - Google's version of Alexa and Siri. Open Settings and go into the Google category. Under Services, select Search, then tap Settings under Google Assistant. Under Devices, tap your phone's name and switch off the Google Assistant toggle. **1**



5 Google may have recorded voice data from other sources, including Chrome. Visit Google's Activity Controls page (myaccount.google.com/activitycontrols) and scroll down to Voice & Audio Activity, then slide the switch to Off. **1** This prevents Google linking voice activity to your account.



6 Finally, delete all the recordings made by Google. Tap Manage Activity under Voice & Audio Activity to go to the page in Step 1 where we listened to Google's recordings. Tap the menu button, then 'Delete activity by' and change the drop-down option from Today to All Time. **1** Tap Delete. **2**



Scan editable text from pictures

Extracting the text from a picture – such as a photo you’ve taken of an interesting snippet from a newspaper or magazine – used to be a fiddly process involving several different tools. Easy Screen OCR (Optical Character

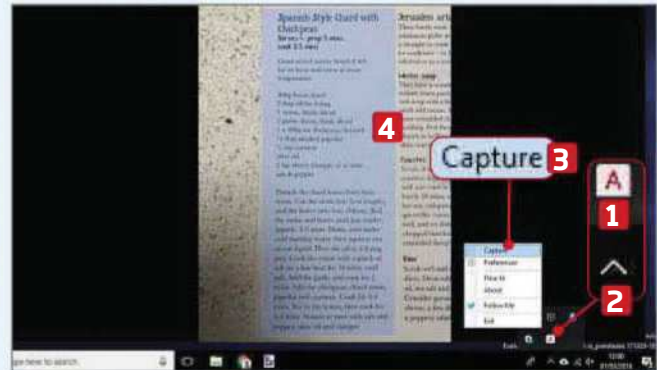
Recognition) dispenses with the fuss by providing one simple free program that does the lot – capturing, scanning and transforming an image into text.



Easy Screen OCR: easyscreenocr.com | 10 mins | Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10



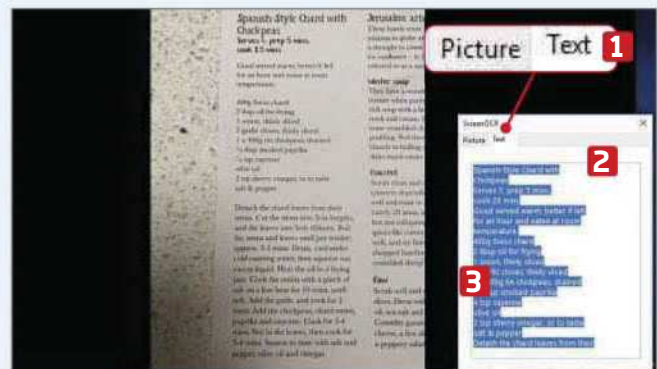
1 Install the software or, if you prefer, there’s a portable version available on the website that you can run on demand. Open the image you’d like to turn into text – in our example, we’ve got a photo of a recipe that’s been emailed to us. **1**



2 Right-click the Easy Screen OCR icon in the notification area **1** – you may have to use the up arrow **2** to open the overflow tray if you can’t see it. Select Capture **3** from the menu and the cursor will change into a rainbow of colours. Drag a box around the text you want to convert. **4**



3 A window pops up containing an image of the selected text. **1** Click the OCR button **2** to convert it to editable text. All the processing is done in the cloud, using Google’s OCR software, so the results come back fast and are remarkably accurate.



4 The software switches to the Text tab **1** and displays the results, **2** keeping any line breaks from the original image. There are no scroll bars but if there’s more text than the window can fit, you can click and drag to the bottom of the window to select it all **3** or press Ctrl+A.



5 Right-click the icon and choose Preferences. The General tab **1** lets you set whether the tool launches with Windows. Hotkey **2** lets you change the keyboard shortcut, **3** to save right-clicking the icon. By default, it’s set to Ctrl+D1 (Hold down Control, press D, then press 1).



6 On the Local tab, **1** you can also choose to have the software save the images you capture as PNG or PDF files, though this is switched off by default. If you’re trying to capture text that isn’t in English, select the correct language from the Language tab. **2**

Weekend Project

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



How to...

Create a portable USB rescue kit for your PC

Don't wait until disaster strikes. **Wayne Williams** explains what you need to create a toolkit of essential free software – and where to get it

Windows is available on all sorts of different devices – desktop PCs, laptops, tablets, 2-in-1s – but they all share one thing in common: they can go badly wrong in lots of different ways, and identifying and fixing the problem can be tricky. Has your PC been hit by a malware infection, a hardware failure or have some important system files become corrupt? It's hard to know.

Fixing your own computer is enough of a challenge without friends and family members wanting help with their PC problems, but a portable USB rescue kit, packed with useful tools, that you can turn to in case of emergency may be all you need to perform the necessary miracle fixes. In this issue's Weekend Project, we show you how to create one.



What you'll need

The first thing you need for your rescue kit is a USB memory stick. You can, if you prefer, create a rescue CD or DVD, but modern PCs don't always come equipped with an optical drive. It's also easier to carry around a single memory stick than a data disc, and it's much less likely to get damaged. Some USB flash drives even come with a keyring attachment, so you can keep your rescue kit with your house

keys, ready for when disaster strikes.

Almost any USB memory stick will suffice, but it makes sense to go for one that is USB 3 compatible, so you'll benefit from the faster speeds that USB 3 ports provide. A 64GB drive should be large enough to hold all the rescue tools and any data you might need to recover from

AOMEI PE Builder lets you create a recovery drive that aims to fix your PC problems





CrystalDiskInfo can identify all manner of problems with your hard drives



Clear the space taken up by unnecessary software using IObit's Uninstaller



Malwarebytes AdwCleaner removes problem junk from your web browsers

a troublesome PC.

The next step is to collate the tools you need to fix any PC problems you encounter. There are plenty of dedicated rescue toolkits that fit the task, such as AOMEI PE Builder (bit.ly/aomei445) which creates a recovery disc based on Windows PE (Windows Pre-installation Environment) – a cut-down version of Microsoft's operating system.

Alternatively, you can create a Windows 10 Recovery Drive, which doesn't have as many tools but is a useful quick option. See our Mini Workshop below for instructions on how to set this up.

Best portable tools

The best type of recovery kit is one you build yourself. There's a huge range of portable tools available, but here are some of our favourites to get you started:



Google Chrome Portable

bit.ly/gchp445

You'll definitely want to include a browser in your toolkit, or you might get stuck using Microsoft Edge – or worse

still, Internet Explorer – on someone else's PC, so it makes sense to take Chrome with you. The link above lets you download the very latest version of the browser.



Windows Password Recovery Tools

www.nirsoft.net

NirSoft offers a number of tools designed to recover lost usernames and passwords, which may come in handy if resetting your password isn't an option. There are password tools for instant messengers, routers, browsers, wireless networks and more. You can download all the tools in a single ZIP file (enter nirsoft123! as the password).



CrystalDiskInfo

bit.ly/crdi445

If you suspect one or more of your PC's hard drives is failing, CrystalDiskInfo can tell you for sure. It displays the drive's S.M.A.R.T (Self-Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Technology) status and current temperature, along with details

such as the number of hours the drive has been on for, and the read-error rate.



