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'OH NO!'

Don't lose your photos & videos - back up your phone **TODAY** p58

Wipe Your DIGITAL FOOTPRINT



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PLUS

WHY YOU MUST PARTITION YOUR PC

And the best FREE program for it

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Our Favourite Browser Just Got Better

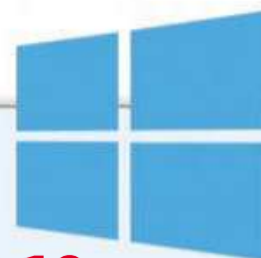
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THE NEW WINDOWS 10

7 reasons why you'll love it



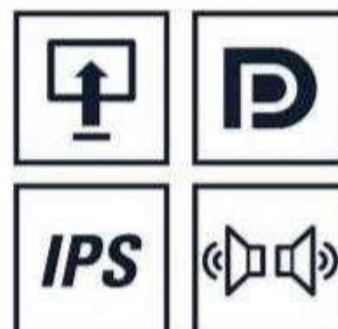
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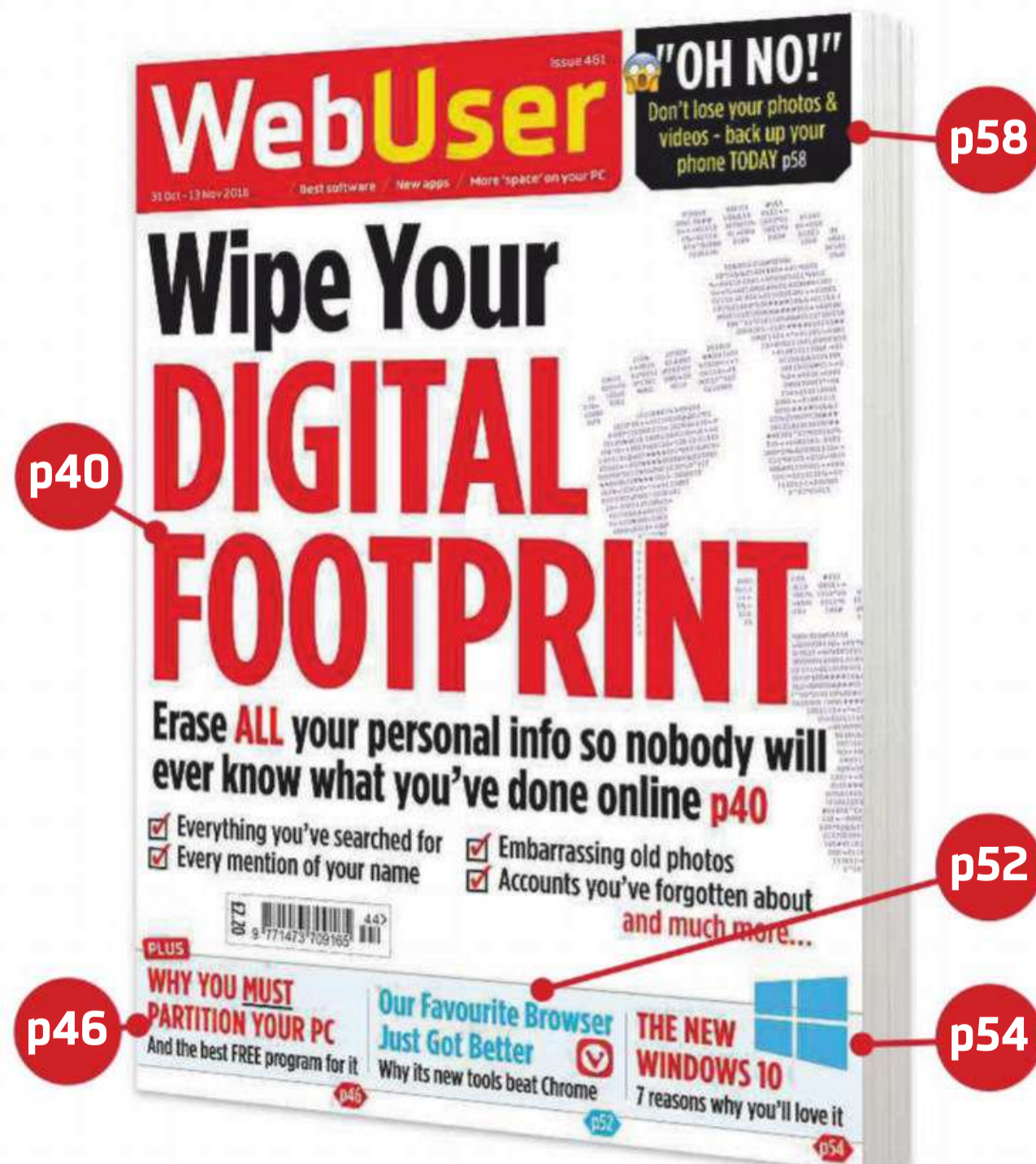
Scrub the horror from your history

We've all been there – you browse for a quirky Halloween costume on Amazon, only for the store to deduce that you regularly dress up as, say, a vampire or zombie, and bombard you with further 'recommendations'. Just as creepily, Google Maps will recall your exact journey to the Halloween party and Facebook will identify you in the ghastly photos.

These days, whatever we do online – and off – leaves behind a permanent 'footprint', and risks our private data falling into the hands of evil hackers, state snoopers and potential employers. In this issue's cover

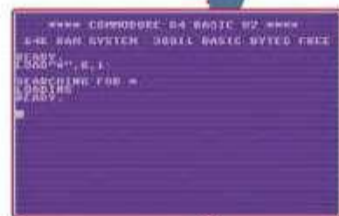
feature, Jane Hoskyn pulls on her rubber gloves and pinny to explain how you can stop this happening by scrubbing all the grubby personal info you've left spattered across the web. From details of your browsing and viewing history to forgotten accounts and forum posts, Jane reveals the easiest and most effective ways to make your digital footprint disappear – and avoid leaving one in future.

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



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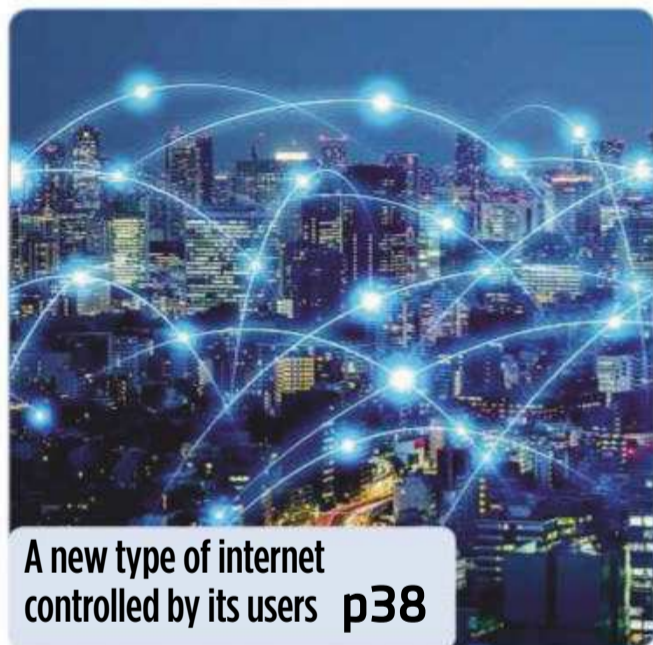
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Delete your
online activity
and data to
start 2019 with
a clean slate

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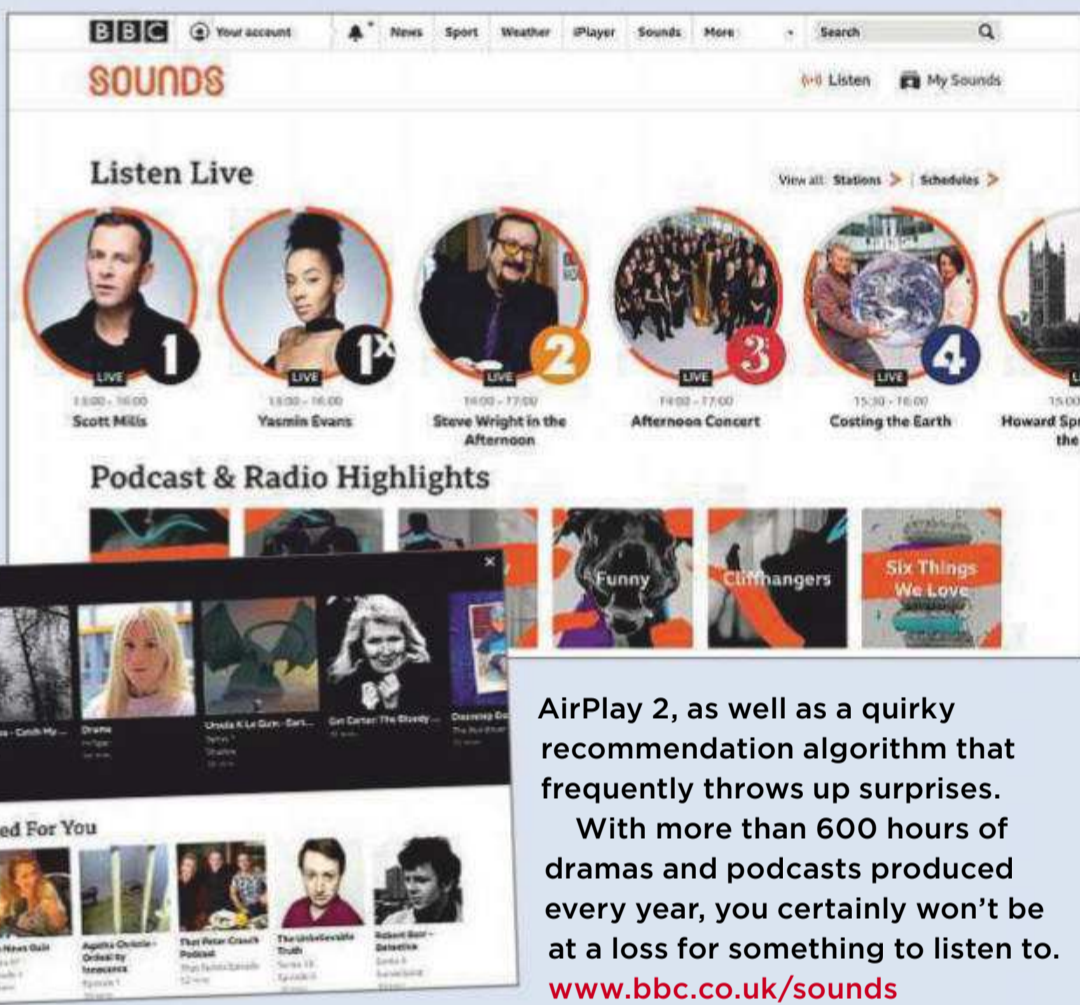


Listen to the BBC's new Sounds service

Millions of us still tune into the radio every day, but listening habits are evolving, particularly among the young. There's been a steady drift toward on-demand content, with just 40% of 15 to 24-year-olds now listening to live broadcasts – which is why the BBC has replaced its iPlayer Radio service with BBC Sounds.

We had our first taste of the new service in June, when it appeared as an app for Android and iOS devices. Now BBC Sounds has launched on the web, allowing you to choose from a wide selection of podcasts and radio highlights, receive recommendations based on your listening habits and create a list of your favourite shows.

You can set programmes to autoplay, view full scheduling information and even tune into live radio broadcasts if you want. The mobile app has been updated, too, and now offers programme downloads, a new Drama category and support for



AirPlay 2, as well as a quirky recommendation algorithm that frequently throws up surprises.

With more than 600 hours of dramas and podcasts produced every year, you certainly won't be at a loss for something to listen to.

www.bbc.co.uk/sounds

Play Commodore 64 games in your browser

bit.ly/comm461

If you're a fan of retro games, you'll love the Internet Archive's vast new online collection of software developed for the Commodore 64. The site offers a whopping 18,000 titles, all of which you can play in your browser, thanks to built-in emulator su



The archive spans releases from the 1980s and 90s, and includes games written by hobbyists as recently as 2012, demos that push the boundaries of the age-old computer's technology and digital versions of old software magazines. You can filter the catalogue by year, title and creator.

Launching a game is as simple as clicking the Play button on a title's page to start the emulator and load the data. There are no messy commands to type, although some games take a little while to get going. Frustratingly, the games don't come with instructions, but if you mash a few buttons, you should soon figure out the controls.

Post 3D photos on Facebook

www.facebook.com

Facebook now lets you add a new dimension to your photos, thanks to its impressive new pseudo-3D effect. This gives your images greater depth by working out the distance between the foreground subject and the background. Viewers can then see your photo from different angles by moving their phone.

To take a 3D photo, you currently need an iPhone with dual cameras (such as the iPhone 7 Plus, 8 Plus, X or XS). Just snap an image in the camera app's Portrait mode, head to Facebook and start a new status update. Tap 3D photo, select the image you've taken, and Facebook will quickly scan it before adding the 3D effect. It likens the result to looking at a subject through a window. You can share 3D photos in the usual way, and also view them using the Oculus Browser on Oculus Go or Firefox on Oculus Rift.

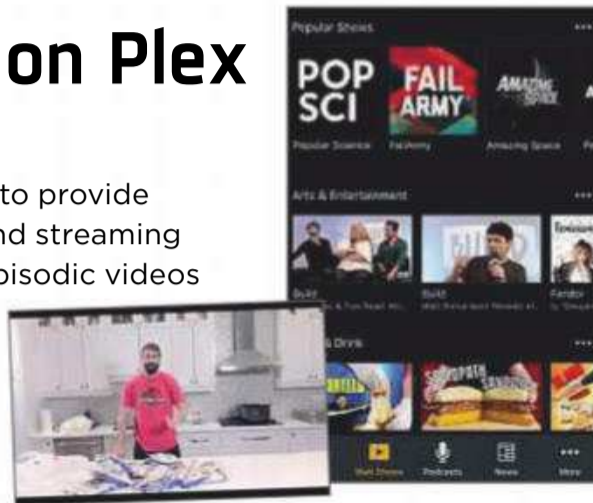


We pick the 10 best things you must do on the web this fortnight

Watch web shows on Plex

www.plex.tv

Plex has teamed up with media producers to provide exclusive web programmes. The on-demand streaming service, which is currently in beta, offers episodic videos that you can watch for free, without a subscription. Click the Web Shows tab at the bottom of the screen to start watching. You can add shows to a queue or place them on a list to view later.



Charge your car using Google Maps

maps.google.co.uk

With an increasing number of motorists switching to electric vehicles, Google has updated its Maps app for Android and iOS to help drivers quickly find the nearest charging point, so they don't run out of juice in the middle of nowhere. Simply search for keywords such as "ev charging" or "EV charging stations" and the map will display



the nearest supported stations. To help you decide which point to use, Google Maps also shows information about the business where the station is located, the types and number of port available, and charging speeds.

Upload your podcasts to Spotify

podcasters.spotify.com

Podcasting has truly come of age in recent years, and there has never been a better time to make yourself heard. With that in mind, Spotify for Podcasters is opening up to everyone, so you can gain access to more than 180 million listeners simply by submitting a link to an RSS feed. You'll need to find someone else to host your content, but once you've set it up, any new episodes you upload are automatically updated in Spotify. You can then check out how well your podcast is performing, with daily stats on listener location, engagement and demographics.



Use Snapchat lenses to augment your cat

www.snapchat.com

The internet is already bursting with pictures of cats but if you're "feline" in the mood to add more, fire up Snapchat's new lens. This recognises your moggy's facial features and uses augmented reality to apply cartoon decorations over the top – from glasses and hats to bulging eyes and bat wings. Look out for the cat filter when you take a photo.



NEW VOICE COMMANDS



Get regular updates

Google Assistant can offer regular updates on the weather, a fun fact or anything else. To set it up, simply say "Send Daily" when the Assistant tells you something.



Find your keys

If you own a Tile Bluetooth tracker for locating 'dumb' items such as your keys, you can now find them using a Siri Shortcut. Open the Tile app, select a Tile, choose Siri and record a phrase.



Make chores fair

Alexa's new Fair by Fairy skill keeps track of who's done the washing up. Say "Alexa, tell Fairy mum is doing the washing up" to log the event. You can set monthly goals and get washing-up advice.



Translate more languages

translate.google.com

Google Translate now offers virtual translation for a further 13 languages, bringing the total number to 50. These include Arabic, Hindi, Bengali and Thai. Just tap the camera icon and take a photo of the text you want to translate.

Make Google News dark

news.google.co.uk

Google News is the latest service to add a dark theme. Go to Settings, Dark Theme to turn it on or off, and set when you'd like it to be active: it can be auto-activated at night or while in battery-saver mode.

See where M&S gets its fish

bit.ly/marks461

M&S's interactive map has long been showing us where its food and clothes are made. Now, as well as indicating where its beef, milk and wool come from, the company reveals the source of its fish. Click the Raw Materials tab to find out.



Need to Know

Google will charge phone makers to include its apps

What happened?

Earlier this summer, EU regulators slapped Google with antitrust charges over Android, particularly regarding the tech giant's bundling of Search, the Play Store and other Google apps with the mobile operating system.

Google is appealing the ruling and the fine, but in the meantime it has to take action – and Android users may bear the brunt of this by paying higher prices. Under its new plans, Google will continue to offer the Android operating system for free to manufacturers, leaving it open-source. If phone makers want to only use the OS and nothing else, they can do so at no extra cost. However, if they want to include the Play Store and other popular apps such as Gmail and Google Maps, they'll have to pay to license them. The Google Search app and the Chrome browser can be added on top of those apps for free via an additional bundle.

Other changes are more subtle but may have even more impact. One is the lifting of Google's strict restriction that handset manufacturers could only include the Play Store if they did not feature any other app market on any other phone they make. This ban was seen as anti-competitive and may have limited the rise of Amazon's app marketplace, for example.

How will it affect you?

Google hasn't said how much the licensing fee will be, though leaked documents suggest it could run as high



as \$40 (£31) per phone, depending on the country and how high-end the handset is – more expensive devices with higher-resolution displays could pay the most. The fee for tablets, meanwhile, is expected to be \$20 (£15).

There are further costs, too. Google currently divvies up search revenue with manufacturers that use Android. Going forward, Google will only do this with companies that preinstall the Search app and place it in the phone's home-screen dock, so those that don't will miss that slice of revenue.

It's difficult to predict whether device prices will rise, but it's also hard to imagine the extra costs not being passed on to consumers. On the other hand, this could mean phone makers find new sources of income, sparking more competition.

Remember Mozilla's short-lived Firefox OS? Now that Google can no longer ban manufacturers from using forked versions of Android, we might see a wider variety of handsets out there, and the renewed competition could drive down prices.

What do we think?

None of us wants to see prices rising for consumers, but competition in the mobile market is vital. At the moment, phone users can essentially choose between Apple's excellent but expensive range of iPhones or a wider variety of

cheaper smartphones running Android. Imagine only having the choice of two car makers, or two beer breweries. Because Apple makes its own software and its own hardware, it can get away with whatever it pleases. Android, on the other hand, is given away for free, but with strict restrictions on manufacturers that mean most of us default to Google for search, browsing, email and so on.

These changes could see more options on handsets. Instead of Google apps, a phone maker could use Android alongside its own default apps – though they aren't always of the best quality – or turn to smaller rivals, such as Firefox for browsing or DuckDuckGo for search.

That's the EU's aim, at least, but we've been here before with browsers. Back in 2010, the EU slapped Microsoft with antitrust charges regarding Internet Explorer's dominance in that market, leading Microsoft to introduce the 'browser ballot', to show users there's more than one option for web surfing. Less than a decade on, that seems laughable, but ultimately things changed not because of regulatory action, but the arrival of Chrome. Whether these Android changes do any better remains to be seen, but the increased competition that resulted from the arrival of Chrome was ultimately good news for browsing, and we hope the same benefit to consumers arises from this new EU ruling.



Phone manufacturers will now have to pay to include Google apps on their devices

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

Windows 10 lets you remove built-in apps

What happened?

It may feel like we're still cleaning up the mess from the last Windows 10 update after it was rolled out riddled with bugs, but there's already another one on the way. Happily, there's good reason to look forward to the next major update, because Microsoft is finally letting Windows users delete some – though not all – preinstalled apps.

Though the update isn't due out until next spring, early versions of the operating system are with beta testers via Microsoft's Insider Program. Windows users can already remove some preinstalled apps – notably games such as Solitaire and Microsoft's own Skype – but that's set to be extended to almost all preinstalled apps, including Paint 3D, Sticky Notes and Movies & TV.

If you don't use these apps, you won't have to put up with them cluttering up your PC and taking up precious storage space. However, you still won't be able to ditch Cortana or the Microsoft Store itself.

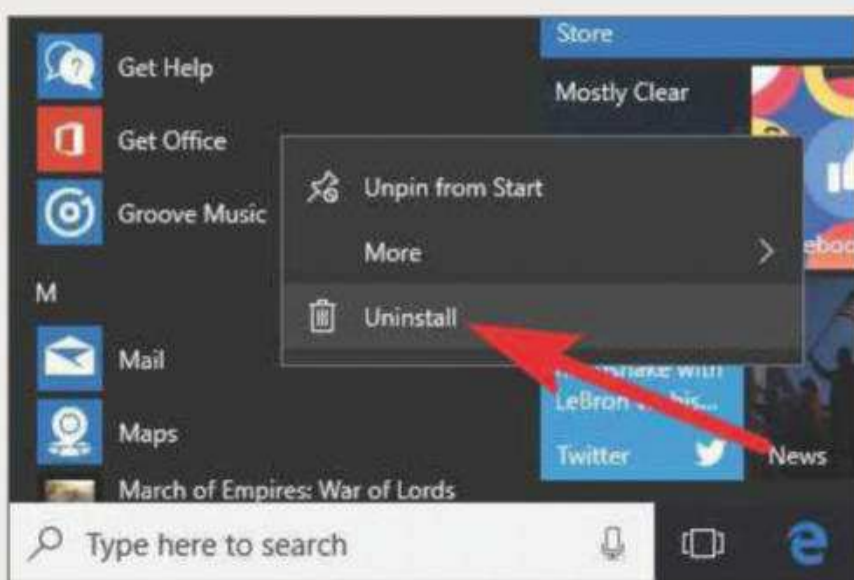
How will it affect you?

Budget Windows laptops are often low on storage space, which can cause problems with updates. These apps don't take up much space, but removing them may give you some extra breathing room.

Microsoft already lets you remove some preinstalled apps, including the Weather widget and OneNote. Just right-click the app and select Uninstall. If you change your mind, you can reinstall the app via the Microsoft Store – which is probably why that service won't be disappearing from Windows anytime soon.

What do we think?

Plenty of these apps are genuinely useful, but there are also better alternatives out there. For example, if you find Paint 3D frustrating, you can install Paint.net (www.getpaint.net) for free. But until this update becomes available, you'll have to keep both tools on your system – which is a pointless waste of resources and storage.



New UK porn blocker misses adult content



What happened?

The government has revealed its plans to prevent children from viewing adult content online, requiring anyone visiting a website that hosts such content to verify their age, potentially with a payment card. However, the system will only target websites that directly host such material for profit, rather than social-media sites including Twitter, Tumblr and Reddit – despite the fact that those sites host plenty of pornographic photos and videos. That's because, according to the government's own rules, the age-verification system will only apply to websites where at least two-thirds of the content is pornography, and which don't make money solely from adult-only material.

How will it affect you?

Consenting adults will need to prove they are over 18 if they want to view pornographic material, but children will still be able to find freely available adult material online with very little effort. It's not yet clear how the government

intends to enforce age verification, but any system in which identity is involved, such as using payment cards, is open to abuse if it were to leak personal data or be hacked.

What do we think?

Efforts to keep children safe online should be applauded, but they should also be carefully considered – and given that the government has been working on this project for years, it's had plenty of time. That said, it's a tough task because, for example, most content blockers can be easily circumvented via a VPN or proxy. If you're trying to keep your children away from such material, you'll need to do more than rely on the government's plans.

There are plenty of parental-control filters on the market that can block whatever material you choose, though they can never catch everything. Either way, once your child is of a certain age, you'll probably need to have a conversation with them about what they might see online – such is life in the modern age.

NHS trials scheme to beat prescription fraud

What happened?

The NHS is trialling a system of digital checks in a bid to crack down on prescription fraud. Patients who illegally dodge prescription fees are thought to cost the NHS in England an estimated £256m every year.

At present, anyone entitled to free prescriptions must produce a valid medical exemption certificate or sign prescriptions for the pharmacist to waive the £8.80 fee. Their eligibility is later checked by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA), but some believe this 'honour system' is open to abuse. Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, has declared that "the NHS is not an easy target," and pledged to halve prescription fraud within five years.

With the new digital system, pharmacists can see instantly if a patient is entitled to free prescriptions. Run by the NHS Counter Fraud Authority, the technology introduces real-time eligibility checks. Data will also be shared with both the NHSBSA and fraud-prevention organisation Cifas to quickly spot fraudulent activity.

The plan is already under fire, however. Pharmacists have resisted similar trials in the past, claiming these systems harm patient trust. Sandra Gidley of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, which also campaigns for free



prescriptions in England, said "Sometimes, somebody has free prescriptions legitimately. They've got a medical exception, they're something like a diabetic, and they might forget to renew it and the computer says no. You're not going to stop a diabetic from getting their insulin, for example. So, I think this is potentially fraught with problems."

The pilot scheme is set to be introduced next year.

How will it affect you?

If you're entitled to free prescriptions, you're unlikely to be affected by this scheme. The NHS claims it will be quick and painless, and may even be limited to

random spot-checks. We know from past experience, however, that IT and the NHS aren't the best bedfellows. As the Royal Pharmaceutical Society points out: "What if the computer says no? That is a real dilemma."

What do we think?

Given the history of failed IT projects in the NHS, we'll wait and see. The idea seems fair – imagine what that 'stolen' £256m could do for a health service in dire and seemingly perpetual need of funds – and technology offers an optimal way to prevent fraud. We'd like to see fail-safe procedures built into the system to avoid harming patients in need, and damaging trust.



FIRST LOOK

Google Pixel Slate

bit.ly/slate461

Google's new Pixel Slate is an ultra-thin, lightweight tablet that combines the power of a laptop with the always-on ease of a mobile device. It's due to hit the shelves on 1 November, just in time for Black Friday and Christmas, and is Google's answer to the iPad Pro and Microsoft's newest Surface (complete with optional £189 detachable keyboard). Prices start at £549, but for that modest price you get a machine with only middling performance on a par with that of a cheap laptop. The high-end models cost at least a grand more.

Like all devices in the Pixel line, the midnight-blue Slate is well designed, with curves in all the right places. The device measures just 202 x 7mm,

making it barely 0.1mm thicker than the more expensive iPad Pro.

The entry-level tablet's specifications are so-so, with an Intel Celeron processor, 4GB RAM and 32GB storage, while the two mid-range versions have twice the memory and storage, and either an M3 or i5 processor. The top-end Slates are far more respectable. With 16GB of RAM, 256GB of storage and i7 processors, they compare favourably with their direct competitors, although Chrome OS hardly justifies that sort of power.

If you're willing to overlook the hefty price tag, however, or you're upgrading an old Android tablet and are heavily invested in Google's family of products, there's plenty to love about this portable touchscreen tablet. The vibrant



12.3in screen with 'Molecular' six million-pixel display is pin-sharp. Pixel Imprint is an impressive Windows Hello-style fingerprint scanner that makes signing in quicker – although we were disappointed that there was no Apple-like FaceID despite the 8-megapixel front- and back-facing cameras.

As with all new products from the search-giant-turned-hardware-merchant, the Slate comes with the super-smart Google Assistant built in. "Hey, Google, pop a Pixel Slate on our Christmas list."



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is Facebook Messenger introducing an unsend option?

Image @wongmjane

Facebook may be about to let its users 'unsend' messages, according to a reliable Twitter tipster.

At the moment, Messenger lets you delete your own messages, but they're still visible to others in the chat. 'Unsend' would allow you to pull those messages from everyone, although chat recipients will probably be able to see when messages have been removed, even if they can't read their contents.

Screenshots leaked on Twitter by [@wongmjane](#) (bit.ly/unsend461) appear to include an option to 'Unsend Message' from Messenger chats in the Android app. Developer Jane Manchun Wong has a sterling track record, having previously lifted the lid on prototypes including Facebook's Your Activity dashboard and video-calling on Instagram. She suggests that the 'unsend' function will be time-limited, so you'll have to act quickly to remove those embarrassing messages.

Unsend Message?

@wongmjane

Your message will be removed from the chat, and you

CANCEL UNSEND

This isn't the first time Facebook has experimented with 'unsending' messages. Back in April, the social network came under fire after admitting it had retroactively removed messages from users' inboxes that had been sent by Mark Zuckerberg and other executives. Facebook denied this was anything more than a protective measure, but critics claimed it was a serious breach of security and trust. Facebook then said it would roll out the 'unsend' feature to everyone. After six months of silence, it now appears that the announcement may have been more than a cynical PR deflection.

LIKELIHOOD RATING



Facebook hasn't confirmed that an 'unsend' option is on its way, but we expect an announcement imminently. The Facebook-owned WhatsApp added an 'unsend' option last year and, judging by Wong's

leaked screen grabs, it's likely that Messenger's version will work in a similar fashion. Besides, Facebook can't afford to generate more negative headlines by breaking its promises, so we suspect it's a question of when, not if, the Unsend Message feature will arrive.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Insta Ring

bit.ly/ring461 | From £60

The Insta Ring is a water-resistant, shockproof wearable camera designed for on-the-go photographers and wannabe 007s. Its wide-angle camera captures high-quality images and videos of holidays, events and secret volcanic lairs. Despite its size, this Bluetooth-enabled wearable has specs that Q Branch would be proud of: the 12-megapixel camera includes auto-focus, face detection and image stabilisation to ensure photos are neither shaken nor stirred. It has 32GB of internal storage and can transfer your shots to your smartphone. Pledge £60 or more to get your own Insta Ring.



WEBOMETER



WE LIKE...

Winamp makes a comeback

A new version of the classic media player Winamp is now available to download from www.winamp.com. Winamp 5.8 has been rush-released after a beta version of the program leaked online. It was last updated in 2013.



Apple launches privacy hub

Apple has launched a privacy portal that lets its users see exactly what data the company holds on them, including photos, search history, bookmarks, App Store purchases and downloads. The data can be deleted and downloaded.



WE DON'T LIKE...

Tumblr reveals security flaw

Tumblr disclosed details of a major security bug that could have leaked users' personal information. The problem was located in the code of Tumblr's Recommended Blogs widget, but there is no evidence that it was exploited.



Co-founder of Microsoft dies

Paul Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft, has died aged 65. His death came two weeks after he revealed that he had been rediagnosed as suffering from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, which he was seemingly cured of in 2009.





Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

New Trojan mimics the Google Play store

A new type of Trojan malware has emerged that disguises itself as the Google Play Store. The app, which was discovered by digital-security investigator Cisco Talos, is dubbed 'GPlayed' and presents itself as the Play Store to trick unsuspecting users into downloading and using it. Once installed, GPlayed steals bank details and location information from the user's phone, and can transfer code between desktop and mobile platforms, which means connected computers are at risk, too.

The fake app isn't available on the

real Google Play Store, but capitalises on the trend for mobile developers to bypass official stores and release their apps through their own sites. This practice puts customers at risk, because they don't benefit from the Google Play Store's stringent protections, which flag and remove apps containing malware.

GPlayed's icon closely resembles the official Google Play app and asks for permissions that give it almost complete control of an infected device. "This is a full-fledged Trojan with capabilities ranging from those of a banking Trojan to a full spying Trojan," said Cisco Talos. bit.ly/cisco461

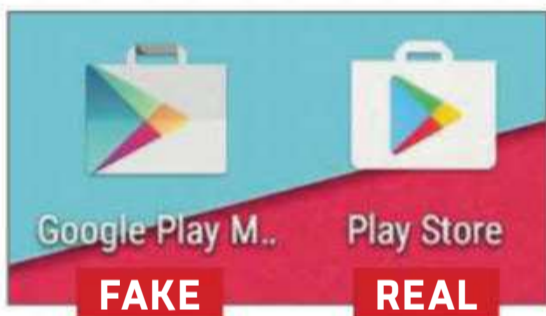


Image © Cisco Talos

Google+ to shut down after security flaw

Google has announced that it will close its ailing Google+ social network, following reports that it failed to inform up to half a million users about a massive



data leak in March this year.

Initially, Google opted not to go public with the news that it had inadvertently allowed app developers to access users' profile data. The

company claimed that it had patched the bug responsible for the security flaw as soon as it was discovered, but said it couldn't confirm which users were affected by it.

In a blog post explaining why it decided to shut down Google+ for consumers, the company said it "has not achieved broad consumer or developer adoption, and has seen limited user interaction with apps".

The social-networking service will close in August next year, but a version for businesses will remain open. Google has also promised to introduce new limits on third-party developers accessing its users' data.

bit.ly/plus461

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Joe Hancock, Cyber Security Lead at Mishcon de Reya
(www.mishcon.com)

Q

How vulnerable is the UK to cyberattacks?

Jack Pollard, Twitter

A

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) says it thwarted nearly 1,200 attacks against UK targets in the past two years. That may seem like a lot, but it's just the tip of the iceberg.

Most of these attacks are aimed at businesses, government departments



and third-sector organisations. Many go unreported, and perhaps even undetected. Beyond the high-profile attacks are the millions of online crimes that affect individuals every day.

More must be done to support law enforcement, and to help victims detect and recover from attacks. The NCSC is a crucial part of this

“

There are millions of online crimes that affect individuals every day **”**

strategy and essential if the UK is to succeed in its ambition to become one of the safest places to be online.

The recent Facebook breach shows the risks of large-scale data collection. When users rely on a single platform to access a wide variety of online services, it can act as a gateway for attackers.

Many cyber incidents have a financial component, often involving the banking system, as well as cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin. Driving cybercriminals out of the

financial system would reduce cybercrime levels.

A major problem in the battle against cybercrime is that security practices are not consistent around the world. This means an attack against a weak link in the data chain can have dire consequences for companies and individuals elsewhere. It's hard to see how cybercrime can be tackled without an international consensus and if there are no consequences for nations that turn a blind eye.

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★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

VIDEO

BBC Reel

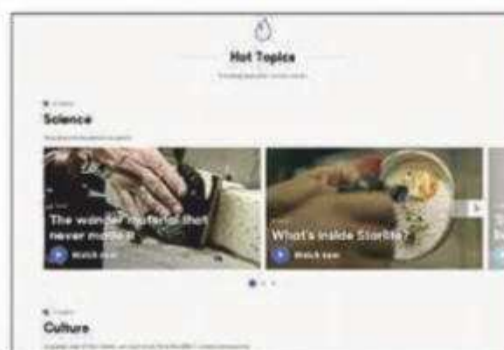
www.bbc.com/reel

Hosted on the Beeb's global website, this new service from the BBC is in danger of being hidden from UK viewers – but seek it out and you'll be rewarded with a wonderfully curated selection of videos that combine new and archive content to great effect. Its eclectic collection includes an Icelandic model who shears sheep and an amazing art museum under the sea. Most of the videos fall under the categories of travel, culture, science and the future but there are also 360-degree videos, series that run over several short episodes and even a picture-in-picture mode. The videos are available in the BBC Reel channel on YouTube, too.

