Issue 451

# WebUser

13 - 26 June 2018

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- ☑ Pretend to be offline
- ☑ Create fake accounts

+ Who's hiding from YOU?

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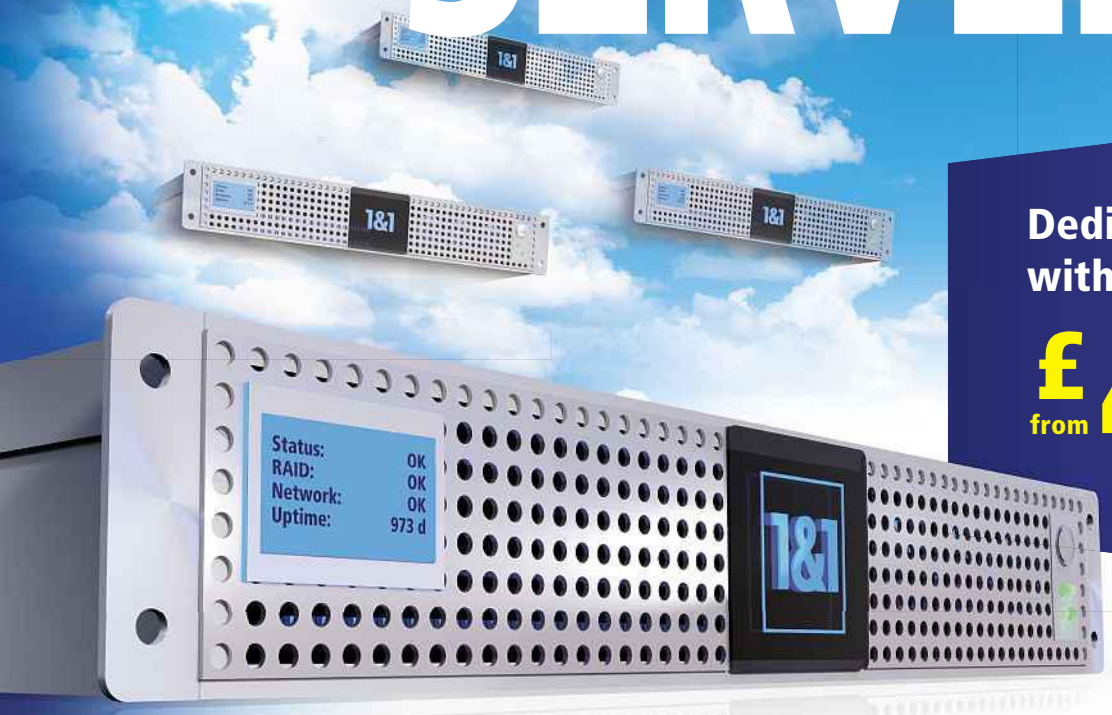


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# How not to be seen online

In days of old, when you didn't want to be disturbed, you could simply ignore the ringing phone and unwanted callers would assume you were out, asleep or soaking in a tin bath. Nowadays, people can see instantly when you're available to chat, and whether you've received and read their messages, and even get a visual signal that you're actively typing a reply. Claim that you're somewhere else or otherwise occupied, and those giveaway 'seen' ticks will expose you as a liar and all-round bad egg.

In this issue's cover feature, we explain how to avoid the pressure of online social interaction by making yourself invisible on services including Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, so you can go about your business without being bothered by unwelcome attention and unwarranted intrusion. We also reveal how you can prevent nosy companies from knowing that you've opened their emails, and keep your guilty-pleasure listening on Spotify private. It definitely pays to be unseen!

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

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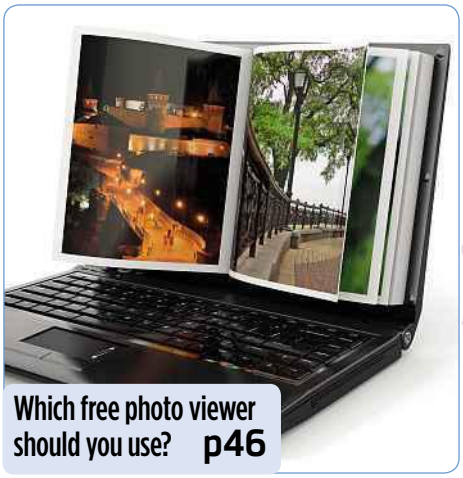

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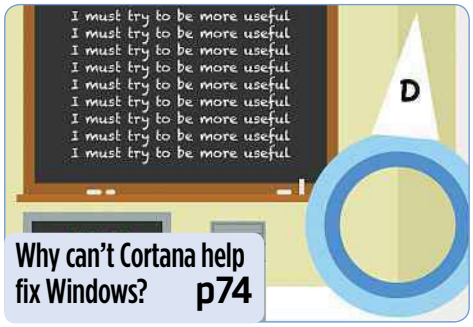



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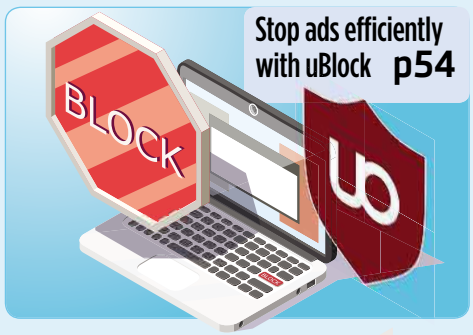

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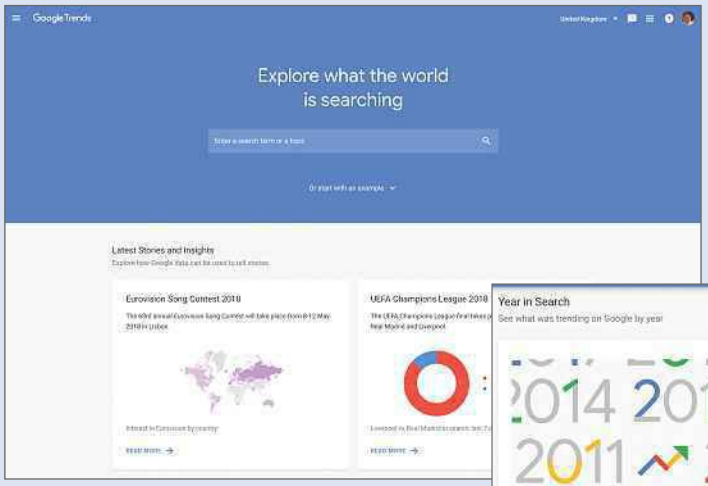
# What's New Online

## See what the world is searching for

If you like to keep abreast of what people are searching for online, there's a good chance you've already come across Google Trends. Launched 12 years ago, it highlights what's hot and what's not around the world, and is a fascinating resource for anyone who wants to see which topics are preoccupying specific countries.

Now, after a thorough makeover, Trends is even more comprehensive and easy to use. For a start, you can see what was trending on Google year by year, with annually compiled data that stretches back to 2001. You can also search for topics to view trends and data relating to them, and check out the Recently Trending section to see the most popular search terms from the past few hours.



The trends make for interesting reading. Swine flu dominated the news in 2009, for example, but topped the list of falling searches the following year. In 2011, "how to snog" was exercising the UK's thoughts, while in 2015 people wanted to know what a Penny Black stamp was.

The site also provides in-depth reports from Google's news team, which collates lots of data about a particular topic to provide insights into major events. Just be sure to change the country from the US to the UK for the most relevant information.

trends.google.com

## Mute annoying Instagram friends

www.instagram.com

Sometimes unfollowing or blocking someone on social media is more trouble than it's worth, because it implies that you're unhappy with them, which could hurt their feelings. With Instagram, such sensitive situations may be consigned to the past, thanks to a new 'mute' option. This simply stops people's posts appearing in your feed, but doesn't reveal that you've taken any action. What's more, it's really easy to do. Just tap the three-dot menu icon in the top-right corner of a post from someone you're fed up with and, in the menu that appears, select the new Mute option. You can then choose whether or not you want to mute everything posted from that account or only their public images. If you later decide that you want to message that person or browse their profile page, you still can.

## Add a soundscape to pictures

imaginarysoundscape2.qosmo.jp

A picture may paint a thousand words, but it doesn't always tell you the full story. Imaginary Soundscape, which launched last year, lends a greater sense of atmosphere to Google Street View by finding suitable background noises to accompany the still images, for a more immersive experience.

The developer has added a new feature since we first looked at the site in Issue 441. You can now upload your own images or use photos from the web, and Imaginary Soundscape will use machine learning to match each picture with audio. The sound of crashing waves may accompany a seaside photo, for example, while the system might match a shot of a city with sounds of the hustle and bustle of urban life.

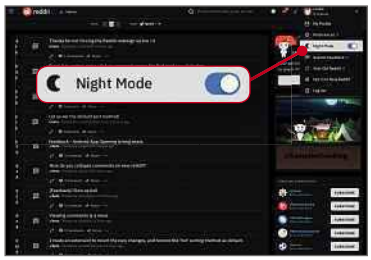
Things become really interesting when you select random pictures, because the site responds by producing abstract sounds. Just make sure they're under 5MB.

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

# Enable a dark mode in Reddit

www.reddit.com

If you don't want to be dazzled by Reddit's traditional white background when you're reading at night, you can now switch to the new native dark theme on its freshly designed site. Just click your username in the top right-hand corner and toggle the Night Mode to On. See our feature on page 50 for more ways to apply dark themes to your favourite sites.




# See Tweets from 10 years ago

www.twitter.com

Discovered by Kickstarter's CTO Andy Baio, this trick lets you read decade-old tweets that were posted by people you follow today. It's a great way to see what concerned people back then, and it works even if you weren't on Twitter in 2008. Simply log in and type `filter:follows until:2008-05-30-filter:replies` into the search engine. If those you follow were using the social media platform 10 years ago, their tweets will appear. You can also play around with the date to see chats from other moments in time.

# Play with Jurassic World's dashboard

bit.ly/jurassic451

To get you in the mood for *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* as it roars into cinemas, the promoters have made a stunning recreation of the dashboard that covers a wall in the theme park's control room in the previous movie. Using the ArcGIS platform to integrate real-time data, it replaces the fictional island of Isla Nublar with the similarly shaped La Palma in the Canary Islands and draws on Esri maps as well as open data for its webcams, weather reports and other feeds. All that's missing is a T-Rex.

# Explore the surface of an alien planet

bit.ly/planet451

NASA's Exoplanet Travel Bureau lets you view far-off worlds as if you were standing on their surface. The latest addition is Kepler-186f – "where the grass is always redder". To transport yourself there, click 'Explore the Surface', then drag your mouse to rotate the view through 360-degrees.

You can also click to see what the planet might look like with and without an atmosphere.

## NEW VOICE COMMANDS

### Play a World Cup quiz

**Test your World Cup knowledge by getting Google Assistant to ask you questions. Say "Ask Football World Cup Quiz" and see if you can get a result.**

### Control your iPhone

**You can now use Siri to control your iOS devices and Mac, turning Wi-Fi and Bluetooth on and off, changing the display's brightness, adjusting the volume and opening the Settings app.**

### Rearrange a meeting

**If you use Alexa to schedule a meeting (by saying "Alexa, schedule a meeting...") but you find you need to change it, you can now say, "Alexa, rearrange my meeting" to change the time and date.**

### Track Amazon packages more accurately

www.amazon.co.uk

If your Amazon parcel is being delivered by its in-house couriers, you can check its location in real time. A new delivery tracker notifies you when your order is 10 stops away to ensure you don't miss it.

### Change Google Maps icons

maps.google.co.uk

Now, when you put the iOS version of Google Maps into driving-navigation mode, you can select an alternative icon. Choose from a red sedan, a green pickup truck or a yellow 4x4 and follow it all the way to your destination.

### Upload videos to Imgur

imgur.com

As well as sharing stills and GIFs, iOS users can now upload videos up to 30 seconds long (with sound) to Imgur. The audio is switched off by default but viewers can activate it with a simple tap or click.

Tell us your favourite new things at forum.webuser.co.uk

# Need to Know

# Apple unveils host of features and improvement in iOS 12

## What happened?

Apple kicked off its Worldwide Developer Conference (WWDC) by unveiling the next version of its mobile operating system, iOS 12, promising performance improvements and lots of new features when the update arrives this autumn.

Apple software VP Craig Federighi said the company was "doubling down on performance", claiming iOS 12 will make apps launch 40% faster and the camera open 70% more quickly. However, iPhone and iPad fans are likely to be more interested in the new features in iOS 12. Perhaps most intriguing is a new option called Screen Time that tracks how much time you spend using specific apps, summarising your activity each week. If you want to cut back, you'll be able to set a limit for how much time you spend using a specific app, with 'time's up' appearing when you run out of minutes.

Another key improvement is to voice assistant, Siri. Apple is making it easier for developers to create shortcuts for voice interaction, so rather than asking Siri to open an app to perform a task, you can just describe what you want done. There's also a new augmented-reality measuring app, called Measure, that lets you point your camera at an object to measure it. There are already many apps that can do this, but the feature will now be built in.

One of the headline features in last year's iPhone X was Animoji, animated characters that mimic your movements.

*iOS 12 will let you create Memoji – animated characters that look like you*

With iOS 12, Apple is offering a wider range of characters, including a T-Rex, and introducing Memoji, an emoji avatar that you can customise to look like you.

More useful is the addition of group calling to Apple's video-chat tool FaceTime, which will let you talk to up to 32 people at once, rather than just one. If you don't want to show your face in a call, you can use your Memoji or Animoji instead. Other changes include the rebranding of iBooks to Apple Books, and the addition of sharing suggestions to the Photos app: take a group photo and the app will suggest you send it to the friends who appear in it.

Alongside the iOS update, Apple unveiled the next version of its desktop operating system, MacOS Mojave, and revealed that the software and iOS 12 will both block sites such as Facebook from tracking you across the web using 'like' buttons and other surveillance techniques. Safari users will see a message asking if they want to allow Facebook to use cookies and available data while they're browsing. Simply click 'don't allow' to prevent it.

## How will it affect you?

iOS 12 will be available for iPhone owners this autumn, most likely in September, as a free upgrade as usual. If you can't wait, a series of betas will arrive from this month for users registered for Apple's trial software.

The update will work on all the same devices as iOS 11, so if you have the current version, you should be able to update your device. If you weren't able to update last time, you'll be left out of this upgrade too – and you're unlikely to get any future updates, so perhaps it's time for some new hardware.

If you don't have an iPhone and you find any of the new features appealing, there's no need to be disappointed. Apple is the *de facto* trend setter in the mobile market, so other manufacturers and developers are sure to follow suit and offer similar features and apps. Indeed, if you want to measure furniture with your phone, plenty of Android apps (of varying quality) already offer that.

## What do we think?

It's easy to criticise Apple for its expensive smartphones, but its annual software upgrades are a steal. For no charge, iPhone owners not only get the basic stability and security fixes we expect on any digital device, but a host of free new features that could be selling points for new hardware.

Not all the additions are particularly innovative, but the anti-Facebook tracking, FaceTime group conversations and Screen Time tool are genuinely useful. Memoji may seem like a gimmick, but we predict that personalised animated creations will be all over social media as soon as iOS 12 is released.

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

# Voice assistants could let hackers listen in

## What happened?

Researchers have found two new ways to nab sensitive data using voice assistants such as Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant. Past studies have shown that voice assistants are vulnerable to manipulation by hackers, but this is one of the first pieces of research to run the attack remotely, which means criminals could target your smart speaker from anywhere.

The researchers from the University of Virginia and Indiana University hijacked devices using two techniques: voice squatting and voice masquerading. With squatting, criminals could create a dodgy Alexa skill called "Capital Won", for example, which sounds like credit card company "Capital One". If a voice command triggered the bogus skill instead of the genuine one, they could then nab your card details.

With the masquerade hack, attackers would design a useful skill that pretends to terminate but continues to run in the background, hoovering up data.

The study follows an incident in the US where a couple's conversation was unintentionally recorded by their Alexa device and sent to a friend.

## How will it affect you?

It's important to remember that such research is done by academics, not criminals. The Capital Won attack is possible but, as far as we know, no hacker has tried it – and Amazon may have checks in place to stop such dubious skills reaching Alexa devices. Still, the studies highlight the security risk of introducing any connected device into your home.

## What do we think?

Even if these hacks are never used against Amazon Echo or Google Home owners, there will be one that eventually gets through. With that in mind, you should think carefully about how you use voice assistants. If adding a credit card app to Alexa is a genuine convenience, the risk may be worth it. If not, it may be better to reserve the voice assistant for less sensitive tasks, such as playing Spotify music and checking the weather.

# Google Chrome lets you ditch passwords

## What happened?

Tired of having to remember login details for every website you visit? A password manager can help, but Google has another answer: ditching passwords altogether. The latest version of Chrome (67) supports a new web-authentication standard that lets you log in using physical credentials rather than a password. That credential could be a fingerprint reader or a USB key. Mozilla has already added support for the system to Firefox, and Microsoft Edge is expected to follow suit soon.

## How will it affect you?

The web-authentication system will allow you to sign up and log into websites by registering a fingerprint or other biometric identifier, as well as a PIN on a smartphone or a USB security key. You'll need to set up a login method for every site, but it'll make signing in online as easy as using a mobile app. When you log in, the website will trigger a notification on your phone asking you to, for example, present your finger for scanning.

The new system not only does away with the need to remember a different password for every site, but also avoids the risk of hackers stealing passwords to break into accounts. If your phone doesn't have a fingerprint reader, you may want to invest in a FIDO physical USB key to use with the system – these are small USB devices that you plug into your PC to identify yourself, and they're available for as little as £10 from Amazon.

## What do we think?

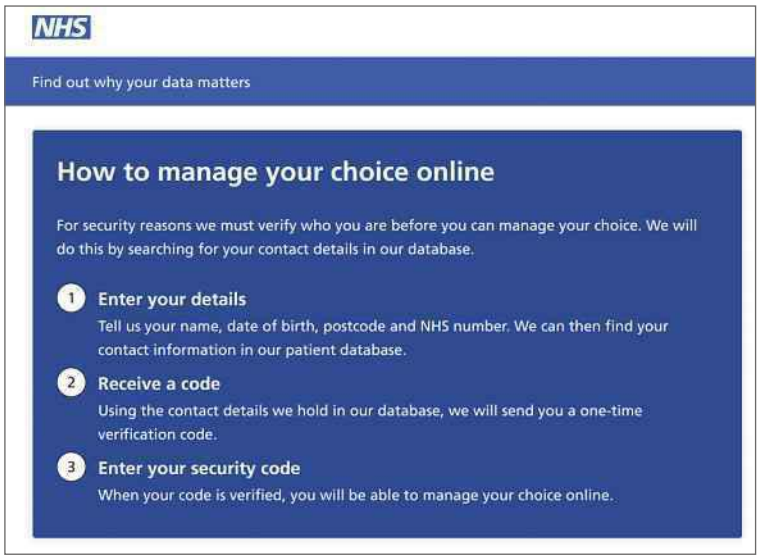
If you worry about online security but you have trouble remembering your passwords, the new web-authentication system could work for you. But if you're more concerned about someone at home or work nabbing your phone or USB key to access your account, it's perhaps better to stick with passwords. Either way, this new standard is a welcome option for web users who are suffering from password fatigue – it's about time we had more choice over how we secure our online accounts.

# NHS lets you opt out of data-sharing online

## What happened?

On 25 May, the day that GDPR entered UK law, NHS Digital unveiled a data-sharing opt-out tool that lets you manage how the health service handles your personal information.

By visiting a new section of the NHS website, called Your NHS Data Matters (bit.ly/yourdata451), you can discover exactly what happens to your confidential information – the sort that potentially identifies you and your health conditions – and choose how it's collected, stored and used.




Don't worry – changing preferences won't affect your ability to see a doctor. The NHS states that healthcare professionals including GPs can still "access your records for important information about your health". Opting out just means your personal data won't be used to "research and develop cures for serious illnesses" or to "plan and improve health and care services".

NHS Digital's data opt-out tool was developed in response to Dame Caldicott's 2016 review, which urged the introduction of a consensual data-sharing model in the wake of the controversial Care.data project – an ill-fated attempt to share anonymous patient data across a central database. This GDPR-compliant initiative seeks to redress that imbalance, while offering greater protection over patient data than its failed predecessor

## How will it affect you?

It's possible that you've never considered precisely what data the NHS holds on you, so this opt-out tool presents an opportunity to control that information. Opting out – or even opting in – is entirely voluntary and, helpfully, the new online tool automatically replaces the old 'type 2 opt-outs'. This means that if you've already declined to share your data, no further action is required. Otherwise, head to the website, armed with your NHS number, to set your preferences. If you're unable (or unwilling) to do this online, there are three alternatives: ring them, contact them by post or ask a proxy to do it on your behalf (bit.ly/nhsmanage451).

## What do we think?

Gaining more control over our personal data always gets the thumbs-up from us – no matter whether it's Facebook, Google or even the National Health Service, which arguably holds the most sensitive information of all. Managing your data-sharing preferences is incredibly simple, provided you have the necessary details to hand. What really worries us, however, is the fact that for all its good intentions, the NHS has a hit-and-mostly-miss relationship with new technology, so we hope our personal data remains secure.

# FIRST LOOK

## OnePlus 6

**bit.ly/oneplus451**

The eagerly anticipated OnePlus 6 features the design, performance and power of a premium smartphone, yet despite packing some top specs, it's almost half the price of flagship rivals such as the Samsung S9+ and the iPhone X. Equipped with a 19:9 AMOLED screen measuring 6.28in, the OnePlus 6 looks like a smartphone-tablet hybrid. It's certainly not as pocketable as a standard 5-6in phone, but it's slim and lightweight, and its glorious 2,280 x 1,080 Full HD+ resolution makes it ideal for watching videos and playing games.

The bigger screen comes at a cost, though, with noticeable battery drain compared to last year's OnePlus 5T. In our video rundown tests, we managed to squeeze 17 hours out of the device, whereas the older 5T managed 20.

Crammed inside the OnePlus 6 is a zippy octa-core 2.8GHz Snapdragon 845 processor running near-vanilla Android 8.1 Oreo. You can choose between the 64GB model with 6GB of memory and the 256GB or 128GB models with 8GB of memory. Disappointingly, OnePlus has squeezed in a dual SIM reader but there's no MicroSD card support for additional storage. OnePlus's alert slider makes a welcome return for easy cycling between loud, vibrate and silent.

Flip that smudge-prone glass body over and you'll find the fingerprint sensor – a strip, rather than a spot, because the designers felt a circle under the dual-camera panel looked like an exclamation mark.

The cameras are 16- and 20-megapixels, with an f/1.7 aperture, packing a large sensor for improved low-light images. However, for photography fans, the OnePlus 6 is let down by a basic 16MP secondary camera that's only capable of adding faddish 'bokeh' backgrounds and unlocking your phone with your face.

The most obvious competitor to the OnePlus 6 is the similarly specced Honor 10 (bit.ly/honor450) – but while the Honor 10 is cheaper and prettier, the OnePlus 6 is speedier and more powerful.

## WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

# Is Microsoft developing a Surface Phone?

Microsoft's Surface Phone has more in common with the mythical island of Atlantis than it does the now-defunct Windows Mobile: folk tell you it's real, but there's no proof of its existence. Or at least there wasn't, until serial Microsoft tipster WalkingCat stumbled upon references to a 'Factory OS Andromeda Device' concealed within the code of the Windows 10 17672 software-development kit (SDK).

Andromeda, according to keen Microsoft-watchers, is the codename for the fabled Surface Phone, which runs the equally mythical Andromeda OS – a modular operating system that tailors itself to any device running it.

The SDK reveals that the operating system supports both x86 and ARM64, with the so-called 'Andromeda device' running on ARM – hardware typically associated with mobile phones, tablets and low-powered computers. Digging deeper, WalkingCat also found references to the mobile-friendly Qualcomm Snapdragon 835 processor while, elsewhere, the code lists Andromeda's release type as 'Production', leading many to believe that the Surface Phone's grand unveiling is tantalisingly close.

Fuelling the fire is the recent US release of Miami Street (bit.ly/miami451), a racing game designed for touchscreen Windows 10 computers. A peek inside the game's metadata, however, reveals Andromeda compatibility, suggesting a test run for future games on the high-spec Surface smartphone.

Leaked patents filed by Microsoft imply that the Surface Phone is a foldable tablet-style phone equipped with a stylus and designed for schools and businesses. In other words, it's a powerful digital notepad.

### LIKELIHOOD RATING

✓✓✓✓✓

**Surface Phone rumours have been around since 2012, long before Microsoft bought (and later sold) Nokia. However, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, who has spearheaded a 'mobile first, cloud first' ethos, claimed the company will 'make more phones, but they won't look like today's devices'. If it even exists, the Surface Phone would certainly match that claim.**

## What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

### PiMecha – Humanoid Robot

**bit.ly/pimecha451 | From £299**

Fusing creativity and education, the Raspberry Pi-powered PiMecha aims to spark interest in programming and robotics (otherwise known as 'the future'). Build a miniature mechanoid from scratch, add extra parts such as sensors and cameras, then use the soon-to-be open-source software to breathe life into the machine. Developed both for tech newbies and veterans, the PiMecha is compatible with all Raspberry Pi models, so anyone with an interest in robots can get involved. Donations start at £1, but you need to pledge over £299 to get your own simple-to-assemble PiMecha robot.

## WEBOMETER

### WE LIKE...

#### Binge-watch *Doctor Who* on iPlayer

Every episode of *Doctor Who* since its 2005 revival is now available to watch for free on iPlayer, in a surprise move by the BBC. This includes all 10 series and every special, including the 2013 mini-episode 'The Night of the Doctor'.

#### Google quits AI military project

Google has pulled out of a controversial artificial-intelligence program with the Pentagon, following strong opposition from its workforce. Project Maven involved using machine learning to distinguish people and objects in drone videos.

### WE DON'T LIKE...

#### Visa outage causes payment chaos

A system failure left some Visa customers across Europe unable to make purchases using their cards. The company apologised and said it didn't believe the hardware failure was caused by "any unauthorised access or malicious event".

#### Facebook 'shares data with phone companies'

Facebook has been accused of sharing sensitive user data with at least 60 smartphone manufacturers including Apple and Samsung. Facebook has denied any wrongdoing and any connection between this story and the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

# Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

### Processors at risk from new Spectre variant

A new Spectre variant has been discovered by Google and Microsoft researchers.

The flaw, called Variant 4 or Speculative Store Bypass, affects processors from Intel, ARM and AMD, which means hundreds of millions of devices are potentially at risk, although no exploits have been seen in the wild.

The researchers said that, like Spectre, the variant could allow an attacker to access and read processor memory. "An attacker who has successfully exploited this vulnerability may be able to read privileged data across trust boundaries," Microsoft Security Center's Security Advisory read.

Hackers could exploit the bug by running JavaScript in web browsers, producing native code that could trigger Variable 4. Microsoft said it has strengthened its Edge and Internet Explorer browsers to make this less likely Similar steps have been taken for other browsers, including Chrome and Firefox.

bit.ly/spectre451

### Fortnite players targeted by phishing scams

Cybercriminals are taking advantage of the hugely popular online game Fortnite, by targeting its players and exploiting their desire for free 'V-Bucks', Fortnite's in-game currency.

In recent weeks, YouTube has become littered with videos aimed at tricking players into handing over their personal details in return for free V-Bucks. Some videos direct players to phishing sites, demanding usernames and passwords, while others promise free V-Bucks in return for filling out surveys.

"There's no such thing as a free V-Buck," said Epic, the company behind Fortnite. "We've seen the sites online, just like you. They want you to enter your account credentials into their page (enabling them to log in as you and create fraudulent charges) or else encourage you to click down a chain of advertising referrals, getting click-through advertising money for the person running the site. Under no circumstances are those sites able to actually grant V-Bucks."

Epic added that it's now in the process of shutting down the sites in question.

bit.ly/fortnite451

## Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

**THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Marty P Kamden, CMO of NordVPN (nordvpn.com)**

NordVPN

**Q Are 'porn passes' (Need to Know, Issue 450) just another way for the government to spy on us?**

**Lucas Pearce, Twitter**

**A** The proposed legislation means you will have to prove you are 18 or over to visit any adult entertainment site. You can verify this using your credit card – which reveals your identity – or buy a 'pass' from a high-street shop. Both methods undermine your privacy: using a credit card means you'll probably have your personal information stored online by an adult site, which can be leaked if the site is hacked; buying a pass means having to personally acquire one from a vendor.

It seems the decisions of the UK government are directly influencing the privacy of the country's citizens. The passing of the Investigatory Powers Act was the beginning of large-scale surveillance, since lots of personal private information got exposed to tracking, including web-browsing history, photos, phone numbers and so on. The new legislation simply follows the same logic of a surveillance state.

> "The passing of the Investigatory Powers Act was the beginning of large-scale surveillance in the UK"

Opening a door for the government to access this data makes everyone's online activities vulnerable to hackers, fraudsters, system dysfunctions and so on. Similarly, when you enter your credit-card information in an adult-entertainment site, you run the additional risk that your data could be exposed.

A VPN – such as NordVPN – encrypts your data through a secure tunnel before you access the internet. This protects any sensitive information about your location by hiding your IP address.

Most VPN providers work hard to support free internet and online privacy. For Brits who want to keep their web activity private and secure from breaches, we strongly recommend using a VPN.



+ Email us your security questions at webuser@dennis.co.uk

# The Fastest Just Got Faster

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# Best New Websites

## Site of the Fortnight

CULTURE

NEW

### Dollar Street

bit.ly/dollar451

Dollar Street imagines the world as a road that's ordered by the income of those who live there. At one end is a family in Burundi getting by on $27 (£20) per month; on the other, a family in China on $10,098 (£7,580). As such, it provides a fascinating glimpse into global inequality while giving you lots to see and do. Click any of the 264 families spread across 50 countries to read more about them and their domestic situation, view 30,000 photos and 10,000 videos, and compare similar incomes and their differing outcomes. Microsoft founder Bill Gates says it "captures the most complete picture of humanity I've seen yet".

Our rating ★★★★★

**COMPARE ITEMS**
Basic items such as toilets differ according to income. Select items and compare them

**VISIT FAMILIES**
Click a family for a profile and downloadable images, then select 'Visit this home' to see what they own

ROYALTY

NEW

### The Duchess of Sussex

www.royal.uk/duchess-sussex

After the wedding comes the website – Meghan Markle's official online introduction to the Royal Family – which provides a profile, quotes and photos that describe her charitable work and proud feminist credentials. The site harks back to the new Duchess of Sussex's teenage years, but there's very little detail about her successful acting career, which may not satisfy fans of the TV show *Suits*. Still, it's worth paying a visit if only to learn more about her thoughts and potential future stamp on the world's most famous family. There's a link to an opinion column for *Time* Magazine and a list of her and Harry's chosen charities. Content can be shared on Facebook and Twitter.

