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Sync files securely on your **OWN** network instead p54

with the

Make your PC do what you always wanted it to p40



Force your PC to start faster



Beat file restrictions



Disable problematic updates



Add secret functions



Remove pointless tools





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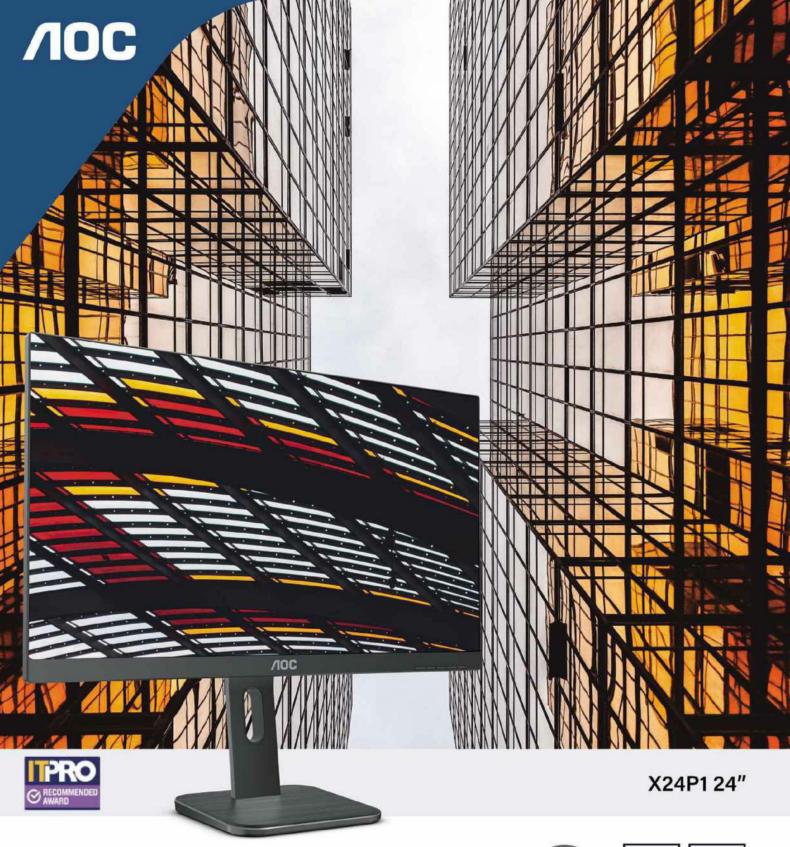
Top tools you'd expect to pay for



So nobody else will EVER see them

YOUR Wi-Fi, *YOUR* RUL

Control who does what on your home network p56



Experience great resolution

in style













Get reckless with the Registry

he Windows Registry - Reg to its friends - doesn't do itself any favours. Not only has it got the dullest interface imaginable, but it baffles and bores with its technical talk of HKEYs and DWORD values. I can see why another 'Reg' had to brand himself Elton John and dress up as Donald Duck to make things more interesting.

Still, looks aren't everything and without the trusty old Registry, your system wouldn't be able to function. And, as we explain in this issue's cover feature, delving into the Registry to tweak its apparently unfathomable settings can yield all manner of interesting and beneficial results. From forcing your PC to load faster to disabling annoying features and unlocking useful ones, creatively fiddling with Reg's values is a lot more fun than you'd think.

Naturally, you can't just open the Registry Editor and delete keys willy-nilly, so we also explain the precautions you should take before you tweak, and pick the best free Registry-editing tools. Happy hacking!

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





Average sales, Jan-Dec 2017, 27,156 copies per issue

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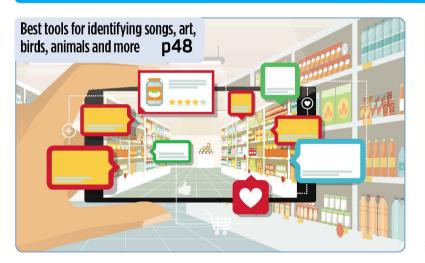
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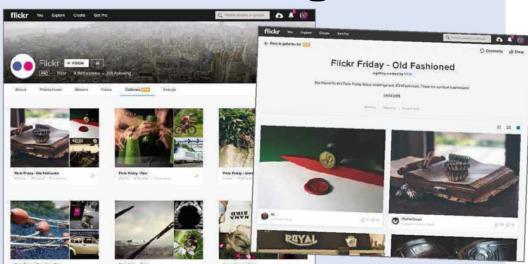
What's New Online

Tell visual stories in Flickr galleries

aving neglected the look of its albums for a while, Flickr has finally got around to freshening up the design. As a result, its new Galleries section has a much smarter layout that increases the size of the images and videos to take advantage of today's larger screen sizes and resolutions. You can now add as many as 500 photos and videos to a gallery - a huge 10-fold increase on the previous limit of 50 - with Flickr encouraging you to use this increased

Additionally, the list page within Galleries has been spruced up. Now, with each album, you get to see a large cover image accompanied by thumbnails of the most recent pictures, giving a better at-a-glance

flexibility to tell "visual stories".



flavour of what is contained within. Meanwhile, the albums and the photos they contain are displayed in a cardstyle format that includes gallery metadata

Flickr has introduced these improvements without losing the

old ways of making adjustments to your galleries. If nothing else, it's breathed some life into the image and video-hosting service following its acquisition by former rival SmugMug earlier this year. www.flickr.com

Listen to three times more Spotify tunes offline

www.spotify.com

Spotify's Premium service has raised the limit on the number of songs you can download for offline listening. Previously, you could download 3,333 songs per device and use three different devices in total. Now, Spotify lets you download 10.000 tunes per device and store tracks on up to five devices, which makes it more convenient to listen to your favourite tracks without an internet connection.

That said, Spotify still lags behind rival Apple Music, which only restricts you to the amount of storage on your device and has a more generous limit of 10 devices. Google Play



Music also lets you download as many tracks as you like. Nevertheless, it's an improvement. though we'd also like Spotify to raise the limit for your personal collection from the maximum of 10,000 songs. We're sure that will come soon enough.

Play with YouTube's new gaming service

www.youtube.com/ gaming

YouTube has ditched its dedicated video app for gaming, calling it a "big misstep", and integrated the service with the main YouTube website, which



makes the service much easier to access. It has also added some welcome new features, including game-specific pages that contain live streams, videos and other titles made by the game's developer.

At the top of the screen, there's a personalised carousel packed with gaming content based on what YouTube thinks you like to watch. The gaming service also highlights upcoming and top live streams, trending videos and recommended content based on your subscriptions and history. Likely to come soon is a new 'On the Rise' section that showcases up-and-coming gaming creators. The only thing you can't do is actually play the games yourself.

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

Get personalised shopping suggestions in Instagram

www.instagram.com

Instagram has added a new Shopping channel to its Explore feature. Tap the search button, look for Shopping at the top of the screen and browse posts from the brands you follow, together with suggestions of items you might like. Brands can now add shopping-bag icons to Stories to tell you more about their products.



Explore iconic sites in Lebanon

bit.ly/lebanon459

Google brings the delights of Lebanon to Street View, letting you explore one of the greatest natural wonders of the world - the vast limestone caves of Jeita Grotto - while allowing you to nose around the Roman ruins of Baalbek, a trip through the Cedars Forest and a splash in the Ibrahim River (without getting wet, of course). As with all Street View images, you can use your mouse or finger to move left, right, up and down, and zoom in for a closer look. You can also click the arrows to move around the scenery.



See the orbits of known exoplanets

exoplanet-explorer.space

Based on data provided by NASA, this fascinating tool lets you discover and learn more about a staggering 3,000



planets found outside our Sun's solar system. Using stunning imagery to show each

exoplanet's orbit around its star, it also provides detailed info ranging from the celestial body's temperature, density and mass to its orbital period and year of discovery. Click Show List to select an individual exoplanet or choose Next Planet to cycle from one to another while pondering the vastness of space and your own insignificant place in the universe.

Check if you're eligible for free NHS prescriptions

bit.ly/nhs459

Anyone living in England has to pay for an NHS prescription unless they have an exemption. This tool lets you find out if you're entitled for help with NHS costs by answering a series of simple questions. You'll then discover if you can get free prescriptions or learn how you can save money by prepaying for them.



NEW VOICE COMMANDS

Play Disney games

Say "Hey Google" followed by "play Maui's Music Game", "play Toy Story Freeze Dance" or "play Disney Princess" to enjoy some fun Disney-inspired adventures.

Use Siri Shortcuts

Apps now suggest Siri shortcuts, inviting you to create a specific voice command to carry out a task. When you see a suggestion, tap Add to Siri, press the red button and record a phrase.

Get daily nutritional advice

Enable the Kellogg's' Every Day Nutrition (by Special K) Alexa skill to get vitamin advice and tips about upping your iron intake. Just say, "Alexa, help with Special K".

Play retro games on Switch

bit.ly/switch459

If you like old-school games, you'll love Nintendo's new Switch Online service. Annual membership costs £17.99 to play classics such as Mario Bros, Zelda and Donkey Kong on a Nintendo Switch console.

Return eBay items without

www.ebav.co.uk

To make it easier to send back unwanted items, eBay now accepts return requests as soon as a buyer asks. This has proven controversial among sellers but means buyers receive return labels instantly.

Read a parent's guide to social media

bit.ly/parents459

Instagram's new downloadable parent's guide addresses the dangers of social media and gives a useful overview of the app's safety, privacy and comment-filtering tools.

Windows 10 October update might not fit on your PC

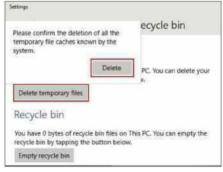
What happened?

Microsoft is set to release its next major update for Windows 10 later this month, but the Windows 10 October 2018 Update – as it's been named – could pose a serious problem for computers with limited storage space.

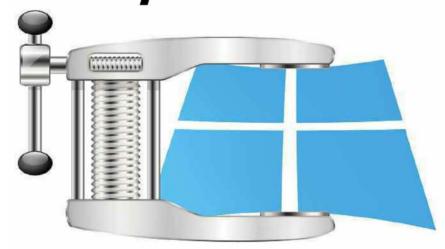
A Microsoft support document (bit.ly/support459) warns that the installation may fail on any device with "low storage space", such as budget laptops, noting that the update does not check systems to see whether they have adequate space before initialising. This means it's up to Windows users to check this before upgrading to the latest version of the operating system.

This isn't the first time that budget devices with low storage have been hit by update woes. Microsoft states that the minimum hardware requirement for Windows 10 is 16GB on 32-bit versions of the operating system and 20GB for 64-bit. Since Windows 10 itself is around 10GB to download, that doesn't leave much room for your own data when you install the update.

Another disappointment for Windows 10 users is the apparent lack of a Smart Updater. This intriguing feature – touted by Microsoft earlier this year and expected to arrive in the October 2018 Update – uses artificial intelligence to make smarter automated updates. It predicts the optimum time to restart your computer when installing an update, so you don't find yourself nipping off for a quick cup of tea only



Delete temporary files and empty the Bin to make room for the Windows 10 update



to come back to a machine that's suddenly halfway through an installation and has lost all your unsaved files. While Smart Updater has shown up in previous builds of Windows 10 preview editions used by beta testers, it recently disappeared without a trace.

How will it affect you?

Before the October update arrives, take a few minutes to check your devices, making sure they have enough room to install the new operating system. On most computers, this simply involves going to Settings, opening the System section and scrolling down to Storage. If you're only just short of the required space, you can use Windows 10's 'Storage sense' feature to automatically clean up your temporary files and the Recycle Bin.

If you still don't have enough space to install the update, you have two options: delete some of your own files or expand your storage using an external drive or SD memory card. Start by deleting any apps and software you don't actually use, and clear out your Recycle Bin, downloads and temporary files. It's worth backing up your files before a major update anyway, so take the opportunity to archive any files you don't often use to online storage or a separate hard drive.

If you're running Windows on a budget laptop, buy the largest

SD card you can afford to help you avoid the storage-space crunch. It's worth spending a bit extra to get more space, or storing your files in the cloud. Indeed, if you're after a budget laptop and aren't wedded to Windows, you should consider getting one that runs Chrome OS, which updates almost constantly and doesn't roll out major installations that make huge demands on storage.

What do we think?

Installing updates such as the Windows 10 October Update brings fixes for security vulnerabilities, boosts to performance and a variety of welcome extra features – all for free. However, they can be a pain to install, so expect to hear plenty of reports of failed updates and bugs. Indeed, it's often worth waiting a few weeks before updating, to give Microsoft time to fix any problems, rather than rushing in and encountering them yourself.

Updates are a hassle, but they're better than being left with an insecure system or without the latest features. That's why we were so keen for the arrival of Smart Updater - here's hoping Microsoft has it ready soon, because it could save millions of Windows users around the world a ton of frustration.

We'll explain how to guarantee that you have enough space on your computer for the October 2018 Update in the next issue of *Web User*.

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

Amazon unveils new Alexa home devices

What happened?

Amazon launched a new range of devices controlled by its Alexa voice assistant, including an Echo Show speaker with a display, an in-car dashboard gadget and even an Alexa-powered microwave. It also unveiled smart plugs that allow any device to be controlled via Alexa, and updated its existing Echo lineup.

Alongside the hardware, Amazon introduced Alexa Hunches, a new feature that uses artificial intelligence to predict tailored reminders for you. The aim is to observe your patterns, then tell you when you deviate, such as reminding you to lock a door before you go to bed. The company said Alexa will take a few weeks to get to know your habits before making suggestions.

How will it affect you?

The Echo Show goes on sale this month for £220, alongside the updated Echo Dot and Echo Plus, with the smart plug costing £25. So far, the microwave and in-car hub are only set to be released in the US.

Amazon often tests the success of a new product in its home (American) market before rolling it out more widely. The software updates should come to all existing Alexa devices, but if you're not keen on Amazon using Hunches to make recommendations about your home and habits, you should turn it off – it's activated by default.

What do we think?

Amazon seems determined to cram its Alexa assistant into as many devices as possible, but whether the company's vision of a smart home chimes with what people want remains to be seen. There are obvious benefits to smart-home tech, such as intelligently managing your heating to cut costs, but it's hard to see why you'd want to speak to your microwave. Saying "cook this potato" may be easier than the often confusing button controls, but we'd have serious reservations about handing data about the food we eat and our other domestic activities directly to Amazon.



Government plans for web regulation



What happened?

The UK government wants internet companies to do more to protect web users and contribute to the fight against terror and crime, and is working on proposals that may include a web regulator akin to Ofcom. That's according to a leaked White Paper, which suggests that an internet regulator could be tasked with punishing web firms that don't remove extremist material, hate speech or child-abuse images quickly enough.

This follows a German law fining social platforms that don't remove such material within 24 hours. Other plans in the documents leaked to BuzzFeed News (bit.ly/buzz459) include forcing social networks to verify the ages of their users and making them restrict ads for unhealthy food and drink, perhaps blocking sites that don't comply.

How will it affect you?

The concern with such laws is that smaller websites will find it impossible to comply: it's one thing to expect Facebook to use its huge profits to hire moderators, but it's more

.....

difficult for companies that are less well off. Additionally, there are concerns over freedom of speech and worries that websites could be blocked in error.

Deciding what content will be illegal is another challenge – one that could slow down any efforts at policing the web. That said, the full details of the White Paper haven't yet been finalised and these are nothing more than proposals. Don't expect changes any time soon.

What do we think?

Social-media sites and other web giants need to take more responsibility for the inherent dangers on their platforms, and a dedicated regulator could help focus this work.

That said, it's worth noting that child-abuse images, hate speech and terrorism materials are already illegal. Socialmedia firms may need more motivation to crack down on illegal content on their sites, be it through fines or the threat of being banned, but creating more laws to abolish yet more content may prove controversial.

Millions of mobile customers overcharged

What happened?

If your phone contract is with EE, Vodafone or Three, you may be paying for a handset you already own, according to Citizens Advice.

When signing up for a new phone, an ongoing fee is levied to pay for the handset. However, network operators don't always tell their customers when their fixed-term contracts are up, so if you don't change your airtime plan, you could be charged for a device that's already yours.

The consumer charity branded the practice of knowingly overcharging customers as "unacceptable", revealing that four million people have paid an extra - and unnecessary - £490m.

Gillian Guy, chief executive of Citizens Advice, said: "We need action. Other companies have already stopped doing this, so we're looking for these three major providers to follow suit."

The group's research shows that older customers are twice as likely to continue paying for their phone, costing them an extra £264 each year. The study also looked at 700 different handsetinclusive contracts - in 73% of cases, a SIM-free contract and purchasing a phone outright was cheaper.

When pressed for a statement, the three networks fingered for the con responded by saying that all contract end dates are clearly communicated to



customers. In other words, 'not our problem, guv'.

How will it affect you?

Unless your contract is with Vodafone, Three or EE, you should be okay. O2, which already splits airtime and device costs, claims that charging for phones that have been paid off "does nothing but damage customer trust and the reputation of the industry".

Your wallet takes the biggest hit. Citizens Advice indicates that it costs customers who don't switch contracts an extra £22 per month on average; if you still have an iPhone 8, your monthly overcharge rises to £48.

And unless your contract is unclear about continued higher costs after the

fixed-term end date, you can't even claim compensation.

What do we think?

Charging for property you already own is brazen daylight robbery, and exploits people confused by the intricacies of handset-inclusive contracts and tariffs. Ofcom is currently bringing new plans to combat contract overcharges, but these won't be published till March 2019, and rumours suggest they'll require network providers to send just one end-of-contract notification.

Citizens Advice says everyone should "check their phone bills to see if they can save money with a SIM-only contract or upgrade to a new phone". We couldn't put it any better ourselves.

FIRST LOOK

PlayStation Classic bit.ly/psone459

Following the recent success of Nintendo's NES and SNES Classic Mini consoles - and Sega's discreet announcement of a forthcoming MegaDrive Mini - Sony has unveiled a miniature of its best-selling PSX console: the PlayStation Classic.

It's difficult to understate the original PlayStation's game-changing impact on an industry once dominated by Nintendo and Sega. Thanks to impressive, disc-based 3D graphics and a massive library of titles that included Tomb Raider, Grand Theft Auto and Resident Evil, the iconic console helped propel a niche hobby further into the mainstream. And Sony will be banking on that nostalgia to drive the success (and

sales) of its retro-gaming replica.

The diminutive console is 45% smaller than its clunky predecessor, and comes packed with modern-day hardware that should improve graphics and load times. In the box - which, naturally, mirrors the original packaging - are a PlayStation Classic console, two old-school controllers, an HDMI lead and a USB power cable. You'll need to supply your own plug, though.

Released on 3 December - precisely 24 years after the console first appeared on Japanese shelves, and just in time for Christmas - the portable reproduction retails for £90. If that seems a tad steep, you can still pick up a second-hand PlayStation for about £25 (though you'll need to buy your own games and find a TV with Scart or AV connections).

But you won't be replaying those old games you stashed in the loft decades ago; like Nintendo's mini machines, the PS Classic is little more than a limited emulator pre-loaded with 20 games that, according to the company, lets gamers "play games with real-time 3D rendered graphics

> in their homes for the first time". While the full line-up has yet to be revealed, Sony confirmed the Classic features Tekken 3, Ridge Racer Type 4, Jumping Flash, Wild Arms and the masterful Final Fantasy VII.

WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will the next Google Home have a screen?

Images apparently showing a new Google Home device with a screen have leaked online ahead of the company's product-launch event on 9 October. Dubbed the Google Home Hub, the device appears to be taking on the Amazon Echo Show by combining Google Assistant features with a touchscreen interface.

D 8:00 AM - Tue, Oct 9 20 min to work

We've known for a while that Google Assistant is capable of working on displays, but only third-party manufacturers have actually started to develop such systems. Now, according to the leak, it seems Google has created its own model.

The leaked images of the Google Home Hub show a device that looks like a melding of a Nexus 10 tablet and a Google Home speaker. The tablet-like screen section appears to be resting on the speaker base, which makes it look more like a tablet on a stand than a single entertainment unit.

MySmartPrice, which leaked the product and has watermarked the images, claims that the Google Home Hub has a 7in LCD screen rising up from a fabric-wrapped speaker stand. The device reportedly weighs 480g - only a little more than the standard Google Home device.

No price has been stated, but rumours suggest it will cost \$149 (£113), making it around the same price as an Echo Show.

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LIKELIHOOD RATING 11111

It's believed we'll find out more about the Google Home Hub at Google's October devices event. where the company is expected to unveil the Google Pixel 3 and Pixel 3 XL. However, even if the screen-and-speaker unit does exist outside of the leaked images, don't hold your breath for a UK release right away. Google tends to announce its new Home products for the US first and then wait before rolling them out in the UK.

What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

WingLights360

bit.ly/wing459 | From £1

Cyclists vs drivers, locked in a perilous battle for road space. WingLights360 is an update on the Dragons' Den-backed original - waterproof, shockproof indicator lights that help prevent reckless overtaking by highlighting a bike's precise position and intent on the streets. Screw the magnetic side-lights into your handlebars and activate them with one tap. A single USB charge lasts over three hours, which should be enough to safely see you through your commute. Pledges start at £1; a £48 donation rewards you with a set of side-lights; and £158 gets you a family four-pack of WingLights360.



WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Vivaldi releases second version of browser

Vivaldi, which won our 'Battle of the Browsers' earlier this year, has released its biggest update yet, with version 2.0 now available to download. New features include

sync functionality, resizable tab tiling and floating web panels.

WhatsApp set to get dark mode

WhatsApp is reportedly working on a dark mode for its Android and iOS apps, to make reading messages at night easier on your eyes. Many other services have recently introduced dark modes, including YouTube and Edge.



WE DON'T LIKE...

Twitter users' direct messages leaked

Twitter has warned an undisclosed number of users that their private messages may have been exposed to third parties. The bug involved direct messages between users and



▲ Gmail account data still being shared

and has since been fixed.

business accounts on Twitter,

Google is still letting third-party services access people's Gmail accounts, according to a letter sent to US senators. The search giant stated that:



"Developers may share data with third parties so long as they are transparent with the users".

Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

TV Licensing accepted unencrypted payments

The TV Licensing website has admitted directing 25,000 viewers to send their bank details over an unencrypted connection.



In a statement, the organisation said that tens of thousands of customers had sent personal details over an unsecure HTTP connection when making payments and setting up direct debits, but insisted that credit and debit card payments were not compromised.

"We can now confirm that fewer than 25,000 customers sent over unencrypted bank details and that credit and debit cards numbers were always secure," the agency said. "There is no evidence of the website being subject to any sort of attack, or anyone having acted maliciously".

The agency has been criticised for having an HTTP branch of its website, which didn't redirect to HTTPS and handled forms containing sensitive financial information such as account and sort-code details. TV Licensing subsequently took its website offline as it migrated to the encrypted protocol, and advised viewers to check their bank statements for suspicious transfers. bit.ly/tvlicensing459

Internet of Things malware triples in 2018

Kaspersky's latest IoT Lab Report has revealed that Internet of Things malware tripled in the first half of 2018, and that attacks are becoming more sophisticated as hackers realise the financial opportunities of breaking into networked devices.

The report found that attacks such as malicious cryptocurrency mining, DDoS (direct denial of service) attacks and botnet activities are becoming more prevalent and harder for manufacturers to combat.





methods, accounting for 93% of attacks, involved criminals using brute force to guess passwords. Routers were the most popular target, with 60% of all attacks aimed at them; the remaining 40% were split between digital video recorders, printers and other IoT devices, including 33 washing machines.