Our rating

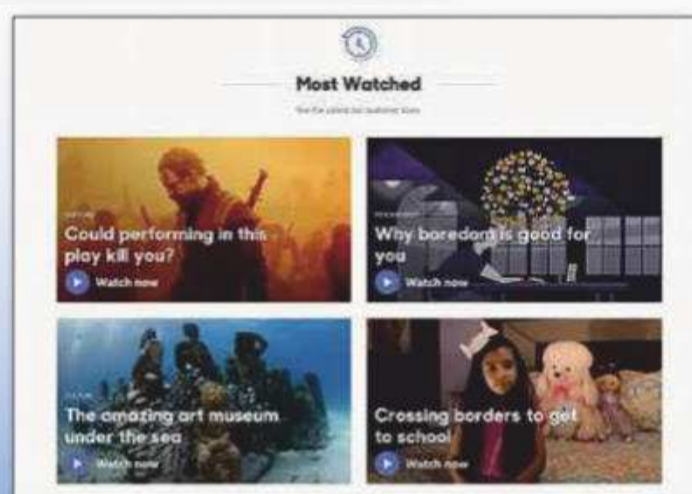


NEW



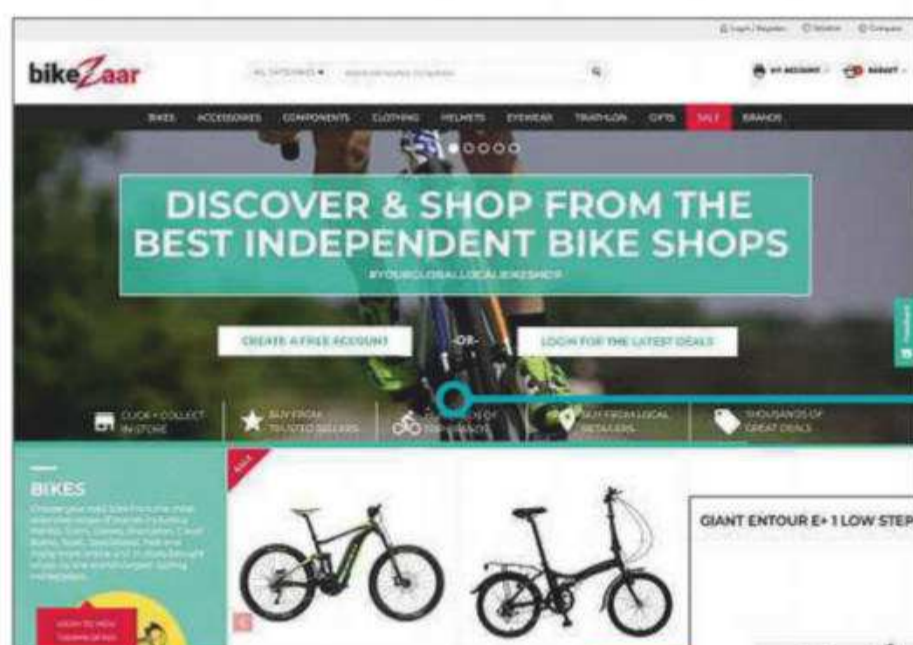
HOT TOPICS

BBC Reel pulls together the best of the Beeb's digital video content from across the world



MOST WATCHED

Original videos are commissioned to run alongside the BBC's rich video archive



CYCLING

BikeZaar

www.bikezaar.com

This new cycling marketplace promises to help turn the wheels of commerce by handling orders for independent bike shops, brands and distributors across the UK. Visitors can peruse bikes, accessories, components, clothes, helmets, eyewear and gifts, then add them to a cart and check out in a single transaction. We love how seamless it feels. Product pages include large images along with the supplier's name, clear pricing and a wishlist option. A handy comparison feature lets you sign in, select items and view them side by side. Bike descriptions can be hit and miss, but the detailed FAQs, blog and (hidden) bike insurance page more than make up for it.

Our rating



NEW



NEW

ART

Dinosaur Pie

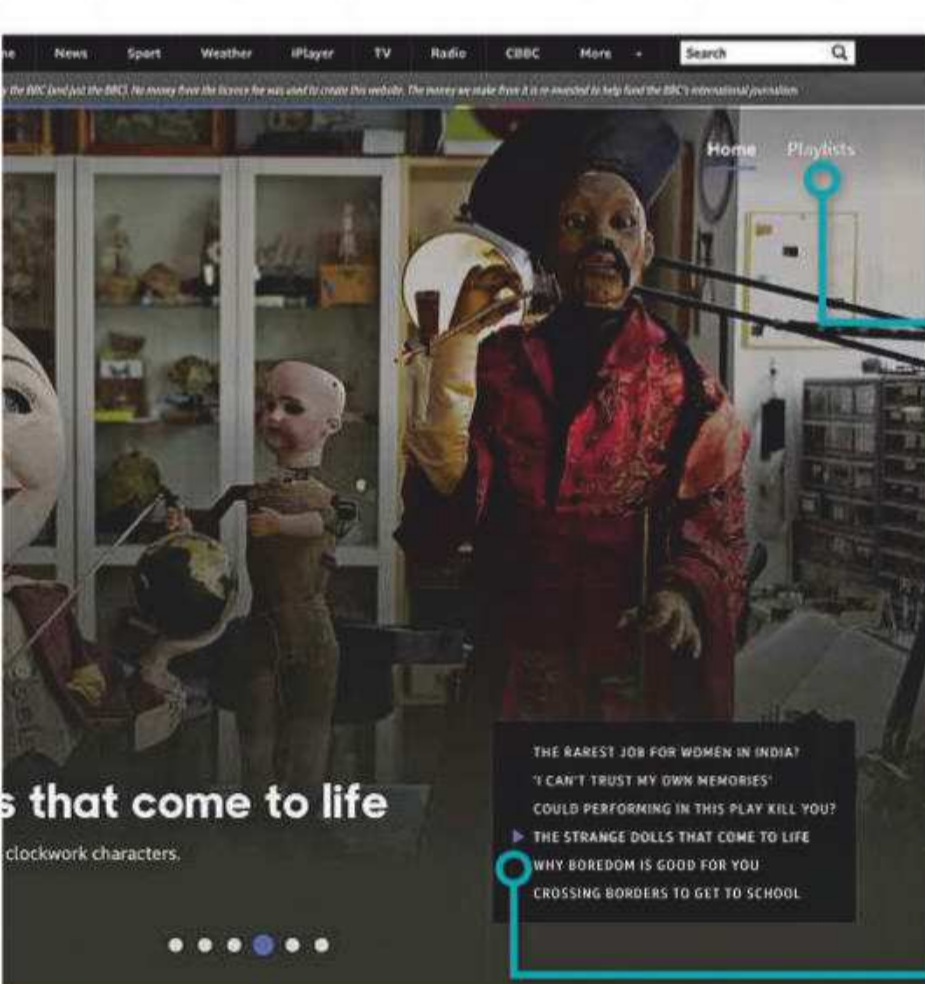
dinosaur-pie.co.uk

One look at this website will tell you that Simon Butler has been busy. As a graphic artist who started work in the gaming industry in 1983, he's a dab-hand at pixel art and has been using his talent to create pixelated versions of characters and icons from movies, music, TV and computing, which you can buy from this site as prints. There are hundreds to choose from, and we had fun simply sifting through them – which is just as well because the search facility and organisation could be better. Buying a print is easy, however, and every artwork is signed by the artist.

Our rating

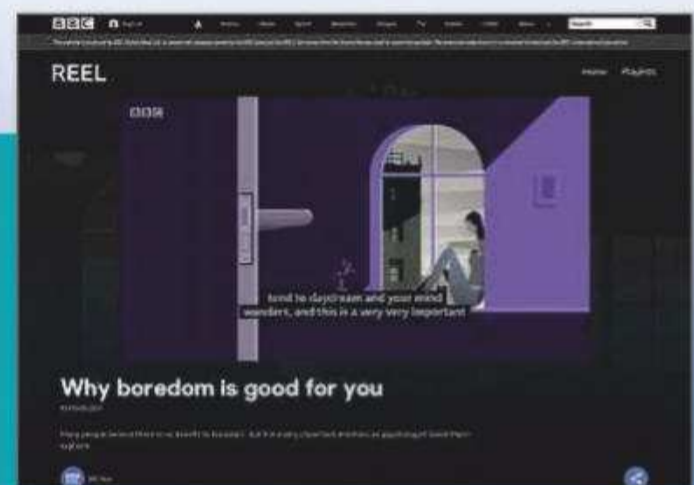


We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features



LATEST PLAYLISTS
The Reel service promises to add a themed playlist of four to five videos each weekday

SERIES
You can watch videos in full screen and with subtitles, and set the next item to play automatically



FOOD

Scary Dairy

scarydairy.org.uk

The debate over dairy is a fierce one. Proponents argue that it's a good source of protein, calcium and vitamins but opponents say it's linked to health issues and disease. This well-presented site is in the latter camp, and highlights the ethical benefits of going dairy-free while explaining how it could improve your wellbeing. There's an exhaustive section on animal welfare, information on dairy alternatives and hundreds of recipes to whet your appetite. With a focus on campaigns run by vegan charity Viva, and an abundance of posters, guides, videos and audio, it makes its point well.

Our rating



SHOPPING

House of Fraser

www.houseoffraser.co.uk

House of Fraser went into administration in August, but it was bought by Sports Direct and is now back online. Selling clothes, homeware, furniture and electrical goods, it picks up where it left off, using the same website it revamped earlier in the year, albeit without free delivery (you pay £4.99 even if you click and collect, although you receive a £5 voucher). The site is a breeze to use: it's well structured, with lots of images, and selecting a size and colour takes a couple clicks. However, there have been reports of problems with returns and a messy situation regarding past gift vouchers.

Our rating



TRAVEL

Visit Guernsey

www.visitguernsey.com

It's the task of tourism chiefs to milk their region's assets, and Guernsey's revamped website not only promotes its world-renowned cows but its beautiful waters, sandy beaches, secluded coves, castles, ancient burial sites and wider history. Here you'll find places to stay, walking routes and various lists of things to see and do. You can also read an online magazine, gaze longingly at scenic photos and view a map showing the location of accommodation, restaurants and sights. With important travel information as well, it's a comprehensive offering that caters for all tastes.

Our rating



BACK ISSUES DISC 2017



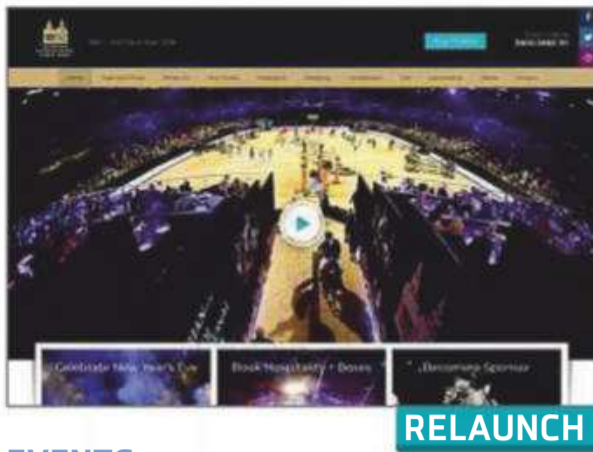
2017 Back Issues Disc

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

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

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





EVENTS

Liverpool International Horse Show

www.liverpoolhorseshow.com

This popular annual exhibition of elite show jumping, dressage and live music takes place at the end of each year. This site prooting the event is packed with information but navigating it can be a chore. The Seating & Prices section is separate from Buy Tickets, and you have to jump over hurdles just to find basic details: the daily schedule could have included explanations of each event, for example, rather than forcing you to click back. Even so, the videos and gallery give a flavour of the event and the booking system is well designed.

Our rating



FOOTBALL

The FA Women's Leagues and Competitions

womenscompetitions.thefa.com

All the FA's domestic women's football coverage has been moved to a single site, making it easy to view the results, fixtures and league tables for the Women's Super League, Women's Championship, Women's FA Cup and Women's League Cup. Scroll down from the main story and you'll find news and basic profiles of the England Lionesses. Unfortunately, the site pales in comparison with the FA's main site. That said, there's no better hub for the women's game right now and it's certainly worthy of support.

Our rating



TRAVEL

England Originals

bit.ly/england461

Many English cities, from Manchester to Bristol, are steeped in fascinating history, but this new site focuses on more picturesque examples, jamming its pages with lavish descriptions, key sights and beautiful images that will have you packing your bags in no time. The 16 locations – which include Bath, Canterbury, Durham, Lancaster and Cambridge – include suggested itineraries, complete with the number of stops and the days you'll have to spend. Some cities are grouped by location and theme, and you can explore further by clicking links to most cities' tourism sites for details of where to stay, eat and drink.

Our rating



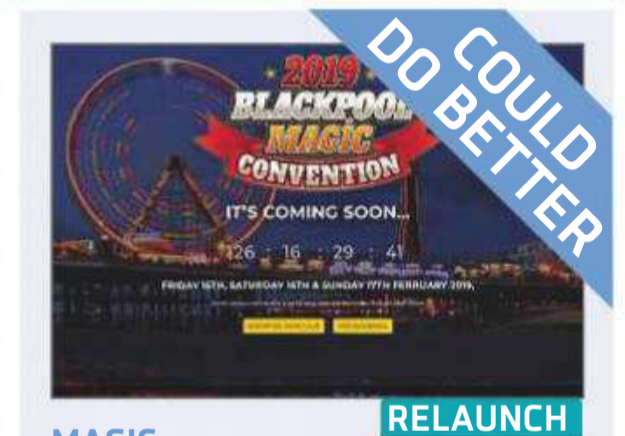
FOOTWEAR

StockX

stockx.com

StockX, the online 'stock market' for trainers, has hotfooted it over to the UK, allowing buyers to snap up the latest footwear in pounds sterling while sellers receive the money for their shoes more quickly. The site, which has already trodden a popular path in the US, guarantees 100% authenticity for every item by getting sellers to ship the trainers to its London-based warehouse for inspection before funds are released. Prices include all fees, and the site displays price fluctuations along with an indication of volatility, important details of each shoe, large images and the cost of the last sale. It's one to dash to if you're keen to buy exclusive and highly sought-after footwear.

Our rating



MAGIC

2019 Blackpool Magic Convention

convention.blackpoolmagic.com

You'll like this site for Blackpool's magic convention – but not a lot. It's certainly pulled a rabbit out of the hat compared to past years, making it easier to buy tickets and choose your level of access – from attending full days to watching a nightly show. There are no profiles of the artistes, and no programme of events as yet, but for those who like performing magic, there's a list of 120 traders, as well as links to Visit Blackpool and the Blackpool Magic Club.

Our rating



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Use gorgeous free HTML templates



If you'd like to create a website from scratch but you don't want to reinvent the wheel when it comes to making it attractive and ensuring it displays on any device, try HTML5 Up (html5up.net). This site offers more than 40 stunning templates that you can use for free (under a Creative Commons licence), complete with trimmed-back CSS code that works effortlessly. Simply cut and paste your own content into the HTML files provided and you'll have a great-looking site with a minimum of fuss. You'll need a basic

understanding of how HTML and CSS work, but nothing like the know-how you'd need to use sophisticated template tools such as Bootstrap (getbootstrap.com).

Find broken links

Links are the nuts and bolts that hold the web together, so it's a good idea to check the links on your site regularly to make sure they work. Dr. Link Check (www.drlinkcheck.com) will check up to 1,000 pages of your website for free. Just type your site's address into the box and it crawls through your site, looking for broken links and reporting any it finds.

Deal of the Fortnight

Krystal Hosting (www.krystal.co.uk) is offering 34% off if you pay for three years in advance, reducing its Amethyst hosting from £4.79 per month to £3.17 per month.

Web-building Helpdesk

Q A friend of a friend had their WordPress website hacked and they lost everything. What steps should I take to secure mine?

Graham Franks, via email

A There are lots of options open to you. The first step is to change the main username from Admin to something else, which will help block a brute-force attack. Likewise, choosing a unique, secure password will also help.

It's important to keep WordPress up to date, too. Updates to the site and any add-ons and templates you have will be flagged up on the Dashboard when you log in. Don't ignore them.

If you keep your site backed up, you won't lose anything, even if disaster strikes. Our favourite free backup tool is Updraft Plus (updraftplus.com).

Andy Shaw, Technical and Reviews Editor, *Web User*



MINI WORKSHOP | Create your own favicon Favicon.cc: favicon.cc | 10 mins | Any website

A favicon is a small 16x16 pixels image that appears on a tab when your site loads in a web browser. It's a key part of your site's identity and is very easy to make, particularly if you use the website Favicon.cc



1 Open the website and start colouring in the pixels on the 16 x 16 grid, using colours selected from the colour picker. **1** The last colours you used appear below. **2** The background pale yellow colour **3** is actually transparent. You can make coloured pixels transparent again by ticking the Transparent box **4** and clicking them.



2 If drawing isn't your strong point, try importing an image instead. Bear in mind that a favicon is small and has very few pixels, so a small, simple image is the most appropriate. Click the Import Image button, **1** select your file **2** and click OK. You can shrink the image while maintaining the shape **3** or force it into a square. **4**



3 You can see what your icon will look like in the Preview section. **1** When you're happy with it, click Download Favicon **2** and save the ICO file somewhere safe. You'll need to use FTP software to upload the file to your website. Make sure you place it in the root folder of your site, so it appears on every page.

All you need to know about **electric cars**...

How much will I save? £%!

What is a hybrid car?

Is the tech any good? How far

How long will it take to charge?

will it go?

How much does it cost to run? !?



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What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight



See Julia Roberts' TV debut in *Homecoming*

From 2 November

Julia Roberts (*Pretty Woman*, *Erin Brockovich*) is the latest megastar to be tempted over to online TV, suggesting once again that streaming series have overtaken cinema movies in Hollywood's hearts (or at least its business plans).

The 10-part conspiracy thriller *Homecoming* casts Roberts as Heidi, a therapist at a secret US government facility that helps soldiers return to civilian life. The action flips forward to 2022, where we find Heidi working as a small-town waitress and living with her mum (*Carrie* legend Sissy Spacek). What happened in those four years? What was that 'homecoming' facility really up to? And why can't Heidi remember anything?

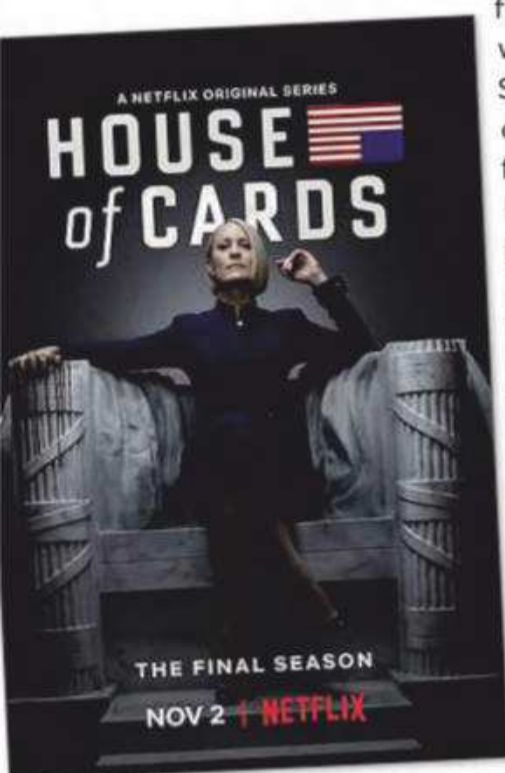
The official trailer (bit.ly/homecoming461) already has us hooked, so much so that we're tempted to binge the original *Homecoming* podcast right now (bit.ly/home461). But be warned: the plot of the award-winning 2017 podcast, which stars Catherine Keener (*Capote*) and David Schwimmer (*Friends*), has been stuck to faithfully for the TV version, so it's effectively one massive spoiler. Save it for later!

N Watch the final season of *House of Cards*

From 2 November

It's all firsts and lasts in *House of Cards* Season 6. As Claire Underwood (Robin Wright – always *The Princess Bride* to us) ends her first 100 days as US President, the first-ever Netflix Original show takes its final curtain. This is the

first season without Kevin Spacey, whose character (the first President Underwood) is now dead, leaving his wife in charge. Joining the cast are Diane Lane (*Unfaithful*) and Greg Kinnear (*Little Miss Sunshine*) as sibling politicians. Watch the trailer at bit.ly/house461.



Time-hop to Colonial America for *Outlander*

From 5 November

Romantic time-travel drama *Outlander* – a kind of *Doctor Who* meets *Braveheart* – returns for a fourth season after amassing huge audiences for its first three outings. Seasons 5 and 6 are already signed and sealed.

The saga follows Claire (Caitriona Balfe), a married World War Two nurse who's whisked back to the 1700s and into the arms of chivalrous Scottish warrior Jamie (Sam Heughan). Seasons 1 to 3 saw them century-hop together until a shipwreck washed them up in slavery-era North Carolina. Judging by the trailer (bit.ly/outlander461), they

face some ominous company.

Returning cast members include Tobias Menzies (the next Prince Philip in Netflix's *The Crown*), who plays two dead characters. It's proper old time-travel fiction.

Season 4's first episode arrives on Amazon on 5 November, a day after airing on US network Starz, then 12 more episodes arrive weekly.

Stream international rugby, cricket and tennis

It's a busy fortnight for international sports on Sky's streaming service Now TV. Saturday 3 November sees two Rugby Union Autumn Internationals competing for attention – Wales v Scotland (2.45pm) and England v South Africa (3pm). The Women's Twenty20 Cricket World Cup kicks off on the same day.

The First Test between Sri Lanka v England follows on 6 November, and there's more rugby on Saturday 10 when



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



England face NZ (3pm). Check Sky's site for updated listings for rugby (bit.ly/rugby461) and cricket (bit.ly/cricket461).

Tennis fans should clear the diary from 11-18 November, when the men's ATP Finals reach London's O2 Arena. The ATP's YouTube channel has all the video highlights from 2018's World Tour (bit.ly/atptube461).

All this action airs live on Sky Sports, which you can watch live and on-demand on Now TV with a Sky Sports Pass (bit.ly/newsports461).

Fight demon plumbers in *Stan Against Evil*

From 6 November

John C McGinley hangs up his *Scrubs* to battle 172 demons in a sleepy New

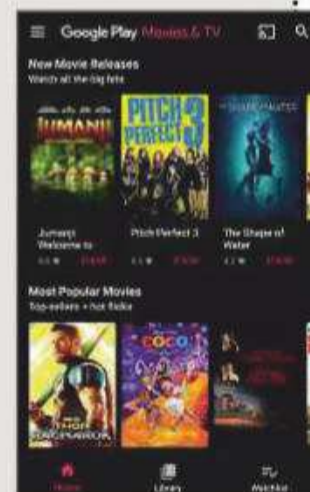
Google Play Movies' "free 4K upgrades"



Google is set to automatically upgrade films and shows in your Google Play Movies library to ultra-HD 4K, completely free – bringing it in line with Apple.

Evidence uncovered by the app-dissectors at Android Police includes several references to 4K upgrades in the Google Play Movies & TV app's code, plus the message: "Enjoy this higher quality on any supported 4K device" (bit.ly/apolice461).

The move, which Google hasn't yet confirmed, would bring Google Play in line with iTunes. Apple has offered 1080p-to-4K upgrades since 2017, ahead of the launch of the Apple TV 4K (bit.ly/apple461).



Hampshire town, now back for a third season. Season 2 of this excellent comedy-horror ended with Stan (McGinley) accidentally leaving the portal between the Land of the Living and the Land of the Dead wide open, unleashing more evil than ever before. New monsters include an "apathetic demon-plumber" (Scott Adsit from *30 Rock*), evil Nurse Pickles (Maria Bamford from *Arrested Development*) and some exceptional killer puppets who delighted us so much we watched the trailer twice (bit.ly/stan461).

Episodes air weekly on Fox UK, which you can stream via Now TV. Seasons 1 and 2 are still available on-demand until 23 December (bit.ly/nowstan461).

Unravel a new mystery in *The Sinner*

From 9 November

Bill Pullman (*Torchwood*, *Independence Day*) returns for a second season as detective Harry Ambrose, who specialises in investigating unusual

crimes. Season 2's case centres on 13-year-old Julian (Elisha Henig from Netflix's *American Vandal*) who, after murdering both his parents for reasons unknown, begins to display terrifying telekinetic powers.

Season 1's star Jessica Biel stays off-screen as executive producer this time, but US audiences don't seem to mind – they've given the new season rave reviews.

Watch three new trailers, plus Season 1 if you're a Netflix subscriber, at bit.ly/thesinner461.



In case you missed it...

Julia Davis' HBO comedy *Sally4Ever* began airing on Sky Atlantic on 25 October, followed by Romesh Ranganathan's Sky One



sitcom *The Reluctant Landlord* on the 30th. You can stream both shows live and on-demand via Now TV, which includes

them in a brief teaser (bit.ly/nowcom461). Get a bigger sneak peek at *Sally4Ever* from HBO's trailer (bit.ly/sally461).

Emergency services drama *9-1-1* is back for Season 2, also on Now TV. The series, from the makers of *American Horror Story* and starring Angela Bassett (*Contact*) and Peter Krause (*Six Feet Under*), arrives weekly. All of Season 1 is

available on-demand – but only until 16 November (bit.ly/911-461). Watch Season 2's trailer at bit.ly/911trail461.

Over on Netflix, eight new episodes of game-inspired medieval fantasy *Castlevania* have landed, adding to Season 1's four episodes. Watch the lot – or just the trailer if you're not a Netflix subscriber – at bit.ly/castle461.

Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

Amazon All-New Fire HD 8 Tablet

With more features for the same money, the new Amazon Fire HD 8 remains a top budget buy

Amazon's tablets may not be the pinnacle of power or luxury, but they do what's required at an affordable price. Although they lack the slick design and performance of Apple's iPads and Samsung's Android tablets, Amazon continues to improve its tablets year on year – a trend that continues here, with a handful of small updates to its medium-sized 8in model.

However, if you're looking for a significant upgrade from the previous generation Fire HD 8, you'll need to wait a little longer, because much of the tablet's specifications remain the same.

What's new?

The front-facing camera is now 2 megapixels, up from 640 x 480 pixels, and the tablet's microSD slot can take cards up to 400GB in capacity, rather than 256GB. That's it for new hardware, though: the rest is precisely as it was before.

The software has had a more extensive overhaul,

and the new model now supports hands-free Alexa and Show Mode, which transforms the tablet into a cheaper version of Amazon's Echo Show smart speaker. There are also tweaks to the Kids Edition of the tablet, notably a new interface and child-friendly audiobooks.

At £79.99, the new 16GB Fire HD 8 remains the same price as the model it replaces, as does the 32GB model at £99.99. Both are great value for money.

These prices are for the 'Special Offers' versions of the Fire HD 8, which feature ads that show on the screen when you turn on the tablet, before you unlock it. The versions without them are £10 more expensive for both 16GB and 32GB models.

Screen and hardware

The tablet has an 8in, 1,280 x 800 pixels screen, a two-megapixel camera at the rear, and Dolby Atmos-enabled stereo speakers. It's still powered by a fairly slow 1.3GHz quad-core



“ Amazon's 'Show Mode' displays the time, news, hints and tips on how to use Alexa, plus visual aids to Alexa queries ”



MediaTek MT8163 processor with a miserly 1.5GB of memory.

As such, performance is identical to the previous model. Geekbench 4's duo of single- and multi-core CPU tests returned not-so-speedy results of 623 and 1,738. In other words, it's adequate, with enough power to play casual games and stream video at the screen's native resolution. But it will feel sluggish if you try anything too demanding.

Like the core components, the battery – and its impressive staying power – are also unchanged. Running our in-house battery test, which plays a looping video with aeroplane mode engaged and the screen set to a standard 170cd/m² brightness, the new Fire HD 8 lasted just over 11 hours, which is exceptional.

With a price tag under £100, the Fire HD 8 was never going to set the standard for screen quality, and nothing has changed. In our tests, we

measured an ability to display 62% of colours in the sRGB standard, alongside a rather dull contrast ratio of 1,010:1. Colours look decent enough, however, and text is easy to read and reasonably crisp.

The rear 2-megapixel camera hasn't changed and quality is as disappointing as before, with washed-out colours and grainy images in low light. However, the upgraded front-facing camera now supports 720p video, which will improve the quality of your video calls.

Software

Amazon has made some interesting changes to its Fire OS software. The Fire HD 8 gets hands-free Alexa support, which means it will respond to the spoken "Alexa" keyword without you having to touch the tablet. Alexa on the Fire HD 8 operates in the same way as it does on an Echo speaker, so it includes the ability to make calls and drop in on friends and family via their Echo speakers.

Another addition is Amazon's 'Show Mode', which fires up an onscreen display similar to what you see on the company's Echo Show speaker. It displays the time, news and hints and tips on how to use Alexa, plus visual aids to various Alexa queries, such as countdown timers and questions about the weather.

This is designed to work alongside the new Show Mode Charging Dock – a case that connects to the tablet's micro-USB port and provides a couple of charging pins on the rear, and a simple hinged stand that can be connected to any USB power source. Whenever you place the tablet in the case, it begins to charge and fires up Show Mode automatically. Buying the bundle with the Dock takes the price up to £109.98 for the 16GB model and £129.98 for 32GB.

Amazon is also making some changes to the Fire HD 8 Kids Edition. As before, this package includes the 32GB regular Fire HD 8 tablet with a simplified child-friendly interface and a colourful, chunky case for protection. It still includes a one-year subscription to the Amazon Fire for Kids Unlimited service and Amazon's two-year, no-questions-asked, damage and breakage warranty.

New features include a redesigned interface that makes things even simpler for kids to get to grips with, and the addition of child-friendly Audible audiobooks to the Fire for Kids Unlimited subscription package. The Kids Edition costs £129.99.

PRODUCT INFO

Amazon All-New Fire HD 8 Tablet

Price: From £79.99
Buy from Amazon:
bit.ly/fire461

SPECIFICATIONS

- 1.3GHz quad-core processor
- 8in 1,280 x 800-pixels touchscreen
- 1.5GB of memory
- 16 or 32GB of storage space
- microSD slot supports cards up to 400GB
- Dual-band 802.11a/b/g/n Wi-Fi
- 2-megapixels cameras front and back
- USB 2.0 micro-B connector
- 3.5mm stereo jack
- 215 x 128 x 9.7mm
- 363g

FOR

- ✓ Wallet-friendly price
- ✓ Show Mode is excellent
- ✓ Integrated hands-free Alexa

AGAINST

- ✗ Lack of hardware upgrades

BIGGER & BETTER

Apple iPad,
£319

bit.ly/appipad461



ANDROID RIVAL

Huawei MediaPad T3 7,
£79.99

bit.ly/huaw461



OUR VERDICT



There aren't many decent 8in tablets around that will give you change from £100 but the Fire HD 8 has consistently managed this feat, and continues to do so with this updated device. Although the changes aren't as far-reaching as we'd hoped, and the price is

clearly subsidised by Amazon locking the Android device to its own app store, the latest improvements are still worthwhile, particularly if you want to further integrate Alexa into your home.

The Fire HD 8 may not have the the best camera,

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

the fastest performance or the best-stocked app store, but it's still a phenomenal device for the price.

Now TV Smart Box

The new Now TV Smart Box is the cheapest way to get 4K programmes to your TV, but its options are limited

Now TV is Sky's pay-as-you-go internet-based subscription service, designed for viewers who want to enjoy Sky-exclusive TV shows such as Premier League football and *Game of Thrones* without having to commit to expensive, long-term contracts. You sign up for free, enjoy a short trial and if you want to retain a service, you pay a monthly fee. You can cancel and resume any subscription at any time.

The only catch is that Sky's content is split into 'passes', so if you want to watch boxing matches as well as fantasy drama, you have to pay for multiple subscriptions. There are five passes to choose from: Entertainment (£7.99 per month), Cinema

(£9.99 per month), Kids (£3.99 per month), Sky Sports (£7.99 per month) and the reality-show service, Hayu (£3.99 per month). They all include some live channels and access to a selection of catch-up content.

Smart Box

To get the programmes to your TV, you also need the Smart Box, which now supports streams up to 4K at 60fps (frames per second). That's a massive step up from the Now TV Smart Stick, which only supports Full HD.

As with the older model, the new Smart Box also has a voice-search function, which can be activated via the remote control. The hardware is made by Roku and comes with many of the same features as Roku's own boxes, though Now TV's prices are subsidised, making it an attractive option even if you don't want to subscribe.

Available for £46 from Now TV's website, it's currently the cheapest way to add 4K streaming to your existing 4K TV – Google's Chromecast Ultra and Amazon's Fire TV with 4K Ultra HD start at £70.

Unfortunately, the 4K services are currently limited to Netflix and YouTube – even Sky's services, available in 4K through the Sky Q box, are only available in 720p, though 1080p has been promised by the end of the year.

The Smart Box is elegant but not particularly exciting – glossy black plastic with a bright pink Now TV logo. At the back of the device, there is an HDMI 2.0 port, an Ethernet socket, a microSD card slot (to provide extra



“It's a massive step up from the Now TV Smart Stick, which only supports Full HD”

storage for apps) and a mains power connector. As for wireless connectivity, the Smart Box has dual-band Wi-Fi 802.11ac.

The previous model had Freeview built in, but it's sadly been removed from this version. This means you're limited to the usual collection of Roku apps, though this is as comprehensive as these devices get, containing all the

main British catch-up apps (BBC iPlayer, ITV Hub, All 4 and Demand 5 – all in 1080p).

Setting up the Smart Box is straightforward and took us less than 10 minutes. The interface is highly intuitive and we were impressed by the voice search, which accurately picked up our speech when we requested actors' names, film titles and TV shows.

PRODUCT INFO

Now TV Smart Box

Price: £45.99

Buy from:

bit.ly/nowtv461

SPECIFICATIONS

- 720p, 1080p and 2160p video out
- Digital audio over HDMI (7.1 and 5.1 surround pass-through)
- Requires broadband
- 125 x 125 x 21mm
- 222g

FOR

- ✓ Affordable
- ✓ Runs up to 4K HDR at 60fps
- ✓ Voice control works well

AGAINST

- ✗ Doesn't support Dolby Atmos or DTS:X
- ✗ Only supports 720p live television
- ✗ Doesn't have Freeview built in

OUR VERDICT



Now TV is a great way to get Sky services at a reasonable price and without the hassle of installing a dish or getting embroiled in a long-term contract. Even if you don't want Sky, it's a cheap way to get a Roku device.

This latest model supports 4K but only as yet through the Netflix

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

and YouTube apps, which is a tad disappointing. It's also lost the previous version's ability to connect to your aerial and show Freeview programmes.



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.



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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.

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HARDWARE

TABLET

Amazon Fire HD 8

£79.99 from bit.ly/amazon461

Tested: Issue 461

The Fire HD 8 offers excellent battery life, superb build quality, seamless Alexa integration and impressive performance – all at a great-value price.

KEY SPECS

■ Quad-core 1.3GHz processor ■ 16GB storage ■ 1.5GB memory ■ 8in, 1,280 x 800-pixel screen ■ 2-megapixel rear camera, VGA front camera ■ 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi ■ 214 x 128 x 9.2mm ■ 341g ■ 1-year return-to-base warranty

NEW!



BUDGET SMARTPHONE

Motorola Moto E5 Plus

£149 from bit.ly/motoplus460

Tested: Issue 460

Impressive specifications, a 6in screen, excellent battery life and a 12-megapixel camera that captures stunning images – the Moto E5 Plus is astounding value for money.

KEY SPECS

■ Quad-core 1.4GHz Snapdragon 425 processor ■ 2GB RAM ■ 16GB storage, expandable by 256GB ■ 12-megapixel rear camera, 8-megapixel front camera ■ 6in, 720 x 1,440-pixel screen ■ 161.9 x 75.3 x 9.35 mm ■ 200g ■ Fingerprint reader



LAPTOP

Acer Aspire 5

£629.99 from bit.ly/acer458

Tested: Issue 458

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-Stream

£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.ly/honevo449

Tested: Issue 449

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

KEY SPECS

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



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 consumer-level 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

ANDROID VIDEO EDITOR

Adobe Premiere Clip

Free from bit.ly/prem460

Tested: Issue 460

Premiere Clip's excellent no-cost ad-free toolbox of features makes editing videos on your Android device incredibly easy.

NEW!



BOOKMARKING TOOL

Raindrop.io

Free from raindrop.io

Tested: Issue 459

This powerful bookmarking tool automatically saves your bookmarks to the cloud and provides enough add-ons and apps to work on all devices.



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.



DICTATION TOOL

Google Voice Typing

Free from docs.google.com

Tested: Issue 457

Google Voice Typing delivers an effortless, impressively accurate and sleekly presented speech-to-text experience.