IObit Uninstaller Portable

bit.ly/ioup445

If you need to fully remove unwanted applications or browser junk, IObit's Uninstaller is the tool for the job. It can batch uninstall multiple items, then identify and remove any leftovers.



Malwarebytes AdwCleaner

bit.ly/mwbac445

AdwCleaner can remove toolbars, adware, hijackers, and PUPs (potentially unwanted programs) from your web browsers. It's very easy to use – you just run it and click the Scan button, and the program will present you with its findings.



BlueScreenView

www.nirsoft.net

If your PC keeps crashing and ends up displaying the 'blue screen of death' (BSOD), don't despair. This program can narrow down the possible



MINI WORKSHOP | Create a Windows 10 Recovery Drive



1 Windows 10 lets you create a USB recovery drive that includes a selection of useful troubleshooting tools. It can even reinstall Windows if necessary. To launch the tool, type **recovery drive** in the Windows search box, **1** then click 'Create a recovery drive'. **2** The wizard will open.







2 The first question you're asked is whether you want to 'Back up system files to the recovery drive'. **1** This lets you use the drive to reinstall Windows, so tick the box if that's something you want to be able to do. Click Next and select the correct drive when prompted.



3 Click Create. If you see a message asking you to format the drive, ignore it. The creation process will take a while, especially if you're backing up system files. When it's done, click Finish. When you boot into the drive, you'll be able to refresh **1** or reset your PC, **2** and access troubleshooting tools. **3**

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3		Sky: Broadband	£28.99 (£20.00 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£240.00
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 9 March 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...

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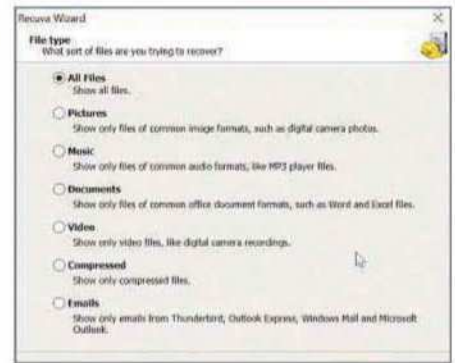
**On sale
Weds
28 March**



Find out all about your PC and its hardware with Piriform's Speccy



NirSoft has a selection of tools you can use to recover forgotten login details



Recuva can restore accidentally deleted files and folders

cause by scanning all the minidump files that were created during a crash and making them available to study.



Speccy Portable

bit.ly/spo445

Speccy is a fast, lightweight, system-information tool from Piriform, the creators of CCleaner. It can tell you everything you need to know about a PC, from the version of the operating system it's running to the hardware contained within. You can even use it to monitor the temperature of its core components.



WhoCrashed

www.resplendence.com

Like BlueScreenView, WhoCrashed searches your crash dump logs, tells you the cause of your woes and offers suggestions for fixing the problem. The download is an installer, but you can then copy the program's folder



ProduKey

www.nirsoft.net

A very useful NirSoft tool, ProduKey helps you find the Windows key of the PC you run it on, as well as several other registration keys.



Process Explorer Portable

bit.ly/proc445

Process Explorer displays a list of running processes and colour-codes them to make it easier to see what they are. You can scan suspicious entries using the VirusTotal online virus checker.



Recuva

bit.ly/recuva445

If important files have accidentally been deleted, you can use Piriform's Recuva to find and restore them. Running

the software from a flash drive – rather than your PC's hard drive – means there's less likelihood of overwriting the files you're trying to recover.

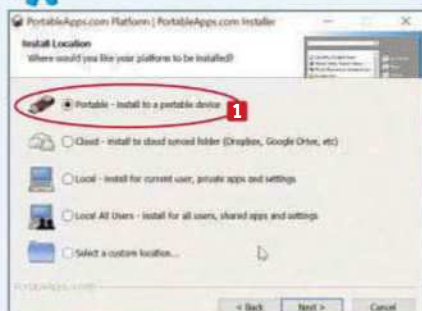
Create a rescue kit using PortableApps

You can manually drop each of the tools we've listed into their own folders on a USB memory drive, then run them as and when they're required. However, if you fancy adding a professional flourish to your rescue kit, you could use PortableApps (portableapps.com). This is a Start menu and organiser, which even comes with its own built-in app store to make it easier to find and install the latest tools. You don't have to worry about updating your apps, either, because the software makes it easy to download the most up-to-date editions.

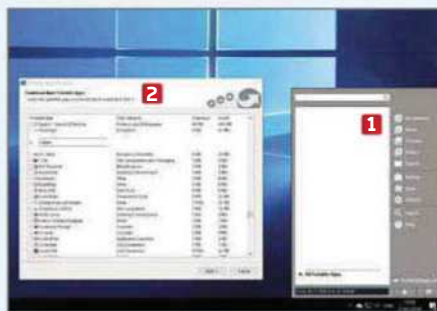
We show you how to put this together in our Mini Workshop, below. ■



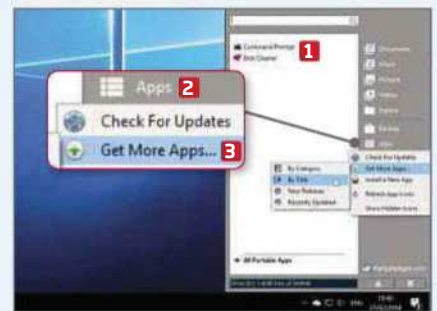
MINI WORKSHOP | Assemble your toolkit using PortableApps



1 Insert a USB memory stick into a spare port on your PC, then download the PortableApps program to your desktop and run it. During installation, select Portable **1** as the location to write the software to. On the next screen, select the drive to install to (make sure you pick the correct one).



2 When you run PortableApps on your drive, a blank Windows 7-style Start menu appears, **1** along with the Portable App Directory. **2** The directory lets you find apps to install. Chrome can be found under Internet, which is sensible enough, while the likes of CrystalDiskMark and IObit Uninstaller are under Utilities. Tick the ones you want.



3 When you've chosen some programs, click Next. Your selection is downloaded and installed, which may take a while. Once it's finished, the installed apps appear in the menu, **1** ready to be launched. You can also access the App Directory by clicking the Apps button in the menu **2** and selecting Get More Apps. **3**

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Set up a second-hand laptop, phone or tablet

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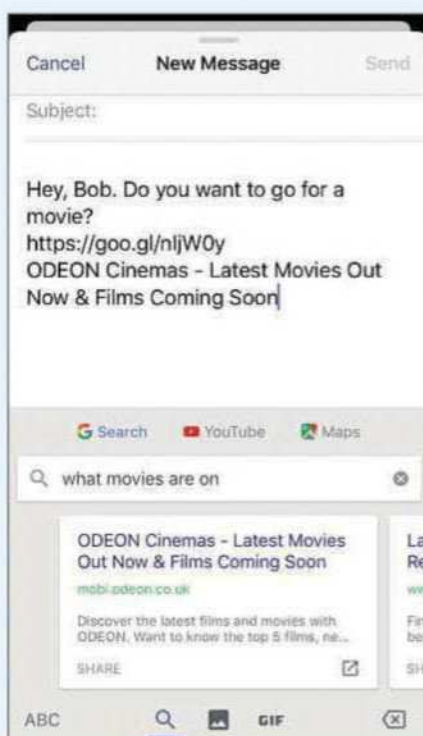
Our experts offer tips to **supercharge your phone and tablet's keyboard** with Gboard for iOS and Android

Search Google from any app



With mobile keyboard Gboard installed (see our tip below if you need help), you can search Google from whatever app you're using, without having to switch over to a browser. For example, if you're messaging someone about going to see a movie and you need to search Google for options as you type, tap the G icon at the top of the keyboard to show the Google search box. Search suggestions appear as you type.