"For those people who think that IoT devices don't seem powerful enough to attract the attention of cybercriminals, and that won't become targets for malicious activities, this research should serve as a wake-up call," said David Emm, principal security researcher at Kaspersky Lab. bit.ly/iot459

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

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





Julie Marsh, Twitter

Encryption is arguably the most important method. Schools should ensure their Wi-Fi networks are safe and encrypted, and should take IT audits to test their

it's unrealistic to expect all schools to encrypt their Wi-Fi networks immediately. Therefore. parents should take matters into their own hands and install a VPN on their kids' computers and tablets. VPNs create a connection tunnel that automatically encrypts all the data coming in and out of a device, and effectively protects anyone using the

internet, especially on open

should also warn their kids to

Wi-Fi networks. Parents

security. However,

be especially cautious when connecting to open networks because they can easily be monitored. Game scams pose a particular threat to children. You should

supervise when your children install games, research to see if the game and the provider are reputable, and make sure you only download games from a reliable source. Too often, fake games are uploaded online and made deliberately eye-catching on websites, prompting kids to install them for free, when in fact

they contain malware that could infect your device.

Children should also be wary of email deals, which are invariably fake. If your kids receive an email about a great offer such as a free mobile phone or concert tickets, it's a trick designed to get them to provide personal information. Advise your kids to always show you such emails and never to respond to them if they offer free stuff.

Kids these days are very tech-savvy, but if they are not taught basic internet safety rules from an early age, they could fall prey to online identity theft, hackings and snooping.





GB2488HSU | GB2788HS

Panel	TN LED / 1920 x 1080
Response time	1 ms, 144Hz, FreeSync**
Features	OverDrive, Black Tuner, Blue Light Reducer, Predefined and Custom Gaming Modes
Inputs	DVI-D, HDMI, DisplayPort
Audio	speakers and headhpone connector
the laboration and the same below	10







GE2288HS¹ | GE2488HS-B1² | GE2488HS-B2¹ | GE2788HS-B2¹ | GE2788HS-B2¹ |

Panel	TN LED / 1920 x 1080
Response time	1 ms, 60Hz
Features	FreeSync™, OverDrive, Black Tuner, Blue Light Reducer, Predefined and Custom Gaming Modes
Inputs	VGA², DVI-D, HDMI
Audio	speakers and headhpone connector
Height adjustable	







GB2888UHSU

Panel	TN LED / 3840 x 2160
Response time	1 ms, FreeSync™
Features	OverDrive, Black Tuner, Blue Light Reducer, Predefined and Custom Gaming Modes
Inputs	DVI-D, HDMI, DisplayPort
Audio	speakers and headhpone connector
Height adjustable	13 cm







GB2783QSU

Panel	TN LED / 2560x1440, QHD
Response time	1 ms, 60Hz
Features	FreeSync ^m , OverDrive, Black Tuner, Blue Light Reducer, Predefined and Custom Gaming Modess
Inputs	DVI-D, HDMI, DisplayPort
Audio	speakers and headhpone connector
Height adjustable	13 cm













Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

Mental Health At Work

www.mentalhealthatwork .org.uk

Launched by Prince William and curated by the charity Mind, this wonderful new site seeks to improve mental wellbeing in the workplace by providing an online portal packed with info and training for staff and managers. The toolkits offer packages of resources based around a theme, speedy search makes it easy to navigate the data and a resource finder narrows by topic, type of job, workplace, role and company size. We particularly love the Urgent Help button, which links to relevant organisations.

Our rating





PODCASTS

The site also

uses outside

as podcasts

and CIPD websites

hosted on the

Financial Times

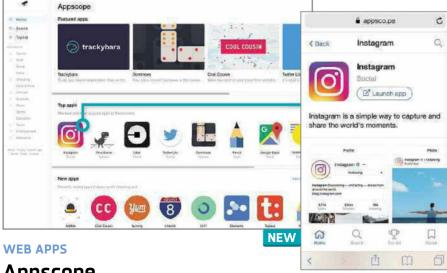
resources such

RESOURCES Browse the documents, tips, videos, podcasts and guides, using the filters to find relevant content









Appscope

appsco.pe

This bustling directory of web-based applications looks like a regular app store, but instead of highlighting downloadable software, it offers Progressive Web Apps (PWA) that launch in your browser without taking up any storage space on your device. The site includes a host of big names from Instagram to Google Maps, all neatly placed in a wealth of categories alongside Featured, Top and New apps, and a fast search engine. What's more, everything is free. Simply select the PWA you like the look of, view screenshots and a list of features, and click Launch App when you're ready. You can also add the site to your iPhone or Android home screen for easy access.

Our rating





NATURE

The Wildlife Garden **Project**

wildlifegardenproject.com

The Wildlife Garden Project offers fertile ideas for creating a horticultural haven in your own backyard, with tips and tricks for nurturing plants and attracting creatures from birds to bats, and close-up photos of Britain's finest critters showcased in the fresh redesign. The Species section provides a fascinating overview of wild animals lurking in your garden, while the video library's tutorials show you how to create bug hotels, bird boxes and bird-seed cakes for peck-ish visitors. It's a fantastic way to entertain and educate green-fingered enthusiasts.

Our rating



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





MUSIC Brass Bands England

www.bbe.org.uk

Without blowing its own trumpet, Brass Band England's new website is marching down the right path. It not only provides support for people running or participating in a brass band, but keeps visitors informed of the latest news, lets vou search for events and allows vou to pay for membership online. It still has some way to go - the member resources and FAQ are rather bare and while it looks good, it can feel a little lacking in oomph. You also need to click around too much to find the membership sign-up page (and again if you want to make a one-off rather than recurring payment).

Our rating





HEALTH

Sing and Say

bit.ly/sing459

Aimed at developing speech, language and communication skills, Sing and Say hopes to build the confidence of young people with craniofacial conditions. It does this through a combination of play and song, serving up a collection of activity-based videos and easy-to-play tunes, specially created to encourage kids to learn. Produced by the Oxford NHS Trust, the site includes authoritative PDF leaflets and booklets providing essential resources for parents to work on their child's development in between hospital appointments and understand more about the condition.

Our rating





TRAVEL

Touring Bird

www.touringbird.com

If you're planning a city break in North America or Europe, this site - created by Google's ideas incubator, Area 120 - lists the top sights, guided tours and activities in each destination, dishes out local tips and bundles together attractions to suit a wide range of interests. Each guide is compiled by expert teams and includes a selection of interesting facts, breakdowns of what's included in an activity or tour and, for those wishing to book an attraction, a clear description of the cancellation policies. Activities can also be filtered, but be aware that the site operates in US dollars only.

Our rating





BACKISSUES 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





Letterbox Luxuries

www.letterboxluxuries.co.uk

When we first visited Letterbox Luxuries,

we found ourselves hunting for a pop-up

give a whimsical appearance but it rather

a lovely range of gifts small enough to fit

lessens the site's impact. Thankfully, the

other pages are bolder, showcasing

through your letterbox. Each item is

described in great detail, with space

preferred delivery dates. There's also

thorough FAQ and a straightforward

a sweet and cheerful blog highlighting

to add personalised messages and

the latest offers, a delightful and

way to contact the company.

window because the screen looked so

washed out. Presumably, it's meant to

RELAUNCH

BOOKS

Verve Books

VERVE BOOKS - CURRENT TITLES

www.vervebooks.co.uk

Verve Books is a new digital-only fiction publisher launched by the independent Oldcastle Books. It specialises in crime, thrillers, historical fiction, and commercial women's fiction but there's currently only one book available: The Righteous Spy by Merle Nygate. As such, content is a tad thin on the ground - the authors section only includes details about Nygate while the news section details the launch of the site. That, of course, will change over time and you can sign up to the newsletter to hear about future launches. Emerging authors will also be interested in the submissions page, where you can upload your manuscript for consideration.

RIGHTEOUS





TOYS

NEW

The ToyShop

www.thetoyshop.com

With online sales up 30%, The ToyShop has not only made some background tweaks to cope with demand but has also made shopping for toys even faster. The new predictive search shows a selection of toys accompanied by images as you type, and the categories have been tidied up. Meanwhile, the Gift Ideas section has been refined so that it no longer references gender. The overall effect is a more pleasant, better-looking experience with room to promote featured toys and a neater personalisation section. The designers have also played around with the mobile version of the site, making it a lot more intuitive to use.

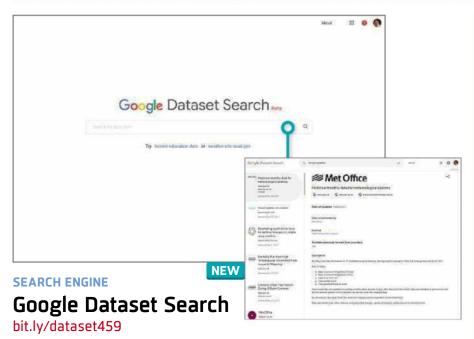
Our rating



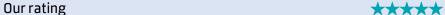
Our rating

GIFTS





Developed for scientists and journalists, Google's new search engine lets you scour the many open data repositories scattered across the web. It grants easy access to information collated by governments, academic institutions, public libraries and individuals and, though it relies on datasets being properly described with indexable metadata tags, there's plenty to peruse. It includes datasets from the Met Office, NASA, local authorities, universities and many other institutions, with details of who created the information, how it was collected and how it should be used - ensuring that everything is above board, as well as immaculately presented.





Cheshire Live

www.cheshire-live.co.uk

Cheshire's first news, sport and entertainment hub combines the content of the Chester Chronicle, Crewe Chronicle and Macclesfield Express. However, being spread over such a wide area doesn't always work in its favour and the navigation bar feels cluttered by trying to cope with separate sections for the three main towns. Worse, Macclesfield Town Football Club is missing from the More menu, and the 'Traffic & Travel' section is a sprawl. The site also suffers from clumsily placed ads and surveys that obstruct content until they are completed.

Our rating



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Transform your videos with Wix tools

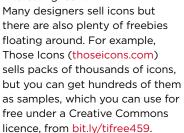
Wix (www.wix.com) has a new tool, Videobox, that lets you break your videos out of the usual rectangular viewer and change the way they look. As well as using different shapes, you can add interesting overlay textures and control the playback, making some sections slow motion and adding interesting effects. Find out more at bit.ly/vidb459.



Free icons for your website

Websites look plain without images, but if your site isn't particularly conducive to showing

off photographs or you're not a confident designer, you could consider adding a visual boost with some interesting icons.



Deal of the Fortnight

.....

eUKhost (www.eukhost.com) is offering its Basic web hosting package for £3.33 per month, which includes 2GB of storage, unlimited bandwidth. 10 MvSQL databases and a free domain name.

Web-building Helpdesk

I want to learn how to build websites from scratch but don't know where to start. What would you recommend?

Mike Franklin, via email

Search Google and you'll find stacks of online resources that teach you how to build a website. However, we're not going to bother listing them because you've probably already been overwhelmed by the options. Instead, we'll point you to one of our favourites: Mozilla's 'Learn web development' website at bit.ly/ lwd459. This clear and sensibly organised resource guides you through the process of creating a site with HTML, CSS and JavaScript. It describes all the basics in detail, provides downloadable files you can build from and experiment with, and has an assessment at the end of each section, where you can create your own sites using the information you've learned.

> Andy Shaw, Technical & Reviews Editor, Web User

MINI WORKSHOP | Publish formatted WordPress pages straight from a mobile notepad Simplenote: simplenote.com | (1) 10 mins | (1) 10 Android, WordPress

Automattic, the company behind WordPress, has its own notepad software. If you have the WordPress app on your mobile, you can use the Simplenote app to draft posts and upload them straight to your website



Create your web page in Simplenote on any device. When it's ready to publish, open the Simplenote app on an Android or iOS device that also has the WordPress app installed. Open the note and tap the 'i' button, 11 then tap the Send button. 2



Tap the WordPress icon. Your note may be treated as quoted text, with a border around it. 11 If this is the case, and you'd like to get rid of the formatting, tap a paragraph, then tap the quotation marks below. 2 When you're happy, tap Next, 13 then Publish.



You can use Markdown to change the formatting of your note, such as using the hash (#) symbol to create headings 1 and the asterisk (*) to make text bold and italic. 2 For a full rundown of the formatting options available with Markdown, go to the Markdown Guide at bit.ly/mkdo459.



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What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight





Meet The Romanoffs in Amazon's new weekly series

Everything about The Romanoffs is big. Big budget (\$70m), big writer-director (Mad Men creator Matthew Weiner), big cast (dozens of famous names, including Aaron Eckhart from $\it The\ Dark$ Knight, Christina Hendricks from Mad Men and Griffin Dunne from American Werewolf in London) - and a big wait in between episodes. Well, a week.

In a first for Amazon, The Romanoffs' eight episodes arrive weekly, one every Friday, rather than landing as a box set. This old-fashioned tactic can be frustrating (for example, the BBC's Bodyguard works better as a binge: bit.ly/bodyguard459), but in this case it's a good fit because each episode is a self-contained film focusing on a different modern-day character who believes they're descended from the Russian royal family.

The first trailer (bit.ly/romanoffs459) comprises little other than actors' names floating around to The Apprentice theme (sorry, Prokofiev's Dance of the Knights), but the second (click the sidebar) offers a glimpse of each episode and has already spawned a YouTube drinking game (scroll to Andrey in the comments, and don't say we didn't warn you!).



Watch Netflix comedy **Big Mouth**

From 5 October

Two eternal truths: puberty is horrible, and Netflix loves cartoons for grownups. Put them together and you've got Emmy-nominated animated comedy Big Mouth, back for a second season of painful, unfair and so embarrassing reminders of why you'd never ever want to be a teenager again.

US comedy stars Maya Rudolph and Fred Armisen (currently appearing in Amazon's sitcom Forever, bit.ly/ forever459) head the cast, while Family Guy scribe Andrew Goldberg is



on writing duty. It's a winning combination, if Season 1's rare 100% Rotten Tomatoes score is anything to go by (www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/ big_mouth). Watch the trailers on Netflix, with or without a subscription: bit.ly/bigmouth459.

See The Walking Dead rise yet again

From 8 October

The Walking Dead is the defining TV show of the decade. Game of Thrones fans may disagree, but it's hard to argue with nine seasons (so far) plus a spin-off (Fear the Walking Dead, watch Seasons 1-4 on Amazon bit.ly/fear459); four seasons of webisodes (Torn Apart, bit.ly/tornapart459); and a discussion show (Talking Dead, bit.ly/talking459).

Andrew Lincoln (This Life, Teachers) is back as Rick Grimes, who kicked it all off by waking from a coma to find the world overrun by "walkers". Lincoln has confirmed Season 9 is his last, but is it a happy ending or ...? No-one's saying.

Episodes air at 9pm each Monday on Fox UK, followed at 10pm by Talking



Dead. Stream and watch on-demand with a Now TV Entertainment Pass (14 days free, then £7.99 per month: bit.ly/nowdead459). Watch the trailer at bit.ly/walkingdead459.



Watch Amazon's Nazi sci-fi The Man in the High Castle

From 5 October

What if the Nazis had won World War Two and brought back slavery? That's the chilling premise of Amazon's alternative-reality drama, now entering its third season.

The Man in the High Castle is based on Philip K Dick's dystopian sci-fi novel, in which the German Reich and Imperial

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



Japan control the US coasts and the Resistance rises from the Rocky Mountains (home to the mysterious titular character). Dick's work also inspired Blade Runner, whose director Ridley Scott is on hand here as executive producer. Regular cast members include Rufus Sewell (Victoria, The Illusionist), who plays memorably monikered Obergruppenführer John Smith.

Season 3's 10 episodes arrive on Amazon Prime Video on 5 October. Watch the latest trailer at bit.ly/ castle459 and recap Seasons 1 and 2 at bit.ly/castlerecap459.

Watch a month of cricket and rugby on Now TV

From 10 October England's cricket team face Sri Lanka in five one-day internationals



across October, starting at 10am on Wednesday 10th. You can watch all the Sky Sports coverage live and ondemand via Now TV (bit.ly/ nowcricket459). Find more of October's cricket fixtures, including the Twenty20

Netflix comes to Sky Q

Netflix is coming to Sky TV, as part of a new package on the Sky Q home streaming system. Sky Q Ultimate On Demand (UOD), coming in November, adds Netflix to paid-for Sky content including Sky Box Sets, which offers around 400 US and UK shows. Sky Q subscribers can add UOD for £10 a month - less than the combined cost of Netflix and Sky Box Sets.

The partnership between Sky and Netflix could mean trouble for Now TV and the BBC. Previously, it made sense to ditch your set-top box and pay for

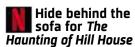
Now TV (owned by Sky) and Netflix separately. That may no longer be the case, depending on what you're paying for Sky Q. Meanwhile the BBC has complained that Sky Q "buries" iPlayer content to promote paid-for shows. Find out more about Sky Q Ultimate On Demand, and register your interest, at bit.ly/skyflix459.



Series, at bit.ly/skycricket459.

Now TV also has the Rugby Super League Grand Final, between two as-yet unconfirmed home teams on Saturday 13 October.

Now TV's Sky Sports Day Pass costs £7.99; a week is £12.99; and a month is currently £16.99 (normally £33.99). Sign up at bit.ly/nowsport459.



From 12 October Netflix's new aothic horror series, based on the classic 1959 novel by Shirley Jackson, is ostensibly for teenagers

- but don't let that put you off. Many of the great paranormal dramas are aimed at younger audiences, but this story touches on decidedly adult topics

including suicide. Indeed, best-selling author Stephen King called The Haunting of Hill House one of the finest horror novels of the 20th Century.

Henry Thomas (Elliot from ET) and Timothy Hutton (currently in Amazon's Jack Ryan) lead the grown-ups among a mainly younger cast. Netflix lets you watch the trailers without a subscription (bit.ly/haunting459). Enter if you dare.



in case

ITV's 1950s drama The Bletchley Circle was cancelled five years ago but lives to decrypt another day, largely thanks to US

fans. Both seasons are now on Netflix (bit.ly/ bletchley459) and a spin-off, The Bletchley Circle: San Francisco, is on YouTube Premium (bit.ly/ bletchtube 459, £6.99 per season). Also new are the Netflix Original film, Alaskaset murder mystery Hold the Dark (bit.ly/dark459) and the final season of FBI drama Hannibal (bit.ly/

Over on Now TV, South Park is back for Season 22 - but Seasons 1-18 have just expired (bit.ly/ southpark459). New films

to watch with a Now TV Sky Cinema Pass include All the Money in the World and the brilliant tennis flick Battle of the Sexes (bit.ly/

nowcinema459).

And, of course, the new series of Doctor Who, with Jodie Whittaker debuting as the Thirteenth Doctor

> is available to stream on BBC iPlayer from 7 October. You can watch the official trailer at bit.ly/who459.





We test and compare the latest products

Microsoft Surface Go



he Surface Go is a 10in Windows tablet with a difference – with the addition of an optional keyboard, it transforms into a usable and useful laptop. If you prefer Windows to iOS and Android, this could be the hybrid device you've been looking for.

Microsoft is selling it in two configurations: one with 4GB of memory and a 64GB eMMC drive for £360.74 (from Amazon at bit.ly/sg4gb459); the other with 8GB of memory and a 128GB SATA 3 SSD for £499.99 (from Amazon at bit.ly/sg8gb459). There's a significant price difference between the two models but

we recommend paying the extra for the higher-spec version because you need every ounce of performance to run Windows 10, and 4GB of memory just isn't enough.

However, you'll need to spend a further £96.16 for the basic, black keyboard (bit.ly/ kbbl459) or £108.20 for one that's finished in fancy Alcantara (bit.ly/kbal459), which pushes the price of the higher-spec bundle up to £596.15. Admittedly, this is beginning to creep into expensive territory, but it's actually pretty reasonable when you compare the price to rival tablets: the recently launched Samsung Galaxy Tab S4 is £599 plus £119 for the add-on keyboard; while the 10.5-inch iPad Pro is £619 plus £159 for the keyboard. Only the regular 9.7in iPad for

The screen is superb, and is more versatile than rival tablets because it's capable of running Windows software

£319 and a Bluetooth keyboard can better it for price, but this combo won't provide the authentic laptop feel of the Surface Go.

Performance

Even with the higher specs, the Surface Go isn't going to win any awards for speed. It scored 2,050 in the single-core Geekbench 4 test, rising to 4,026 in the multicore portion. That's slower than any of Apple's iPads and well behind comparable Android models, too. It didn't shine in our Windows-based benchmarks either, with a score of 20. For reference, last issue's Gold Award-winning



laptop, the £629.99 Acer Aspire 5, scored 85 in the same Windows test.

That said, web pages appear reasonably quickly and it's adequate for typical Windows jobs, such as tapping away in Word, reading PDFs and editing the occasional photo. Just don't use it for anything too demanding, such as editing video.

Screen quality

The screen is terrific and its image quality is right up there with the iPad - though it doesn't match the iPad Pro. A resolution of 1800 x 1200 pixels translates into a sharp 217ppi (pixels per inch) and its maximum brightness of 426cd/m² (candles per square metre) means it's readable outside in all but the brightest conditions. We were pleasantly surprised by its colour accuracy, too, which displayed a respectable 90% of the sRGB colour standard.

We settled into a prolonged Netflix session to look for lost details in shadows and any other defects that might spoil the viewing pleasure, and the Surface Go sailed through with flying colours. It helps that the audio from its two side-mounted speakers is surprisingly strong, with great handling of speech - there's also a 3.5mm headphone socket built into the tablet if you want to plug in headphones.

On the downside, the 10in screen makes Windows feel

cramped. Poking at icons on the taskbar is fiddly (you'll end up using the generously sized trackpad on the keyboard) and in this respect, iOS and Android work better because they are designed for your fingers.

OS and keyboard

The Surface Go is presupplied in Windows S mode, which means you can only install apps from the Microsoft Store. This adds a layer of security but it also means you're restricted to browsing on Edge rather than Chrome. However, it's easy and free to switch to Windows 10 Home.

The £99 keyboard feels good to type on. The main keys are well-spaced enough to avoid mistyping and, while it's smaller than a standard keyboard, we had no difficulty hitting our normal touchtyping speeds.

The screen has a kickstand to support it in laptop mode, but its compact size makes it comfortable to use on your lap, even if you have relatively short legs! The touchpad is

large and responsive, while the backlit keys make it easy to use in dim or dark conditions

Build, ports and battery life

Without a kevboard, there's nothing special

about the tablet's design. At first glance, it's almost indistinguishable from an iPad, with chunky black bezels surrounding the screen. There's no Home button, though - just a power button and volume up/down rockers

Also around the edge are a microSD slot, Surface Connect port and USB Type-C port, which can be used as a display output or for extra storage. However, you'll need some kind of hub if you want to connect more than one device at a time.

on the right-hand edge.

Sadly, the USB-C port can't be used to charge the device, which is a pain because it means you'll need to carry around the 170g power supply if you think your battery might run down during your

To accentuate the problem, the battery life itself isn't brilliant, lasting 6 hours and 44 minutes in our standard battery test. Windows 10 is a more power-intensive operating system to run than iOS or Android and, because you have a full x86 processor inside, it consumes more electricity than the ARM chips that are built into its rivals.