SYSTEM MONITOR

Wise System Monitor

Free from bit.ly/wise456

Tested: Issue 456

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



WEB USER BACK ISSUES DISCS

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INTERIOR DESIGN SOFTWARE

Sweet Home 3D 6

www.sweethome3d.com

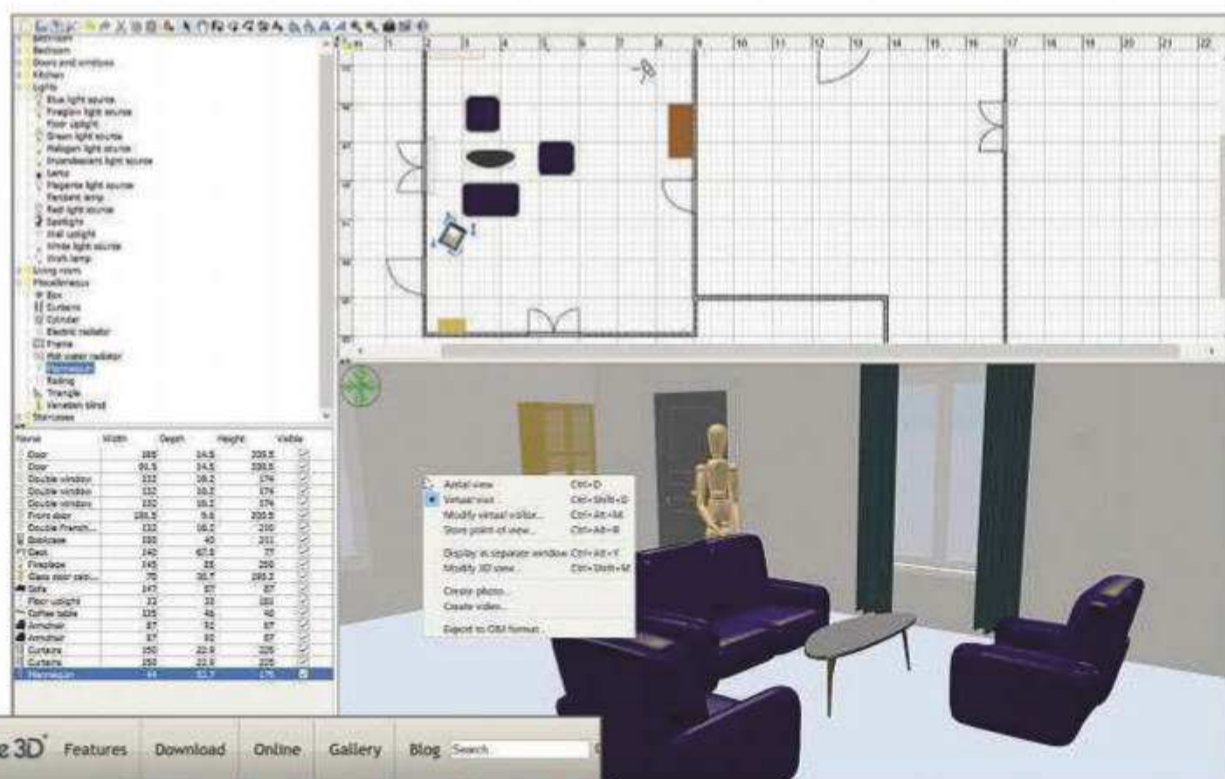
Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10,
Mac OS or Linux

File size: 49.4MB

If you've just moved into a new house, are thinking of rearranging your furniture or want to make significant changes to the layout of your current home, Sweet Home 3D could be just what you need. This sophisticated free interior-design software lets you create a two-dimensional floor plan, add furniture and then view the results in 3D.

Created your floor plan, then use the sidebar to populate it with furniture and other items. The objects are arranged into straightforward categories, such as Bathroom, Bedroom, Kitchen, Living Room, Lights, Staircases and 'Doors and windows'. Additional objects, including items created by other users, are available from the Sweet Home 3D website.

You can add text anywhere to label or highlight specific items, and the software lets you move through your 3D world, take photos or record a video



3D introduces a wealth of new features, such as texture shifting, multiple lines of text and the ability to rotate and slide openings and light spots. It also provides new ways of manipulating items, an updated furniture catalogue and even an 'articulated mannequin' that you can colour and pose to give you an idea of how people will fit in each room.

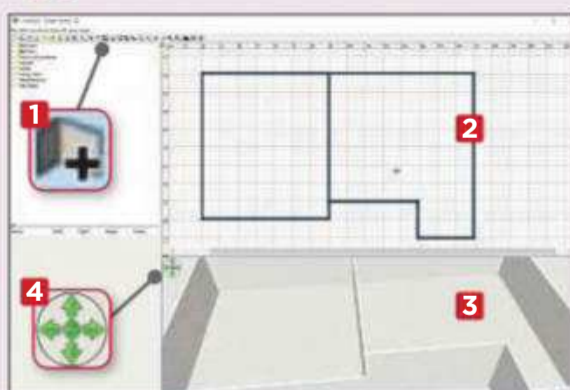
When installing the program, you can decide whether you want the software to run in 32-bit or 64-bit mode, which can help with compatibility. Support for high-resolution screens has improved, too.

to watch later. To help you achieve the best results, the program lets you adjust the resolution, aspect ratio and frame rate of the movie, as well as the quality.

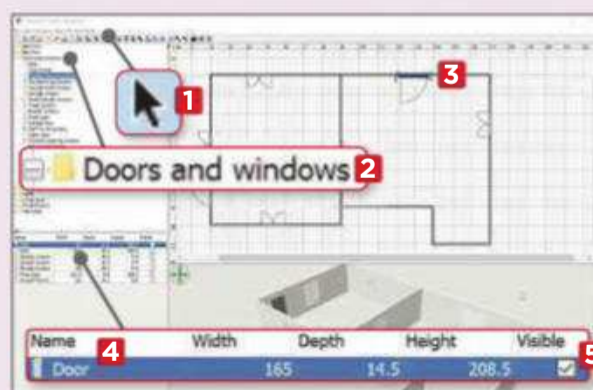
The latest version of Sweet Home



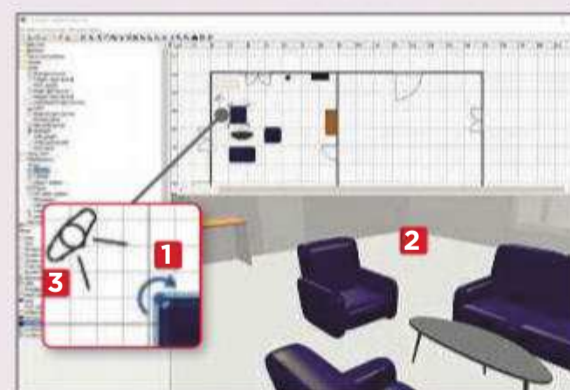
MINI WORKSHOP | Redesign your rooms using Sweet Home 3D



1 The first step is to draw your floor plan in two dimensions. Click the Create Walls button in the menu bar, **1** then draw the walls in the top half of the main window. **2** A 3D representation of your building appears in the bottom half. **3** Use the direction button **4** to rotate and tilt the 3D view.

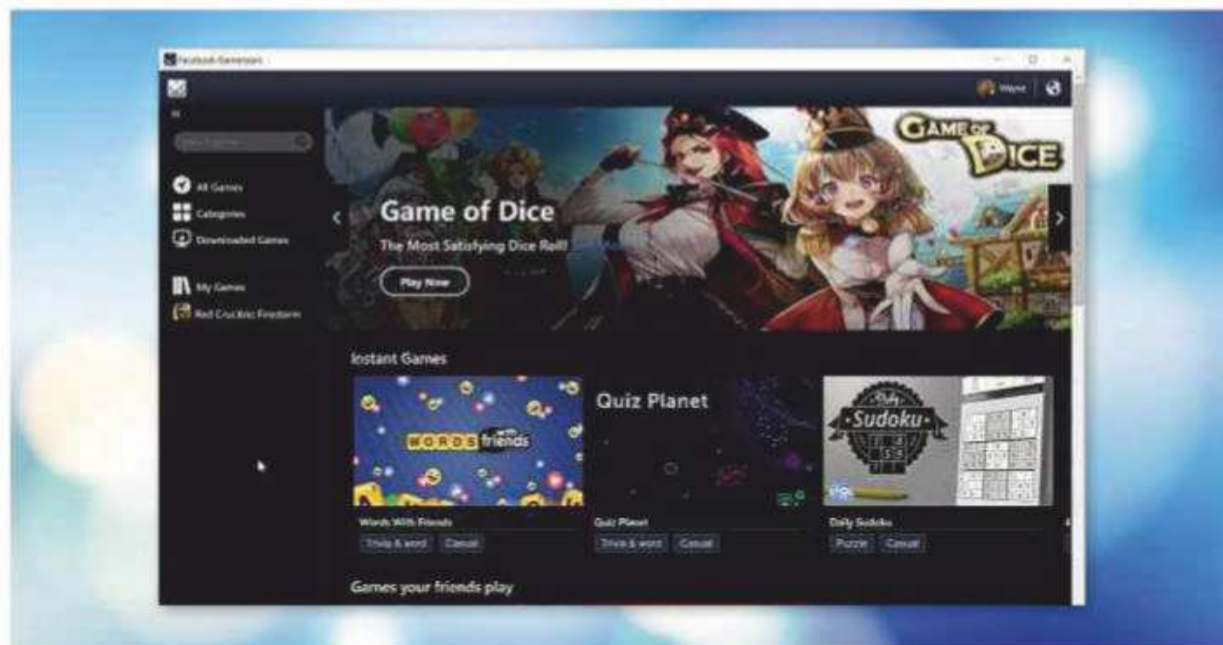


2 To create openings in the walls, click the Select Objects button in the menu bar, **1** then expand the 'Doors and windows' section on the left. **2** Drag any items you want into your plan. **3** Information about the objects you've added appears in the bottom-left panel, **4** and you can temporarily hide any. **5**



3 Continue to work through the different categories, adding objects and furniture to your plan. You can use an item's corner handle **1** to rotate it. Click 3D view **2** in the menu and select Virtual Visit to explore your creation in 3D. The 'point-of-view' icon in the 2D plan **3** lets you change your viewpoint in the 3D room.

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



GAME MANAGER Facebook Gameroom

bit.ly/fbgame461

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 254KB

Facebook Gameroom is a standalone hub that lets you play, watch and share your favourite Facebook games without needing to go into the social network – although you still need a Facebook account. Use the program to browse for new games by category and find out more about them, including their system requirements. Your chosen games download in the background and launch when you're ready to play them. Gameroom shows the keyboard controls for games when you start them.



UPDATE MANAGER WuMgr

bit.ly/wumgr461

Min requirements: Windows 10
File size: 121KB

WuMgr (Windows Update Manager) gives you greater control over updates in Windows 10. The software displays your entire update history – including pending, successful and failed updates – or you can switch the view to see only Windows Updates, Installed Updates or Hidden Updates. You can also use the software to download, install or hide any update, disable automatic updates or store them for later.



PASSWORD REVEALER Asterisk Password Spy 7

bit.ly/asterisk461

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10
File size: 3.8MB

Asterisk Password Spy reveals the passwords hidden behind asterisks (***) in the login box of Windows applications. It doesn't work with every program, but if you can't remember exactly what your password is, it may be able to help you. Just drag the search icon over a password that's been obscured with asterisks to reveal your forgotten login. This updated version works with Windows 10 apps.

New Windows Apps

Candy Crush Friends Saga

bit.ly/candy461

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 167.87MB

The latest game in the Candy Crush saga offers updated graphics and new game modes. The twist here is that you call on friends scattered through the game to help you clear levels.



Wundermail for Gmail

bit.ly/wunder461

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 48.22MB

If you use Gmail but think it could be improved, try Wundermail. This mail app uses Microsoft's Fluent Design principles, so it looks at home in Windows 10 and offers plenty of advanced features.



Screen Recorder Plus

bit.ly/srplus461

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 15.63MB

Screen Recorder Plus records audio and video for free. It can capture the whole screen, specific windows or custom areas, and saves recordings as MP4 and MP3 files.



SECURITY TOOL

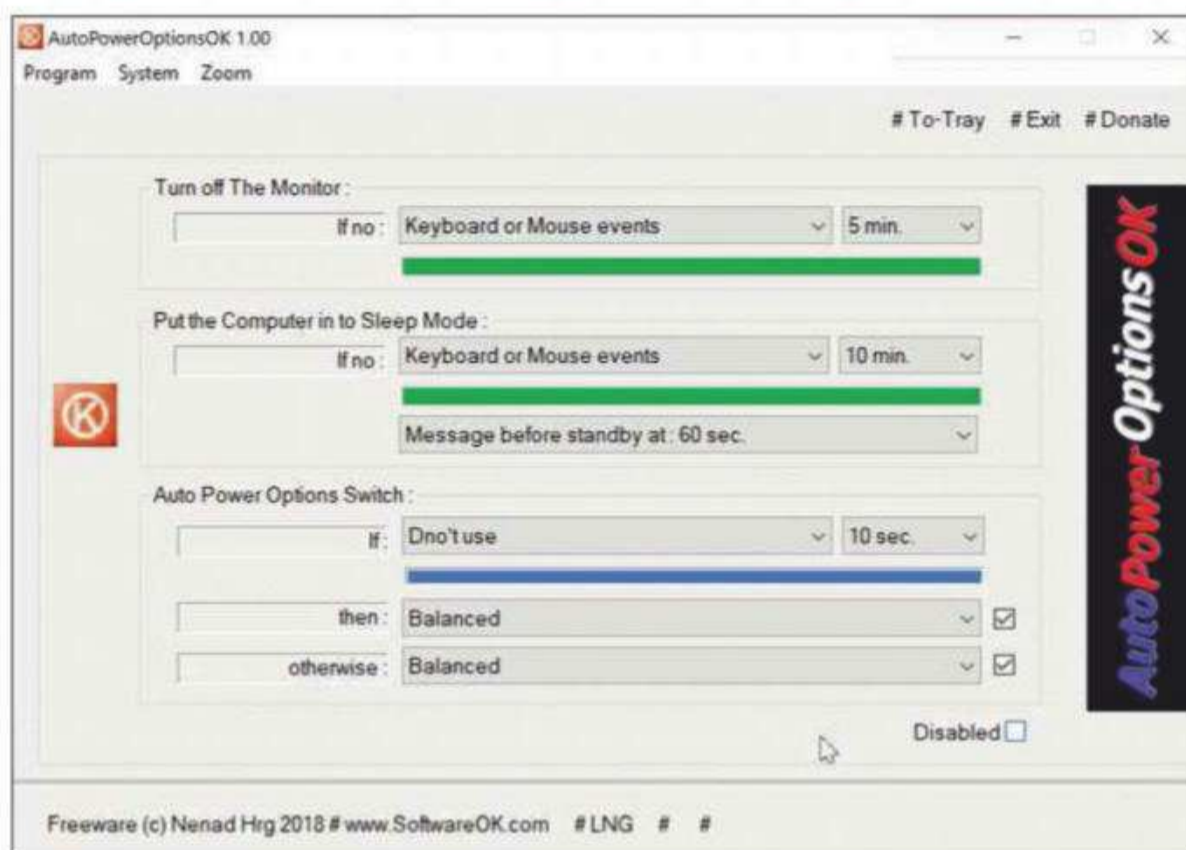
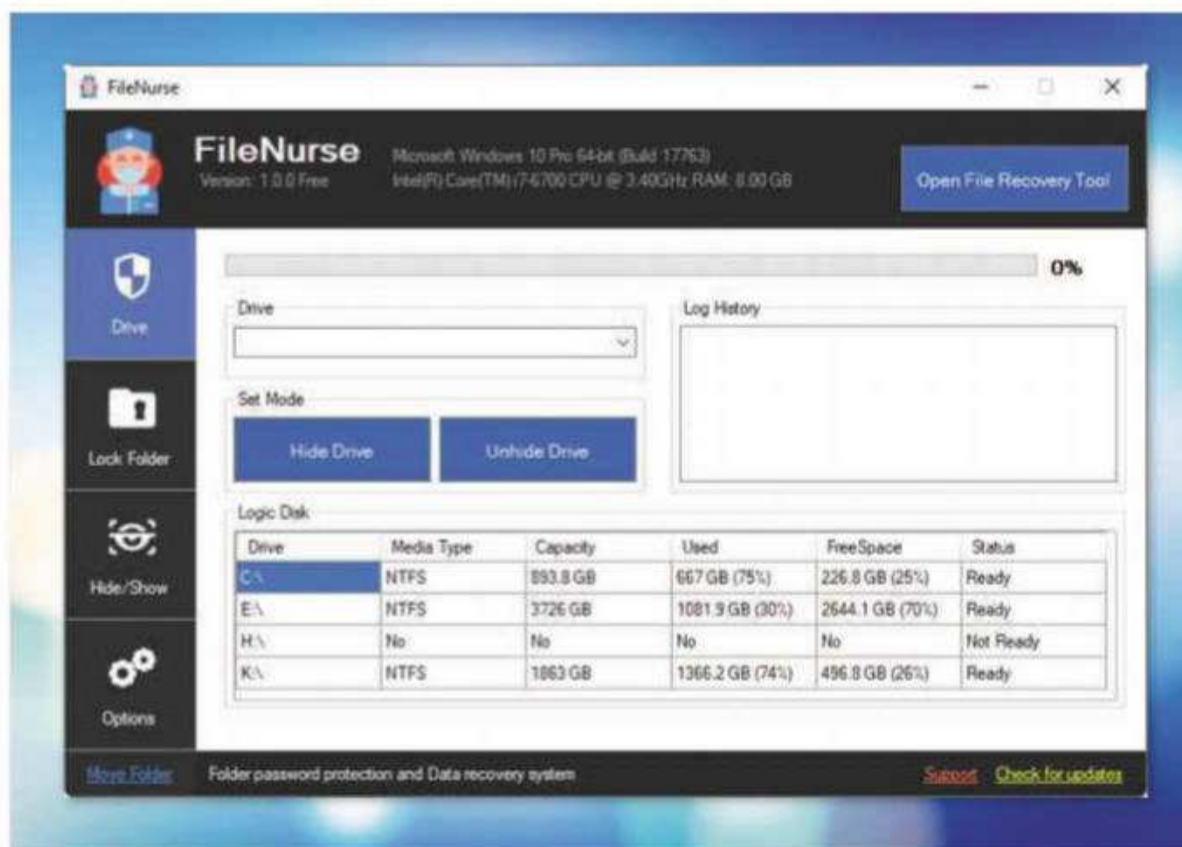
FileNurse

filenurse.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 661KB

If you have confidential files on your computer that you want to keep safe from prying eyes, FileNurse can help. This new, free software lets you password-protect folders, encrypt files and hide individual folders and drives. It's very easy to use, with a sidebar on the left that provides access to all the different options. That's not the only trick up FileNurse's sleeve, either. Despite its tiny size, the program can also recover lost or deleted files from your PC, USB drives or memory cards. Click the Open File Recovery Tool button at the top of the screen and the recovery tool opens in a new window, ready to use.



POWER-MANAGEMENT TOOL

AutoPowerOptionsOK

bit.ly/auto461

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 45KB

AutoPowerOptionsOK is a tiny portable tool that lets you make quick changes to your computer's power plans from the system tray. Simply right-click the tray icon and select a preset power plan from the context menu or open the Windows Power Options. If you left-click the button, you can open the AutoPowerOptionsOK interface, which lets you set your monitor to turn off automatically and your system to go to sleep after a set period of time, along with a few other useful functions. You can also decide whether you want the software to start with Windows, and adjust the size of its interface.

SYSTEM TOOL

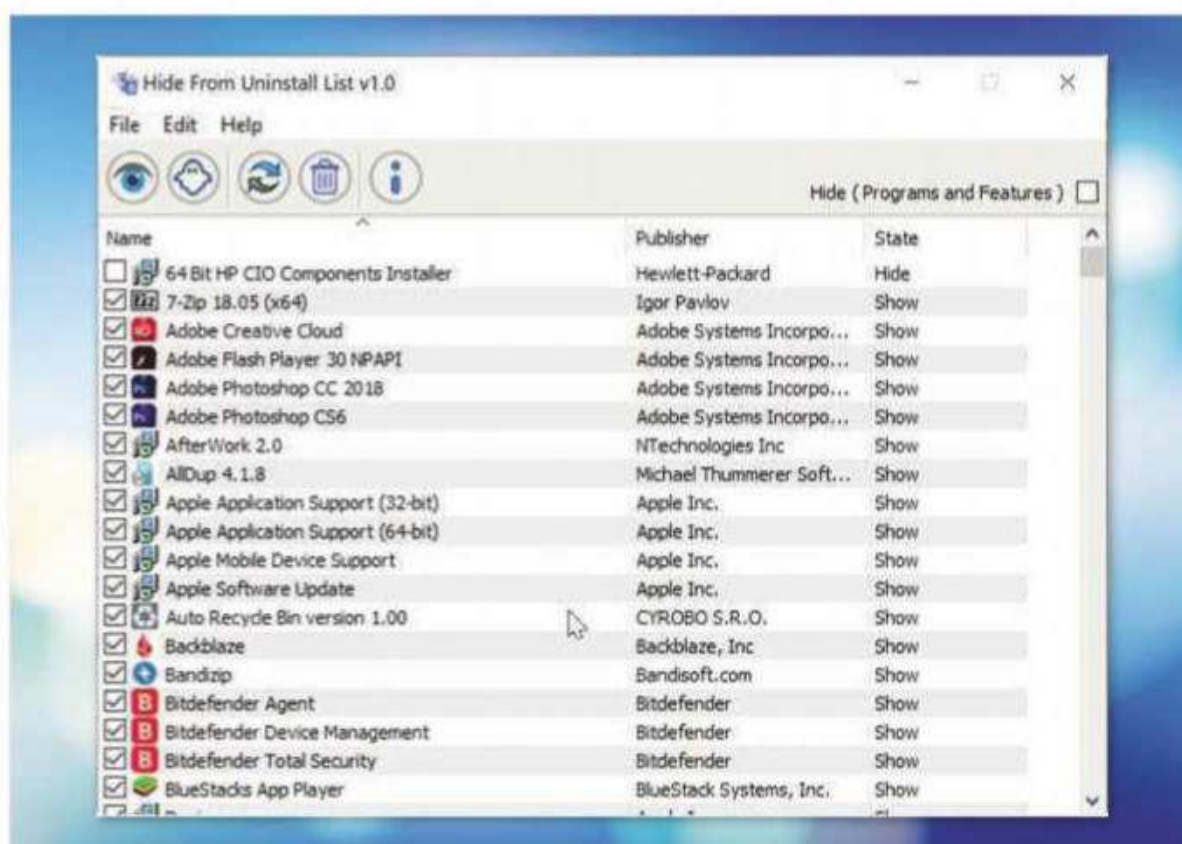
Hide From Uninstall List

bit.ly/hidefrom461

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 481KB

Windows can display a list of all the programs installed on your PC, giving you the option to remove any you no longer require. However, there may be some software you don't want to appear in this list, which is where Hide From Uninstall List comes in. This tool lets you hide selected items or everything installed on your system. The latter option is useful if you want to stop people spying on your software choices or uninstalling anything. The program also removes the 'Apps & features' option in Windows 10. If you want to uninstall a hidden program, simply reverse the process.





GAME

Cube Escape: Paradox

bit.ly/cube461

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10, or Mac OS

File size: 75.2MB

At the start of this challenging game, Detective Dale Vandermeer wakes up to find that he's trapped in a room, with no memory of how he got there. Your mission is to escape by interacting with different objects and solving puzzles. As well as playing the adventure, you can watch a separate short movie that connects to the game.

Don't install...

Disk Mapper

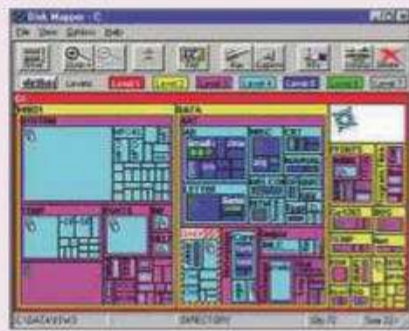
www.miclog.com/dm

Min requirements:

Windows 95/98/ME/2000

File size: 1MB

It may seem snide to mock a program that was written 20 years ago – just check out the specs and interface! – but if you're looking for a tool to analyse your drive space, Disk Mapper is best avoided, especially as it costs \$49.95 (£38.32). Perhaps the developer forgot to remove its page from the web.



...Install this instead

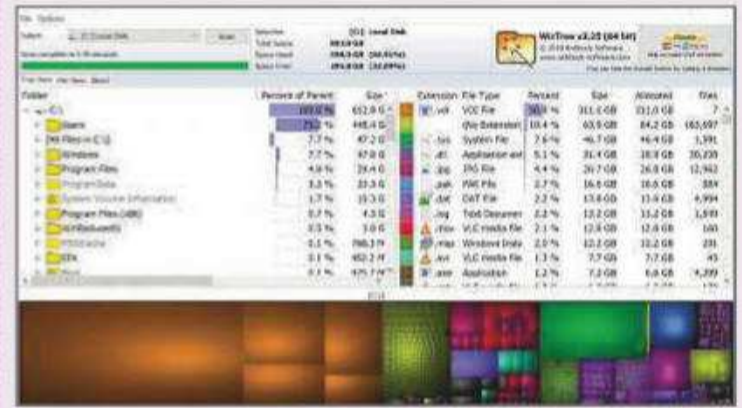
WizTree

antibody-software.com

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

File size: 2.8MB

The speedy WizTree drive analyser can check any hard drive to identify the files and folders that take up the most space, so you can delete or move them. Select the drive you want to check from the drop-down menu, click Scan and the results appear in the window below. You can switch between Tree View and File View to examine the results, then reorder your files and folders and explore the drive's contents to root out the space hogs. A separate 64-bit build of WizTree is also available to download.



UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



DUPLICATE FINDER

CloneSpy 3.41

www.clonespy.com

Min requirements:

Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 4.5MB

CloneSpy saves hard-drive space by finding and removing unwanted duplicate files. This updated version can ignore subfolders and files with paths that are too long. You no longer need to run the installer in Admin mode when you make a portable version of the program.



PDF TOOL

PDFCreator 3.3

www.pdfforge.org

Min requirements: Windows Vista/7/8.1/10

File size: 33.1MB

PDFCreator lets you print a PDF from almost any application. The latest release fixes some security vulnerabilities and should no longer be flagged as a potentially unwanted application by antivirus software. Be sure to decline the bundled junk during installation.



AUDIO EDITOR

Audacity 2.3

www.audacityteam.org

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10, Mac OS or Linux

File size: 25.5MB

This superb free audio editor lets you import, improve and mix music files, and fix common problems with audio recordings. The latest update adds 'Punch and Roll Recording', so you can stop a recording, listen to a few seconds of the preceding audio and pick up where you left off.



DRIVE MANAGER

DiskBoss 9.8

www.diskboss.com

Min requirements:

Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 7.7MB

DiskBoss has a selection of tools for managing built-in and removable drives. This new release adds the ability to search for files in drive-space analysis and file-classification reports, and improves search operations and the reports dialogue box. It also fixes some bugs. ■

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Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

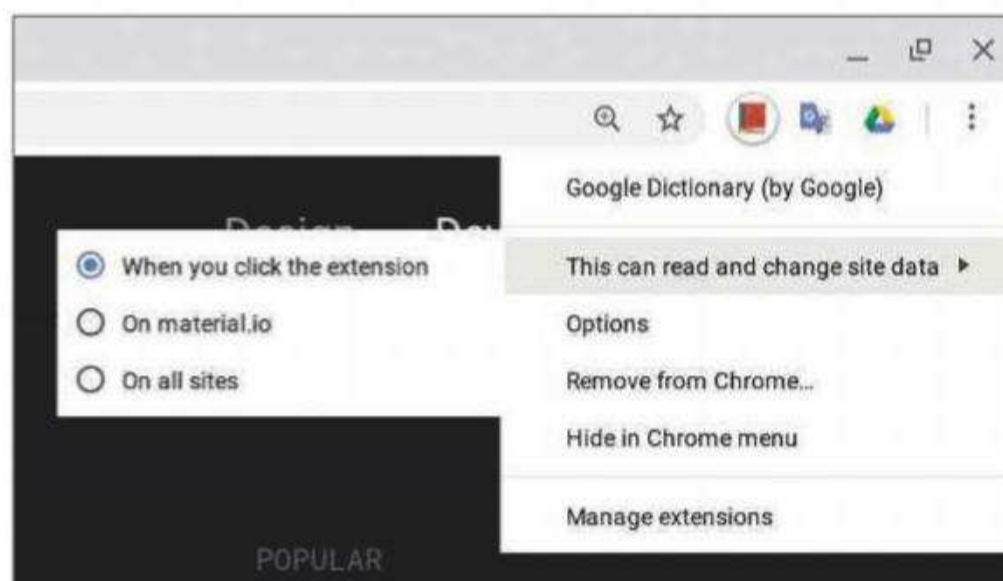
Improved extension security coming to Google

Google is clamping down on unsafe browser extensions. As we've reported before, installing a rogue extension on your computer is like leaving your front door wide open at night; it's an invitation to unscrupulous ne'er-do-wells. Even apparently trustworthy extensions can be hacked and turned against users.

That's all changing in the Chrome 70 update (bit.ly/trust461) as the company stamps out extensions that use dodgy code to conceal their true nature. According to Google, "over 70% of malicious and policy violating extensions that we block from Chrome Web Store contain obfuscated code".

Additionally, any extension that remotely hosts code or requires "powerful permissions" will be subjected to a deeper review process. You'll soon be able to restrict or permit the use of extensions on white- and blacklisted sites.

On top of that, developers are being asked to introduce two-factor authentication by 2019 to deter hackers and hijackers.



Use Privacy Badger to stop Google tracking you

Earlier this year, Privacy Badger (bit.ly/badger461) – the extension created by online privacy organisation the Electronic Frontier Foundation – released an update that prevented Facebook from tracking any link you clicked. Now, a new feature specifically targets Google's link tracking.

Google loves nosing into what you're up to online without your knowledge – hover over the URLs of your search

results and you'll probably see standard and totally non-suspect web addresses. But that's not the full story. The instant you click any link, that info is pinged

across to Google, telling them where you came from and what you're clicking. Surprisingly, you'll be 'link-tracked' in the supposedly private Google Hangouts and Docs suite, too. Privacy Badger blocks that info from reaching the search giant.



Remember what you read in 'unforgettable' font

If you've got a memory like a sieve, Sans Forgetica (sansforgetica.rmit) is the font for you. The typeface is available as a downloadable font and a Chrome extension, and was designed by scientists at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology "using the principles of cognitive psychology to help you to better remember".

To activate the font, highlight any text and click the extension icon. When you click away, the font changes. It's gappy and difficult to read – we can't imagine slogging through a Sans Forgetica novel – but that's the point: the extra effort required forces you to engage your brain and fill in the font's 'blanks', thus improving memory retention. When tested on 400 university students, Sans Forgetica helped them remember 57% of a text, compared to 50% of the same text written in Arial.

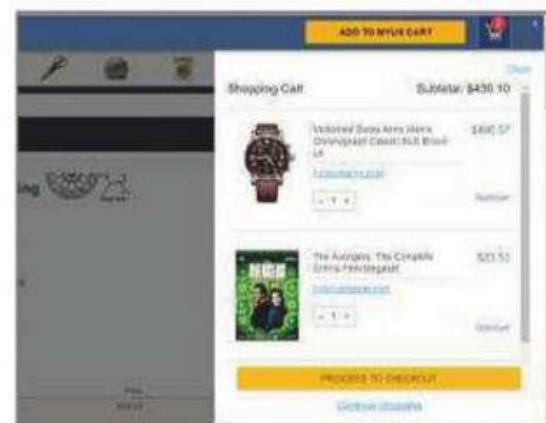


Make worldwide shipping cheaper

We may live in a globalised world, but it's still prohibitively expensive to buy US goods and get them shipped over here – sometimes the postage costs more than the item!

MyUS's new Chrome extension (bit.ly/myus461) makes it cheaper to buy from multiple American sites by posting packages to their US warehouse, where they'll combine all your items to save on shipping. Just find the items you want, hit the Add To MyUS Cart button and pay using the extension.

Make sure you check the Ts & Cs: certain sites won't deliver to forwarding addresses, while MyUS also checks items don't contravene shipping rules. If it's your first time using the service, try a cheap test buy before you splash out \$1,000 on that new graphics card.



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



FIREFOX

Keep your politics private with Election Bundle

Mozilla's new Firefox Election Bundle (bit.ly/elect461) definitely gets our vote. Fake-news fighters such as the excellent NewsGuard extension (newsguardtech.com) are gaining popularity, but responses to nefarious political ads have been muted at best.

The Election Bundle looks the same as the classic Firefox browser, but it comes pre-installed with two handy extensions. The first – ProPublica's Political Ad Collector (bit.ly/polad461) – scans Facebook's political ads and adds them to ProPublica's database, to understand how political messaging changes for different audiences and whether they're spreading misinformation and propaganda. The second is Mozilla's own Facebook Container (bit.ly/fbcon461). While the social network studies what you do online, to determine which political ads it displays, this extension helps block the site's trackers to let you "explore the web without Facebook watching, so you can keep your political opinions to yourself and your dinner companions".



Force favicons on every site

Favioli (bit.ly/favi461) promises to give websites a bit more identity, while making them easier to browse. A site's favicon – the little site-defining icon that appears on the left-hand side of a tab – makes it easy to quickly identify which site is on a specific tab. However, not all websites have them. This extension automatically replaces blank favicons with easily recognisable emoji, while letting you override existing favicons with your own icons. This basic function may seem niche, but it's a super-lightweight extension and worth running for those just-in-case moments.

Because it's an experimental project, Favioli for Firefox doesn't yet pack all the features of its Chrome counterpart (bit.ly/favchrome461). The developer has indicated on GitHub that the tool may also get a release on the Firefox for Android browser.



Bring Instagram's mobile app to your browser

Instagram is built for smartphones – for taking photos and uploading them on the go – and while it's just about possible to use the website, it's clearly an unloved anomaly. The Instagram Web (bit.ly/insta461) extension attempts to bring the snappy mobile experience to your browser. Install it, then press the icon to unleash an Insta-pop-out that apes the cool smartphone style on your browser, including a smartphone's aspect ratio and button placement. It certainly makes cruising through the latest snapshots more fun, but watch out when switching to Dark Mode because all the buttons shift out of whack. The main highlight is being able to upload photos from your desktop. Normally, you have to resort to tricking Instagram by using your browser's Developer Tools.



OTHER BROWSERS



Get Dark Mode for any website

While many popular apps and programs have fully embraced dark mode, websites are still trailing. Enter Night Eye (nighteye.app). This extension is available for just about every browser out there, and the developer has now added Edge to the line-up. Night Eye delivers near-unparalleled control over how your screen looks. Not only are you given three default options on clicking the extension's icon – Dark, Filtered and Normal – but you can also tweak the brightness, colours and other display settings. The only snag is that after three months' free use, you need to stump up £7 for the annual subscription, while lifetime use costs about £30.



See archived versions of all webpages

Wayback Everywhere (bit.ly/way461) is your ticket to internet nostalgia. Visit any website and this recently updated Opera extension automatically loads the last archived version of that page. You're also able to slip further back in time, thanks to the inclusion of the Wayback Machine toolbar at the top of the screen. The extension excludes very popular sites you're likely to visit, such as Google and Twitter, so it won't interrupt general browsing – but it also offers the option to temporarily include them if, as the name suggests, you want to go 'wayback everywhere' you go.





Best Free Apps



App of the Fortnight

TOOLS

Shortcuts

bit.ly/shortcuts461



Last month, Apple rolled out iOS 12, the latest major update to its mobile operating system. As well as the update, however, it also released some new tools and updates, including Shortcuts.

This standalone app lets you create clever shortcuts and automations, so you can carry out complex tasks with a single tap. It's based on an app called Workflow, which Apple acquired recently, and it works in a similar way to the popular If This Then That (IFTTT) tool.