Search results are displayed on cards at the bottom of the screen and tapping one inserts a link into the app that you're currently using. To switch back to keyboard mode, press the 'X' on the right of the search box.



Insert Gboard's Google results directly into the app you're currently using



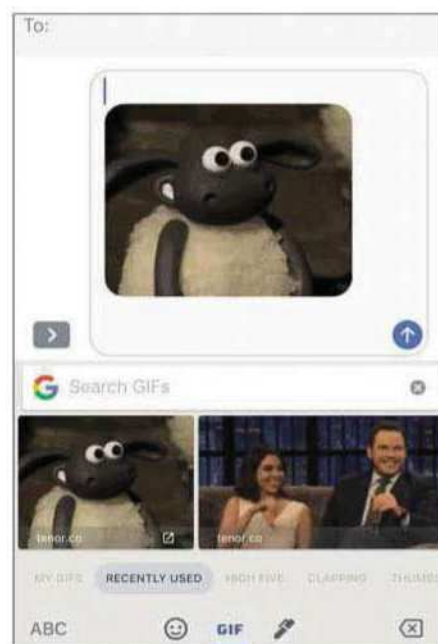
Tap the emoji button and search for the one you want

and you'll only see the golf-related ones. Tap the one you want, then tap the cross on the right side of the search box or the arrow at the left to return to normal input.



Use funny GIFs

If you want to make your messages and emails more lively and



Find and insert animated GIFs into messages and emails



Install Gboard

On Android, install Gboard from the Google Play Store (bit.ly/gban445) and run it to set it up. If you're using an iPhone or iPad, go to Gboard in the App Store (bit.ly/gbapp445) and install it, then go to Settings, General, Keyboards and press Add New Keyboard. Select Gboard then press Gboard in the keyboard list and enable Allow Full Access.

Open any app that uses text input, such as Notes. Long-press the globe button at the bottom to display a list

of keyboards, then select Gboard. For security reasons, iOS sometimes switches back to its own keyboard, such as when entering passwords.



Position the cursor

Gboard's spacebar doesn't just insert spaces, it also acts like a mini trackpad. Slide a finger left or right along the spacebar to move the cursor through the text. It's handy for positioning the cursor so you can change a single letter rather than having to retype the whole word.



Search for emoji

Tapping the Emoji button lets you browse the emoji library. However, there are so many available that it can be hard to find the one you want, so it's quicker and easier to search for them instead. Type happy into the search box, for example, and all the happy emoji are displayed. Type golf

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.



fun, you can include animated GIFs. Gboard has lots of them and they are easy to use. Press or long-press the emoji button, then press the GIF icon at the bottom of the screen.

A horizontal strip of animated thumbnail images is displayed with a list of categories below. Slide the categories left or right to see them all, then tap one to see GIFs in that category as thumbnail images. Tap a GIF and Android inserts it directly into the email, note or message. In iOS, the GIF is copied to the clipboard - long-press the place in the app where you want to position it and wait until the Paste option appears to insert it.



Keyboard shortcuts

If you long-press certain keys, you'll be shown a selection of foreign characters. Just slide your finger over the one you want to type. Long-press the full stop and a collection of characters and punctuation options is displayed. Slide your finger over to the one you want.



Glide type

Glide typing is a way of entering text without having to tap individual keys. Instead, you place your finger in the first letter of your word, then move it across the keyboard from letter to letter, without lifting it, until it's spelled out. The word is then automatically entered. It's faster than tap typing, but not always as accurate.



Slide your finger over the letters of a word to automatically enter it



Switch themes

Gboard comes with several graphical themes, so if you don't like the default look, you can switch to one of the others. Choices include dark and light, along with a great collection of landscapes and some customised options. Open the Gboard app and tap Themes. If you see a theme you like, tap to select it, or tap 'Show all' to see the whole collection. The customised option lets you choose an image from your photos library to use as a keyboard background.

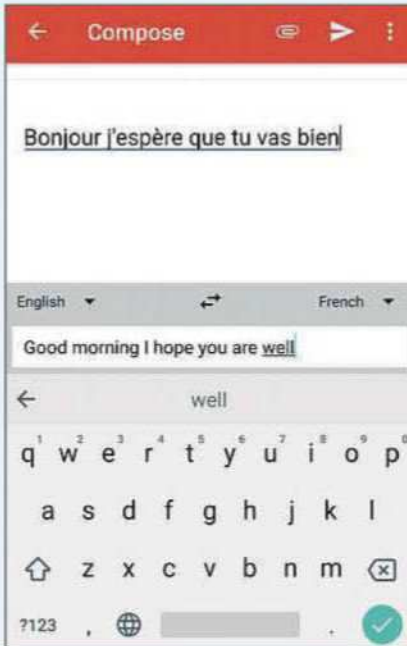
TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave



Type in foreign languages

On Android only, tap the G button, then Google Translate (the second icon). Select a foreign language on the right. Anything you now type in English is automatically translated and appears in the selected language.



Speak any language and translate it on the fly in the Android version



Type with one hand

Typing one-handed can be a stretch, especially if you have a large phone. Gboard makes it easier by shifting the keys over to the side that your thumb is on, so you can reach them more easily. On iOS, long-press the globe button and select 'One-handed mode'. On Android, long-press the comma, then slide to the left icon. Use the '<' and '>' symbols to move the keys over to the left or the right, and tap the double arrows to return to the normal keyboard.



Speak instead of typing

Speech recognition has come a long way, so instead of typing notes, emails and messages, try speaking them instead. On an iOS device, press the tiny microphone icon in the top-right corner of the spacebar; on Android, press the microphone just above the P key. Speak to your phone and, when you stop, the text should be entered automatically.



Create hyperlapse video GIFs

This excellent iOS Gboard feature lets you shoot a hyperlapse video (a video that's made shorter and faster by jumping frames) to insert into an email, message or note as an animated GIF. Open the Messages app and create a new message. In the top-right corner of the Google keyboard is a square-ish icon with an infinity symbol. Tap it to open the camera. Shoot a three-second video and the clip will be turned into an animated GIF and stored on the clipboard. Switch back to the Messages app, then long-press and select Paste to insert the animated GIF.



Leave no trace

By default, Google tracks some of your activity and uses the data to improve the app, but you can switch this off if you're worried about privacy infringement. Open the Android app and tap Advanced, then turn off the two switches if you don't want to share what you type with Google. Open the iPhone app, go to 'Keyboard settings' and scroll down to the bottom. Tap 'Clear my dictionary' and 'Clear My Recently Used GIFs' to cover your tracks.



Share map links

The iOS version of Gboard lets you share a map location by inserting a link from the keyboard. Press the G button and tap Maps, just above the search box. Search for a place in the usual way, such as by name or postcode. The results appear as tiles below and tapping one enters a link into the note, email or message. When the recipient taps this link, Google Maps opens showing the location.



Insert YouTube videos

Gboard for iOS lets you paste YouTube videos into your apps. Tap the G button to activate search, then press YouTube above the search box. Enter the search term to see matching videos shown as tiles below. Tap a video to insert it into a message or email as a web link, or press the Play button to open and view it in the YouTube app. Double-press Home to switch back the email or message if you decide to preview it.