PRODUCT INFO

Microsoft **Surface Go**

From £360.74 Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/sg8gb459

SPECIFICATIONS

- Intel Pentium Gold Processor 4415Y
- 4GB or 8GB of memory
- 64GB eMMC or 128GB SSD
- 10in 1,800 x 1,200 pixels resolution display
- 802.11a/b/g/n/ac Wi-Fi
- ■1 x USB-C port
- 1 x Surface Connect port
- 1 x microSDXC card reader
- 3.5 mm headphone jack
- Windows 10 S
- 245 x 175 x 8.3mm
- = 522g

FOR

- Excellent keyboard
- ✓ Superb screen
- ✓ Well-priced

AGAINST

X Performance can be slow at times X Battery life isn't as good as iPad Pro's

CHEAPER TABLET

Apple iPad, £319 Buy from John Lewis: bit.ly/ipad459



FASTER LAPTOP

Acer Aspire 5, £629.99 Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/acer459



OUR VERDICT

As a tablet, the Surface Go is a bit of a disappointment, primarily because it lacks the iPad's range of apps. The ones in the Microsoft Store are mostly repackaged software designed to use in Windows with a mouse and keyboard.

However, with the addition of its excellent £97 keyboard, the Surface Go

covers a second, very useful function by turning into a compact laptop - just be sure to choose the higherspec model.

The screen is superb, especially for watching videos, and is more versatile than rival tablets because it's capable of running Windows software.

If you've previously

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

avoided tablets because you find them limited in their capabilities, we urge you to take a look at the Surface Go. It really is a device like no other.

Canon Pixma TS6150

An affordable printer, scanner and copier that doesn't cut corners on speed or print quality

he Canon Pixma TS6150 is an all-in-one printer, scanner and copier aimed at home users with a creative bent. It includes two paper trays: an enclosed one in the base, and a rear feed for plain and photo paper. There's also automatic duplex (double-sided) printing and support for wireless networks. It's controlled via a touchscreen.

The printer has a five-ink setup comprising pigment black ink for text on plain paper, and dye-based black, cyan, magenta and yellow

PRODUCT INFO

Canon Pixma TS6150

Price: £98.04 Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/cano459

SPECIFICATIONS

- = 4,800 x 1,200dpi print resolution
- 1,200 x 2,400dpi scan resolution at RGB 16-bit colour
- 5 ink tanks
- Automatic duplex
- Borderless printing
- 100-sheet front paper tray,
- 20-sheet rear paper tray
- 7.5cm touchscreen LCD
- USB port
- 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi
- **372** x 315 x 139mm
- 6.2kg

FOR

- ✓ Five-ink system
- ✓ Rapid performance speeds
- ✓ High-quality prints and scans

AGAINST

- ✗ Slow duplex prints
- Poor colour photocopies
- Mono prints expensive

tanks for graphics and photos. Replacements come in standard, XL and XXL sizes. Calculated using the most costeffective XXL versions, running costs are a reasonable 8.6p per page of A4 graphics and text, but at 3p per page, the black component is surprisingly expensive compared to its rivals, due to the high price of the pigment ink cartridges.

Expensive mono prints aside, there's plenty to love. It produced our 25-page text test at 12ppm (pages per minute) and our test colour images at 3.9ppm. Photos were even more impressive, needing only 70 seconds to print each borderless 6 x 4in print at its highest-quality



of its results. Despite a so-so 1,200 x 2,400dpi maximum resolution, scanned images are about as good as you'll get from a multi-function device, showing excellent colour accuracy and sharply focused detailing.

Plain paper prints were great, too, exhibiting dark

Double-sided prints are on the slow side, and at the default settings they were fainter than the same pages printed on one side only, though you can tweak this if you don't mind waiting longer. Colour photocopies were also a touch drab.

We encountered a couple of annoying flaws in the Pixma's physical design – after stocking the rear paper tray, you need to remember to close the dust cover or the printer won't work. Also, the scanner lid is opened by a recessed handle in the front edge: grab it anywhere else and you'll end up lifting the entire scanner bed and opening the printer's internals, as if you wanted to replace the ink cartridges.

Scanned images are about as good as you'll get from a multi-function device

setting. Photocopies scanned and printed on the device were quick enough, at 13 seconds in mono and 23 seconds in colour.

Tested over Wi-Fi, scans were also rapid, with previews complete in seven seconds and a 300dpi A4 scan needing only 19 seconds. Things slowed down at higher resolutions, with a photo scan taking 31 seconds at 600dpi and about a minute and a half at 1,200dpi – but both these times are competitive for a home device.

Print quality

Where the Pixma TS6150 really delivers is in the quality

black text and punchy colour graphics. The printer also excelled on photo paper, delivering natural looking prints with sharp detailing.

There are a couple of weaker areas, however.

OUR VERDICT

Overall, the Pixma TS6150 is a classy device. Compact and quiet, it's easy to use and offers great all-round performance with only a few rough edges.

However, if you are printing in high volume, it's worth noting that its

FFATURES ***

FEATURES
PERFORMANCE
EASE OF USE
VALUE FOR MONEY

black-ink costs are relatively high compared to rival printers.







SEAMLESS, SECURE WHOLE-HOME WI-FI

Antivirus & Parental Controls Powered by Trend Micro™





Deco M5 Whole Home Wi-Fi System



Antivirus

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



Parental Controls

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



Bandwidth Prioritisation

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





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



₩eb User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE

LAPTOP

£629.99 from bit.ly/acer458



The Acer Aspire 5 is a no-frills, fast-performance laptop. It's not as slim and lightweight as top-of-the-range models, but is a reliable Windows workhorse that powers through tasks.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 1.6GHz Intel Core i5-8250U processor ■ 256GB SSD = 8GB memory = 15.6in, 1,920 x 1,080-pixels screen = 1 x USB 2, 2 x USB 3, 1x USB Type-C ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ Windows 10 Home ■ 382 x 263 x 21mm ■ 2.2kg ■ 1-year return-to-base

ROUTER

Linksys EA9500 Max-Śtream

£224.99 from bit.ly/lksy456

Tested: Issue 456



The EA9500 Max-Stream is a superb router that's packed with features and sensibly priced. It delivers terrific wireless speeds, creates two 5GHz networks on separate frequencies and offers an excellent smartphone app.

KEY SPECS

802.11a/b/g/n/ac ■ 8 x Gigabit Ethernet ports ■ 2 x USB 3 ports = Guest-network mode = DLNA media server = 318 x 265 x 67mm ■ Two-years return-to-base warranty

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.lv/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

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.

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

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

SOFTWARE & SERVICES

PHOTO-EDITING SOFTWARE

DxO PhotoLab

£99 from bit.ly/dxo455

Tested: Issue 455

If you're put off by Adobe's subscription costs, DxO PhotoLab is the



best alternative for managing and editing your photos. Its interface is streamlined and elegant, and the editing and image quality are exceptional. It's also very simple to use and comes with lots of sophisticated tools.

KEY FEATURES

RAW conversion ■ High quality noise-reduction ■ Optical corrections ■ Red-eye correction ■ Advanced light and colour ■ Batch processing ■ Selective tone ■ Full-screen mode ■ Spot-weighted mode

VIDEO-EDITING SOFTWARE

Adobe Premiere Elements 2018

£86 56 from www.adobe.com/uk

Tested: Issue 453

With its clean interface and sackful of special effects, Elements performs



just about every action you'll ever need from a consumerlevel video-editing suite. It's a powerful beast and rendering is super-speedy, even when exporting at 4K - but note that it only runs on 64-bit systems.

KEY FEATURES

Automatic editing ■ Image stabiliser ■ Surround-sound support ■ Stop-motion capture ■ Variable-speed control ■ Unlimited timelines ■ DVD disc authoring (no Blu-ray support) ■ 4K support ■ Requires Windows 7/8.1/10 or Mac OS (64-bit versions only)

Web User Gold Award winners

SCREEN RECORDER

FlashBack Express

Free from bit.ly/fbex458

Tested: Issue 458

FlashBack Express looks good,

is easy to use and produces great results. It can capture video of anything that's happening on your screen.

NEW!

DICTATION TOOL

Google Voice Typing

Free from docs.google.com

Tested: Issue 457

Google Voice Typing delivers an

effortless, impressively accurate speech-to-text experience that's sleekly presented and a joy to use.

SYSTEM MONITOR

Wise System Monitor

Free from bit.ly/wise456

Tested: Issue 456

Wise System Monitor has effortless

charm - a lightweight tool that performs seriously well, offers lots of useful features and is very easy to use.



IOS BACKUP TOOL

Air Transfer

Free from bit.ly/aitr455

Tested: Issue 455

Air Transfer takes the fuss out of getting files and photos from your iOS device to your PC. It works beautifully over Wi-Fi.

ONLINE DESIGN TOOL

Desygner

Free from desvaner.com

Tested: Issue 454

Slick and powerful, Desygner lets you create great-looking designs in minutes, with no need to download software.



Search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon



Best Free Software

SECURE WEB BROWSER

Tor Browser 8

bit.lv/tor459

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10,

Mac OS or Linux File size: 53.2MB

If you're worried about your online privacy (and, these days, you should be), Tor Browser offers a great way to safeguard it. Based on the same engine as Mozilla Firefox, this secure browser uses the Tor network to protect your browsing and disguise your location.

Unlike a VPN, there's no single entity behind Tor that you need to trust the network is run by thousands of volunteers. Your traffic gets relayed and encrypted across three Tor relays around the world, and you can request a new 'circuit' for any site at any time. The browser also comes with a number of privacy-focused add-ons, and disables risky plugins such as Flash.





You can adjust the security level of the browser as required, moving between Standard, Safer and Safest. The higher levels disable additional elements, such as JavaScript, and make audio and video click-to-play rather than letting them start automatically.

The latest version of Tor Browser updates the Firefox engine, moving from 52 ESR (Extended Support Release) to 60 ESR, which allows the software to use the latest features offered by Mozilla's browser. The Tor component has also been updated,

as have OpenSSL and Libevent, and the built-in HTTPS Everywhere and NoScript tools. Tor Browser 8 also gains a useful new 'onboarding experience', designed to explain how Tor works to anyone unfamiliar with it, and help users get the most from the browser.

There have been numerous other improvements and bug fixes made throughout. Some Mac users might find it crashes on older systems, but a fix is planned for this problem. We'll take a closer look at Tor, and what you can do with it, in the next issue of Web User.

MINI WORKSHOP | Browse securely with Tor Browser 8



When you launch Tor Browser, gives you two options - you can either connect to the Tor network using the default settings 11 or click Configure. The latter option is handy if you use a proxy to connect to the internet or you're browsing in a country where Tor is censored. You can also exit the browser from here. 3

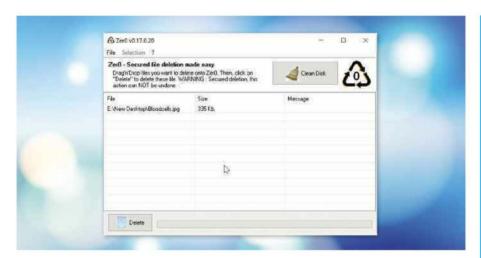


Once the connection is made to Tor, the browser will open and you can begin using it. You can enter an address or search for something using DuckDuckGo. 11 Unlike Google, this search engine doesn't track or record your search history. If you're new to Tor Browser, click the Start Now button to see how it all works.



Click the onion button in the top-left corner to change your current security level, or to open the Tor Network Settings. Click the three-line menu button in the top-right corner to choose a new browsing identity 2 (the browser will close and reopen) or request a new Tor Circuit for the current site. 3

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



SECURE DELETION TOOL

Zer0

www.kcsoftwares.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10 File size: 2.1MB

ZerO securely deletes files, making their recovery impossible. To use it, drag any files you want to delete to the program interface. You can queue up multiple items. Click the Delete button and it will go to work, overwriting everything in the list. Unlike other similar programs, it doesn't offer a choice of deletion methods, or any other options, though you can view and delete the log file (showing past actions). See our feature on page 50 for more advice on making deleted files unrecoverable.



SYSTEM CLEANER

Red Button 5

bit.ly/redb459

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8.1/10 File size: 563KB

Red Button is a tiny system cleaner that can find and remove all manner of unwanted junk, clean and optimise your Registry, disable potentially unwanted Windows features and boost system performance. It can also be used to securely delete files on your PC, wipe the memory and erase hard drives. It's very simple to use - just choose the actions to perform and click the eponymous Red Button.



DRIVER UNINSTALLER

Display Driver Uninstaller 18

www.wagnardsoft.com

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

Although you can remove old graphics software through the Windows uninstaller, files sometimes get left behind, which can cause problems. Display Driver Uninstaller is a more thorough solution that removes all traces of past graphics drivers - perfect if you're about to install a new card. This new version of the program adds support for removing Realtek and SoundBlaster audio drivers.

New Windows Apps

Text Editor — Write Beautifully

bit.ly/texteditor459

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 30.1MB

Text Editor is an attractive, lightweight, distraction-free writing tool. You can bold, italicise and underline content, check the word count and see how long it takes to read the current text.



Audio Media Conversion Tool

bit.ly/amct459

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 22.14MB

Audio Media Conversion Tool works with all the major audio (and video) formats, and lets you convert between them. You can also adjust sound quality and trim tracks.



Vigo Video

bit.ly/vigo459

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 27.81MB

Vigo Video (formerly Hypstar) is a social network where you can share short videos with your audience. This is a third-party app for the service that lets you find users and view videos.



Best Free Software

IMAGE VIEWER

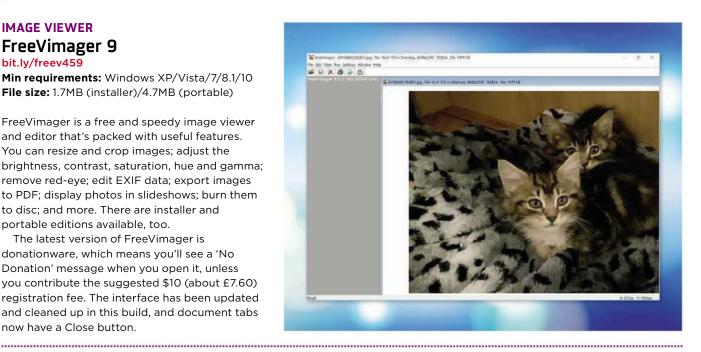
FreeVimager 9

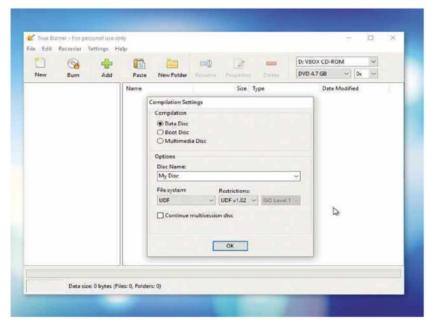
bit.ly/freev459

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10 File size: 1.7MB (installer)/4.7MB (portable)

FreeVimager is a free and speedy image viewer and editor that's packed with useful features. You can resize and crop images; adjust the brightness, contrast, saturation, hue and gamma; remove red-eye; edit EXIF data; export images to PDF; display photos in slideshows; burn them to disc; and more. There are installer and portable editions available, too.

The latest version of FreeVimager is donationware, which means you'll see a 'No Donation' message when you open it, unless you contribute the suggested \$10 (about £7.60) registration fee. The interface has been updated and cleaned up in this build, and document tabs now have a Close button.





DISC BURNER

True Burner 5

www.glorylogic.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 3.9MB

CD and DVD drives are not as common as they once were, but there's still plenty of free disc-authoring software available if you have a drive in your PC or laptop. True Burner is a simple tool that can handle all the main tasks, including writing Blu-rays and DVD-Video discs. You can adjust the writing speed and set various other options.

The latest version gains a new file-sorting system and method of disc detection. Other improvements include an update to the disc-burning software-development kit, improved buffer handling and Blu-ray support, and a new user interface. Make sure you decline the bundled junk during installation.

IMAGE EDITOR

Paint.net 4.1

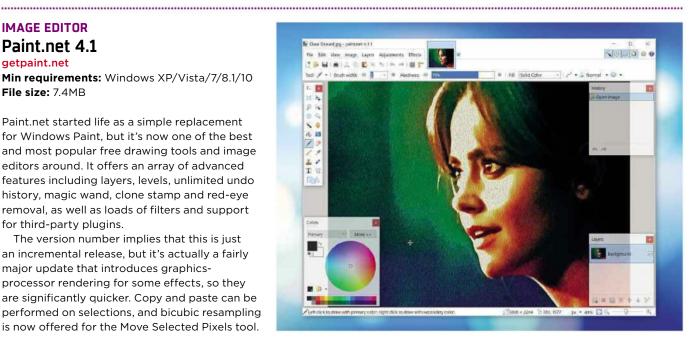
getpaint.net

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10

File size: 7.4MB

Paint.net started life as a simple replacement for Windows Paint, but it's now one of the best and most popular free drawing tools and image editors around. It offers an array of advanced features including layers, levels, unlimited undo history, magic wand, clone stamp and red-eye removal, as well as loads of filters and support for third-party plugins.

The version number implies that this is just an incremental release, but it's actually a fairly major update that introduces graphicsprocessor rendering for some effects, so they are significantly quicker. Copy and paste can be performed on selections, and bicubic resampling is now offered for the Move Selected Pixels tool.





GAME NeonCode

bit.ly/neonc459

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10,

Mac OS or Linux File size: 1.7GB

NeonCode is a first-person adventure game that has the cyberpunk noir atmosphere of Blade Runner. You play as a detective wandering around the neon-washed city, trying to solve a murder. You can collect items, start conversations and solve puzzles. It looks and sounds great and is highly immersive.

Don't install...

Mailbird Lite

www.getmailbird.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10

File size: 78.8MB

Mailbird Lite is a greatlooking email client that lets you connect to popular apps and services such as WhatsApp, Slack and Facebook, as well as email accounts. However, the free version restricts you to a single email account and to get the full program's better tools, such as attachment previewing and email snoozing, you need to pay £19.50.



...Install this instead

eM Client

www.emclient.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10

File size: 51.3MB

eM Client's smart-looking, modern interface and many advanced features make it the best email software for Windows PCs. Calendar, contacts and tasks are integrated and setting up accounts is easy - most popular email services are automatically recognised and configured, and eM Client offers to import data if you're switching from another email program. Notable features include super-fast search, advanced filtering tools, templates, signatures, tags and the ability to categorise mail using colourcoding. You can customise eM Client's interface and opt for a stylish Dark theme.





UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



HOME-THEATRE SOFTWARE

Kodi 18 'Leia' Beta 2

www.kodi.tv

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 91.7MB

The latest beta for this popular media-centre software is found under the Pre-Release tab in Downloads. Several bugs have been fixed, making it more stable. The EPG and PVR interfaces have been optimised, and fixes made to the Live TV feature.



SYSTEM TOOL

WifiHistoryView 1.50

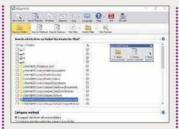
www.nirsoft.net

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10

File size: 76.3KB

This program shows historic info on any connections made by your computer to wireless networks, including the date, time, SSID, profile name and more. The latest version of WifiHistoryView lets you resize the Properties window, and saves details of the last size and position of this window in the CFG file.



DUPLICATE-FILE FINDER

AllDup 4.1.8

bit.ly/alldup459

Min requirements:

Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 7.8MB

A long-time Web User favourite, AllDup scans your system for duplicate files and lets you delete any unwanted copies, which helps keep your hard drive tidy. This updated release lets you add new drive letters to the source-folder list and search filter lists via the column header.



MEDIA MANAGER

iTunes 12.9

bit.ly/itunes459 Min requirements:

Windows 7/8.1/10 or Mac OS

File size: 257MB

If you own an iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch, you'll already have Apple's music player and organiser installed. This new version of the media software has been updated to add support for iOS 12, the latest version of Apple's mobile operating system.

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



Best New Browser Tools

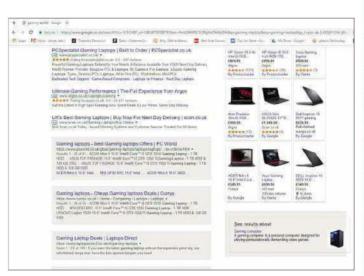


CHROME

Filter adverts from Google's search results

Run a search on Google and you're likely to be bombarded by half a page of ads before you reach your results; then, if you scroll too far, Google once again becomes a shameless billboard. In a random search for 'gaming laptop', we counted 10 genuine results flanked by a total of seven adverts – at a glance, it can sometimes be tricky to know exactly which link to click.

Google Search Bypass (bit.ly/bypass459) filters out the noise, so you can focus on what you want to find. The extension highlights real search results by surrounding them with a grey box, while all paid-for and featured adverts – whether lurking at the top, middle or bottom of the page – simply blend into the wilderness of their white surroundings. It's not the most attractive-looking extension, but Google Search Bypass's basic, monochrome approach does a great job of delivering simple, distraction-free browsing.





Save your pinned tabs

If your browser is cluttered with pinned tabs, try the tab-management extension Tabpin (bit.ly/tabpin459), which boldly claims to offer "pinned tabs, done right". Start by creating an account, then set up a group and add your favourite websites to it. That's it.

Settings are stored online, so if you sign into the extension on another computer, your saved data carries across to the new browser. Click the icon to choose which group of tabs to load, and whether they replace or merge with other pinned pages you have open.

There are some minor limitations for free users – you're only given one group of 10 tabs – but you can stump up the £2.50 monthly subscription for unlimited use. The extension is also available on Firefox (bit.ly/tabsfox459).

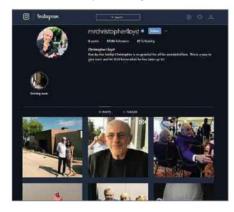
Switch on night mode for Instagram

Despite pleas from Instagram users, the image-sharing site has so far failed to

implement a night mode and, in this respect, lags far behind its rivals Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Thankfully, one canny developer has heeded the clamour and created a Chrome extension to get the job

done. The aptly named Night Mode for Instagram (bit.ly/insta459) works like a light (or dark) switch specifically for the website: give your aching eyes a rest by pressing the extension icon to seamlessly invert background colours and texts without affecting photos.

The tool, which opts for an attractive midnight-blue hue rather than overpowering black, has already received some minor updates, with the team behind it promising more soon.



Add knowledge to your new tabs

Breathe fresh life into new tabs with Always Be Learning (bit.ly/ always459). There are countless ways to jazz up your new tabs - such as adding animated images and customising 'speed dial' icons for speedy web navigation - but the Always Be Learning extension takes a more mindful approach by replacing the traditional New Tab page with motivational quotes. Read about the inspirational importance of learning from top thinkers, authors and celebs - after all. "Learning never exhausts the mind." as Leonardo da Vinci once said.

"There's always failure. And there's always disappointment. And there's always loss. But the secret is learning from the loss, and realizing that none of those holes are vacuums."

- Michael J. Fox

The extension, created by online learning platform BlueDash, loads quickly and won't slow down your browsing. You can also click the icon without having to open a new tab, if you just fancy receiving a pop-up quote to broaden your learning horizons. Remember, as Confucius put it: "You cannot open a book without learning something".



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

FIREFOX

Embed private YouTube videos

The new Privacy-Enhanced Mode for Embedded YouTube (bit.ly/privacy459) for Firefox automatically stops Google tracking you when you watch videos embedded on websites. YouTube's own privacy-



enhanced mode lets you manually choose to strip out cookies when sharing or embedding videos on websites - but if the mode isn't enabled at source, Google can continue to track your activity when you watch embedded videos.