You can use Apple's new app to create powerful shortcuts for a wide variety of different tasks. Want to receive a notification reminding you to buy milk when you pass a certain location on your way back from work? Want to set a toothbrush timer, calculate a tip in a restaurant or get directions home from wherever you happen to be at the time? Shortcuts lets you create all these and more. Basically, if there's a tedious task that you have to perform regularly on your iPhone or iPad, there's almost certainly a shortcut you can create to make your life easier.

To get you started, Apple includes several ready-made shortcuts that you can enable or customise to suit your needs, but you can also build your own from scratch by tapping Library, Create Shortcut. You can even turn your shortcuts into widgets, so they're never more than a swipe away. We show you how to create your own shortcut in the Mini Workshop, right.

Confusingly,

Siri Shortcuts is a separate – though related – tool that's built into iOS 12. This lets you create shortcuts for frequent iOS tasks, invoking them via a simple spoken command.

NEW



MINI WORKSHOP

Add and edit shortcuts on your iPhone or iPad

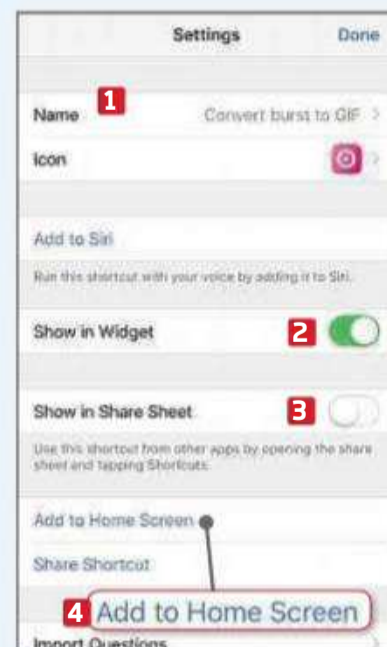
1 When you first use Shortcuts, it's a good idea to try out some of the ready-made shortcuts that come with the app. Press the Gallery icon at the bottom of the screen, **1** then scroll through the categories. Select See All **2** next to a specific category – Photography, for example – then tap a Shortcut that sounds useful, such as 'Convert burst to GIF' (for creating GIFs from sequential photos), and choose Get Shortcut.



2 The app saves your shortcuts to your Library – press the Library icon **1** to see it. Tap the three-dot menu on your shortcut button **2** to open it in the shortcut editor. You'll see that the shortcut is actually a series of separate actions strung together in a sequence. Each action can be edited, which means you can customise every aspect of the task by tapping and selecting different options.



3 Press the switch icon (top-right) for more settings. Here, you can change the shortcut's name or icon, **1** for example. Make sure 'Show in Widget' **2** is enabled and switch on 'Show in Share Sheet' **3** if you want to make the shortcut available from the Share button options. Select 'Add to Home Screen' **4** to give the shortcut its own home-screen icon. Tap Done when you're finished.





Our rating



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

NAVIGATION

Garmin Explore

bit.ly/garminandroid461
bit.ly/garminios461
 5  11

If you love the great outdoors and own a compatible Garmin device (including the Instinct GPS watch), this new companion app will enhance your hiking, biking and running activities. You can plan your adventure before you set out, plotting your route and checking the terrain ahead using downloadable maps, topographic data, aerial imagery and more. Maps can be viewed offline – useful when mobile coverage is patchy – and data is synced with your Garmin device. It's a shame UK maps aren't more detailed, though.



Our rating



LAUNCHER

Apolo Launcher

bit.ly/apolo461
 5

The Google Play store is practically bursting at the seams with free alternative launchers for your Android phone or tablet, but they often include ads or require in-app purchases to get the most from them. Apollo is different because it not only lets you restyle your device's interface completely – adding useful functions such as a 3D weather widget and smart folders that group your applications, for example – but it also doesn't ask you to cough up extra cash or wade through annoying ads. Apollo is also highly customisable, and navigating it feels snappy.



Our rating



MESSAGING

Yahoo Together

bit.ly/yahoodroid461
bit.ly/yahooios461
 5.1  10.3

Yahoo's new group-messaging app lets you organise your contacts into groups – such as 'friends', 'family', 'football buddies' and so on – and split conversations into topics, so you can follow the ones you're interested in (and mute those you're not). Shared calendars and group reminders help you and your contacts stay organised, and the app includes all the emoji and custom reactions you'd expect. Together is basically Yahoo's take on WhatsApp. It's slick and user-friendly, but whether it'll catch on in the UK remains to be seen.





Our rating



SMART ASSISTANT

Google Home

bit.ly/homedroid461
bit.ly/homeios461
 4.4  10

Google launched a raft of exciting new devices at its October event, including a new Google Home Hub and the Pixel Slate tablet (see First Look on page 10). But, in addition to all that shiny new hardware, the company also launched a number of apps, including this revamped Google Home app for iOS and Android. The app has been redesigned so you can access all your smart devices in one place – not just Google products, such as Chromecasts, but smart lighting, heating and more – rather than having to flip between apps. You can organise devices by room, create quick actions for frequent tasks and control your devices while you're away.



Our rating

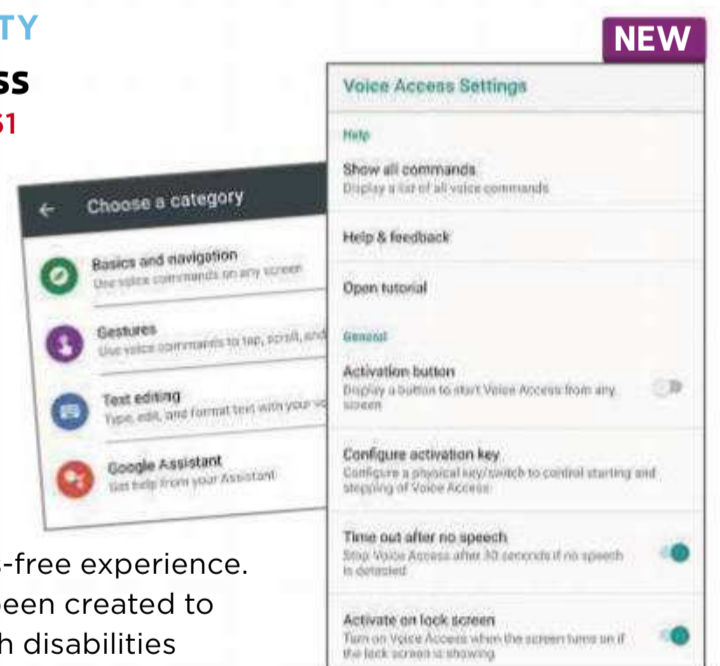


ACCESSIBILITY

Voice Access

bit.ly/voice461
 5

Google's new accessibility app is designed to make controlling your Android device an entirely hands-free experience. The app has been created to give users with disabilities a viable alternative to Android's default touchscreen controls. Once Voice Access is enabled, you can use spoken commands to perform basic navigation (such as "go back" or "go home") and gestures ("scroll down"), as well as simple dictation and text editing. You can invoke Voice Access either by using the spoken "OK Google" command, or by tapping the on-screen button. Voice Access works surprisingly well, although it's currently only available in English.



Our rating



5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

GAME

Pac-Man Ralph Breaks the Maze

bit.ly/pacdroid461

bit.ly/pacios461

Price: £6.49 (Android), £6.99 (iOS)

 4.4  10

The original *Wreck-It Ralph* movie paid homage to classic video games. Now that a sequel is on the horizon, the gaming world has returned the favour with this Ralph-themed take on Pac-Man.



Price: £2.99

 4.4  7

If you want to pass your driving-theory test with flying colours, try this useful new app, which offers official DVSA hazard perception-test clips and expert advice from the people who set the test.

GAME

Civilization VI

bit.ly/civ6ios461

Price: £22.99

 11

There are lots of strategy games available for mobile devices, but Civilization VI for iPad is the real deal – a fully fledged port of the original PC game that loses nothing in translation.



PUZZLE

KLAC

bit.ly/klacdroid461

bit.ly/klacios461

Price: 89p (Android), 99p (iOS)

 4.4  9

There are no ticking clocks in this pleasantly stress-free brain teaser – just a set of minimalist monochrome puzzles that play like a cross between dominoes and a wordsearch.



WEATHER

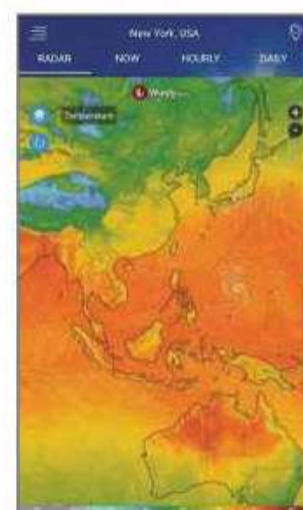
Weather Radar Pro

bit.ly/weather461

Price: £4.99

 5

Most weather apps provide you with a forecast based on meteorological data. Weather Radar Pro supplies the data itself, including real-time weather maps and weather-radar animation.



EDUCATION

The Official DVSA Hazard Perception Practice

bit.ly/dvsadroid461

bit.ly/dvsaios461



Pac-Man Ralph Breaks the Maze



KLAC



The Official DVSA Hazard Perception Practice



Civilization VI



Weather Radar Pro



Don't install...

Timer Voice Recorder

bit.ly/timer461

The ability to record sounds – such as voices, music, lectures and so on – to your mobile device can be extremely handy. But beyond the cool retro cassette-deck design and the ability to set timed recordings, it's hard to see what makes Timer Voice Recorder worth the socking great £29 price tag its developers have slapped on it. We can only hope someone put the decimal point in the wrong place.



...Install this instead

Voice Recorder

bit.ly/recorder461

 4.1

For a free app, Voice Recorder certainly packs in the extra features. You can use it to record voice notes – or just about anything else you point your device's microphone at – in MP3 or OGG format, and at a range of sample rates (8-44kHz). It includes a microphone-calibration tool and lets you make recordings in the background, even when your device's display is switched off. Better still, Voice Recorder has a clean, simple interface with straightforward controls. On the downside, you have to put up with adverts unless you pay £2.99 for the Pro version, and there's no timer function – but then it doesn't cost £29, either.





Take a Screen Break

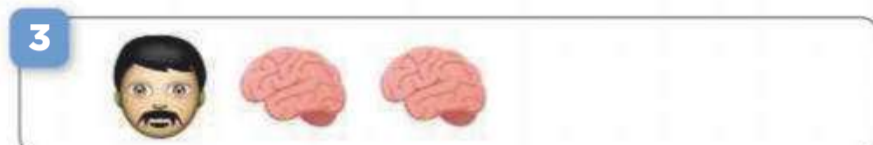
Give your eyes a rest from your browser by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you guess the 1980s comedy films from the emoji?

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

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



CAN YOU GUESS THE EIGHTIES COMEDIES FROM THE EMOJI?



GUESS THE TECHNOLOGY YEAR

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

1 Samsung is forced to recall and discontinue its Galaxy Note 7 'phablet' following reports of the device's battery overheating and exploding.



2 The most viewed video on Facebook's new live-streaming service features a woman wearing a Chewbacca mask laughing hysterically.

3 Twitter closes its Vine mobile app, which let users capture and share six-second video clips. The social network bought the service in 2012.



4 Microsoft is accused of dirty tricks when it coerces PC users into installing Windows 10 even though they declined its free-upgrade offer.

5 Apple clashes with the FBI when it refuses to unlock an iPhone 5 used by a gunman involved in the San Bernadino terrorist attack that killed 14 people.



COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 3 KitSound Car DAB adapter

KitSound's new in-car radio adapter comes with Bluetooth and a built-in microphone, letting you play music wirelessly from your phone and make safer hands-free calls. It has up to 60 preset stations that you can switch to at the touch of a button. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'car' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.kitsound.co.uk and follow @KitSoundUK on Twitter.



**WORTH
£49.99
EACH**

WIN 1 OF 4 PaintShop Pro 2019 Ultimate

The 2019 edition of PaintShop Pro Ultimate applies artificial intelligence and deep learning to deliver innovative new artistic styles. Thanks to feedback from users, there are over 50 performance improvements for faster editing and cropping. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'paintshoppro' in the subject line. For more info, visit www.paintshoppro.com and follow @CPaintShopPro on Twitter.



**WORTH
£89.99
EACH**



FAQ

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

Decentralised web

Are you worried about online companies hoarding your data? **David Crookes** looks at a new type of internet that's designed to be entirely controlled by its users

What is it?

The decentralised web – or DWeb as it's also known – is an online network that seeks to wrest power away from technology companies by giving full control to users. It aims to bypass the 'walled gardens' of gatekeepers such as Amazon, Google and Facebook, while also ensuring that user data isn't controlled or amassed by governments. By doing so, DWeb promotes openness over surveillance and allows everyone to participate equally.

Why is it important?

We have come to rely disproportionately on just a few centralised operators who maintain a tight grip on the information they take from us in return for providing their services (there's a reason why they're free to use). We have little control

over the data they collect and lock away on their large, physical servers, and we are generally powerless to prevent them from profiting from it, most often through advertising. Moving toward decentralisation would, in effect, take us back to the ethos of the original web – to a time before big companies began to dominate and seek ever tighter controls. No-one would be able to monopolise the data flowing through a decentralised web.

But how would it work?

It would entail shifting to a new version of the web – Web 3.0, as it is being dubbed – in which information would cease to be stored on central servers and instead be scattered widely across independently owned computers. As a consequence, reliance on middlemen would be cast aside since users would interact directly with each other over a peer-to-peer network and no single entity would be able to exert control. What's more, all transactions would be encrypted and accessible only to permitted people, while user details could not be sold because no web services would have possession of them.

So where would our personal details be?

Quite simply, in our own hands. One of the biggest proponents of decentralisation is Sir Tim Berners-Lee,

the inventor of the world wide web, who has launched a project called Solid (solid.mit.edu) that breaks the link between software and our personal online data.

By allowing our information to be stored on our own choice of cloud server – or in 'pods' – we'll be able to control who can access the data and when, without giving any service the opportunity to lock it down or glean unwanted benefits from it.



Sir Tim Berners-Lee is not happy with the way the web has been going

Credit: Paul Clarke

How would apps use the data?

They would have to ask for permission to use the information stored in your pod and would, in a sense, simply become a series of 'windows' that are able to use your personal data in different ways. The services you use cannot own your information because it always remains your personal property. "It allows people to look at the same data with different apps at the same time," Sir Tim wrote in a post on Medium (bit.ly/medium461). The idea is that the web could



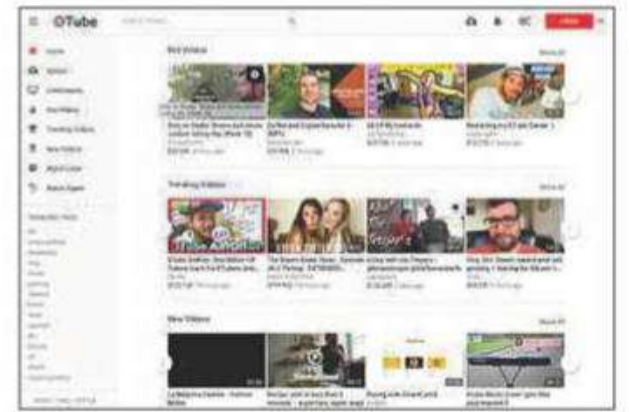
Web companies lock our data away on massive servers in dark rooms



Solid is Sir Tim's exciting new project, with a not-very-exciting website



The Beaker browser lets you check out the decentralised web today



Enjoy videos on DTube, away from the ever-watchful eye of YouTube

become, as stated on the Solid website: "a collaborative rewrite space, passing control from owners of a server to the users of that system". To pursue this, Sir Tim has founded a new company called Inrupt (www.inrupt.com) that will build on the open-source platform of Solid by creating a new ecosystem for commerce.

Is it a bit like blockchain?

Yes, to a degree. Blockchain is a decentralisation of transactions where ownership is trackable. It can be used on the DWeb to store data, record its movement and make logins less reliant on traditional usernames and passwords. You could have one single, unrecoverable password to cover every service you use – but with the attached risk that if you lose or forget that password, you'll be locked out of everything forever.

What DWeb apps are available?

There are already quite a few. You can use the Beaker browser (beakerbrowser.com) to explore the peer-to-peer web, chat on the decentralised social network Diaspora (diasporafoundation.org), watch the YouTube alternative DTube (d.tube) and share photos on Storj (storj.io). There's also the peer-to-peer marketplace app OpenBazaar

(openbazaar.org), which has no fees or restrictions and makes clear that nobody has any control over it. Each user contributes equally while retaining control of their private data, and it uses Bitcoin, Ethereum, Litecoin and other cryptocurrency.

What about my day-to-day productivity?

You could ditch Google Docs in favour of Graphite Docs (www.graphitedocs.com), and have your work, files and messages encrypted, made shareable and decentralised to ensure you retain ownership of your data (without it falling prey to advertisers). Your documents can only be viewed by checking a 12-word encryption keyphrase against the key stored on your devices, and you choose where your data is retained – perhaps on your own server or the Gaia storage network powered by Blockstack, on which Graphite Docs is built.



Graphite Docs provides a decentralised alternative to Google Docs

Will I see any difference between the web and DWeb?

The hope is that you won't, at least on the surface. The DWeb intends to be consumer-friendly and aims to achieve a seamless transition from Web 2.0 to Web 3.0. The differences will be underlying: it will be far harder for governments and companies to censor actions being carried out online, and your privacy will be better maintained. Having data decentralised also means your activities are harder to spy on. Hackers will be unable to target a specific server to grab data such as usernames and passwords. The vision is that it will be a far more open web with greater access and no censorship.

So, what's the catch?

Well, for all the positive aspects of the DWeb, there are concerns that law enforcers, governments and service providers will be unable to block sites, pull pages and remove unwanted content, thereby allowing undesirable services to flourish unhindered. Islamic State terrorists have already used Diaspora to spread extremist material, and the development team behind the site has been unable to block the hateful content. Although such concerns have been brushed away by those who claim encryption and the dark web are allowing such activities already, most people want to see tougher action rather than a system that allows illegal behaviour to go unchecked.

WHERE HAVE I SEEN DWEB BEFORE?

If you're a fan of the HBO comedy *Silicon Valley*, which has been aired on Sky Atlantic, then you'll have followed the work of the Pied Piper team with great interest. They've been seeking to create a decentralised peer-to-peer network that will run off smartphones and render controlled servers redundant – doing to the fictional company Hooli what real-life DWeb developers will be hoping to do to the likes of intermediaries such as Google.



Will it also curb our right to be forgotten?

As it stands, it will. Decentralisation results in a censorship-proof internet that makes it harder to remove sensitive material about ourselves. Since a file can be stored on multiple computers around the world, often in small chunks, it follows that it is then trickier to completely remove information. This is likely to be a concern for the EU, which has a 'right to be forgotten' law, and could be something the likes of Google seize upon to prevent moves that could reduce their power.

Wipe Your DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

COVER
FEATURE

You and your data are all over the internet. **Jane Hoskyn** explains how to delete your personal info and activity from the web so you can start 2019 with a clean slate

In real life, most of what you've done over the last 20-odd years has faded from memory (thank goodness), but the web never forgets. Your "digital footprint" never fades – it just keeps growing. Every Google search, every Amazon buy, every Facebook 'like' – the whole caboodle follows you around like some gigantic *This Is Your Life* book that the world can see and search.

That dead weight of regrettable purchases and tagged photos isn't just embarrassing, it also compromises your security. When your personal details and habits are all over the internet, you're easy pickings for hackers, snoopers and blackmailers.

Every week, new reports appear demonstrating proof that your footprint is being used against you. Facebook has suffered its worst hack ever, Twitter has been caught leaking millions of private messages and Google is fighting for its right to include dodgy old info about you in search results.

In this feature, we explain how to get your data out of harm's way and claw back some digital dignity. We'll start with the easiest strategies for covering your tracks in Google and Facebook, then move on to tougher tasks such as finding the accounts you'd forgotten even existed, and expunging them for good.

WIPE YOUR GOOGLE FOOTPRINT

See your entire Google history

Log into your Google Dashboard (google.com/dashboard) to see an unexpurgated history of your life as a Google user. It's an unsettling experience, like looking in the mirror for the first time in 20 years. Here, you'll find details of every YouTube video you've watched, every Maps location you've clicked, every Android app you've installed, every Gmail conversation you've had, every contact you've saved and much more. Click Expand All to see a summary for each service, then click 'Go To' to unfurl its full history in a new tab.

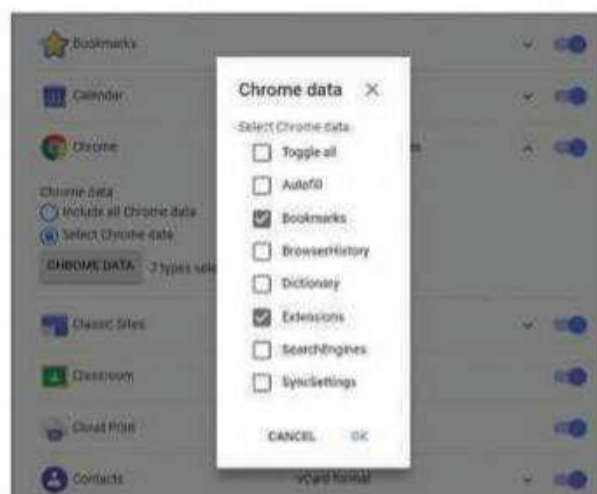
Google's Web & App Activity page is the most alarming Dashboard section of all (under 'Search activity', or go straight to google.com/myactivity). It lists every search you've conducted across your entire Google account, from Android to YouTube. This activity isn't just tracked and stored, it's put to work targeting you with ads and building projects such as Google AI (google.com/ai).



What have you been doing in your Google account for years? Dashboard reveals all

Download your Google data

Before you start obliterating chunks of your Google account, download a backup of all your settings and files. In many cases, you can use the data in a third-party program – for example, Outlook lets you import Google



Download your data from Google services before deleting it from its servers

Calendar data.

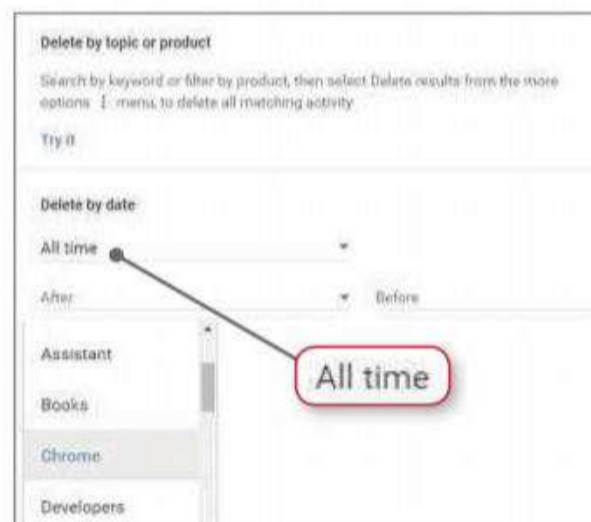
The easiest approach is to download one Google service at a time. Expand a service on Dashboard, click the three-dot menu and select 'Download data'. Alternatively, click 'Download your data' at the top of the page (or go straight to google.com/takeout), click Select None and click a service's toggle to prepare the ZIP archive.

Permanently wipe your Google activity

Google offers excellent tools for wiping your activity record, but it also tries to talk you out of using them by making you re-enter your password, tick a multitude of boxes and bat away pop-up warnings. Don't let it put you off. After all, this is *your* data.

Log into My Activity (google.com/myactivity) and choose how to delete your data. The most drastic (and satisfying) is to wipe the whole lot in one go. Click 'Delete activity by' and click Delete, leaving the 'All products' and 'All time' drop-down menus as they are.

To only erase your past from specific Google services, make a selection from the 'All products' drop-down menu (for example, Android, Chrome, Maps or Google Play Store) and click Delete.



Delete everything you've ever done from your Google history, one service at a time

For a more nuanced approach, scroll through MyActivity and blitz individual entries (such as a particular search) by selecting Delete from its three-dot menu options. You can wipe all activity that matches a keyword (for example, 'solicitor') by searching for it, clicking the dots in the search box and clicking 'Delete results'.

Delete Google+ and other Google services

Only a few Google services can be completely deleted from your account. To see them, log into google.com/account, then click 'Delete your account



If you only fully delete one service from your Google account, make it Google+

or services' and 'Delete products'. Google makes you enter your password to confirm that it's definitely you making the purge.

Our measly list of deletable products comprised Google+, Play Games, YouTube and Gmail. Click a bin icon, read through the small print detailing exactly what's about to be wiped, then tick the relevant boxes and hit Delete to pull the plug. Google+ has now been shut down following a data breach (see page 12) but it may contain personal info about you even if you don't remember using it, so bin it immediately.

Delete your entire Google account

Killing off your Google account will instantly wipe half your digital footprint, but you stand to lose a lot: every Drive file, every Gmail message and any hope of using your Android phone or tablet, which has all its settings and updates entirely governed by your Google account.

Not bothered? Then here's how to do it. Log into google.com/account, click 'Delete your account or services', then 'Delete Google Account and data'. Enter your password and let Google gather all the data you're about to obliterate. Scroll down, tick the boxes and click Delete Account. Google won't say how quickly your data is destroyed but it'll probably take at least a week.



Cut yourself loose from Google – and lose everything attached to your account

WIPE YOUR FACEBOOK FOOTPRINT



See everything Facebook knows about you

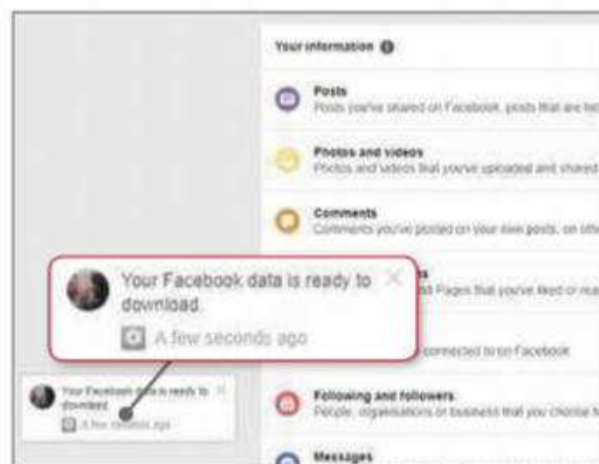
Your massive Facebook footprint of posts, photos, comments, likes, friends, groups and messages arguably opens an even bigger window into your life than your Google account. Facebook also knows very personal info such as your phone number, home address and marital status, and stores a shockingly full history of your searches, locations, login sessions and even text messages you've sent outside of Facebook.

To see this goldmine in full, log into Facebook's new Dashboard-type page (www.facebook.com/your_information) and click 'Expand all'. This opens info ranging from people who 'poked' you (remember that?) to the dates you joined various groups. Now scroll down to 'Information about you' and click 'Expand all' again. Here, you'll find a rather sinister store of info such as the "life stage" Facebook thinks you're at, a list of topics used to target you with ads and a log of your texts. You can't remove this info without deleting your account, but it's a revealing insight into the disturbing amount of intimate detail Facebook knows about you.

Download all your Facebook data

Your info on Facebook's servers is obviously valuable to hackers, but it's a personal treasure trove for you, too. It's therefore worth taking up Facebook's offer of a single ZIP file containing everything you've shared over the years – before it changes its mind.

Click 'download your information' on www.facebook.com/your_information to get started. By default, everything is selected. The archive could take hours



Download a ZIP archive of all your Facebook activity in one go



Discover how closely Facebook has been watching you from 'Access your information'

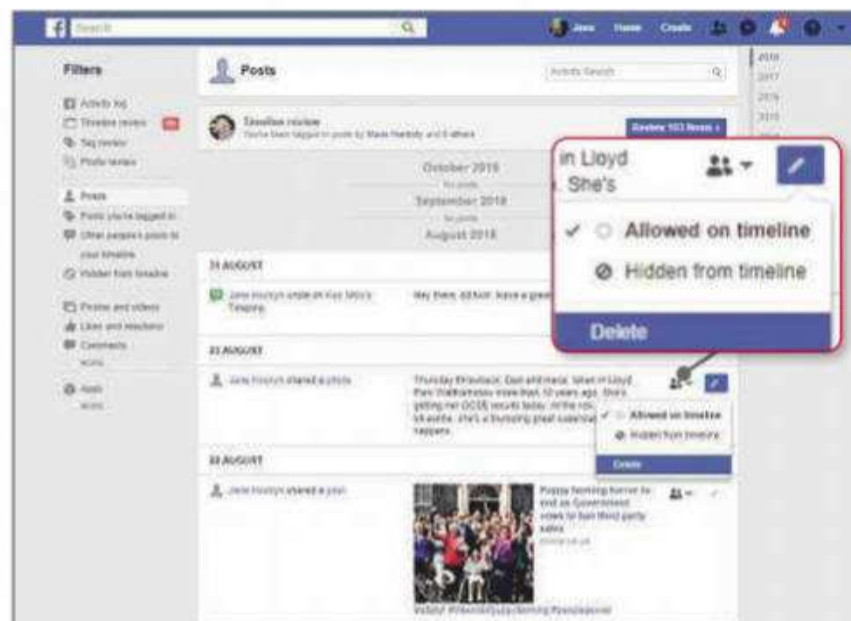
to prepare and requires many gigabytes of space, so use the tick boxes and 'Date range' tool to narrow it down. Unlike Google, Facebook doesn't put a cap on the archive's size.

A few minutes or hours later, you'll get a notification that your download is ready. Each type of data, and each photo album, is organised into its own ZIP or HTML file inside the archive.

Delete Facebook posts and albums

Downloading your Facebook data doesn't remove it from the company's servers, so once you've backed it all up, you need to start wiping. Photo albums are easy to delete one by one. Open an album, click its Settings cog then select Delete Album.

To pick off old posts, click 'Activity log' (or add '/allactivity' to the end of your Facebook URL), then click Posts. You can hide any post from your timeline or click Delete to erase it



Purge old Facebook posts by deleting or hiding them

forever. Click the links ('Likes and reactions', 'Posts you're tagged in' and so on) to remove more data bit by bit.

There's no Google-style option to wipe all your data from a particular type of Facebook activity, such as all posts, in one go. However, you can stop any 'non-friends' seeing anything you've ever posted. Go to www.facebook.com/settings, Privacy, then click Limit Past Posts. Here, you can also remove your profile from Google and other non-Facebook search engines.

Delete your Facebook account

Following the theft of nearly 30 million users' private details, there's never been a wiser time to kill off your Facebook account. Facebook would prefer you to 'deactivate' it instead, which hides your profile but doesn't remove anything from the company's servers. If you're fine with that, go to www.facebook.com/settings, click Edit next to 'Manage account' and choose 'Deactivate your account'. To properly wipe yourself off the face of Facebook, go to bit.ly/fbdelete461 and click Delete Account.



Deleting your Facebook account is quick but the data isn't deleted for 90 days

Facebook then "schedules" your account deletion for 30 days hence, and lets you change your mind in the first 14 days. After deletion, it'll take up

to 90 days to purge your data from Facebook's servers. That's a quarter of a year, so don't hold your breath!

You should also ditch Facebook-owned Instagram (www.instagram.com) if you're really determined to escape Facebook's servers. Open the Delete Your Account page (bit.ly/instadel461), then log in and follow the steps.

WIPE YOUR STREAMING & SHOPPING HISTORY

Prune your
YouTube
history

Google's tracking can make the web a nicer place (stay with us here) and YouTube is a great example. Open it in incognito mode and you'll be battered by a blizzard of chart-music videos and gaming uploads; log in, and it's moulded to fit you.

However, it's not a perfect fit. Just because you watched your sister's wedding video doesn't mean you want to watch everyone else's big-day celebrations. To wipe any irrelevances from your Watch History, go to bit.ly/ythistory461, hover to the right of a video's description and click 'X' to remove it. Next, click 'Search history' on the right and do the same for searches you don't want YouTube to use in recommendations. To wipe the lot, click 'Clear All'.

Wipe your BBC iPlayer
Watching list

Any programmes you open in the BBC iPlayer – even the ones you gave up on after a couple of minutes – are automatically added to your Watching list (bit.ly/iplayer461) and used to shape Recommended For You (bit.ly/bbcrc461).

To purge any two-minute wonders, open your Watching list and click Remove under a thumbnail, then Remove again. Do the same for your Added list which, unlike Watching, includes content that's no longer available to watch. You can only edit these lists on the iPlayer site, and not in the apps for Android, iOS and smart TV.



Return to Year Zero in YouTube by wiping everything you've watched and searched for

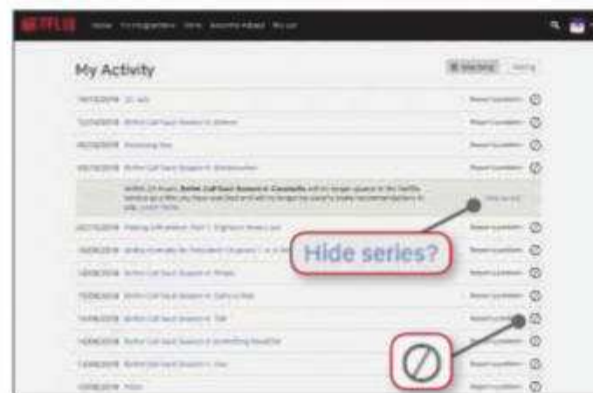


Clear your Netflix activity

Every show you've opened in Netflix stays in your Continue Watching list until you remove it, but the controls are well hidden. Here's a shortcut: bit.ly/netflix461.

In the mobile app, tap the menu, then your avatar and select Account, and choose 'Viewing activity'. Click an episode's crossed-out circle icon to remove it. To remove every episode of a show, click 'Hide series?'.

Netflix still stores and uses data on shows you've removed, claiming its algorithms are clever enough to work out what you've disliked (bit.ly/netflix461). The only way to wipe the slate clean completely is to remove your current profile. Go to bit.ly/manage461, click the pencil icon over your avatar,



It's easy to edit your Netflix viewing activity, but the data may still be used

click Delete Profile and start afresh with a new profile.

Like the Hotel California, you can never entirely escape Netflix. The best you can do is cancel your membership using the button on your Account page. "It is our standard practice to automatically delete Netflix accounts that remain cancelled for more than 10 months," says Netflix Help (bit.ly/cancel461), meaninglessly. Netflix has been "blacklisted" for being impossible to leave (more about this on page 44).

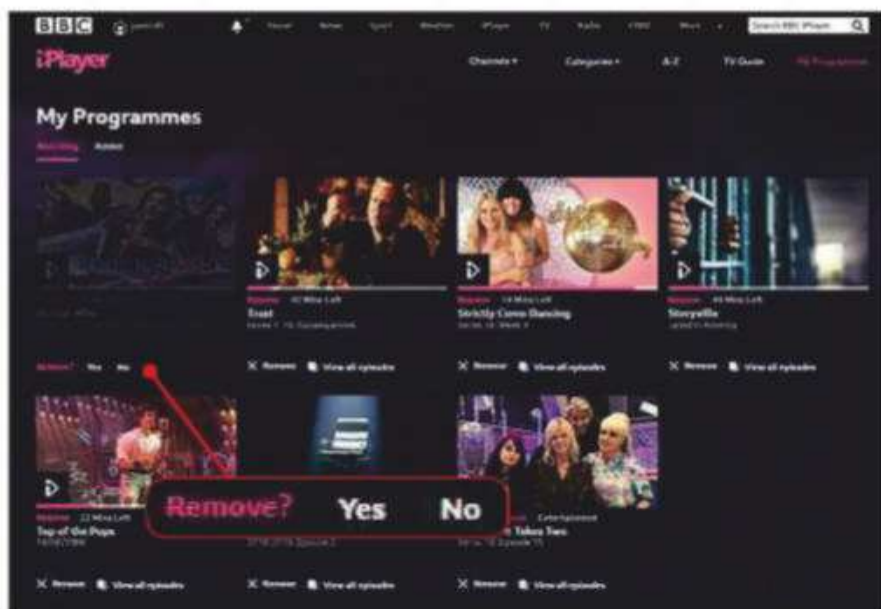
Hide your purchases from
Amazon

Amazon's shopping recommendations are pushy ('Buy it again'); embarrassing (you can buy anything on Amazon, and not everything is welcome on your homepage) and they ruin Christmas (if you're shopping for surprise gifts).