Our rating ★★★★☆

NEW

LANGUAGE

### Glaschu

glaschu.net

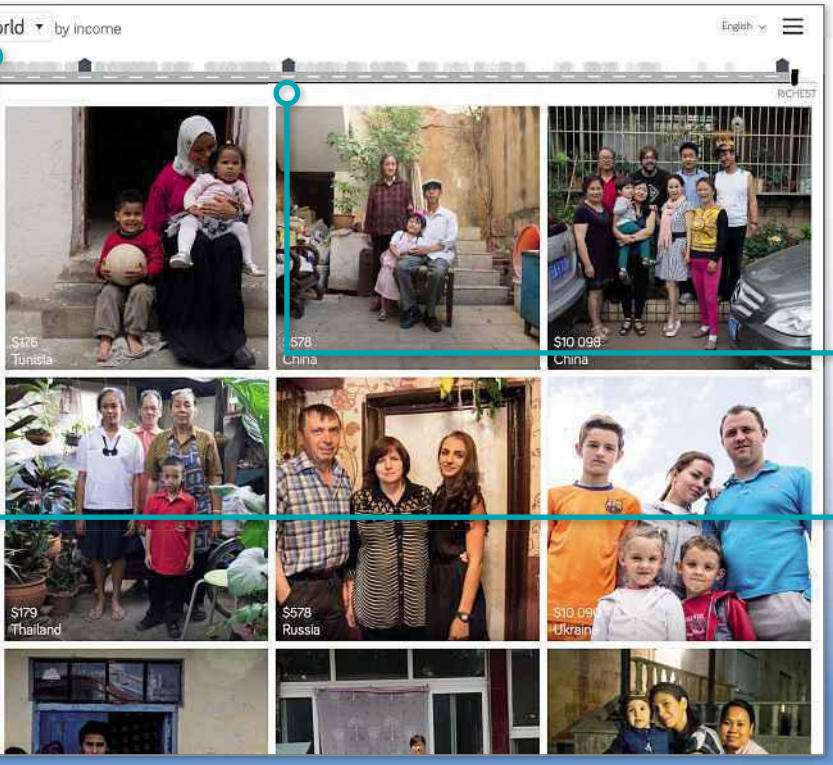
Glaschu is Gaelic for Glasgow but while few in the city call it that today, there's no disputing the influence the language and the Gaels have had on the area. This site explores Glasgow's Gaelic connections, highlighting places, culture, industry and social settings, and making its points in both English and Gaelic. The rich content and bold design include suggestions for further reading, and navigation is easy – just hover over the Gaelic links for the English interpretations and click. As a starting point for exploring the language and weegie history, it's undoubtedly *glè inntinneach* (very interesting).

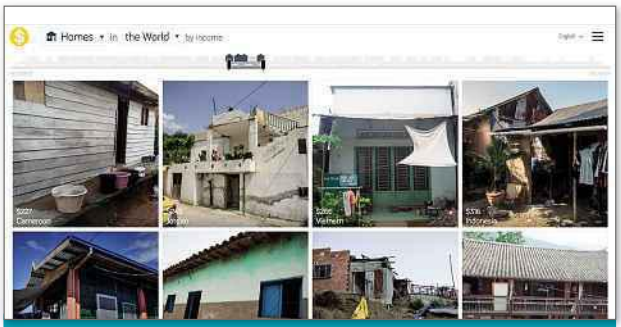
Our rating ★★★★☆



**Reviews by David Crookes**

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




**MOVE SLIDERS**
By moving the sliders, you can study the differences between homes on similar incomes

**SEARCH BY COUNTRY**
Choose one or more countries and see how people's incomes can vary widely

RELAUNCH

MILITARY

## Forces War Records

www.forces-war-records.co.uk

The redesigned Forces War Records site is clean, modern and makes it easy to search the records of more than 10 million servicemen. The speedy search engine lets you sift through military records and documents simply by entering a name, and results can be narrowed by period, service number, unit and whether someone survived or died in service. Unrestricted access to the records costs up to £8.95 a month but there are lots of free extras including a blog, useful links, a forum, user stories and galleries. You can also hire a researcher if you need assistance.

Our rating ★★★★☆

NEW

CHARITY

## The Prince Philip Trust Fund

theprincephiliptrustfund.org

Having celebrated its 40th anniversary last year, The Prince Philip Trust Fund has launched a new site to promote its work. This clearly explains the projects it funds and how organisations can apply for money, providing a downloadable application form and case studies of those who have benefited. To that end, it's very impressive, but the three-paragraph history of the Trust feels scant and the site could make dates more prominent on the event posts. As it stands, the mix of past stories and forthcoming events is confusing.

Our rating ★★★★☆

RELAUNCH

COLLECTIBLES

## Value My Stuff

www.valuemystuff.com

Launched with investment from *Dragon's Den* in 2009, the online art, antique and collectibles service Value My Stuff seems to have fresh fire in its belly. The site has simplified its checkout process and spruced up its homepage, so it's clear what's on offer and how the process works – you pay up to £20 to get one of its 62 experts to provide an online valuation of an item within 48 hours. New mobile apps and an improved members' account area make it easier to view and build an inventory of valuations, but quite why the layout doesn't use the full width of the browser window mystifies us.

Our rating ★★★★☆

Tell us about your website via webuser@dennis.co.uk

# BACK ISSUES DISC 2017

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

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

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

NEW

ECONOMY

## Invest in Great Britain and Northern Ireland

invest.great.gov.uk

Developed as a hub to attract global investors to the UK, this site highlights key industries and opportunities for capital investment while explaining the ins and outs of applying for UK visas, establishing a base in Britain, hiring skilled workers and opening bank accounts and companies. For most of us non-international business types, it's interesting to see how each region is promoted, as well as the strength of the various sectors. You can download and read PDFs of the investment portfolios for the Midlands, Northern Powerhouse, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Our rating ★★★★☆

NEW

TRAVEL

## Naturist BnB

www.naturistbnb.com

There's no faulting the naked ambition of this site, which is dedicated to helping you find naturist-friendly accommodation across the world. Boasting a cheeky logo and carefully shot photos, it features holiday homes, resorts, campsites and private rooms, and a simple search engine to nail down the best dates. Each property is well described and accompanied by images, along with a comprehensive breakdown of the costs per night and the various facilities on offer. The site includes a series of articles that cover house rules and etiquette. Owners can be contacted direct and you can also submit your own property.

Our rating ★★★★★

RELAUNCH

COPYRIGHT

## Fairness Rocks

www.fairnessrocks.com

Originally created to highlight a lawsuit brought by Harry Shearer of parody band Spinal Tap (and *The Simpsons*), Fairness Rocks has widened its remit. It's now concerned with promoting creator rights for all, claiming musicians and those in film are unfairly treated by companies. The site lets you view dozens of artists who are making or have made legal claims, and goes to great lengths to explore the laws surrounding copyright and detail how performers are protected and paid. Even so, it fails to set out its stall clearly, which means you have to put in some effort to understand its point. The news is bang up to date, though.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

NEW

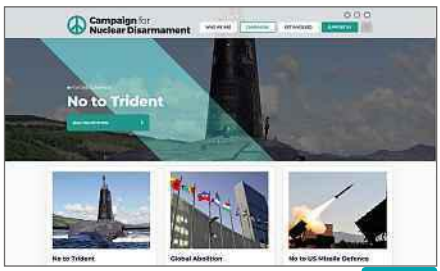
FOOTBALL

## Modern Fitba

www.modernfitba.com

This football-stats website has launched at an odd time – just as the domestic season comes to a close – but it still has its eye on the ball. Concentrating solely on Scottish football, it seeks to streamline the huge amounts of statistical data available while providing in-depth tactical analysis. But despite being able to view the loss of possession rates, for example, or the number of dribbles over 90 minutes, navigation really lets the site down. The problem is that it's presented as a series of blog posts so while articles packed with graphs about players and teams can be fascinating, content can easily be overlooked. Hardcore footy fans will love it, though.

Our rating ★★★☆☆




NEW

CAMPAIGNING

## Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

cnduk.org

CND has been pushing for nuclear disarmament since 1957 and although membership has fallen since the end of the Cold War, recent events in North Korea highlight the continuing threat that nuclear weapons pose. The site fuses videos, blogs, infographics and news reports to get its message across, providing info on current campaigns and how you can lend support (financial or otherwise). We enjoyed 'The Story behind the Symbol' and the general secretary's blog. Sadly, the link to the potentially fascinating People's History of CND is currently broken.

Our rating ★★★★☆

# Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

## Top Tips of the Fortnight

### Jimdo releases Dolphin

Jimdo's new web-building tool Dolphin (bit.ly/dolph451), which lets you get a web page up and running in minutes, has left its beta test phase. It works by asking a series of multiple-choice questions in a simulated chat program, as if you were talking to a site designer. You can choose from a range of styles and the software does the rest.

The free version is limited to five pages. You can upgrade to 10 pages for €9 per month (£7.90) or unlimited pages for €19 per month (around £16.70).

### Make embedded videos more private

If you embed YouTube videos on your web pages, you should consider using the video-hosting site's new Privacy Enhanced mode. Normally, YouTube can track visitors on any of your

pages that include embedded video, even if they don't click through to watch it. Privacy Enhanced stops your visitors being revealed to YouTube unless they actually click the Play button to watch the video.

To use Privacy Enhanced, click the Share button below a video, choose the Embed option, then scroll down to tick the 'Enable privacy-enhanced mode' box.

### Deal of the Fortnight

Tsohost (www.tsohost.com) is offering '.uk' domains for £1 for the first year, down from £5.99.

## Web-building Helpdesk

**THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:**
**Russell Hogg, Managing Director of Hogtronix (www.hogtronix.com)**

**Q I want my web pages to do better in Google but what's the best strategy? Should I be updating and polishing existing pages to make them better or concentrate on adding more content?**

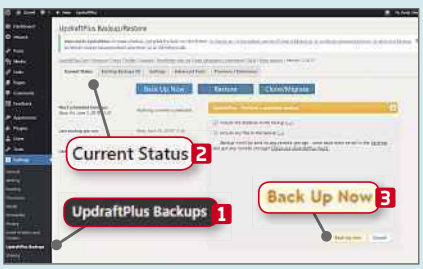
**Malcolm Bowler, via email**

**A** Adding extra content by way of more pages won't help if you aren't adhering to SEO protocols across the site. Make sure you're running fast-loading, mobile-responsive, optimised pages and you have a clear plan of keywords that you're targeting, with pages you've optimised for those keywords. Don't over-optimise your pages, though. If you haven't already, move your hosting to a SSL (https) URL as these seem to be attracting more kudos from the search engines.

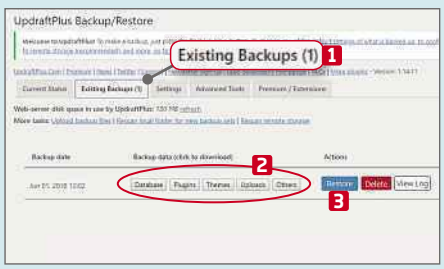
## MINI WORKSHOP | Back up your WordPress website

**UpdraftPlus Backup: updraftplus.com | 10 mins | WordPress website**

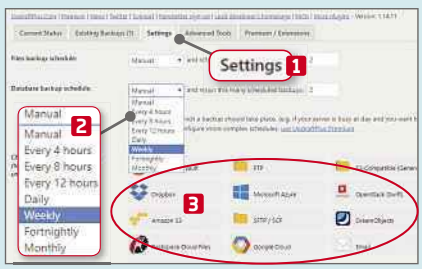
**Having put time and effort into your website, the last thing you want to do is risk losing it all. You can make sure this doesn't happen by installing the free UpdraftPlus plugin and using it to regularly back up your site**




**1** Install the plugin as usual, then go to Settings and click UpdraftPlus Backups. 1 You can run a manual backup immediately. Select the Current Status tab 2 and click Back Up Now. 3 The backup will take a few minutes to create, depending on the size of your site, but progress is shown on the screen as it happens.




**2** Once it's completed, click the Existing Backups tab. 1 The sections of the site that you've backed up are displayed. 2 To download each item, click its button, wait for it to appear above, then click 'Download to your computer'. Repeat this for each section of the backup. To restore a backup, click the Restore button. 3




**3** To schedule automatic backups, click the Settings tab, 1 choose the desired schedule from the drop-down menus 2 and select the number of backups you'd like to keep on your server. You can also set the backup to save to your choice of online storage, so it doesn't clog up your web server. 3



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# What To Watch Online

## Pick of the fortnight

### Watch the 2018 World Cup in 4K – live online

**From 14 June**

Russia 2018 will be the first football World Cup to stream matches live online in pin-sharp Ultra HD (UHD, or 4K) and immersive VR (virtual reality), so you'll be able to see every tear rolling down the cheeks of Gareth Southgate's team when they lose on penalties again. Sorry – when they *win*.

There are just a couple of catches. First, only BBC iPlayer will stream matches in 4K. The opening ceremony (14 June) and final (15 July) are on both BBC and ITV, but for ITV-only matches, you'll have to put up with plain old HD.

The second catch? The Beeb's 4K streams are first come first served (well, first tens of thousands). If you're not among the first to tune in, you'll get an HD stream instead.

Alternatively, you can fire up the BBC's free World Cup VR app (Android 5+, iOS 10+) for a panoramic view. The app will be released for the start of the tournament and offers on-demand highlights and different camera angles.

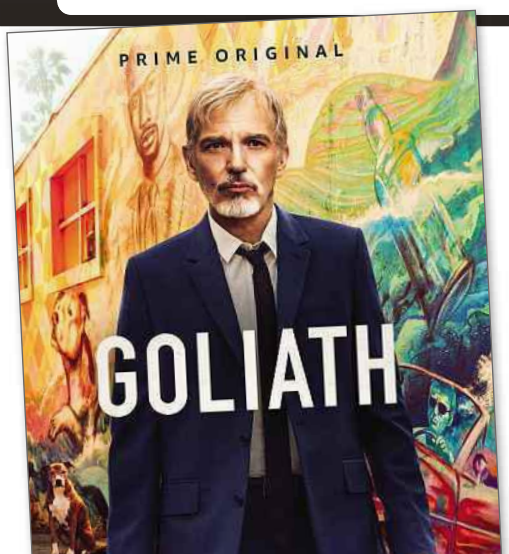
#### What's on where, and when?

England's first two group games – against Tunisia (7pm, 18 June) and Panama (1pm, 24 June) – will be on BBC iPlayer, along with 32 other matches. The Beeb has first choice over quarter-finals, too, so if England reach the last eight, the game will probably air on iPlayer on 6 July. BBC-only matches include Portugal v Spain (7pm, 15 June) and Germany v Mexico (4pm, 17 June).

Other BBC online treats include additional commentary from the likes of Gary Lineker, Gabby Logan and Rio Ferdinand; personalised updates and video feeds; and full on-demand replays of old World Cup matches, such as England v Belgium in 1990 and England v Tunisia in 1998. See the official trailer for details (bit.ly/worldcup451).

ITV (www.itv.com/fifaworldcup) has 31 games, including the opener between hosts Russia and Saudi Arabia (4pm, 14 June). ITV will also show England v Belgium (7pm, 28 June), all three of Brazil's group games and Argentina v Iceland on 16 June – a must-watch, if only for Iceland's amazing Viking thunderclap. If England reach the semis, the match is likely to be on ITV.

ITV's World Cup site also offers videos of classic goals (bit.ly/goals451) and 'iconic moments', although the one we clicked ('England lift the Jules Rimet trophy in 1966') opened a 404 page. Hope that's not an omen.




### See Billy Bob Thornton in *Goliath*

**From 15 June**

Billy Bob Thornton (who played villain extraordinaire Lorne Malvo in the first *Fargo* TV series) won a Golden Globe last year for his role as *Goliath*'s Billy McBride, a hot-shot lawyer who becomes an alcoholic after a murder suspect he successfully defended goes on to kill an entire family. Season 2 sees Billy living and boozing in a Californian seaside hotel, about to get sucked back into the courtroom to untangle a drugs conspiracy that runs to the seedy heart of LA politics.

*Goliath* was created for Amazon by *Ally McBeal* super-producer David E Kelley, and co-stars William Hurt (*Broadcast News*) as Billy's troubled former business partner; Maria Bello (*ER*) as his loyal ex-wife; and Molly Parker (*House of Cards*) as a scheming lawyer. Catch the official trailer at bit.ly/goliath451, where Amazon Prime Video subscribers can also watch Season 1.

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

## Watch Tiger Woods in the US Open

**14-17 June**

Was it by accident or design that the 118th US Open golf tournament started on the same day as the World Cup? Either way, the sight of Rory McIlroy and Justin Rose teeing off in New York – and the return of Tiger Woods – will be welcome relief if you can't stand football. You can stream it live on Now TV with a daily or weekly Sky Sports pass (£7.99 or £12.99, bit.ly/nowsky451).

Other upcoming sport includes tennis from Queen's, live on BBC iPlayer (18-24 June), and Royal Ascot 2018 on the ITV Hub (19-23 June, bit.ly/itvracing451).

## Marvel at the second season of *Luke Cage*

**From 22 June**

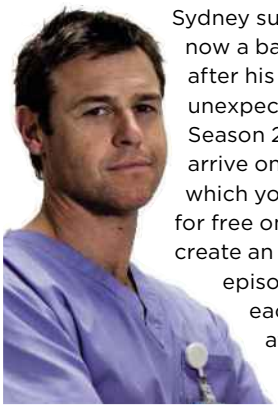
He was the first black superhero to get his own comic book, then the first to get his own TV show, and now *Marvel's Luke Cage* is back for a second season of crime-busting in New York City.

Cage (Mike Colter) – who first appeared in *Marvel's Jessica Jones*, also on Netflix (bit.ly/jjones451) – is a reluctant hero with a tragic past. The victim of a sabotaged experiment that left him with super strength and unbreakable skin, he really just wants to relax outside a barbershop reading Walter Mosley novels, but he finds ways to use his Marvel-grade powers to clean up the town. Check out the latest trailer at bit.ly/lukecage451.

## Meet *The Heart Guy*

**From 17 June**

In its native Australia, this amiable drama is called *Doctor Doctor*, which is hardly up there with *Only Fools and Horses* in the league of great telly titles, but is less awful than its UK alias, *The Heart Guy*. Still, at least the title is accurate. Doctor Hugh Knight is a heart specialist, once a star of the Sydney surgery scene, now a backwoods GP after his life took an unexpected turn. Season 2 is about to arrive on UKTV Drama, which you can watch for free online if you create an account. New episodes arrive each Sunday at 8pm from 17 June at bit.ly/heart451.



## Discover *Atlanta*

**From 17 June**

Season 1 of this brilliant comedy drama has more gongs than Dame Judi Dench's sideboard, with multiple Emmys, Golden Globes, MTV Awards and more. Can Season 2, *Atlanta (Robbin' Season)*, keep up the quality?

Actor-comedian Donald Glover writes, directs and stars in the show as one of two cousins – Earn (Glover) and Paper Boi (Brian Tyree Henry, Broadway star of *Book of Mormon*) – who claw their way out of poverty by becoming rap stars. Season 2 kicks off with a double bill, starting at 10pm on Sunday 17 June. You can watch it on Fox TV or stream it online through Now TV (bit.ly/atlantanowtv451). A Now TV Entertainment Pass costs £7.99 per month after a 14-day free trial. For trailers and free clips, head over to Fox TV's website at bit.ly/atlanta451.

Meanwhile, the BBC has picked up Season 1, with new episodes arriving on iPlayer every Wednesday until mid-July and remaining online until August (bit.ly/atlantabbc451).

## Skip Netflix intros on your Chromecast

**Chromecast users can now dive straight into the Netflix action by clicking Skip Intro, as computer and mobile users have been able to do for months (bit.ly/skip451). The feature is currently only available for Android-connected Chromecasts but is likely to arrive on iOS eventually.**

**If you watch Netflix in Chrome, you can even skip Skip Intro. New extension Never Ending Netflix (bit.ly/neverend451) automatically cuts out intros and credits, and even disables the annoying 'Still here?' pop-up that appears after a few hours.**

# Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

# Nokia 6.1

Your next smartphone doesn't have to cost a fortune – we've compared two of the latest low-cost handsets that prove budget can still be brilliant

Motorola and Nokia have been rivals for almost as long as there have been mobile phones. Nowadays, they're duelling for their share of budget smartphone sales with two impressive new models that cost less than £250 SIM-free.

If you're looking to disguise the fact that you've plumped for a cheaper-than-average phone, Motorola's Moto G6 has adopted the tall, thin 18:9 aspect ratio screen of the latest cutting-edge Samsung Galaxy and Google Pixel models. The entire device is cloaked in Gorilla Glass, front and back, with a curved design all the way round.

The new Nokia 6.1 (not to be confused with the 2017 version 6) is crafted from a single block of matte-black aluminium, trimmed in copper. Both devices find room to house a microSD card slot, 3.5mm headphone jack and fingerprint reader, all of which should be celebrated.

## Screen quality

The Moto G6 has a good-quality 5.7in screen, with an aspect ratio of 2,160 x 1,080 pixels. The squatter dimensions of the Nokia 6.1 make for a smaller 5.5in screen and a slightly lesser 1,920 x 1,080-pixels aspect ratio.

That said, the Nokia's screen is brighter, managing up to 454cd/m² (candles per square metre), compared to the Moto's 408cd/m². It also put in the better performance in our other screen tests, recreating 93.9% of the sRGB standard colours compared to the Moto's 86.3% (though this still isn't bad), and registering a contrast ratio of 1,242:1 to the Moto's 931:1.

Both screens have been stretched to their limits (in a good way), and while you'd struggle to tell the difference with the naked eye, we reckon that Nokia's screen has the edge.

## Performance

Both the Moto and Nokia models come equipped with 3GB of RAM and 32GB of storage. However, the Moto is powered by a Qualcomm Snapdragon 450 while the Nokia has a more impressive-sounding Qualcomm Snapdragon 630 processor. You can see the impact of this on our charts, below. In our processor performance benchmark, which tests the devices in both single-core and multi-core mode, results were similar, though the Nokia was marginally faster in the processor-intensive tests.

In our graphics performance tests, the results again skewed in Nokia's favour. The intensive 3D tests of the GFXBench tests push the phones hard and, as you can see from the results, neither achieved particularly impressive frame rates. The Nokia did markedly better, managing 15fps (frames per second) in the onscreen test compared to the Moto's 9fps, but neither phone is built to run the latest and most demanding mobile games. If you're looking for a serious portable gaming device, you'll have to spend more money.

Both devices have 3,000mAh batteries, which

**PRODUCT INFO**

**Nokia 6.1**

**Price: from £229**

**Buy from Nokia:**
bit.ly/nokia451

**FOR**

✓ Attractive design
✓ Decent performance
✓ Sensibly priced

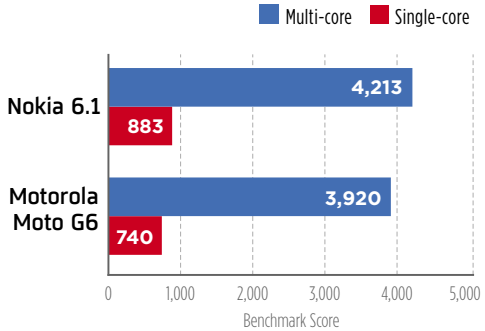
**AGAINST**

✗ Disappointing camera

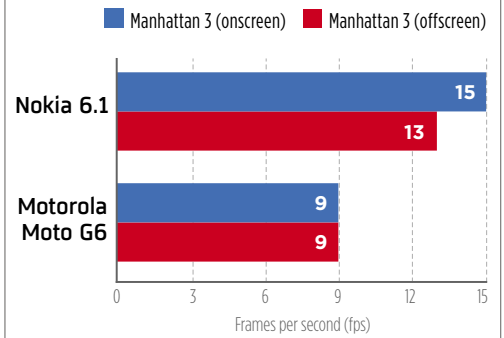
★★★★☆

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

**Processor performance (Geekbench 4)**




**Graphics performance (GFXBench)**



# Motorola Moto G6

we tested by setting the brightness to a standard level (170cd/m²) and timing how long a looping video took to run down the battery from a full charge. The Nokia did reasonably well, lasting 12 hours 49 minutes. It would seem that the Moto is hungrier for power, though, and lasted just 10 hours and 46 minutes.

> "Both screens have been stretched to their limits (in a good way), but you'd struggle to tell the difference with the naked eye"

## Camera

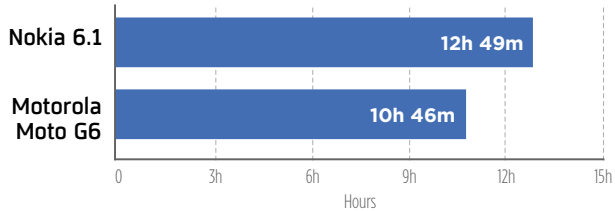
Where the Moto G6 comes into its own is in the quality of its camera, which is nothing short of phenomenal for the price. The main snapper has two lenses that can be used to create sophisticated effects. For example, in portrait mode you can snap a subject, then edit the photo based on the extra data captured by the supporting camera, which lets you blur, replace or desaturate the background at will. It works well, even if the edges are occasionally identified incorrectly. Outdoors and in good light, the Moto G6 captures landscapes bursting with detail, with colours that are pleasingly accurate. Flick on HDR mode and you'll find that both bright and dark areas are beautifully equalised.

Selfies taken with the front-facing camera aren't quite up to the same standard but they're still detailed and well balanced. Our one grumble about the Moto G6's still camera is that there is a delay between pressing the shutter and capturing the image. It didn't take us long to get used to this, but it makes magic-moment photography that bit more challenging and there were a few occasions when we moved the phone too early and got a blurred picture as a result.

The Nokia 6 has a single lens on the back. Outdoors, in well-lit conditions, it can capture images with oodles of detail, accurate colours and with well-balanced exposure. Unfortunately, its low-light performance is disappointingly grainy, while HDR performance is also noticeably weaker than that of the Moto G6.

However, the Nokia can shoot video in 4K at up to 30fps, whereas the Moto is limited to less-impressive Full HD (1,080p) at 60fps.

### Battery life




### PRODUCT INFO

**Motorola Moto G6**

**Price: £219.95**

**Buy from Amazon:**
bit.ly/moto451

### FOR

- ✓ Attractive glass and aluminium body
- ✓ Superb camera
- ✓ Sensibly priced

### AGAINST

- ✗ Battery life could be better

★★★★★

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

## OUR VERDICT

**The Nokia model put in the best performance in our tests, but only just: it's a bit faster, its battery lasts a couple of hours longer and its screen is slightly better. However, the Moto G6 has more panache, and we prefer its camera to the Nokia's, which proved disappointing in low light.**

**The Moto's elongated body shape and stretched screen imbue it with a degree of luxury that you just don't get from Nokia's rival phone.**

**Both phones are impressive, given their £250 price tag, but if you want to eke out the most from the specifications and don't care about the camera, opt for the Nokia. We'll be plumping for the Moto G6, because it looks and feels like a phone that costs twice the price.**

# Acer Swift 3

## Acer's latest laptop has an AMD Ryzen processor option, which delivers a surprising power boost over Intel alternatives

Like most laptops, Acer's Swift 3 range comes with options for various Intel processors, but in this review we've focused on one of its more interesting models, which is one of the first laptops we've seen that uses AMD's new mobile Ryzen processor.

This laptop isn't trying to be the thinnest or lightest. Its 15.6in screen is housed in a hefty chassis that's 18.9mm thick when closed and weighs 2.1kg. Both the lid and the base are enclosed in aluminium and the screen is scratch-resistant Gorilla Glass.

One of the upsides of the Swift 3's considerable size is that there's room for a full, generously spaced, backlit keyboard. The trackpad is well proportioned, responsive to gestures and smooth to the touch, without feeling too glassy. There's even space for a fingerprint reader.

Slimmer laptops tend to restrict themselves to the narrower USB Type-C ports but this model has room for one USB 2 and three USB 3 ports, as well as a Type-C. It also has a convenient SD card slot and an HDMI socket for video output.

Sadly, the Swift 3's screen is its greatest weakness. It gets off to a good start: the 1080p resolution is crisp and the IPS panel provides wide viewing angles. However, our display benchmarks showed the screen produced just 57% of the sRGB standard colours, with a maximum brightness of just 233cd/mÐ. This means it will struggle with direct sunlight. Its contrast is good, though, with a ratio of 1,199:1 and a low black level of 0.19cd/mÐ, showing plenty of detail in dark video scenes.

Along with a middling yet adequate 8GB of RAM and a 256GB SSD, this laptop gave us our first look at AMD's Ryzen 5 2500U in action. It's a quad-core chip with a base clock speed of 2GHz and includes an integrated Radeon Vega 8 graphics processor. It performed better in our multitasking benchmark than laptops we've tested that cost twice as much, which is an outstanding coup for this model.

The built-in graphics processor also appears to beat Intel's most recent equivalents by some margin. Running Dirt Showdown at 1,280 x 720 pixels with High settings, the Swift 3 produced a smooth 67fps (frames per second), where Intel models we've tested have only managed 40-50fps.

Battery life, however, is short. It only lasted 3 hours and 16 minutes in our video-playback test, so even with light use you'll need to keep the charging cable handy.

> "A great laptop if you value performance over portability and battery life"

### PRODUCT INFO

**Acer Swift 3**

**Price: £699.99**
**Buy from Currys:**
**bit.ly/ryz451**

### SPECIFICATIONS

- AMD Ryzen 5 2500U processor
- Integrated AMD Radeon Vega 8 graphics
- 8GB of memory
- 256GB SSD
- 15.6in IPS screen
- 1,920 x 1,080-pixels screen resolution
- 802.11ac Wi-Fi
- Bluetooth 4.0
- 1 x USB Type-C, 3 x USB 3, 1 x USB 2 ports
- HDMI port
- 3.5mm headphone jack
- SD card reader
- 370.5 x 255 x 18.9mm
- 2.1kg

### FOR

- ✓ Impressive benchmark scores
- ✓ Decent for basic gaming
- ✓ Good connectivity

### AGAINST

- ✗ Poor screen
- ✗ Short battery life

### OUR VERDICT

★★★★☆

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

**With AMD's latest processor installed, the mid-priced Swift 3 is a powerhouse of a laptop that will comfortably run most Windows programs without problems, and even has a good stab at running 3D games. It's disappointing, then, that the screen doesn't handle colours so well.**

**It's not the slimmest or lightest of laptops, so it's not best suited for carrying around all day. But if you value performance over portability (and battery life), the Acer Swift 3 may be just what you're after.**

PROLITE
**XUB2492HSU** | SET YOUR MIND **FREE**

## PROLITE **XUB2492HSU-B1**

Give a boost to your productivity and comfort. Choose the ultra slim 24'' **XUB2492HSU** and install it on the stylish iiyama dual gas spring arm DS3002C-B1 to gain the space you need to let your creativity blossom.

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## HARDWARE

### PHOTO PRINTER

**Epson Expression Photo HD XP-15000**

**£251.96** from bit.ly/epsonexp450
**Tested:** Issue 450

Epson's XP-15000 lacks some of the features of a true all-rounder but it prints photos beautifully, all the way up to size A3+.