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



HARDWARE

Install a hard drive

Q I can't get Windows to recognise my new 1TB Hitachi hard drive in either of my PCs. I've tried plugging it in using its SATA connection and also a SATA-to-USB converter, but neither works. I know the hard drive is spinning because I can hear it.

Neil Heyes, via email

A Is Windows failing to detect your new drive or is it just not showing up in Explorer? To find out if Windows can see the drive, right-click This PC in Explorer's sidebar and select Manage. Expand the Storage section and select Disk Management.

This tool displays all the drives and partitions Windows can see, even



Use Disk Management in Windows to format a drive and assign a drive letter

those that don't appear in Explorer. If the drive is listed, right-click it and choose from the options – you can do things like format it or assign it a drive letter. Sometimes, just changing the drive letter is enough, but if there's nothing on the hard drive that you want to keep, feel free to format it. Once you've done that, the drive will appear in Explorer.

A Saving screenshots as PDF files is easy when you know how. If you don't already have it, download a copy of Paint.net (www.getpaint.net), which won our Gold Award in last issue's image-editing software roundup. When you want to take a screenshot, press the Print Screen button. Press Alt+Tab to switch to Paint.net and press Ctrl+Alt+V to paste your screenshot as a new image. Use the Rectangle Select tool to choose the part of the image you want to keep, then click 'Crop to Selection' to trim and discard the rest.

You can perform a similar action in the standard Windows Paint app. Open it, take a screenshot as above and press Ctrl+V to paste in the screenshot. Paint also has selection and crop tools, so you can trim the image afterwards.

Both programs let you use the Print tool to save as a PDF. Select Print and choose the 'Microsoft Print to PDF' virtual printer instead of your usual printer to save your image as a PDF file.

SOFTWARE

Access a NAS drive remotely

Q Seagate says it will close its Tappin remote login service for NAS drives on 8 April 2018. According to the email I received, my NAS drive will still work but I will no longer have cloud access to the NAS via Tappin, which means I won't be able to access my 3TB NAS drive remotely. Is there any other software or service I can use instead?

Noel Moore, via email

A Tappin allowed its users to access their network-attached storage (NAS) drive securely over the internet. There are several alternatives you could use instead, such as ownCloud (owncloud.org). This free, open-source program lets you set up cloud storage on your own PC. You have full control of the hardware and software required to operate it, so you don't need to use remote servers or online storage. It's not quite the same as Tappin but it's close.

Another alternative is Tonido (www.tonido.com), which lets you access all the files on your computer remotely from any computer or device on the

internet, and also supports DLNA devices for streaming video and music. To use it, you install a server on your computer and client software on your other PCs and devices. Again, it's similar to Tappin but there are differences.

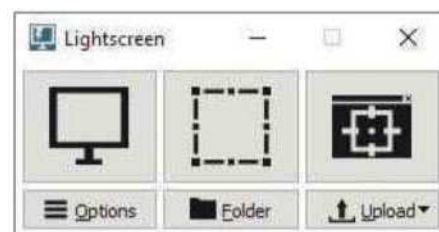
These days, many people find online storage a better option for accessing their files remotely. Google provides unlimited free storage for photos, for example, which you can then access from anywhere. OneDrive offers 1TB of online storage with Microsoft Office for £5 a month, or you can upgrade to 5TB of storage for £6.67 a month if you pay annually. With OneDrive, you can also stream music and video to devices and browse your photos.

SOFTWARE

Save a screen as a PDF

Q I want some software that can capture part of the image on my screen, such as a document, and save it as a PDF file. I've used ABBYY (www.abbyy.com) in the past, but I can't get it to work since I upgraded to 64-bit Windows 10.

James, via email



Lightscreen saves any section of the screen to the hard drive as an image file

If cropping your screenshot in an image editor seems overly complicated, you may prefer to use Lightscreen (lightscreen.com.ar), which lets you grab whole screens or sections of screens. It won't save to PDF, though, so you'll still have to paste the screenshot into another program to convert it.

ABBY software is compatible with Windows 10, but you may need to upgrade it if you have a very old version.

GENERAL PC

Restore missing Media Player

Q I want to use Windows Media Player 12 on my Windows 10 PC. I've looked everywhere on my PC but I can't find it, and Microsoft's website doesn't give

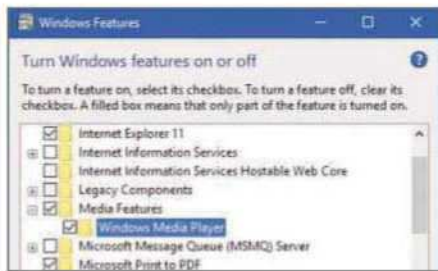


you an option to download it. I realise Microsoft wants people to use Groove Music, but I prefer Media Player. Can you direct me to a download?

Keith Williams, via email

A Windows Media Player is included in Windows 10, so perhaps you just can't find it – it's right at the bottom of the Start menu. Alternatively, click the search box, type **windows media player** and click it in the search results. The Windows 10 version doesn't play DVDs, but otherwise it works fine.

If you still can't find it, you may need to install the program. Click the search box, type **control panel**, then open it when it appears. Open 'Programs and Features', then click 'Turn Windows features on or off' on the left. In the next window, expand the Media Features section and make sure Windows Media Player is ticked. It will install automatically if you don't have it.



Add or remove Windows tools in Control Panel's 'Programs and Features' section

ONLINE SHOPPING

Contact Amazon directly

Q Can you help me find Amazon's email address? I recently purchased a Panasonic DVD recorder, but it doesn't work. When I phoned Panasonic and explained what was wrong with it, they said I had to return it to where I bought it from. However, I can't find Amazon's email address on its website.

John Roy Pound, via email

A When something you buy turns out to be faulty, it's the responsibility of the seller, not the manufacturer, to put it right. That's why Panasonic told you to return it to Amazon. Sometimes manufacturers repair faulty products if they have an agreement with the seller, but it's not a legal requirement.

First, you need to establish who sold you the device – it may have been Amazon or someone who sells through Amazon Market Place. Go to the product's page on the Amazon site. If it was sold by a Market Place vendor, you'll see a 'Sold by' link.



Return faulty products to Amazon or the Market Place seller

If you bought the device from Amazon itself, go to Amazon's About Our Returns Policies page (bit.ly/retu445), which explains your rights in detail. After reading that, go to www.amazon.co.uk/returns, where there are simple options to return a purchase, return a gift and view the status of returns.

The returns process is slightly more complicated if you bought the device from another seller, who simply uses Amazon to look after its payments and deliveries. They might have a different returns policy and procedure, so click the 'Sold by' link we mentioned above. Here, you'll see the company's name and address. You should find the returns policy on a tab below. The About Market Place Returns & Refunds page (bit.ly/mpret445) has useful information you'll need in this case.

SECURITY

Remove scammer's software

Q I was experiencing problems with my PC, including warnings that it was downloading illegal content, when I got a phone call from an engineer claiming to be from my ISP. After a very convincing conversation, I gave him remote access to my PC. He used Supremo to operate it and showed me what it was downloading. Then he said TalkTalk would credit me £200 for a new router and asked for my bank details. When I refused, he got a bit shy and asked me to set up a PayPal account. I said no and he hung up.