You can't clear your purchase history unless you delete your whole account, which you have to request (bit.ly/amaz461). However, you can stop items littering your homepage. Hover over Your Account, select Your Recommendations and click Improve Your Recommendations. Tick 'Don't use for recommendations' to stop Amazon badgering you to buy similar things.

If you're an Amazon Prime Video member, click 'Videos you've watched' on the left and go through the list excluding shows from your viewing recommendations. Now, click Your Browsing History (see screenshot, below) to clear Amazon's store of every item you've ever viewed. Click the arrow next to 'Manage history', then click 'Remove all items'.

To stop Amazon tracking your clicks in future, click 'Turn Browsing History on/off'.



Weed out accidental viewings from your BBC iPlayer Watching list



Tell Amazon what you don't want to see again (and again) on your homepage

WIPE OLD & FORGOTTEN ONLINE ACCOUNTS

Find forgotten accounts

Sites you abandoned years ago may still have your name, address, login details and credit card number – and they’ve almost certainly shared them with other companies. When those companies get hacked, your data is up for grabs.

To find out how many times that’s happened, type your email address into www.haveibeenpwned.com. Now find and close those leaky accounts. Search your email archive for phrases such as “confirm email” (with quote marks) and ‘username’ to find sign-up emails going back years. Also, try typing your usernames into KnowEm (knowem.com). The greyed-out accounts are sites where your username is in use –



Type old usernames into KnowEm to find sites you joined and then forgot

possibly by you.

If you go to the site and find your email address matches the username, wipe and delete the account.

Delete your old accounts

To find out how easily (or not) you can delete old accounts, browse the colour-coded lists of apps and sites at AccountKiller (www.accountkiller.com). Whitelisted services – such as eBay, WhatsApp, Dropbox and our old friends Google and Facebook – are easy to delete. Netflix is blacklisted for letting you wipe your profile but not actually leave, and the same goes for Etsy and WordPress (bit.ly/blacklist461). Some services, such as Groupon and Skype, are “greylisted” because leaving is a headache but it can be done.

AccountKiller offers instructions for deleting these accounts, but its search facility doesn’t currently work. You can try the ‘site:’ trick in Google (for example ‘microsoft site:www.accountkiller.com’ led us to AccountKiller’s instructions for deleting Office: bit.ly/office461), or get instructions from Just Delete Me (justdelete.me) instead. This open-source site only covers a few dozen

Netflix: Contact customer services. Even then they may not delete your account



The Just Delete Me extension reveals instantly how easy an account is to close

services compared with AccountKiller’s hundreds, but it’s easier to understand and navigate.

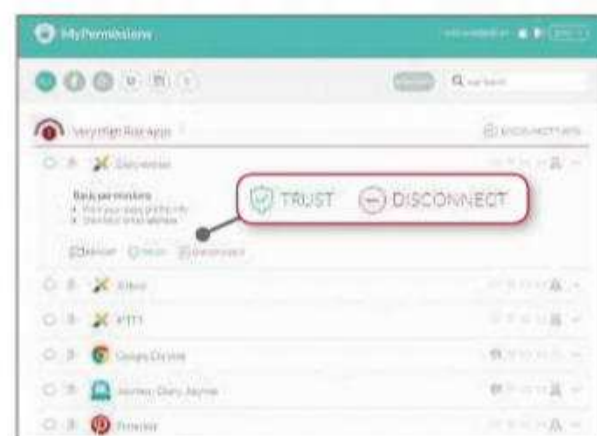
There’s also a Just Delete Me Chrome extension (bit.ly/just461), which displays a dot above a site to show how hard it is to leave: green (easy), red (hard), yellow (headache) or black (not a chance). Hover over the dot for a summary (see the screenshot, above), and click it to open the service’s account page.

Stop old accounts spying on you

If you can’t delete an account, wipe it and deactivate it instead. Even then, it may still be connected to accounts you use every day, tracking everything you do in them. To see all accounts connected to your Google account, go to google.com/account, click ‘Apps with account access’ and click Manage Apps. Click an app to see what info it’s tracking, then click Remove Access.

MyPermissions (web.mypermissions.com) automatically displays every service you’re signed into, and shows how they’re connected to your Google, Facebook, Dropbox and other accounts. They’re sorted according to the extent of permissions they demand, from Low Risk (Adobe, Castbox) to Very High Risk (Airbnb, IFTTT, Pinterest). Click Disconnect to cut the cord.

There’s also a MyPermissions app for Android and iOS (mypermissions.com), but you have to sign into your connected accounts individually to see which apps can access them.



Cut off forgotten accounts you’re connected to using MyPermissions

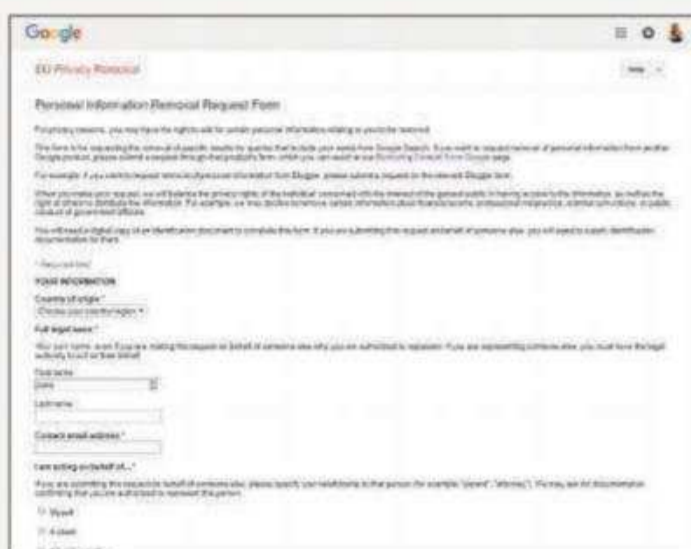
HOW GDPR SAVED THE RIGHT TO BE FORGOTTEN

The General Data Protection Regulation forces companies to tell you what data they’re tracking and why, then lets you opt out – which can only be a good thing. Better still, GDPR enshrines what the EU delightfully calls the ‘right to erasure’ (bit.ly/erasure461), better known as the right to be forgotten.

You can now apply to have old and inaccurate info about you removed from Google’s search results (bit.ly/remove461), as well as from Google products such as Blogger, Google Ads or Image Search (bit.ly/content461). Microsoft (and Bing), Facebook, Yahoo and the BBC explain their own content-removal request procedures in their Help pages.

But Google’s not happy about this. It argues that the right to be forgotten will be abused by corrupt governments, tax-dodging companies, wealthy and powerful bullies, and other people in the habit of bending laws to suit themselves (bit.ly/right461). It has a point – the right to be forgotten runs contrary to the public’s right to know.

Meanwhile, tools used by us normal folk for wiping data have been killed off by GDPR. For example, the automated spam-finding tool Unroll.me no longer works in the UK and Europe, thanks to heavy-handed privacy laws. Whether Brexit will change all this remains to be seen.

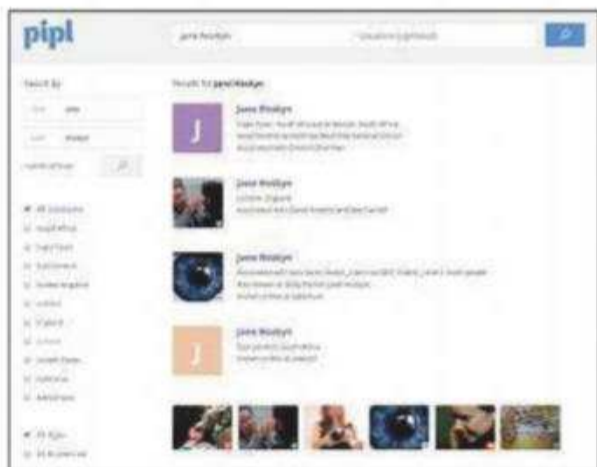


Wipe your details from directories

To find what's left of your digital footprint after you've wiped and deleted your accounts, search for your name on Yasni (www.yasni.co.uk) and Pipl (www.pipl.com). These free tools scour the web for traces of you, including old forum posts, blogs, photos, videos and social profiles, as well as mentions of your name in public records, news stories and advertising databases.

Getting your info removed may prove tricky, despite the 'right to be forgotten' being enshrined in law (see box on page 44), and you might have to contact the site's administrator. Search for the site's Whois entry (www.whois.net) if you can't find contact details on the site and use the Removal Form at UK Datahouse (ukdatahouse.com) to wipe your details from some marketing database. Another option is UnlistAssist (www.unlistassist.com), which has opt-out instructions for international directories.

You can pay a service to get you out of all directories, but it's not cheap. DeleteMe (joindeleteme.com) costs from \$129 (£98) per year to remove you from all services, then keep tabs to ensure your details are never collected and shared again. ■



Search for your name on Pipl to see how far and wide your footprint spreads

10 STEPS TO MINIMISE YOUR FUTURE FOOTPRINT

1 Use your browser's stealth mode (Chrome Incognito, Firefox Private Window) to avoid your actions being added to your footprint.

2 Throw trackers off your tail with free tracker-blockers Disconnect (disconnect.me) and Ghostery (www.ghostery.com).

3 Use a VPN such as NordVPN (bit.ly/nordvpn458) or proxy tool to spoof your location and hide your activity.

4 Ditch your browser and use Tor (www.torproject.org) instead. This 'onion network' bounces your activity around the world, making it impossible for anyone to track you.

5 Use a private search engine that never stores your searches, such as the brilliant DuckDuckGo (duckduckgo.com). The DuckDuckGo app lets you browse in complete privacy on your Android and Apple device (duckduckgo.com/app).



6 Block Google from tracking and storing your voice and audio activity, and from using your info to tailor ads, by using the Privacy Checkup (bit.ly/checkup461).



7 Switch off Web & App Activity in your Google account (google.com/myactivity).

8 Stop Chrome and Android saving your passwords to your Google account. Go to passwords.google.com and click the toggle off. You can also delete stored passwords from here.



9 Stop people tagging you on Facebook. Go to facebook.com/settings, 'Timeline and tagging', and lock down all the settings to 'Only me'.

10 Set up a junk email address for newsletter sign-ups. If they want a phone number, get a spoof from bit.ly/fake461.

NEXT ISSUE**on sale Wednesday 14 November 2018**

What You Must STOP DOING ONLINE

The careless web mistakes you don't realise you're making – and how to avoid them

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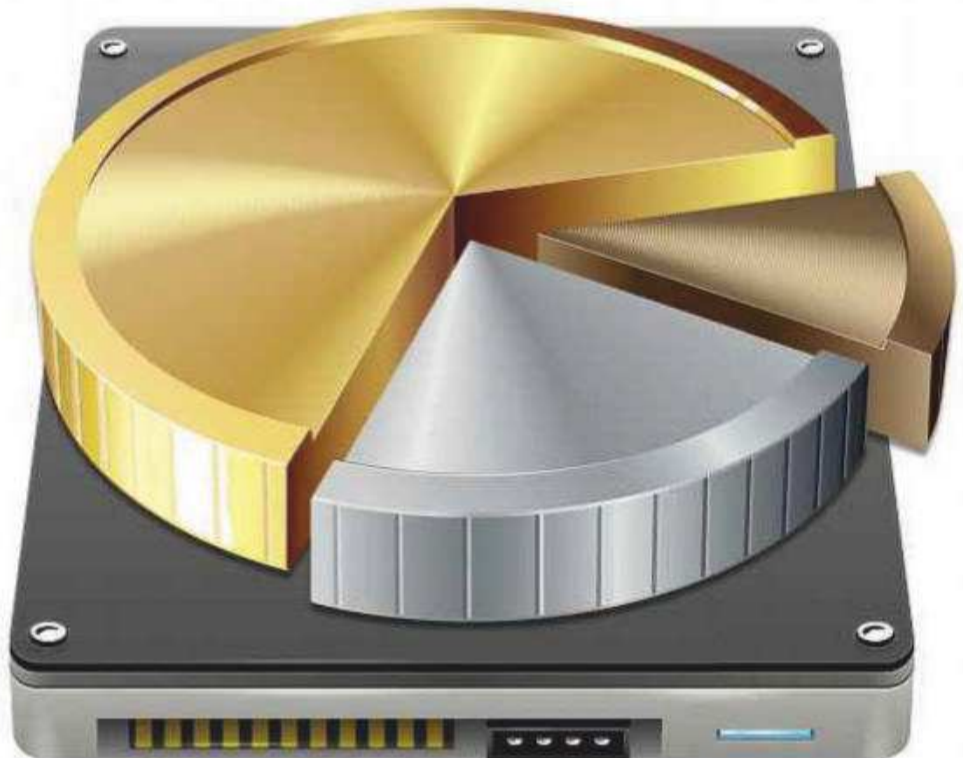
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Best free partition-management software

Disk Management is Windows' built-in tool for manipulating partitions on your hard drive, but the program has hardly changed since the days of Windows XP. **Andy Shaw** tests five alternatives to see how they compare



Macrorit Partition Expert Free | bit.ly/macro461 | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

What we liked:

Partitioning is a way of splitting a large hard drive into smaller sections, each with its own drive letter.

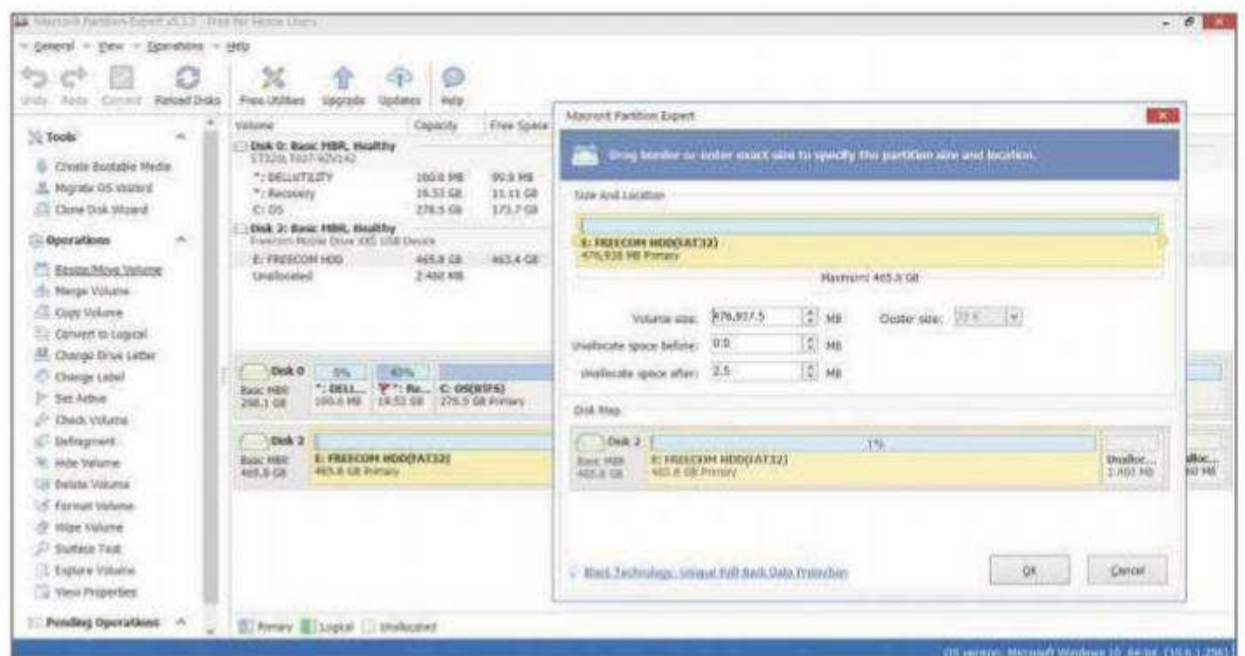
This means you can install Windows on one partition and keep your files in another,

so the two will never clash. New PCs often have a small partition containing a backup of the operating system, which you can restore in an emergency.

If you want to manipulate partitions on your hard drive, you need partition-management software. Our favourite is Macrorit Partition Expert Free, which is available both as a standard installable version and a portable edition.

From the moment the software starts, you can see that it's crammed with useful tools. Options at the top of the side menu let you create bootable USB drives, migrate your operating system to a new drive (ideal if you want to upgrade to an SSD, for example) and create a clone of an existing drive. A simple wizard helps you configure these tools, many of which are paid-for extras in the other programs we've reviewed here.

Further down the menu are the core partition tools. Here, you'll find everything you need to resize, split and merge partitions to your heart's content.



Tools open in their own windows, and there are some nice touches, such as the option to click and drag a partition to adjust its size, so you can perform actions quickly by eye, rather than having to work out the numbers.

How it can be improved:

One of VirusTotal's 60 scans flagged up warnings for both the portable and installable versions of the software, but the others deemed them safe, as did the Norton security software running on our PC. This makes us suspect a false positive, but if you'd rather not take the risk, try our Silver

Award-winner instead, which received a 100% clean bill of health.

OUR VERDICT

Partition Expert is a full-featured free program that doesn't hold too much back for the paid-for version. Its interface is clean and easy to use, and while it's not as dynamic as some of the others we've reviewed here, it's easy to configure and use. It provides many more tools and options than the basic Windows Disk Management software.

Aomei Partition Assistant Standard |

bit.ly/aomei461 | ★★★★★☆

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

WebUser
SILVER
AWARD

What we liked:

If the single red flag in VirusTotal has put you off Macrorit's software, you may prefer to try Aomei Partition Assistant Standard instead, because it passed every security test.

The interface is busy but reasonably clear for a free program, although many of the options listed are available only in the paid-for version. These are clearly indicated with a Pro icon.

Partitions are presented clearly on the screen but you can't manipulate them from the main program window. If you choose an option such as resizing, another window opens with a visual representation of the drive, which you can manipulate by dragging the far end of a partition to the left, for example, to create room for another one.

Other available tools have more basic controls, such as simple text boxes for entering how much space to allocate from one partition to another, which is less dynamic but more accurate than a slider.



How it can be improved:

The screen is littered with tools that aren't available in the free version. Although the labelling is clear, it would be simpler if they were kept out of the way, rather than scattered among the other non-paid-for options.

OUR VERDICT

If you don't mind the constant reminders that you're using a cut-down version of Aomei's paid-for software, this tool is a significant step up from Windows Disk Management. It's much easier to use and has a few extra tools, too.

Paragon Hard Disk Manager for Windows |

bit.ly/para461 | ★★★★★☆

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

WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD

What we liked:

Hard Disk Manager groups a handful of Paragon's older programs, including Partition Manager and Backup & Recovery tools, into a single interface. The

download was certified clean by all the scanning tools at VirusTotal.

You have to hand over your email address to activate the free version of the software, and not everything works. In fact, when we first tried it, we thought it had been so stripped back that it was unusable, because the only active icon on Partition Manager's interface was the 'Undelete partitions' tool. However, once we worked out that we needed to click the graphical representation of a partition to access its features, the options opened up significantly, with tools to resize, delete, format, rename and perform all the basics.

How it can be improved

We're bemused by Hard Disk Manager's interface, but perhaps it makes more



sense if you've upgraded to the paid-for version or you want to tie both backup and partition options into a single tool. However, too many of the key features are locked, and many of those that aren't are difficult to find.

OUR VERDICT

Paragon's interface looks as if it should be easier to use than the basic Windows tool, but it's strangely obtuse, with most of the tools hidden in submenus. If you're willing to spend time working it out, you'll find that it covers the basics with greater aplomb than Windows' tool, but it takes some exploring.

BEST OF THE REST

EaseUS Partition Master Free

bit.ly/easeus461

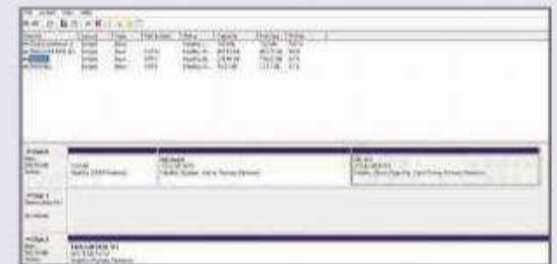
EaseUS Partition Master Free has lots of buttons and menu options but keeps them neatly arranged around the edge of the screen. Unfortunately, some of them (such as the 'Migrate OS to SSD/HDD' button) are just glorified adverts for the paid-for version's extra tools, so they're not particularly useful. It also tries to install other EaseUS software when you run it.



Windows Disk Management

bit.ly/wdm461

The basic Windows tool is exactly that: basic. However, if all you want to do is create and remove partitions, it may be sufficient, and saves you having to download extra software. If you're not planning to do a lot of work on your partitions, this is probably all you need, but enthusiastic PC tweekers who require more versatile tools should look to our award winners instead.



MiniTool Partition Wizard Free

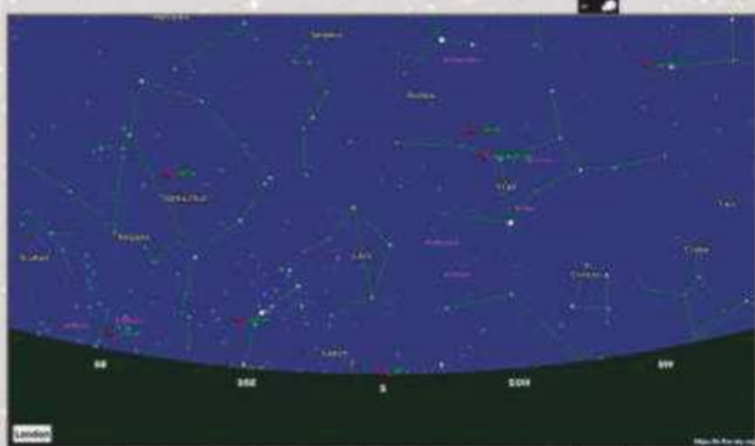
bit.ly/mini461

Although Norton declared this software to be safe as we were downloading it, on installation it flagged up a potential security problem. Four services on VirusTotal, including respected ESET and Microsoft, flagged up problems with potentially unwanted programs. They could be false positives but we don't think the software is worth the risk.



Explore space from your PC and phone

Fancy a free journey to the stars? Then join armchair astronaut **Steve Clark** as he explains how to voyage to the final frontier without leaving your home



Find out what's twinkling in the night's sky using In the Sky's satellite map

nearby comets and asteroids, all the major satellites circling earth and the solar system's downgraded former 'ninth planet' Pluto.

Star Walk 2 (bit.ly/starwalk461) for Android, iOS and Windows 10 is the

cosmic companion to Solar Walk Lite. Download this ad-supported astronomy app to your phone, then point and move the camera across the sky to identify constellations, clusters and craft. It can even notify you of upcoming lunar events.

For a more traditional planetarium experience, try The Planets (theplanets.org), which is bursting with facts about Earth and its seven planetary neighbours. You can also view an impressive 3D solar system.

For a change of pace, have a go at cultivating your own planet with TerraGenesis for Android (bit.ly/terra461) and iOS (bit.ly/terraios461). Based on data from NASA, this app sets you the task of colonising real and fictional planets, and creating and managing complex biospheres.

PlanetMaker (planetmaker.wthr.us) and the NSTMF Lab (bit.ly/g:av461)

THE STARS

The internet has made it easy to lose yourself in the howling abyss of space, thanks to sites such as In The Sky (in-the-sky.org), which offers a wonderful primer on planets, comets and how best to see specific stars. The clever maps are the main draw, though, including the customisable Planetarium (bit.ly/skymap461) and the fascinating live-satellite map (bit.ly/satmap461).

If you want to see what the sky looked like when you were born, set your coordinates for Sky Map Online (skymaponline.net), which shows the position of the stars at any moment between the years 1900 and 2100. Meanwhile, astrologically inclined stargazers can see which sign they were *really* born under (taking into account an astronomical phenomenon known as precession) at bit.ly/astro461.

THE PLANETS

To get more familiar with our solar system, use the free Solar Walk Lite app for Android (bit.ly/solar461) and iOS (bit.ly/solarios461), a smartphone planetarium that focuses on the eight planets that orbit our sun. The app even charts clusters of



Star Walk 2 makes stargazing point-and-shoot simple using your phone

are Chrome browser 'experiments' that let you try playing God, while learning about the physics behind space's gravitational pull.

THE UNIVERSE

It's one of the few facts missing from Monty Python's 'Galaxy Song': the universe is almost 14 billion years old. And while much of that time was filled with dead space and silence, BBC Ideas has crammed its entire history into a four-minute video (bit.ly/unibbc461). The result is a child-friendly look at the universe, with enough engaging facts and statistics to keep adults informed and entertained, too. If that leaves you wanting more, head to the incomparable Space.com to watch an eight-part documentary charting the universe from its origins to its inevitable end (bit.ly/origin461).

NASA's timeline (bit.ly/time461) may seem like a dry infographic in comparison – but we urge you to look a little deeper. Rather than simply plotting the universe's 14 billion-year course, this illustration was created using images from the European Space Agency's Planck mission, allowing them to make "the most precise map ever of the oldest light from our universe, the cosmic microwave background, harking back to less than 400,000 years after the Big Bang".

Meanwhile, the UN's Office for Outer Space Affairs details our



The BBC Ideas site explores the entire history of the universe in four minutes

modern forays into space, starting with the USSR's launch of Sputnik in 1957 (bit.ly/untime461).

SPACE SIMULATION

Space Engine (spaceengine.org) is as close to real space travel as you're likely to get on your computer. Inside this Windows program, developed by Russian astronomer and programmer Vladimir Romanyuk, is a massive universe that realistically blends scientific fact with algorithmically generated fiction. Click an interstellar object near or far and watch the stars scream by as if you were flying at warp speed. When you arrive at your destination, you can land on the star or planet to explore the terrain.

As well as travelling through space, users are encouraged to create their own planets in the editor. Although the app emphasises realism – with copious statistics for every planet, and a mode of travel that's based on the Einstein-inspired Alcubierre warp drive – Space Engine is an accessible ride through the cosmos. As you might expect, however, it's a big download at 1GB in size.



Travel across the cosmos with the amazingly realistic Space Engine

Celestia (bit.ly/cele461) is another simulation tool that renders the known universe (including satellites currently whizzing above our heads). As a consequence, it's smaller than Space Engine but also more accurate, which makes it the go-to educational program for NASA and ESA. Tour-guide mode lets you jump directly to some of the most popular destinations, including Jupiter and Alpha Centauri, as it serves up stories behind the celestial bodies. You can also travel to any point in time to watch fairly accurate planetary orbits and see the universe's evolution.

We also recommend the Chrome-based browser simulator 100,000 Stars (bit.ly/stars461), which includes an impressive guided tour of the Milky Way.

SEEING INTO SPACE

If exploring a simulated universe has you yearning for the real thing, visit National Geographic's Hubble hub



This is just one of the astounding shots taken by the Hubble Space Telescope

(bit.ly/hub461), where you'll find 11 of the best photos taken by the Hubble telescope since it launched in 1990. Highlights include the Eagle Nebula's billowing gas pillars and two spiralling galaxies seemingly dancing together across the void. The images are so stunningly detailed it's hard to believe they're not the fantastical renderings in a sci-fi comic.

For more Hubble fun, try NASA's official site (hubblesite.org), where you can check the current status of the world's most famous telescope (last time we checked, it was in 'safe mode' and undergoing repair). News and blogs vie for your attention alongside education tools and the monthly Tonight's Sky – the ideal stargazing starter site. Certain sections of the site look as if they were brought online when the telescope first launched, although the images section more than makes up for that.

With its advanced digital cameras, NASA claims, the Hubble Space Telescope "has seen stars being born" and "seen stars die. It has seen galaxies

that are trillions of miles away" and "seen comet pieces crash into the gases above Jupiter" (bit.ly/hubtel461). Of the sights, the Lagoon Nebula collection is easily one of the most impressive – and is accompanied by a collection of astro-artistic impressions.

EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE

The question of whether or not we're alone in a universe of 100 billion galaxies continues to haunt us. The organisation that's perhaps doing the most to answer that question is the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute (SETI, www.seti.org), whose site is an excellent resource for the latest news. If alien life is ever found, you can expect to see the news here long before the 'We Are Not Alone' headlines are splashed across tabloids worldwide. The group also runs a series of outreach programmes encouraging youngsters to get involved in the search. If they ever do find intelligent life out there, fingers crossed they're more ET than Xenomorph. ■



If anyone's going to reveal the existence of intelligent alien life, it's probably SETI

A SOCIAL MEDIA SPACE...

Social media is great for discussing and sharing celestial content – with everything from 'Life on Mars' conspiracies to the European Space Agency's Instagram account (bit.ly/euro461), a love letter not just to the stars but to the 'heavenly bodies' working behind the scenes. Our own Space Agency (bit.ly/sagov461) and the International Space Station (bit.ly/iss461) are worth following on Twitter, while on YouTube, you can subscribe to NASA (bit.ly/nasatv461) for live-streams of Earth as seen from orbit. The SciShow Space (bit.ly/scishow461) and Science & Futurism with Isaac Arthur (bit.ly/isaac461) delve a little deeper with full-length space-age documentaries.



scishow461) and Science & Futurism with Isaac Arthur (bit.ly/isaac461) delve a little deeper with full-length space-age documentaries.

Spot the fakes online



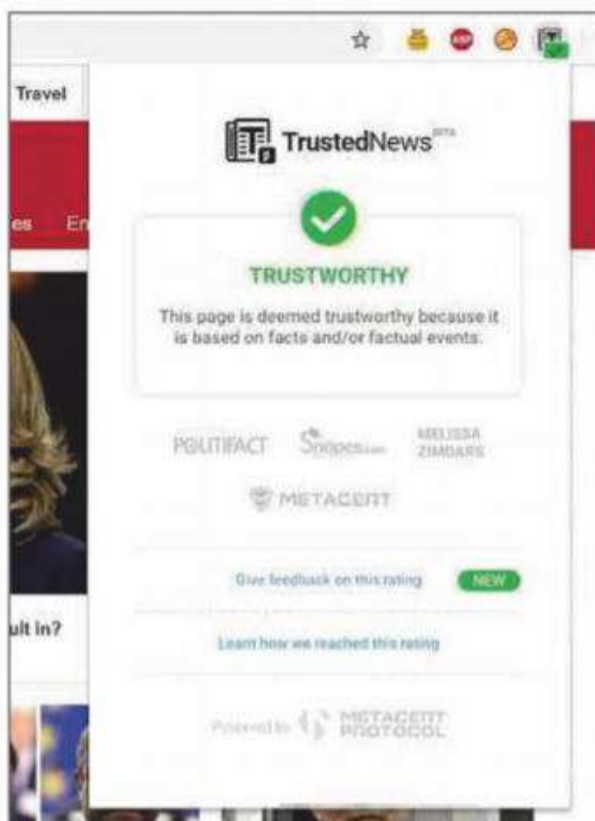
Wayne Williams explains how to combat the recent rise in 'fake' content on the web by identifying things that aren't what they seem



Identify fake news stories

US President Donald Trump calls out pretty much every unflattering story about him or his administration as 'fake news', but the problem of fabricated or deliberately misleading news stories is very real. If you spend any time on Facebook or Twitter, you'll no doubt have encountered plenty of dodgy headlines and dubious stories.

Eyeo's TrustedNews add-on for Google Chrome (bit.ly/trustn461) colour-codes the trustworthiness of any news site you visit, so you can see whether it's reputable or not. Install the add-on, browse to a site and check the icon in Chrome. If the site is fully trustworthy, it will be marked green.



It can be difficult to spot trustworthy news stories but this add-on can help

A blue smiley icon denotes that the site is satirical, and not intended to be taken seriously. There are icons for political bias, clickbait, malicious content and more. You can click the icon to find out more about how and why this conclusion was reached.



Don't get tricked by fake websites

You've probably heard of phishing. This is where someone tries to trick you into visiting a fake version of an existing site, such as PayPal. You're persuaded to log in, and your username and password are then captured, allowing the fraudster to gain access to your account on the real site. To avoid this, never click the links to a site contained in an email, and use an anti-phishing add-on, such as Windows Defender Browser Protection for Chrome (bit.ly/windef461).

Most decent antivirus software will also protect you against phishing threats, as will your browser itself.



You should use your common sense to avoid phishing scams, but both your antivirus software and your browser can help spot phishy links



Spot fake product reviews

People often rely on product reviews to see whether an item is worth spending money on. Unfortunately, it's very hard to know if a review is genuine. Sites such as Amazon will flag up if a reviewer actually bought the product they've written about, but there's no way of knowing if they have ulterior motives for posting a positive opinion, such as being paid to do so.

Fakespot (www.fakespot.com) analyses all the reviews for a product, service or place, and presents you with an overall rating and an overview that tells you how much deception, if any, was detected. ReviewMeta (reviewmeta.com) is even more thorough and will sometimes find problems with reviews that Fakespot trusts. It flags up first-time and potentially paid-for reviews, and singles out the most and least trusted writeups. It also cleverly identifies reviews from people who



ReviewMeta reviews the reviewers, to ensure you're reading the best opinions



Snopes reveals fake photos and also flags real photos with fake backstories



Check whether a social-media account is boosted by fake and paid-for followers

consistently rate products highly, and are therefore considered easy to please.



Avoid installing fake mobile apps

Installing a fake or malicious app can wreak havoc on your smartphone and compromise your personal data. To avoid this, stick to your device's official app store, such as Google Play and the Apple App Store, which have systems in place to spot and remove suspicious downloads and are safer than third-party stores.

Check the app description to see how well written it is, and read the bad reviews as these often give a good idea of its true quality. Also check to see how many installs an app has to date and what other apps the developer has created: are there lots of apps on a very similar theme or the same names among the positive reviewers? Check the developer's website too, if it has one.

If you spot a fake app, be sure to report it to the app store so action can be taken, preventing other less careful phone owners from falling into the trap.



Detect fake photos

The web is awash with fake photos. Some will have been created for legitimate purposes (such as a news story) but

then used out of context to subvert the narrative. Others might have been created for comedy or satire, or for malicious reasons.

The TinEye Reverse Image Search (www.tineye.com) can identify matching photos on the web, which may include the versions before they were altered, or the original source. Snopes is also very helpful for identifying so-called fauxtography (bit.ly/snopes461).

Bad Photoshopping often leaves behind clues, such as impossible shadows, weird lighting effects and warping. Zooming into a photo will often reveal imperfections you might otherwise have missed. The distortion created by JPEG compression can also be a giveaway, and may be different (more or less noticeable) in the suspect area of the image.



Spot fake social-media accounts

If you have a lot of followers on social-networking services such as Twitter and Instagram, there's a good chance that some will be fake. Spotting which ones aren't real requires a little investigation. Accounts that don't post original content, but only like, retweet or share posts, will probably be fake. You should be similarly suspicious of any account

that has a lot of followers, but few engagements (likes and comments) or gets far too many likes, too quickly. Also, watch out for accounts that follow the maximum people allowed (7,500 on Instagram).

If you suspect someone has been buying followers, you can check their account for sudden spikes using Social Blade (socialblade.com).