#### KEY SPECS

5,760 x 1,440dpi maximum print resolution ■ 250-sheet input capacity ■ Double-sided printing ■ Colour touchscreen ■ USB, Ethernet, Wi-Fi connectivity ■ 479 x 370 x 159mm ■ 8.5kg ■ Three-years return-to-base warranty

### SMART THERMOSTAT

**Honeywell Evohome**

**£199** from bit.ly/honevo449
**Tested:** Issue 449

The Honeywell Evohome is a powerful multi-zone smart heating product that lets you control all the radiators in your central heating system. This will save on heating bills, but it may take a while before you recoup the cost of the initial outlay.

#### KEY SPECS

Remote thermostat ■ Battery-powered ■ Hot-water support ■ Individual radiator support ■ Alexa voice-assistant support ■ IFTTT support ■ 13.9 x 2.1 x 10.1cm ■ 898g

### LAPTOP

**Asus ZenBook UX410**

**£539.95** from bit.ly/asuszb447
**Tested:** Issue 447

This laptop, with its compact aluminium body and impressive design, feels built to last. Performance was middling, though it's fine for everyday tasks, and the screen looks fabulous.

#### KEY SPECS

Dual-core Intel Core i3-7100U processor ■ 4GB memory ■ 128GB storage ■ 14in 1,920 x 1,080-pixels screen ■ USB-C, USB 3, 2 x USB 2 ports ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ Windows 10 Home ■ 323 x 223 x 19mm ■ 1.4kg ■ 1-year return-to-base warranty

### MONITOR

**BenQ GL2580HM**

**£109.99** from bit.ly/benq445
**Tested:** Issue 445

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

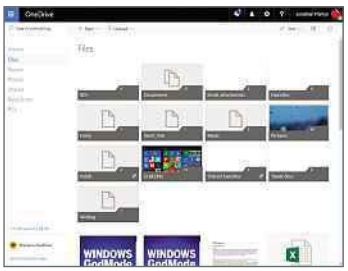
Octa-core 2.3GHz Exynos 8895 processor ■ 12-megapixel rear camera, 8-megapixel front camera ■ 4GB RAM ■ 64GB storage ■ 5.8in 1,440 x 2,560-pixel screen ■ Android 8 ■ 68.1 x 148.9 x 8mm ■ 155g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

All prices correct at time of review

# 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

**£19.99** from bit.ly/kaspersky1pc
**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 over £15 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

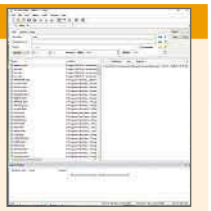
### VIDEO DOWNLOADER

NEW!

#### 4K Video Downloader

Free from bit.ly/fkvd450
**Tested:** Issue 450
Simple and effective, 4K Video Downloader supports multiple formats and isn't bundled with any annoying extras.

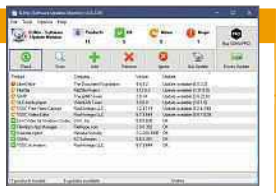
### WINDOWS SEARCH TOOL



#### Agent Ransack

Free from bit.ly/agent449
**Tested:** Issue 449
Agent Ransack's extensive search filters, options and simple user interface deliver reliable results every time, with huge power where it counts.

### SOFTWARE UPDATER



#### SUMo

Free from bit.ly/sumo448
**Tested:** Issue 448
SUMo is lightweight, easy to use and supports a wide selection of programs. By default, it checks for updates every time you start your PC.

### FILE MANAGER

#### Astro File Manager

Free from bit.ly/astr447
**Tested:** Issue 447
With an attractive interface that emphasises productivity, Astro File Manager makes it easy to manage files on your Android phone.

### SANDBOXING TOOL

#### Sandboxie

Free from bit.ly/sandboxie446
**Tested:** Issue 446
Lightweight, powerful and regularly updated, Sandboxie is by far the best free sandboxing tool for keeping your PC safe.

WEB USER
BACK ISSUES DISCS

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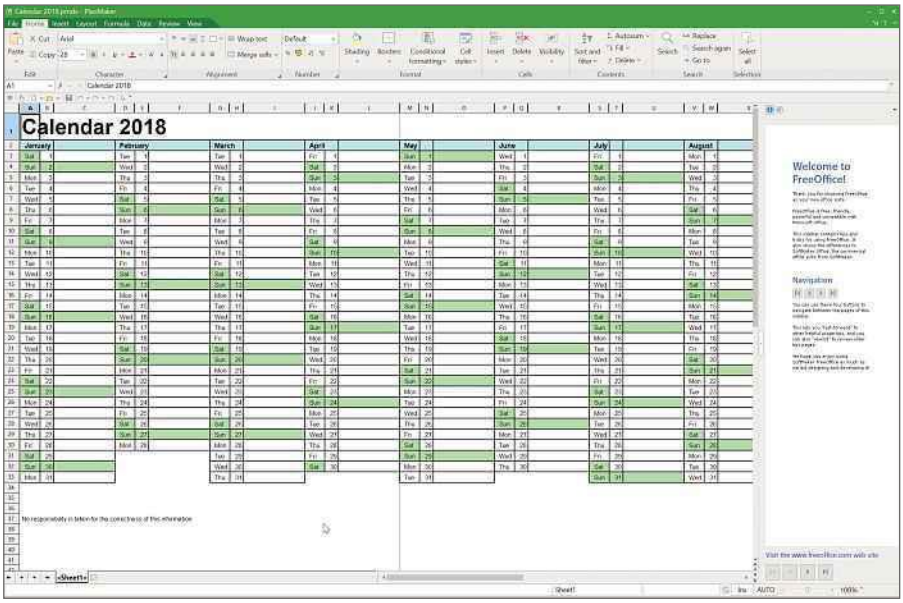
# Best Free Software

OFFICE SUITE

## SoftMaker FreeOffice 2018

www.freeoffice.com

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10 or Linux **File size:** 108MB



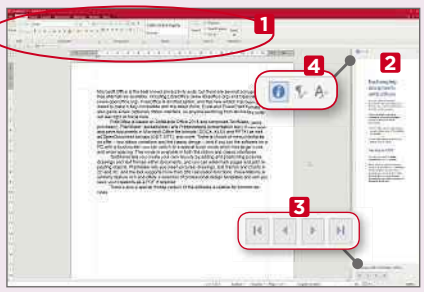

Microsoft Office is the best known productivity suite, but there are several free alternatives, including LibreOffice (www.libreoffice.org) and OpenOffice (www.openoffice.org). FreeOffice is another excellent option, and this new updated edition is fully compatible with the latest Word, Excel and PowerPoint formats. It also gains a new (optional) ribbon interface, so if you're switching from Microsoft's suite, it feels reassuringly familiar.

FreeOffice is based on SoftMaker Office 2018 and comprises TextMaker (word processor), PlanMaker (spreadsheet) and Presentations (presentation tool). It can open and save documents in Microsoft Office file formats (DOCX, XLSX and PPTX) as well as OpenDocument formats (ODT, OTT) and more. There's a choice of menu interfaces – two ribbon variations and the classic design – and running the software on a touchscreen PC lets you switch to a special touch mode with larger icons and wider spacing, available in both the ribbon and classic interfaces.

TextMaker lets you create your own layouts by adding and positioning pictures, drawings and text frames within documents, and you can watermark pages and add repeating objects. PlanMaker lets you insert pictures, drawings, text frames and charts in 2D and 3D, and supports more than 350 calculation functions. Presentations is similarly packed with features, offers a selection of professional design templates and lets you save your creations as PDFs.

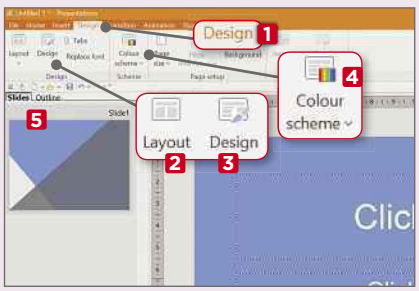
There's also a special mobile version of the software for Android devices.

### MINI WORKSHOP | Get to grips with SoftMaker FreeOffice 2018



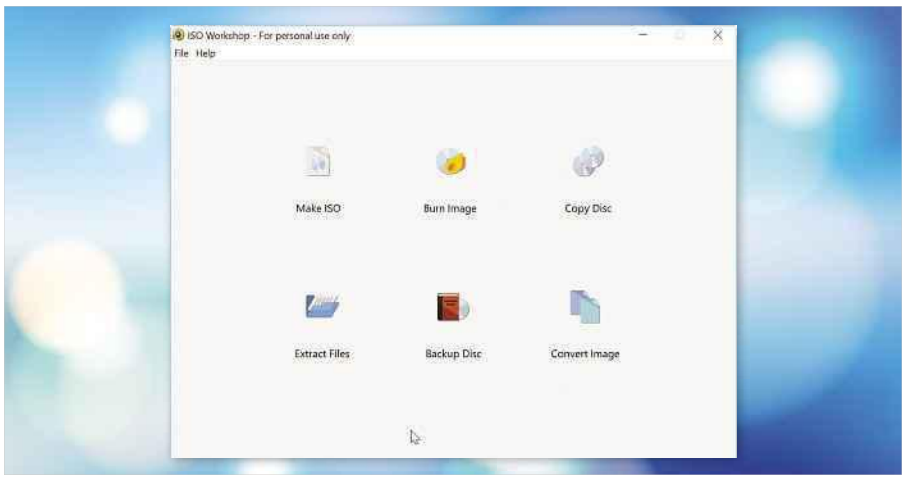

**1** TextMaker is FreeOffice's word processor. The software has been updated with a ribbon interface. 1 The sidebar on the right-hand side 2 displays tips and instructions that you can navigate through using the controls at the bottom. 3 The buttons at the top of the sidebar 4 let you switch to show Paragraph and Character styles.

**2** Use the tabs that run across the top of the ribbon interface 1 to switch to a different section, then access its specific tools below. 2 The File tab lets you open and save documents, and export them as PDFs 3 or ePub files. 4 The Customise button 5 lets you tweak the interface – you can minimise the ribbon or switch interface types, for example.




**3** Presentations, FreeOffice's presentation creator, offers a selection of templates you can access by going to the Design tab. 1 Click Layout 2 to select a style, then click Design 3 to choose a theme. You can also pick a colour scheme. 4 Any slides you add will appear in the sidebar on the left-hand side. 5

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




ISO TOOL

## ISO Workshop 8

www.glorylogic.com

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 4MB

The best way to back up software CDs, DVDs and Blu-rays is to save them as an image file. Operating systems downloaded from the web usually already come packaged in this way. ISO Workshop lets you make ISO files from your own content, view and extract files, convert one image format to another, and more. The latest version updates translations and fixes boot problems and memory leaks. Make sure you decline the bundled junk during installation.

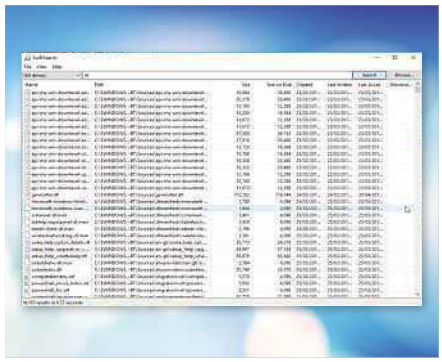
BROWSER TOOL

## MiTeC Internet History Browser 2

www.mitec.cz/ihb.html

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/ Vista/7/8.1/10 **File size:** 1.7MB

If you use more than one browser and want to find a particular site you visited previously, MiTeC's tool can help. It displays your browsing history and lets you filter the contents by name, date, time and browser. It's fully portable and supports the latest versions of all major browsers as well as Vivaldi, Yandex and Pale Moon. Just unzip and run the tool, then click the Scan button.



SEARCH TOOL

## SwiftSearch 7

bit.ly/swift451

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/ Vista/7/8.1/10 **File size:** 1.3MB

You can search for files directly within Windows, but there are better and faster search tools available, such as SwiftSearch. It doesn't need to crawl or index the drive, but instead uses the NTFS drive's raw Master File Table (MFT) to deliver results in seconds (provided you're checking an NTFS drive). The latest release uses less memory, offers faster pattern matching and lets you copy files using Ctrl+C.

## New Windows Apps

### iDownload-Manager

bit.ly/idown451

**Min requirements:** Windows 8.1/10

**File size:** 24.62MB

This free app can download files up to 10 times faster than standard web browsers. It can pause, resume and schedule downloads, and limit network usage. It integrates with Chrome, too.

### Image Raw

bit.ly/iraw451

**Min requirements:** Windows 8.1/10

**File size:** 4.85MB

Image Raw is a simple image viewer that lets you quickly review images downloaded from a connected camera. It supports several RAW types as well as image formats such as PNG, JPG and GIF.

### World of Tennis: Roaring 20s

bit.ly/tennis451

**Min requirements:** Windows 8.1/10

**File size:** 750MB

This free-to-play game is set in the 1920s – the golden age of tennis. You can play it using a mouse or touch controls, and choose from different characters and customisation options.

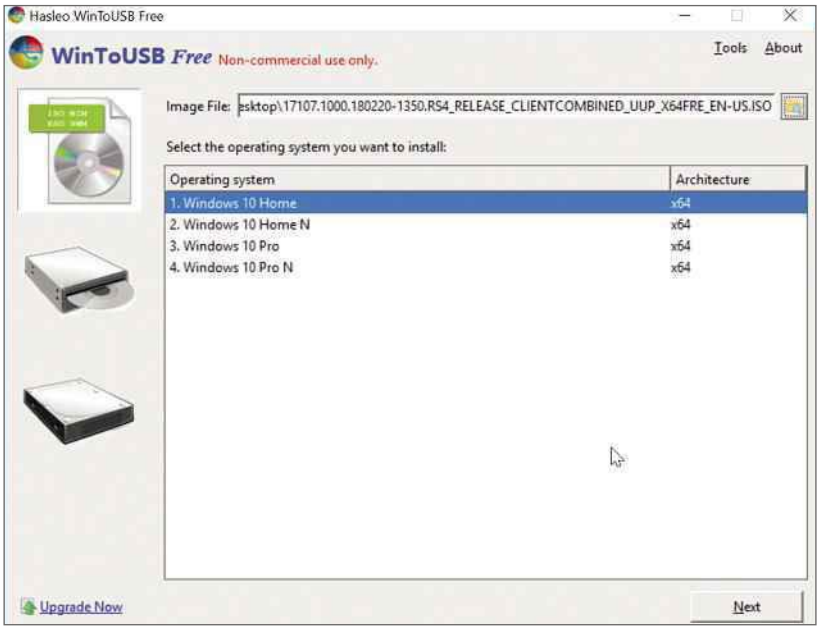
IMAGE EDITOR

## Fenophoto 4

fenophotoapp.altervista.org

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10 **File size:** 91.5MB

Most phones take pretty good photos these days, but certain shots may require tweaking before they're ready to share. Fenophoto provides all the tools you need to enhance your images and fix problems. Features on offer include auto levels and auto gamma, the ability to equalise shadows, red-eye correction, denoise, sharpening and batch and command-line processing. You can rotate, flip and crop photos, and the program can handle all of the common image formats, including RAW. The interface isn't great, and takes a lot of getting used to, but the number of features on offer make Fenophoto worth persevering with.




PORTABLE WINDOWS CREATOR

## WinToUSB 4

www.easyuefi.com/wintousb

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10, USB flash drive

**File size:** 5.3MB

WinToUSB lets you boot into and run Windows directly from a USB flash drive. However, there are a couple of requirements to be aware of before you start using the program – you'll need a fast USB memory stick and a copy of your Windows installation media, in ISO, WIM, ESD or SWM image file format, or on a CD or DVD.

A simple wizard guides you through the process of creating a bootable Windows To Go installation, and the latest version lets you hot clone the operating system without needing to restart the source computer. It also improves the cloning process and fixes a number of persistent bugs.

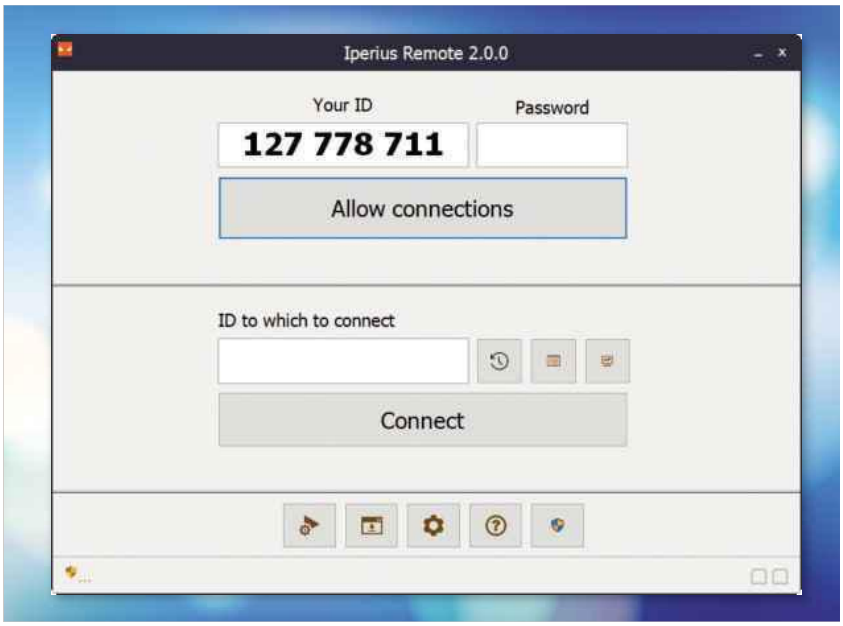
REMOTE-ACCESS TOOL

## Iperius Remote Desktop 2

www.iperiusremote.com

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10

**File size:** 5.7MB




Being able to access another computer remotely is incredibly handy. For example, you can log into your home PC from work to grab a file you need for your morning meeting, or solve a friend's PC woes by logging into their PC from yours and fixing the problems they're having. Iperius Remote Desktop lets you connect to another computer (with the owner's permission), and take control of it, transfer files, chat with the person on the other end and more.

The updated version of the program makes it easier to manage frequently accessed systems, and allows multiple users to access the same target PC.

GAME

## KeyCars

bit.ly/keycars451

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10, MacOS or Linux
**File size:** 29MB

KeyCars is a simple but exciting multiplayer racing game. Each player controls their car using a single key on the same keyboard. Pressing your key of choice lets you join the game, and holding it down makes the car turn. The vehicle accelerates automatically. The aim is to destroy your rivals or knock them off the track.

## ✗ Don't install...

### ClipMate

www.thornsoft.com
**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10
**File size:** 7.5MB

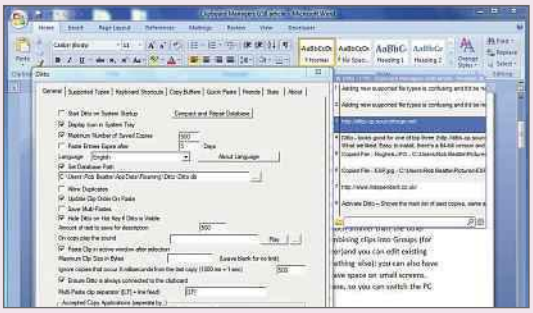
Described as the "ultimate clipboard extender for Windows", ClipMate has two drawbacks: first, it hasn't been updated since 2015 – although it does apparently work with Windows 10; and second, it costs an astronomical $34.95 (£26.35), when most tools of this type are completely free to use.

## ...Install this instead ✓

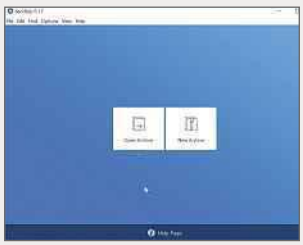
### Ditto

ditto-cp.sourceforge.io
**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10
**File size:** 20.7MB

Ditto runs alongside the standard Windows Clipboard to significantly enhance its capabilities and convenience. You can use the standard Ctrl+C (copy) and Ctrl+V (paste) key combinations, then explore its extra tools, including options to capture and save text, images and web addresses; and set the number of items it stores – the default is 500, after which the oldest item will be deleted as you add new ones. Alternatively, you can mark clips as 'Never Delete', so they always stay in the Ditto database. Ditto is also available as a Windows 10 app.



## UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



ZIP ARCHIVER

### Bandizip 6.13

www.bandisoft.com
**Min requirements:** Windows Vista/7/8.1/10
**File size:** 5.1MB

Bandizip is a compression tool that's very fast and easy to use. It supports all the main file formats, including ZIP, 7Z and RAR. This updated verson benefits from a new show/hide status bar, improves the installer and the updater, and fixes a number of bugs.

SYSTEM CLEANER

### CCleaner 5.43

www.ccleaner.com
**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10
**File size:** 15.1MB

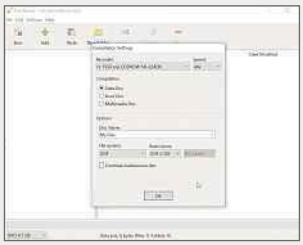
The Avast-owned system cleaner gets updated on a monthly basis. This latest version has added a new Privacy tab so you can now opt out of sharing usage data with third parties for analytics purposes. Remember to decline the Avast software during installation.

SYSTEM TOOLKIT

### Advanced SystemCare 11.3

www.iobit.com
**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10
**File size:** 28.4MB

IObit's Advanced SystemCare fixes PC problems, cleans your system, boosts performance and protects your privacy. This update improves the startup manager and strengthens surfing protection and ad removal. All known bugs have been fixed too.



DISC-AUTHORING TOOL

### True Burner 4.9

www.glorylogic.com
**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1
**File size:** 3.7MB

True Burner can write data to all sorts of discs, including Blu-rays and DVD-Videos. The new version improves the Blu-ray burning and copying processes, and resolves a problem with loading boot options. Decline the bundled junk during installation. ■

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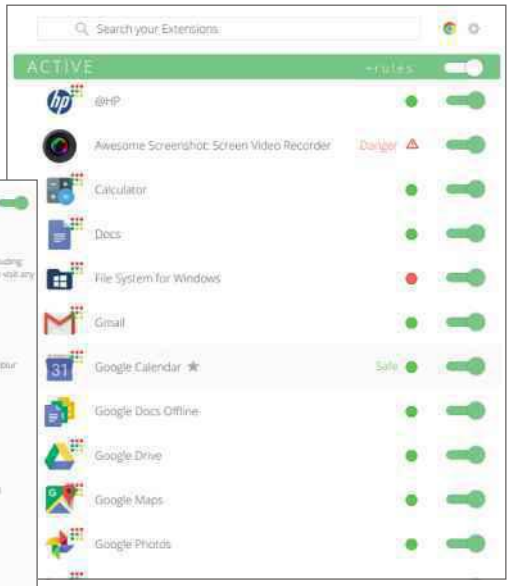
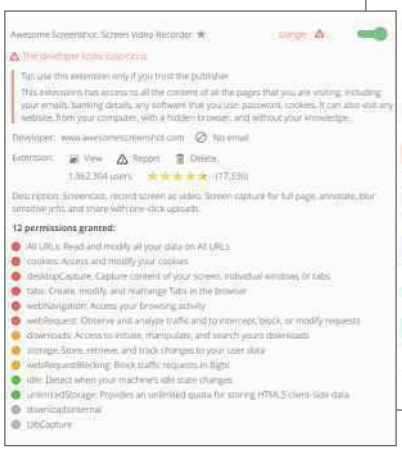
# Best New Browser Tools

## CHROME

## Police your extensions for malware

There's been a lot of stories in recent months about extensions in the Chrome Web Store that harbour malware and trick you into installing them by closely resembling legitimate tools. If you're worried about falling victim to a rogue add-on, you can protect your browser using Extension Police (bit.ly/police451), which detects and blocks extension threats to prevent them from injecting Chrome with ads, stealing your data, tracking your cookies and running cryptocurrency-mining scripts. Extension Police scans all the add-ons you have installed, marks the safe ones green and the risky ones red, and explains why a tool is potentially dangerous, such as it requiring unnecessary permissions. You can disable or delete extensions individually or turn them all off in one go. We found some of Extension Police's conclusions were incorrect – flagging a safe add-on as 'high potential risk' – but it's still a useful safeguard against the growing number of dodgy Chrome tools.



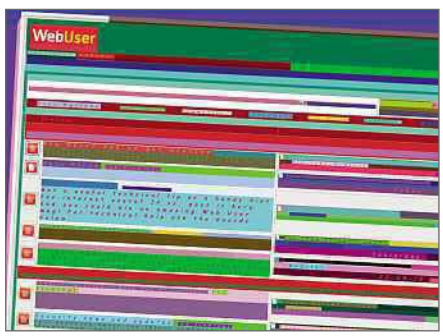
### Snooze your browser tabs

One of the best new features in the recently revamped Gmail is the ability to 'snooze' emails when you're busy, making them reappear in your inbox when you have more time to respond. A new Chrome extension called Snooze Tabby (bit.ly/snooze451) applies the same concept to your browser tabs, allowing you to save interesting articles and web pages for later without needing to bookmark them.

To snooze the tab you're currently viewing, click the add-on's toolbar button and choose how long to snooze the tab for, such as later today, this weekend or a specific date. You can also create custom snoozes specifying the number of hours and minutes.

### Make the web look terrible

'Night modes' that make websites and software easier on your eyes are all the rage at the moment – in fact, we've got a feature about them on page 50 of this issue. But it's also interesting to see just how badly you can mess with a site's design to make it look as garish and awful as possible, which is where Masochist's Extension (bit.ly/masoch451) comes in. This add-on aims to "go against as many design principles as possible" by changing the text, colours and alignment of every page you visit to create a delightfully offensive browsing experience. If you're not feeling masochistic, you can use the extension to prank a friend – they're bound to see the funny side!




### Launch sites via hotkeys

Browsing your bookmarks to access a website is quick and convenient (so long as you've got them well organised), but there's an even faster way. Quickey Launcher (bit.ly/quickey451) lets you visit your favourite sites via keyboard shortcuts rather than mouse clicks. It adds a virtual keyboard to your New Tab page that you can customise by assigning keys to specific sites, for example 'Y' for YouTube and 'B' for 'BBC News', to open them with a single button-press.

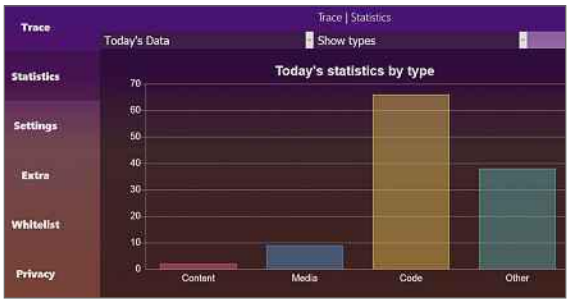
Alternatively, use Alt+the relevant key to launch the site from wherever you are on the web. You can even personalise shortcut keys with emoji.

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

## FIREFOX

# Block advanced tracking techniques on the web

You may already use a privacy add-on such as Ghostery or Privacy Badger to prevent invisible trackers from following you around the web, but many such tools merely block known tracking servers. Trace (bit.ly/trace451) is a new extension for Firefox and Chrome that goes much further by including canvas-fingerprint protection to stop your browser being identified, WebRTC protection to conceal your IP address, removal of referrer headers to stop sites seeing where you clicked from, blocking of bad top-level domains and protection against cryptocurrency miners. Trace also provides statistics on the number and type of tracking techniques it's blocked so far, and lets you create a whitelist of sites to exclude from its protection. It's currently in beta, but it already looks very promising.

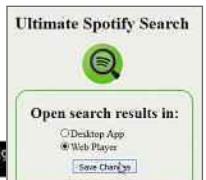



## Hide content from Firefox's New Tab page

Since Firefox's rebirth as Quantum last year, Mozilla has been coming up with ways to make the browser's New Tab page more useful and interesting. This includes displaying thumbnails for your most visited sites, other pages you've viewed and – as of Firefox 61 (released 25 June) – your most recently downloaded files. If you share your computer, you might not welcome this display of your activities, but it's easy to customise the page to hide unwanted content. Click the top-right cog icon and select the Home tab on the left. In the Firefox Home Content section, under Highlights, deselect any options you don't want to appear on the page, such as Most Recent Download.

## Search for any song on Spotify

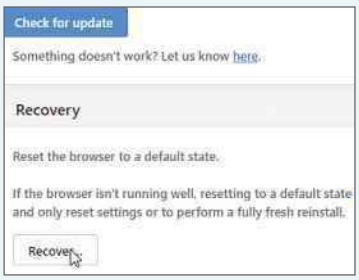
Spotify has revolutionised the way we listen to music, and this handy Firefox (and Chrome) add-on called Ultimate Spotify Search (bit.ly/spotify451) makes the streaming service even more indispensable. It adds 'Search on Spotify' buttons to tracks on sites including YouTube, SoundCloud and Bandcamp, so you can instantly look them up in the Spotify desktop app or the web player, and either listen to them or save them to playlists. Even better, you can simply right-click the name of a tune on a web page to find it on Spotify.



## OTHER BROWSERS

### Update and reset Opera instantly

Opera 54 introduces new features that make it easier to upgrade the browser and reset it to its default state. Handily, these are both in the same new section, called 'Update & Recovery', which you can access via Opera's main 'O' menu. Click the 'Check for update' button to see if a newer version of the browser is available – if it is, choose 'Update now' to install it. Click Recover to reset the browser, either by deleting all extensions, bookmarks, history, saved passwords and cookies, or by reverting to default settings while preserving your data.




### Turn on Vivaldi search suggestions

Unlike most browsers, Vivaldi doesn't use autocomplete to suggest search queries and URLs as you type into its address bar or search box. This is a deliberate privacy measure to prevent search engines from gathering your data, but if you miss the convenience of suggestions, you can turn them on manually. Click the Tools menu in Vivaldi, choose Settings and click the Privacy option on the left. Select the options 'Search Suggestions in Address Field' and 'Search Suggestions in Search Field', or just one or the other if you prefer.

# Best Free Apps

## App of the Fortnight

GAMING

### Steam Link

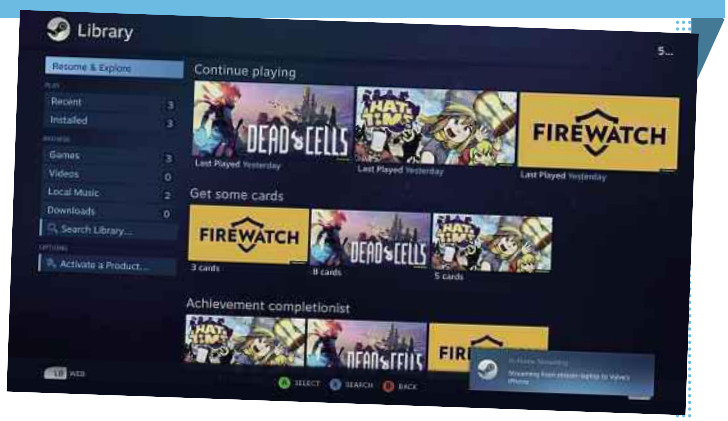
NEW

bit.ly/steam451

5

If you've bought any PC games digitally over the past decade or so, you're probably already familiar with Steam. It's an online store – a bit like an iTunes store for games – and is owned and run by Valve, the company behind games such as Half-Life and Portal.