That's where the Privacy-Enhanced Mode for Embedded YouTube extension comes into play. The extension automatically switches from the standard 'youtube.com' to the 'youtube-nocookie.com' URL. If you're curious to see how well it works, head into the extension's Options via Firefox's Add-ons Manager to discover how many times it's protected your privacy. Be aware that it requests to 'Access your data for all websites', but this is arguably a small price to pay to prevent Google nosing at your web-wide viewing history.

Remove absolutely everything from Facebook

Safebook (bit.ly/safefox459) purports to offer an antidote for our increasingly unhealthy relationship with social media. Developed by artist Benjamin Grosser, the extension strips out everything from Facebook's site - and we mean everything: no photos, no notifications, no comments, no likes. This is more than a browser tool. This is part social commentary, part safety measure from an artist whose previous projects include Twitter Demetricator, which removes all likes and views from posts.

Once it's installed, you're greeted with Facebook's familiar white and blue boxes, and left to blindly navigate the social network. The extension doesn't make the site unusable - and after trying Safebook, you'll be surprised how intuitive and ingrained Facebook's interface really is. But if it's all a bit bare for your liking, you could try Grosser's



Textbook, (bit.ly/text459) which only eradicates Facebook images.

Search and preview web pages

Searching web pages for keywords is a tedious affair, no matter which browser you deploy. You type the word you're looking for, then hit the arrows until you stumble on a hit. 'Find in Page with Preview' (bit.ly/ find459) is a superior - and more visual - alternative. The usual Ctrl+F shortcut won't work, so click the icon, and run a search on your chosen word

or phrase. Matching words are instantly previewed in context - each is highlighted in a vivid, unmissable purple. You



can then click the preview image to automatically scroll to the relevant section. Narrowing your search is, well - a bit narrow. You'll only find the option to either match case or the entire word - but it's a minor grumble in an otherwise efficient way to search a web page.

OTHER BROWSERS



Brave, the privacy-focused browser with a built-in ad blocker, has had a major update

that ditches its old Muon framework in favour of a browser based on Google's open-source



Chromium. You're now free to install any Chrome extensions - yes, even the one that replaces every online image with a photo of Nicolas Cage (bit.ly/cage459) - without Google's databanks harvesting your info. To get the extensions, download the Brave

Core dev browser (bit.lv/ brave459), then visit the Chrome Web Store.



news continues with the introduction of NewsGuard for Edge (bit.ly/guard459). Founded by an independent team of politically diverse journalists, and partnered with Microsoft, the extension - also available for Chrome and Firefox - operates a traffic-light system that displays a site's trustworthiness based on its overall credibility and transparency. Forget unfathomable algorithms controlling what you see; each site is reviewed by a human.

That means. for now, not every website features a trust rating For those that have one. you'll spy the



NewsGuard shield on the website and in search results on Bing, Google, Facebook and Twitter. Just hover over the icon to see a site's full 'Nutrition Label'.



Best Free Apps

NEW





App of the Fortnight

PRODUCTIVITY

RescueTime

bit.ly/rescuedroid459 bit.ly/rescueios459

Our job in this section is to encourage phone and tablet use - not to actively discourage it. Otherwise, how would anyone ever enjoy all the brilliant apps we recommend? But it's increasingly obvious that we all need to become more aware of how much time we spend on our devices and potentially change our behaviour so that we don't fritter our lives away, glued to tiny screens and social-media feeds. And that's precisely

what RescueTime aims to help you do.

RescueTime is effectively an activity tracker, but instead of counting the number of steps you take, or monitoring your heart rate, it tracks your digital activity - the amount of time you spend using your devices.

With RescueTime, you can monitor how much you use your device or specific apps, and set yourself daily screentime goals. You can also log offline activities – phone calls, lunch breaks, meetings and so on – to get a better picture of how you spend your time. And you can set up FocusTime

sessions: regular do-not-disturb periods where you're not interrupted by your device.

RescueTime has been available as a desktop tool and via rescuetime.com for a while, but the iOS app is brand new and the Android version has been refreshed.

To use the app, you'll need to create a RescueTime account. Basic tracking is provided free of charge, but if you feel the need to take even more control over your screen time, you can subscribe to RescueTime Premium (around £7 per month or £55 per year), which unlocks features such as

distracting websites, real-time alerts when you spend too much time online (or when you

the ability to block ne alerts when you

Tuesday, September 18

Tuesday, September 18

total desktop time
6 in 58 m

Communication & Scheduling
2n 46in

Design & Composition
The The
Address Protestrap Quickling
Address Protestrap Quickling
Address Protestrap Quickling
Address Protestrap Quickling
Reference & Leierring

Reference & Leierring



MINI WORKSHOP

Manage your digital wellbeing using RescueTime

To get started with RescueTime, launch the app and create a new account when prompted, making sure you opt for the 'Lite: free forever' plan rather than the free trial of the premium version. Allow notifications when asked, and let the app track the device you're using 1 - on an iPhone, you'll also need to select the option to Always Allow, 2 otherwise the app won't work properly.



The best way to start using RescueTime to help you manage your digital wellbeing is to set yourself some goals.



Currently, this can't be done in the mobile app, so you will have to open a web browser on your computer and go to rescuetime.com. Log in using the account you created in step 1, then click Reports, 1 followed by Your Goals. 2 Click the 'Set a new goal' button. 3

Let's say you want to reduce your daily mobile use: in the 'Set a new goal' window, select Less from the first



drop-down option, 1 then type a number in the 'hours per day' box. 2 From the next drop-down menus, 3 select All Mobile Time and 'All Time (24x7)', then click 'Create goal'. 1 In the mobile app, tap the Goals button at the bottom to view your goal and check that you're on track.



Our rating



meet your goals) and offline tracking.

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

SHOPPING

TK Maxx Clearance bit.lv/

tkmaxx459 4.0.3

TK Maxx is a great place to pick up clothing, accessories, aifts and household items at affordable



prices, and with this new app - currently only available on Android - you can go directly to the biggest bargains from your mobile device. You'll find major brands reduced by up to 60%, with free delivery available. In practice, the app is little more than a wrapper for the store's Clearance website (bit.ly/ tkmaxxweb459), but it's

simple to use and well worth downloading if you want instant access to all the lowest prices.



LAUNCHER

Rootless Launcher bit.lv/ rootless459

177 5

This refreshingly tasteful launcher provides a Google Pixel-like experience for non-Pixel owners, complete with a search bar at the

bottom of the home screen and support for adaptive icon packs. The updated version fixes flaws and adds features, including Material Design icons. But it has also removed the Rootless Pixel Bridge installation code in order to comply with Google's Play store regulations. This now needs to be installed separately to enable the Google Now

Feed and At A Glance see bit.ly/rootlesshelp459 for detailed instructions.

NEW

Our rating



TOOLS

UPDATED

UPDATED **Additional Security Settings**

Disable Fingerprint on Lock Screen

AdminControl

bit.ly/admin459

9 5.1

Fingerprint recognition is a great security feature on devices that support it. But there are times when you may need to disable it - for example, if you need to keep your device unlocked for extended periods of time. But removing device protection in Android deletes all your fingerprints and prevents you from using fingerprint recognition within apps. This simple little tool lets you switch the lockscreen fingerprint reader

on or off without affecting saved fingerprints or other apps. Handy - although it doesn't do anything else.



Our rating



NEW

ACCESSIBILITY

WayAround

Our rating

bit.ly/waydroid459 bit.ly/wayios459

4.4 🖷 10

Freshly updated for iOS users and brand new for Android. WayAround is an innovative smarttagging system for

people with vision loss. The idea is that you add tags to clothes, food and other items around your home, then use your smartphone to 'see' useful information - washing instructions or use-by dates, for example - and make it accessible by having it read aloud. While the app is free, the NFC tags themselves aren't: prices start at £18 for a pack

of 25 stickers and, currently, there doesn't seem to be anywhere selling them in the UK. Instead you'll need to import them from the US site at wayaround.com/shop.





BROWSER

Tor Browser for Android (Alpha)

bit.ly/tordroid459

4.1

You can already browse the web securely via the Tor network on an Android device using the Orfox browser in conjunction with the Orbot proxy. But the Tor Project developers are phasing out Orfox



in favour of a new browser that distils the experience into a single app - at least, that's the ultimate aim. The new Tor Browser for Android app is still very much in development so, currently, you still need Orbot installed (bit.ly/orbot459). The new browser basically brings all the power of Tor to your mobile device, allowing you to block trackers, foil surveillance and browse freely.

Our rating



Best Free Apps



NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

PUZZLE

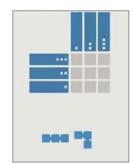
Shapeuku

bit.ly/shapedroid459 bit.ly/shapeios459

Price: 99p

2.3.3 6

This minimalist brain teaser is like a relaxing blend of Sudoku and Tetris. In each level, you arrange shapes in a specific pattern on the grid.



REFERENCE

Concorde Virtual Tour bit.ly/concordedroid459

bit.ly/concordeios459 Price: 99p

5.1 69 Get a 360-degree virtual digital tour of

the much-missed iconic supersonic aircraft, based on the pre-production craft at the Duxford Imperial War Museum.



GAME

Returner Zhero

bit.ly/returner459

Price: £4.99

If you enjoy a story-led sci-fi adventure with challenging puzzles and



handsome graphics, then check out this follow up to last year's Returner 77. It's currently only available for iOS.

NATURE

Mushroom Identification

bit.ly/mushdroid459 bit.ly/mushios459

Price: £4.79 (Android), £4.99

(iOS)

5 10

This tool tells you exactly what type of mushroom you've stumbled upon, using your device's camera. We're not sure we'd rely on it completely to distinguish between edible and deadly fungi, though!



IMAGE EDITOR

Affinity Photo for iPad bit.ly/affinity459

Price: £19.99

11.1

The iPad's best imageediting tool just received a massive update that adds dozens of new tools and features, including



intuitive new gestures, brushes and export options. It's a must for avid photographers working on tablets.

Shapeuku

Concorde Virtual Tour

Returner Zhero

Mushroom Identification

Affinity Photo for iPad











X Don't install...

Tape Measure Sound

bit.ly/tape459

Apple has just introduced a native measuring tool in iOS 12, but there are plenty of great measuring apps available in Google Play, too. Just make sure you don't accidentally install



this pointless waste of megabytes. It doesn't provide any actual tape-measuring - just the ability to create the sound of a tape measure, so you can (in the developer's words) "be sounded like you measure something" and "surprise people".

...Install this instead

AirMeasure

bit.ly/measuredroid459 bit.ly/measureios459

6 6 10

It might not offer the pinpoint accuracy of a laser measurer, but AirMeasure does more than just make silly noises. Like Apple's new Measure app, AirMeasure uses AR technology to measure objects in front of you via your device's camera. Tap to create a start point, then again to create an end point, and you'll see an instant measurement of the distance between the two. The app is updated regularly, with the most recent iOS

update adding a thin ruler mode as well as improvements to the UI. AirMeasure is free (with adverts) for Android and costs 99p for iOS. It requires an ARCore-supported Android device - see bit.ly/arcore459.







Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your browser by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you guess our radio-show emoji and our web year?

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

one correct entry will win a disc



CAN YOU GUESS THE CLASSIC RADIO SHOWS FROM THE EMOJI?



book

that

and

benefits.

GUESS THE TECHNOLOGY YEAR

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

Google announces the release of its browser, Chrome, via a 38-page comic



explains its key features

AOL buys social-networking site Bebo for a reported \$850m.

Five years later, the founders buy it back for just \$1m.



In September, the Large Hadron Collider, the largest machine and largest experimental facility in the world, goes live.

Apple opens its online App Store,

offering more than 500 apps for the iPhone, of which more than 125 are free to download.

Exercise game Wii Fit, for Nintendo's

Wii console, has millions of people flailing their arms and leaping around their living rooms.



COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 8

Plasma case for Samsung Galaxy Note9

Made by Urban Armor Gear to military drop-test standards, the Plasma case for the Samsung Galaxy Note9 has oversized tactile buttons and non-slip ruggedized grip. It's compatible with Samsung Pay and Samsung Fast Wireless Charging. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@ dennis.co.uk with 'plasma' in the subject

line. For more information, visit urbanarmorgear.com and follow @UrbanArmorGear on Twitter.



WIN 1 OF 3

KitSound Classic DAB+ Radio

KitSound's Classic DAB+ Radio has storage for up to 20 station presets, plus a built-in rechargeable battery with up to seven hours play time. The telescopic, highly sensitive 360° FM antenna means you can find a

crystal-clear signal every time. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'classic' in the subject line. For more information, visit www .kitsound.co.uk and follow @KitSoundUK on Twitter.

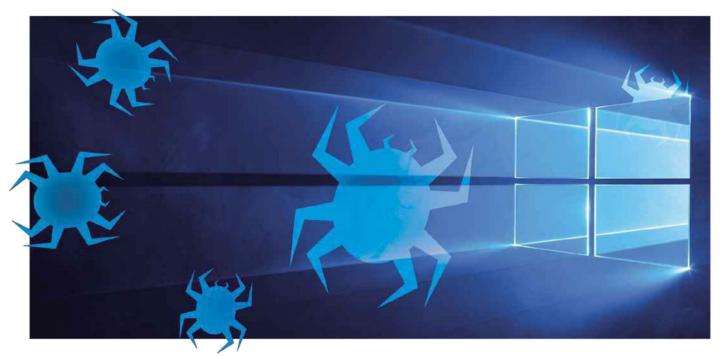




Everything you need to know about the most interesting new technology trends and events

Fileless malware

David Crookes looks at malware that makes Windows turn on itself



What is fileless malware?

Over the years, we've all become familiar with malware and the damage that it can do, whether it manifests itself as a virus, worm, spyware, ransomware or Trojan. Our general understanding of malware is that it works by installing software on a computer without our consent. However, a relatively new variant appears to turn this concept on its head. As the name suggests, 'fileless' malware infiltrates a PC without any software being written to the hard drive, making it the most sinister, well-disguised threat that we've ever seen.



Fileless malware is hard to spot because it leaves no trace on your hard drive

How does it work?

Fileless malware uses tools that are already built into Windows, which means an attack appears, to all intents and purposes, like a normally running process. In particular, it tends to target Microsoft PowerShell and Windows Management Instruction (WMI), taking over the service before loading software or getting it to execute commands that will launch an attack. There is no actual malware file involved, nor is there any contact with the host PC's hard drive. Instead, the fileless malware is written directly to the PC's memory (RAM) and run from there.

And there it remains, causing problems, until the PC is rebooted. Worst of all, you probably won't have a clue that anything has happened until it's too late.

How does fileless malware get on my computer?

Fileless malware could be disguised as a Word or Excel file containing a link that, when clicked, will deliver malware into your PC's memory, infecting it via a PowerShell script. Alternatively, it could be hosted on a website that looks for vulnerabilities in a Flash plugin, allowing

it to run in the memory reserved for your browser. Fileless malware is known to be spread by phishing emails, malicious downloads and malvertising. The key thing to remember is that no malicious program is actually installed on your hard drive, which is what makes it such a tricky and insidious problem.

Why are PowerShell and WMI targeted?

Aside from being ubiquitous, these tools allow access to the heart of a computer. PowerShell, for example, is an advanced scripting engine widely used to administer machines running Windows, which means an attacker can access Windows features by running malicious script in the memory. It also provides full access to Microsoft COM (Component Object Model) and WMI, where software can be installed and updated, and where the operating system can be queried. If the fileless malware wants to delete, copy or execute files, it can do so via the WMI.

Won't my antivirus software detect it?

Unfortunately, no. Traditional antimalware and antivirus tools are totally ineffective against fileless malware because they are simply not set up to deal with this kind of intrusion. Instead, they are programmed to act when they detect a malicious file is being written to a hard drive - the idea being that the files are compared to the security software's library of known threats. But that isn't happening in this instance, so the fileless malware is able to get through entirely undetected. What's more, the commands and applications being used are native to Windows and are, in other circumstances, legitimately used for administrative tasks. If nothing else, it shows how sophisticated this malware strain actually is, which only makes it more worrying.

How can I combat the threat?

Perhaps the most effective method is to disable PowerShell, which you can do by opening the Control Panel (search for it from the taskbar's search box) and selecting 'Programs and Features'. Click the link 'Turn Windows features on or off' and untick the box next to Windows PowerShell. You should also ensure that Windows and other programs are regularly updated, and keep a keen eye out for unusual behaviour, rebooting your machine if you suspect anything odd is happening. For most ordinary users, this should suffice.

So why doesn't everyone disable PowerShell?

It's not a problem for Windows Home users but PowerShell and WMI are crucial for the smooth running of many company IT departments, and preventing their use could have an adverse effect on productivity. To that end, if businesses decided to ban PowerShell, it would severely disrupt many day-to-day tasks carried out by IT professionals. Besides, PowerShell isn't the only vulnerability -Microsoft Word macros can also be



Fileless-malware attacks are on the rise, and the situation looks likely to get worse

leveraged, browsers can be made to run malicious code and Windows processes such as Rundll32 and VBScript Mshta also offer a point of access.

How big a problem is fileless malware, though?

According to a report from security company SentinelOne (bit.ly/sen459), the first six months of this year saw a 94% rise in fileless malware attacks and it's continuing to get worse. In June 2018, there were a record 5.2 PowerShell attacks per 1,000 PCs, up from 2.5 attacks in May. It's only a matter of time before fileless malware grows from something that primarily affects businesses to a blight that impacts us all.

Is anything being done about it?

Security experts are looking at the best ways to tackle the problem but it isn't easy. Aside from disabling PowerShell and WMI (with all its associated problems), there's a suggestion that IT departments should consider using software to review security logs in the hope of spotting high levels of data leaving the network - but this could be closing the proverbial barn door after the horse has bolted.

More encouraging is the potential use of artificial intelligence and machine

Possible Fileless Malware

One giveaway sign of fileless malware is high levels of data leaving a network

learning to instantly spot particular kinds of activity, so the malware can be stopped dead in its tracks. That would certainly be preferable to having security professionals review logs manually for signs of suspicious behaviour. If you want to see how hard it is to solve a fileless malware attack, complete the guiz on McAfee's website at bit.ly/mca459.

Can the malware spread easily?

Yes, it can. Using WMI, a hacker is able to spread the threat to other PCs on a network by getting those computers to run malicious code that doesn't get saved to the hard drive. It can then become a race against time to sort out the issue and check the damage. Worse, fileless malware is becoming so sophisticated that some strains place a script in the Registry, which reinstates malicious code after an infected computer is powered down and rebooted. Other strains of the malware are developing techniques using ransomware and data encryption which, if successful, could prove devastating.

Scary. However, I have a Mac so am I ok?

As it stands, you are - for now, at least. Currently, fileless malware is only attacking Windows, but that's because more computers are running this operating system, so hackers are paying more attention to it. This doesn't mean Apple Macs can't be affected, it's simply a case of the hackers not getting around to writing the attacks. As soon as they work out a suitable equivalent to PowerShell on Mac OS, you can bet it'll be exploited.



Mac users haven't yet been targeted, but that's only because the OS isn't as popular

HOW IS FILELESS MALWARE BEING USED?

Fileless malware attacks don't often hit the headlines, but that's mainly because it's a relatively recent phenomenon. Last April, however, it was reported that a hacker had targeted at least eight cash machines in Russia, getting away with a jaw-dropping \$800,000 (about £610,000).

The theft appeared to baffle those monitoring the CCTV footage because the hacker seemed able to withdraw lots of cash without even touching the ATM. The mystery was solved when researchers found a log file pointing to a fileless attack. There was no sign of any malware files on the ATM or the bank networks.



tack Anything with the

COVER **FEATURE**

Don't let Windows' default settings restrict the way you use your PC. Wayne Williams reveals the best tricks for customising and optimising your system via the Registry

eceived wisdom advises that you shouldn't go messing around in the Windows Registry, just as it's best not to fiddle under the bonnet of your car. This is because unless you know what you're doing, you could cause more damage than good. However, just as tuning your car's engine can significantly boost your vehicle's power and performance, so tweaking the Registry can optimise and speed up your PC.

In this feature, we lift the lid on the nerve

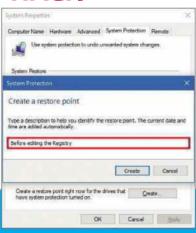
centre of the Windows operating system to demonstrate why you should hack the Windows Registry, how you can do so safely and the best changes you can make to customise and improve your computer.

Over the following six pages, we also explain how to back up the Registry before making changes, in case something goes wrong; how to choose the best third-party tweaking tools; and how to create your own Registry hacks for running on multiple PCs.

BACK UP BEFORE YOU HACK

carefully, you shouldn't encounter any problems when editing the Registry. However, it's always best to be on the safe side and back everything up - just in case. To do this, open 'regedit' and go to File, Export. Under Export Range, you have the option of exporting the entire Registry, or just the branch you'll be changing. You can reload a saved backup by going to File, Import. Another option is to create a restore point before you make any changes: type create a restore point into the Windows search box and hit Enter. In the System Properties box, click Create and follow the instructions.

Provided you follow the instructions in this feature



Hack anything with the Windows Registry



HOW TO EDIT THE REGISTRY

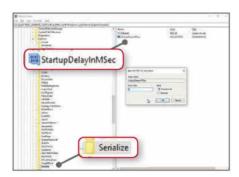
Don't worry if you've never edited the Windows Registry before - the process is straightforward. Type regedit into the Windows search box, press Enter and click OK when the User Account Control prompt appears. Navigate to the relevant parts of the database by clicking the arrows in the folder on the left-hand side of the Registry Editor (also known as 'regedit') window. To speed things up in Windows 10, type or paste the location of a Registry key (HKEY CURRENT USER\Control Panel\Desktop, for example) directly into the Registry Editor's address bar at the top of the window, then hit Enter.

SPEED UP YOUR SYSTEM

Force Windows to load faster

When you boot your PC, Windows takes longer to start than is absolutely necessary. This is because it waits for programs and processes to load in the background. If you've reduced the number of programs that start alongside Windows, it's worth removing this delay, so that the operating system starts that little bit quicker.

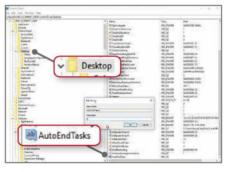
To do this, launch the Registry Editor and navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_ USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\ CurrentVersion\Explorer. Right-click in the right-hand pane and select New, Key. Call this key Serialize, click the new key to select it, then right-click in the right-hand pane and select New, DWORD (32-bit) Value. Call this new value StartupDelayInMSec. Double-click it and make sure its value is 0. Click OK and restart your PC. From now on Windows should load a bit quicker.



Make your PC load faster by creating a new startup value in the Registry

Speed up your shutdown

Windows has to wait for running programs to end before it can shut down your system. Occasionally, this takes a while, and you'll be faced with a message listing programs that haven't closed yet, giving you the option to 'Shut down anyway'. You can use a Registry tweak to have Windows



Don't wait for Windows to shut down force it to close programs instantly

automatically terminate all running programs before shutting down.

Navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\ Control Panel\Desktop. Look to see if there's an AutoEndTasks entry on the right. If there isn't, you'll need to create one. Right-click in the right-hand pane, select New, String Value and call this AutoEndTasks. Double-click it, change its value to 1 and restart your PC.