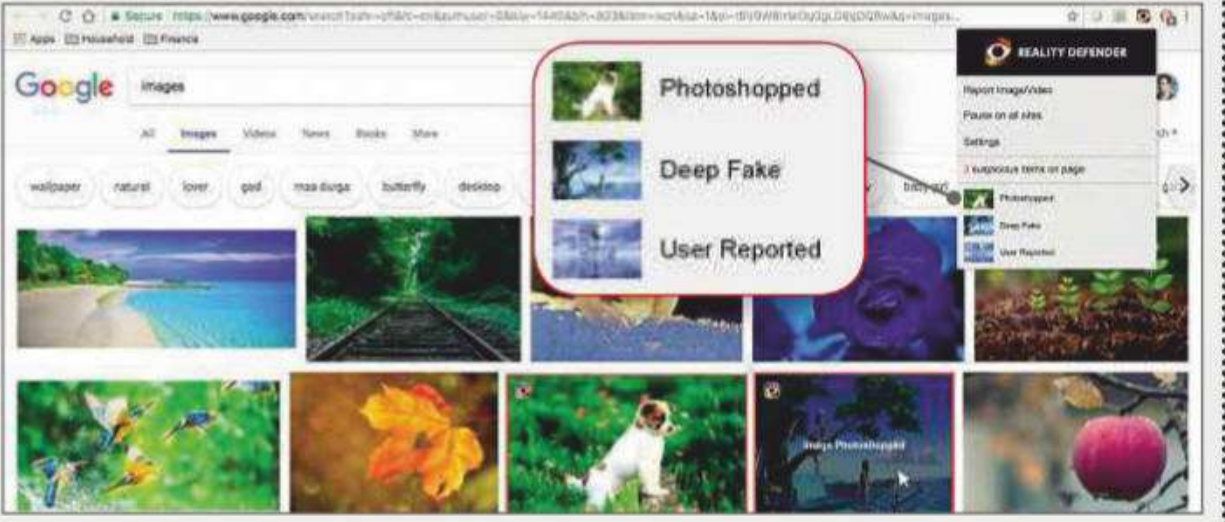


How to spot counterfeit products on eBay and Amazon

Earlier in the year, a US government agency found that a staggering 42% of goods sold on major online stores by third-party sellers (such as products on Amazon that aren't sold by Amazon itself) were fake. While Amazon and eBay say they do their best to remove counterfeit products, they remain a significant problem. Avoiding products that are priced much lower than you'd expect is one way to make sure you're not buying a fake, but not all counterfeits are cheap. If the product you receive doesn't match the image that accompanies a listing, or it isn't the same as one found in a shop, contact Amazon or eBay and they can investigate and arrange a full refund. ■

A FUTURE WAY TO SPOT FAKE VIDEOS

It's already difficult to identify fake videos and it's only going to get harder as the technology used to create them gets more sophisticated. Google engineer Supasorn Suwajanakorn is working on a 'Reality Defender' app with the AI Foundation, which will run in your browser and identify Photoshopped images, fake videos and user-reported content. It's still early days for the project, but you can find out more at bit.ly/resp461.





Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Try new features in Vivaldi 2.0

The Vivaldi browser has recently been updated with clever new tools and features. Here's what you need to know

Vivaldi: vivaldi.com | 20 mins | Windows 7, 8, 10

If you're not keen on the big-name browsers – Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge and Opera – there are plenty of alternatives available. However, few are as polished as Vivaldi.

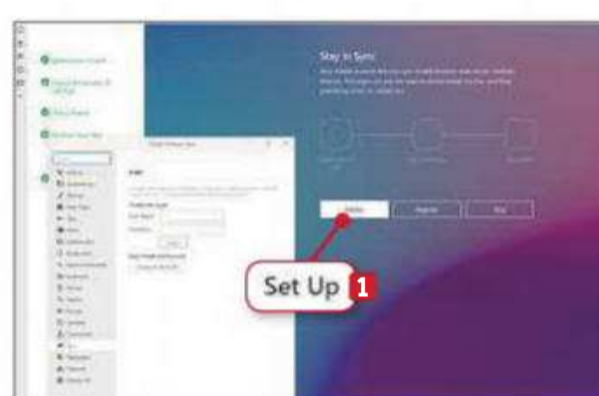
It's been nearly four years since one of Opera's co-founders launched the Vivaldi browser, and in that time it's notched up more than 1,500 improvements.

It's also gained plenty of new features including, most recently, the addition of Sync, resizable tab tiling and floating Web Panels.

Because Vivaldi is based on Chromium, the open-source framework that both Chrome and Opera are built on, you can install the same add-ons you might currently be using in those browsers.



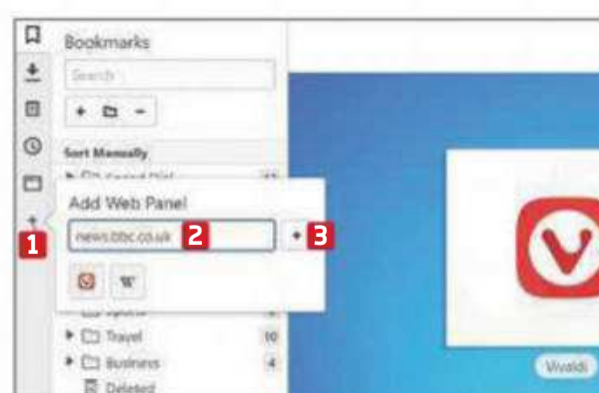
1 If you've used Vivaldi before, you'll immediately notice that the browser has undergone a redesign. This includes a new setup screen that lets you import bookmarks and settings, pick a different theme, change the position of tabs and use Sync. **1** You can skip all this **2** if you prefer.



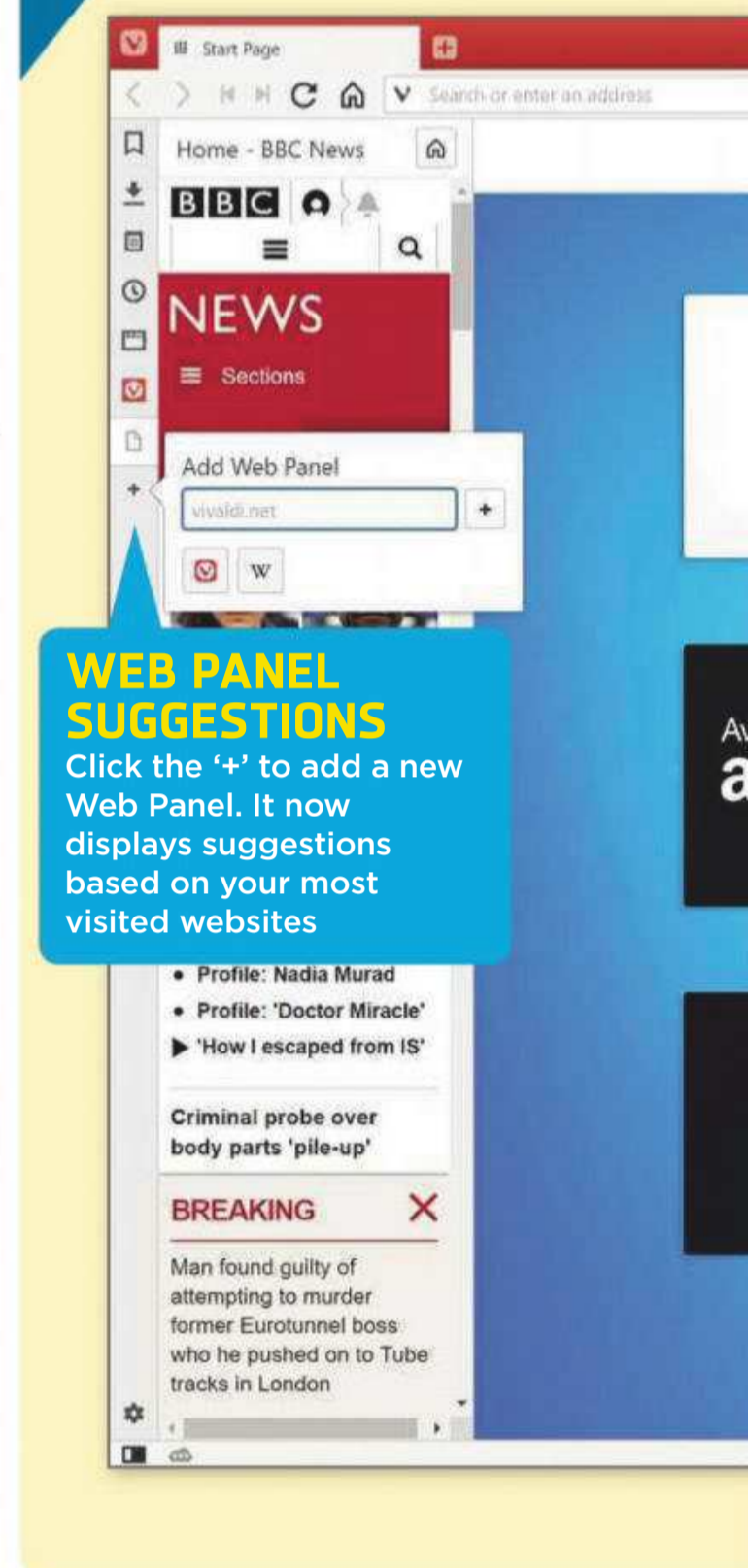
2 Sync is new to the latest version and lets you sync your browser data across multiple devices. To use it, you need to create a free Vivaldi account. Click the Set Up button **1** to get started, then click the 'Create an Account' button in the next window.



3 Once you've entered your details and validated your account, log in and choose the data you want to synchronise. This can be all **1** or just some elements, such as bookmarks and passwords. **2** You can also encrypt your sync data using a separate password. **3** Click the Start Syncing button. **4**



4 Web Panels – the customisable tabs that let you keep sites accessible in the sidebar of the browser – appeared in the first version of Vivaldi, but have been improved and can now 'float'. To create a Web Panel, click the '+' tab **1** and enter the address of the site. **2** Click the plus button in the pop-up. **3**



5 The Web Panel will open, **1** taking up space in the main window. To make it float so that it slides over the current site rather than resizing it, click the Settings button **2** and select the Panel tab **3** in the new window.

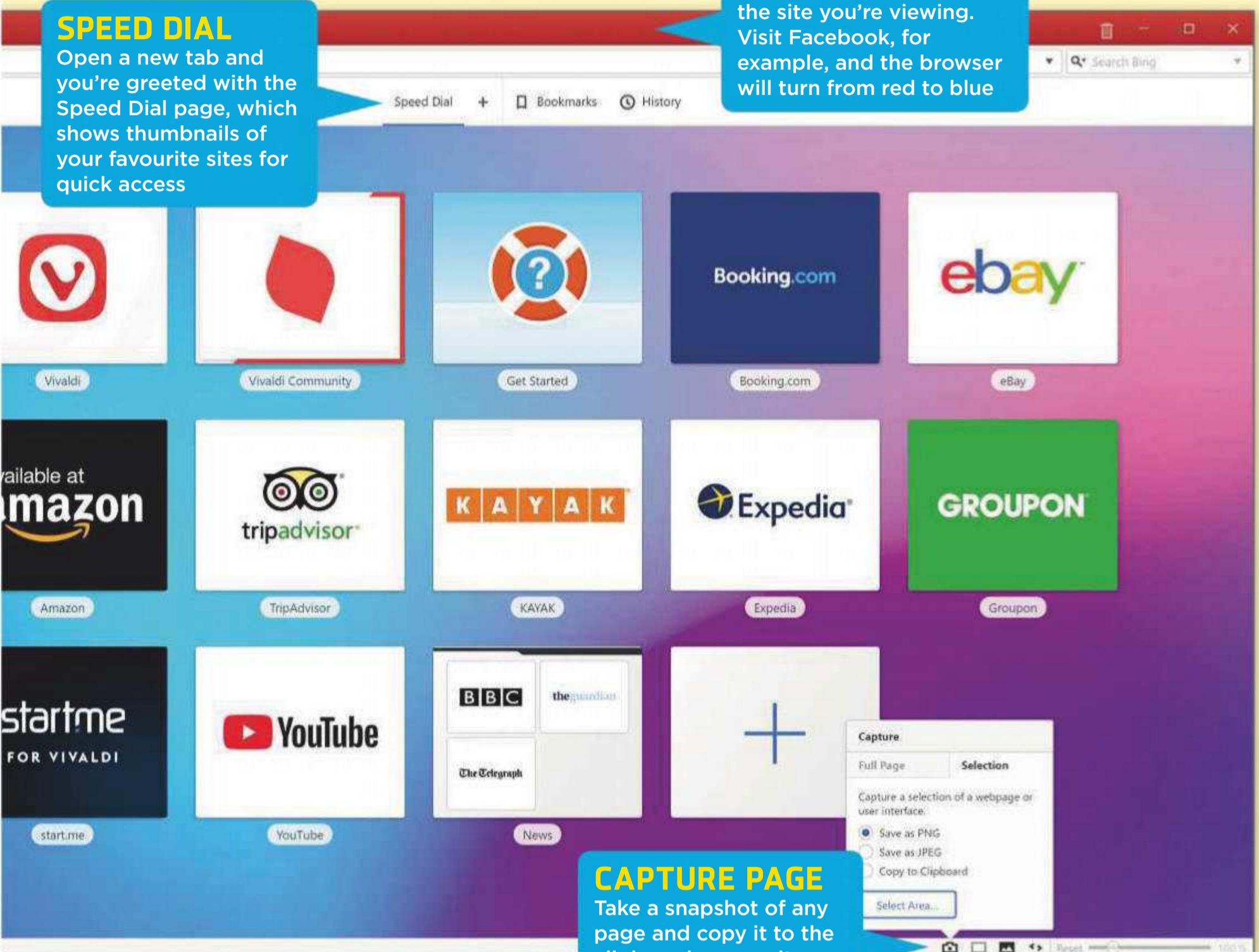


SPEED DIAL

Open a new tab and you're greeted with the Speed Dial page, which shows thumbnails of your favourite sites for quick access

ADAPTIVE INTERFACE

The browser cleverly changes colour based on the site you're viewing. Visit Facebook, for example, and the browser will turn from red to blue



CAPTURE PAGE

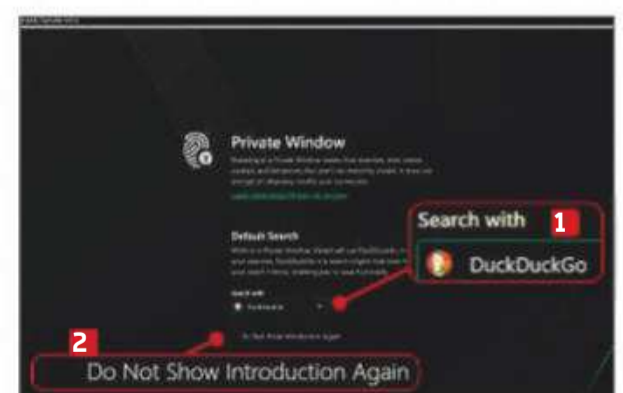
Take a snapshot of any page and copy it to the clipboard or save it as a JPEG or PNG file



6 Under Panel Options, tick Floating Panel. **1** From this window, you can also choose to Auto-Close Inactive Panel. **2** With this option ticked, the panel will close automatically as you move your mouse away from the panel area, so it immediately stops obscuring the site behind it.



7 Create Tab Stacks by dragging tabs on top of each other. Hover over a stack to select the page to view. **1** Right-click a stack and select Tile Tab Stack, and those pages will be tiled across the browser. **2** You can adjust the size of a tile by dragging its border. **3**



8 Like most browsers, Vivaldi has a private browsing mode. This is launched from the File menu. By default, it uses the privacy-focused DuckDuckGo search engine, but you can switch to an alternative, such as Google, StartPage or Qwant. **1** You can ask the browser not to show you this page again. **2**



Discover Windows 10's best new features

Windows 10 October update: bit.ly/winoct461 | ⌚ 20 mins | 🇬🇧 Windows 10



EXPERT TIP

Steve Clark says

If your eyesight's not what it used to be or your high-res monitor makes text difficult to read, it's now easier to tweak text sizes. Search 'Ease of Access settings' and, under Display, drag the slider beneath 'Make text bigger'. By the way, don't forget that you can add the Downloads folder as a clean-up location by ticking the Downloads box in Disk Cleanup. You'll find a similar setting in Storage Sense, too.



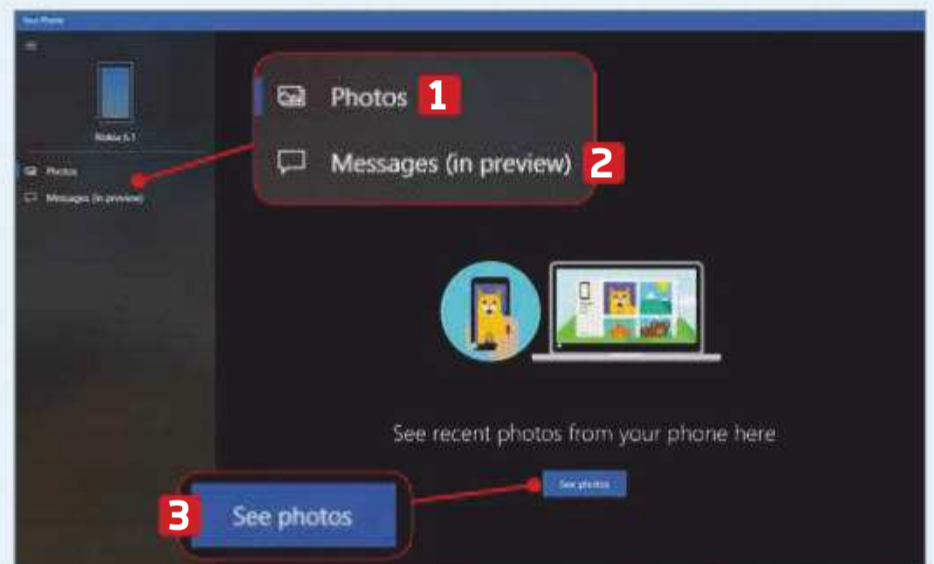
The Windows 10 October Update had a rocky start, with Microsoft yanking the eagerly awaited version 1809 after it mysteriously deleted some users' files.

But beyond these unwanted hard-drive clean-ups, you'll find some welcome features, including improved Search, upgraded copy-and-paste, increased app support for linking devices, and Timeline for Phone, which uses the excellent Microsoft Launcher for Android (bit.ly/mslaunch461).

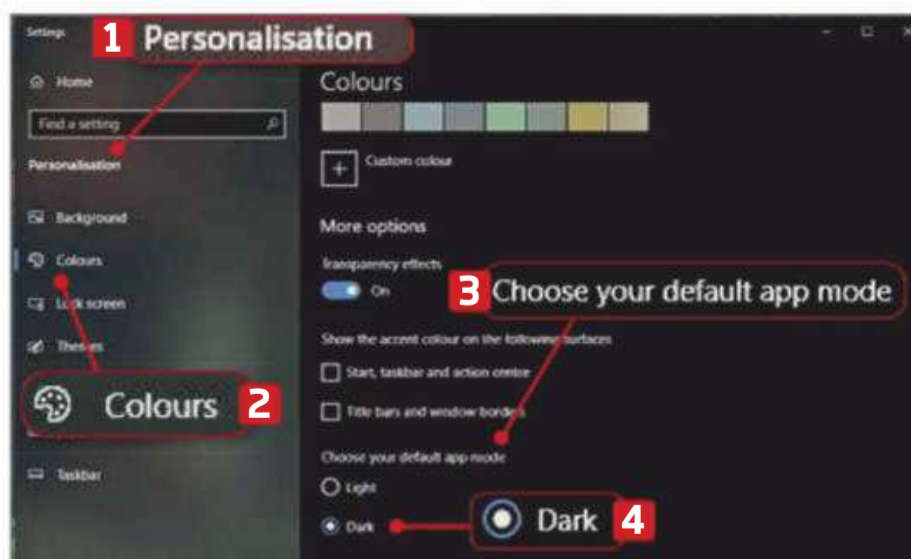
Microsoft didn't include every rumoured feature – such as the in-app tabbing tool, Sets – but at least you can now sync and share your copy-and-pasted content and send text messages from your phone using your PC. Here, we help you make the most of the Windows 10 October Update's best features.



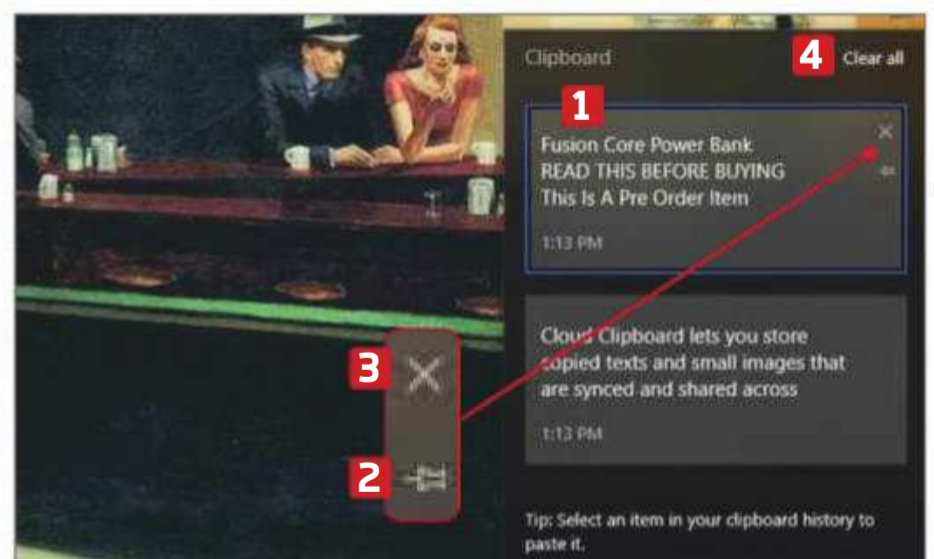
1 The new Your Phone app lets you mirror your mobile's photos and messages on your PC. Start by downloading the app on your PC (bit.ly/your461) and your Android mobile (bit.ly/phone461). Launch the PC app and sign in, then launch the phone app. On your phone, tick the box 'My PC is ready'. **1** Press 'Connect my PC' **2** and sign into the app.



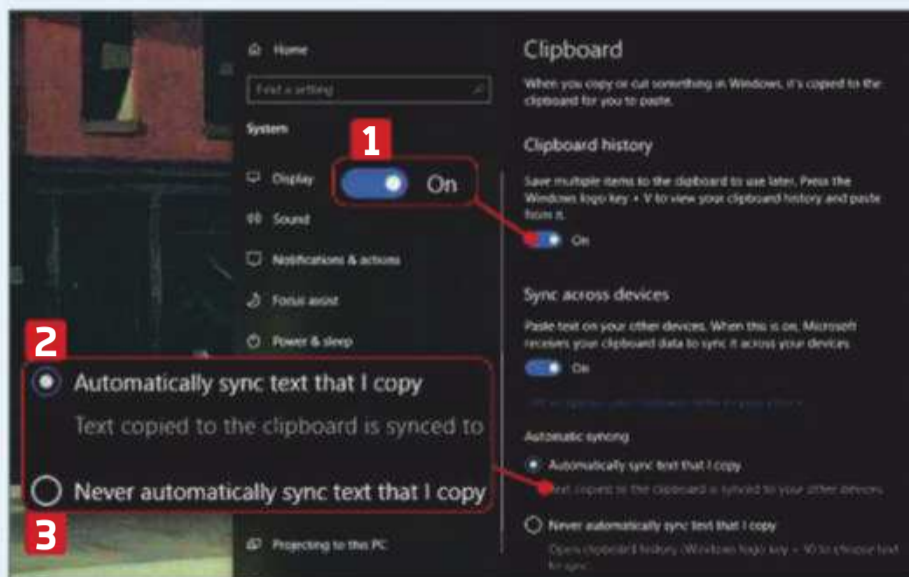
2 Once you've connected your phone and PC, accept the permission requests. You're prompted to link the two devices by tapping the 'Allow' notification on your phone. This persistent notification is also used to 'Disconnect' your mobile. On the PC app, choose Photos **1** or Messages, **2** then press 'See photos' **3** or 'See texts' to do just that.



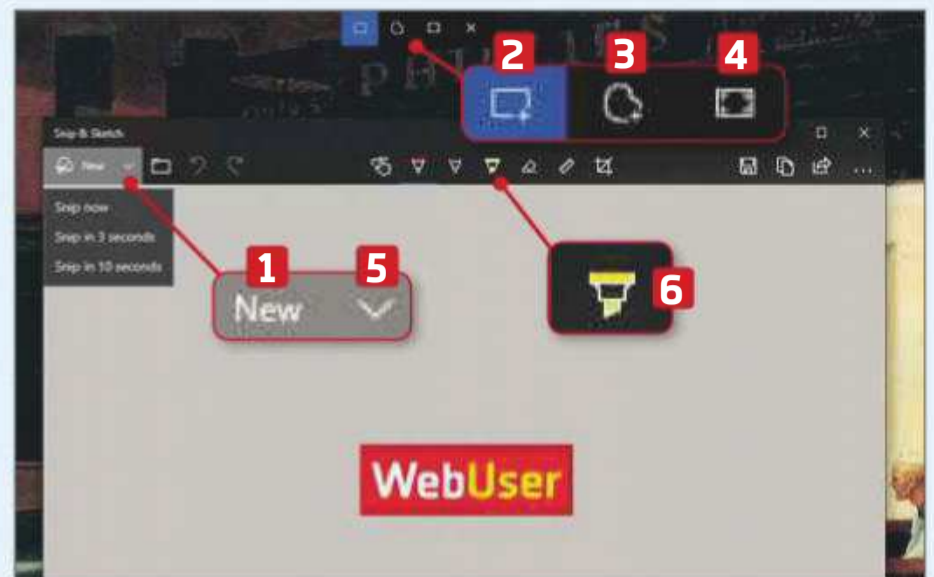
3 Dark Mode grows more popular by the day and with the October Update, the classic File Explorer joins Edge in including the easy-on-your-eyes theme. To activate it, search the Start Bar for Settings and click Personalisation, **1** then Colours. **2** Scroll down the page until you see the option to 'Choose your default app mode' **3** and select Dark. **4**



4 Cloud Clipboard lets you store copied text and images on a clipboard that syncs across all your devices. To access the tool, press Windows+V. Left-click any content **1** to copy it instantly. Hover over clippings and click the drawing-pin icon **2** to pin content to the top. To remove individual texts and images, click the 'X'. **3** To delete everything, click 'Clear all'. **4**



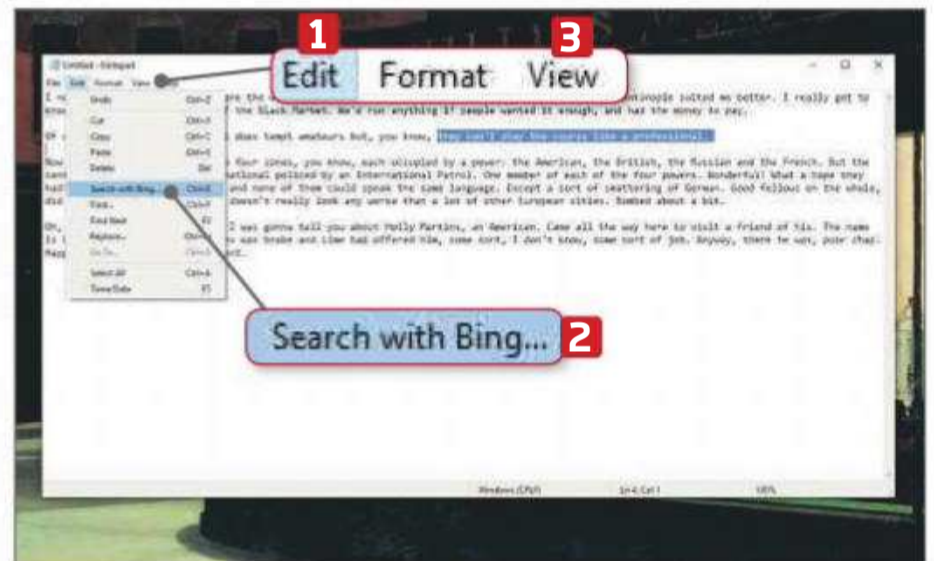
5 If you don't want to use the tool, go to Settings, System, Clipboard and toggle 'Clipboard history' to Off. **1** Doing this also clears the clipboard. Under 'Sync across devices', you can opt to 'Automatically sync text that I copy' **2** or 'Never automatically sync text that I copy'. **3** To use auto-sync, all devices must have the October Update installed.



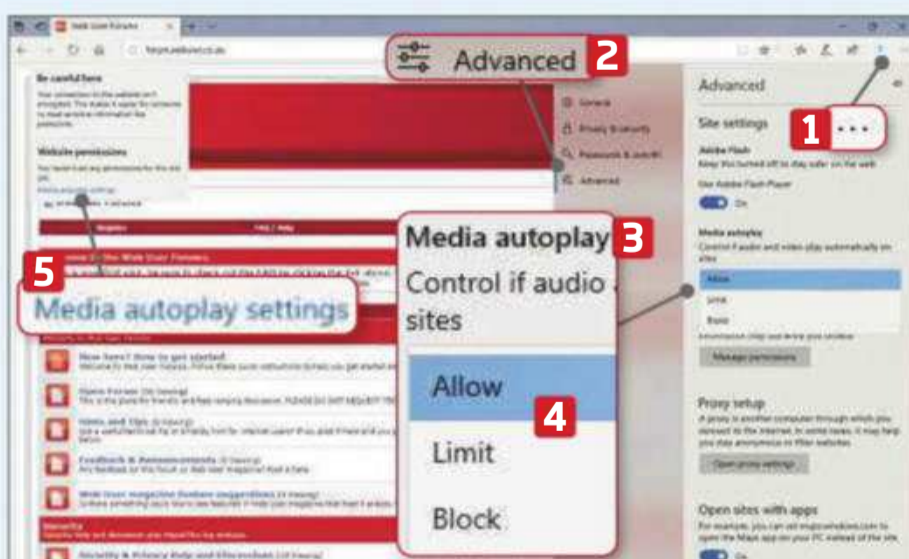
6 Snip & Sketch is Windows 10's upgraded Snipping Tool. Click New **1** to see three options: Rectangular, **2** Freeform **3** and Full Screen Clip. **4** Click the down arrow **5** to set a delay of three or 10 seconds before Snip & Sketch activates. Once it has captured an image, the tool pastes it automatically. Use the highlighters **6** to mark your image.



7 Windows Notepad barely seems to have changed since 1983, but it finally gets an upgrade in the October Update. In previous versions, Find and Replace only worked for text below the cursor. Now, if you select Edit, **1** Replace and tick the 'Wrap around' box **2** at the bottom of the pop-out, Notepad 'loops' the text to make changes throughout the document.



8 Highlight any text and go to the Edit menu, **1** then choose 'Search with Bing' **2** (or press Ctrl+B) to search for the selected content online. Notepad also lets you enlarge or reduce the size of the text by pressing View. **3** Move the mouse over Zoom and select Zoom In or Zoom Out – or use Ctrl+Plus or Ctrl+Minus, if you prefer keyboard shortcuts.



9 Microsoft has improved Edge with every update, and this one is no exception. You can now stop sites autoplaying by clicking the menu button, **1** Settings, Advanced. **2** Use the drop-down menu under 'Media autoplay' **3** to Allow, Limit or Block. **4** You can also click the padlock in the address bar to view a site's information and alter autoplay settings. **5**



10 Edge's 'Reading view' offers a simplified browsing experience. Click the book icon in the address bar **1** to activate it. The new 'Line focus' option adds a more concentrated view. In the Reading view menu bar, press 'Learning tools', **2** 'Reading preferences' **3** and switch on 'Line focus'. **4** Use the boxes to set how many lines to display. **5**



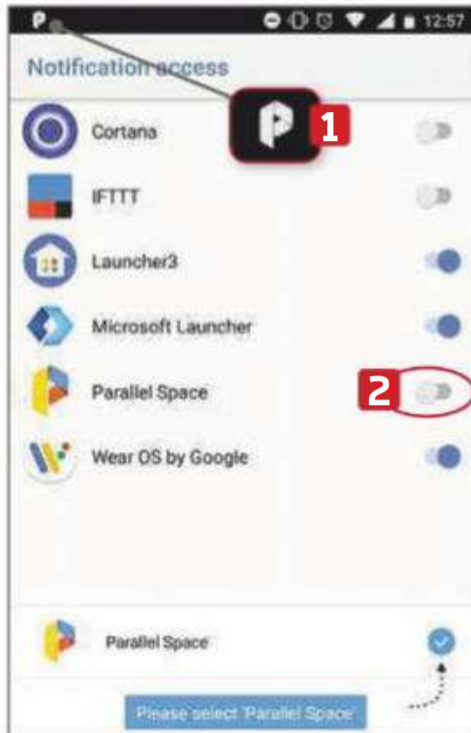
Run two Android app accounts at the same time

It's tiresome to have to keep signing in and out of an app if you use multiple accounts. Parallel Space creates a sandboxed 'clone' of your main app, so you can sign in with an alternative account. This lets you use a single messaging tool

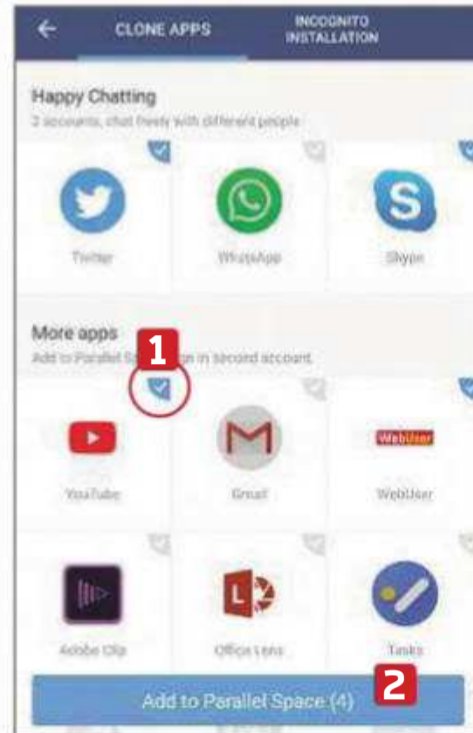
for both business and personal chats; play games under separate accounts; and even be logged into multiple social-media profiles at the same time.



Parallel Space: parallelspace-app.com | 10 mins | Android



1 As soon as Parallel Space installs, its icon appears at the top of your screen. **1** To receive notifications from secondary accounts, pull down the notification bar and tap its icon. Now, toggle Parallel Space to On **2** in 'Notification access'. Be aware that this lets the app 'read' any notification you receive.



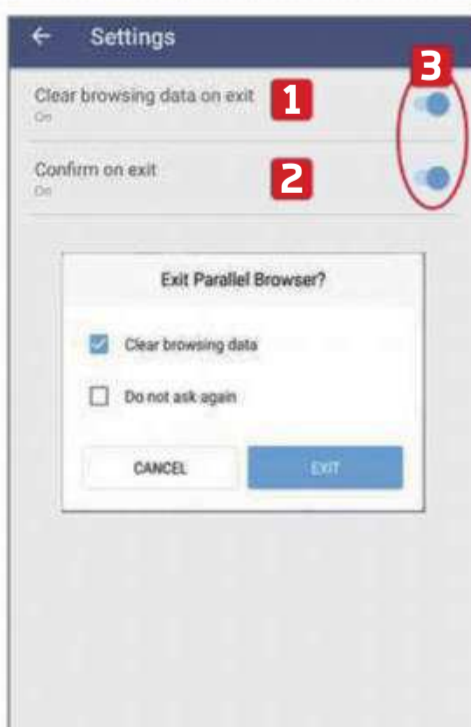
2 Open Parallel Space and choose which apps you want to clone - some apps are ticked by default. **1** Click 'Add to Parallel Space'. **2** You may be asked to accept or reject the app's request to maintain a log. You may also be prompted to download the Parallel Space 64-bit support (bit.ly/support461), which helps keep the app stable.



3 On the app's home screen, tap your cloned app **1** and sign in with your second account. Now, use your 'parallel' app as normal. To add more apps, revisit the home screen and tap Add App. **2** Pressing and holding any existing app lets you drag and drop it to Delete **3** or 'Create shortcut'. **4**



4 To the right of Clone Apps is an option called Incognito Installation. **1** Tap this to download and hide apps inside a 'vault'. After the 'incognito installation' of an app from the Play Store, uninstall the original app from your phone in the usual manner. It can now only be accessed via Parallel Space.



5 Scroll down the home screen to the 'Private browsing' button. Tap the arrow pointing right to open a basic Chrome-like browser. Before browsing, tap the menu button and choose Settings, of which there are two: 'Clear browsing data on exit' **1** and 'Confirm on exit'. **2** Toggle both switches to On. **3**



6 Tap the menu button **1** to access general settings. **2** This is also where you activate Password, **3** which lets you lock Parallel Space with a pattern or fingerprint; and Speed Mode, **4** which disables Google Play Services, reducing memory usage. Just remember to switch Speed Mode off before visiting the Play Store via the app.