Valve recently released a streaming box called Steam Link, which lets you stream games from your PC to your TV. Now, thanks to the new Steam Link app, you can stream games you own to your mobile device, too.




Once connected, you can browse your library and play games installed on your PC, or buy new games from the Steam store. The app supports Steam's own gamepad (which isn't to everyone's taste) but works with pretty much any Bluetooth gamepad that's compatible with your device.

Steam Link only works over a local network – you can't stream games over the internet while you're out, for example. But the system works well, and setting it up is relatively painless – see our Mini Workshop below.

Steam Link is still in beta, so you may notice a few quirks – streaming works better on some networks than others, for example (see Step 3 of our Mini Workshop). We're hoping Valve will be able to optimise Steam Link to suit a broader range of network setups in time for its official launch.

Another limitation is that Steam Link currently works only on Android devices. As we went to press, Apple had refused to approve the iOS version of the app, citing "business conflicts" as the reason. Hopefully, these issues will be resolved soon, because Steam Link is a great way to enjoy your library of games on a second screen.

Our rating ★★★★★

MINI WORKSHOP

### Stream games to your phone or tablet using Steam Link

**1** Steam Link will only work on your mobile device if you also have the latest version of Steam installed on a computer that's connected to the same home network. If you don't already have Steam on your PC, download it for free from store.steampowered.com/about – just click Install Steam Now. 1 Steam must be running on your computer, too, so fire it up and sign in with your Steam account before you launch Steam Link on your device.

**2** When you first run Steam Link, it automatically scans your local network for a computer running Steam. Tap the computer's name 1 to connect to it. If it can't find your computer, make sure it's set up correctly, as described in Step 1, then tap Rescan. 2 When you select the computer, you'll see a four-digit authorisation code on your mobile device. Type this into the corresponding box on your PC and click OK.

**3** The app will run a test on your home network. Currently, it works best when your PC is connected to your router with an Ethernet cable, and your mobile device uses a 5GHz wireless connection. You can retest your network by tapping Settings, 1 Streaming, then Network Test. Tap Start Playing 2 to connect to your PC. You may see a message about installing an additional driver – if so, follow the instructions on your PC.

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

NAVIGATION NEW

## Horizon Explorer

bit.ly/horizondroid451
bit.ly/horizonios451
7 11

With this brilliant augmented-reality (AR) app, you can point your phone's camera at a hill, village or landmark on the horizon to see useful information about your surroundings, including the names of local landmarks, altitude and a 2D map of the area. Alternatively, you can tap the AR Cam button to overlay a 3D map of where you are. Horizon Explorer is very new, and its developers say more features are on the way soon. For now, the app is fun and free of adverts.

Our rating ★★★★☆

GAME NEW

## Jurassic World Alive

bit.ly/jurassicdroid451
bit.ly/jurassicios451
4.4 10

If you can imagine Pokémon Go but with dinosaurs instead of Bulbasaurs, you'll have a pretty good idea of what to expect from Jurassic World Alive. It's a 'gotta catch them all'-type augmented-reality game released to tie in with the latest movie in the Jurassic Park franchise, *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*. As well as hunting dinos around your neighbourhood, you can get them to battle each other and evolve, or create hybrids in the labs. The game is free, but in-app purchases are available for additional supplies and other extras.

Our rating ★★★★☆

EDUCATION NEW

## WHExperience

bit.ly/WHEdroid451
bit.ly/WHEios451
4 9

Always wanted to visit the White House but don't have enough money for a return flight to Washington DC? Then this app offers the next best thing. Produced by the White House Historical Association, WHExperience lets you take a virtual room-by-room tour of the presidential residence, as well as the surrounding neighbourhood. New tours and features – including a presidential lookalike tool, which analyses selfies and tells you which President (or First Lady) you most closely resemble – will be added later through updates.

Our rating ★★★★☆

SMART HOME UPDATED

## Philips Hue

bit.ly/huedroid451
bit.ly/hueios451
5 10

After unveiling a raft of new features at the CES exhibition back in January, Philips has finally released version 3.0 of its Hue home-automation app, and the update is a big one. If you already use Hue smart lightbulbs in your home, you'll be pleased to hear that Philips has made significant improvements to the app's navigation, so you can now get to your favourite scenes more quickly. A powerful new scene editor helps you pick colours that suit your room, and the app also provides more than 30 new preset scenes for you to choose from.

Our rating ★★★★★

MEDIA UPDATED

## Plex

bit.ly/plexdroid451
bit.ly/plexios451
(varies) 9.3

Plex is one of our favourite media players, and the latest update adds even more great features to the brilliant mobile app. Not only has the interface been overhauled, but the app now supports podcasts, which means you no longer need a separate app to subscribe and listen to your favourite shows. Podcast support is still in beta, but it works well. To sign up for a podcast, tap More in the new navigation bar at the bottom of the screen, then tap Podcasts and search for or browse available shows. You can also customise the Home screen.

Our rating ★★★★★

# 5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

## PHONE

### Call Recorder Premium

bit.ly/callrecord451

**Price:** £2.79

3

The Premium version of this excellent voice-call recorder lets you make high-quality two-way recordings and export them in a choice of file formats, including MP3 and WAV.

## CAMERA

### Obscura 2

bit.ly/obscura2451

**Price:** £4.99

11

A sequel to one of the best iPhone camera apps, Obscura 2 improves on the original, equipping your phone with manual controls usually found only on DSLR cameras – such as exposure, focus and ISO – in an accessible and touch control-friendly way.

## GAME

### Homo Machina

bit.ly/homodroid451

bit.ly/homoios451

**Price:** £2.99

6 10

Inspired by the work of avant-garde scientist Fritz Kahn, Homo Machina is a clever, surreal puzzle game that represents the inner workings of the human body as an enormous 1920s factory.

## PERSONALISATION

### EdgeMaster

bit.ly/edgemaster451

**Price:** 59p

6

Get some of the best features of the upcoming Galaxy S9 Edge phone on your existing Android handset, including pop-up shortcuts to apps and contacts – all for just 59p!

## CAMERA

### Camera+ 2

bit.ly/cameraplus2451

**Price:** £2.99

11

Camera+ was one of iOS's most popular camera apps, and this new version has been completely rebuilt from scratch. Features include smile detection, slow shutter mode and photo library integration.

Call Recorder Premium

Obscura 2

Homo Machina

EdgeMaster

Camera+ 2

## ✗ Don't install...

### Weather – unlimited & realtime weather forecast

bit.ly/weather451

During the summer months when we indulge in more outdoor activities, a reliable weather app is all but essential. But don't assume that paying a premium price is always a guarantee of satisfaction. You'd think, for example, that by coughing up £19.49 for this Android weather app, you could guarantee there wouldn't be a single advert in sight. But the small print admits that "we may still serve ads". What a cheek!

## ...Install this instead ✓

### Met Office Weather Forecast

bit.ly/metdroid451

bit.ly/metios451

4.1 9

You don't need to pay the best part of £20 for accurate weather forecasts. There are plenty of great weather apps to choose from – many of which are free. The Met Office app, for example, is ad-supported (although you can pay an acceptable £2.99 to banish them) and provides reliable, up-to-the minute meteorological data, including pollen and air pollution forecasts, UV index, humidity and pressure. If you want something prettier, Yahoo Weather (bit.ly/yahoodroid451 or bit.ly/yahooios451) is free and beautifully designed. And if you want an app that's free *and* free of ads, try BBC Weather (bit.ly/bbcdroid451 or bit.ly/bbcios451). ■

# Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your browser by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you guess our British-film 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 BRITISH FILM TITLES 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** Former CIA employee Edward Snowden reveals that government agencies around the world collect data on "nearly everything" web users do.

**2** Microsoft releases Windows 8.1 to address the many complaints from users about the previous version of its operating system, Windows 8.

**3** Google upsets millions of loyal users of its RSS reader, Google Reader, when it discontinues the service, saying that "usage has declined".

**4** The UK's best-selling internet magazine reveals how to avoid renewing your TV licence by exploiting a loophole (since closed) in the law.

**5** The Xbox One and the PlayStation 4 go head-to-head as both next-generation games consoles are launched just before Christmas.

## COMPETITIONS

### WIN 1 OF 5
**Roku Streaming Stick+**

WORTH £79.99 EACH

An ideal gift for Father's Day, the Roku Streaming Stick+ gives you access to blockbuster films, TV shows, live sport, news, music and specialist channels. You can also watch YouTube on it (unlike the Amazon Fire Stick). To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'roku' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.roku.com and follow @RokuPlayer on Twitter.

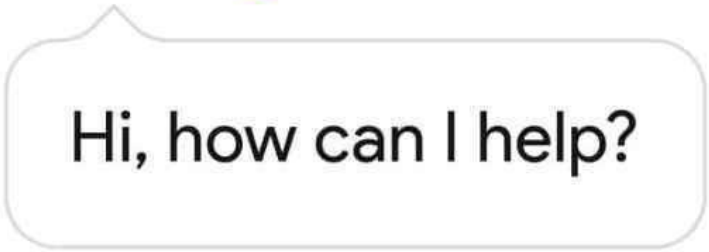
### WIN 1 OF 2
**Ambeo Smart Headset**

WORTH £259.99 EACH

Sennheiser's Ambeo Smart Headset has two omnidirectional microphones for producing immersive videos with 3D-like sound recordings on your iPhone or iPad. The listener feels like they are really there, making it ideal for vloggers and other content creators. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'ambeo' in the subject line. For more details, visit en-uk.sennheiser.com and follow @Sennheiser_UK on Twitter.

# Google Duplex

Google can now use artificial intelligence to make phone calls on your behalf, but is it clever or creepy? **David Crookes** finds out




## What is it?

Duplex is a new Google tool that uses complex artificial intelligence (AI) not only to dial a phone number and conduct a voice conversation but also to sound convincingly human in the process. It's designed to carry out specific tasks such as booking appointments and checking opening hours. But although it undoubtedly marks the next step towards effective human-computer interaction, it is already proving controversial.

## What's the idea behind it?

Google noticed that many businesses have yet to introduce an online booking service. This means we still have to make phone calls to book appointments with dentists, doctors, opticians, hairdressers, restaurants and the like. In an effort to bring these phone-only services more in line with those that let you book online, Google is offering to conduct the necessary conversation on our behalf.

*Google Duplex pretends to be a human to book appointments on your behalf*

## How does it work?

Duplex is to be integrated with Google Assistant, and you simply have to ask it to perform a certain task. You could ask when a local computer shop is open, for example, or make an appointment with your nearest hairdresser. In either case, details of the request are passed to Duplex, which then makes a call, does the talking for you and reports back with an answer or confirmation. Magically, the person on the other end should have no idea that they've just been speaking to a computer.

## How does it achieve that?

For several years, Google has been training a 'recurrent neural network' using anonymised phone-conversation data. Such networks work to some extent like a human brain, using memory to process input sequences while taking into account their own output, context and history. As you can imagine, this is hugely complex. Duplex needs to work with the output from Google's automatic speech-recognition software while taking into account features of the audio and the conversation's history. It also needs to operate within the parameters of the conversation it is tasked to carry out, knowing what to ask and the kind of responses it should give.

## Can I just chat merrily away to it?

No, not yet. Duplex will not be phoning businesses for a general chit-chat and neither could it handle one if it did: flawless open-ended conversation is difficult to achieve because it relies on context and multiple layers. For this reason, Duplex can only respond in limited ways, so discussing the weather and what you're having for your tea isn't on the agenda right now.

## But does it sound convincingly human?

Yes. Based on the examples that Google demonstrated at its annual I/O developer conference, Duplex can start a conversation with a person who picks up the phone, make the correct request, listen for a response, answer questions and deal with nuances of speech. As a follow-up blog showed, (bit.ly/duplexai451), Duplex is also able to handle interruptions and elaborations, with latency taken into account ("hellos" are responded to immediately, while responses that would ordinarily require a little bit of thought are slightly delayed). It even "ums" and "aahs" like a human, lending extra authenticity to its speech so the person on the other end of the phone thinks they are speaking to a real person.

*Google Duplex employs complex technology to make phone calls but it's very simple to use*

*Could you tell if you were speaking to Google Duplex or a real person?*

## Can it recognise any speech?

Apparently so, although Google has not yet provided any examples of a conversation that's struggling to be heard over clattering plates or snipping scissors, nor has it given evidence of Duplex coping with fast talkers or strong accents. However, voice-recognition software, neural networks and natural-language processing are advancing at a rate of knots so we wouldn't be surprised.

## Will it replace infuriating automated phone systems?

Sadly, that's not the current intention. Instead, Google Duplex is flipping computer-human conversations around, with the business on the receiving end rather than the customer. But Duplex makes the process of talking to a computer much more natural. Google says humans do not have to adjust to the system; the system adjusts to us.

*There are no plans for Duplex to replace awful automated phone systems*

## Will people be told they're talking to a robot?

In the audio examples given by Google, Duplex does not identify itself as a machine. This has caused controversy because many people worry that it is deceptive and creepy. But Google insists it is experimenting to find the right approach and, since the demonstration, it has said Duplex will indeed identify itself (as Google Assistant) at the start of a conversation.

## Isn't this still a slippery slope?

Maybe. Some people believe a robot should always sound like a robot, so there are no misunderstandings. There's certainly a fear that human-sounding robot voices could be used to manipulate people. We've already seen AI that can mimic any voice: a startup called Lyrebird (lyrebird.ai) creates digital voices that sound like you by sampling a minute of your speech. But even something as small as the "ums" and "aahs" of Duplex could be seen as a step too far.

*Lyrebird can create a digital version of your voice from one minute of your speech*

## Won't people just put the phone down?

If the system announces itself as a robo-caller, then the person may well simply hang up. But if they do, they risk losing business, so it's in their best interest to answer the call. Whether or not they adapt the way they talk when they're alerted to the non-human nature of the caller is another matter entirely. It's even possible that by becoming accustomed to talking to robots, we'll change the way we converse with each other.

## Will Google record the conversations?

Yes, but only "in certain jurisdictions". We take that to mean it will record conversations where it is legal to do so and that it will seek permission in countries that require people to know a recording is being made. Google says recordings could be shared with users so they have a record of how they responded. The information is also likely to aid Duplex's learning process.

## Why can't we just pick up the phone ourselves?

Well we can, of course, and we envisage that many people will still prefer to call direct. Going via Duplex does have benefits, though. It can save time and allows Google Assistant to make a note of the appointment in your calendar and set a reminder. The system also means businesses don't have to spend a fortune on online booking systems.

It could even get us across language barriers: you could request a booking for a Parisian restaurant in English using Google Assistant and have the request made in perfect French.

*Google can not only book appointments for you but also create reminders afterwards*

## DID GOOGLE FAKE THE DUPLEX CALLS?

**It may be testament to the impressive nature of the technology, but when Google showed off examples of Duplex in action (bit.ly/calls451), some journalists and experts believed the calls may have been edited or staged.**

**They pointed to the lack of an introduction by the humans, who failed to identify their business names. They also believed the lack of ambient noise was a giveaway sign that something was amiss. The fact that none of the humans asked for a phone number or email was also deemed suspicious, and this was compounded by the fact that there was no evidence that the person called had agreed to be recorded.**

**Google has not commented on the speculation, although some web sleuths picked up on a photo of Duplex engineers Yaniv Leviathan and Mathan Kalman in a restaurant. The pair were said to have booked their meal via Duplex, so reporters identified the eatery from the style of décor and booth and called it up. The restaurant appeared to confirm that the AI had made the reservation.**

# HIDE YOUR PRESENCE On The WEB

COVER FEATURE

Want to browse the web without interruption or intrusion? **Wayne Williams** reveals how you can stay undetected online by making yourself invisible to other people

Today's always-on technology means you can get online whenever you want, wherever you are, but the downside is that you too are 'always-on', constantly available and contactable. You can't even take a peek at Facebook without people seeing what you're doing, and if they then take that opportunity to contact you, they'll even see when you read their message.

Fortunately, it is possible to use the web casually without everyone spotting you and without resorting to heavy-handed measures such as installing a VPN or switching to Tor. In this feature, we round up the best ways to make yourself invisible on your favourite online services, so nobody knows you're there and you don't feel pressured to reply instantly to their messages.

Over the following six pages, we show you how to make yourself appear offline in WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, disguise your online availability in multiplayer games, stop people from knowing when you've read their emails and keep your listening private in Spotify.

# HIDE YOUR PRESENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

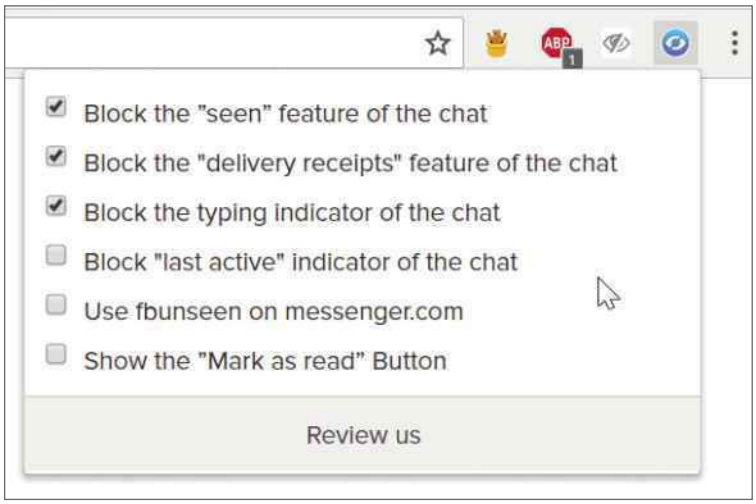
## Stay unseen on Facebook Messenger

Facebook lets you see at a glance all your friends who are currently active on Messenger, which indicates that they are available to chat (in theory, at least). If you're on Facebook and/or Messenger, you're probably also marked as 'active', which means people can see you're online. To check your availability – and change it – open Messenger.

If you're using the web version, click the cog icon on the left-hand side and click 'Active contacts'. This displays a list of all your friends on the messaging service. At the top, you'll see a toggle switch. To go offline, simply turn this to off. This in turn means you won't be able to see the online status of *your* contacts, but you might not be interested anyway!

In the Messenger app for Android and iOS, you'll see an Active tab at the top of the screen. Tap this to see which of your contacts are currently online. To conceal your own status, tap your profile image, choose Availability and toggle the switch off. You can make yourself available again by selecting 'Turn on' on the Active tab.

If you access Facebook Messenger through a desktop browser, you can hide your online status by installing FB Unseen (fbunseen.com). This add-on for Firefox, Chrome and Opera blocks the chat tool's 'seen' and 'delivery receipts' features, so friends won't know whether you've read their messages. It also blocks the 'last active' indicator so they won't know when you're online.




*FB Unseen lets you conceal your Messenger activities from nosy contacts*

The only drawback is that messages you've read will appear as unread for you, as well as for the sender.

## Only let select friends see when you're on Facebook

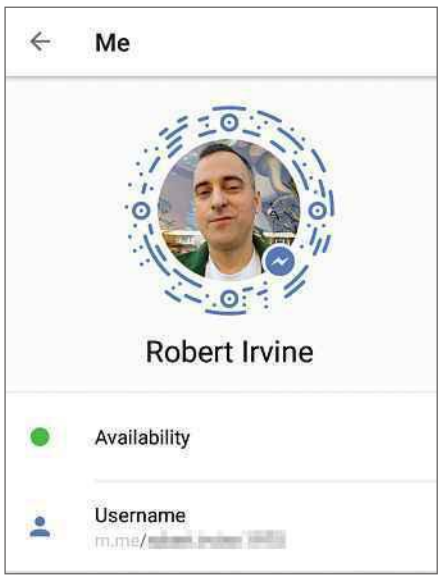
If you're trying to hide when you're on Facebook, there's a good chance you're only concerned with staying hidden from specific individuals – perhaps an over-communicative friend, or a crowd you'd rather avoid. Facebook lets you organise your friends into groups, and you can use this option to hide yourself from a block of people.

To do this, log into Facebook on the web and click the 'Friend lists' link in the sidebar on the left. There will already be a number of lists here, which are created for you by Facebook (you can't delete these lists but you can archive one or more of them by clicking the cog next to it). Click the Create List button and give the group a name – 'Friends I'm hiding from', for example. Enter the names of the people you want to appear invisible to in the Members box.

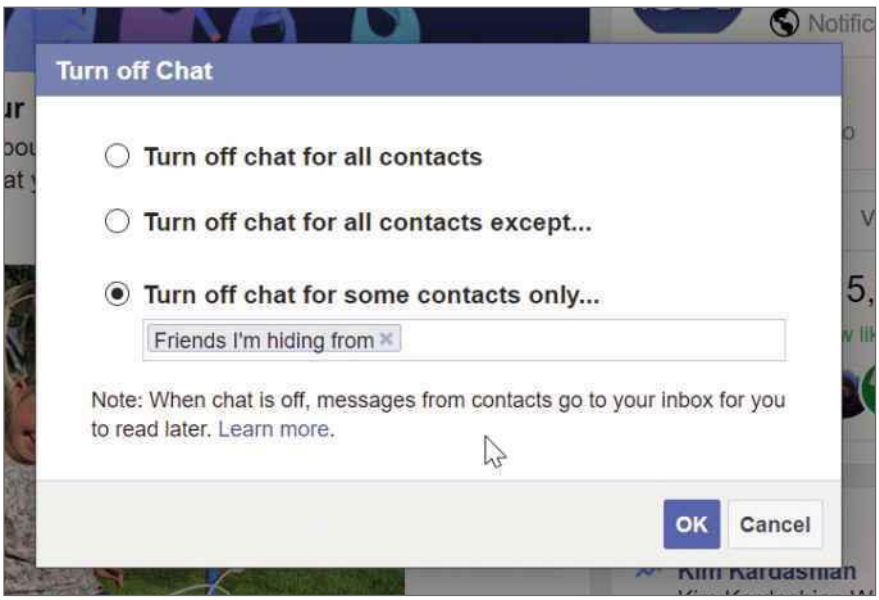
When you've finished, click the blue Create button. A page for that list will appear with posts from the members in it. The On This List box on the right lets you add more people, should you need to. The next step is to hide your online availability to everyone in this list. Return to the homepage and expand the Chat bar, then click the cog at the bottom and select Turn Off Chat.

A new window will open, giving you the option to 'Turn off chat for all contacts', 'Turn off chat for all contacts except...' or 'Turn off chat for some contacts only'. This last option is the one you need. Select it, click in the box underneath and type the name of the list you created. Click OK. The cog icon also gives you the option to turn off video and voice calls, which is worth doing if you want to make sure that the people you're avoiding don't try to call you.

This method makes it easy to avoid




*Turn off your Messenger availability to stop people bothering you*

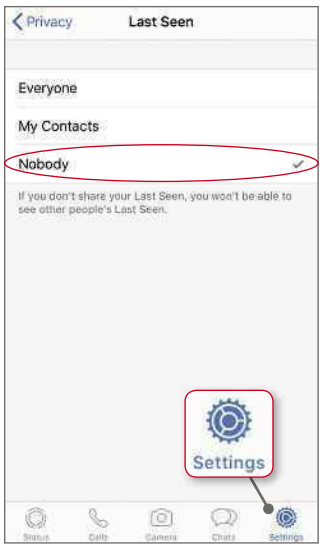



*Turn off chat for specific friends on Facebook to make yourself invisible to them*

a few people, but if you want to avoid the majority of your contacts, you can instead create a list of people you *do* want to see you online, and just block everyone else. Follow the instructions above, but create a list of favourite people and select 'Turn off chat for all contacts except…' instead.

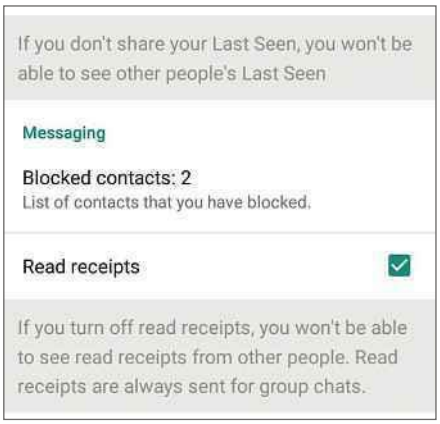
## Make yourself invisible on WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a fantastic messaging tool that's easy to use and offers lots of useful features – it's no wonder so many people use it to chat and send photos and videos. The problem is that being seen as 'active' on the service gives the impression that you're available 24/7, so friends may contact you for a chat at an inconvenient time. If you'd prefer people not to see when you're on WhatsApp, but still want to read and write messages at any time, you can hide your availability.




*Set WhatsApp's 'Last seen' option to Nobody so people can't see when you're online*

In the WhatsApp app for Android or iOS, tap the three-dot menu in the top-right corner and choose Settings, Account, Privacy. Set the 'Last seen' option (which shows users when you were last online) to Nobody. You can change this back to 'My contacts' or even Everybody when you're feeling more sociable. Note that withholding your 'Last seen' status means you can't see other people's, either.



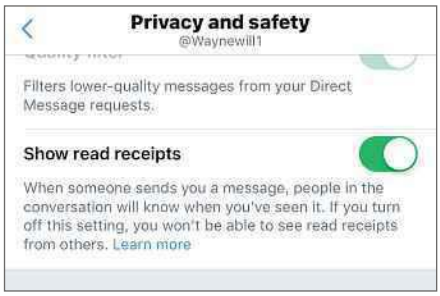

*Turn off read receipts in WhatsApp so nobody knows you've read their messages*

WhatsApp uses ticks to report the status of messages to users. A single grey tick means a message was sent; a double-grey tick means it arrived at its destination; and a double-blue tick means it's been seen. You can disable this option to stop people seeing when you've received or read their messages, so you don't feel pressured to reply right away. Go to Settings, Account, Privacy and turn off read receipts.

Again, this will prevent you from seeing when other people have read your messages, too. You can also temporarily block friends here, which will stop them contacting you for a while. Remember to unblock them again afterwards, though.

## Disable read receipts on Twitter

When someone sends you a DM (direct message) on Twitter, they can see whether or not you've read it. That's handy for the sender, especially if they are sending a DM to someone with a lot of followers, where there's the danger of it getting lost in an overcrowded inbox. However, for the recipient, it can put pressure on you to reply because you can't claim that you haven't seen the message.




*Twitter lets you hide that you've read a direct message from someone*

If you don't want people knowing when you've read their direct messages, you can easily disable this read-receipts feature. The process is the same for the web, Android and iOS versions of Twitter. Click or tap your profile picture and select 'Settings and privacy'. Choose 'Privacy and safety' and, in the 'Direct messages' section, turn off the option to send and receive read receipts (which obviously means you won't be able to see when people have read *your* direct messages).

## Lock down your Twitter account

The whole point of Twitter is to share your thoughts with the world and, unlike Facebook, anyone can follow you and see what you're up to, which can sometimes lead to problems (as US comedienne Roseanne Barr recently discovered). The best way to maintain your privacy while still making the most of Twitter is to lock down your account, so your tweets are only visible to people who follow you, who you've approved.

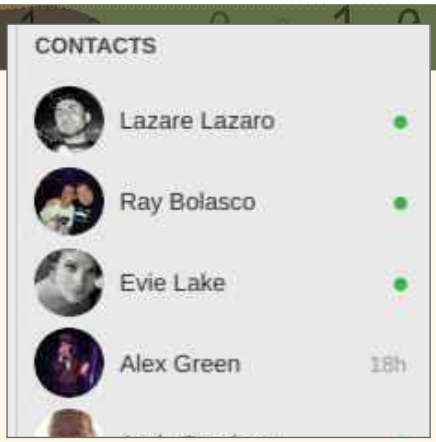
To do this, click or tap your profile picture, select 'Settings and privacy',

## SEE IF SOMEONE IS HIDING ON FACEBOOK

**As we mentioned previously, it's possible to hide your online availability on Facebook and Messenger – but how do you know if someone is hiding from you? There's no easy way to tell, but you can get a rough idea by doing a little sleuthing.**

**Log into Facebook and open the chat sidebar. People who are currently online will be marked with a green circle, while people who aren't available will have a 'last seen' timestamp next to their name, showing when they were last online. If they haven't been online in a long time (or want to appear that that's the case), this will be blank.**

**Once you've checked this, type your friend's name into the search box, and check their timeline to see when they last posted. If they posted more recently than their last appearance in chat, it's a fair bet that they're hiding their status.**



*Protect your tweets so only approved people can see your Twitter activity*

'Privacy and safety' and tick the box to 'Protect your Tweets'. Future followers will need your permission to view your tweets, but existing followers won't, so it's worth blocking anyone who you don't want seeing your posts.

## Stay anonymous on LinkedIn

Unlike Facebook, which is about connecting with people you probably know in real life, LinkedIn is more about connecting people who work in similar circles or industries, which can lead to job opportunities. However, there might come a time when you don't want random people being able to view your LinkedIn profile.

To hide yourself on the business social network, you just need to make a simple change to your privacy settings. Click your avatar and go to Account & Settings. Click the Privacy tab at the top and choose 'Profile viewing options'. From here, you have three choices: people can view your name, headline and photo but not any other information; visitors to your page can see your private profile characteristics (a rough outline of your job and location, but not who you are); or Private Mode, which will list you only as 'Anonymous LinkedIn Member'.

Note that the option you choose will also affect the information you can view about other people, so if you decide to be anonymous, you won't be able to see who's been looking at your LinkedIn profile.

*Be anonymous on LinkedIn and nobody will know you've viewed their profile*

## Appear offline on Instagram

In January, Instagram added a feature that lets people you follow or have interacted with see when you were last using the service (people who follow you, but who you don't follow back, can't see this). This is similar to the feature found in Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, which isn't surprising given that they are all owned by Facebook. The option is enabled by default, but is easy enough to turn off if you want to hide your presence on Instagram. Open Instagram and press your profile picture. Tap the cog icon to open Options and scroll down to the 'Privacy and security' section. Locate and tap 'Activity status', and you can toggle the feature on or off.

*Prevent people who you follow on Instagram from seeing when you're online*

## Create a fake Instagram account

Savvy youngsters on Instagram will often have two accounts – a Rinsta (Real Instagram) and Finsta (Fake Instagram). The Finsta contains anything you are happy to share publicly, while the Rinsta is the locked-down account that is only visible to friends and those you choose to grant access to (so not parents!).

This approach means you can make it look as if you're not online to all the followers who only know your Finsta account, while you continue to go online and post to your Rinsta account. You can create as many separate real and fake accounts as you like, but just make sure you keep track of what each one is for!