Now I've found that he left his software on my PC. Supremo isn't in my program list but 'supremo services' 'supremo exe' and 'supremo helper' are running in Task Manager. I can stop them temporarily, but they start again when I reboot, and I can't delete them.

Paul Moody, via email

HARDWARE

Should I put off buying a new PC?

Q I want to buy a new PC to replace my old, failing one, but I've read that current PC processors are affected by the Spectre and Meltdown bugs. Should I wait six months before buying a new one? If the new fixes slow PCs down, should the seller give me a discount?

Dave Squires, via email

A It will be a long time before the processors in computers are replaced with models that aren't affected by the Spectre and Meltdown bugs. New CPUs take time to develop and even longer to reach the market, so it could be 2019 before we see them.

Will your old PC last that long? If not, you may have no choice but to buy a new one. However, updates to Windows, the BIOS and security software have minimised the severity of the problems, so they're unlikely to affect you.

The security patches do slow PCs down but the amount varies and it depends on the task. We've updated ours with the latest patches in Windows 10 and haven't noticed any slowdown. You may notice it if you run benchmark software, but not in everyday use.

We doubt you'll get a discount on a PC because of this, but it's worth a try.



Emsisoft Emergency Toolkit can help you clean malware from your PC

A This is a scam, so you were right not to give out your bank details. Supremo remote-access software shouldn't need uninstalling – deleting it is sufficient. Right-click the taskbar and select Task Manager. On the Processes tab, right-click all items called Supremo and select 'Open file location'. Right-click again and select End task, then delete the files. If they won't delete, try using the free IObit Unlocker (bit.ly/iobun445) utility.

Your PC may be infected with other malware, so download Emsisoft Emergency Kit (www.emsisoft.com). Go to c:\eek in Explorer and run it.



This fortnight Roland smashed up his stack of old hard drives with a hammer to destroy any data still held on them

Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others, visit forum.webuser.co.uk



TOP TIP

GENERAL PC

Simplify the Start menu

If you have a limited Windows 10 user account that you've set up for your children, you can simplify the Start menu to show only the apps that they need to use regularly. Open the Start menu and right-click an app in the list. Click 'Pin to Start' and the app's tile will be permanently displayed in the Start menu. Right-click any tiles in the Start menu that you don't need and select 'Unpin from Start'.

Now, open Settings (Windows+i) and go to Personalisation, select Start and switch off 'Show app list in Start menu'. This hides the list of apps so your children will only see the tiles you want to provide access to. You can reorder



Simplify the Start menu by only showing the tiles you require

tiles by dragging them into position.

Adam Coleman, via email

Mug winner



select My Account or 'View account'. Click Privacy in the menu bar to open the 'Privacy dashboard'. Select the 'Activity history' tab to view all the recorded data, including everything you've said to Cortana in Windows 10, all the websites you've visited using the Edge browser, any videos you've watched, music you've listened to and more.

You can delete individual items if you want to hide just one or two things, or you can remove everything with the 'Clear activity' link. It doesn't seem to track what you do in Chrome, though.

Gary Nolan, via email

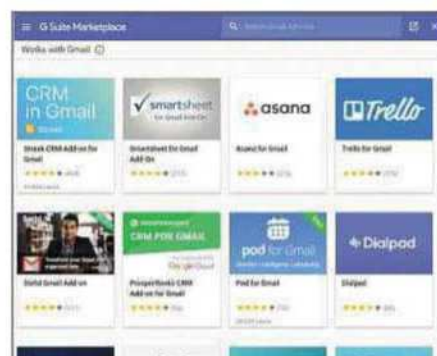
EMAIL

Use add-ons to get extra Gmail tools

I opened the cog menu in Gmail today to check some settings and noticed a new menu option called 'Get add-ons' that I hadn't seen before. It appears that there is now an official store for Gmail add-ons that provide extra tools for your email account.

There are only a few items at the moment but it's worth keeping an eye on it because there could be some useful tools appearing in the future. I have a free Trello (trello.com) account, which I use as a to-do list, so I have added the Trello Gmail add-on.

Sean Williams, via email



You can activate extra tools for Gmail via these add-ons

SEARCH

Bring back Google's View Image button

Like many people, I was outraged at Google's removal of the View Image button on its image search results. I used this all the time to get images – just for personal projects, not to steal people's pictures to pass off as my own.

Luckily, lots of people have been working on ways to bring back the View Image button, or at least work around the problem. The best option I've found is a Chrome add-on called View Image, which is available through the Chrome Web Store (bit.ly/viewim445). Click the Add To Chrome button and, the next time you click an image in Google's



Bring the View Image button to Google Image Search with a simple add-on

Image Search, the View Image button will appear again, as if it had never left.

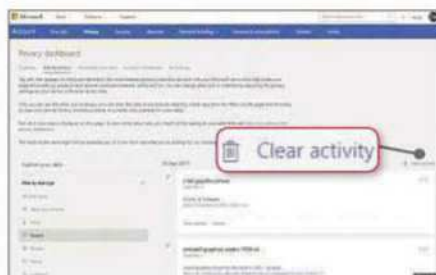
Joe Burke, via email

PRIVACY

Remove Microsoft tracking data

It seems like everything we do on our computers and internet is tracked by someone, somewhere. Sometimes you don't know what's being tracked, but some companies let you find out. For example, Microsoft tracks lots of Windows users, but at least you can see the data and delete it if you want to.

Go to OneDrive (onedrive.live.com) or Outlook (outlook.live.com) and click your picture in the top-right corner, then



Visit Microsoft's 'Privacy dashboard' to clear the personal info the company holds



MOBILE

Free Android VPN

After registering for ProtonMail (see the *Web User* workshop in Issue 444), I've discovered that the account also provides me with access to its free Android VPN (bit.ly/pvpn445). You just download the app from the Play Store, then sign in using your existing ProtonMail account. It's free and doesn't display ads, but you only get a limited amount of data. It's enough for some casual surfing, though.

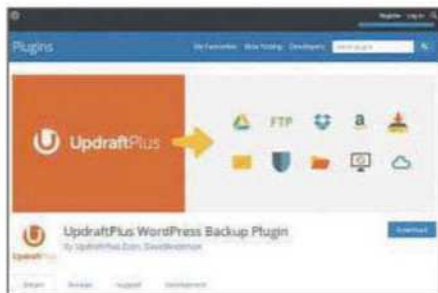
John Lawson, via email

WEB BUILDING

Back up your WordPress database

In issue 444, Adrian Bonnington wrote: "It is almost impossible to download the WordPress Database". This isn't true and anyone with a WordPress site should be routinely making backups of their database to a different computer. I use the free version of the UpdraftPlus add-on (updraftplus.com), which I've set to back up daily to Google Drive, but there are plenty of alternatives.

Bob H, Sheffield



Try the free version of UpDraft, if you need to back up WordPress

BROWSERS

Microsoft services in Chrome

I have noticed that when accessing certain features in Microsoft accounts, Chrome doesn't always work. For example, go to OneDrive (onedrive.live.com) and click the cog icon at the top, then click Options. In Chrome, I get nothing whereas the Edge browser takes me to Settings.

Maybe it's the current version of Chrome or maybe it's my PC, but it might also be a deliberate move by Microsoft. If you find you are having trouble accessing Microsoft sites and settings, try using Edge.