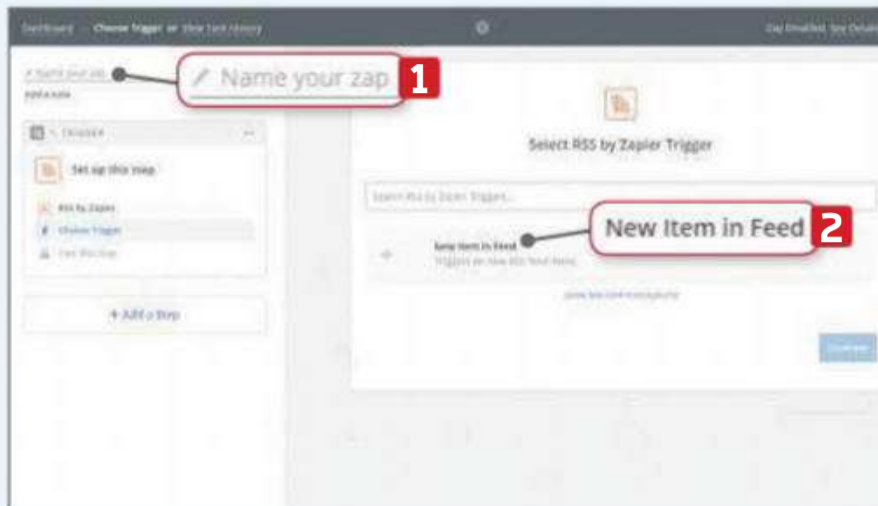


Get alerts when favourite websites are updated

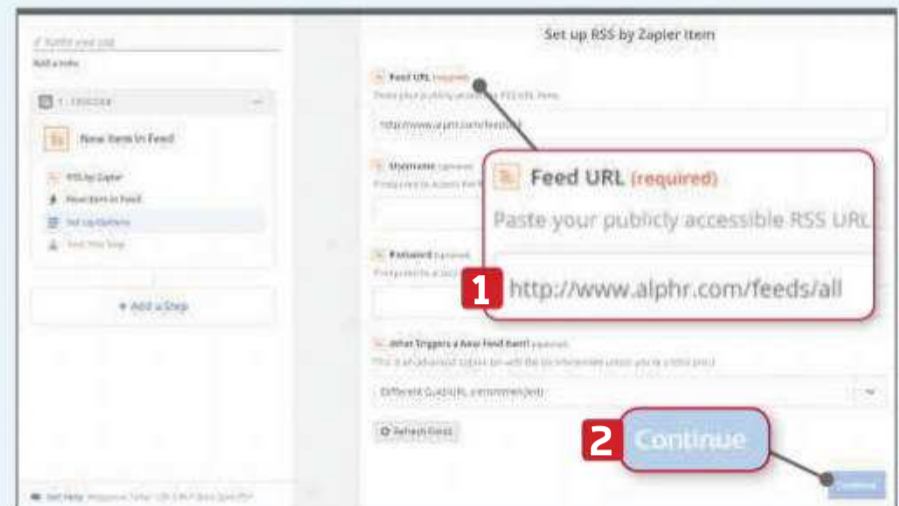
Not all websites update their content regularly, and repeatedly visiting a site to find nothing has changed is a waste of time and effort. So why not set up an alert so you know when there's new content to enjoy?

Zapier: zapier.com | 10 mins | **Any browser**

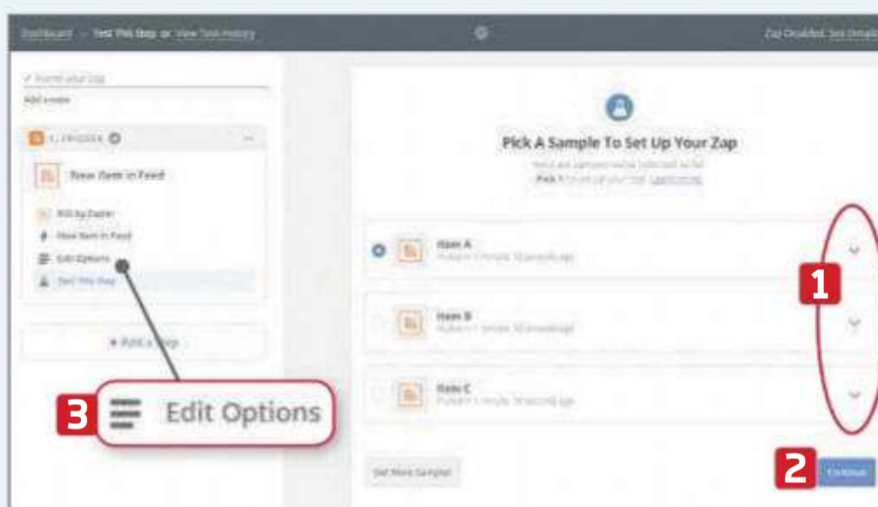
In this Workshop, we're using Zapier to monitor a site for new articles. When something new appears, you'll get an email to let you know.



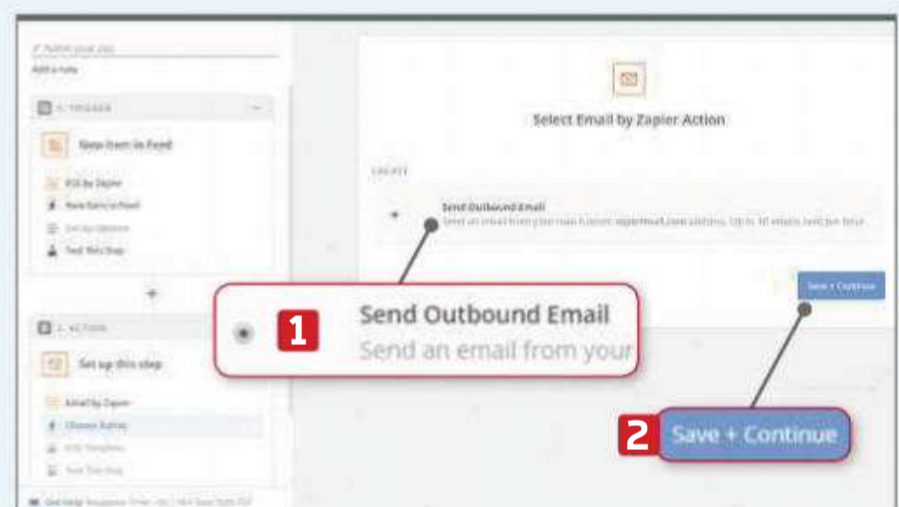
1 Click the 'Make a Zap' button. Click 'Name your zap' **1** and give it a descriptive name. Under 'Choose a Trigger App', select RSS. On the next screen, you'll see the available triggers. RSS has just one: 'New Item in Feed'. **2** Click this, then click the 'Save + Continue' button.



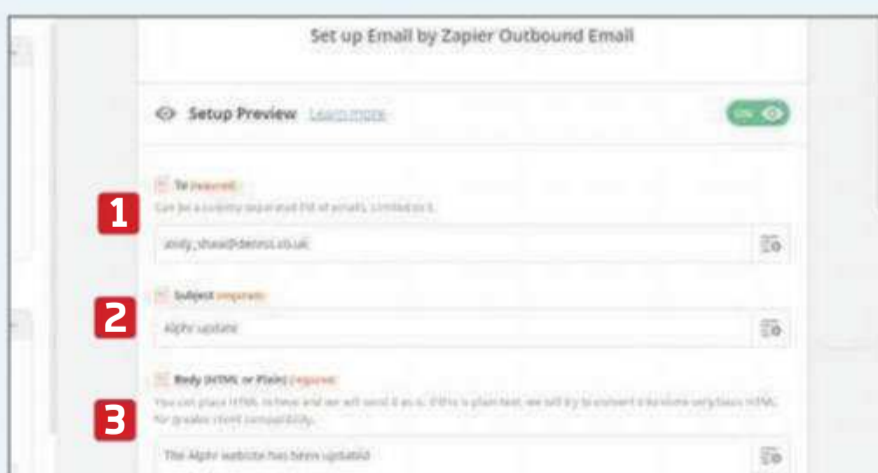
2 Look for the address of the site's RSS feed. Tech-news site Alphr.com, for example, has a Feeds link in the menu at the very bottom. Click this and copy the full address of the feed you require, such as the Sitewide RSS Feed, into the Feed URL box. **1** Click the Continue button. **2**



3 Zapier should now be able to grab an item from the feed to test it. Click the drop-down arrow of one of the samples **1** to check that it looks like the right feed. If all is well, click Continue. **2** Otherwise, you may need to go back to the Edit Options **3** and check the address you entered.



4 Click the 'Add a Step' button and choose Action/Search. Search for email and choose the 'Email by Zapier Action'. There's only one option - Send Outbound Email. **1** Make sure it's selected and click the 'Save + Continue' button. **2**



5 The next screen lets you specify the email address, **1** subject **2** and message **3** you want to use for your update. Scroll through the other available actions and fill in any you want, then click Continue. On the next screen, you can choose to send a test email.



6 Run the test and you should receive an email, which lets you know that the email link is working. When you're happy, click Finish. If there are any essential bits of information missing, the service will remind you. **1** Flick the switch to On **2** to start the service working.

Weekend Project

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



How to...

Back up your entire phone or tablet to your PC

The data on your phone or tablet may be more precious than the device itself. **Wayne Williams** shows you how to safeguard it

Smartphones and tablets have become our trusted repositories for a wealth of personal data including contacts, past conversations, photos, videos, music, loyalty cards, browsing history, banking access and more. If you lose your device, have it stolen or just break it, the cost of replacing it could be the least of your worries.

It's important, therefore, to back up your mobile device regularly. And we don't just mean backing up your photos, but everything on the device, including messages, call logs, system settings, Wi-Fi passwords, calendar events, apps and browser history.



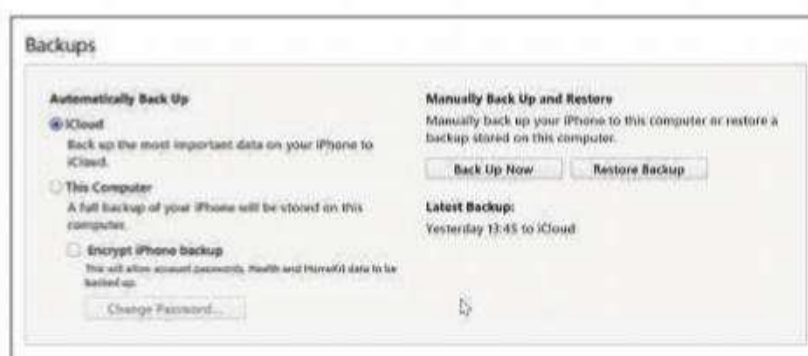
BACK UP iOS



You have two straightforward ways to back up an iOS device – using iCloud or iTunes. With iCloud, everything on your phone is backed up to the cloud, provided you have enough space. By default, you only get 5GB of cloud storage for free, which should be enough to back up important basics, such as contacts, calendars and

notes, but probably not all your photos or videos.

However, paid storage plans are surprisingly affordable: 50GB costs 79p a month; 200GB is £2.49 a month; and 2TB is £6.99 a month. Both the 200GB and 2TB options can be shared across all your family's iOS devices.



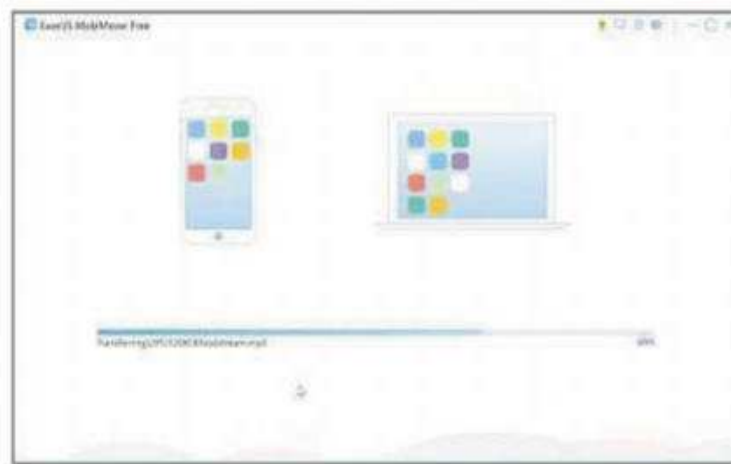
One of the easiest ways to back up everything on your iPhone is to use Apple's iTunes software



If you have enough storage space, you can back up your entire device directly to iCloud

Assuming you have enough storage, you can choose what to back up by opening the Settings app and tapping your name at the top of the screen. Tap iCloud and select what you want to back up. Options include Photos, Mail, Contacts, Calendars, Notes, Messages, Safari, Wallet, Siri, Keychain and supported installed apps. Tap Manage Storage to see what's using your space.

If you need more than 5GB but don't want to pay for extra iCloud storage, you can just back up your device to your PC or Mac using iTunes (bit.ly/itu461). Install the software – if you haven't already done so – and connect your device to your computer. Open iTunes and click the iPhone icon, then click Summary. Select This Computer as the destination for

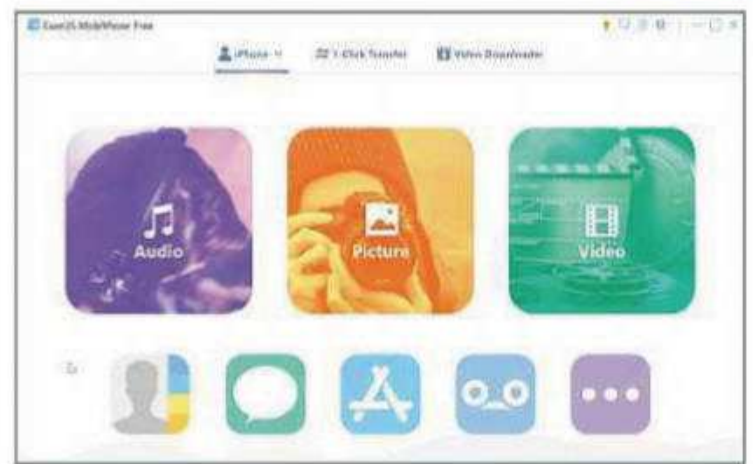


MobiMover quickly copies everything you've selected on your iOS device to a PC or Mac

saving your backup. You have the option to encrypt it, which you should do for the sake of security. Click the Back Up Now button.

If you don't like iTunes (it's a bloated behemoth and not worth the hassle if you're only using it to back up your phone), you could try EaseUS MobiMover Free (bit.ly/fit461). This is available for Windows 7, 8 and 10, and Mac OS. There's a beta version for iPhone XS, XS Max, XR users, and those running iOS 12. The software is entirely free and can back up everything on your iOS device or just the bits you want. You can browse through items on your device, and copy or restore content from your computer to your phone. We show you how to use the software in our Mini Workshop, below.

MobiMover comes with a bonus video downloader, which can save videos from services including YouTube, Vimeo and Instagram to your PC or directly to your phone. There is a paid-for version of the software available, but the only extras you get are a free lifetime upgrade and 24-7 technical support.



Click the device tab at the top to explore and back up items on it

BACK UP ANDROID



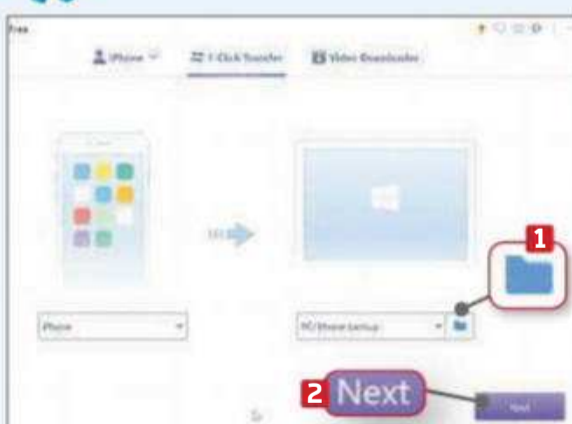
If you're only interested in backing up the photos and videos on your Android device, then Google has you covered. It automatically backs up your snaps directly to Google Photos (photos.google.com) and offers users unlimited storage in High Quality format (note that this may not be the full quality and resolution of the original image).

Make sure this option has been enabled by opening the app, tapping the menu icon and opening Settings. Tap 'Back up & sync' and toggle its switch to On. Unless you have an unlimited mobile data plan, you'll probably want to restrict your files from uploading until you're connected to a Wi-Fi network. Next, install Google Drive on your PC and sign in with the same Google account used on your phone.

Visit Google Drive on the web (drive.google.com), click the cog icon and open Settings. Make sure 'Create a



MINI WORKSHOP | Back up your iOS device with EaseUS MobiMover Free



1 Install and run MobiMover Free, then connect your device to your PC or Mac with its USB cable. The software recognises the device and you'll be able to back it up. Click the blue folder icon **1** and select the folder to save to. Click Next. **2** On your device, choose to trust your computer.







2 Enter your passcode on your device, then click OK on your computer. On the next screen, choose which items you want to back up. Everything is selected by default, but you can deselect any section. **1** The total number of items to back up is shown at the top. **2** Click Transfer. **3**



3 Contacts, notes and Safari bookmarks can't be backed up if iCloud is running. MobiMover displays instructions for disabling it. The backup begins and you just wait for it to finish. The software also lets you copy files from your computer to the iOS device. Just use the drop-down arrows to switch direction. **1**

Broadband Deals

Call FREE on 0800 083 2357 to switch your broadband

	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1		TalkTalk: Broadband	£17.95 (£27 after 12 months)	12 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	CHEAPEST £215.40
2		Sky: Broadband Unlimited	£18.00 (£30 after 18 months)	18 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£216.00
3		First Utility: Broadband	£18.99	18 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£227.88
4		Virgin Media: Player Bundle + Fibre Broadband + Weekend Calls	£32.00 (£51 after 12 months)	12 months	54Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited*	£384.00

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

* Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 15 October 2018.

Ofcom

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

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

**SNEAK
PREVIEW!**

Computer active

THE MISSING MANUAL: REMOVING PC JUNK Your definitive guide to clearing the clutter from your computer

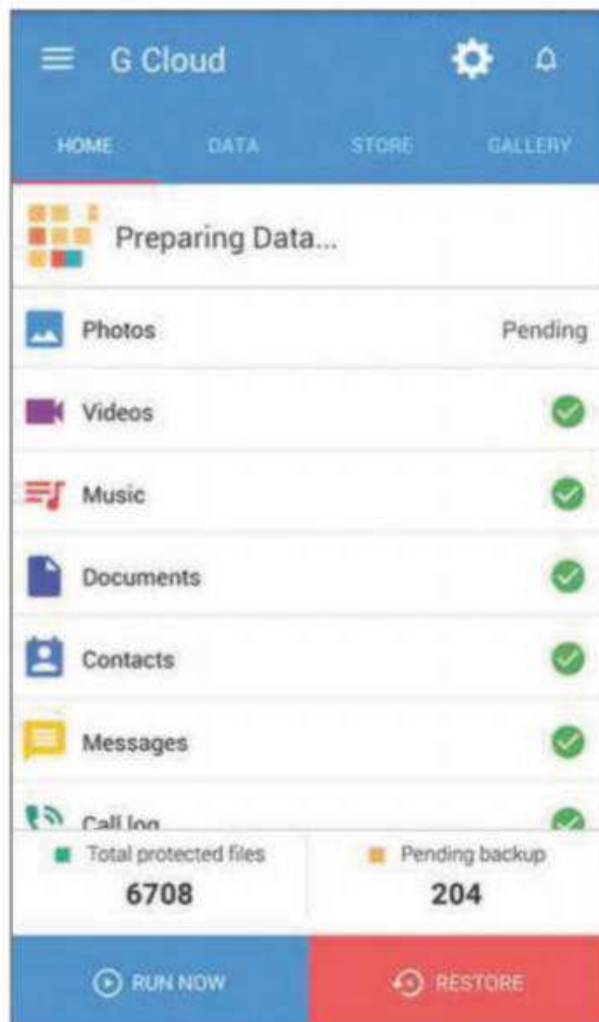
- Second-hand phones – what, where and how to buy

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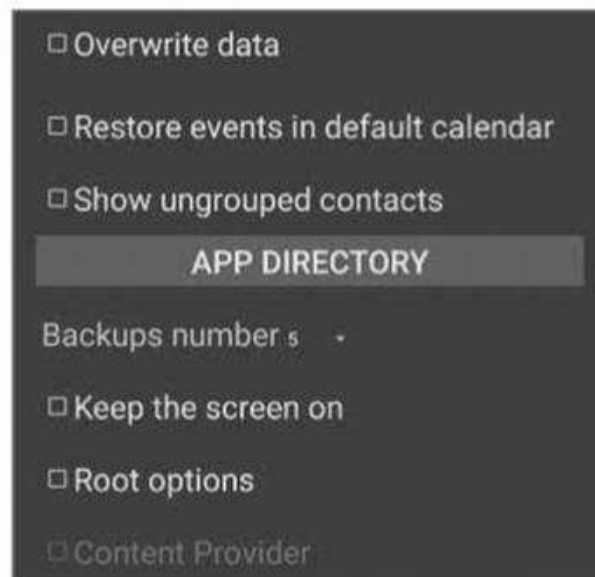
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G Cloud Backup for Android can back up your device's contents to the cloud

Google Photos folder' is ticked. Right-click the Drive icon in the Windows system tray, then click the three-dot menu and select Preferences. The Google Photos folder should be ticked. Photos from your Android device will be automatically backed up to the PC.

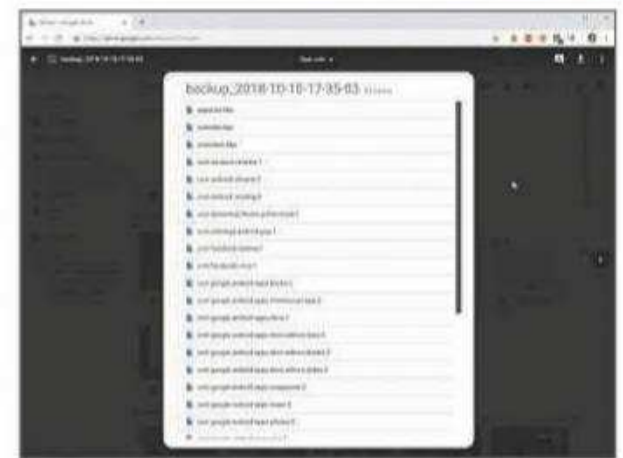
It's worth noting that Google Photos will also back up the images on an iOS device if you install the app.



Backup Your Mobile lets you overwrite data and specify the number of backups

To back up more than just your photos, you need a good backup app, such as Backup Your Mobile (bit.ly/buym461). This can back up and restore most things on your device, including contacts, messages, settings, passwords, events and bookmarks. The backups get stored on your phone's SD card or in the memory, but you can also store them in cloud services such as Google Drive, OneDrive and Dropbox. You can schedule automatic backups, so you don't have to remember to run them manually. We show you how to use it in our Mini Workshop, below.

Some of the backup options, such as backing up Wi-Fi passwords, secure system settings and app data, require your device to be rooted, but most of the other options don't. Backups made with the app can be encrypted using strong



You can save copies directly to Google Drive with Backup Your Mobile

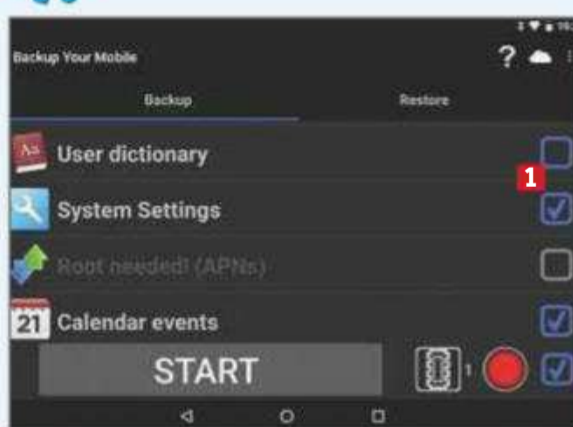
AES-256 encryption, so you don't need to worry about them falling into the wrong hands.

The app is entirely free, although it does contain ads. When you run a backup, you'll be prompted to install a new app but you can avoid this by tapping the 'Maybe later' button or closing the ad by clicking the 'X' in the corner.

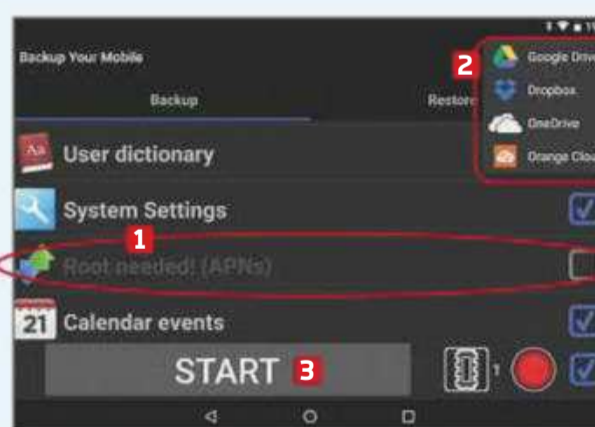
Alternatively, try G Cloud Backup (bit.ly/gcbu461), which can back up and restore your Android device to the cloud. You need to create an account to use it, but once you have, you can set it to automatically back up text messages, contacts, call logs, documents, settings, photos (at full resolution), videos, music and more. You only get 1GB of cloud storage to start with, which isn't much, but you can earn up to 10GB for free by performing various tasks. Alternatively, go unlimited for \$3.99 (around £3) a month. ■



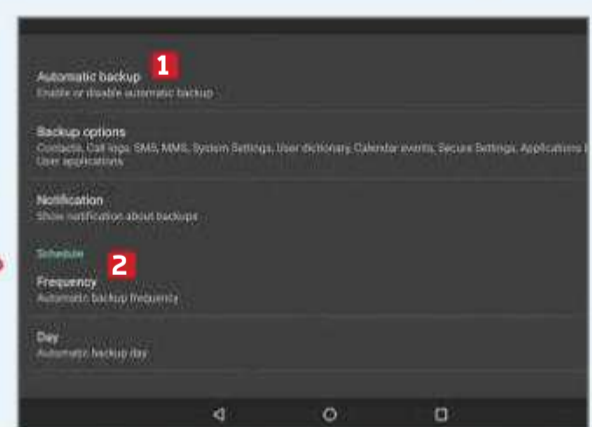
MINI WORKSHOP | Back up your Android device with Backup Your Mobile



1 Install and run the app. You'll need to grant it a number of permissions the first time you use it so it can access and back up your device's content. You'll be presented with a list of items that the app can access, such as contacts, call logs and messages (SMS and MMS). You can untick any you don't want to include. **1**



2 Options that need root access will be greyed-out if you haven't rooted your phone. **1** Tap the cloud icon in the top-right corner and pick a cloud service (Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox) to save to. **2** You'll need to link the chosen drive to its app. Click Start **3** to begin the backup.



3 When it's complete, the number of backups is shown at the bottom of the app. Click the three-dot menu in the top-right corner to access settings such as 'Automatic backup' **1** and to set a schedule. **2** You can also encrypt your backups here. Scroll down to make sure automatic backups only occur when you're connected to Wi-Fi.

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Turn an old hard drive into a NAS

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Web User Masterclass

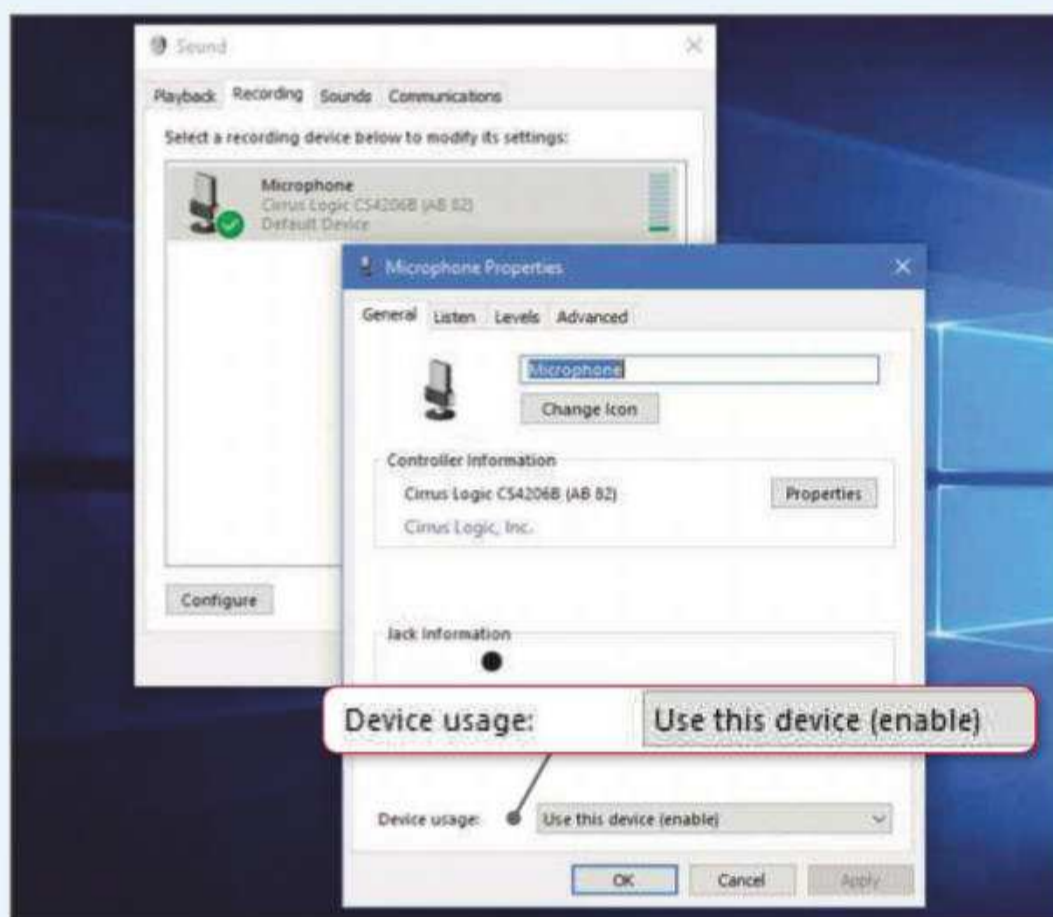
Fix finicky microphones and enhance your mic's audio recordings

Enable or disable the microphone

There are lots of Windows settings related to recording audio through the microphone. These can be customised to suit the hardware, improve quality and boost recording levels. Open the Control Panel (start typing `control panel` into the search bar and click it when it appears) and click Sound in one of the 'icons' options on the 'View by' menu. Select the Recording tab to display your device's microphones.

If you don't see a microphone but you know the computer has one, right-click the window and select Show Disabled Devices. When the microphone appears, right-click it and choose Enable. If it's already enabled, you can Disable it in the same way.

Double-click the microphone to open the Properties window. On the General tab, make sure it says 'Use this device (enable)' at the bottom next to 'Device usage'.



Make sure your microphone is enabled by changing its settings in the Control Panel

Use direct connections

If the devices you want to plug into your computer outnumber its ports, you may be using a dongle or hub to connect all your external drives, wired mice, speakers, microphones and so on. If you are experiencing problems with a microphone (or any other device, for that matter) that is connected via a hub, remove it and try connecting it directly to the computer.

Check for colour-coded connections

Desktop computers often have sockets at the back, where they are neatly tucked out of the way but often difficult to reach or even see. There may be several audio sockets and it's easy to accidentally plug the microphone into the speaker socket (or vice versa) and then wonder why nothing is working. Audio sockets are often colour coded: red or pink for the microphone socket; green for the speakers. This helps when you're plugging in your devices – if you can see them.

Avoid feedback loops

Be careful when you plug in a microphone near speakers – if the volume is turned up, you might cause an ear-splitting blast of squealing feedback. This is caused by sound entering the microphone and getting amplified and then played through the speakers, which then re-enters the microphone in a repeating loop.

Always remember to turn the speakers down or off before plugging in the microphone. Earphones or headphones prevent feedback because the sound they emit isn't loud enough to be picked up by a microphone.

Split the plug...

Some headsets with headphones and a microphone only have one 3.5mm jack plug, but computers usually have separate ports for the microphone (audio in) and the speaker or headphones (audio out). You can use a 'splitter' to connect the two. This is an adapter with a socket that splits the single 3.5mm jack plug from the

headset into separate 3.5mm jacks for the microphone and speaker sockets on the PC. Search Google, Amazon, eBay and elsewhere for microphone splitters. They cost as little as £5.

...or split the socket

Some computers and mobile devices have a single socket that can be used for either headphones or a microphone. If you need to plug both in, you can get a splitter for this, too. This time you're looking for one that splits a single microphone port into two separate sockets: one for the microphone and the other for the

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.



headphones, so you can plug in both at the same time.

Use the Troubleshooter tool

Windows provides tools for checking that various components and systems are working correctly. These troubleshooting tools can't fix everything but they're worth running whenever you encounter a problem.

Press Windows+i to open the Settings app, go to 'Update & Security' and select Troubleshoot in the sidebar. Click Recording Audio to scan for problems. The tool will automatically try to fix any problems it finds.

It's also a good idea to run the Playing Audio tool from the same list. Played sounds use the same audio hardware as recording, so fixes made here can also solve recording problems.



Use the Windows Troubleshoot tools to identify and fix audio problems

Check the sound settings

Older versions of Windows have all the sound settings in the Control Panel, but Windows 10 places them in the Settings app as well. Open Settings (Windows+i), click System and select Sound in the sidebar. Scroll down to the Input section and make sure the correct microphone is selected. Most laptops have a built-in microphone, so if you've plugged in an external mic, you need to select the one you want to use.

Below, you'll see a live volume-level indicator, which you can use to test the microphone. When you speak, the bar should light up. Below the microphone level is a Troubleshoot button to run the troubleshooter. Use this if you're still having audio problems.

Below that, you'll find 'Manage sound devices'. Click this and check that the microphone appears, then click it to enable it. This setting auto-disables when it's not needed, so don't worry if it's disabled when you first see it – that's normal.

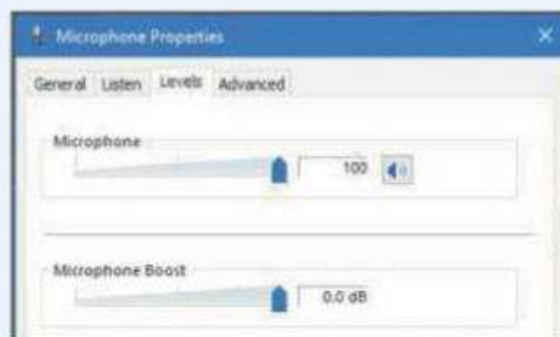
Return to Settings, System, Sound and in the Input section, under the microphone, find 'Device properties'. Click this to make sure the microphone isn't disabled.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Boost recording levels

Open the Control Panel and click Sound. In the window that appears, click the Levels tab. There are two sliders: one for adjusting the microphone recording level and the other to give the microphone a boost. If you find that your recordings are too quiet – or too loud and distorted – adjust the Boost slider.



Increase or decrease the Microphone Boost to adjust the recording level

Play audio through your PC

If you have a device that plays music, such as an MP3 player, you may be able to connect its output to your PC's microphone socket and amplify sound through the speakers.

Open the Control Panel, click Sound, select the Recording tab and double-click the microphone. Select the Listen tab in the next window to see if audio can be output through the microphone socket. Tick the box next to 'Listen to this device' and select the output device from the list below. Usually, the default is the right one.



Use the microphone socket to play audio from other devices through PC speakers

Narrate recorded games

Windows 10 introduced the 'Game bar', which lets you stream or record games as you play them. If you're having problems with the audio in recordings, check the settings. 'Game bar' controls have evolved with each version of Windows, so you may have to hunt for the controls.



Configure audio recording in games in the Settings app and the 'Game bar'

Open the Settings app and click Gaming. Select Captures in the sidebar and scroll down to the 'Recorded audio' section. Turn on the switch under 'Record audio when I record a game' and tick the box next to 'Turn on mic by default when I record'. Select the audio recording quality. Choose the lowest value if your computer is not particularly powerful because high-quality recording results in more data being written to the hard drive.