*Copy savvy young Instagram users by having two accounts on the service*

## STOP WEBSITES RECOGNISING YOU

**Cookies allow websites to recognise you, which is handy because it saves you having to log in every time you visit and can be used to store your personal preferences. Certain cookies can even track where you go and what you get up to on the web.**

**You can clear out all your cookies, but doing so may cause you problems. A better option is to use a browser add-on to manage your cookies instead. Cookie AutoDelete (bit.ly/cookie451) for Chrome will automatically delete any cookies not in use when you close a tab. You can whitelist cookies you want to keep, and import and export your cookies whitelist. Firefox users can install Self Destroying Cookies (bit.ly/sdc451), which works in much the same way. You can even see how many cookies and third-party cookies a website creates in real time, which can be a real eye opener!**

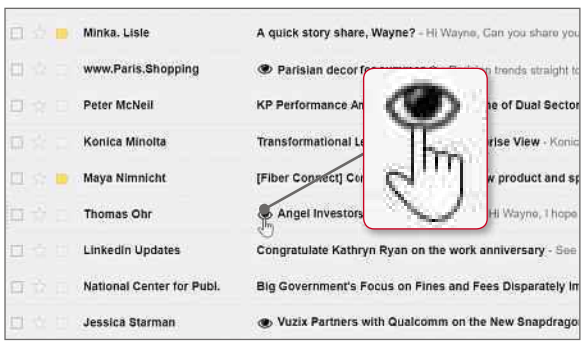
# HIDE YOUR PRESENCE ON EMAIL & CHAT

## Stop people seeing that you've read their emails

When you receive a newsletter or a marketing email, there's a chance that the sender will have embedded a tracker in the message that lets them know when you've opened it. Not only that, but the tracker can also send back information on the device you opened it on, your location and any links in the message that you click. Amazon, for example, is notorious for doing this, and admits so in its privacy policy. This tracker usually takes the form of an invisible, 1x1-pixel image, so it's not something you can see.

The easiest way to identify which messages come with a tracker is to install the Chrome extension Ugly Email (bit.ly/ugly451), which also works in Vivaldi. You can only use it with Gmail and, once it's installed, it will open that service in a tab. Messages that have a tracker will be marked with an eye icon in the subject line. Ugly Email doesn't only identify trackers, it blocks them as well, so you can open a message without the sender knowing.

Another way to block trackers is to stop images – including 1x1 web bugs – from loading automatically. In Gmail, click the cog icon and, on the General tab, tick 'Ask before displaying external images'. If you know an email is from a sender who would never track you, you can allow the pictures to display.

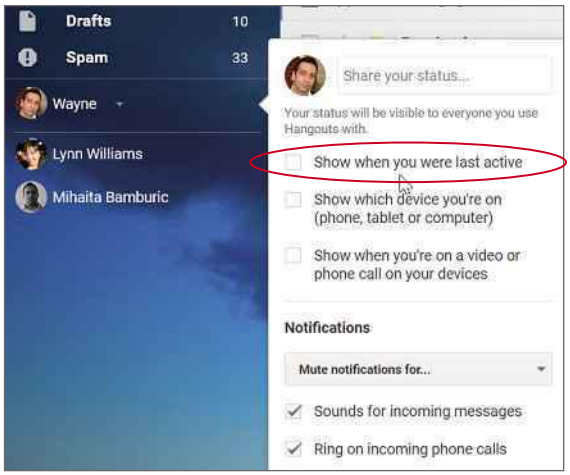



*Block email trackers to stop companies seeing you've opened their messages*

## Prevent Gmail from revealing you're online

Google Hangouts, one of the search giant's many messaging services, integrates tightly with Gmail. To make it easier for your contacts to know when you're logged in and able to chat, it displays a status button that other people will see so they can initiate a conversation with you. But if you don't want them bothering you, this feature is easy enough to disable – just click your name in the left-hand sidebar and, in the window that appears, untick 'Show when you were last active'.

If you never use Hangouts, you can sign out of the chat service by clicking the button at the bottom of the window. Doing this means you won't be able to see when other contacts are around to chat with, but this obviously won't matter if you're not a Hangouts fan. However, although the green status light is for Hangouts, it does have another benefit – if someone is shown as active, it might mean you get a speedier response to emails because you can see that the person is currently checking Gmail.




*Hide when you were last active in Gmail so people don't try to chat to you*

## Hide your online status in Skype

Microsoft's communication tool marks you as available to chat when you sign in, but you might simply want to read old messages or call a specific person without letting everyone else know you're online. Thankfully, Skype lets you set your status to 'Invisible', which marks you as offline to everyone in your contact list.

To change your profile in the desktop application, click the Skype menu in the top-left corner, hover your mouse over Online Status and select Invisible from the menu that appears. If you're using the Skype app for Windows 10, click your profile picture and change the status there.

If you access Skype on mobile (Android or iOS), select the Chats tab and tap your profile picture at the top. Tap the Active button to change your presence to 'Do not disturb' (which means you can still be contacted, but won't receive notifications) or Invisible.

*Make yourself invisible on Skype to avoid unwanted contacts*

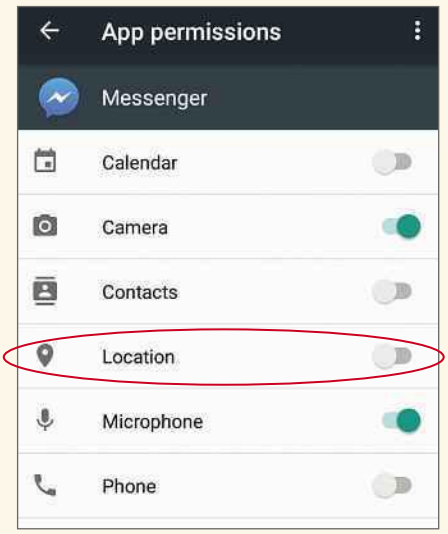
# HIDE YOUR LIVE LOCATION IN CHATS

**Most messaging services let you share your location with friends, which is handy if you're meeting up but not so great if you've told someone that you're on holiday but really just want to avoid them!**

**To ensure you're not leaking your whereabouts in WhatsApp, tap the three-dot menu and go to Settings, Account, Privacy. Press 'Live location' and select 'Stop sharing'.**

**For Facebook Messenger, you need to open the Settings app on your iOS or Android device and choose Apps, Messenger.**

**On iOS, switch Location to 'off'; on Android, select Permissions and turn Location off there.**



# HIDE YOUR PRESENCE IN ENTERTAINMENT

## Keep your listening private in Spotify

Spotify is a brilliant music-streaming service, with additional social features that let you share what you're listening to with people around the world. Anyone can follow you on the service and see the type of music you're into, which is all well and good when you're playing a self-consciously cool selection of tunes but not ideal for indulging in a guilty-pleasures Boney M danceathon. Thankfully – and wisely – Spotify lets you hide your listening activity.

To do this in the desktop app, click the down arrow in the top-right corner and select Settings. Under Social, you can make whatever changes you require to keep your listening private. You'll probably want to turn off the option to make new playlists public, and also disable the option to publish your activity (listen history) on Spotify. You can also hide your current top artists.

If you only want to temporarily hide your listening activity (for the hour or so that you're power-singing along to Celine Dion, for example), you can switch to a Private Session here.

Another option is to hide specific playlists. On the desktop app or in the web player, right-click the playlist you want to hide and select Make Secret. To do this on mobile, tap the three-dots icon next to a playlist and access the Make Secret option there.

*Make specific Spotify playlists secret so nobody sees what you're listening to*

## Appear offline in online games

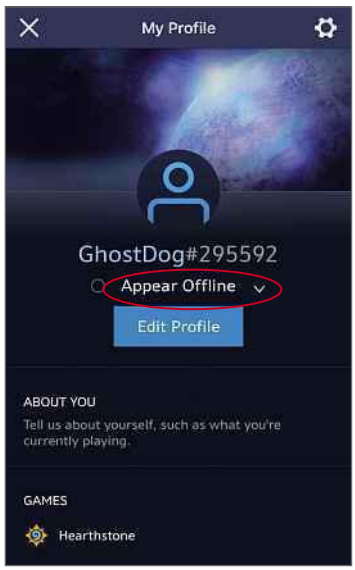
Playing games with other people online can be a lot of fun, but sometimes you just want to enjoy a single-player campaign or watch a movie. Thankfully, both Xbox and PlayStation let you make it look as if you're offline. Xbox One owners just need to press the Xbox button and from the Home menu open their user profile. Sign in (if you haven't already) and you can choose to 'Appear offline'. You'll see an 'Appearing offline' message below your username. To go back online, repeat the process but select 'Appear online'.

*Hide your presence in online games so you play unhindered by other people*

The process is similar for PlayStation 4. When you sign into the PlayStation Network, you will automatically appear to be online. To change this, open your profile and, under Set Online Status, select Appear Offline.

## Appear offline in Blizzard mobile games

Blizzard's Hearthstone is a superb and very popular fantasy-card combat game for iOS and Android that you play against friends. There's no built-in way to appear offline in the game, but you can install the free Blizzard Battle.net mobile app (bit.ly/bliz451) and use this to make yourself invisible when you don't want people to see you're available.




*Be temporarily invisible on mobile games such as Blizzard's Hearthstone*

The app lets you appear offline in Hearthstone and other Blizzard games such as Diablo III and World of Warcraft: Legion.

To appear offline, just open the Battle.net app, log in (if you haven't already) and tap your profile picture in the top-left corner. Tap Online and select Appear Offline. This status will then appear on your profile. ■

NEXT ISSUE on sale Wednesday 27 June 2018

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# Free Windows photo viewers

Windows 10's default Photos app takes an age to load your snaps, while Google's beloved Picasa is long gone. **Steve Clark** hunts for a free Windows photo viewer that brings images to life – quickly and without fuss.

## PhotoScape X | bit.ly/psx451 | ★★★★★

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

WebUser GOLD AWARD

**What we liked:**

Like puppies and ice cream, it's difficult to dislike PhotoScape X. With its uncluttered interface, complete with the now ubiquitous dark theme (see page 50), this free app perfectly fits the clean, user-friendly aesthetic that defines Windows 10.

The left-hand side of the screen displays a full folder path, along with options to view Favorites, or you can have them share the screen by choosing to view both. This means you'll never spend too long rifling through folders to find what you need.

Once you open an image, you'll notice just how whippet-quick PhotoScape X is. This is a lightweight app that won't devour your PC's resources. Selecting your image opens the dedicated Viewer, a no-fuss mode featuring simple arrows to scroll, alongside a split-screen mode to view multiple photos at once.

Exploring beyond the Viewer reveals a raft of tools – from the delightful collage creator to effects typically associated with Photoshop knock-offs. If you want to make images look antique or add more lens flare than a JJ Abrams movie, PhotoScape X superimposes such effects at the click of a button.

One of our favourite novelties is the Create GIF option, which lets you load multiple images into the app to create frame-based moving images ready to share on social-media sites. PhotoScape X may be free but it produces impressively professional-looking results.

As if this wasn't already enough, PhotoScape X features a useful toolkit packed with a screen-grabber, colour picker and image converter. For the privacy-conscious user, there's even an option to junk all the metadata stashed within your images.

**How it can be improved:**

We're impressed by PhotoScape X's speed and functionality, but certain fiddly features still niggle. We experienced noticeable lag when we hit Print, and switching from Viewer to Editor requires you to load a new image, rather than carry your current image over. While it's not ungenerous with its editing tools, many are locked behind PhotoScape X's paywall and we'd like a few more to be available for free.

**OUR VERDICT**

**PhotoScape X does what most photo viewers do, only better. It's fast, practical and mostly intuitive. We hope Microsoft's developers are taking notes!**

## FastStone Image Viewer | bit.ly/fstone451 | ★★★★☆

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

WebUser SILVER AWARD

**What we liked:**

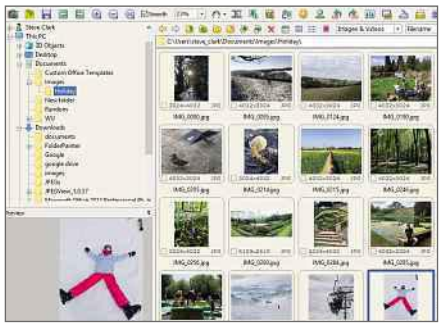
FastStone Image Viewer is what Windows Photos should be, if it had some ambition. Open an image and it immediately jumps to full-screen mode. This keeps the focus fully on your photos and, to further reduce on-screen clutter, a hidden menu bar that lets you navigate to other tools can be pulled down when you hover your mouse at the top of the screen.

FastStone's editing tools are more extensive than most, but not by much: cropping, resizing and removing red-eye come as standard, and it can also overlay images with some rather unconvincing textures and add old-school frames and borders.

Experiment for long enough and you'll stumble on a tutorial text box that explains how to use the tools. It's a nice touch that makes FastStone both powerful and user-friendly.

**How it can be improved:**

While FastStone adheres to a familiar Windows layout, there's a dizzying array



of unfamiliar icons cluttering the top of the screen. It looks more like a full-on photo editor than a simple viewer, despite being fairly limited in that department, which makes it feel unnecessarily complicated.

**OUR VERDICT**

**Overall, because of its half-hearted editing tools, FastStone is best described as 'okay'. However, used as an image viewer, it's perfect. Also, unlike some of the other software in this test, you can set it as your default via the Windows settings.**

## Nomacs | bit.ly/nomacs451 | ★★★★☆

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

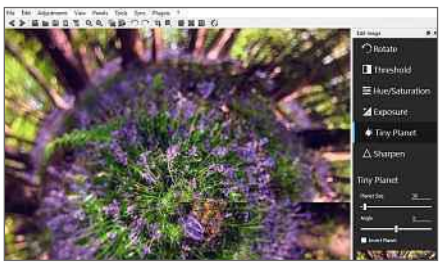
WebUser BRONZE AWARD

**What we liked:**

Nomacs is nowhere near as powerful as it first seems, and navigating its core features leaves you wondering whether you've missed something. You haven't – the editing tools are that basic. But as a photo viewer, it delivers. It's not the quickest (especially compared to PhotoScape X), but opening and scrolling through your photo albums is generally hassle-free.

By right-clicking your image and selecting Panels, you get extra info about your pictures, including metadata, file info and histograms. The latter includes one of Nomacs' best tools – Image Notes – which, as its name suggests, lets you add notes to any image. When saved, these remain in place – but only when you open the image in Nomacs, and only when you choose to see the Image Notes again.

If you like keyboard shortcuts, you'll find plenty to play with here. That's a major plus, because many photo viewers don't respond to even basic shortcuts,




such as opening an image with CTRL+O.

**How it can be improved:**

If only Nomacs had more features. Sure, it's got all the basics but to seriously compete with Gold Award-winning PhotoScape X, we'd need (and love) to see some extras under the hood along with a tad more horsepower.

**OUR VERDICT**

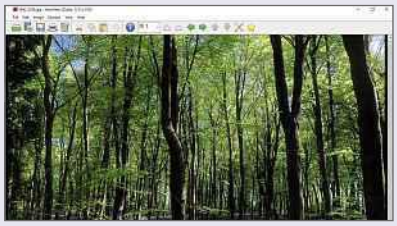
**Easily one of the more effortless photo viewers out there, Nomacs is lightweight and stable. Don't forget to check out the fun Tiny Planet option, which wraps your images into spherical planetoids.**

## BEST OF THE REST

### IrfanView

bit.ly/irfan451

Looking a little creaky now, IrfanView has been shuffling around the internet for 21 years, quietly carving out a name for itself as a reliable image-viewing tool. To get the most out of it, you have to download plugins from the official site. Also, you can't easily set it as your default photo viewer in Windows 10's Default Apps – you have to use the 'Set defaults by app' Windows setting instead.



### QuickViewer

bit.ly/qv451

QuickViewer is like a version of IrfanView built for total beginners. The app's VCR-style buttons on the menu bar let you seamlessly navigate through all the images in a folder, or even 'fast-forward' to the next sub-folder on the list. Editing tools are basic but that's not the purpose of QuickViewer, anyway – the clue's in the name!

### ImageGlass

bit.ly/iglass451

ImageGlass is a speedy little photo viewer with a simple layout that handily places all the tools you need on the menu bar. Our favourite trick is to right-click an image and select 'Edit image' to open the much-loved Windows image editor, Microsoft Paint. Like IrfanView, you can't set this as the default photo viewer.

# Get money for nothing online

The web can be a real money-spinner, if you know where to look. **Steve Clark** reveals the best ways to earn free credit, gift cards and even hard cash online

## GET REWARDED FOR HELPING OUT

### JOB SPOTTER

Available for both Android (bit.ly/jsdroid451) and iOS (bit.ly/jsios451), job-search site Indeed's Job Spotter app lets you submit photos of 'staff wanted' ads in shop windows. Take a snap of the ad and the storefront, click Submit and, once approved, you'll get anything from 10 to 150 points to put towards Amazon gift cards. Points can also be earned for verifying other users' submissions.

**Typical earnings:** £30 a month

**Increase what you earn:** Visit busy locations, such as tourist hotspots, where staff-wanted ads are plentiful.

*Get paid to help others get paid by sharing wanted ads with Indeed*

### YOU SPOT PROPERTY

With You Spot Property (youspotproperty.com), you could help solve the nation's housing crisis by tracking down empty properties that the site can buy, redevelop and sell. Your reward is a £20 Amazon or Marks & Spencer gift card, plus 1% of the purchase price when the place is bought. You Spot Property even doles out £500 to a local charity with each purchase.

**Typical earnings:** £40 a month

**Increase what you earn:** The criteria is very specific, so your property has to perfectly fit the bill to earn that golden 1% of the purchase price.

*You Spot Property puts a new spin on the term 'household budget'*

### ROAMLER

Roamler (www.roamler.com) pays you to visit stores and photograph products so companies can see how they're presented *in situ*. One caveat: you need an invitation code from Roamler's social-media pages to join the scheme, and these are currently like gold dust or unicorns – only rarer.

**Typical earnings:** £15 a month

**Increase what you earn:** As well as retail audits, Roamler promotes delivery and installation jobs, tailoring work to your skills and interests.

*If you're a sneaky shopper, Roamler is the app for you*

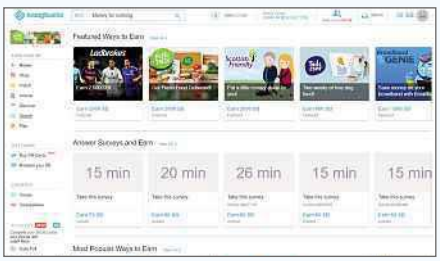
## EARN CASH REWARDS BY SEARCHING

### SWAGBUCKS

Swagbucks (www.swagbucks.com) is the most popular 'free money' site out there – and by using the site's Google-and-Bing-powered search engine as your default, you can earn yourself Swagbucks points that can be redeemed for cash via PayPal or for Amazon vouchers (which these days is the next best thing to cash). As well as earning points, you can snag prizes by searching with Swagbucks and by completing surveys.

**Typical earnings:** £15 a month

**Increase what you earn:** The Daily Search on Swagbucks' homepage lets you load a random search, then pays you points when you click a link.




*It's easy to earn money and vouchers with Swagbucks by using its search engine*

### QMEE

To get started with Qmee (www.qmee.com), install the Chrome extension (bit.ly/qchrome451) and visit your search engine of choice – it works with Google, Bing, Yahoo and even Amazon. Whenever Qmee has a relevant advert for your search query, a sidebar pops out – just click one of the ads to earn some easy moolah. Money is deposited directly into your PayPal account, and you can also select iTunes,

*You won't earn money for every search with Qmee – only relevant ones*

Amazon and Starbucks gift cards.
**Typical earnings:** £10 a month
**Increase what you earn:** Qmee knows when you're second-guessing results, so don't try to game the system!

## MICROSOFT REWARDS

If you use Bing or Edge, Microsoft Rewards (rewards.microsoft.com) is a great way to line your pockets with points for gift cards, gaming subscriptions and sweepstake entries to win high-end computing products. As a cross-platform offer, you earn five points per Bing search on desktop, mobile and even Xbox. And to keep you focused, you can set savings goals, which also get you freebie points.
**Typical earnings:** £3 a month
**Increase what you earn:** Check for daily quizzes and random searches that will net you between 10 and 30 points each.

*Earn rewards for searching, playing and buying from Microsoft*

## MAKE MONEY FROM YOUR OPINIONS

### YOUGOV

Monitoring the nation's mood, YouGov (www.yougov.co.uk) courts public opinion on topics ranging from political hot potatoes to celebrity non-entities, and features multiple quiz and survey types, so you won't get bored while picking up points. Surveys are sent to participants matching specific demographic profiles, so the frequency – and therefore payment – varies. You'll also need to save 5,000 points before you can cash-out and get your paws on that £50.
**Typical earnings:** £5 a month
**Increase what you earn:** You can refer friends for extra points but beyond that, your only hope is that you fit the demographic YouGov needs for a particular survey or quiz.

*Now you have an excuse not to keep your opinions to yourself*

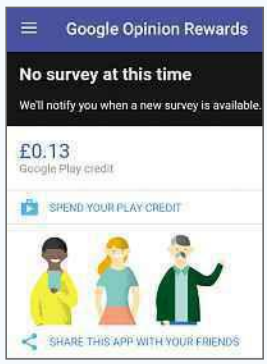
### TOLUNA

Like YouGov, Toluna (www.toluna.com) is a pollster that wants to hear your thoughts. Complete surveys, play games and vent about brands to rack up points that can be traded for gifts, gadgets and Amazon, Gap, Argos, iTunes and PayPal credit. Most surveys are created by market research teams, so they can be a bit dry, but if you're willing to slog through the long ones, you'll earn more.
**Typical earnings:** £5 a month
**Increase what you earn:** Complete the quick profile quizzes, as well as big surveys, and you'll earn 100 points apiece for about 30 seconds work.

*The questions aren't always interesting, but your online wallet will thank you*

### GOOGLE OPINION REWARDS

If you don't feel you've given Google enough of your data, you can send it even more via the Google Opinion Rewards app (bit.ly/rewards451). Surveys are quick to complete – no more than 30 seconds – but make sure you always read the answers before clicking: Google occasionally tosses out fake surveys, then bans those who cheat. There's no cash on offer, but you will receive Google Play credit.
**Typical earnings:** £2 a month
**Increase what you earn:** Make sure you permit survey notifications, and respond to any survey quickly to qualify for more.




*Google will eventually know you better than your family and friends*

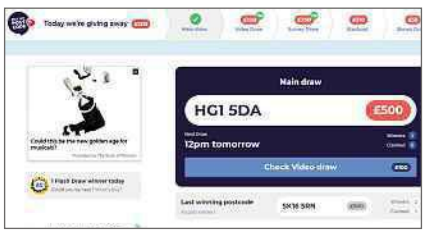
## STOP EARNING, START WINNING

**If you'd rather rely on pot luck than hard graft, these apps and sites are guaranteed winners – even if you're not!**

**Pick My Postcode (www.pickmypostcode.com) is a daily lottery funded by the adverts that appear on the site. You won't win millions, but it is free to enter and you can scoop £500 just by submitting your postcode.**

**HQ Trivia (bit.ly/hqtriv451) and SwagIQ (www.playswagiq.com) are two insanely addictive live trivia shows that have you competing against thousands of other people, answering increasingly difficult questions to win big bucks. See last issue's FAQ for more on HQ Trivia.**

**Nielsen (bit.ly/panel451) aims to "drive the future of the internet". Simply sign up, join the panel and install the research meter on your computer, and you'll be entered into monthly, quarterly and annual prize draws that top £30,000.**




*Boost your chances of winning: relocate to a different postcode area every day?*

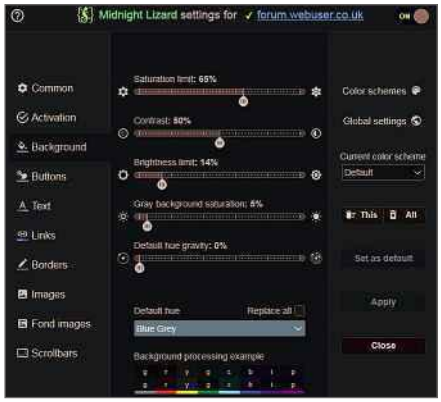
# Protect your eyes using NIGHT MODE

The glare from your screen can strain your eyes and give you headaches, especially at night. **Robert Irvine** reveals how to apply a dark theme to your PC and phone

## CHROME & FIREFOX

There are lots of Chrome extensions that apply a night mode to every website you visit, but most merely invert the page colours so that white becomes black and vice versa. Midnight Lizard (bit.ly/midnight451) adopts a more sophisticated approach, inverting the brightness while retaining most colours, and making text much easier to read. Links are rendered a restful shade of blue, and you can customise how individual elements – such as images and backgrounds – are displayed on each site you visit. The add-on can be easily toggled on or off, and scheduled to turn on automatically between certain times of day or night.

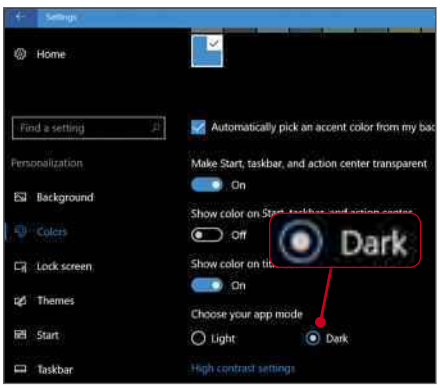
Midnight Lizard is also available for Firefox (bit.ly/midnightfire451), along with many similar – if not as versatile – night-mode extensions. We particularly like Dark Theme for Google (bit.ly/dark451), which changes the white background to black on Google services including Search, Images and Translate, making the text grey and links blue.




*Midnight Lizard lets you create and save custom dark themes for different sites*

## WINDOWS 10

Windows 10 comes with a dark theme that changes certain elements of the operating system – including the Start menu, settings and apps – to make them easier on the eye. To switch to dark mode, click Start, Settings, choose Personalisation and click the Colours option on the left. Scroll to the bottom and you'll see an entry that says




*Turn on Windows 10's dark mode to change the colour of apps and other elements*

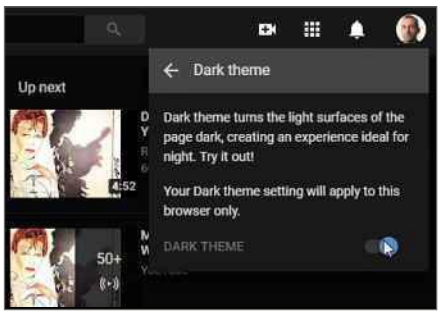
'Choose your app mode'. Change this from Light to Dark, then turn off the options 'Make Start, taskbar and action centre transparent', 'Show colour on Start, taskbar and action centre' and 'Show colour on title bar'.

This change isn't universal so it's not applied to every program and feature in Windows. To activate dark mode in Windows 10's Edge browser, click the menu button in the top-right corner, select Settings and choose Dark from the 'Choose a theme' menu. Microsoft Office 2016 also has a dark theme – in Word or Excel, go to File, Options, General and, in the 'Personalize your copy of Microsoft Office' section, set the Office Theme to Black.

Microsoft is set to add a dark mode to File Explorer in a forthcoming release of Windows 10. In the meantime, you can make Explorer and other desktop tools dark by going to Settings, 'Ease of Access', Colour & High Contrast. Scroll down to the High Contrast section and choose High Contrast Black from the 'Choose a Theme' menu.

## YOUTUBE

When you're watching YouTube at night, the glare of its white background can take its toll on your eyes and distract you from the video you're viewing. To make things easier on your peepers and create a more cinema-like experience, you can transform the white into black by applying the site's new dark theme. On the YouTube website or in the iOS app, click or tap your profile image in the top-right corner, select 'Dark theme' and set the slider to 'on'. Annoyingly, the feature isn't yet available for Android.



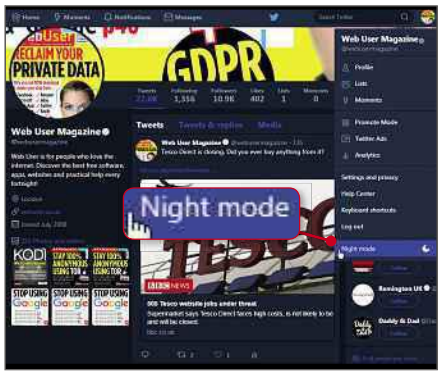

*YouTube now makes it easy to switch to its dark theme on its website and iOS app*

## TWITTER

Twitter offers a built-in night mode to protect your eyes if you often find yourself tweeting into the early hours. You can switch to this on the Twitter website by clicking your profile image in the top-right corner and choosing 'Night mode' from the menu. The interface will instantly change to a darker, bluer version that arguably looks better than Twitter's standard design.

Similarly, in the Twitter mobile app, tap your profile picture and choose 'Dark mode' or press the moon icon. Twitter for Android has a handy 'Automatic at Sunset' option that turns on night mode automatically at sunset and turns it off again at sunrise.

Twitter has also just added night mode to its Progressive Web App for Windows 10 (bit.ly/twitter451).




*Twitter's night mode makes the social network much easier on your eyes*

## IOS

Apple added a night mode to iPhones and iPads in iOS 9.3. Night Shift is designed to reduce the amount of blue light your screen emits at night because too much blue light before sleep, it is claimed, can mess with your sleep patterns.

The feature uses your device's clock and geolocation to work out the sunrise and sunset times where you are, turning your screen gradually 'warmer' as the evening wears on. It's very easy to turn it on and off: simply swipe up from the bottom edge of the screen to access the iOS Control Center and tap the shortcut button at the bottom of the screen that looks like a moon imposed on a sun.

*Apple's Night Shift helps you sleep better by making your screen warmer*

## ANDROID

Similar to Night Shift on iOS, the latest version of Android, Oreo, introduces a Night Light mode (in Settings, Display) that filters blue light from your screen at night to protect your eyes and help you sleep better. The feature is also built into Google Pixel phones, while other manufacturers offer a similar option; for example, on Motorola phones, open the Moto app, choose Moto Display and turn on Night Display to reduce blue light after dark.

*Twilight reduces the light intensity of your Android device as night draws in*

If you can't see a night-mode setting on your Android phone or tablet, there are several free apps that add one. Twilight (bit.ly/twilight451) adapts your screen to the time of day by reducing the amount of blue light it emits and applying a soft red filter. The light intensity adjusts according to your sunset and sunrise times, so you can read your Android device in bed without harming your peepers.

## PAINT.NET

Editing images involves closely scrutinising your screen's display, which won't do your eyes any favours. Popular image editor Paint.NET has added dark-theme support, as of version 4.0.20, released in January. If you're using Windows 10, Paint.NET will automatically switch from Light to Dark when the latter option is selected in your Personalisation, Colour settings (see earlier tip). In Windows 7, it will only work with Aero, not Classic.