Once you get into OneDrive's settings, select 'Office file formats' and you can choose to save documents in Microsoft Office or OpenDocument formats. The latter could be useful if you often exchange documents with someone who uses LibreOffice.

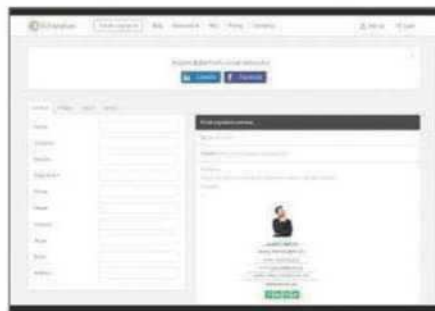
Neil Curtis, via email

EMAIL

Design a better email signature

I reluctantly gave up Incredimail a few years ago and switched to Gmail. The one thing I miss is the signatures, which always looked great and which I was never able to recreate in Gmail. However, I've found that mysignature.io lets you make a free, professional-looking email signature. It looks more corporate than Incredimail's but I think they look a lot better than just plonking your name at the bottom of a message.

Jack McDonald, via email



Get a professional-looking email signature for free from mysignature.io

MOBILE

Edit Android's Share menu

When you try to share something in Android by tapping the Share button in an app, the menu of potential options looks very messy. However, you can pin options you use regularly to the top of the list to make it look and feel more organised.

Share a file as you normally would and,

when the 'Share via' options appear, long-press the option you want to bring to the top, then tap Pin on the menu that pops up. You can do this to as many other options as you like, but be aware that pinned options are sorted alphabetically, so any subsequent items you pin will only appear at the top of the menu if they come earlier in the alphabet than those you've already pinned.

To remove a pinned option from the top of your list, simply long-press it and choose Unpin from the pop-up menu.

James Anderson, via email

BROWSERS

Run Edge add-ons in a private browser

Most browsers don't let you run add-ons in their private-browsing modes because the browser can't control whether the add-on is compromising your security or not. This is a sensible restriction but if there's an add-on that you trust, which you really want to use in your private browsing, there's a workaround you can use in Microsoft's Edge browser.

Click the menu icon and select Extensions from the menu. Make sure the add-on you want to use is already enabled for regular browsing. Hover the mouse over it and click the cog icon that appears. Tick the box next to 'Allow for InPrivate browsing'. Edge will let you know that it can't block the add-on from collecting your browsing history, so make absolutely sure you're happy to trust the add-on before you give it access.

John Farmer, via email

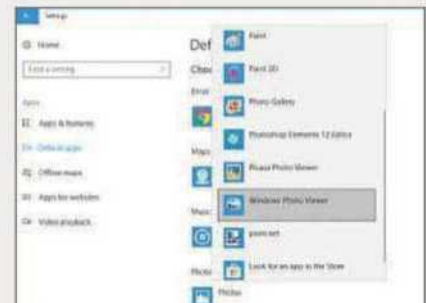
BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

SOFTWARE

Change your default photo viewer

I used to use Windows Photo Viewer to preview pictures in Windows because it was quick to load and did the job efficiently. Since I installed Windows 10, I've used the Windows 10 Photos app which takes ages to load when I click a photo. I'd resigned myself to this but have recently found out that I could have gone back to using Photo Viewer from day one!

If you've upgraded your PC from an older version of Windows, as I have, then Photo Viewer should still be there. Open Settings (Windows+i) and choose Apps, then 'Default apps'. Scroll down to 'Photo viewer', click the



Choose your preferred photo viewer from Windows Settings' Apps section

current option, then pick Windows Photo Viewer from the list.

Matthew Burns, via email

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?

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



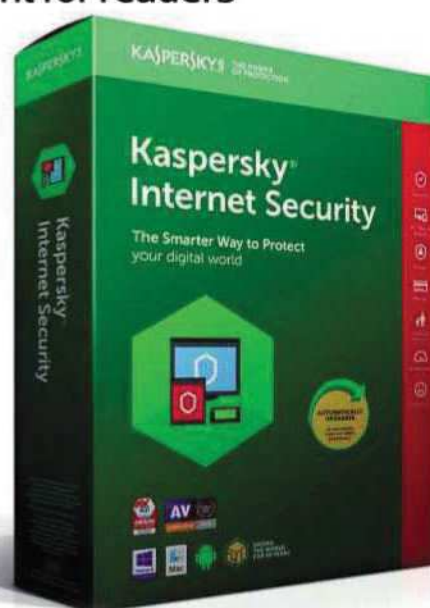
OFFER OF THE FORTNIGHT

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:

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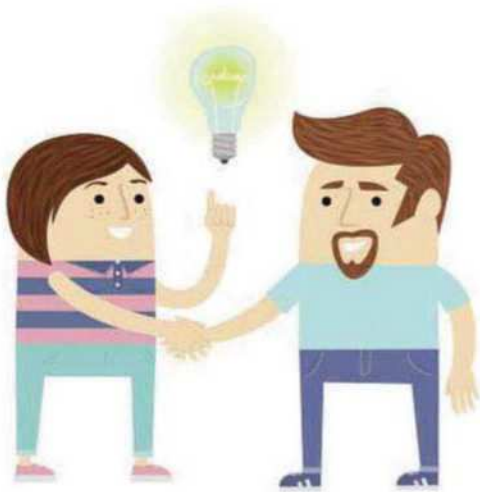
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GENERAL PC

Fixing boot slowdown

Q Since installing recent Windows updates, my laptop takes three times as long to start Windows 10 and I spend ages staring at the circling cursor! Are there any free Windows diagnostic tools or other programs I can use to ascertain what's causing these longer boot times? Are there any logs I can look at?

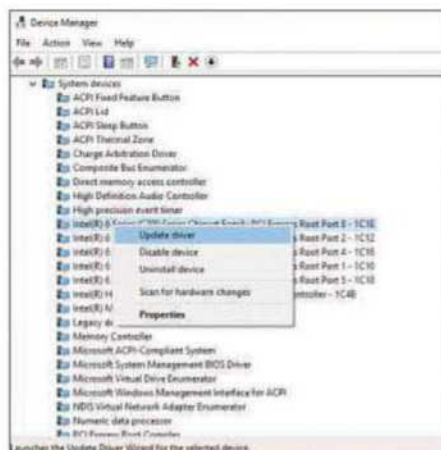
pats02, Web User Forums

A Event Viewer may tell you if anything is hanging and you can also create a boot log, but I've never found them to be that informative because everything appears to have started fine whenever I've looked.

I think I'd start by checking to see if anything needs a driver update. While I don't have much faith in Windows finding anything new via Device Manager, it has found updated drivers for me for items in the 'System devices' section. Just work your way through them by right-clicking each one and selecting 'Update driver', then 'Search automatically for updated driver software'.

If you use antivirus software, try switching it off and rebooting to see if that helps. Just don't forget to re-enable it after the computer has restarted.

Cantrel, Web User Forums



If an update slows down your PC, check your system hardware for new drivers

GENERAL PC

Recommended disc burners

Q I am looking for free Windows 10 software that I can use to burn music CDs. This is for personal use, to play on the CD player in my car. I read that the software I previously used now has PUPs (potentially unwanted programs) bundled with it, so I'd rather not use it any more. Any useful information you could share on other products would be very helpful.

fossewayfella, Web User Forums

A I've previously used ImgBurn (www.imgburn.com), which is a good program but it doesn't appear to have been updated for five years.