There's a slider to adjust the microphone volume – you may need some trial and error to get this right. Try recording a game and then check the sound level. Come back to the settings and adjust if necessary. When playing a game, Windows+Alt+M turns the microphone on or off.

Press Windows+G to open the 'Game bar' and click the cog icon. Scroll down to the bottom to see the three audio recording options. The first records only game audio, which means the microphone is turned off. The second option (All) records game audio and also sound from the microphone. The third setting is None, where no game sounds are recorded and the microphone is switched off.

Use the tickbox at the bottom to enable microphone recording notifications.

Select exclusive audio use

If you are still having problems with audio recording or playback, open the Control Panel, click Sound, select the Recording tab and double-click the microphone. In the Advanced tab, under Exclusive Mode, you'll see two tick boxes. These allow a program full and exclusive control over the microphone. Try the tick boxes with every combination of ticked and clear. One setting may be better for your setup than the other.

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

Make space to update

Q My daughter's Windows 10 HP laptop is 18 months old and has 32GB of hard-drive space. It's not been used much but she has regularly checked it and run the required updates. There's nothing stored on it apart from Windows and LibreOffice.

When she tried to install the latest system updates, the process froze after reaching 30% and she got a message saying: "Cannot install updates as there is not enough disk space - 27.2 GB used of 29GB." This effectively means the computer is useless.

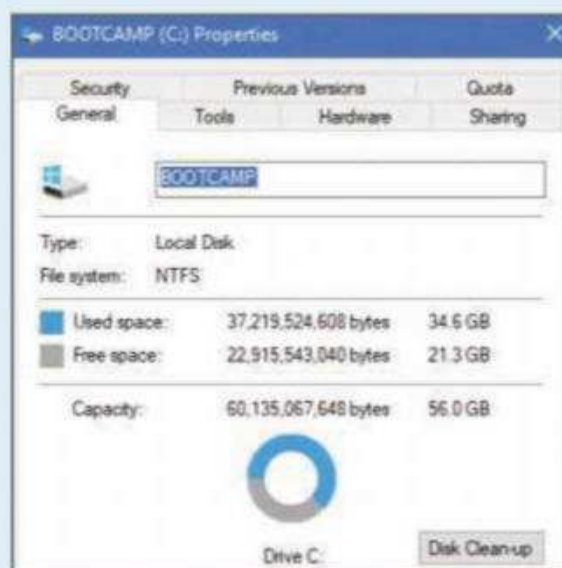
On visiting the local PC store, she was told "We get lots of people coming in with this problem. The answer is a separate hard drive". How can this be right? I don't believe that the operating system can be split over two hard drives, so what's the point of buying a second one?

How can it be that you need a separate hard drive to run updates?

Ian Thomson, via email

A All computers eventually stop being able to install the newest version of Windows and there's no guaranteed number of years for which updates will work. If a new version of Windows can't be installed, it doesn't make the computer useless because it will still work with the current version.

There is a way to install the update.



Enabling compression on a hard drive can free up storage space

Open Explorer and select This PC in the sidebar. Right-click the C: drive and select Properties, then tick the box 'Compress this drive to save disk space'. It uses automatic compression to shrink files on the drive and free up space. Go to Start, Windows Administrative Tools, Disk Clean-up. After scanning the drive, click 'Clean up system files'. After a second scan, tick all the boxes and click OK.

When Windows Update runs out of space on the C: drive, it can use an external one. A small 16 or 32GB USB memory stick should be fine. Some cost as little as £5.

When Windows Update runs out of room, it suggests cleaning the drive to free up space. After following the instructions, insert the USB stick and click Continue to complete the update. See bit.ly/winup461 for more information.

Settings app (Windows+i), open 'Update & Security' and select Troubleshoot on the left. Click 'Playing Audio and Recording Audio' on the right.

If there's still no improvement, it could be because the drivers from Microsoft are not suitable for the audio hardware. Go to the manufacturer's website, search for the model of computer, find the software and driver downloads and download anything related to sound. If your computer is old and there aren't any specific Windows 10 drivers, Windows 8 ones will usually work.

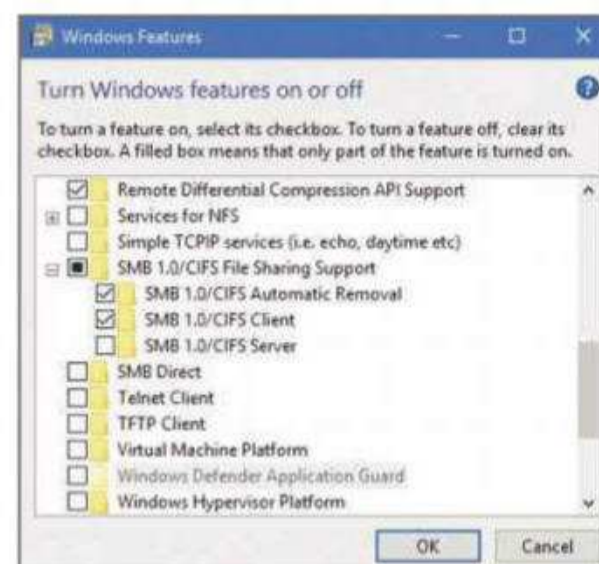
NETWORKING

Map a hard drive to a router

Q I'm having problems mapping a USB drive to a Linksys EA9500 router. I have two devices on the network, both running Windows 10 version 1803. On the tablet, which runs Windows Home, I can find the router by right-clicking Start, then Run, then typing \\192.168.1.1. I can then read and write files but the drive is not present to be mapped in File Explorer.

On the desktop PC, which runs Windows Pro, I get an error message about SMBv1 not being installed. I have looked at the Microsoft article that this error refers to, but I don't understand it.

I may be able to access the drive by switching on FTP access at the router, but it seems overkill since I don't really need access outside the house. The previous router, a Netgear model,



Enable or disable Windows components such as SMB 1 in the Control Panel

HARDWARE

Sort sound problems

Q I have two problems with the sound on my Windows 10 PC. One is that when I switch on my PC, the sound is off. The volume is up but I have to adjust it to hear any sound. The other problem is that the volume is very low. It used to be quite loud but now it needs to be on maximum volume to be heard at all.

Liam Philips, via email

A There are three possible solutions. First, check that the latest sound driver from Windows Update is installed. Click Start, type **device manager**, then click it in the search results. Expand the 'Sound, video and game controllers' section, right-click each item listed and select 'Update driver'. Restart Windows afterwards and see if the sound is better.

Next, try the troubleshooter, which can occasionally fix problems. Open the



worked easily using ReadySHARE.

Have I missed something?

Lee Reynolds, via email

A SMB is a networking system that enables remote storage on the network to be accessed as if it was plugged into the computer. SMB 1 was found to contain security flaws, so Microsoft removed it from Windows. The problem is that some older network storage devices still require SMB 1 and Windows no longer has it.

Go to the Control Panel and open 'Programs and Features'. Click 'Turn Windows features on or off', find SMB in the list, enable the options and click OK. After it's finished installing, restart the computer. You should then find that the drive can be mapped.

SMB is a known security risk so some antivirus software may report it as a problem after you've installed it.

EMAIL

Avoid grammatical mistakes

Q Can you suggest a free or paid-for grammar checker that I can use with Outlook.com?

Maria, via email

A One of the most popular grammar checkers is Grammarly, and it's available as an add-on in Chrome and Edge. In Chrome, go to bit.ly/chro461; for Edge, open the Windows Store and search for Grammarly.

The add-on is not specifically designed for Outlook and will work almost everywhere that text can be typed on the web, such as writing emails, filling forms, writing comments on websites and so on. Spelling errors and poor grammar are highlighted and suggested fixes are displayed.

SECURITY

Hide a type of file

Q Is it possible to hide files of a certain type, such as all GIF images? It's not GIFs that I want to hide, but I'd like something that works with any type of file.

Ken Raddison, via email

A Yes and there are several ways to do it. Open a File Explorer window, then open a folder with the files you want to hide. Select the View tab, find the Layout box and select Details. Click the Type column in the file listing to group all the files of one type together.

Click the first file, then hold down the Shift key and click the last file. Right-



Attrib is an old Dos command that changes file attributes. Type: attrib /?

click any selected file and choose Properties on the menu. Go to the General tab, tick the box labelled Hidden and click OK. All the selected files will have their Hidden attribute set.

This technique is fine for setting the attributes of files in a single folder, but it is slow and tedious if the files are in subfolders, as may be the case with the Pictures folder. If so, go to the topmost folder in File Explorer that the subfolders are in – for example, the Pictures folder. Enter ***.gif** into the search box to find all files of that type that are in the current folder and all subfolders. Click 'Search, All subfolders' if it doesn't work. Click any file in the search results and press Ctrl+A to select them all. Then right-click one, select Properties and tick the Hidden box.

If you are working with a very large number of files in Explorer, in the thousands, a better solution is to press Windows+R to open the Run box and type **cmd** then press Enter. At the command prompt, type:

attrib +h c:*.gif /s

This adds the Hidden attribute to all

GIFs in all subfolders on the C:\ drive. There is no limit to the number of files and it keeps going until it finishes.

Instead of **c:*.gif** you could use a path such as **"c:\my folder*.gif"**. For more information on attrib, type **attrib /?**.

Whether hidden files can be seen depends on Explorer's settings. Click the View tab and tick or clear the 'Hidden items' box to show or hide them.

HARDWARE

Turn an internal drive into an external one

Q I'd like to use my Seagate 500GB SATA hard drive as an external USB hard drive. Do I need an adapter of some kind? What type would I need and how much is it likely to cost?

Philip Smith, via email

A A bare drive would need an enclosure, which is basically an empty case into which a drive can be fitted. Search 'drive enclosure' on Amazon, eBay, Google and other places to find one. Some are designed for 2.5in drives, some for 3.5in and some accept both. Drives can also be 7 or 9.5mm thick. What size drive do you have? Make sure it will fit inside the enclosure you choose.

A low-power drive is able to run off the power supplied by a USB socket, but some old drives designed for desktop computers need their own power supply. If in doubt, get a mains-powered enclosure.

SOFTWARE

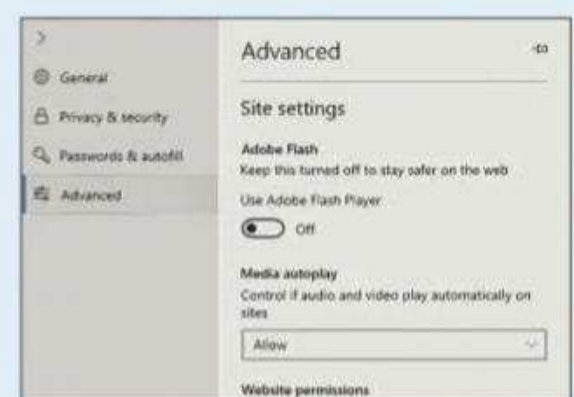
Flash in Windows

Q I visited a website that said I need to install Flash Player on my PC for the site to work. However, I have read elsewhere that I should not install Flash. Should I install it or not? I am running Windows 10.

Ken Cooper, via email

A Flash was once essential but its use has declined following a series of security problems, and the latest estimates are that only 5% of websites use it. If you must use it, there's no need to install it because it is built into both Edge and Chrome.

In Chrome, open the menu and click Settings. Click Advanced at the bottom, then Content Settings. Click the Flash section then choose



Flash is rarely used nowadays but can still be enabled if you need it

whether to block all use of it or be asked if you want to enable it if it detects that a site is trying to use it.

In Edge, click the three-dot menu and select Settings. Go to the Advanced category and use the switch to turn on Adobe Flash. It's best to enable it only when it's needed and turn it off afterwards.



This fortnight, Roland has been travelling and working remotely using Wi-Fi hotspots

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

Save or show PDFs in Chrome

When a website links to a PDF document, it can either be viewed in Chrome or downloaded. You can set this choice by configuring Chrome's settings. Open the menu, click Settings and expand the Advanced section. In the 'Privacy and security' section,

click Content Settings, then 'PDF documents'. There's a switch you can set to choose between viewing PDFs in the browser or downloading them to your hard drive. I prefer to download them.

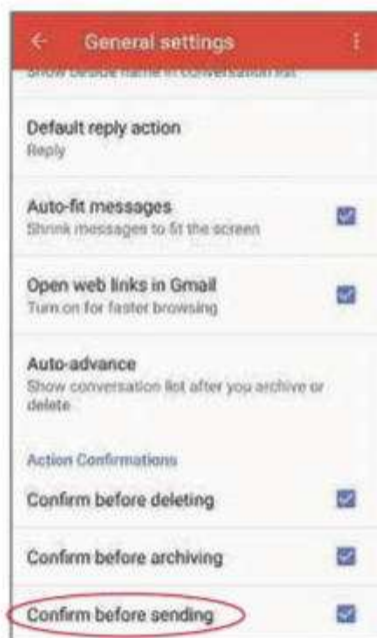
John Collins, via email

Back Issues disc winner



EMAIL

Check before sending



An extra step before sending an email is a good way to prevent impulsive mistakes

About 10 seconds after I send an email, I often realise I have forgotten or mis-typed something. You can buy yourself some extra time in Gmail on Android by going to Gmail Settings, then General Settings. At the bottom, there is an option to 'Confirm before sending', which gives you a chance to pause and think before you send, or

cancel if you need to change anything.

If you do send the email, there is an Undo option at the bottom of the screen, which appears for about five seconds.

Clive Simpson, via email

EBOOKS

Re-download deleted documents on Kindle

I'm aware you can download an ebook that you previously deleted from your Kindle, but I didn't realise that you can also do this with documents. I needed a PDF that had been sent to my Kindle and I was delighted to learn that, once I'd located it, I could download it again.

FratPark, Web User Forums

INTERNET

Load a cached version of your favourite websites

It's frustrating when a website goes offline but you can still access it by searching for it in Google and selecting the cached version. For a time, I even used the rather novel Wayback Machine (archive.org/web) as a solution. However, I've recently started using a quicker method. If a site doesn't load, simply add **cache:** to the beginning of the web address. That's all there is to it!

Phil Massey, via email



If your favourite site goes down, you can look at a recently cached version instead

GENERAL PC

Defer updates to save battery power

As a laptop owner, I find the big bi-annual Windows 10 updates irritating. Just downloading and preparing to update uses loads of battery power, so if my laptop isn't plugged into the mains, I find it useful to put off updates. To do this, go to the Settings app (Windows+i) and choose 'Update & Security'. In the Windows Update section, click the 'Advanced options' link. Find the

Pause Updates section and turn on the switch below.

This only pauses an update for seven days, but that's enough – just turn it on when you're using battery power and turn it off again when you're plugged in, so it can install the updates before you next have to work on battery power.

J Harris, via email

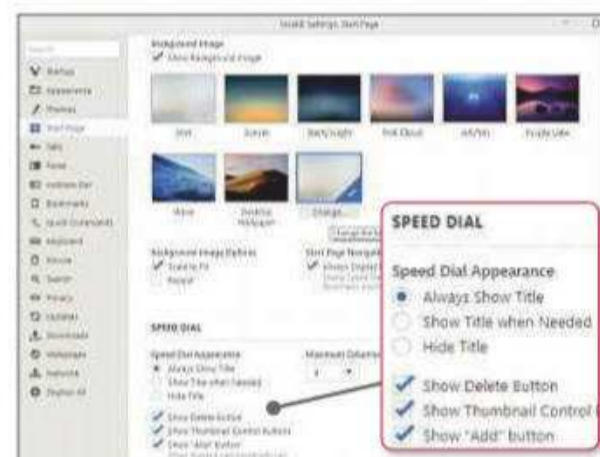
BROWSERS

Customise Vivaldi's Start Page

To change the appearance of Vivaldi's Start Page, go to Tools, Settings, Start Page. Under Background Image, click the blank Custom square and click the Change box when it appears. Now, browse your computer for an image that you want to display whenever you open the New Tab page.

If you have Speed Dial thumbnails on the Start Page, right-click a thumbnail and press 'Select Custom Thumbnail' to add your own image. You'll still be able to tell what they are because their titles are shown beneath the image. You can rename them and get them to display only when you hover your mouse pointer over them: go back to the Start Page settings and, under Speed Dial Appearance, set it to 'Show Title when Needed'. You can get rid of the 'Add' button by unticking 'Show "Add" button'.

Madeline, Web User Forums



Give Vivaldi's Start and New Tab pages a personal touch



SECURITY

Unlock secret Windows Defender setting

There's a hidden security feature in Windows Defender that lets you automatically block elements such as adware and PUPs (Potentially Unwanted Programs), but you have to be running Defender on its own – don't try this if you also use other security software. Press Windows+X, open 'Windows PowerShell (Admin)'. and type: `Set-MpPreference -PUAProtection 1`

Press Enter. The '1' means it's active, so to switch it off, type the command again and replace '1' with '0'. To check everything's up and running, type the following, pressing Enter after each line: `$Preferences = Get-MpPreference`
`$Preferences.PUAProtection`

If you see a '1', Windows Defender is now blocking all that rubbish that's slowing down your computer. Heads up, though: you must disable other antivirus software, so only do this if you're happy relying on Windows Defender alone.

Paul Catterham, via email

OFFICE

Get Wikipedia in Word

Did you know that Microsoft's Office web apps include add-ons that provide extra tools? For example, the Wikipedia add-on lets you research topics using Wikipedia in a sidebar, instead of having to open a new tab and switch between them while you're writing. On the OneDrive website, create a new Word document, click Add-ons on the Insert toolbar and click Store. There are lots of available add-ons and some you have to pay for. Wikipedia is one of the free ones in the Reference category.

Richard Daniels, via email



Microsoft's web-based office tools have free add-ons, such as Wikipedia

EMAIL

Add GIFs to your Gmail

There's a cool add-on for Gmail that lets you include GIFs when replying to emails, which you can't otherwise do in a newly composed message. Me and my mates love trading GIFs in our WhatsApp group, and it's great that I can now do this with email, too.



Gyfcats adds fun animations to your Gmail

The add-on is called Gyfcats and you can get it at bit.ly/gif461. Once it's installed, simply open any email to find it in Gmail's right-hand sidebar. As with other messaging tools, it's totally searchable and easy to use.

James Briar, via email

MONITORS

Release trapped screen pixels

Trapped pixels cause black lines or spots on your screen. Part of the screen or the bezel around the edge could be pressing on them, making them show the wrong colour or forcing them to stay black. Press and release the affected area of the screen or bezel to see if it frees and unsticks the pixels. Pulling the bezel out a little bit may also solve the problem.

If the screen appears completely dead, look closely – if you can still see a very dark image, it may mean the backlight is

damaged or broken. You'll need to get a professional to repair the backlight, but this may still be cheaper than replacing the entire screen.

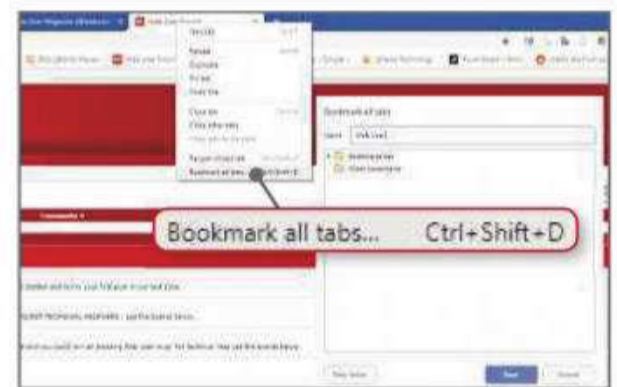
Bill Walker, via email

BROWSERS

Save your tabs in Chrome

If you want to save your current Chrome session and return to it later, you can configure the 'On startup' setting to 'Continue where you left off'. My startup is set to 'Open a specific page or pages'.

You can also save your current session as a group of tabs via the Bookmark Manager. Right-click an open tab and click the last menu item – 'Bookmark all tabs' – or press Ctrl+Shift+D. This brings up a Save window where you can add all the grouped tabs to a new or existing folder. Hover your mouse over the folder to see the titles of all the saved tabs.



Save your current browsing session by bookmarking open tabs as a group

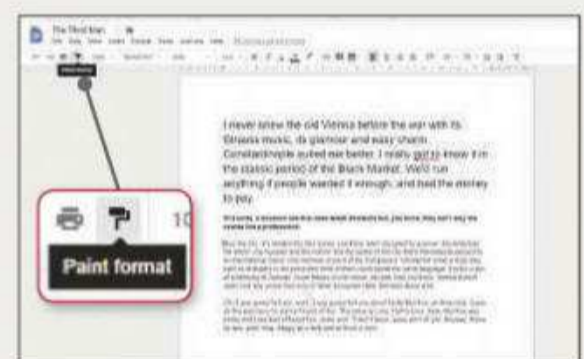
BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

GOOGLE

Copy and paste Google Docs formatting

Having ditched my extortionate Microsoft Office subscription in favour of the free Google Docs suite, I've spent many an unhappy hour manually entering the Formatting menu after copying and pasting text from various websites. In Word, the Paste Options box let me clear formatting but I was utterly stumped in Google Docs.

Turns out, once you've pasted your text into the document, you can right-click it and select Clear Formatting. To save even more time, you can copy and paste the formatting of a paragraph with the 'Paint format' button – the paint-roller icon on the toolbar. Place your cursor alongside a paragraph whose formatting you wish to copy, then click 'Paint format'. Now, click alongside the text you want



Google Docs' 'Paint format' tool is the hassle-free way to copy formatting

to change. The font type and size should change automatically.

To copy the formatting of multiple sections, simply double-click 'Paint format', then proceed as before.

Benjamin Wheeler, via email

Web User says: You can also remove formatting using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+Shift+V when pasting.

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?

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



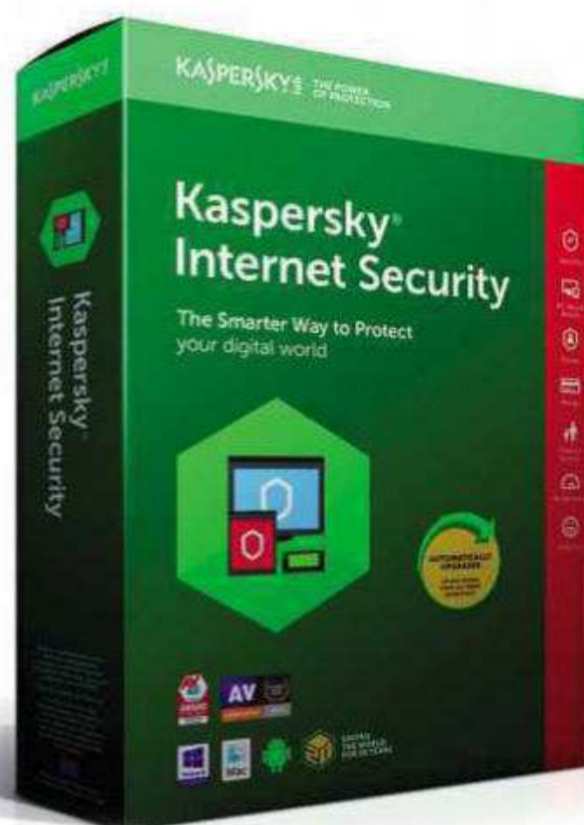
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Kaspersky Internet Security 2019 - on sale now

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:

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- ✓ 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



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Readers' Helpdesk

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

EMAIL

Block Gmail's new look

Q I don't like the new-look Gmail (mail.google.com) but I can't find a way of switching back to the previous design. The last time Gmail was updated, there was an option to keep the old look. Does anyone know if it's still there?

lolalola, Web User Forums

A You can't go back, but you can load a basic version intended for users with poor internet connections. Open Gmail and, as soon as the page starts to load, check for the option to 'Load basic HTML' in the bottom-right corner. You need to be quick because once your inbox fully loads, the option disappears. Choosing it opens a basic inbox view. If you click 'Set basic HTML as default view' at the top of the screen, this quick-load view is preserved. It may not always be suitable, but you can revert at any time by clicking 'Switch to standard view'.

Moonshine, Web User Forums



Not a fan of the new Gmail? Try the quick-loading basic view instead

GENERAL PC

Rebuild your Tokens.dat file

Q I've been using Windows 10 on my laptop since the free update. The other day, a message appeared asking me to activate Windows. Is this malware?

Martjc, Web User Forums

A It's a genuine message but may mean your Tokens.dat file is corrupt. From the Start menu, open Command Prompt (Admin) or PowerShell (Admin), then type the following commands, pressing Enter after each line:

```
net stop sppsvc
cd %windir%\ServiceProfiles\
```

BROWSERS

Use Chrome add-ons in Vivaldi

Q I don't use many add-ons but I saw one for Firefox called I Don't Care About Cookies (bit.ly/idc461), which blocks the cookie warning exhibited by websites.

Is it available for Vivaldi? And is there somewhere I can see a list of Vivaldi-compatible add-ons?

fossewayfella, Web User Forums

A Open Vivaldi and find I Don't Care About Cookies in the Chrome web Store (bit.ly/idcc461). Click the 'Add to Chrome' tab, then check it's correctly installed by opening the menu and selecting 'More tools', Extensions. Right-click the page and check the context menu for 'I Don't Care About Cookies'. Most Chrome add-ons work



Most Chrome add-ons also work in Vivaldi

in Vivaldi, though there's no easy 'get extensions' option in the browser, so you have to bookmark the Chrome Web Store (bit.ly/chrome461).

I've added it to my Speed Dials on the Start/New Tab page. To do this, click the bookmark icon in the Location Bar, select Speed Dial and give it a description, then click 'Save'.

Moonshine & Madeline, Web User Forums

Web User says: Find out more about the latest version of Vivaldi on page 52.

```
LocalService\AppData\Local\
Microsoft\WSLicense
ren tokens.dat tokens.bar
net start sppsvc
cscript.exe %windir%\
system32\slmgr.vbs /rilc
Type shutdown /r /t 00 to restart
the PC. That should stop the message.
```

Cantrel, Web User Forums



A corrupt Tokens file can make Windows forget it's registered

GENERAL PC

Solve boot problems with a new motherboard battery

Q I've got a 64-bit Windows 10 PC from HP. Recently, whenever I switch it on, I get a black page with lines at the top reading: Processor

Type, Processor speed, L1/L2/L3, Memory size, Channel 1, Channel 2, BIOS revision. At the bottom, highlighted in blue, it says, 'F1 : Boot'. When I press F1, it boots up, no problem. I'm not aware that I've changed anything to make this happen.

steveh, Web User Forums

A When you first get your PC to boot after pressing F1, does the clock show the correct time? If not, a flat CMOS battery (often called a watch or coin battery) is the likely cause – remove the cover from your PC to locate it on your motherboard and replace it. This may reset your BIOS, so download any available updates from the HP support site. Also, try going to Recovery, Advanced Startup, Restart.

Cantrel & Bedstor, Web User Forums



A watch battery helps your PC remember essential start-up info

Star Email

Traditional spacing is not antiquated!

Having read Jay Knutsen's 'Blunder of the Fortnight' in Issue 459 (bit.ly/webuser459) about transforming Word's double spaces into single spaces, I would like to add the following. In 1994 (ouch!), I was working at the Bank of England. I was in its 'school', learning to touch-type for stock certificates and many other very important documents. There, I was taught to type three spaces after the full stop, which is a lesson I have continued to use to this day. I was led to believe that this was therefore grammatically correct at that time.

Although Jay acknowledged that others have their own preferences, this is not a 'personal' preference but a well-learned rule. I have no idea whether this is or was the accepted



standard, and while it may be considered 'antiquated' by some, it's a rule I've continued to follow ever since.

Later in life, and prior to computers, I worked in the Probate sector, where I typed many wills. It was imperative that these contained absolutely no mistakes

or corrections. The same three-space rule was accepted as the standard for this form of legal document, too.

I touch-type well to this day, and I have a friend living in Australia who is also always correcting the grammar of others. We discussed this matter and she agreed that this was, and may still be, the accepted, grammatically correct method of typing. I use Word now but, being a touch typist, the three-space gap after the full stop comes naturally, so I don't need to use many of the 'cheats' contained within the software. I take exception to the word 'antiquated' and the heading calling it a 'blunder'. I guess if this method is classed as antiquated then so am I and many others of my age!

Patricia M Smith, via email

Back Issues disc winner



Beat hackers by using a pre-paid card

Barry Collins' Page 404 article about credit card security (Issue 459) has prompted me to share the idea I came up with after my PayPal account was hacked a few years ago, putting me severely overdrawn.

At the time of the hack, I'd been working for an ISP for 15 years so I was supposed to know what I was doing when it came to online security! The simple solution was to purchase a pre-paid card for



99p and transfer just enough money to cover the cost before making an online purchase. Local and overseas online retailers treat the card as a credit card, so I've had no problems whatsoever.

I suppose this system could be seen as a slight inconvenience, but if my card is ever compromised again, I'll sleep better at night knowing that the hackers can't steal more than the pound or two that's left on the card.

Andrew Davies, via email

Shops still take carbon copies of cards

I'm not sure if Barry Collins (no relation!) realises it, but the practice of shops using those 'old-fashioned devices' that make a carbon copy of your card has never quite gone away. Apparently, they're still perfectly legal and GDPR-compliant. Just last week, I heard that a well-known chain of tool suppliers was using them to take card payments when its system

went down. Perhaps it's more secure than other ways of using your card.

David Collins, via email

A little security knowledge is dangerous

After reading about two-factor authentication, I went off half-cocked and proceeded to waste my time and money. People may laugh at my naivety, with some justification, but all I can say is

Quiz Answers: Issue 460

1 **I, Robot**



2 **Blade Runner**



3 **Forbidden Planet**



4 **Men in Black**



5 **Cowboys & Aliens**



6 **12 Monkeys**



WINNER!

Well done to **Phil Manners** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



TECH YEAR

1976



that I expected more from experts. First, I bought a Yubico security key as recommended by one 'expert'. This doesn't work with Windows Hello or much else I wanted it for, either. A guide on the Yubico website explained how to set up two-factor authentication, but nothing happens with my key, and there were no instructions on how to make it work.

Then I decided to download a password manager to replace the one built into Firefox, which had served me well until then. The moral here is that if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Sticky Password isn't compatible with Firefox, and I wasn't overly impressed with LastPass, which didn't catch all my passwords. I tried Dashlane in Firefox and it worked once but captured just five out of around 56 passwords. The second time I tried Dashlane, it refused my master password, so I couldn't match it up with my Yubico key. I wrote a strong email to Dashlane support, who replied a day later to ask me for the very information I'd already given them.

Perhaps I should stop buying premium versions of programs just to use the key, and stop reading security advice, too. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Martin Fletcher, Thorpe Hesley

Recommended link not working

With reference to the 'Filter adverts from Google's search results' tip in Best New Browser Tools, Issue 459, the link for the recommended

extension Google Search Bypass (bit.ly/bypass459) doesn't work. Please can you confirm the correct link?

Kiasu, Web User Forums

Web User says: Unfortunately, it seems that Google removed the Google Search Bypass extension from the Chrome Web Store shortly after Issue 459 went to press. We presume it doesn't approve of its adverts being filtered (although not removed) from search results! We'll look out for another tool that does the same job and share the details in a future issue.



What you say...

GOOGLE IS CLOSING GOOGLE+ (bit.ly/google461) FOR THE PUBLIC. DID YOU EVER USE IT?

Never used it as such. Had a profile for my business, but only updated it annually. I doubt I'll miss it.

Cheyvonne Bower

This is another VHS/Betamax thing. Google+ is the better platform, but it just never had the take up.

Adam Francis

Google what? I guess that says it all!

Anthony Higham

I tried it. Too little, too late, I think. It would have had to be something special if it was to topple Facebook or Twitter. It didn't.

Ady Colclough @AdyC76

HAVE YOU HAD ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE WINDOWS 10 OCTOBER UPDATE?

It wiped Google Chrome from two machines that I updated. What a pain to uninstall, reboot, then reinstall.

Derek Sutton

Updated two PCs last week – both working normally, no files lost at all.

John Hewett

Updated two computers, one with Home, the other Pro, and had no problems so far. I should add though that all my data is stored on external hard drives.

Garry Gazzadp Povey

I've used Windows right back to 3.1. The four times my computers have failed have all been down to Windows updates messing up.

Gavin Green

MORE THAN 250 PEOPLE HAVE DIED TAKING SELFIES SINCE 2011 (bit.ly/selfie461). IS THERE A WAY WE CAN STOP PEOPLE TAKING DANGEROUS SELFIES?

Perhaps someone could make an app that Photoshops a previous selfie shot taken in a safe location? People use Photoshop all the time, so why not save lives too?

Lance Parkington

We can't. There's always going to be a percentage of people who don't put their own personal safety first.

Brian Brown

Remove front-facing cameras.

Goldmaster @imthegoldmaster

You can't legislate against stupidity!

Robin Felton

THERE'S A NEW VERSION OF THE WINAMP MEDIA PLAYER AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD (www.winamp.com). DID YOU EVER USE IT?

It was one of the first systems I can remember using that had an easy way to compile your playlist and it didn't eat massive amounts of memory on your PC when in use.

Janne Virtanen @JanneVirtanen81

Yes, it was my favourite media player – I'm off to download it now.

Nomadic Dad

To paraphrase Roy from *The IT Crowd*: "I haven't seen that since the Nineties". I probably won't bother using it again because I play my music through Wi-Fi speakers these days.

Lee Dodgson

Winamp was good only because the alternative was Windows Media Player, which was shocking. I use GOM Player (www.gomlab.com) now, but sadly Spotify has me for music now, and good old VLC (www.videolan.org/vlc) for video.

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

! Page 404



Microsoft goes missing when things go wrong with Windows, says **Barry Collins**

Don't expect help with broken Windows

Another Windows 10 update, another set of problems. When Windows was updated in the spring, many users found that the operating system froze when using Google Chrome. This time around, documents and other files are being wiped after the upgrade. Whoops.

For sure, Microsoft has big questions to answer regarding its testing procedures. It boasts of 10 million users on its Windows Insider Programme, trying out new Windows releases before they're effectively forced on to all our PCs. With so many testers, how are these major bugs slipping through?

The answer lies in the question. There were reports of test versions of the October update wiping people's files – they just got buried in the avalanche of feedback. When you shout fire in a forum full of 10 million people, there's every chance you won't be heard.

My biggest problem with Microsoft isn't so much that errors creep into code in the first place – that's almost inevitable. My beef is how the company deals with them.

I'm writing this almost a week after reports of disappearing data started to emerge and five days after

Microsoft yanked the faulty update from its site. Yet, if you were to visit Microsoft's support pages, you wouldn't know there was a problem at all.

The "Windows Help" page has a guide to "what's new in recent updates", but not a word about what to do if that same October update has whitewashed your files. It's see no evil, speak no evil.



What about the Contact Us button on that Help page? Surely that's going to give you a phone number to call where someone can talk you through how to get your files back? Nope, not so much. The first time I clicked it, it returned a

'page not found' message. On the second attempt, it launched Microsoft's virtual help assistant app on my desktop – one of those apps designed

to stop you talking to an actual human being for as long as possible.

Playing the game, I typed in "My files were deleted after Windows 10 update". Microsoft's virtual assistant thought about it for a couple of seconds and posted a link to a support forum post from October 2016. That's about as much use as a concrete trampoline.

"Did this solve your problem?" the Microsoft bot optimistically enquired. No, mate, it didn't. Off it goes to hunt for another article, this time from August 2016, which has two frankly pathetic suggestions for why your files might have gone missing after a Windows update before helpfully suggesting: "if you still can't find your files, you may need to restore them from a backup".

Only after you've exhausted the virtual assistant's patience by repeatedly pressing No on the "Did this help?" question do you finally get an offer to speak to a human being.

None of this is remotely good enough – not the showstopping errors in the first place, nor the 'pretend it's not happening' attitude of Microsoft support.

Just as you can barely expect the police to turn up if your car gets broken into these days, you can't rely on Microsoft showing any willingness to respond to broken Windows.

“Only after you've exhausted the virtual assistant's patience by repeatedly pressing No on the "Did this help?" question do you finally get an offer to speak to a human being”

WebUser

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FOR MORE INFO SEE PAGE 62

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