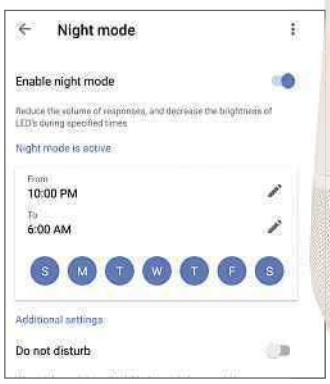
Coincidentally, rival image editor GIMP was recently redesigned and now has a dark theme by default. ■

*No more sore eyes when editing images thanks to Paint.net's new dark theme*

## KEEP GOOGLE HOME QUIET AT NIGHT

**If you want to use your Google Home in the wee hours without disturbing the neighbours or annoying your family, you can use its clever night mode to keep the noise down. This lowers the volume of the smart speaker's devices between specific times and on certain days of the week (you can let rip at the weekend!). To activate the feature, open the Google Home app on your phone or tablet, tap Devices and find the relevant speaker. In the top-right corner of the device card, press More, then Settings and switch Night Mode to On. You can then set a schedule for when you want the mode to kick in.**

**The Google Home's night mode also dims the LED lights on the device and has a 'do not disturb' function that turns off notifications but not alarms.**



# Manage and monitor your PCs from anywhere using Syspectr

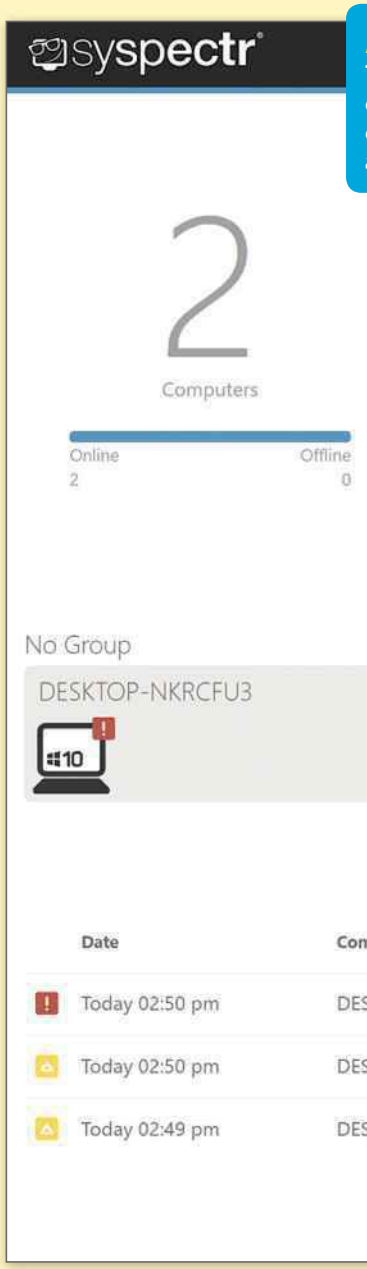
Syspectr lets you keep track of what's happening on all your PCs. Here's what you need to know

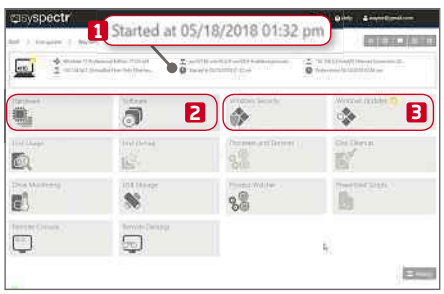
**Syspectr: www.syspectr.com | 20 mins | Vista, 7, 8, 10**

**Keeping one PC running smoothly can be tricky enough, but managing several PCs on a network can become a full-time job. O&O Syspectr lets you monitor and manage all your PCs in one place, over the web. It used to be a commercial tool – priced at €1 (around 90p) a month per PC – but it's now entirely free and lets you check your computer's drive health, identify unauthorised access, automatically update and install software, remotely shut down, and more. It can even inform you when new programs have been installed on a connected PC, which is great if you want to know what your kids or anyone else is installing. You can monitor your computers on your mobile devices, too.**

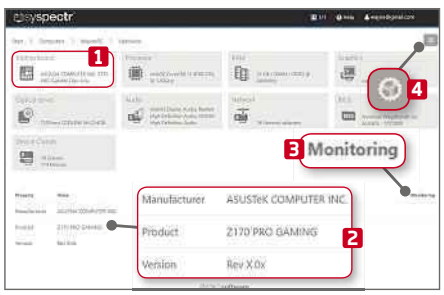
**1** Enter your email address, create a password, then download and install the software, linking it to your account. Syspectr opens in your browser and the PC you're using is added automatically. It displays the number of PCs being monitored 1 and any events or problems. 2 Click the computer icon. 3

**2** If there's a problem with your PC, you can view it here. In this instance, there's an optional update available through Windows Update. 1 Address any problems, then tick the circle on the right 2 and choose to either mark the message as read 3 or resolved. 4 Click the computer's name. 5

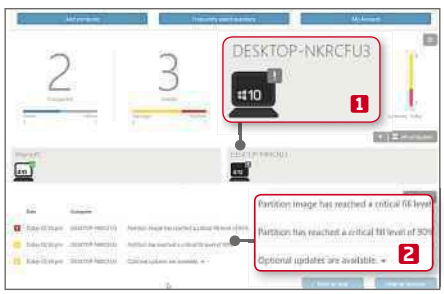


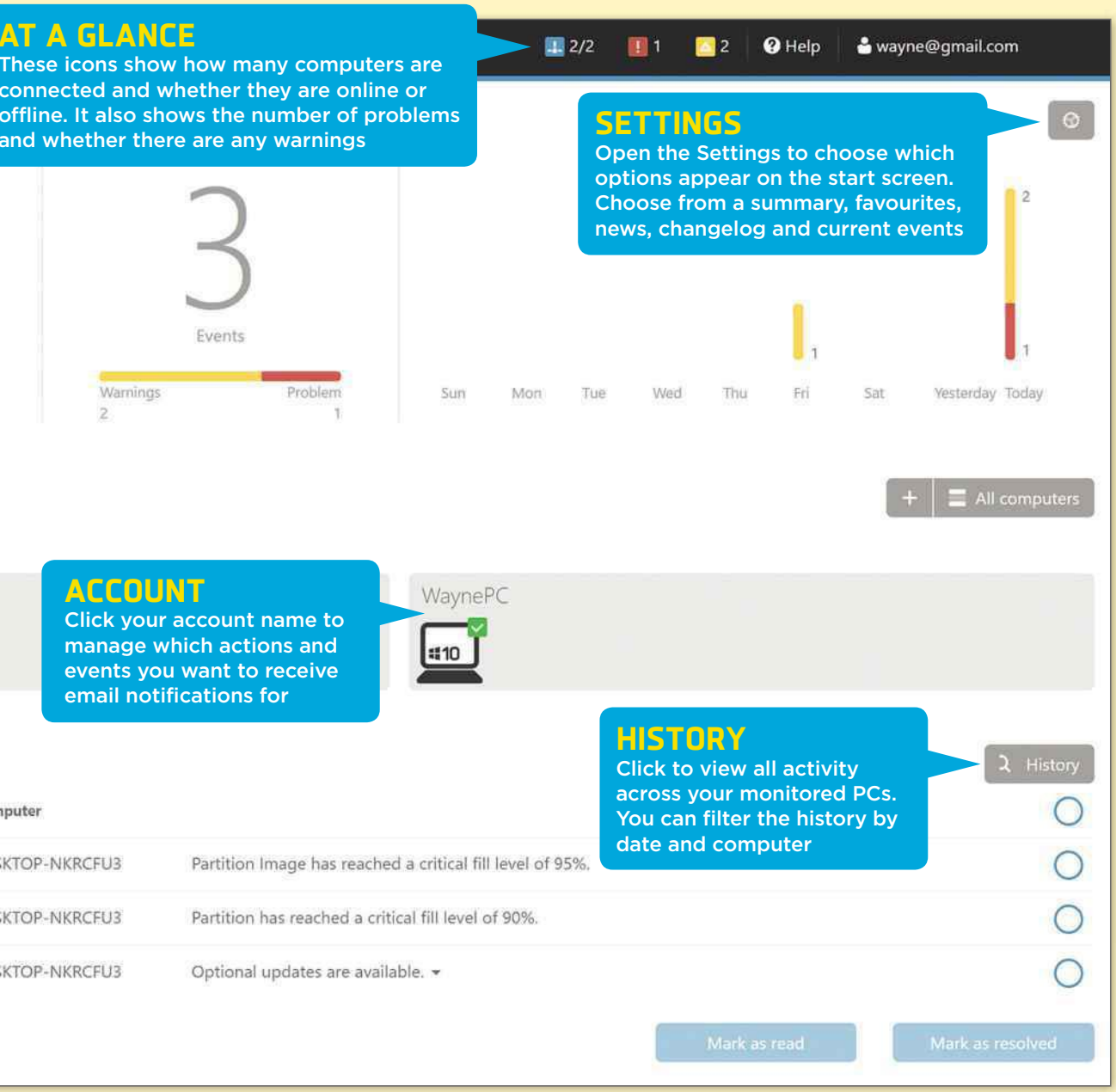

**3** This screen provides information about your PC, including the operating system it's running, when it started up 1 and more. The tiles below provide access to a range of informative pages from lists of the hardware and software you have installed, 2 to the status of your security and updates. 3

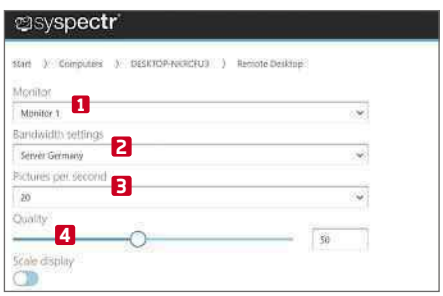



**4** Click the Hardware tile to reveal another screen showing more tiles with information about the motherboard, 1 processor, memory and so on. Clicking any tile will display details for it 2 and show you if it's being monitored or not. 3 Click the settings cog 4 to turn the monitoring on or off.




**5** Add another computer to your setup at any time. Log in with your details on the second PC and download and run the installer. The new PC will appear, 1 along with any warnings and problems you need to resolve. 2 If any monitored computer is offline, it will appear greyed-out.



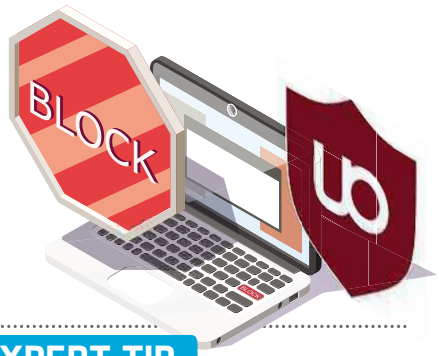




**6** To remotely access a PC, select it and click Remote Desktop. If there's more than one screen on the target PC, you can choose which display you want to view. 1 You can also select the server, 2 the number of pictures per second 3 and the quality of the image. 4

**7** Wait a few seconds while the connection with the remote computer is established. You need to grant permission on the other PC for its display to appear. You can then interact with it as if you were using it for real. 1 The View button lets you scale the display, switch to high quality and change the monitor. 2

**8** You can switch to a full-screen view. 1 The Actions button 2 lets you send a Ctrl+Alt+Del command to the remote computer, show a virtual keyboard, 3 send a Windows key command, lock the computer or log off that user. When you've finished, click the button to end the remote connection. 4

# The ad blocker that doesn't hog your PC's resources




**uBlock Origin: bit.ly/ubo451** | 10 mins | Chrome Firefox

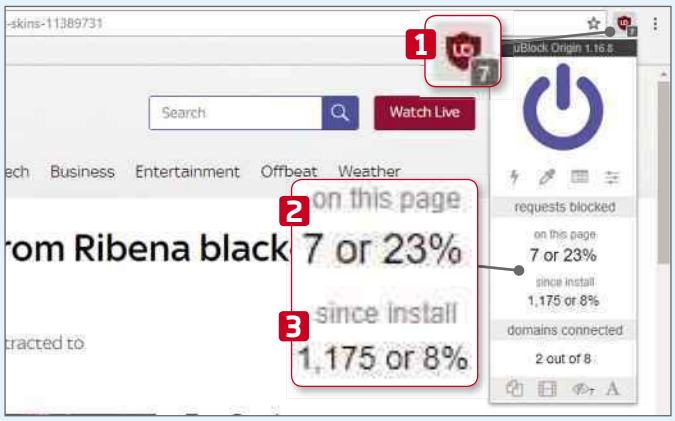
**Browser add-ons that block adverts and stop commercial services following you around the web are now so common that it's tough to choose between them. There are several reasons to pick uBlock Origin: it has a five-star Chrome Web Store rating, voted for by nearly 19,000 users, and we regularly hear our own readers singing its praises; it's open source, so there are no nasties lurking in its code; and it doesn't harbour a hidden agenda, unlike some blockers that filter online ads for free while encouraging advertisers to pay to bypass the blocks.**

**Best of all, uBlock Origin is a lightweight extension that uses minimal memory, but is powerful enough to block everything we threw at it.**

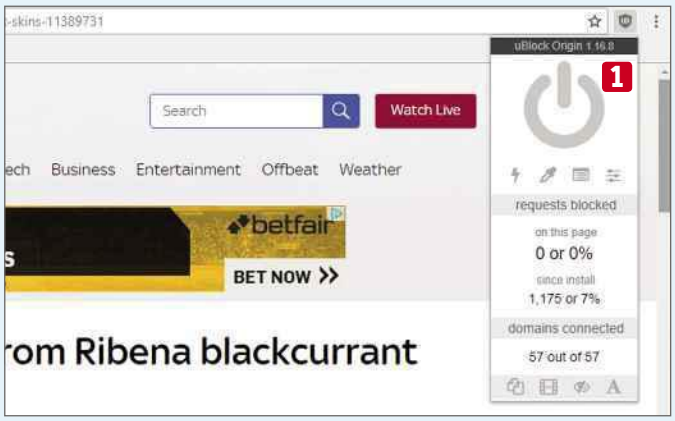
## EXPERT TIP

### Andy Shaw says

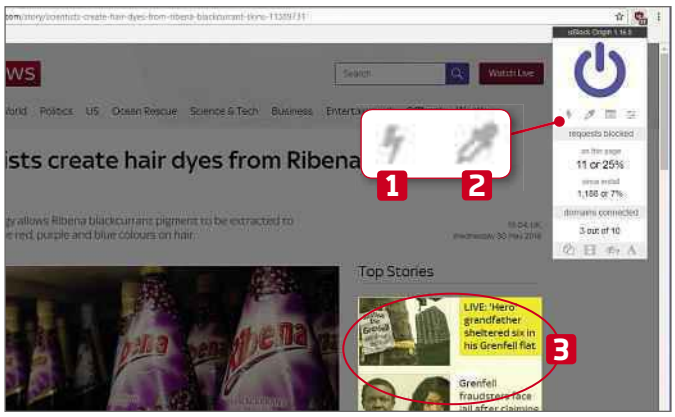
uBlock Origin's advanced settings are switched off by default because they could inadvertently block things you don't want blocked. If you're feeling brave, you can switch them on, but check out the instructions at bit.ly/ubad451 and read them carefully. The advanced options give you access to dynamic filtering, which lets you easily create your own filters to block specific elements across all websites.



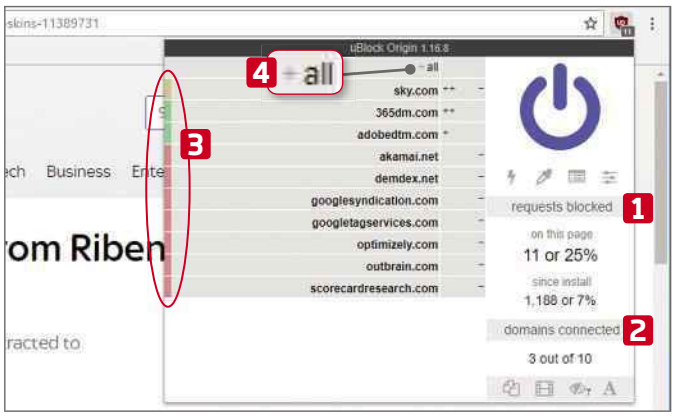

**1** Click uBlock Origin's toolbar button 1 to open a panel that shows the number of requests that have been blocked on a particular page, and what percentage of the total requests made by the page this represents. 2 You can also see the number and percentage of blocks that have been performed since the tool was installed. 3



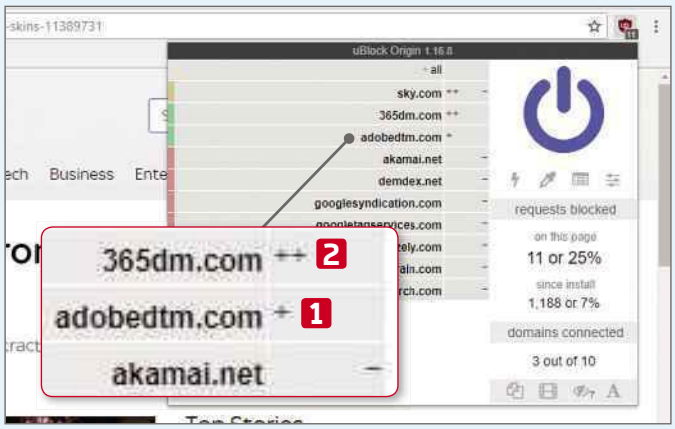

**2** Click the big power-switch icon 1 to stop blocking on the site you are visiting. This stops any blocking across the entire site. If you only want to unblock items on a particular page, hold down Ctrl while you click. Your settings will be remembered on subsequent visits.



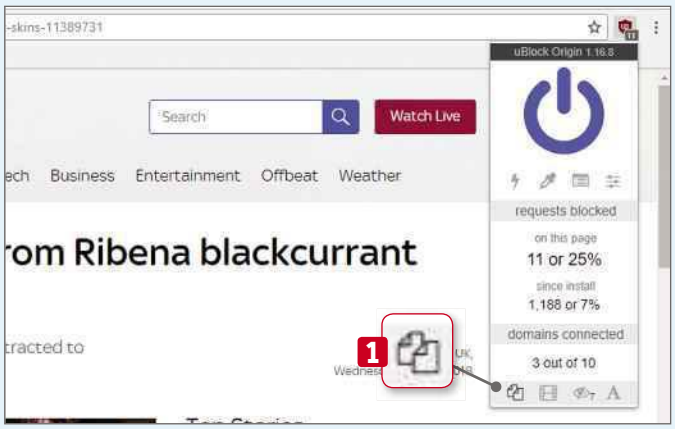

**3** If there are specific elements on the page that you want to remove, you can use the 'zapper' 1 or 'picker' 2 tools. The 'zapper' temporarily removes something, while the 'picker' creates a permanent rule. Hover over the element with either tool, then click the item you want to remove when it is highlighted. 3



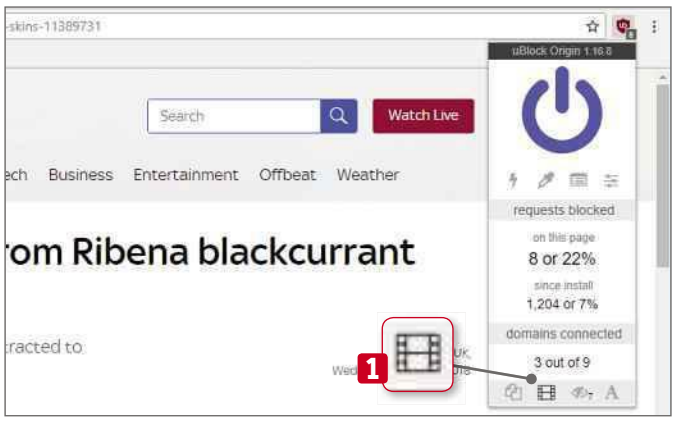

**4** Click 'requests blocked' 1 or 'domains connected' 2 to see a pop-out list of the root domains that have been analysed. Green indicates domains that have been allowed, while red shows those that have been blocked. 3 An amber domain means elements have been both blocked and allowed. Click '+all' 4 to show a breakdown of what they are.



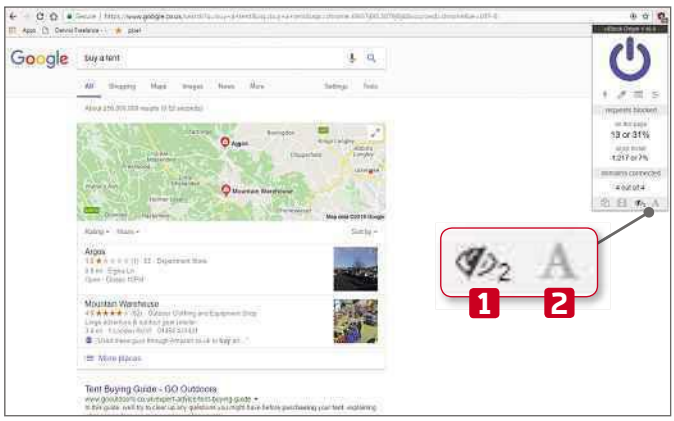

5 The plus and minus symbols give an indication of how often the domains are blocked: a single symbol (+ or -) 1 means it's been blocked or allowed less than 10 times; a double (++ or - -) 2 is less than 100 times; and a triple (+++ or - - -) is more than 100 times.



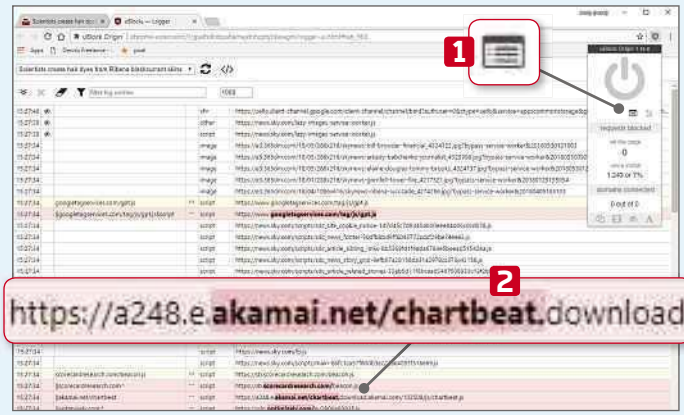

6 The tools across the bottom of the panel work on a 'per site' basis. The pop-up blocker 1 stops all pop-ups on a site, even those that would get through the standard filtering process. This could block pop-up adverts, for example, that are currently slipping past the included filters.



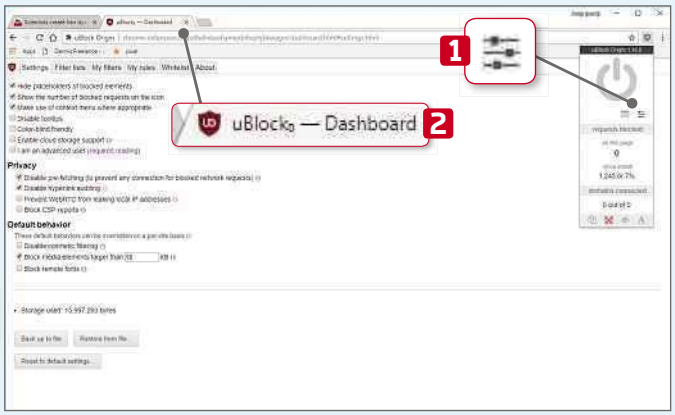

7 If you want to save bandwidth on a site that often has large media files (Facebook and other social-networking sites spring to mind), click the 'large media elements' button. 1 This stops large videos and similar from loading in the first place, but should still let smaller elements such as images through.




8 Cosmetic filtering 1 is switched on by default but you can show what it's hiding by clicking the icon. Examples of this are the adverts you see at the top of Google pages, that look like regular Google links except for the small 'Ad' box next to the web address. You can also stop external fonts from loading with the 'block remote fonts' button. 2




9 For more information on what's been blocked, click the 'logger' icon 1 to open the log file in its own tab. This shows everything that the software has picked up. If you see a site highlighted, 2 you can click it and find out which filter the software used to block the element, which could be useful if you want to allow certain elements through.




10 Clicking the sliders icon 1 opens the settings dashboard. 2 It would take a whole workshop to explain its many options, but here's one example: to make the large-media block from Step 7 operate across all sites for a session, perhaps because you're on limited bandwidth, tick the box next to 'Block media elements larger than'.

# Sync bookmarks across browsers and devices

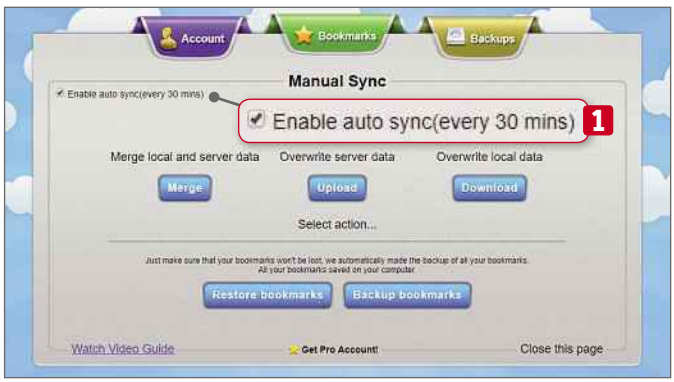
Xmarks was once the best way to sync bookmarks across browsers and devices, but its owner LastPass has shut it down. If you still want to sync your bookmarks on whatever browser you're using, give EverSync a try instead. The free version syncs 15,000 bookmarks so you won't need to upgrade to the full version ($4.99 per month – around £3.75) unless you've got a serious bookmarking addiction.

**EverSync: bit.ly/es451 | 10 mins | Chrome Firefox Android iOS**

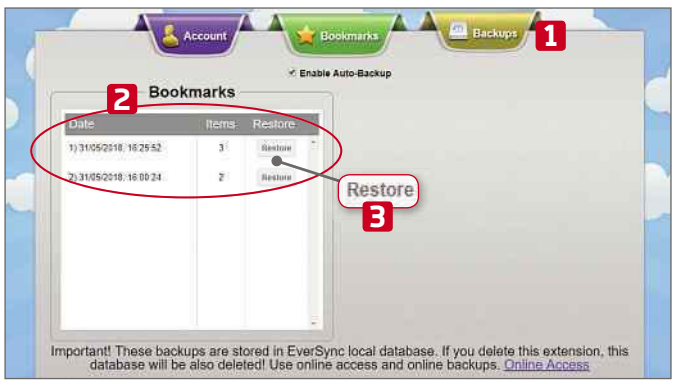
1 Install the EverSync add-on in any browser you want to sync bookmarks across. You'll find the Chrome add-on at bit.ly/esc451 and the Firefox version at bit.ly/esff451. There are also Android and iOS apps. In a browser on your PC, click the icon in the toolbar 1 to register and sign in. 2

2 When you open the tool in a second browser, you can choose how to sync automatically with the bookmarks synced in your first browser. The obvious choice is to Merge 1 the bookmarks in your current browser with those on the server, so any new ones are added to the overall collection.

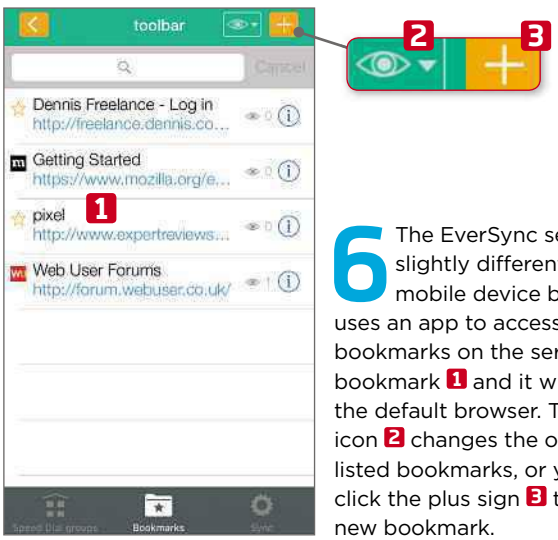
3 Alternatively, you can Upload 1 the bookmarks in this browser to overwrite any bookmarks stored on the server; or Download 2 the server data to overwrite the bookmarks that are currently stored in this browser.




4 The software will be set to auto-sync in the first browser but may not be set in the others. If you want all your bookmarks to sync with all your browsers, tick the box next to 'Enable auto sync (every 30 mins)'. 1




5 To add a new bookmark to all your browsers, bookmark it in a browser as normal. You can see how many you've got saved by clicking the Backups tab, 1 which shows all the backups you've made. 2 If something has gone wrong, you can click the Restore button to bring back a previous version. 3

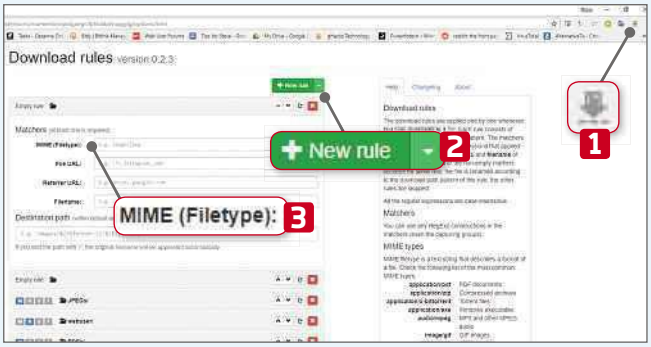



6 The EverSync service is slightly different on a mobile device because it uses an app to access the bookmarks on the server. Tap a bookmark 1 and it will open in the default browser. The eye icon 2 changes the order of the listed bookmarks, or you can click the plus sign 3 to add a new bookmark.

# Organise the Downloads folder automatically

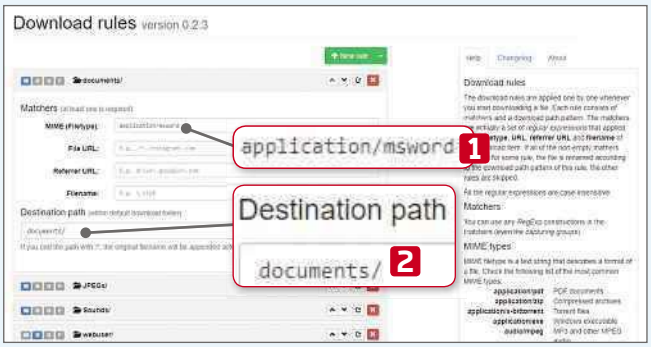
The RegExp Download Organizer extension for Chrome lets you create rules to download particular file types to specific folders, rather than just sending them all to the Downloads folder. This is particularly useful because the Downloads folder has a nasty habit of filling up with half-forgotten documents, images and EXE files, which makes it difficult to quickly find what you're looking for.