With this setting active, you'll need to make sure you save your work as you progress before shutting down Windows, because you'll no longer be prompted to do so.

Accelerate Windows animations

Part of what makes Windows look so polished is the various animations that



Reduce the amount of time Windows takes to open menus and windows

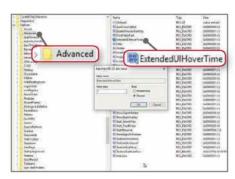
play when you open the Start menu, launch a program, or open or close a window. These are so subtle that you probably don't even notice them. but they add a few seconds to using Windows, and are easily disabled.

In the Registry Editor, navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Control Panel\Desktop. Double-click the MenuShowDelay entry in the right-hand pane and change the Value Data millisecond delay from 400 to 100, then click OK.

Speed up taskbar previews

When you hover your mouse over a button on the Windows taskbar, a thumbnail of that program or window will appear above it. There's a quite a delay before this happens, but you can remove this so the thumbnails appear instantly.

In regedit, go to HKEY_CURRENT_ USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\ CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced. Right-click in the right-hand pane and select New, DWORD (32-bit) Value. Call this ExtendedUlHoverTime and double-click it. Change the Base to Decimal and enter the Value Data in milliseconds. To remove the delay almost entirely, enter 1 and click OK. Restart Windows.



Remove the delay for showing thumbnail previews of items on the taskbar



CUSTOMISE & IMPROVE WINDOWS

Display seconds in the systemtray clock

The clock at the bottom-right lets you see the current hours and minutes, but if you want to know exactly how long is left to go in the current minute, you can add the seconds to the clock by going to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced. Right-click in the right-hand pane and select New, DWORD (32-bit) Value. Call this ShowSecondsInSystemClock. Double-click the new entry and change its value to 1, then click OK and restart your PC.



Display seconds in the clock that appears in your system tray

Change the system font in Windows 10

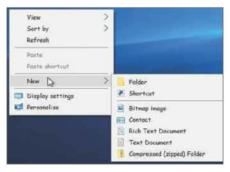
Unlike Windows 7 and 8, which allow you to choose a font to use throughout the operating system, Windows 10 gives you no option but to use Segoe UI. However, you can get around this restriction using a Registry tweak, and use any font you like – even (if you must) Comic Sans!

Right-click the desktop, select **Personalise** and click **Fonts** on the left-hand side. Decide which fonts you want, then Open Notepad and either type the following or copy and paste it from bit.ly/fonts459:

Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00

[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\
Microsoft\Windows NT\
CurrentVersion\Fonts]
"Segoe UI (TrueType)"=""
"Segoe UI Bold (TrueType)"=""
"Segoe UI Bold Italic
(TrueType)"=""
"Segoe UI Italic (TrueType)"=""
"Segoe UI Light (TrueType)"=""
"Segoe UI Semibold
(TrueType)"=""
"Segoe UI Symbol (TrueType)"=""

[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\
Microsoft\Windows NT\
CurrentVersion\FontSubstitutes]



Change the default Windows font to something more fun - like Comic Sans!

Replace 'Newfont' with the *exact* name of the font you want from the Fonts page. Click File, go to 'Save as' and select All Files in the 'Save as type' box. Change the extension from '.txt' to '.reg' and save the file to the desktop. Double-click the file and your changes will be made in the Registry. Restart your PC.

To go back to Segoe UI, Windows 10's default font, create a new Notepad file with the following text, which you can copy and paste from bit.ly/segoe459, then repeat the other steps above.

Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00

[HKEY LOCAL MACHINE\SOFTWARE\ Microsoft\Windows NT\ CurrentVersion\Fonts] "Segoe UI (TrueType)"="segoeui. ttf" "Segoe UI Black (TrueType) "="seguibl.ttf" "Segoe UI Black Italic (TrueType)"="seguibli.ttf" "Segoe UI Bold (TrueType)"="segoeuib.ttf" "Segoe UI Bold Italic (TrueType)"="segoeuiz.ttf" "Seqoe UI Emoji (TrueType) "="sequiemj.ttf" "Segoe UI Historic (TrueType) "="sequihis.ttf" "Segoe UI Italic (TrueType) "="segoeuii.ttf" "Segoe UI Light (TrueType) "="segoeuil.ttf" "Segoe UI Light Italic (TrueType)"="seguili.ttf" "Segoe UI Semibold (TrueType)"="seguisb.ttf" "Segoe UI Semibold Italic (TrueType)"="seguisbi.ttf" "Segoe UI Semilight (TrueType) "="segoeuisl.ttf" "Segoe UI Semilight Italic (TrueType) "="seguisli.ttf"

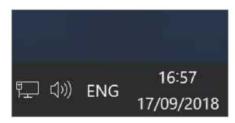
"Segoe UI Symbol

(TrueType)"="seguisym.ttf"
"Segoe MDL2 Assets
(TrueType)"="segmdl2.ttf"
"Segoe Print
(TrueType)"="segoepr.ttf"
"Segoe Print Bold
(TrueType)"="segoeprb.ttf"
"Segoe Script
(TrueType)"="segoesc.ttf"
"Segoe Script Bold
(TrueType)"="segoesc.ttf"

[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\
Microsoft\Windows NT\
CurrentVersion\FontSubstitutes]
"Segoe UI"=-

Remove the Windows Action Center

The Windows 10 Action Center displays notifications from your apps and system. If you see an alert pop up in the bottom-right corner of your screen but don't have time to read what it says, just open the Action Center from the taskbar and you can view it - and other notifications - there. On the other hand, if you never use this feature and therefore have no need for it, you can remove it by going to HKEY_CURRENT_ USER\Software\Policies\Microsoft\ Windows\Explorer. Right-click in the right-hand pane and select New. DWORD (32-bit) Value. Call it DisableNotificationCenter. Double-click it and change the Value Data to 1, then click OK and exit the Registry Editor. The Action Center will vanish from the taskbar when you restart your PC. To bring it back, change the value data for DisableNotificationCenter back to 0.



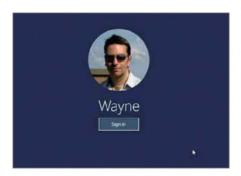
Use a Registry hack to remove the Action Center from Windows 10

Change the lock screen to a solid colour

Most people like to have an image on the lock screen, but if you prefer to take the minimalist approach, you can swap it for a single colour instead. Open regedit and navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Policies\Microsoft\Windows\System. Right-click in the right-hand pane and select New, DWORD (32-bit) Value. Name this DisableLogonBackgroundImage

[&]quot;Segoe UI"="Newfont"

Hack anything with the Windows Registry



Replace the image on your lock screen with a solid-colour background

and give it a value of 1. Windows 10 will automatically use the colour accent from your desktop wallpaper, but you can change this under Settings, Personalisation, Colours.

Add a custom message to the login screen

You can add a message to the login screen that will be the first thing you see when Windows 10 boots up. To add a message, navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\Current Version\Policies\System. Double-click the key called legalnoticecaption. Enter a title for your message in the Value Data box and click OK. Next, double-click legalnoticetext and enter your message text. Sign out, and the message will appear when you



Set your own Windows login message

BEST FREE REGISTRY-EDITING TOOLS

If you're still not confident using the Windows Registry Editor, there are third-party options that make editing the Registry both easier and safer. Winaero Tweaker (winaero.com), for example, presents you with a large number of tweaks for Windows 7, 8.1 and 10 that you would normally only be able to access by delving into and editing the Registry manually. There are options for disabling taskbar transparency, customising (or



removing) the shortcut arrow, forcing Windows to always show the boot menu and disabling the lock screen. Ultimate Windows Tweaker (bit.ly/uwtweak459) is a similar tool that offers over 200 tweaks for Windows 10, sorted into categories such as Customisation. User Accounts and Performance.

Web User favourite NirSoft (www.nirsoft.net) offers lots of free Windows tools that can do everything from monitoring your network to recovering lost passwords. The developer offers a number of useful Registry tools, such as EncryptedRegView, which lets you find passwords and other data held in the Registry; RegFileExport, which lets you extract data from an offline Registry file located on another drive; and RegScanner, which finds the Registry values that match a search and displays them in one handy list.

log back in. To clear the message each time, just click OK.

Disable live tiles in Windows 10

Open the Start menu and you'll notice that some of the colourful 'live tiles' update regularly. This looks cool but it doesn't serve any great purpose – who spends time watching tiles update in the Start menu? You can disable individual live tiles by right-clicking them, but a much better option is to apply a Registry tweak that kills all live tiles in one hit. Launch regedit and navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\SOFTWARE\ Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ PushNotifications.

Right-click **PushNotifications** and go to **New, DWORD (32-bit) Value**. Call it **NoTileApplicationNotification**. Double-click it and set its value as 1. You'll now

need to clear the cache in order to stop live tiles showing. Navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\SOFTWARE\Policies\Microsoft\Windows\Explorer. Create a new 32-bit DWORD value called ClearTilesOnExit. Set its value to 1 and sign out of Windows, then log back in.



If you're not keen on Windows 10's live tiles, disable them with a Registry hack

UNLOCK HIDDEN WINDOWS TOOLS

Install Skip Ahead Insider builds in Windows 10

Windows Insiders get to test early builds of feature updates for Windows 10 before everyone else. They can join the Fast, Slow or Release Preview rings.

Alternatively, if you're feeling particularly adventurous, you can sign up to the Skip Ahead ring. This lets you skip the next feature update and start testing the one that follows it. However,

there are limited places available for this ring. If you're a Windows Insider (insider .windows.com) and want to try Skip Ahead builds but missed your chance, you can use a Registry hack to beat the system and get the test builds anyway. Note that although you'll be offered Skip Ahead builds, you won't actually be in the Skip Ahead ring.

Start by launching the Registry Editor and navigating to HKEY_LOCAL_

MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\
WindowsSelfHost\UI\Selection. Locate
the key UIContentType, double-click it,
and change its value to Skip. Next,
locate UIRing and change its value to
WIF. Now navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_
MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\
WindowsSelfHost\Applicability.
Change the value of ContentType to
Skip, and do the same for Ring. Restart
your PC and go to Settings, Update &



Hack the Registry to get updates to Windows 10 before everyone else

Security. Check for updates and if there's a Skip Ahead build (currently referred to as 19H1 releases), it will be made available to download and install. Be warned that these are *very* early builds and subject to bugs and other problems, so you shouldn't use them on your main PC.

Get the Windows 7 volume control in Windows 10

There are lots of differences between Windows 7 and 10, but some of the new features that have been implemented seem rather like change for change's sake. Take the volume control, for example. In Windows 10, clicking the speaker icon on the taskbar presents you with a horizontal volume slider, instead of the - frankly, much easier to use - vertical version found in Windows 7. Happily, you can unlock this previous version with a simple tweak. In the Registry editor, navigate to HKEY_ LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\ Windows NT\Current Version. Rightclick Current Version and select New, Key. Call this key MTCUVC. Click it and in the right-hand pane, select New, Dword (32-bit) Value. Call this EnableMtcUvc. Double-click the value to ensure it's set to 0, then click OK and restart Windows.



Make the Windows 10 volume control vertical – as it was in Windows 7

CHANGE SYSTEM SETTINGS

Take ownership of your files in Windows

Windows occasionally prevents you from performing certain actions with a file, such as moving or deleting it. The solution to this it to "take ownership" of the problem file. You can add a Take Ownership option to the right-click context menu by opening regedit and navigating to HKEY_CLASSES_ ROOT*\shell. Right-click the shell key and select New, Key. Call this runas. Double-click Default and change the value to Take Ownership, then click OK. Right-click the runas key and go to New, String Value. Name this NoWorkingDirectory. Right-click the runas key and choose **New, Key**. Call this key command. Double-click the Default value for this key and type: cmd.exe /c takeown /f \"%1\" && icacls \"%1\" /grant administrators:F. Click OK, then right-click command and select New, String Value. Call this IsolatedCommand. Double-click it and,

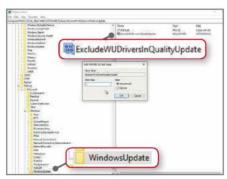
Visite-HippShipiteric
Open
Open file location
Edit with Photos
Edit with Paint 3D
Set as desktop background
Edit
Print
Take Ownership
Rotate right
Rotate left

Beat annoying Windows restrictions by taking ownership of files

in the Value data box, type cmd.exe
/c takeown /f \"%1\" && icacls
\"%1\" /grant administrators:F.
Restart Windows to access the new
option.

Disable automatic driver updates in Windows 10

Windows 10 downloads and installs the latest versions of drivers automatically to keep your system up to date. Sometimes, though, it might install problematic drivers, and there's no longer a way to stop the operating system doing this through Settings. Luckily, you can take back control through the Registry. Open regedit and navigate to **HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE**\ SOFTWARE\Policies\Microsoft\ Windows. Right-click the Windows key and select New, Key. Call this WindowsUpdate. Right-click the new key, select New, DWORD (32-bit) Value and name this key ExcludeWUDriversInQualityUpdate.



Take back control of Windows updates via a simple Registry tweak

Double-click it and change its value from 0 to 1, then click OK. To start receiving driver updates again, right-click ExcludeWUDriversInQualityUpdate and select Delete.

Add the Windows version to your desktop

If you run an Insider version of Windows 10, you'll see a watermark on the bottom right-hand side of the desktop showing the version of Windows you're running and the build number. This watermark gets removed from the finished version (and from Insider builds rolled out close to the release date), but you can easily add it back, so you can check at a glance which version of Windows you're running. To do this, open the Registry Editor and navigate to HKEY_ CURRENT_USER\Control Panel\ Desktop, Locate PaintDesktopVersion under the Desktop key, double-click it and change its value from 0 to 1. Restart Windows and you'll see the version and build number on the desktop.



Show which version of Windows you're running on your desktop

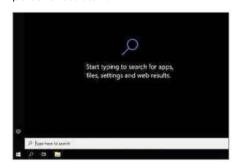
Hack anything with the Windows Registry



FIX WINDOWS ANNOYANCES

Disable Cortana completely

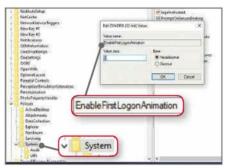
Microsoft's personal assistant Cortana lets you perform tasks using only your voice, but if you never use it, you can disable the voice-controlled feature using a Registry tweak. Launch regedit and navigate to: HKEY_LOCAL_ MACHINE\Software\Policies\Microsoft\ Windows. Right-click Windows, select New, Key and call it Windows Search. Right-click Windows Search, then select New, DWORD (32-bit) Value and name it AllowCortana. Double-click this and set the value to 0. When you restart your PC, Cortana will be gone. Changing the value back to 1 will restore the personal assistant.



Stop Cortana bothering you by disabling the voice assistant

Hide the 'Hi' greeting in Windows 10

When you install Windows 10 or upgrade to a new version, one of the first things you'll see is a welcome screen that starts with a 'Hi' greeting. You can disable this rather cheesy message using a Registry tweak. Doing so won't actually speed up the configuration process, but will make it seem quicker. Open regedit, and navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\ SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\ CurrentVersion\Policies\System. Right-click in the right-hand pane



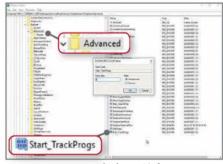
Stop Windows being over-friendly by disabling its 'Hi' greeting

and select New, DWORD (32-bit Value). Name this key

EnableFirstLogonAnimation, doubleclick it and ensure its value is set to 0. The animation will now be hidden and instead you'll see a spinning circle and a 'Preparing Windows' message.

Disable App Launch Tracking

Windows 10 tracks the apps you launch and uses this information to customise your experience, tailor the Start menu to suit you and make other tweaks you never asked for. If you don't find this



You can prevent Windows 10 from tracking what you're doing

helpful, or if you're concerned about your privacy, you can disable this tracking through Privacy Settings or via a Registry tweak. For the latter option, open regedit and navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\SOFTWARE\ Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ Explorer\Advanced. Right-click in the right-hand pane and go to New, DWORD (32-bit) Value. Call this Start_TrackProgs. Set its value to 0 to disable app-launch tracking, and 1 to re-enable it. Restart your PC to action the change.

CREATE YOUR OWN REGISTRY HACKS

If you've found a Registry tweak you like, you may want to apply it on more than one PC. Instead of going through the whole process on each computer, you can output your tweak as a Registry hack. This file can be run on any PC and will merge your chosen changes into the target device's Registry. Just select the key you made the change to, right click it, select Export and name it. If your tweak involves more than one key - and most will - save each change,

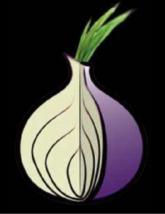


then right-click the first saved REG file and select Edit. Open the second key and paste the main [HKEY] part below the first. You will need to have 'Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00' on the top line of the page. However, this should only appear once in the REG file.

NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 17 October 2018

Where to find the best free, safe and legal stuff on the deep web



© REVIVE OLD WINDOWS

Run classic versions of Microsoft's operating system

© EDIT VIDEOS ON ANDROID

The best free apps for perfecting mobile movies

CIMMUNISE YOUR BROWSER

Stop the web installing malware and junk on your PC

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

Best free bookmark managers

If you're still keeping all your bookmarks in your browser's built-in manager, you're missing out on a wealth of extras. Andy Shaw tests six advanced tools that share your bookmarks across all your browsers and devices



Raindrop.io | raindrop.io | ★★★★

FEATURES **** PERFORMANCE **** EASE OF USE ****

What we liked:

WebUser GOLD AWARD

In an ideal world, your browser bookmarks should be easily accessible wherever you are. Raindrop.io certainly succeeds in delivering this wish, via a web-based

interface you can access in any browser, and add-ons available for Chrome, Firefox, Opera and Safari, as well as apps for Android and iOS. There's a paid-for option that includes a few more tools and features, but we were very happy with the free one, which is generously equipped with all the essential tools and leaves only powerfeatures for the \$3 (around £2.30) per month upgrade. Both free and paid-for versions require that you create an account and sign in. If you don't want to start from scratch, the software can import (and export) existing bookmarks from your browser.

When you click the browser icon to create a new bookmark, it opens a small window below, where you can choose a folder to store the bookmark and add tags to further classify and organise it. You can also save images: just click and drag the picture you want to save to the right of your browser window, then drop it on the cloud icon when it appears.



There's a slight complication in that images that link to other pages will save as a bookmark instead, so it's worth noting whether your mouse pointer turns into a pointing finger when you hover over the image you're hoping to save.

The web interface lets you view your bookmarks in a variety of ways, from simple lists to dynamic-looking cards and 'mood board' views. You can filter and rank the bookmarks by various different means, which makes it a breeze to browse through your saved sites.

How it can be improved:

There's a significant amount of nagging about what you can get if you upgrade

to a Pro account and yet the \$3 per month doesn't buy you that much – just nested folders, suggested tags and bookmark backup to Dropbox.

OUR VERDICT

This powerful bookmarking tool automatically saves your bookmarks to the cloud for sharing anywhere, and provides enough add-ons and apps to work on all your devices. Saving and organising your bookmarks is quick and efficient, with enough options to help you organise things without overdoing it.

Lasso | www.lasso.net | ★★★★☆

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

What we liked:

When you add a bookmark to Lasso, you get a lengthy form to fill in. This collects some information from the site itself but

also gives you several further fields to fill in, including tags, location and expiry date. If you can be bothered to add this information as you bookmark, Lasso becomes a very powerful tool. For example, there's a map view, so you can see your bookmarks by location, which is great if you're saving places to go and visit on your travels, for example. There's also a 'compare view', which creates a table of your bookmarks; a list view that's more compact but still provides oodles of information about each bookmark; or the standard card view, which presents the page as a series of images with information below, as if you were laying out a pack of Top Trumps.

How it can be improved:

Lasso pitches itself as a business tool,



so when you set up a new folder for bookmarks, it encourages you to give it a purpose by choosing from options such as 'knowledge management' and 'social media curation'. However, its provisions for adding supplementary information to your bookmarks can make it overly complex for most people's needs.

OUR VERDICT

If you want to get really organised and gather your bookmarks in a database with as much information as possible, then there's nothing to surpass Lasso. However, you can get bogged-down in details that you'll probably never need.

......

GGather | ggather.com | ★★★★☆

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



What we liked:

GGather has an understated interface which, like our other award-winners. runs on the web with

a browser add-on that provides speedy bookmarking. When you're on a page you want to keep, click the browser button to bring up a small form with the name and address of the site pre-filled. You can rate the site out of five, add some notes and use tags, which help to categorise the site and find it again later.

Saved sites are available to view via the web interface, which provides a list of all the pages you've bookmarked. You can refine the list by searching, and use tags to bundle your bookmarks under a particular theme or heading, without having to hide them in a folder.

How it can be improved:

GGather's interface in the free version is more understated and text-based than its rivals. If you want exciting



visuals, you'll have to upgrade to the paid-for version. The pared-back interface has some advantages, though - you can certainly fit more bookmarks on screen than you can with its rivals - but it makes the tool look a little flat and uninviting.

OUR VERDICT

GGather's minimalist look provides a decent balance between simplicity and features. It can't create a database like Lasso and it isn't as dynamic as Raindrop.io, but it sits conveniently between the two to provide an efficient and fuss-free bookmark manager.

BEST OF THE REST

Papaly

papaly.com

Bookmark a page with the Papaly add-on and a small icon appears at the top of the screen. It's then up to you to file the icon away in a safe place among your other bookmarks. We liked Papaly's list-inspired interface but it lost marks for having too many ads and changing our new tab page without asking.



Dropmark

www.dropmark.com

Dropmark lets you create attractive-looking collections of bookmarks, pulling in screenshots of the page you're on and arranging them in a grid. However, while this looks good and is easy to use, the free version has a lot of restrictions and limits. This is fair enough in a product that's trying to sell a paid-for version, but we didn't feel that the free version was as good as our award-winners.



Bookmark Manager and Viewer

bit.ly/bmav459

If you're generally happy with Chrome's existing bookmark tool, but wish it could do a bit more, Bookmark Manager and Viewer builds on the browser's basics while neatly integrating with your existing bookmarks. A new star button next to the address bar gives you access to your bookmarks along with a collection of tools for editing them and a handy search option.



Identify anything online

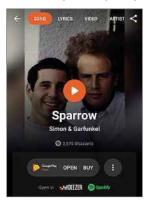
Can't identify a song, movie, painting or animal sound? Jane Hoskyn finds apps and tools that put a name to places, faces and things



Identify songs with an app

Let Shazam (www.shazam .com) hear a song, and it'll

name that tune and artist almost instantly. This amazing free app can recognise anything from a little-known



What's that song? Shazam tells you faster than you can say "Mrs Robinson" Debussy sonata to a Dolly Parton B-side, then let you read the lyrics, stream the video. explore the artist and more. The new Shazam PopUp feature identifies songs played in apps, and the Shazam Auto option runs constantly, automatically identifying any track it hears.

Shazam's recent

£300m purchase by Apple has led some users to jump ship to rival SoundHound (www.soundhound.com), whose free app now only works via voice-control and lets you request songs out loud. Annoying for some, but ideal for when vou're driving



Identify songs in your browser

Free Chrome extension AHA Music Identifier (bit.ly/

ahamusic459) recognises songs as you browse from site to site, then lets you click a track in the list to play it in YouTube, Spotify or Deezer - if it's available there.