These days, I use BurnAware (www.burnaware.com), which has recently been updated to version 11. I've found that it works well with Windows 10 but, confusingly, there are several versions



BurnAware is actively developed but download and install it carefully

of the program, including two versions of the free software. One comes with optional software that's tricky to opt out of unless you read the installation screens very carefully. However, if you go to the bottom of the download page, there's a link to another version of the free software that comes without the optional installers. Download and install this one.

Madeline, Web User Forums

HARDWARE

Get the best memory upgrade

Q I want to upgrade the 4GB of removable memory that came with my laptop to the maximum 8GB. There is only one slot and it needs to be 1600MHz DDR3L (PC3-12800) 1.35V Non-ECC CL11 204-pin SODIMM Intel Laptop Memory. I've found the memory I need on the Kingston Technology (www.kingston.com) and Crucial (uk.crucial.com) websites.

Does the price of memory fluctuate? The 8GB module I'm looking at is currently priced around £70. Is there a particular time of the year the price may dip, for example? Should I stick with Kingston or Crucial, or go for other makes? Also, what should I do with the 4GB module I will be removing?

vista, Web User Forums



Make sure you choose the correct memory module for the device you're upgrading

supplier. Keep your original 4GB module and store it in the package that your new 8GB module comes in. Put it somewhere safe because you never know when you might need it.

My first Toshiba laptop came with a single 2GB module, although it had two slots. I originally got an identical 2GB module to upgrade it to 4GB but later, when I was feeling flush, I upgraded it to 8GB with two 4GB modules. I still have those two 2GB modules!

Cantrel, Web User Forums

Star Email

Email-address bias has its bonuses

In response to Paul Vallance's Star Email in Issue 443, 'Don't judge people by their email address': I found it useful to discover that Admiral charges Hotmail users higher insurance premiums. Knowing that my email address may affect an insurance quote means I can take more care over which address I use when seeking one.

The insurer's decision will be based on their customer's claims history. They will have identified a correlation between email address and risk, just as they do with so many other criteria, such as your postcode – if you live in an area of high car crime, motor insurance is going to cost more. Or should we all pay the same flat rate, irrespective of whether we drive an old banger or a brand new Rolls, whether



we've had loads of accidents or none?

It wouldn't make economic sense to move postcode to reduce my premium, but if all I need to do is use a different email address, that's easy. Thanks for the tip, Admiral!

The news story suggested that Hotmail users pay more than Gmail users. Can we go further? Does the part before the '@' matter? Would JohnSurname@hotmail.com be lower risk than SillyBilly@hotmail.com. Would John Surname be better off buying a domain name and becoming something like John@Surname.me.uk?

I believe the original story was based on an investigation by *The Sun* newspaper and the price difference was only about £5. A bigger mystery is why I got a £50 discount by adding my wife to my policy – she hasn't driven since she passed her test six years ago and I wouldn't let her loose in my car anyway. I don't want the car (or my wife) getting written off!

Bob H, via email

Back Issues disc winner



Spare us your gimmicky routers

Reading your FAQ in Issue 443 on the new Wi-Fi security protocol WPA3, I could not help thinking about what I, as a user, want from a router – as opposed to what router manufacturers apparently want to give us.

What I do not want is a maximum speed of 3,800Mbps or something gimmicky with eight antennas that looks like an upturned tarantula. I want something much more user-friendly, like

a miniature All-in-One PC with its own touchscreen that offers easy installation of programs such as antivirus software and a data-usage



monitor. I realise that some routers already have usage monitors, but having one on the device itself would be much more useful.

Also, the Wi-Fi button should be well away from the WPS button and it would be nice to have a keyring-sized remote to switch the Wi-Fi on and off. The only router I can think of that comes

anywhere near is the TP-Link Touch P5 AC1900 (pictured), but this is not widely available and, of course, not WPA.

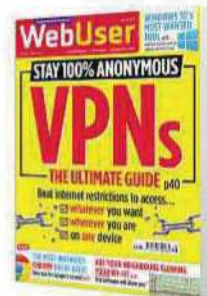
Maurice Belshaw, via email

Do VPNs really protect our privacy?

Over my years of reading *Web User*, I've got the impression that the magazine is trying to advise its readers to be aware of the current state of online privacy. This is obviously a welcome move – but to

what end? We are all now aware that governments eavesdrop on us, and we also know that our web-surfing habits are being sold to third-parties, while hackers are apparently at every street corner getting ready to intercept our unprotected Wi-Fi.

Many of us have unwittingly given up



Quiz Answers: Issue 444

- Ice Station Zebra** (Train, Zebra)
- From Russia With Love** (Russia flag, Heart)
- The Deer Hunter** (Deer, Gun)
- Barefoot in the Park** (Bear, Foot, Arrow, Tree)
- Rain Man** (Cloud, Rain, Face)
- Deliverance** (Ant, Ant)

WINNER!

Well done to Brian Coleman who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



TECH YEAR

2004



our privacy for the convenience of social media, maps, email, forums, searches, online shopping and so on. Inadvertently, we have signed up to give away all our personal information – we may as well just let anyone have the key to our door so they can wander around and do what the heck they like!

We're told there's a solution, though: let's all go "anonymous" and be untraceable by getting a VPN. But which country do the VPN companies reside in? Are they reputable and how much of your data do they store? Will they just hand over your details if asked?

If you want a good VPN, you have to fork out for a two- or three-year contract, paid in advance. Then there's the lovely fast connection you pay your ISP for, now reduced by half the speed or more. Your bank's website probably won't let you use a VPN, either, and there's no guarantee that the VPN offers anything to make you secure – sure, your IP address is different, but what else is being leaked? Are VPNs essentially 'snake oil'? What will we have to protect ourselves from next? I'm going to make a tinfoil hat, just in case!

JayH, Web User Forums

Book Airbnb with a credit card

In Ask the Expert in Issue 443, you reply to the question 'Is Airbnb safe?'. However, you don't

mention that the first time you order an item or make a booking on a website, you should use a credit card and not a debit card. This gives you the protection that if anything goes wrong, you can reclaim your payment from the credit card provider.

Mike Crome, via email

Files Go boosted my battery

Thanks Wayne Williams for the heads-up about Files Go (bit.ly/fg440) in your Workshop in Issue 440. I installed this

app and – this may just be a coincidence – the battery life on my Android phone improved 100%. Awesome.

David Eaglesham, via email



What you say...

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT FACEBOOK LETTING ADVERTISERS TARGET YOU BASED ON YOUR RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL BELIEFS (bit.ly/facebook445)?

I'm going to remove the information under those headings. I want nothing more from Facebook than posts from friends and family.

Nat Grove

Facebook states that it will always be free, but I think this will be its way of offering no adverts for a small fee.

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

Facebook and Instagram are getting ridiculous. The day I start getting religious or political adverts will be my last day on Facebook.

Gary McPherson @gsmcpherson682

Where is that thumbs-down button?

John Young

DID ONLINE SHOPPING KILL TOYS R US?

Very rarely do we buy toys anymore. Kids want technology, not toys. But when we have bought toys for younger family members, it's nearly always been from Amazon.

Sir Cumference @Gary_Olsen

Their prices have rocketed over the last few years. That's why people go online. They had the monopoly, then took advantage. Now look where it's got them.

Ian Wishy Wish

It's basically a large discount warehouse with no frills – rather intimidating for children and nothing exciting to do.