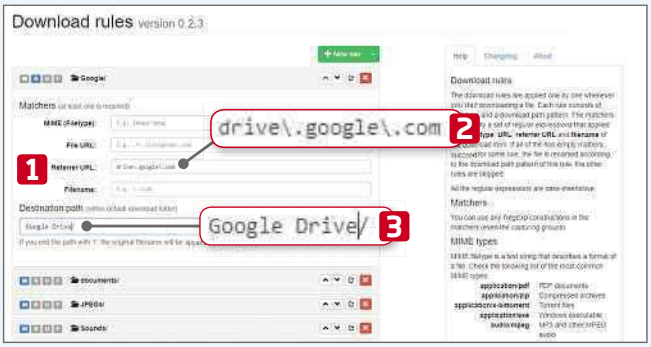
**RegExp Download Organizer: bit.ly/regexp451** | **10 mins** | **Chrome** **Firefox**



**1** Once installed, click the RegExp Download Organizer icon in the top-right corner **1** and select Options. The tool comes with preset default rules for images and torrents. Click 'New rule', **2** and you're presented with four 'Matchers' – from file type to URL – that determine how your rule works. Click inside the box next to 'MIME (Filetype)'. **3**

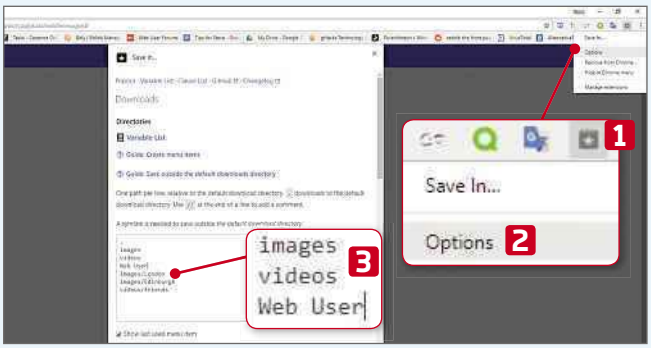
**2** There are two ways to create rules based on file types. The first is to use wildcards. Type the file type followed by `/.*`, for example – `audio/.*`. **1** Name the 'Destination path' `Sounds/`, remembering to include the slash. **2** This ensures the browser saves all audio files to a Sounds folder within your default Downloads folder.




**3** You can also create specific rules for individual file types by entering the MIME file-type format. Visit bit.ly/mimetype451 for a full list. For example, type `application/msword` **1** to direct all Word docs to your chosen folder; `images/jpeg` to send all JPEGs to a folder; and so on. Define your 'Destination path' **2** and press Enter.

**4** To redirect files from specific URLs, click Referrer URL. **1** Type `drive\.google\.com` **2** and enter your 'Destination path'. **3** Now all files you download from Google Drive will be saved here. By typing the overall site name as the Referrer URL, such as `google`, anything you download from a Google site is saved to the chosen location.



**5** Save In for Chrome (bit.ly/savein451) and Firefox (bit.ly/savefox451) is a manual alternative. Neither works well with RegExp so turn it off in chrome://extensions. Right-click the Save In icon, **1** click Options **2** and add your folder to the box under the default 'images' and 'videos' folders. **3**

**6** Navigate to your file on a web page. Right-click it, then hover over Save In **1** to see the list of available folders. **2** If you need to create a new folder on the fly, select Options and repeat Step 5. Now, click your newly created folder to save your file in it.

# Weekend Project

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

How to...

# Master your passwords on all your devices

**Wayne Williams** provides a solution to the perennial problem of how to look after your passwords across all your devices

**Tech companies have long been predicting that passwords will be replaced with better and more secure login methods, but for now they're a necessary inconvenience. Managing them can be a hassle, though, especially when you have to keep changing them because of yet another data breach or security scare. In addition, most people need their logins on multiple devices – PCs, phones, tablets and more – which makes keeping on top of everything even more difficult.**

**In this project, we look at ways to manage the chaos, freeing your passwords from your browser by using a service that keeps them safe across all your devices. Follow the advice here and you'll never have to worry about your passwords again.**

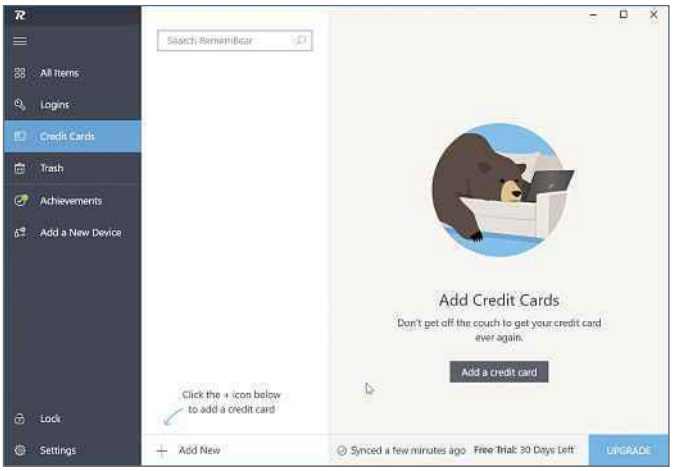
## Basic password security

Passwords, in the main, are fairly secure, but it's important to choose ones that are reasonably long, hard to guess and use numbers, symbols and both lowercase and uppercase letters. It's also important that you don't reuse the same password on different sites because if one site gets breached, the hackers will try your passwords on other sites, which can lead to your other accounts being hacked and your identity getting stolen.

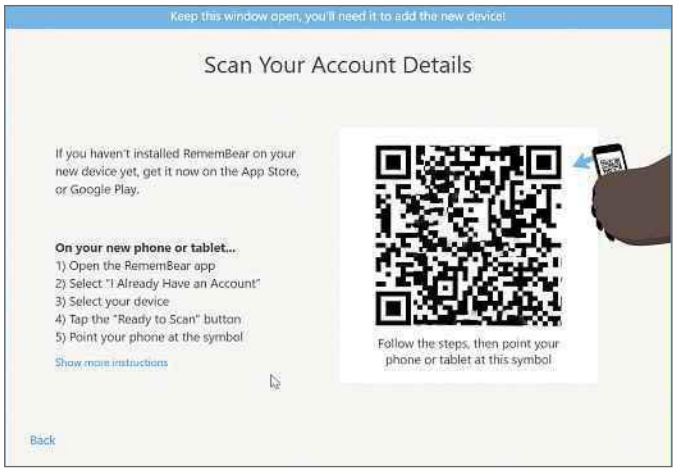
It's never a good idea to use a recognisable word as a password – it's far better to use a passphrase, running multiple words and numbers together. For example, your Spotify passphrase could be "My Favourite Song is 99 Red Balloons by Nena!", which could be shortened to "Mfsi99RBbN!". The best length for a password is a minimum of nine characters.

## Password managers

Ideally, you should have a unique username and password for every site you've signed up to on the web. The problem with this, of course, is that remembering them all will be nigh-on impossible. You could ask your browser to look after your login information, which is what many people do, but that's not especially safe, even if you lock it down with a master password. It also




*RememBear can safely store and remember your credit card details*




*If you want to add a mobile device to RememBear, install and run the app, then scan the QR code*

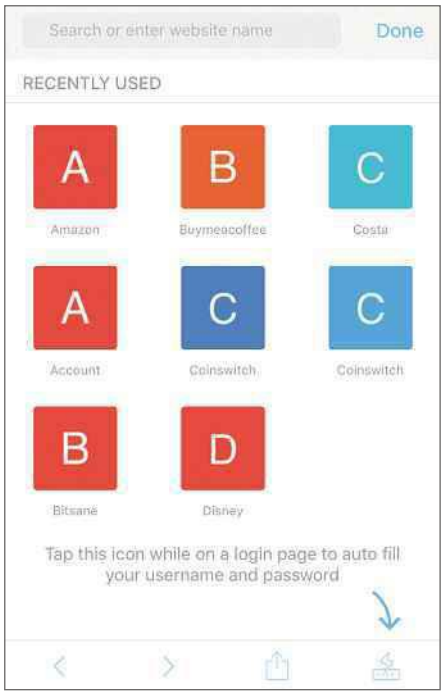
means you can't access them on other browsers on other devices.

The best solution is to use a dedicated password manager, which stores your details securely and can log you into all the sites you visit, thereby saving you time and effort. In addition to this, it can fill in forms automatically using details you've saved, store credit card information and generate (and remember) tougher passwords.

Most decent password managers are available cross-platform, so you can use them to store all your log-ins, and access them on any device, be it a Windows PC, Mac, smartphone or tablet.

There are lots of different tools to choose from. The newest is RememBear (www.remembear.com), from the company behind the popular TunnelBear VPN (now owned by security firm McAfee). It's very easy to use, includes end-to-end encryption, and is available for all the major platforms. It also provides browser extensions for Chrome, Firefox and Safari. RememBear is free to use, although upgrading to the Premium version for $36 a year (around £27) lets you sync unlimited items on unlimited devices, and backs up your passwords, too. We show you how to use it in our Mini Workshop, below.

If you prefer to stick with tried and tested solutions, then it's a toss-up between the ubiquitous LastPass (www.lastpass.com) and the open-source KeePass (keepass.info). LastPass stores your passwords securely online, and logs you into any site from anywhere on any device. It can fill forms automatically, store important personal information such as credit card details, and score and improve your password security. Saved logins are available across all your devices in both the paid-for and free editions.

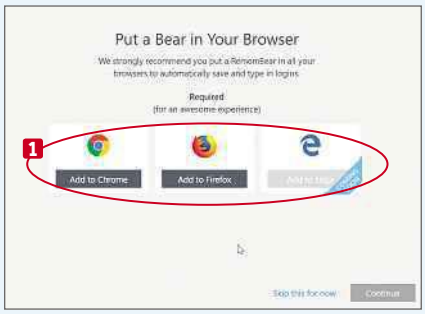



*The RememBear app comes with a 'Bear-owser' for quick access to saved sites*

## MINI WORKSHOP | Get started with RememBear

**1** Download RememBear for Windows (or Mac) and install it. Click the 'Create an Account' button, then type in your email address and a Master Password. 1 A minimum of eight characters is required. The strength of your password choice is indicated by a coloured line. 2 Accept the terms 3 and click Continue. 4

**2** Enter your Master Password again on the next screen and click Confirm. You'll now be given the option to prepare a backup kit. This provides a key you can use to regain access to RememBear if you forget the master password. You can write it down 1 or open and print a PDF of it. 2




**3** You'll now be able to import your logins from your browser or another password manager. You can skip this step if you want to start from scratch. If you choose to import from a browser, you'll be able choose which one, then select some or all logins. You can then add RememBear to your choice of browser. 1

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| | Provider | Package name | Monthly price | Contract length | Broadband speed | Allowance | First-year cost* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| 2 | sky | Sky: Broadband | £30.00 (£18.00 for 12 months) | 12 months | 17Mbps max speed | ∞ unlimited | £216.00 |
| 3 | EE | EE: Broadband | £30.00 (£21.50 for 18 months) | 18 months | 17Mbps max speed | ∞ unlimited * | £258.00 |
| 4 | Virgin media | Virgin: Broadband | £40.00 (£29.00 for 12 months) | 12 months | 50Mbps max speed | ∞ unlimited * | £348.00 |

**Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details**
* Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 31 May 2018.

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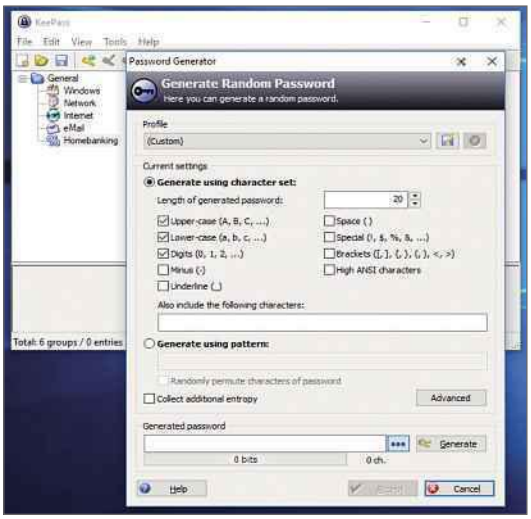
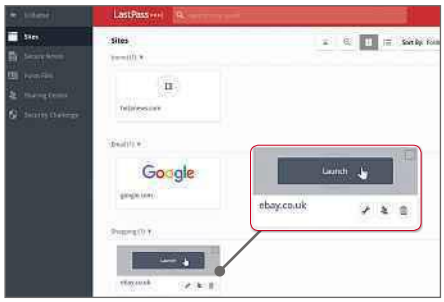



*KeePass can generate and remember super-secure passwords for you*

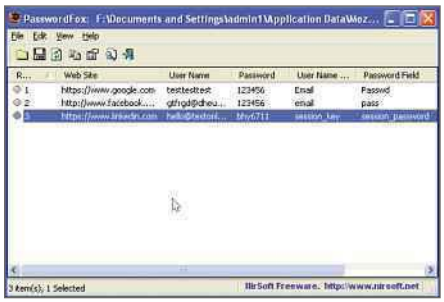
The Premium service costs $24 a year (around £18) and offers emergency access (nominated contacts can access your logins if something bad happens to you), advanced multi-factor options, LastPass for applications and 1GB of encrypted file storage. There's also a new Families version, which lets you store, organise and share passwords for everyone in your household. This costs $48 a year (around £36).

Despite its popularity, LastPass has problems importing passwords from Chrome, and can't import them from Firefox at all (see bit.ly/ffi451). You can still fill your vault with your logins by adding new sites each time as you visit them, but it's an extra hassle to be aware of. We show you how to get started with LastPass in our Mini Workshop, below.

KeePass lets you secure your online passwords and personal data using a master password, a key file or both. It's portable, so you can carry it on a USB flash drive, and it can generate super secure passwords. Because it's open source, you can be confident the program doesn't contain any hidden backdoors for hackers or governments to exploit. It's officially available for Windows and runs on a system called Mono, which makes it compatible with Linux, MacOS and BSD. There are also numerous unofficial ports for Android, iOS, Windows Phone and more.




*Click a tile in the LastPass vault to open and log into that site*




*View and export passwords stored in Firefox using PasswordFox*

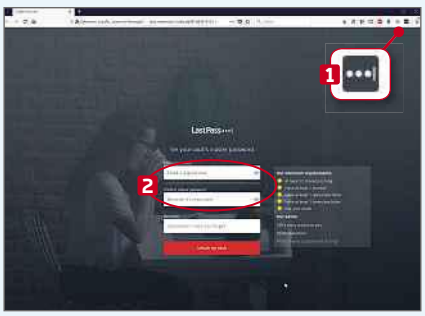
## Export your browser passwords

Most password managers import your existing logins directly from your browser, but it can be useful to export a copy for safe keeping. Google reintroduced the option to export passwords in Chrome 66. To do this, launch your browser, type `chrome://settings/passwords` into the address bar and press Enter. You can view any password by clicking the eye icon next to it, though you will need to enter your Windows username and password for security purposes.

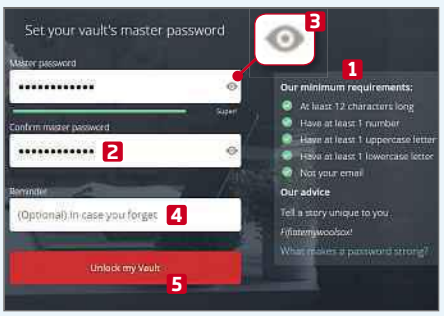
To export a copy, click the three-dot menu next to 'Saved passwords' and select 'Export passwords...' In the window that appears, click 'Export Passwords'. Enter your Windows credentials again when prompted and select a location to save the file to. Your passwords will be exported in a CSV file. Note that this file isn't encrypted – anyone will be able to read its contents simply by opening it in any spreadsheet program.

Firefox users can install Nirsoft's excellent PasswordFox (search for it at www.nirsoft.net). ■

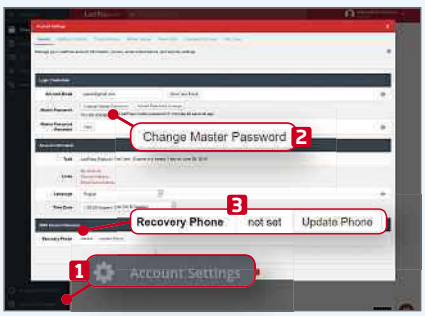
## MINI WORKSHOP | Get started with LastPass




**1** Go to www.lastpass.com in your main browser and install the add-on. Click the LastPass button 1 in the top-right corner and select 'Create an account'. Enter your email address and a master password. 2 This needs to be extremely strong because it will be used to protect all your other passwords.




**2** As you type, the checklist will show whether your master password meets the minimum requirements. 1 It needs to be at least 12 characters long. Enter the password a second time. 2 You can click the eye symbol 3 to reveal what you've typed. Add a password reminder if required 4 and click 'Unlock my Vault'. 5




**3** Your vault will now open. It will initially be empty. Click Account Settings 1 in the left-hand sidebar. From here, you can change your master password 2 and set up a recovery phone. 3 This will help you get back into LastPass should you ever forget your login details.

**NEXT ISSUE** **How To...** Clone Windows to a USB drive to use on any PC

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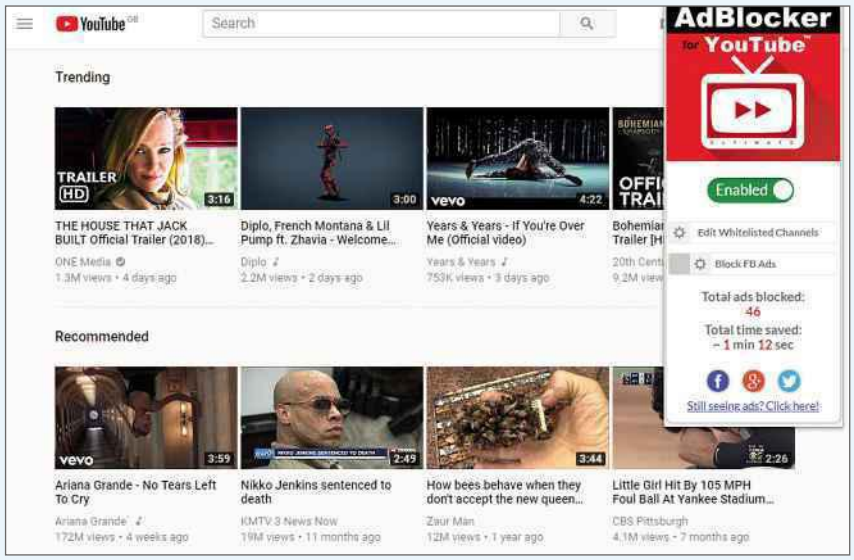
# Web User Masterclass

## Use free YouTube tools to stream your favourite music

## Block unnecessary adverts on YouTube

Putting up with occasional adverts is fine – after all, they keep the internet free – but too many can ruin your enjoyment, particularly when you're listening to music (or watching videos) on YouTube, which is why the new YouTube music service will block them. However, if you're not willing to pay for an ad-free service, there are other options.

Video Adblocker for YouTube (bit.ly/vadb451) is a Chrome add-on that removes the advert at the start of a clip, so your music starts playing immediately, without delay. It makes listening to short tracks more enjoyable and the add-on can easily be turned off to allow ads when listening to longer recordings, such as whole albums and concerts, where a short ad has less impact.

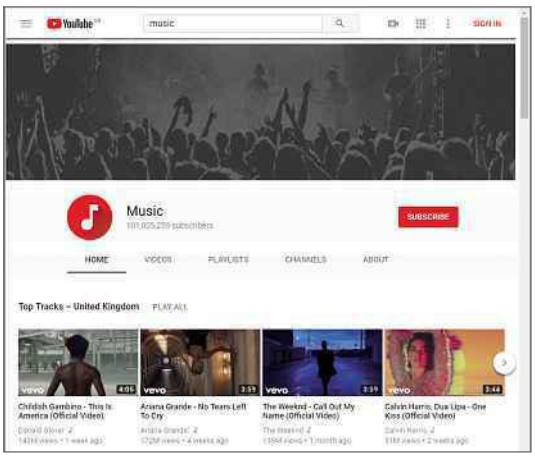



*Like YouTube Music, Video Adblocker stops the ads from spoiling your listening*

### YouTube Music for free

YouTube is sometimes difficult to navigate and while the homepage shows a wide range of videos, it may or may not show music. Even if it does, it's likely to be swamped by a lot of other videos. YouTube's paid-for music-streaming service is set to launch very soon but in the meantime, you can still subscribe to YouTube's free Music channel.

Search for 'music' and click Music in the search results, then click the Subscribe button to add a subscription to YouTube's Music topic. Its homepage is organised into sections, including categories such as Top Tracks, latest Music Videos, Hard Rock, Classic Music and so on. Click Channels in the menu bar to see the full selection of music genres and select your favourites.




*YouTube's Music topic is a free preview of its new paid-for subscription service*

**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.**

### Official artist channels

When searching for music and artists on YouTube, look in the search results for a music symbol next to the name. Only the genuine artist has this, so any music or video without it is just fan content. Artists' videos are usually high quality while fan material may vary in quality.

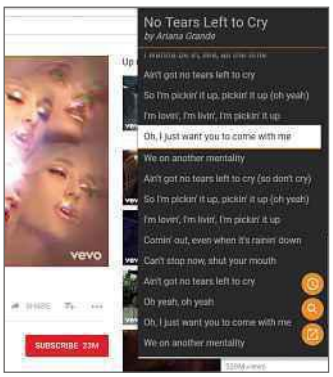
### Sing along with Edge

Do you know the lyrics to your favourite songs? Cortana does! It's a great feature when you want to sing along or just want to know the lyrics to a song. Go to YouTube in Edge in Windows 10 and select a music video. At the right-hand side of the address box there is a message from Cortana asking if you want to see the lyrics. Click it to open a panel showing the lyrics.

*Cortana knows the lyrics to many songs and displays them in Edge*

## Sing along with Chrome

If you're a Chrome user, you can get lyrics to display here, too. Our favourite add-on is Play Music Lyrics Fetcher (bit.ly/plmf451). We like it because it looks great and is clear and easy to read, but also because it highlights the words being sung in time with the music, making it easy to sing along. Even if you start the music video part-way through, it works out where it is and highlights the correct line. After installing it, just click the Chrome toolbar button when a music video is playing.




*Play Music Lyrics Fetcher shows the lyrics to YouTube songs*

## Play it again, YouTube

If you hear a new song you want to listen to a few times, get Auto Replay for YouTube (bit.ly/aryt451). Once it's installed, you should see a tickbox in the bottom-left corner labelled Auto Replay. Tick it to play the track repeatedly.

If you want to hear a favourite song in the middle of footage from a long concert, click the arrow to the left of Auto Replay to slide out a control panel. Enter the time to start playing, when to stop and the number of repeat cycles.

## A different music perspective

If you're looking for something different to listen to, try Vimu TV (vimutv.com), which is a website designed to provide an alternative way of accessing music via YouTube and other sources. Infalco Music (infalco.com) has an innovative display that lets you click a circle to play a song on YouTube, or click the dot next to a track to open more sections with recommendations for further listening. It's a fascinating visual way to find new music you might like.

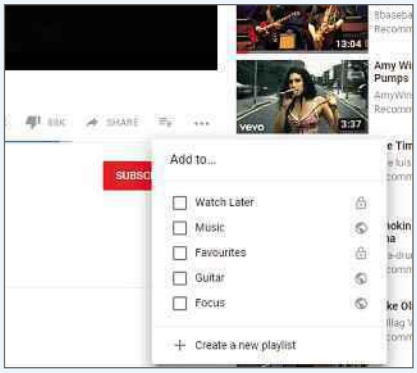
*Infalco provides a visual way to explore new music recommendations*

# TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

## Create music playlists

Playlists are a great way to listen to music because you can queue up any number of videos and save the order you've chosen. When a music video is playing, click the plus icon under it and click 'Create a new playlist'. Name it after an artist, genre, mood or whatever you like. You can then easily add more tracks to your playlist by selecting it in the list.




*Create music playlists and add your favourite tracks to them*

Playlists appear in the YouTube sidebar and you can click one to view it. Drag music videos up and down the list to change the order, and click the three-dot menu on the right to remove any you don't want. Click Edit, then select the Playlist settings button and click 'Auto add'. This lets you create rules that automatically add music to the playlist, such as whenever a video title contains an artist's name.

## Stream audio without video

If you just want to listen to music and don't need the video to play, there are a few options available. The simplest is to open a new browser window for YouTube and, when it starts playing, minimise it to the taskbar. You can then do other things on your computer while enjoying the music.

Another option is to use a website called ListenYo (listenyo.com), which offers a useful audio-streaming service. Visit the site in a browser and click one of the featured and popular songs on the homepage, or use the search box at the top to find your own favourite music. It plays in the browser as audio only, without the video.

This is particularly useful if you're using a mobile-data or bandwidth-capped broadband service, because it significantly reduces the amount of data that's downloaded.

Another option is to use the Audio Only YouTube extension for Chrome (bit.ly/aoyt451) which adds a button to Chrome's toolbar at the right of the address box. Click it to toggle the video on or off. When the icon is red, it blocks videos and only a static image is shown.

## Better YouTube on the go

The YouTube app for phones is a good way to listen to music while you're out and about, but it drains the battery because it doesn't let you turn off the screen and stops the music if you switch to another app. However, if you have an Android device, try Free Music For YouTube: Stream (bit.ly/fmyts451). The app is free to install from the Google Play store and looks similar to YouTube. Instead of browsing every available video, this app focuses on music and lists the latest releases, radio stations and music genres.

Browse the videos, search for your favourites and tap one to play it. The video opens in a small floating window that can be dragged around the screen. It remains in place when you return to the home screen and run other apps, so you can open your email, browse the web and do other things while the music continues to play in the tiny window. It's a handy way to get around YouTube's restrictions without breaking the rules.

*Free Music For YouTube lets you listen to music and keep using your phone*

# 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

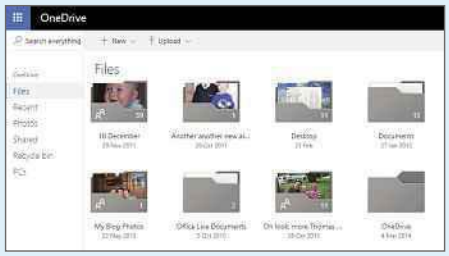
ONLINE STORAGE

## Stop OneDrive files expiring

**Q** In Issue 447's Best Buys section, you recommend OneDrive (onedrive.live.com) as a cloud-storage service. However, the final line of the key features reads: "Files expire after one year of inactivity." Does this mean that a year's inactivity on any individual file causes that particular file to expire, or does it mean a year's inactivity on the whole OneDrive account causes all your OneDrive content to expire? Or does it mean something else?

I'm eager to switch from Google Drive to OneDrive as soon as possible and would appreciate your clarification.

**Richard Roberts, via email**




*As long as you use the service now and then, OneDrive won't erase your files*

**A** It basically means that if you don't use OneDrive for a year, your files could be deleted, because Microsoft won't store them forever if you're not using the service. OneDrive is built into Windows 10 and syncs every time you switch on your computer. Office 365 also accesses OneDrive, and Outlook.com uses it to save email attachments. In other words, if you use Windows, Microsoft software or any one of several web services, it's hard to avoid using OneDrive, so your files should be safe, even if you aren't accessing them directly.

This rule might affect Windows 7 users who don't use other Microsoft services, because OneDrive isn't integrated into the OS. However, it's most likely to affect you if you switch to a Linux or Apple computer and abandon Microsoft completely.

HARDWARE

## Fix the Escape key

**Q** I bought a Bluetooth keyboard from a London branch of Maplin in February. Upon arriving home to Melbourne at the end of April, I paired it with my Surface Pro 3 and Samsung Tab S. According to the packaging, the keyboard is compatible with Microsoft, Android and Apple devices. However, the so-called manual was about the size of an A5 sheet folded in half and has no information about installation.

It's a lovely little keyboard but the Esc key doesn't work as it should. Pressing the top-left key takes you to a web browser. My friend has set it up so that Fn+F4 operates as the Esc key, instead. He used SharpKeys (bit.ly/sk451) to do this, but SharpKeys didn't recognize the key with a square on it (where Esc usually is), so he couldn't remap this key to its proper function. The Delete in the top right-hand corner only works if it's used with the Fn key (Fn+Del).

I have a detachable keyboard for my Surface Pro 3 but that doesn't work well when the Surface Pro is in its hub. Does anyone know how to fix these problems?

**Lynnette Hammet, via email**

*Windows 10 has a built-in virtual keyboard that you can tap or click*

**A** Keys produce codes when pressed and each code is linked to a specific character, such as a letter, number or symbol. The code that the key in the top-left corner of this keyboard produces is a non-standard one. Worse, it's a general code that could mean anything. SharpKeys recommends you don't try to remap the code for that key.

The hardware or driver recognises the key and performs a specific action, but we couldn't find a way to change its function. Maplin has now shut down, which makes it harder to find a solution.

Try pressing the key with Fn, Shift, Shift+Fn, Ctrl, Shift+Ctrl, Alt and so on, in every combination. Hopefully one of the combinations will do what you want, but if not, your SharpKeys remapping is the best solution.

Windows 10 is designed to work on mobile devices, such as tablets that don't have a keyboard, and provides an on-screen alternative. Right-click an empty space on the taskbar and select 'Show touch keyboard button'. Instead of pressing Esc, click the keyboard icon in the taskbar and click Esc – it's two taps with a finger on a touchscreen. Click or press the cog icon on the onscreen keyboard to select a layout. There are several, and some have Esc keys, but others don't.

HARDWARE

## Unlock Num Lock

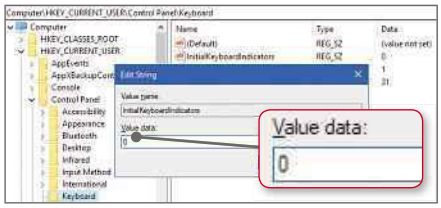
**Q** Two days ago, my Windows 10 PC updated to the latest version (1803). Everything seems to be fine except that the Num Lock keypad on my Logitech K330 no longer types numbers.

I checked that the drivers were up to date and went into settings to see if any keyboard configurations had changed, but everything appeared to be normal. I swapped the Logitech keyboard for a Dell one I had from a previous PC but that made no difference – the Num Lock keypad still won't let me type numbers.

This is driving me mad because I use the keypad a lot for entering data in spreadsheets, and having to use the number row across the top of the keyboard is very inconvenient.

**John Bridge, via email**

**A** Keep checking for Windows updates and driver updates because if this is a general problem, there could be a solution sooner or later from either Microsoft or Logitech. The software




*Registry value 0 or 2 determines the state of the Num Lock key when Windows starts*

download for the keyboard is at bit.ly/logi451 but the dates on the files range from 2012 to 2015. This is an old keyboard with old software, so it doesn't look promising.

One workaround is to hack the Registry. The state of the Num Lock key on startup is stored in the Registry, and by changing the value, you can start with it switched on or off. Press Windows+R, type `Regedit` and press Enter to open the Registry Editor. Go to:

HKEY_USERS\.Default\Control Panel\Keyboard

Double-click the value for InitialKeyboardIndicators, and enter 0 (off) or 2 (on) to set the state of Num Lock when Windows starts.

To save the setting, right-click the Keyboard key on the left and select Export. Choose Selected Branch and set the filename either to Num Lock On or Num Lock Off. Save two versions – with values of 2 and 0 – to the Desktop. You can then double-click the Desktop icon to set the Registry key, so your PC will have the setting you want when you next start or restart it.