To discover which tracks appeared in a TV show or film, use the powerful search tool at TuneFind (www.tunefind .com). For songs in adverts, use What Is That Song? (www.whatisthatsong .net). And if you don't know anything about a tune other than how to hum it, upload a clip of your efforts to WatZatSong (www.watzatsong.com) and the 'song naming community' will try to solve the mystery.



AHA creates an automatic list of songs and clips played in your browser

Identify birdsong

Finding a free "Shazam for birdsong" is like finding a hen's tooth in a haystack.

British app Warblr (www.warblr.co.uk) is pricey (£3.99 Android, £4.99 iOS), and users complain it mis-identifies birds anyway. The iOS apps ChirpOMatic UK (chirpomatic.com) and Chirp (bit.ly/

chirp459)

aet better feedback, but they're £3.99 each. And while Android birdsongidentifier BirdUp (bit.ly/ birdup459) is free to

download.

it costs £2.59 after a 30-day trial. Still, at

least you can get a bird ID from your photos for free. Merlin



Get a quick ID on your bird photos from Merlin - but you'll need a lot of storage space

Bird ID (Android, bit.ly/merlin459) uses AI (artificial intelligence) to determine the breed of your feathered friends. It's a pain to install, demanding 200MB of space for additional 'bird packs', but at least there are no hidden charges - and it's quick and accurate.



Identify plants and flowers

using the wonderful PictureThis (www

Get an instant ID on trees, crops, herbs, flowers and 4,000 other plants from your photos

'SEE' ANY ITEM WITH A SPOKEN ID

Vision-impaired people can get help identifying what's around them using TapTapSee (taptapseeapp.com), a free new app from the maker of CamFind (see opposite page). Tap the screen, wait a few seconds, then let the app identify out loud what it sees.

TapTapSee's powers of recognition are a bit slow, and we found it worked better on iOS than Android (where you'll need to enable TalkBack: bit.ly/talkback459). But it's a superb idea that could reconnect you with your surroundings if you can't see as well as you used to.



Identify anything online



Pick a flower from your photo gallery and use PictureThis to find out what

.picturethisai .com), a free Al app for Android and iOS. Take or select a photo and PictureThis will reveal the plant's name in English and Latin, with a detailed description;

offer photos, comments and tips from users; and invite you to submit questions to green-fingered experts.



Identify animals

Wildlife-identification tools tend to rely on you to enter information, which it then

matches to a database. For example, iTrack Wildlife (bit.ly/itrack459) deciphers paw prints from your description, and The Great British Bee Count app (friendsoftheearth.uk/ bee-count) matches and adds your bee photos to a crowdsourced collection. UK site iSpot (www.ispotnature.org) and US site iNaturalist (www.inaturalist .org) both let you search their huge global databases.

iNaturalist's new iOS app Seek (bit.ly/ seek459) aims to detect species

3.8 3.2 1 Toe 2 Toes 3 Toes

> Find out who's been walking through your garden with critterclassification app iTrack

automatically from photos using AI, but its IDs are hit and miss. Hopefully, a few more months of machine learning from users' contributions should improve its success rate. We should also mention Microsoft's free website

and iOS app What Dog (www .what-dog

.net), which can tell you the breed of your dog from a photo. Full disclosure, however: it identified a snap of our Jack Russell as a Bluetick Coonhound!



Identify where a photó is from

Reverse-image search tools reveal where a photo

appears online - which helps you find out who took it and what's in it. Upload a photo or enter its URL in TinEye (www.tineye.com), or after clicking the camera icon in Google Images (images .google.co.uk). It's a great way to find out if one of your photos is being used without your permission.

Free Android app 'Reverse image search' (bit.ly/reverse459) lets you do a similar search on your mobile, while Chrome for iOS and Android reveals info about a photo if you long-tap it, then tap 'Search Google for this image'.



Find where a digital photo first appeared using reverse-image tools such as TinEye



Identify books **DVDs and posters**

Google Lens (lens.google .com) aims to identify

anything in real time through the lens of your camera (Android 6+), and CamFind is similar (bit.ly/camdroid459, bit.ly/ camios459). Unfortunately, in our tests, they failed to identify most things in detail (see box, below), with one exception: printed media. Both apps are very good at recognising things with

What's that book and who wrote it? Google Lens can tell you with a tap

text on them, such as book covers. DVD cases and event posters, and offer links to related apps such as YouTube.



Google Maps and Google Translate.

Identify artworks

Art galleries rarely include enough background info for paintings. Instead of

borrowing one of those clunky audiodescription gadgets, download Smartify

for free (smartify.org). Point the app at a painting to get a wealth of background info, and save your favourites to a personal gallery. Smartify's new version for Android and iOS lets you browse artworks without having to scan them first, and adds audio commentary for an additional fee.



Smartify offers a wealth of background info on the painting you're looking at

EXPLORE WITH GOOGLE LENS? NOT QUITE

In theory, Google Lens (lens.google.com) and CamFind (bit.ly/ camdroid459, bit.ly/ camios459) are the only travel companions you need. Point your device at any building or food item for an instant ID. But in practice, your guess is as good as theirs. When we showed Google Lens our distinctive local town hall, its verdict was "a

building". CamFind offered "brown and white concrete building". Yes, we



can see that. And actually it's brick.

Using a photo yields better results. Select the photo in Google Photos, then tap the Lens icon (Android 6+; iOS 10+ with bit.ly/gphotos459) or in CamFind, tap the plus symbol. While this method is more accurate with plants and animals. both apps remained hopeless at identifying buildings that aren't

world famous. Which rather defeats the point.

Make deleted files UNRECOVERABLE



Don't let private photos, videos, documents and messages come back to haunt you. **Robert Irvine** explains how to permanently erase sensitive files

Shred private files by overwriting their data

When you delete a file in Windows, it is sent to the Recycle Bin, from where it can instantly be restored. To stop this, simply right-click the Bin, choose Properties and select 'Don't move files to the Recycle Bin'. Alternatively, hold down Shift when you delete a file.

However, bypassing the Recycle Bin doesn't make a deleted file unrecoverable – all you're actually doing is removing the reference to it on your hard drive. This reference – or 'pointer' – tells Windows where the file's data begins and ends; when the file is 'deleted', Windows removes the pointer and marks the sectors containing the file's data as available. The data itself is still there until Windows actually overwrites it, and the file can still be recovered using dedicated software. Even if the file is partially overwritten,

Recycle Bin Properties

General

Recycle Bin Location | Space Available | Local Disk (Ct) | 465 GB

Settings for selected location | Custom size: Maximum size (MB): | 476386 | Don't move files to the Recycle Bin. Remove files | Immediately when deleted.

Display delete confirmation dialog

Bypassing the Recycle Bin doesn't make a deleted file unrecoverable

a file-recovery tool may still be able to restore part of the data.

For this reason, if you want to ensure that confidential data is deleted forever, you need a more powerful solution, such as a secure file shredder. Our favourite free option is Eraser (eraser .heidi.ie), which lets you wipe individual files and folders, entire drives and unused disk space, and offers a choice of overwriting methods with varying numbers of 'passes' (patterns written over the data you want to delete). These include US Air Force (three passes), German VSITR (seven passes) and the most thorough method, Gutmann (35 passes), although one pass should be enough. You can integrate Eraser with Windows Explorer to wipe files and folders via the right-click menu, replace deleted items with fake versions ("to allow plausible deniability") and create a schedule to automatically erase files in specific places, such as the Recycle Bin.

Most popular cleanup tools offer built-in file shredders to save you having



Eraser lets you securely delete private files by overwriting them up to 35 times

to download a separate program. In CCleaner, for example, go to Options, Settings, select 'Secure file deletion' and choose the number of passes. In BleachBit, click File, Shred Files (or Folders) to erase the selected file in one pass.

Permanently delete photos from your phone

The convenience of having your phone with you at all times means you may be carrying around embarrassing and incriminating pictures – snaps of a drunken night out or that pair of hotpants you tried on in a changing room. Deleting images from your Android device merely sends them to the Bin folder, where they'll remain for 60 days. Even if you subsequently delete them from there, they can still be recovered – at least until they're overwritten by new data.

Fortunately, you can permanently delete private photos, videos and other files so they can never be viewed again using a free Android app called Shreddit (bit.ly/shreddit459). Use the app's file explorer to browse photos stored in your phone's memory or on its SD card - captured images usually appear in the DCIM folder, while screenshots can be found in Pictures - then select the unwanted pictures and tap the red 'shred' button in the bottom-right corner. Confirm the deletion and Shreddit will securely erase the files using its default shredding algorithm - you can change this, along with the number of 'passes', in the app's settings.

Make files unrecoverable



Shreddit securely erases embarrassing photos from your Android phone

Alternatively, share a photo or video to Shreddit from an app such as Google Photos, WhatsApp or Messenger to securely delete it that way.

On an iPhone or iPad, Apple suggests that deleting files from the Recently Deleted folder (where they're stored for 30 days) will permanently remove them from your device, but this fails to take dedicated file-recovery tools into account. Sadly, the locked-down nature of iOS makes it difficult for third-party apps to access and properly wipe deleted data, although there are paid-for desktop programs that claim to do the job, such as iMyFone Umate Pro (www.imyfone.com, Windows and Mac OS). This costs from \$29.95 (£23), with a free trial available.



Paid-for tool iMvFone Umate Pro wipes iPhone photos and other data

Remove files from onlinestorage services

So many of our photos, videos, documents and other files are now stored in the cloud that it's easy to forget they're there, especially when we have automatic backup enabled. As is the case on PCs and phones, deleting these items from an online storage service usually moves them to a Bin folder rather than erasing them, where they'll remain for at least 30 days so they can be restored if required. If you'd prefer deleted files to be gone for good, go into the Bin or Trash for that service and either select a specific item and choose Delete, or open the menu for the bin and empty the whole thing.

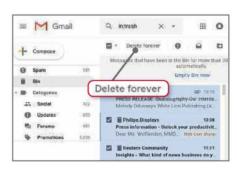


You can permanently delete files and folders from cloud-storage services

Once this is done, the files may still be accessible to the storage provider for a set time - Google Drive, for example, keeps a backup for 25 days after 'permanent' deletion - after which they will be completely erased and therefore unrecoverable.

Erase private emails from your account

Like cloud-storage services, webmail providers merely move emails you delete from your Inbox and other folders to a Bin, Trash or Deleted Items folder rather than wiping them. This means you need to delete them from there, or empty the



Go into the bin folder of your webmail service to delete private emails for good

whole folder, to remove private messages permanently (or wait 30 days for them to be deleted automatically).

In desktop email clients such as Outlook and Thunderbird, you can bypass the Deleted Items folder by selecting an email and pressing the Shift+Delete keys. Outlook also lets you empty the Deleted Items folder automatically when you close the program: click File, select Options, Advanced and tick the box 'Empty Deleted Items folders when exiting Outlook'.

Delete WhatsApp and Messenger messages

There are some conversations we prefer not to cherish, especially on our phones where they could be viewed by others, but deleting them still leaves a record of the chat on the other person's device.

Unless, that is, vou use WhatsApp, which last year introduced the useful option to delete messages at both ends. Simply select and hold the message, tap



WhatsApp lets you permanently delete messages at both ends - but be quick!

the bin icon and choose 'Delete for everyone' from the menu. This will permanently remove the message from both your phones, and WhatsApp's encryption makes it unrecoverable. The catch is that you only have seven minutes after sending the message to perform the deletion. Entire WhatsApp conversations can be deleted from your chat list, but only at your end.

Facebook Messenger offers a useful option called Secret Conversation, which encrypts conversations and lets you set messages to disappear from both devices after a specific time. To use this feature in the Messenger app, select a contact on the Home screen, tap the 'i' icon in the top-right corner and choose 'Go to Secret conversation'. Tap in the text box to set the self-destruct timer.

ENSURE FILES CAN'T BE RECOVERED

There's not much point in wiping files from your PC if some nosy parker can restore them in a matter of minutes (and we don't just mean by looking in the Recycle Bin). To ensure that what you delete remains deleted, run Recuva (www.ccleaner.com/recuva) - the free Piriform tool it's still okay to like. This brilliant program quickly locates all photos, videos, documents and other files that have been deleted from your hard drive or memory card, and tells you whether or not they can be recovered. It also has a Secure Overwrite feature that lets you completely erase items that should no longer be there.



Recuva isn't available for mobile devices, but the free Android app DiskDigger (diskdigger.org/android) will tell you which deleted photos and videos can be recovered (and actually recover them if so required). Upgrade to the Pro version for £2.30 to find erased files of other types.

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Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Improve and edit your videos for free with DaVinci Resolve 15

DaVinci Resolve 15's powerful editing tools produce professional results. Here's how to use it

DaVinci Resolve: bit.ly/davinci459 | 🕒 30 mins | 📰 👛 🛆

here are plenty of free video editors you can use for simple tasks such as trimming and combining clips, adding titles and applying effects. But if you're after something more advanced, DaVinci Resolve provides powerful editing features, advanced trimming options, colour-correction tools, visual effects and transitions, audio

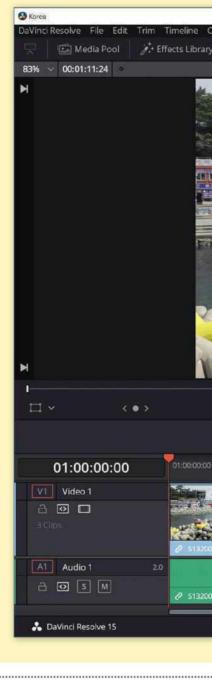
post production and more, and is used to produce Hollywood feature films, TV shows and commercials. Though the free version lacks some of the tools found in the full \$300 (around £229) edition most notably the collaboration aspects - it's very comprehensive and easily a match for paid-for programs such as Adobe's Premiere Pro CC.



Launch the program to bring up the Projects screen. From here, you can open an existing project 11 or create a new Project 2 or Folder. 3 For a quick start, double-click the Untitled Project tile. 4 The editor will open in a new window, ready for you to add your video footage.



First, you need to add some video 🕳 clips to the media pool 💶 by dragging and dropping them on the window. If they have a different frame rate from the current project settings, you'll be given the option to change your timeline frame rate and video format to match. Click Change. 2

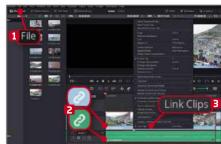




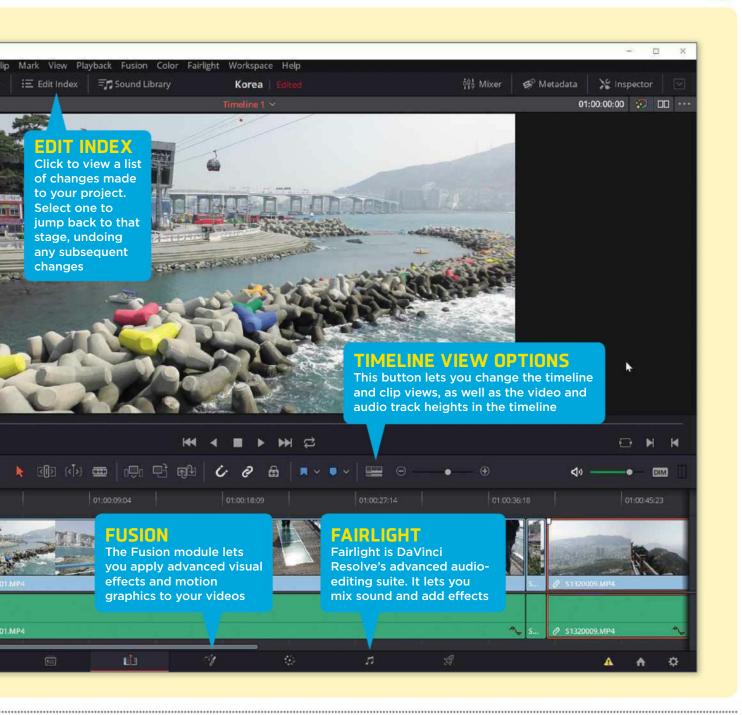
Your pool of clips appears. 11 You can show or hide this pane at any time by clicking the Media Pool button. 2 Click a clip to display a preview of it in the main window. B Hover your mouse over the thumbnail 4 to go to a different point, or click the ellipses (...) 5 to show the video details.



Drag your first clip to the timeline. The video 💶 and audio 🔼 will be separated. Drag and drop more clips to the timeline, wherever you want them placed - at the beginning or end of a clip, or in the middle of it. The magnet button **B** toggles clip-snapping on and off. Preview the video above. 4



🧲 Save your project via the File menu 1 or by pressing Ctrl+S, and give it a name. You can move clips around the timeline by clicking and dragging. The chain icon on the video and audio clips show they are linked 2 and move together. Right-click and select Link Clips if you want to separate them.





The right-click menu also lets you change a clip's speed, normalise audio levels, and copy and cut clips. You can trim clips using either the Trim Edit Mode 11 or Dynamic Trim Mode, 22 and split videos with the Blade Edit Mode. Click the arrow to switch back to Selection Mode. 4



Click the Effects Library button at the top 11 to add some video 22 or audio **I** transitions to your movie. The OpenFX section lets you apply various filters to your video 4 by dragging and dropping one or more to the clip. You might see a limitation message prompting you to upgrade to the paid-for version. 5



There are a number of tools you can use to adjust your movie's colours. Click the Color button 11 and select a tool. The Curves feature 2 lets you adjust the tonal range, while the Qualifier 🖪 is a fantastic tool for playing around with the colours. Click the Deliver button 4 to save your finished movie.



Create cloud-free storage that's synced on all your devices

on't trust Google? Not keen on OneDrive? Syncthing is a free alternative to big-name cloud storage and sync tools that gives you total control over your data. Instead of using anonymous servers that can be hacked, the program – available on a raft of platforms from Windows and Mac OS to Linux and Android – lets you create a private network of devices with access to shared files and folders. Setup is straightforward (with no limits on how much you can share). What's more, in our experience, Syncthing's synchronisation was quicker and more reliable than many popular cloud services.

Be aware that Syncthing can be quite technical and this Workshop involves downloading elements from GitHub (github.com).



Steve Clark says

Where Google Drive, OneDrive and Dropbox use simple drag and drop, Syncthing is slightly more complex – especially if you use the traditional command-line version. In this Workshop, we show you how to start syncing with devices on your local network. If you're diving deeper into the tool's capabilities, check out the well-populated forum.syncthing.net and official help guide at docs.synthing.net.



Syncthing uses a command-line interface, 1 but it's easier to use a graphical one, so download SyncTrayzor (bit.ly/trayzor459). When you open the tool, your firewall may prompt you to let Syncthing access your network – if so, select 'Private networks' for home and business Wi-Fi. Only tick 'Public networks' if you're sure the network is secure.



This Device 1 shows info about your current connection, while a real-time log runs in the lower pane. Folders 2 displays the status of all shared folders. To create a shared folder, click Add Folder. 3 Name your folder and determine its location. 4 The Advanced tab 5 houses further options, such as preventing changes by setting the Folder Type to Send Only.

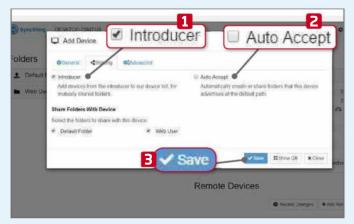


Back on the home screen, click Actions 1 and select Show ID. 2 Now do the same on your second computer. Note the device's ID number or use the QR code provided. Now go back and click Add Remote Device. 3 Syncthing will suggest nearby computers on your network. Compare the suggested device IDs to make sure you're adding the right one.

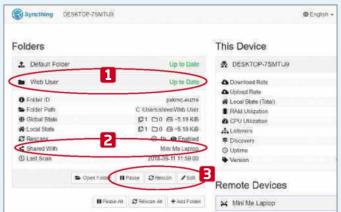


In the Device ID box, add the identification number of the second device 1 or click the suggestion to auto-fill. Add a nickname in the Device Name, 2 then repeat the same process in reverse on your other computer. Go to Sharing 3 and tick the folders you want to share. You only need to do this once - the directory on both machines should update automatically.

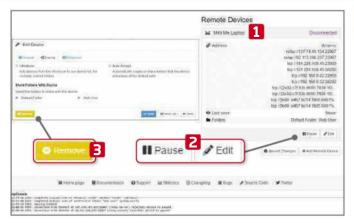




To grant 'admin rights' to other linked computers, tick the boxes for Introducer 1 and Auto Accept. 2 Introducer lets each user add new devices, while Auto Accept allows other devices to create new shared folders using the default directory. Click Save 3 to apply the changes. If you have notifications enabled, you're told that your device is connected.



Now you've twinned the computers, click your shared folder. 11 The expanded panel displays info including which devices can access it. 2 The folder control buttons at the bottom of the pane 🖪 let you stop sharing with Pause, alter the folder's settings with Edit or click Rescan to force a scan outside of Syncthing's regular 60-second update checks.



If you need to remove a device from your shared network, go to the home screen and find Remote Devices, which lists everything that's connected. 11 Clicking the device reveals options to pause sharing and edit device settings. 2 Click Edit to revoke folder access or click Remove 1 to delete it from your network. Confirm your choice by clicking Yes.



Syncthing is also available on Android (bit.ly/ syncdroid459). You can edit the details of your Folders or Devices by tapping into each category. Press the top-right '+' to create a shared folder. Give your folder a label 💶 and navigate your built-in file app to choose the directory location. 2 Toggle the switches to set who can view and edit the folder. **3** Tap the tick to save. 4



When both your phone and computer are running Syncthing on the same network, a notification may display on your phone. Tap or click to automatically connect. To manually add a Remote Device, tap the three-line menu and select Web GUI. 11 The interface is identical to the desktop and online versions, so scroll down to Add Remote Device and repeat steps 4 to 6.



Once connected, your computer sends a folder share request to your Android device, which appears at the top of your phone's screen. Tap Add to see the Folder name and Path for the local storage location. You can edit this if required. Tap the tickboxes under Share With Devices 2 to determine which computers can access and edit the folder. Tap Save. **E**

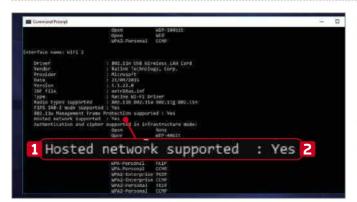


Create a professional Wi-Fi hotspot: Part 1

ost routers come with a guest network that anyone with the password can connect to and use. However, if you're prepared to run it from a spare PC, you can create a vastly more sophisticated hotspot, which lets you

control who uses it and for how long. In this issue, we show you how to set up a hotspot. Come back next issue to find out what you can do with it.

MyHotspot and WiFiCreator: bit.ly/hot459 | 😃 20 mins | 🎥 Windows 7, 8, 10



First, check that the Wi-Fi adapter on your PC is able to share its Wi-Fi connection. In Command Prompt, type: netsh wlan show drivers. Press Enter and find the line 'Hosted network supported'. 1 If it says Yes, 2 go ahead with the workshop; otherwise, try a different adapter or PC.



Download and install WiFiCreator and MyHotspot from bit.ly/hot459, then restart your PC. Both programs need to run with adminstrator rights, so right-click the icon and choose 'Run as administrator'. 11 Start by running WiFiCreator.