Lance Parkington

The last time I went into Toys R Us it was very unappealing. Grumpy staff, signs everywhere saying 'We have the right to search you'. The toys were tacky, expensive and out of date. My nephew said: "This is grim, Uncle".

Gavin Green

FINNISH COMPANY ROVIO, MAKER OF ANGRY BIRDS, HAS CLOSED ITS UK OFFICE. DO YOU STILL PLAY THE GAME?

No. Used to, but once they started putting in more intrusive ads and in-app purchases, I stopped.

Goldmaster @imthegoldmaster

I haven't played it in ages. There are far too many versions of it.

Phil Graham

Don't have enough time to play games with keeping track of social media, emails, texts, calls etc.

Brian Brown

It's the only game I play! Have done for years. I love it.

Colin Leonard

IT'S RUMOURED APPLE MAY CLOSE THE ITUNES STORE. WOULD YOU MISS IT?

No, I buy music downloads from Amazon. Never been a fan of iTunes and it used to annoy me that music was released first on there.

Lynn Sharpe

I hated having iTunes on my PC – nothing more than bloatware. I pay for downloads on Amazon, where you can download the MP3s directly.

Martin Phillp

I've never used it myself as I get my music from websites and borrow CDs from my library.

David Griffiths

I don't use any Apple products. I'd rather buy physical CDs and create MP3s from them.

Wolf Simpson

! Page 404



Smartphone makers are selling us the same old stuff, year after year, says **Barry Collins**

Phone makers are just dialling it in

I'm sat here writing this column at home in Burgess Hill, while half my colleagues have traipsed to Barcelona to cover the latest smartphone releases at Mobile World Congress. I could have told them what to expect before they boarded at Gatwick – as I could have done every time for the past few years – because the mobile industry is bang out of ideas.

The handset manufacturers are dialling it in. Safe in the knowledge that you're almost certainly going to upgrade your phone as soon as your mobile contract expires, they're knocking out handsets that are about as revolutionary as *Songs of Praise*.

The screens get slightly wider/taller/shorter/thinner/fatter (delete as applicable) every year. The processor inside gets slightly faster. The cameras get an extra megapixel or two. And someone will invent a new camera mode that makes your photos look more synthetic than the £3 T-shirts you can buy in Tesco's. The only company that did something different at this year's MWC was Nokia – which rereleased a handset that was popular back in 2003!

If you put the latest flagship handsets from the major manufacturers in a police line-up, even their own mothers wouldn't be able to tell them apart. It's one black oblong of shiny glass alongside another. The only thing



that really changes is the price – you can guarantee this year's must-have oblong is £50 more expensive than the last.

Why do we continue to hand over our money every couple of years? Well, firstly, that £800 price tag is neatly camouflaged in a two-year contract, making the cost seem less ludicrous than it really is.

But the real reason we wearily trudge down to Carphone Warehouse – fending off the eight different types of insurance

the dolt behind the desk insists you'll need to protect your phone from fire/theft/werewolves – is that our handsets are

designed to self-destruct after a couple of years.

New versions of the phone's operating system come down the pipe at regular intervals, each promising a fabulous new set of features and 'essential' security updates. Except most of those new features are reserved for people

buying the latest handsets, and all that operating system update serves to do is make your device 10% slower than it was previously. Four updates later, your phone's about as spritely as Jabba the Hutt and it takes a week to send a text message.

That's if you can even send a message at all, because the battery life of the blasted thing can now be measured in nanoseconds. I'm generally not one for conspiracy theories, but are you seriously telling me that Apple, Samsung, Google and their combined research billions cannot find a way to make batteries last longer than they do currently? Or are they in no particular hurry to introduce a technology that would eliminate the number one incentive to upgrade your phone at the end of a contract? There's a reason they stopped offering replaceable batteries in phones, after all, and it has absolutely nothing to do with preserving the sleek lines of the handset.

Today's smartphones are barely smarter than last year's or the year before's. The industry's just hoping you're not smart enough to notice.

“ If you put the latest handsets in a police line-up, even their own mothers wouldn't be able to tell them apart ”

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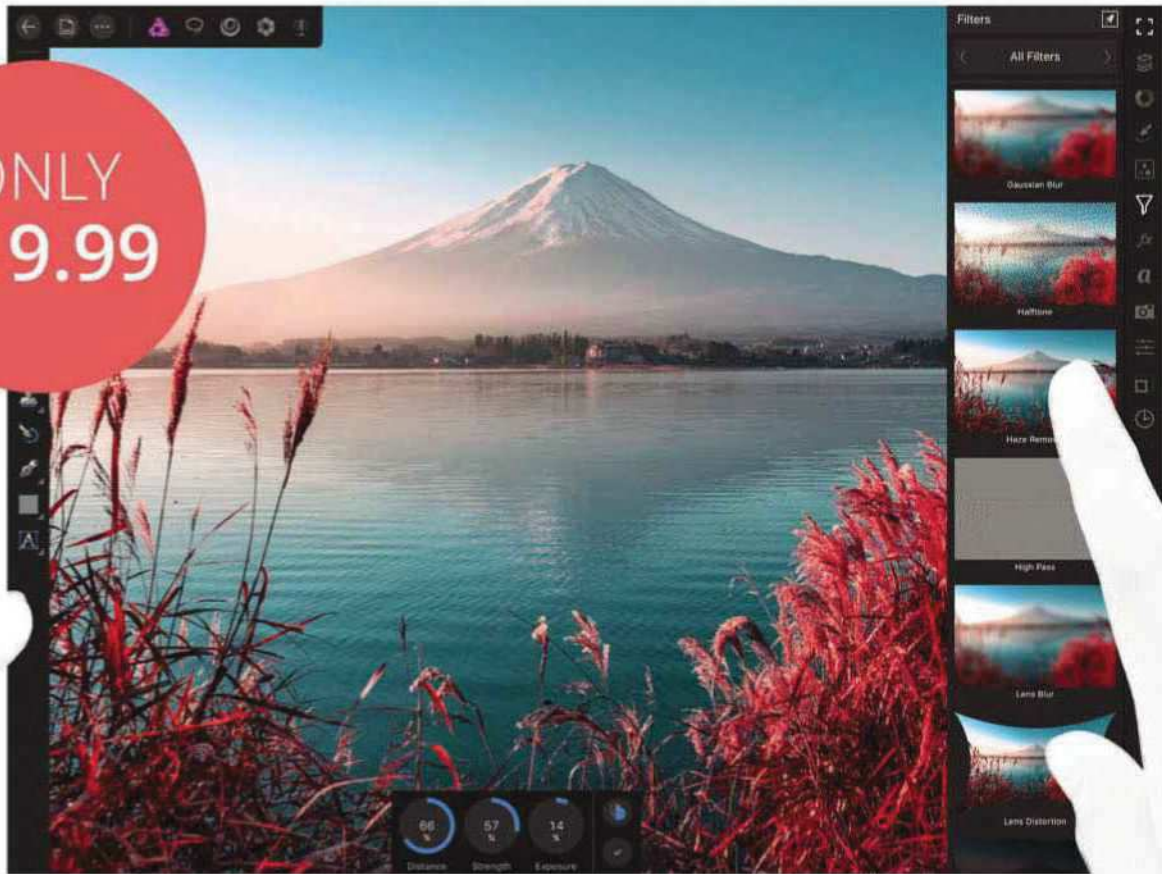
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