OFFICE SOFTWARE

## Link Excel worksheets

**Q** I have been told that I need to use Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) to get an automatic link from one worksheet to another. I want to be able to click the name of a customer in one worksheet to open a related worksheet. I know it's possible to right-click the bottom-left and select the applicable worksheet, but when the list gets long one has to scroll through it. Can anyone supply the applicable VBA code?

**Barry Singleton, via email**

*Create hyperlinks in cells to jump to a worksheet on another tab when clicked*

**A** You don't need VBA to link between worksheets. Let's say you have three worksheet tabs named Company1, Company2 and Company3. To link a cell to a tab, right-click the cell and select Hyperlink.

The options that appear vary depending on the version of Excel you're using, but they all let you link to another worksheet. Select 'Place in this document' for the hyperlink and enter it in this format: WorksheetName!Cell. For example, to link a cell to the Company2 worksheet, type `Company2!A1`. Clicking it would switch to the Company2 worksheet with the cursor in cell A1.

OFFICE SOFTWARE

## Make Works work

**Q** Most Windows 10 updates cause something to move or go missing. After the latest one, I found I couldn't access my Microsoft Works Databases. I decided to uninstall and install again from the disc I purchased, but my computer said someone else was logged into my computer and that the installation may not succeed. It didn't.

Who else could be logged into my computer when I'm the sole user? Thankfully, I have a laptop with Works 8 installed and can access my databases on that.

**Steven Jessney, via email**

**A** Microsoft Works is an old, discontinued program, and people have had mixed results with running it in Windows 10. A possible solution is to right-click the setup program and select 'Send to', then 'Desktop (create shortcut)'. Right-click the shortcut and select Properties, then select the Compatibility tab and tick the box, 'Run this program in compatibility mode for'. Select Windows 7 in the list below, then click OK and try running the installer from the desktop shortcut.

Programs don't work forever, and sooner or later the copy on your laptop may also stop working. Use the Save As option to save the database in alternative file formats in case you need to switch to another database program. LibreOffice (www.libreoffice.org) is free, modern and includes a good database.

SOFTWARE

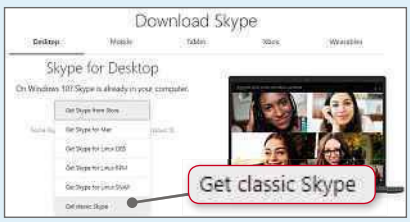
## Get your webcam working with Skype

**Q** Since a Windows 10 update 18 months ago, the webcam on my HP laptop won't work with Skype. My PC tells me it's in use by another program. I've hunted high and low to find out which program is using the webcam, but without success. I have the latest version of Skype.

I looked for help online and found that others have experienced the same problem. I've tried some of their solutions but nothing has worked. Microsoft seems to be aware of the situation, but there's still no fix.

**Judy Yebernet, via email**

**A** This is a common Skype problem. First, check your Windows settings by pressing Windows+i, then clicking Privacy. Select Camera on the left and turn all the switches on. Repeat this for the microphone, which may be built into the camera. Restart Windows and try Skype. If that hasn't helped, return to Settings, Privacy, Camera and, in the list of apps, turn all apps off except Skype. Restart and try Skype.




*If the Windows 10 Skype app causes you trouble, download classic Skype*

Outlook has links to Skype, so if you start Skype after checking your email, that could trigger a 'camera in use' message. Make sure Skype is the first program you run after starting Windows. Some people have found that disabling then enabling the camera solves the problem. Right-click Start and select Device Manager. Expand Cameras, right-click the camera and select Disable. Wait for a few seconds, then enable it again.

Of all the solutions people have tried, the one that works most often is to go back to a previous version of Skype. Open the Start menu, right-click the Skype tile and select Uninstall. Then go to bit.ly/skyp451, click the down arrow on the download button and select 'Get classic Skype'. This seems to have fewer problems and works better than the Windows 10 app.

**This fortnight Roland upgraded to a wireless keyboard and mouse, and is working more efficiently now he's cable-free**

# 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

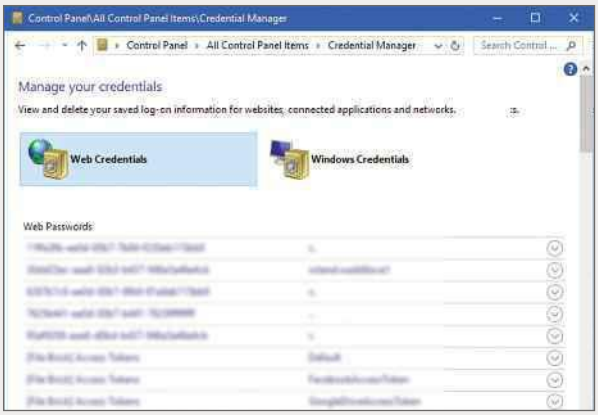
Back Issues disc winner

BROWSERS

### View passwords saved by Edge

I have Windows 10 installed on my PC and have been trying Edge from time to time, but I'm finding it hard to give up Chrome. Edge can store passwords for sites, but there is no obvious way to find out what a password is once it has been set. You can open the menu, go to Settings, 'View advanced settings', find 'Autofill settings' and click 'Manage passwords', but it only shows the sites and doesn't show you the passwords.

It took a bit of searching, but I eventually found where passwords are stored. They are in Credential Manager in the Control Panel – a section I'd never noticed before, though it looks like it's been there forever. Open Control Panel from the Start menu, select Web Credentials from one of the 'icons' views and the websites with stored passwords are shown. Click one and it lists the site details. Click Show next to Password and it asks for your Windows login information to verify it's you, then shows you the password.




*Go to Credentials in the Control Panel to see Edge's stored passwords*

**Jon Portman, via email**

BROWSERS

### Choose to download or open PDFs

I often find PDF files irritating to deal with online, because they always seem to open in my browser when I actually want to download them instead. The larger the PDF file, the more annoying this is.

I always let the mouse hover over a link if I think it might be a PDF to verify what type of file it is. Doing this in Chrome reveals the full file name, including the file extension (.pdf), which appears in the bottom-left corner. If you click a link to a PDF, it will open in your browser. However, if you right-click it and select 'Save link as', it can be downloaded.

You can set the default action for a left-click in Chrome's settings. Go to the menu, choose Settings and scroll down to click Advanced at the bottom. Find the 'Privacy and security' section and click Content Settings, then 'PDF documents'. There is a switch that lets you choose between opening PDFs when you click them, or downloading and saving them to the hard drive.

*Choose what happens in Chrome when you click a PDF*

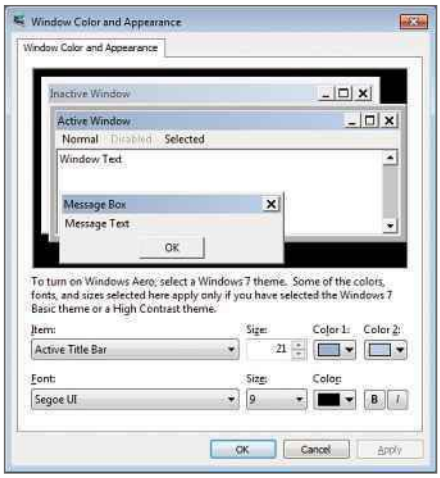
**Steven Keenan, via email**

WINDOWS 7

### Customise Windows 7

In some ways, Windows 7 is still better than Windows 10. For one thing, it's much more customisable. On my Windows 7 PC, I can adjust a window's colours and title bar, and its icons' sizes and colours, and more. To do this, right-click the desktop and select Personalize. Click Window Color and a window appears with controls for adjusting everything. You may need to choose a non-Aero theme for this, though.

**Ron Martin, via email**



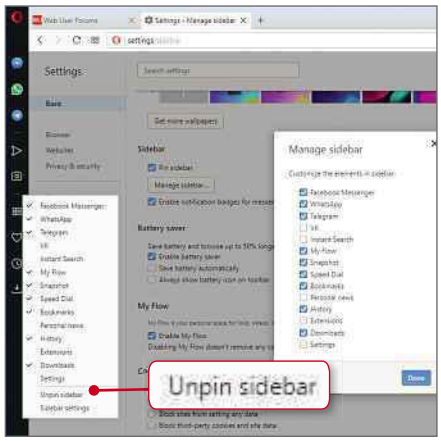

*Windows 7 lets you easily customise window titles, buttons and other objects*

BROWSERS

### Remove Opera sidebar icons

Just a reminder that you can get rid of any sidebar icons that you don't need in Opera, so you don't click them accidentally. Right-click in the sidebar and untick the icons you don't want. They can be re-enabled in the same way, by ticking them again. You can also go to Settings and click Basic. Scroll down to Sidebar, click 'Manage sidebar' and you can customise the elements shown.

If you don't want to see the sidebar at all, you can unpin it. Either click the icon at the bottom of the sidebar, or right-




*Right-click to configure Opera's sidebar*

click it and then click 'Unpin sidebar'. To get it back again, return to Settings, choose Basic, scroll down to Sidebar and tick 'Pin sidebar'.

**Madeline, Web User Forums**

GENERAL PC

## Check new privacy permissions

Whenever there's a new version of Windows 10, I like to see what's changed. Following the April 2018 update, you can now choose which apps are allowed to access your Documents, Pictures and Videos libraries. Open Settings (Windows+i) and choose Privacy. Scroll down the menu on the left to find the new options. Select each one to see a master switch labelled 'Allow apps to access your documents library'. When it is on, there is a list of apps with more switches so you can choose which ones are allowed to access your files.

As far as I can see, this only affects apps installed from the Windows Store, so it is of limited use. However, it's good to know it's there and at least you can allow or block some apps.

**H Burns, via email**

VIDEO

## Manage YouTube subscriptions with RSS

You can manage YouTube subscriptions by turning your favourite channels into an RSS feed. Search Feedly (feedly.com) for the channel and click Follow. You can even export a list of your subsciptions on YouTube's Subscription Manager and add them to Feedly automatically by clicking Add Content, then Import OPML.

**Jennifer Silla, via email**

GENERAL PC

## Fix sound problems

Here's a quick tip for anyone who finds their sound is poor or non-existent after installing the April 2018 Windows Update. Download the audio drivers and software for your PC from the computer manufacturer's website and install them. I have to do it twice a year with the spring and autumn updates.

**Peter Hannon, via email**

MOBILE

## Copy all text on Android

If you struggle with copying text from Android apps, try Universal Copy (bit.ly/copy451), a clipboard app that can copy text from all your other apps. What's really cool, though, is that it lives in the notifications bar, which makes it really easy to open and copy in a rush, even when you're using another app.

**Alex Gus, via email**

GENERAL PC

## Create a bootable recovery drive

I'm not sure if this is of any use and I haven't personally tried it, but I read that you can download the Windows 10 installer as an ISO drive, which creates bootable installation media. You need to grab yourself a USB memory stick (at least 8GB in size) and create a Windows 10 recovery drive using the Recovery Media Creator tool. To do this, go into the Settings app (Windows+i) and start typing `create a recovery drive` in the 'Find a setting' box. Click it when it appears, then follow the instructions to locate and mount your newly downloaded Windows 10 ISO file.

Finally, copy everything from the mounted drive to your USB stick and stash it away until the next time you need to install Windows 10.

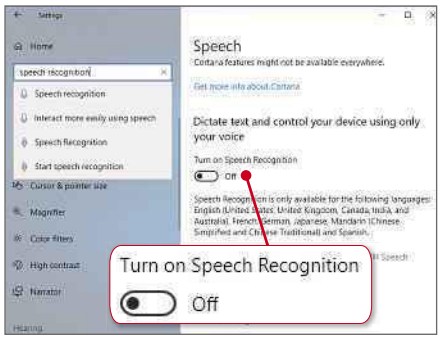
**fossewayfella, Web User Forums**

GENERAL PC

## Turn off unnecessary Windows features

To turn off Speech Recognition after installing the new Windows 10 April 2018 update, open the Settings app (Windows+i) and click 'Ease of Access'. In the 'Find a setting' box, type `speech recognition` and click the result to see all the Speech options on the right. I turned mine off after the update, so I have the option to 'Turn on Speech Recognition', but this shows as 'Turn off Speech Recognition' on other PCs.

**Cantrel, Web User Forums**




*Following the April 2018 update, you can turn speech recognition on or off*

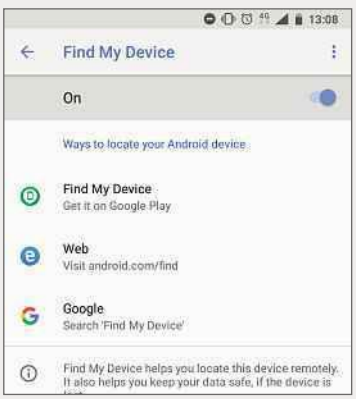
# BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

MOBILE

## Use Google Assistant to find your phone

With all the recent sunshine, my wife and I decided to take a relaxing weekend trip. I had our booking details stored on my phone but this proved to be a big mistake. Five minutes before our taxi arrived, I succumbed to the familiar panic of patting down an empty pocket. Without my mobile, we had no hotel-booking confirmation emails and no mobile rail tickets. In short: no holiday.

We searched the whole house and even tried ringing the phone from the landline (which, thankfully, I haven't ditched yet), but as the phone was in Do Not Disturb mode, we heard nothing. Out of sheer desperation, I asked my Google Home to help 'Find my phone'. Before I knew it, the smart speaker was loudly ringing my mobile. It was in my jacket pocket!




*Stop worrying about misplacing your phone – Google will find it*

Apparently, Google can find your phone if you search `'Google Find My Phone'` online, too. It was almost worth the anxiety to discover this great Google feature that literally saved our weekend.

**Richard Potts, via email**

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

# WebUser Reader Offer

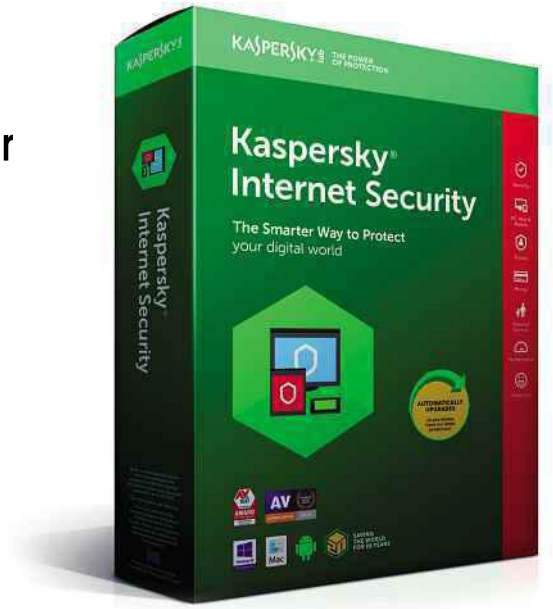
## OFFER OF THE FORTNIGHT

# Kaspersky Internet Security 2018 - on sale now

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

### WHAT'S NEW IN KASPERSKY 2018:

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




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

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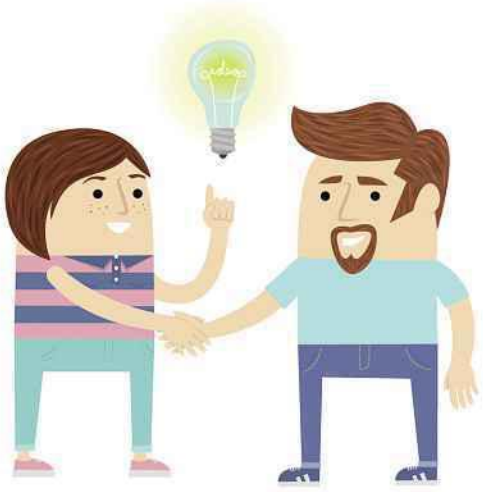


# Readers' Helpdesk

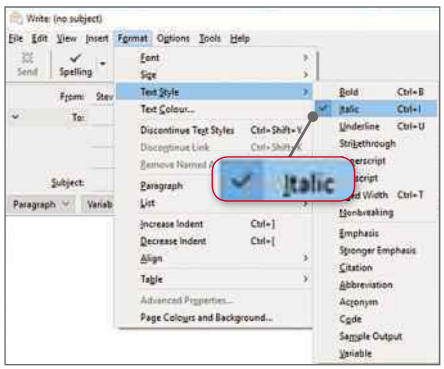
Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit forum.webuser.co.uk – it's friendly and free!

EMAIL

## Stop random italics in Thunderbird

Q I've just composed an email and changed to italics for one sentence. However, try as I might, each time I unclick the italic button, it reverts back to italics every time I type. Can anyone tell me how to remove italics and restore normal type please?

**bobcat, Web User Forums**




*Take control of email formatting in Thunderbird*

A Using the button should work but you can also change the font from the Format menu. In the 'New Message' box, right-click near the top and make sure that you've got the Menu Bar enabled. Go to Format, choose Text Style and tick Italic. When you've finished the italic part of your message, go back to the same place and untick Italic.

Alternatively, press Ctrl+i when you want to start to use italics, then press the same keys again when you've finished. I've tried both methods, as well as the button, and they all work. Is your version of Thunderbird up to date? The current version is 52.7.0.

**Madeline, Web User Forums**

WEBSITE

## Get creative with Tagxedo

Q I want to produce a simple custom shape – a black rectangle on which I can produce white text – in Tagxedo (tagxedo.com). I have produced the rectangle on the desktop, but when I try to upload it, it fails to produce it. In fact, it doesn't seem to recognise any of my pictures at all. Is there something simple that I am omitting to do?

**Minnehaha, Web User Forums**

A Try it this way: Download Silverlight (bit.ly/silver451), choosing the 'Install for Windows' and the Mozilla Firefox portable (bit.ly/ffport451) options. Transfer this to your desktop. Double-click the portable Firefox setup and click Next, Install, then Finish. Via the Firefox menu bar, click Tools, Add-ons, Plugins to check Silverlight is set to 'Always Activate' or 'Ask to Activate'.

Go to Tagxedo and open the Shape menu, then click Add Image. Select or open your image, then click the Load menu and input your text. Click Submit, choose your theme in the Theme menu and save your image. Navigate to the Save location and the image can be edited in your preferred image editor.

**Moonshine, Web User Forums**

*The Tagxedo website lets you make great-looking word clouds*

GENERAL PC

## Fix Windows Defender errors

Q I've just carried out a full Windows Defender scan as part of my routine housekeeping. It froze at 49 minutes, after scanning 375,575 files, but there's no error code or notification of completion.

I ran a Quick Scan on 47,251 files showing 0 threats, which completed in 6 minutes. I also tried an offline scan which seemed to run, but nothing showed on the screen and the computer just started up again without any results. I am completely confused now because these scans are usually straightforward.

I've had some problems with Windows Updates recently and I wonder if there is any connection. Reliability monitor shows two attempted updates – both KB2267602 with different definition numbers – within minutes of the crash. Can anyone suggest what I should do?

**daddybear, Web User Forums**

*Microsoft's Malicious Software Removal Tool can help Windows Defender*

A Try launching the Microsoft Malicious Software Removal Tool. Go to the Start menu and type `mrt`, then press Enter. Use the tool to perform a full scan and see how that performs. Once that's completed, try Windows Defender again.

Defender could be doing its own update or you might find that Windows itself was performing a minor update.

**Cantrel, Web User Forums**

# Inbox

You can let us know your views via:
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## Star Email

Back Issues disc winner

### GDPR frees us from data hoarding

I've lost count of how many emails I've received in the last week from companies I have no recollection of signing up with, asking me to review their new privacy policies and resubscribe to their newsletters. I know it's all to do with GDPR, as covered in your article in Issue 449, but I don't understand why they've left it so late.

These companies have known for *two years* that GDPR would be introduced on 25 May 2018, yet they chose to leave it until the last minute to implement the changes. The only reason I can think of is that delaying their responses allowed them to hang on to our personal details for as long as possible, so they could use them in whatever nefarious way they wanted. In the case of the companies that I couldn't recollect – including an online florist, a travel agent and a restaurant in Rye I've never even been to – I find this intrusive and a little worrying. How did they get hold of my details in the first place?

The best thing about GDPR is that by ignoring all these companies' pleas for me to let them hoard my data indefinitely, I am effectively freeing myself from their clutches. If they ignore my refusal to acquiesce, then they will be breaking the law and liable – as I understand it – for a hefty fine!

***Graham Caldwell, via email***

### GDPR is just a smokescreen

Thank you for your GDPR cover feature in Issue 449 about how to "reclaim your data from the web", but who on Earth has time to go through the infernal maze that all these sites were allowed to impose on us in the first place? Unless you take (a long) time off work or dedicate your entire vacation to this, everybody will give up after only one hour on one site.

So, this GDPR legislation is just a smokescreen allowed by Brussels (once more), allowing all these guys to continue as usual without having to change a single thing so they can continue spying on people. This is extremely upsetting!

***Claude Legrand, via email***

### Copper lines let us talk during power cuts

Further to all the letters about BT landlines, it is all well and good having a fibre line to your house giving you access to fast broadband speeds, but if you happen to lose mains power for any reason, everything will go down, including paths for communications.

At present, the copper line carries enough voltage and power capacity to operate an old-style telephone, although obviously not cordless types, if your mains supply happens to go down. BT is obliged to provide backup batteries and generators at exchanges to allow operation for a couple of hours in the event of a power failure. This allows you to communicate with the outside world in case things go wrong. Forget your mobile phone – while cell sites also have backup, the cell stations can be remotely switched off at will.

So, all in all, BT would be quite happy to get rid of copper lines, which would save them having to maintain them, and reduce the cost of expensive backup supplies and the amount of space used. Additionally, BT can just shrug its shoulders if your fibre line doesn't work when you lose mains power – it's your problem, guv!

***Ray Bastow, via email***

### Why can't we watch BBC iPlayer abroad?

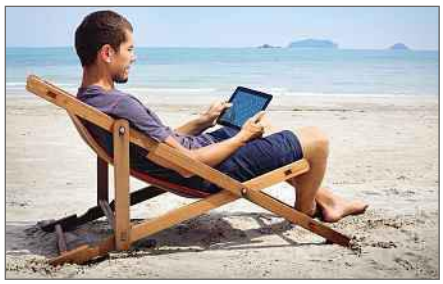
As I am now retired, I like to spend extended periods during the winter months in Thailand and have always successfully used my VPN to watch catchup TV without any problems. However, this year I noticed that the BBC

## Quiz Answers: Issue 450

1 Starbucks
2 Burger King
3 Card Factory
4 Homebase
5 Ikea
6 Waterstones

**WINNER!**
Well done to **Angela Tolliver** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc

TECH YEAR
**2009**



must be blocking my VPN as, for the first time, I could no longer watch iPlayer.

While I am fully aware of copyright issues, it should not be beyond the realms of possibility for the BBC to provide *bona fide* UK licence-fee payers with a solution to watch programmes while abroad that they have already paid for at home. If not, I feel I should be due a partial refund for the unused months, on production of my airline ticket.

Netflix is far more flexible with its viewing options. You can watch abroad or suspend your subscription for as long as you want. At £5.99 a month for the cheapest Netflix subscription, is it any wonder the BBC is losing licence-fee payers in their millions, especially among the younger generation of viewers. I could be joining them very soon.

***Graham Dauphin, via email***

## Reddit is a great place to find bargains

Regarding your suggestions for Amazon alternatives in Issue 448, there are places other than eBay where you can find a bargain. It sounds odd, but Reddit happens to be one. You might expect scams given Reddit's history and reputation, but if you know what you're looking for, ask questions and read other users' comments about a seller, you'll be okay. After all, people buy and sell on Facebook.

However, a few warnings about buying from Reddit: if there are lifetime offers for certain subscriptions, they are likely to be fake, shared or a poor service in general. Always read announcements and if you reply to a seller's post publicly, don't accept direct messages from anyone else who claims to have the same product for cheaper, because they're likely to have been banned from that subreddit. Good luck!

***Gold Master, via email***

# What you say...

## AMAZON IS BANNING CUSTOMERS WHO RETURN TOO MANY ITEMS. DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS ACTION (bit.ly/amazon451)?

Absolutely not. A customer can have a bad run of faulty, incorrectly advertised items. This is a risk Amazon took when they embarked on online selling.

***Jeremy** @jeremyn1000*

If customers abuse the system of returns, then yes. Returns to retailer without a fault is not a right!

***Pablo's Life** @p_banes*

I'm guilty of returning a *lot* of stuff, but as a Prime member who has spent £2,700 with them in 2017 alone, it would be their loss if they banned me.

***Deafinitely Moi** @Gary_Olsen*

I'm with Amazon on this one. I know people who order products to have a look, then decide if they actually want them as "there is no cost to them". All of us eventually cover this cost.

***Jamie Brittain***

## HOW MANY GDPR EMAILS DID YOU RECEIVE?

Only about 11,310-ish. At least that's the last I should be hearing from most of them. It's quite good to have had an enforced cull of junk mail.

***Mark Chatham***

Quite literally hundreds, but by ignoring them, it's saved me the hassle of logging in to unsubscribe.

***John Scott***

All the companies I have ever known have emailed me. It's like I've won the lottery and everyone I ever owed a favour has come out of the woodwork.

***Si Mellor***

Too many to count and many will not get a reply, so that's good.

***Darren Phillips***

Loads, and many repeat emails despite me filling in and sending their forms already!

***Jan Swanton***

## BANKING BY PHONE APP IS EXPECTED TO OVERTAKE ONLINE BY 2019 (bit.ly/bank451). WHICH DO YOU PREFER?

Phone without a doubt! It's faster, more convenient and secure. What's not to love?

***Cheyvonne Bower***

Phone. Laptop is left in a corner these days with no attention paid to it.

***Stuart A Hordern***

Always the PC. I like to be able to see my transactions in detail on a large screen in the privacy of my own home.

***Martin Phillp***

I mainly use the PC for going through my statements, but I've used the phone app a couple of times for quick on-the-fly payments.

***Colin Leonard***

## A NEW REPORT SAYS MANY UK HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVE ONLY HALF THE BROADBAND SPEED THEY PAY FOR. WHAT DO YOU GET?

I'm supposed to get 78Mbps. I get between 72-75Mbps on TalkTalk fibre. I'm very happy with the speed, and it's stable.

***Brian Brown***

I get 208Mbps with Virgin, and I pay for 200. Should I complain?

***Martin James***

I pay for 100Mbps with Virgin, and get 100Mbps, in Tamworth. Sometimes I get more, but never less than 95Mbps. It's more expensive, but worth it.

***Christopher Chesters***

# Page 404

No more weather forecasts! Cortana needs to solve our PC problems, says **Barry Collins**

# Hey Cortana – why not do something useful?

The fact that magazines such as *Web User*, *Computeractive* and a shelf full of other computing titles still exist should be an embarrassment to Microsoft. It means that after 30-odd years of Windows computers, people still need a magazine to explain how to use them.

I spend half of my time co-editing a website specifically designed to help people with tech questions. The other half of my time is spent answering people's direct questions – people like my sister-in-law who sidled up to me with her laptop while I was round her house for a BBQ at the weekend, asking how she can get the blasted thing to stop falling asleep while she's trying to charge her mobile from it.

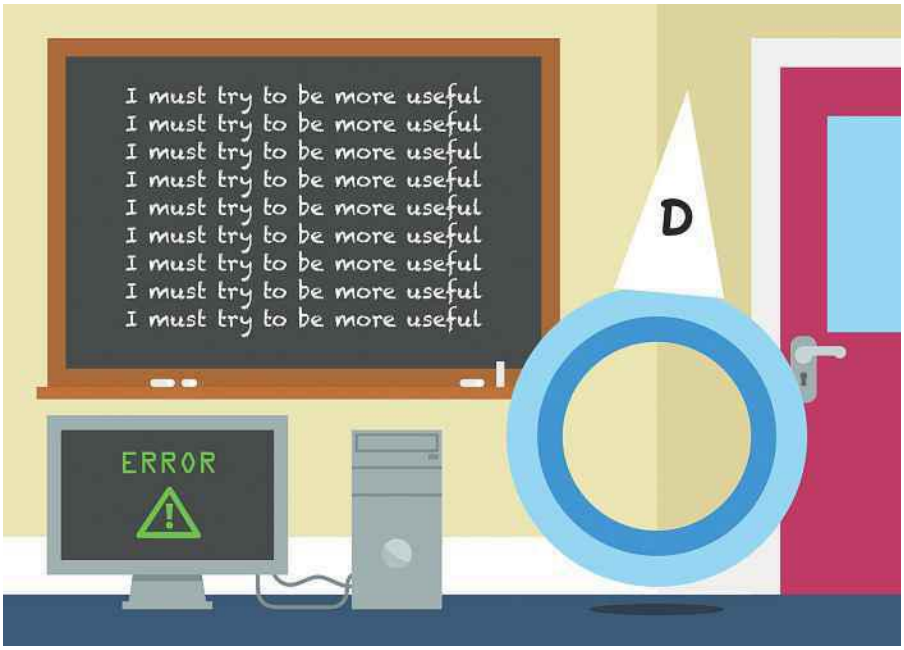
It shouldn't be me answering these questions, it should be Cortana. Like every other major tech company on the planet, Microsoft has built its own voice assistant into Windows. But it does little or no more than any of the others.

Many of us now have Amazon Echo speakers dotted around the house, and almost everyone's got a smartphone with either Google Assistant or Siri built into it. How many more devices do we need to give us a weather forecast or tell us how bad the traffic is on the M23 this morning?

> "After 30-odd years of Windows PCs, people still need a magazine to explain how to use them"

Consequently, the only time I ever use Cortana is when she mishears me. Mention a Ford Cortina or Carlos Santana (not everyday topics of conversation in my house, I assure you) and my laptop is suddenly all ears, trying to work out what I'm on about.

Cortana's true purpose in life is a tech-support bot. Open a photo on your PC, and you should be able to say: "Hey Cortana, turn this photo black and white". Instead of having to hunt through 25 different filters and menu settings, it should be a simple voice instruction. Likewise, for my sister-in-law's plea to change the power settings, which are buried nine menus deep in Windows 10's Settings or require a right-click on the power icon in the taskbar. Most people don't know where to find this stuff. Cortana should.




Right now, she can't even perform the most basic tasks on your behalf. Ask her to switch on the Windows 'night light' – a new feature that dims the screen to help you sleep at night – and she hasn't got the first clue what you're talking about. Ask her to switch on 'airplane mode' and she at least opens the right setting, but stops short of actually doing what you ask. Why?

And if you're thinking this is a tall order for Microsoft, it really isn't. Google recently demoed Duplex, an AI bot that's able to ring your hairdresser and book an appointment on your behalf, all the while sounding like an actual umming and erring human being on the other end of the phone (see our FAQ on page 38 for details). Performing basic Windows tech support is a relative doddle. Cortana can already transcribe most of what I bellow at her – she just has trouble putting it into action.

Windows is still a mystery to the average human being. If Microsoft wants us to still be buying laptops and PCs in 10 years' time, it needs to make them more friendly. Cortana could be the most important member of staff Microsoft's ever had.

Illustration: Andrew Torrens



+ Do you agree? Let us know at webuser@dennis.co.uk

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SUBSCRIPTION OFFER
FOR MORE INFO SEE PAGE 62

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