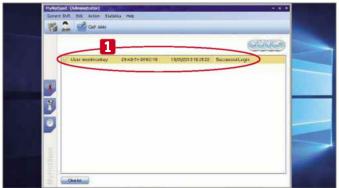
Make sure 'Automatic Hotspot configuration' is selected 11 and that you're happy with the name and password. Click 'Set up and Start Hotspot'. 2 Below the button (which will now say Stop Hotspot) you'll see something like 'Local Area Connection X', where 'X' is a number. Make a note of it.



Launch MyHotspot and you'll be taken to a 'Network configuration' screen (alternatively, you can access it by opening the Edit menu and choosing Hotspot Configuration, then 'Set up Network'). Select 'Automatic network configuration'.



In the 'Network card with the Internet connection' section, choose your existing Wi-Fi adapter. 11 In the 'Network card to W-LAN Access Point' section, choose the Local Area Connection from Step 3. 2 Click Next and the hotspot will be configured.



On another device, find and connect to the network name from Step 3. You'll then have to log in - create an account from the Options button. Back on the host PC, you can see who has logged in. 11 There are lots more settings for further options to explore, which we'll show you next issue.

Keep your mobile messages totally private

iccura Safemail is an encryption tool for your phone that instant messages or up to 30 encrypted adds privacy and security to your email. You don't have to pay the £5.99 monthly subscription - the free app lets you control your online privacy when sending texts,

emails a month. You can make encrypted voice and video calls by tapping the phone icon next to your contacts, too.

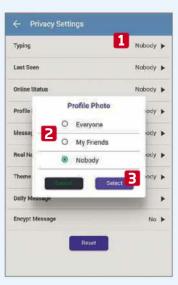


Siccura Safemail: bit.ly/siccura459 | 😃 10 mins | 👘 Android





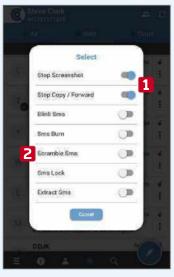
Siccura's automatic encryption only works when both you and your contact use the app. Otherwise, it prompts you to send your message unencrypted or it will arrive scrambled and unreadable. During setup, accept Siccura's permission demands, then sign up using your mobile number. Email accounts linked to your phone are listed on the startup screen. 1 Tap to allow Siccura access to your inbox or add a new account via the buttons. 2



On the home screen. tap the menu button and scroll to Settings, then choose Privacy Settings. To determine who can see details including your personal information, online status and read receipts, 11 click each option and select Everybody, My Friends or Nobody (which is the default). 2 Tap Select to confirm changes. 3



Tap the Email tab to go to your inbox. Reply to an email, press the People icon to select existing contacts or tap the pencil icon to create a new message. Compose your email and add encrypted attachments. 11 Now, tap the menu button. 🔼 You can set your email to Self Destruct Mail 3 if you wish. Tap Send. 4



Swipe to your SMS tab. Tap the menu button beside any message, then press More. You're now able to toggle screenshots and forwarding On or Off. 11 Tap Enable. You can hide messages by adding a blur via Scramble SMS. 2 If your contact doesn't have Siccura, you're prompted to choose to encrypt messages when sending.



Open a text message and tap the menu button, 11 then set a thread to Normal, Self Destruct or Safe SMS. Press Self Destruct SMS and use the drop-down menu to choose the message's lifespan. 2 Press any sent message in the thread to 'Take back SMS'. as well as copy, forward or delete the text. B



If you uninstall then reinstall Siccura, you'll need an encryption key to access your old messages. To create a backup beforehand, tap the home screen's menu button and scroll to Backup Key. Toggle Password Protect to On 11 and type a password. 2 Choose a save location for your backup - Cloud or, if available, Local Storage. 3 Click Save. 4

Weekend Project

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





Block ads on every device on your network

Wayne Williams explains how to use an old PC to create an ad blocker that banishes ads across your entire network - even on your smart TV

d blockers make for a faster, more enjoyable web experience, and they are becoming increasingly popular. But if you want to avoid having to install a separate ad blocker on each of your devices, you can create a hardware ad blocker that connects to your router, preventing any adverts from reaching the devices on your network. All you need is an old PC, a free version of Linux and a copy of ad-blocking software Pi-hole.



Connect your devices to Pi-hole

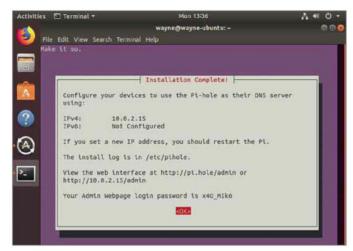
First, install Ubuntu (www.ubuntu.com) on your old PC - see our Mini Workshop, opposite, for instructions. Then, follow our second Mini Workshop on page 61 to set up Pi-hole (pi-hole.net). Next, you'll want to set up your devices or router to use Pi-hole as the DNS server - all the details you require for this are shown on the final page of the setup screen. The IP address for your DNS server is also used

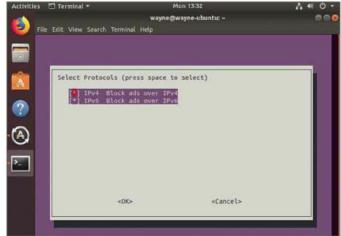
to log into Pi-hole's web interface, which we'll look at shortly.

If you just want to configure one PC to go through Pi-hole's ad blocker, go to Control Panel on that PC, click 'Network and Internet', 'Network and Sharing Center', then 'Change adapter settings'. Right-click your network connection and select Properties. Click 'Internet Protocol Version 4', then Properties, and click 'Use the following DNS server addresses'.

Enter Pi-hole's IP address as the primary DNS server, OK this and exit the windows.

You can also use the ad blocker on iOS or Android devices. In Apple's mobile operating system, tap Settings, then Wi-Fi. Tap the 'i' next to your Wi-Fi connection and change the DNS settings. Enter Pi-hole's IP address as the first one. In Android, go to Settings, Wi-Fi and select your current wireless network. Choose 'Modify network' in the options,





When the installation completes, make a note of the IP address and password

You have the option of blocking ads over IPv4 or IPv6

then scroll down and tick 'Show advanced options'. Scroll down further and tap 'DHCP' under IPv4 Settings and switch to 'Static'. Change the DNS settings.

To use Pi-hole's DNS on all your devices, you need to configure your router. The exact process will depend on the make and model of your hardware, but you'll first need to open your web browser and log into the router page (the address for this will be in your manual or on the router itself). Locate the DHCP/ DNS settings and make sure DHCP Server is enabled, then enter Pi-hole's IP address as the first static DNS. To ensure all traffic goes through Pi-hole, don't add any other addresses. You may need to disable any settings that make the router automatically use the DNS details supplied by your ISP.

Remember, in order to make sure Pi-hole is blocking all the ads on your network, you'll need to leave the Ubuntu



You can select one of the DNS choices from the list, or use vour own if you prefer

PC running all the time. You don't need a monitor, keyboard or mouse attached - you can just check how it's performing and, if there are any problems, use the web interface.

Access the web interface

Pi-hole's web interface provides an at-a-glance view of how it is performing, including the number of queries made to date, the number of queries blocked,

MINI WORKSHOP | Install Ubuntu on your PC



Download and install Ubuntu on the PC you're using as your networkwide ad blocker. Download the desktop version in ISO format from bit.ly/ dlub459. 11's a 1.8GB download, so might take a long time to complete. If you click the Alternative Downloads link 2 you can grab a BitTorrent version, which may download faster.



When the file has finished downloading, write it to CD using a tool such as Free ISO Burner (www .freeisoburner.com) or to a USB flash drive with Rufus (rufus.akeo.ie). Boot your PC using the USB or disc, and the Ubuntu menu will load. You can choose to try Ubuntu 🚺 or install it. 🔼



Click the Install button, select English UK and click Continue. As we're only going to be using Ubuntu with Pi-hole, we'll select the 'Minimum installation' option. 11 Choose to 'Download updates', 2 click Continue and select the option to erase the disk and install Ubuntu. Follow the final steps to begin the installation.



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3	First Utility	First Utility: Broadband	£34.99	18 months	63Mbps avg. speed	w unlimited	£419.88
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the percentage blocked, the number of domains on the blocklist and the number of queries made over the past 24 hours. You can also view clients over time, query types, forward destinations, top domains, top blocked domains, top clients (total) and top clients (blocked). If you hover your mouse over a graph, you'll see some additional information.

Because this is a web interface, you can access it from your browser. Go to http://pi.hole/admin or http://0.0.0.0/ admin (replacing 0.0.0.0 with the actual IP address of your DNS server).

A password for the web interface was generated alongside the IP address when you completed the Pi-hole setup process. Click the Login option in the interface and enter this password. The page will remember you for seven days.

If you forget your password (or it's not recognised for some reason), you can set a new one. In Terminal, type the command:

sudo pihole -a -p

You'll be prompted to enter your Ubuntu password and will then be able to change your Pi-hole login.



The web interface shows you everything you need to know about how Pi-hole is performing

How well does it work?

If you're familiar with broswer add-ons such as Adblock Plus, then you might be initially disappointed with Pi-hole because it doesn't block absolutely all ads - it lets some through, including, we've found, those on streaming video services. However, it still manages to block the majority of adverts you're likely to encounter on the web and, for most people, will do the job well enough to allow you to remove any existing ad-blocking software. These add-ons can be cumbersome and hog a lot of resources, so removing them should instantly speed up your browsing.

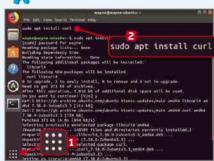
If you have your router configured to use Pi-hole, the adverts get blocked before they reach your devices, which again will make browsing the web quicker. Development on Pi-hole is ongoing, so its adblocking capabilities should continue to improve over time.

Don't have a spare PC?

Not everyone has an old computer they can devote to a project like this. However, Pi-hole doesn't require a lot of resources and it can even run on a tiny Raspberry Pi (as you might have guessed from the 'Pi' in the name). The Raspberry Pi 3 Model B+ (www.raspberrypi.org) only costs £32, so setting up a devoted hardware ad blocker won't break the bank.

The Pi runs a version of Linux (Raspian, typically), which means the process for setting up Pi-hole is the same as we've discussed here.

MINI WORKSHOP | Set up the Pi-hole ad blocker



Once Ubuntu is up and running, click the Show Applications button. From the window that opens, launch Terminal (the Linux equivalent of Command Prompt). Type sudo apt install curl, 2 press Enter, then type in your Ubuntu password. Press the 'Y' key when prompted. The Curl command will be installed.



Next, type curl -sSL https:// install.pi-hole.net | bash. Note the vertical line before "bash". This is called a 'pipe' and you can usually type it by holding down the Alt Gr key (to the right of the spacebar) and tapping the key to the left of the '1' key at the top-left of your keyboard. Press Enter and Pi-hole will begin to install. 1



Click OK, and choose one of the offered DNS providers. OK the third-party lists used to block ads, 11 then choose to block ads over IPv4. Pi-hole needs a Static IP address. Opt to use your current network settings for this, then read the warning, Install the web admin interface and web server, and log queries.

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Create your own Netflix streaming service

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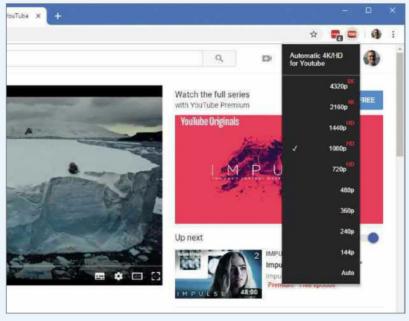
Remove annoyances from YouTube and add extra features

Set the best YouTube video resolution

ouTube videos are available in several resolutions, so you can choose the quality and bandwidth to suit your hardware and internet connection. However, if you want to change the resolution, you have to wait until the video starts, then click the cog icon and select the new resolution.

A more efficient method is to set a new default using the Automatic 4K/HD for YouTube Chrome add-on (bit.ly/akhd459). Click the toolbar icon and choose a resolution up to 4320p, which is 8K. Any video you play will now use your chosen resolution.

You can't watch videos at a higher resolution than your screen is capable of, so if you want to watch in 4K, you'll need a 4K monitor or TV, and you'll need to watch the videos in full-screen mode. Alternatively, you could set a low automatic resolution if you have a slow internet connection or limited data. Firefox users should try the YouTube High Definition add-on (bit.ly/ythd459).



Automatically use the best video resolution for YouTube videos

Block annoying adverts

On the one hand, Google doesn't want you to block adverts on YouTube, but on the other hand, it allows ad blockers in the Chrome Web Store. Until it starts blocking YouTube ad-blocker extensions, it's safe to assume that it's fine to use them.

Video Adblocker for YouTube (bit.ly/vab459) is a useful Chrome extension that stops annoying ads interrupting your streaming videos. Install it and click the icon in the toolbar. The panel lets you turn ad blocking on or off. You can disable it on channels you particularly like and want to support.

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.

Firefox users can choose from Adblock for YouTube (bit.ly/abyt459) or YouTube Adblock (bit.ly/ytab459) add-ons.

Make YouTube better with Magic Actions

Magic Actions for YouTube (bit.ly/magact459 for Chrome or bit.ly/ffma459 for Firefox) adds new features that make it easier to use YouTube

and remove annoyances.
Install the add-on and it
automatically displays the
settings page. You can rightclick the toolbar icon at any
time to access the options.

Instead of fiddling with sliders to adjust the volume, Magic Actions lets you use the mouse wheel instead. Spin the wheel when the mouse pointer is hovering over the video to increase or decrease the volume. If your computer has a touchscreen, sliding your finger

left and right adjusts the volume. Alternatively you can slide up or down a laptop's trackpad with two fingers.

Like the Automatic 4K/HD add-on, Magic Actions can also preselect your favourite video resolution. In the options, choose up to 2880p (5K), if your screen is capable of it.

One of the best features is cinema mode. YouTube has a cinema-mode button to switch to a larger video



Magic Actions' best feature is the cinema mode, which removes distracting clutter

window, but it's cluttered with distracting controls, thumbnails of video suggestions and buttons. Click the Magic Actions filmstrip icon below the video for an alternative cinema mode. This places the video in the centre of the browser window and blurs the background, recreating the effect of a projector on a wall. It looks fantastic.

YouTube's bright white background can be a strain on your eyes if you're watching videos in the evening. You can turn on the dark theme in YouTube's settings, but Magic Actions makes this even easier by adding a handy switch to the left of the YouTube logo, which lets you switch between light and dark modes in one click.

Loop videos you love

Some videos are so good you want to watch them again and again, such as a particularly hilarious comedy moment or a favourite section of a music video. You can click in the timeline to jump back to the start of the video, but this requires you to reach for the mouse.

Looper for YouTube (bit.ly/loop459) is a simple but useful add-on that lets you loop videos. Budding musicians will find this particularly useful when trying to learn a piece of music. Just loop the video and play it over and over. You'll soon get the hang of it.

Adjust playback speed and audio pitch

Transpose (bit.ly/tran459) is an audio customisation add-on that works with YouTube. It's more precise than other audio enhancers, and adds a control panel with sliders for Transpose, Pitch and Speed. Although YouTube already has its own playback speed controls, it doesn't offer the same degree of fine control that you get from Transpose.

The Transpose and Pitch sliders change the quality of the audio in all kinds of interesting ways, which is fascinating to experiment with. The



add-on can fix poor audio in a video, or be used to watch action scenes or magic tricks in slow-motion.

Experiment with Transpose's sliders to see how they affect your favourite videos

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

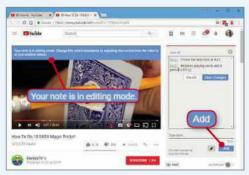
More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Take notes while you watch

If you're watching an instructional or educational YouTube video, to learn how to perform new skills or to research a subject, you can use Rocket Note (bit.ly/rock459) to take notes.

The notepad appears on the right when a video starts, and clicking the red rocket in the video toolbar toggles it on and off. Click below the notepad where it says 'Type here' to enter notes. The time the video is currently at is automatically included in each note and you can store up to 30 notes for free.

Click the 'view all' link either in the notepad or in the drop-down panel when clicking the toolbar icon, and all your notes are displayed in a browser window. Click a note and you can copy the text to paste it elsewhere. There's also a share link you can give to other people so they can read the note.



Use Rocket Notes to write notes while watching YouTube videos

Create a contents page

There is usually a text description accompanying a video, but it's often short and of limited use. Wouldn't it be useful to know exactly what topics a video covers and where in the video they are?

The Chrome add-on BriefTube (bit.ly/brie459) does this for you. Start playing a video, then click the BriefTube icon in the toolbar to open a panel with a list of chapters. It creates thumbnails, headings and brief descriptions of the content. and tells you exactly where everything is, showing the time display on the right.

If you are wondering how it performs this apparently magical feat, it reads the subtitles for the video and uses them to generate chapter headings and descriptions. The add-on is therefore limited to



BriefTube scans the subtitles of long videos to create a guide to its contents

videos that have subtitles, but documentaries and educational content often have this, which is where the add-on is most useful.

Tweak the audio

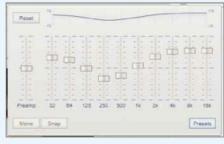
There's a lot of music on YouTube and many people use it as their primary source for streaming music. However, the quality varies - it can be excellent

> but some recordings, particularly old footage and live performances, are not so good.

Add the Chrome add-on Audio EQ (bit.ly/aueq459) or Firefox's Audio Equalizer (bit.ly/ffae459), and you can customise the quality of the sound to suit your listening preferences or adapt it to the room. After installing the add-on, start playing a YouTube video, then click the Audio EQ button in the toolbar.

A panel of sliders is displayed in the corner of the window, which can be dragged up and down to adjust the sound elements.

There are around 20 preset equaliser settings that are quick and easy to select, including Pop, Rock, Classical and Full Bass. There's also an option to save your own custom settings. Start with a preset, tweak the sliders, then save the setup as a preset so it can be easily selected the next time you play the video.



Customise the audio in YouTube videos to get a better sound

Ask the Expert

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



GENERAL PC

Fix failing Windows Defender update

My Windows 10 (version 1803) PC keeps trying to update Windows Defender, but the downloads won't install. All other updates download and install without any problems.

Robert Cull, via email

Manually prompting Windows Defender to update sometimes fixes automatic updates. Right-click the Defender icon in the notification area on the taskbar (it may be in the pop-up section) and select 'View security dashboard'. Click 'Virus & threat protection' followed by 'Virus & threat protection updates', then 'Check for updates'.

You can also download and install Windows Defender updates directly, which may kick-start automatic



If Windows Defender isn't updating itself, prompting it to update may fix it

updates. Go to bit.ly/wdu459. The updates are halfway down the page. Choose a 32- or 64-bit download, depending on your version of Windows, and run the program from the Downloads folder.

Windows Update handles Defender updates and its troubleshooter can repair minor faults. Open Settings (Windows+i), then go to Update & Security, Troubleshoot. Click Windows Update to run the troubleshooter.

SECURITY

Stop Kaspersky blocking my webcam

A message keeps appearing saying that webcam access is denied or blocked. Is someone trying to access my webcam? I can't even use the webcam myself, even though I believe I've adjusted all the necessary settings. I use Kaspersky security software (www.kaspersky.co.uk).

George, via email

Kaspersky is simply notifying you that a program on your PC is trying to access the webcam. It doesn't differentiate whether the software is harmless or malicious, so it could mean that a program or person is spying on you, but it's unlikely.

This annoying message can appear several times a day, reporting unimportant and harmless webcam access by apps or services. The only way to stop it is to turn it off in Kaspersky's security software.

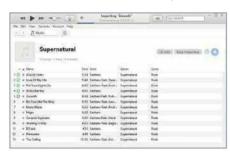
Go to Privacy Protection and disable the webcam access feature. This reduces security slightly, but Kaspersky is good at keeping malware out of a PC, so there shouldn't be anything that could hijack your camera anyway.

HARDWARE

Make music more mobile

I recently bought a 128GB microSD card but I'm not sure how to use it. I thought I'd be able to record music to it to listen to through my headphones.

Laurie Clifton, via email



Use iTunes to copy CDs to your hard drive as AAC or MP3 files

A microSD card is a storage device, so our first question is, do you have a device to plug it into? Some phones and tablets, such as Samsung's top-ofthe-range models, have sockets for microSD cards. These days, phones have almost completely replaced MP3 players for listening to music, but there are still a few MP3 players around, some of which accept microSD cards. Search Google or Bing for mp3 player microsd for info on devices and prices.

You can transfer music to a memory card while it's in your phone, but it's often easier to manage the files on your PC, provided it has a memory-card slot that accepts microSD cards. If it doesn't, you can buy a USB card reader, such as this £4.99 unit from Amazon at bit.ly/ msd459. Use Explorer to copy music to the card, then slot it into the phone or MP3 player.

To transfer music from a CD to the card, use iTunes (bit.ly/itu459) to copy the music to your PC. Go to Edit, Preferences and, on the General tab, click Import Settings and select the quality you desire. AAC Encoder, High Quality (128Kbps) is a good compromise between size, compatibility and audio quality. MP3 is an option if your MP3 player only supports that format.

When you place the CD in your PC, iTunes will save the music to your hard drive. Then Use Explorer to copy it to the microSD card from the iTunes library, which is usually at:

C:\Users\YourName\Music\iTunes\ iTunes Media.

GENERAL PC

Hide updates causing errors

When I switched from Windows 7 to 10, I was using Windows Live Photo Gallery to handle my photos. However, an update removed it, and I've been looking for a good replacement ever since - without success. Then I found a way to reinstall Windows Live Photo Gallery from the Windows archives.

During installation, I must have clicked a box to install 'Live sign-in assistant'. This is causing me problems because updates won't install. When I try to

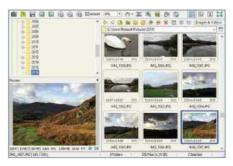
update, a message tells me, "There were problems installing some updates. We will keep trying. Update for Windows Live Sign-In Assistant (KB967912) Error Ox80070002." I've removed all traces of Live Assistant using Revo Uninstaller Pro, but the updates still fail.

Gerald Murphy, via email

Windows 10 doesn't support Live Essentials applications, so they're not fully compatible. Although you removed the software, it looks as if Windows Update registered it and is now trying to update it. The solution is to hide the unwanted updates.

Go to bit.ly/hide459 and click the link to download the 'Show or hide updates' troubleshooter. Run it, scan for any problems, then choose 'Hide updates'. Windows doesn't try to download and install hidden updates.

The new Windows 10 Photos app (bit .ly/wph459) is very good, but there are many popular free alternatives, such as FastStone Image Viewer (bit.ly/fast459).



Browse and organise photos with FastStone Image Viewer

GENERAL PC

Restore Windows to their previous positions

Every time I open certain programs, I have to move and resize the window. How do I get Windows to remember the size and position?

S Taylor, via email

Each program controls the size and position of its own windows. An application can store this information in a settings file or the Windows Registry, but it's up to the application to read and apply the settings when it next starts.

Windows can't make programs open exactly as they were when you closed them, but it does have a useful sizing and positioning feature. In Windows 10, go to Settings, System, Multitasking and turn on Snap. You can then drag windows to the sides or corners of the screen to size and position them.

Aquasnap (bit.ly/aqs459) adds more



Windows' Snap tools resize your windows as you drag them around the desktop

features for tiling windows but AutoSizer (bit.ly/asiz459) is more like what you want. It's a Windows XP tool, but it worked in Windows 10 when we tried it. Run it and it shows the titles of running applications. Select the one you want and it stores the size and position. When you next open the application, AutoSizer resizes the window.

GENERAL PC

Reconnect a reluctant drive

An entry under This PC in Explorer says "Disconnected Network Drive (A)" with a red cross next to it. Can you tell me what this is? Any attempts I've made to get rid of it have resulted in malware infection threats.

For a while now, I've been unable to transfer anything to DVD or USB memory stick. They don't appear in Explorer as E: or F: drives, or show up when I right-click a folder and choose 'Send to'. On the positive side, Device Manager recognises

both the disc and flash drive. Please tell me I haven't permanently lost my ability to copy anything to external storage.

John William Jones, via email

Messages like this can occur if you have previously used Explorer to connect to a network storage (NAS) device or another PC that is no longer on the network. To fix it, open Explorer and select This PC in the sidebar. Click the Computer tab at the top to show the toolbar and click the arrow under 'Map network drive'. Select 'Disconnect network drive'. You can always add it again if you ever need it.

If this doesn't fix the problem, press Windows+R, type regedit and press Enter. In the Registry Editor's sidebar, go to:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\ Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ Explorer\MountPoints2

The only item you need on the right is '(Default)'. Anything else you can select and delete.

Security software such as RansomFree (ransomfree.cybereason .com) can also trigger the message. If you have installed or updated any recently, try uninstalling it.

You can fix this drive problem by assigning a drive letter manually. In Explorer, right-click This PC and select Manage. Select Storage, then Disk Management. Right-click the missing drive and assign or change its letter.

GRAPHICS

Make a fantasy map

I've created a map of a fantasy world using GIMP (www.gimp .org), and I'm looking for a way to break it into small islands and have them randomly flung over the canvas. How do I do this, other than by cutting out the islands and dragging them?

Madanjeet Sandhu, via email

GIMP is a great photo editor, but sadly it can't do what you want. We suggest using a map generator instead. There are several tools available to use online or download, but we think Azgaar's Fantasy Map Generator (bit.ly/fmg459) is the best option. Visit the site and click the '>' button in the top-left corner to open the settings panel.



online Fantasy Map Generator

The Layout and Style tabs let you customise the map, but the most interesting tab is Options. There are many controls that affect how maps are generated, with explanations that appear at the bottom of the window when you hover the mouse pointer over them. Try changing the settings and click New Map to generate a new map. Click Save As to save it.

It's not quite what you asked for, but it can create maps in seconds.



This fortnight, Roland transferred a hard drive from a broken NAS device to a USB enclosure, reclaiming gigabytes

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

BROWSERS

Get the old-look Google Chrome back

I wonder how other Web User readers feel about Google's new Chrome update, because I'm not a big fan of all those pill shapes, or the New Tab button being moved to the wrong side - and has anyone else noticed a slight lag when using Ctrl+T to open a new tab? Before we all migrate to Firefox, Edge or ABC (Anything But Chrome), I thought I'd draw your attention to this easy way to disable the update. Open Chrome (trying hard to hide your disgust at its new look) and, in the address bar, type chrome:// flags/#top-chrome-md. You'll see a drop-down menu. Click it and select



Issues

disc winner

Hate Chrome's new look? Here's how to change it back

Normal. When it pops up, press the Relaunch Now button and you'll have good old-fashioned Chrome back.

Reggie Hatter, via email

GENERAL PC

Get more hard-drive space

Windows Disk Clean-up is useful for removing junk files from your PC's hard drive, to recover space and make it more efficient. However, you have to run it manually. I prefer to use 'Storage sense', which runs automatically. This time last year, it wasn't particularly good, but I think it had a makeover in the last major Windows 10 update and there may be more to come in the next one.

Open the Settings app (Windows+i). click System, Storage and switch on 'Storage sense'. Below the switch, click 'Change how we free up space automatically' and, on the next screen, choose how often to run it. It can be every day, week, month or 'When Windows decides'.

I use the 'Every day' setting to keep



Keep the disk drive clear of junk files with

my hard drive regularly optimised. I also set the option to automatically 'Delete temporary files in my recycle bin if they have been there for over' to 14 days.

Jon Portman, via email

BROWSERS

Bring Google's Material Design to Firefox

If you're a Firefox user who fancies a bit of Chrome's new Material Design, here's how to get the look on Mozilla's browser.

First, download MaterialFox from GitHub (bit.ly/mfox459), click 'Clone or download', choose Download ZIP and extract the contents. Open Firefox and go to about: support. In the Profile Folder category, click the Open Folder button and copy the contents of the extracted Material Fox folder into the Profile Folder.

Go to about:config?filter=svg .context-properties.content .enabled and double-click to change it from False to True. Download a copy of Simple New Tab (bit.ly/simple459) and use the browser's Customise options to drag and drop the add-on to the farright, by the minimise button. Restart the browser and you should have a fair imitation of Google's new-look Chrome.

Dean Gitts, via email



MOBILE

Increase Android battery life

My Android phone is three years old and I have to use every trick I can to make the battery last. Top of the list is to turn on 'Power saving' mode. Pull down from the top (twice if necessary) and tap the battery icon, or go to Settings in Device Maintenance, then Battery.

I also turn on Data Saver - in Settings, Connections, Data Usage, Data Saver. It stops background apps going online, using the web and running other network activities, also saving battery power.

At night, I turn on flight mode. The difference this makes to the battery is amazing. It loses only 5% overnight compared to 30% in normal mode.

Charles Hornby, via email

GENERAL PC

Set your PC to maintain itself

I was cleaning up a friend's computer and found that automatic maintenance was turned off. He swears he didn't turn it off himself because he doesn't know how.

First, check if any maintenance is already occurring. Open the Control Panel and type maintenance in the search box. In the results, click 'Change Automatic Maintenance settings', then tick the box to 'Allow scheduled maintenance' and set the time to run it.

It's fine if the PC is switched off at the set run time - it'll either automatically wake from sleep or perform maintenance the next time it's switched on.

Harry Crouch, via email



Make sure that automatic maintenance tasks run on a schedule



BROWSERS

Block notifications in Opera

In Issue 456 (bit.ly/webuser456), you showed how to block Opera's annoying notifications. However, Opera has since been updated and you now have to go to Settings, then click the little down arrow by Advanced, choose 'Privacy & security' and scroll down to 'Content settings'. Open this and go to Notifications, where it will probably be set to 'Ask before sending (recommended)'. Use the switch there to change it to 'Blocked'.

Madeline, Web User Forums



Block distracting browser notifications in Opera

BROWSERS

Get more bookmarks on your browser

There are only so many bookmarks that can be installed on a browser before you need to click an arrow or a drop-down link to see them all. One way to delay this is to click a bookmark and select 'edit', then reduce its description. This creates more space on the browser, so more bookmarks can be shown.

FratPark, Web User Forums

Web User says: Expand your Chrome bookmarking tools with our test of add-ons on page 46.



Stop running out of space on your browser's bookmarks bar

GENERAL PC

Choose Command Prompt or PowerShell

When I first used computers, we typed commands using the DOS prompt. When Windows came along, we could still use Command Prompt, but it's now being phased out. In the future, we'll all use PowerShell, which is an advanced version of Command Prompt.

Meanwhile, you can choose whether you want the Start button's right-click menu to show Command Prompt or PowerShell. Right-click the Start menu and see which one your version of

Windows uses. If it isn't your preferred option, open the Settings app (Windows+i) and click Personalisation, Taskbar. There's a switch that lets you choose which one shows up on the menu.

If you need guidance, type help into either tool and press Enter.

Phil Mullen, via email

EMAIL

Use Gmail offline

I've always used Gmail offline when travelling around without a decent internet connection on my laptop. However, the Google Gmail Offline browser add-on I used for this has now been discontinued. Thankfully, I've been able to get round this by using Gmail's proper built-in offline mode, which I thought I'd let other readers know about. To get it up and running, click the cog and choose Settings. You'll see a series of options running along the top. Click Offline, and look for the option to 'Enable offline mail'. Tick the box and decide how many days' worth of offline mail you want to sync, as well as checking whether to 'Download attachments'. I hope any fellow offline Gmail users out there find this helpful.

Joe Malpezzi, via email

APPS

Replace your mobile apps with website shortcuts

After reading your article on lightweight apps (bit.ly/webuser456), I was inspired to go even further and remove some of

my apps entirely. You suggested that several sites such as Twitter are largely the same as the 'Lite' app, so rather than downloading that. I've started pinning website shortcuts, including Facebook, to my phone's home screen instead.

Just open up Chrome, visit your website, then press the three-dot menu and select the option to 'Add to



Get rid of unnecessary apps that take up space

Home Screen'. Click Add and it will appear. This may mean that I don't get instant notifications, but I'd argue that's no bad thing!

Peter Chalk, via email

BROWSERS

Fit more tabs on Vivaldi

Just because tabs are placed at the top of every other browser, doesn't mean you need them there. In Vivaldi, why not shift all your tabs to the left or right for more space? Open up All Settings in the browser and click Tabs. Change the tab bar position to suit your preference. Find the Tab Display section and untick Show Tab Thumbnails. Now you can fit a lot more tabs on the screen at once.

Sammi Butcher, via email

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

SOFTWARE

Transform Microsoft Word's double spaces into single spaces

I'm sure everyone has their own typing preference or was taught a certain way. but it really annoys me when I see people placing double spaces after a full-stop. This antiquated standard has made my life difficult when editing someone else's writing, because manually deleting each and every double space is arduous.

It turns out I've been wasting my time - not because it's actually grammatically correct (it's not, and I'll fight that notion to the bitter end!), but because you can use Word's Replace function to turn double spaces into single ones. I knew the tool could



One space or two? This Word tip makes replacing punctuation easy

change words but until last week. I didn't realise it could be used to strip out all those awful double spaces, too.

Jay Knutsen, 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

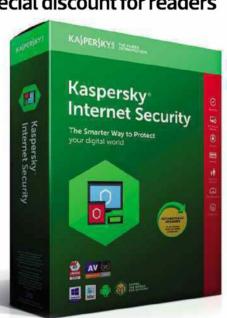
OFFER OF THE FORTNIGHT

Kaspersky Internet Security 2019 - on sale now

Our sister title *Computeractive* is now selling the new and improved 2019 edition of the multi-award-winning antivirus Kaspersky Internet Security at a special discount for readers

WHAT'S NEW IN KASPERSKY 2019:

- ✓ Finds and removes dodgy browser extensions
- Identifies software that needs to be updated
- Gives you more control over which adverts are blocked
- More advanced options to keep malware off your PC



SINCE WINDOWS 10 LAUNCHED 18,642 READERS
HAVE BOUGHT KASPERSKY SOFTWARE
FROM THE SOFTWARE STORE

One PC for one year NOW ONLY £19.99*

Normally £34.99

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

Three PCs for two years NOW ONLY £39.99

Normally £79.99

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* while stocks last

WINNER OF THE PAST NINE COMPUTERACTIVE ANTIVIRUS TESTS





Readers' Helpdesk

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

GENERAL PC

Run 32-bit Office on a 64-bit

My daughter's Windows 7 laptop, updated to Windows 10, started running very slowly, so she asked me if I could sort it. I did so, except for several Windows Office 2007 updates - these displayed the error code 0x80070643 (KB2596650). Not being an Office user, I investigated and it appears Office 2007 was for 32-bit, not 64-bit computers, and this is what caused the problem. I tried to download it myself but couldn't.

Am I correct in assuming that 32-bit software will not load onto a 64-bit PC, and my daughter will therefore have to buy another copy?

fossewayfella, Web User Forums

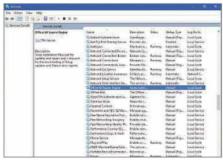
Other 32-bit programs will install on a 64-bit system, so Office 2007 should - although Microsoft says it hasn't been tested on Windows 10, so it may not work. Did you run an anti-malware scan on your daughter's computer? Infections can cause a slowdown. Did you also check the Start-up menu and disable unnecessary programs? You should also open Command Prompt in Administrator mode and type:

dism /online /cleanup-image /startcomponentcleanup

Press Enter. It may take a while to run. Once completed, type:

dism /online /cleanup-image /restorehealth

sfc /scannow



Check the status of Microsoft Office in the Services tool to help diagnose problems

SOFTWARE

Stop CCleaner clashing with Edge

I just tried to run CCleaner and it suddenly told me it needs to close Microsoft Edge. I don't use Edge, and the only programs I've used today are Firefox, Thunderbird and Solitaire. I checked Task Manager and it shows that Edge is running five processes - Browser Broker, Runtime Broker, Background Tab Pool, Chakra JIT Compiler and Microsoft Edge Manager. The last three are suspended and have what looks like a green leaf beside them. Is this normal, and what is running Edge?

beefy, Web User Forums

After looking into this, I found two resources - the official CCleaner site and Microsoft Community forums. Basically, it's happening because other programs are using Edge's database



If CCleaner refuses to run, blocking Edge can help

to store data and access the internet, and this is interrupting CCleaner's operation. The best course of action is to go into the Privacy Settings and scroll through 'App permissions' and 'Background apps'. Alternatively, you can search for 'Background apps' in the Start bar and select 'Choose which apps can run in the background'. Once the window opens, find Microsoft Edge in the list and toggle the switch from On to Off.

Peru, Web User Forums

Press Enter after each line and check to see whether it reports any corruption.

One final tip that might be worth trying - type **services.msc** into the Start bar and press Enter. Scroll down to Office Source Engine and check its status. On my PC, the status is Manual and shows as not started. To change this, you can right-click it to select Properties, then use the drop-down menu to select Automatic, then click Apply and OK.

Now reboot your computer to see if the error still appears.

Cantrel, Web User Forums

EMAIL

Find your most important emails in one place

Does anyone know what the purpose of the Focused and Other inboxes are in Outlook? I use outlook.com on my laptop and I'm confused about the difference between the two. Which one do I select to see my messages -Focused or Other?

In 'Quick settings', which I access by clicking the cog icon, my Outlook shows Focused Inbox as switched off. At the bottom of that pane, you can click 'View all Outlook settings'. In the Layout tab, there's a section for Focused Inbox, asking 'Do you want Outlook to sort your emails to help you focus on what matters most?' The two options are 'Sort my messages into Focused and Other' and 'Don't sort my messages'. Mine is set to the latter. It works like any other email application, with every email going to a single inbox. Try both to see which works best for you.

Madeline, Web User Forums



sjw, Web User Forums Let Outlook sort your inbox for you



Star Email

Back Issues disc winner



The high cost of answering scam calls

n Issue 457 (bit.ly/webuser457), a correspondent proposed the strategy of wasting scam callers' time. But if I spend 10 minutes wasting their time, I've wasted 10 minutes of my time, too. Who's the mug?

Many of these calls come from countries where £5 is a day's pay, so they cost the caller about 10p. I place a much higher value on my time, but if I was a minimum wage earner, 10 minutes of my time would be worth about 80p. Again, who's the mug?

Spam callers expect most calls to fail, but a single successful call will earn them many times more than their day's wage. I understand that a successful fake Microsoft "Your computer has a virus" call can lead to a fee of tens of thousands of pounds to 'fix'

the problem and a few hundred pounds for some fake software "to prevent future problems".

Those payments are taken by credit



card, so the scammers now have the victim's card details. They are also able to take over the victim's PC for use in a botnet, steal personal data such as passwords, spy on the victim's online activities and even harvest contact details from their address book to scam their friends, too. In cases like these, the scammer need never work again after one successful call.

I suspect scammers operate lists of numbers that do or don't answer, and trade them around. My approach is to let all calls go to answerphone unless the caller number displayed is one I recognise. Maybe it's time for us to give up landlines. I use an app to block spam calls on my mobile phone and I receive almost none.

Rob Hindle, via email

Don't taunt scammers, block them

Maybe Ian A (Star Email, Issue 457) has nothing better to do than wind up phone



scammers, but I can recall you or your sister magazine saying that you shouldn't mess with these people. It may sound fun but why bother? I give them two words if they manage to get through my phone's blocking system: "Bye bye".

I get no scam emails any more, but the latest phone calls I've received were supposedly from the TPS (Telephone Preference Service). After the first call, I blocked the number, but they then tried another number, which I also blocked. After that, the number was withheld, which means it can't be blocked, but I recognised the voice. They are quite determined, these people! The matter is now with Action Fraud.

Martin Fletcher, Thorpe Hesley

We shouldn't give up on **CCleaner**

I think SJ Pollard (Star Email, Issue 458) is being a little harsh on CCleaner by accusing it of "dirty tricks". The company realised it had a problem with the latest

version of the program, publicly admitted it and released a fix - hardly a case of treating users with contempt!

I have also been using CCleaner for many years and am perfectly happy with the software. It's an excellent cleanup tool that does everything I need it to, and I run it regularly to remove junk files from my PC. I have noticed more pop-up messages recently, but these are easily closed and a fair trade-off. I think, for such an efficient free program.

I have looked at similar tools such as BleachBit and Glary Utilities, but have found CCleaner to be by far the

friendliest to use, and I like its extra features such as the Duplicate Finder and Startup Manager. I would advise SJ Pollard and other longtime CCleaner users not to give up on the program altogether, just because of a couple of issues that have now been









resolved. Unless, that is, you can suggest a better alternative!

James Preston, via email

Amazon's greed over Kindle discounts

I decided to stop seeing irrelevant discounts on my Kindle lock screen. This is achieved by going into your account on the Amazon website, selecting 'Manage Your Content and Devices' and turning off Special Offers for your Kindle.

What they don't tell you is that they instantly charge you £10 for the privilege.



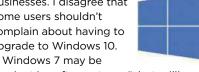
company make enough money?

Rob Forsdyke, via email

Stop bullying us to upgrade to Windows 10

Your news story in Issue 458 reported that Microsoft was extending Windows 7

support, but only for businesses. I disagree that home users shouldn't complain about having to upgrade to Windows 10.



"ancient in software terms", but millions of us still find it the best option for our computing needs and have no desire to give up an operating system that we're familiar and comfortable with, for the apparent delights of Windows 10. Which, as far as I can tell, are mainly a dreary interface, pointless apps, frequent update problems and myriad privacy concerns.

As long as software developers continue to make their products compatible with Windows 7 - indeed, most programs still work fine on the much more "ancient" Windows XP - then I don't see the problem, and I refuse to be bullied by Microsoft into changing for the sake of it. I might be convinced if Norton, which I rely on for my antivirus protection, decides to stop making its products work on Windows 7. Otherwise, I'm sticking with Windows 7 until the bitter end.

Sheila Vaughan, via email



SAMSUNG SAYS THERE IS CUSTOMER DEMAND FOR **FOLDING SMARTPHONES** (bit.ly/folding459). WOULD YOU **BUY ONE?**

What I would like to see is a phone that is flexible enough to be placed in your back pocket and not be damaged if you sit on it.

Anthony Higham

Gimmick. Not tempted in the slightest. Andrew Wakeman

Possibly. Phones aren't as durable as they were back in the day. The Nokia 3210 was virtually indestructible and the battery lasted for days

Brian Brown

The clamshell design reminds me of the Star Trek communicators. Beam me out of here, Scotty!

......

Lance Parkington

AS KIRSTIE ALLSOPP RIGHT TO SMASH HER CHILDREN'S IPADS FOR USING THEM TOO MUCH (bit.ly/ allsopp459)?

She could have easily confiscated and locked them away after the given 'time limit'. Rather than smashing them, she could have donated them to a charity.

Caroline Sharman

Amazing that whatever youngsters enjoy must be bad for them. In my day, it was the transistor radio that would turn my brain to mush. Perhaps she should think more about the effect her lack of control may have on children.

Richard Morgan

I'd smash them, no problem. Kids need rules. Money isn't everything.

Adrian Millington

She just likes to wield a hammer, be it at walls or iPads.

Shamus Doherty

ICROSOFT HAS ADMITTED 'TESTING' POP-UP **MESSAGES TO PERSUADE** PEOPLE TO SWITCH TO EDGE. WERE YOU PERSUADED?

......

As I use Android, Chrome is the easiest browser for me to work with because you sign in and all your bookmarks are carried across devices. Why would I bother with Edge?

Caroline Alderson

Have tried others, but Firefox has been my favourite for many years. It seems like home, and it's also a bit like a rebel against the 'big boys'.

John Hewett

Opera is great for the in-built VPN. Wins my vote.

Graeme Douglas

Edge is the best browser in the world... for downloading Chrome!

Darren Branagh

FCOM SAYS 79% OF PEOPLE HAVE WORRIES ABOUT **USING THE INTERNET (bit.ly/** ofcom459). DO YOU HAVE ANY?

.....

Only the safety of financial data. Nobody is immune to getting hacked.

Nat Grove

Cloud-based storage is always a worry. You don't know if anyone else can access it without your knowledge.

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

No worries at all. The internet is a fabulous communication tool. It has opened up the world.

Jan Swanton

They asked fewer than 2,000 internet users? Not exactly a fair representation. I'm constantly online for business and personal things and I have no concerns.

Cheyvonne Bower

A Page 404

Barry Collins is no longer willing to trust any company to keep credit card details safe



My credit card's not for keeps

f I'm 99% sure my credit

card details are in a stolen

database somewhere — it's

just a matter of time before

someone uses them 📕 🖣

ith the sickening inevitability of a motorway pile-up, yet another big firm has suffered a major data leak. At the time of writing, it was British Airways - by the time you read this it could well be someone else. Unlike Southern trains, they come along with monotonous regularity (that's the last transport simile I'm using in this column, I promise).

The method of attack changes, the amount and type of data leak varies, but the hackers are ultimately after the same piece of information: your credit card details. So many of these attacks have proved successful that you can visit the murky underbelly of the web and pick up a batch of stolen credit-card numbers for pennies each. Before long, you'll be able to buy them on eBay. They're tradeable commodities.

How do we get out of this godawful mess? Well, eventually we need to find a secure replacement for the credit card system. The 'technology' of credit cards has barely moved on since the days when the shop assistant would imprint

vour card onto a strip of carbon paper. Of course, the back-end computerisation and security systems have changed massively, but the underlying

essence of the payment mechanism a unique 16-digit number - has not.

When I first started working in Debenhams as a Saturday boy 25 years ago, I found it laughable that we were handed a printed list of stolen credit card numbers and were expected to check suspect cards against it. That now



seems almost sophisticated. I'm 99% sure my credit card details are in a stolen database somewhere - it's just a matter of time before someone uses them.

Yet there's little chance of the credit card system being overhauled anytime soon. Though the scale of fraud is through the roof, the companies will

> continue to suck up the losses. By which I mean add another couple of per cent to the APR or raise the monthly fees. We pay for the theft one way or another. For companies such as

Visa, Mastercard or Amex, it's just the cost of doing business.

One thing you can do to reduce your own risk of exposure is to stop storing your credit card details with online stores. These are honeypots for the hackers. Crack the database of almost any major retailer - all of which ask to

store your payment details for your convenience - and they've got millions of active credit cards to plunder. They only need to defraud a tiny fraction of those to make the attack worthwhile, and still stay under the radar.

There's no need to leave your payment details with most retailers. although almost all of them will beg that you do. Most password managers will store encrypted payment details on your PC, automatically filling the forms when required. And stores such as Amazon can use your smartphone camera to snap a long credit card number when you're buying on mobile, saving the rigmarole of retyping the number every time.

No store can be trusted to keep your credit card number safe. It's only a matter of time before someone as massive as Amazon, eBay, Google or Apple suffers a major attack. Until they replace this rotten system, it's down to you to stop the thieves making off with the magic numbers.



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