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# AMAZON'S BLACK FRIDAY

# WebUser

Issue 462

14 - 27 November 2018

/ Best software / New apps / Wi-Fi 6, Jargon nil

Set alerts for the  
biggest price drops  
(and avoid fake bargains)

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*He didn't follow  
our advice*



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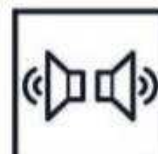
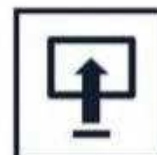


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## End of an error (and an era)

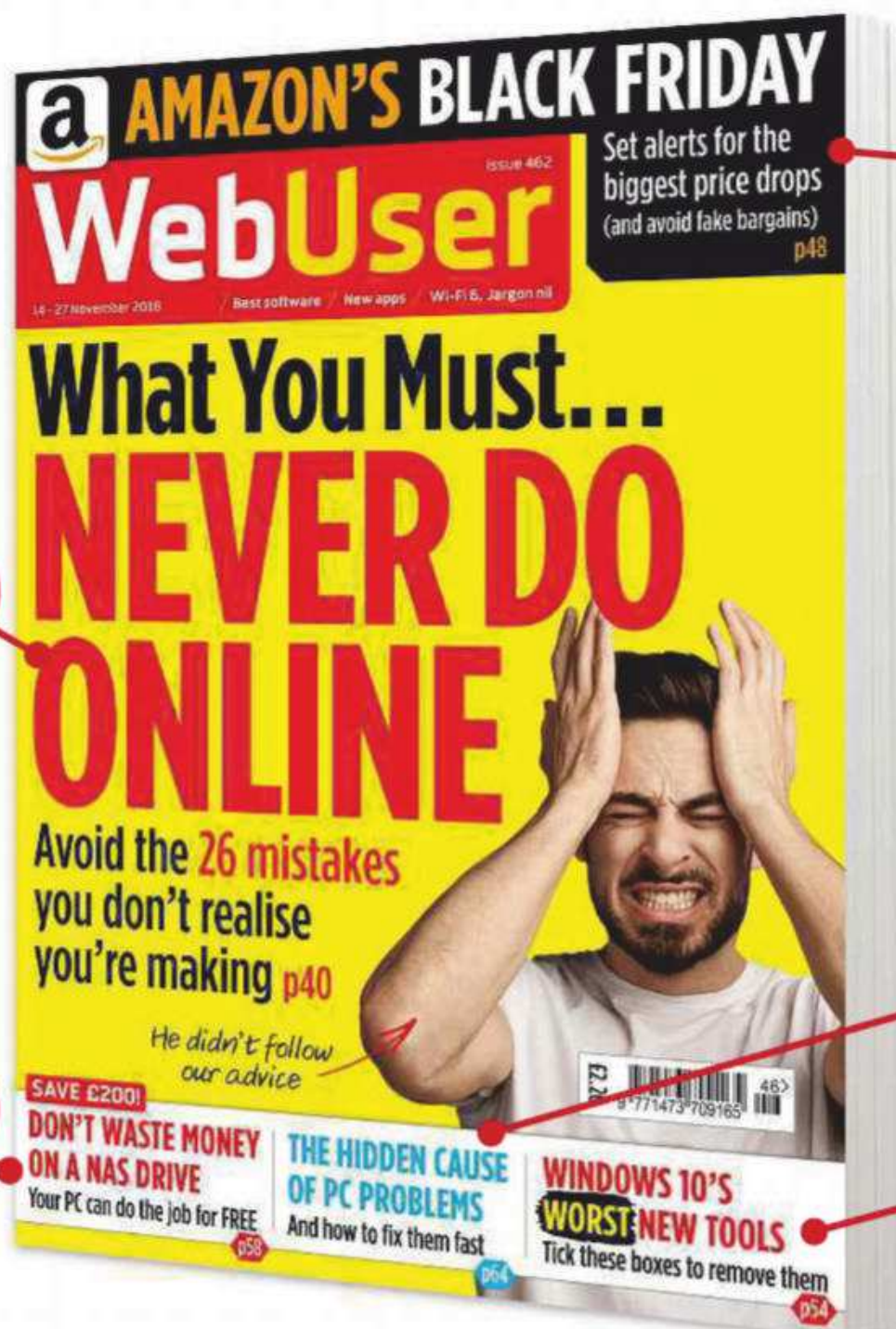
I always used to chuckle at those news stories about the most commonly used internet passwords, which invariably include such lazy logins as '123456', 'qwerty' and 'password'. But I soon stopped laughing when I spotted one of my own passwords on such a list, and swiftly changed it to something less obvious and embarrassingly risky (and no, it wasn't '654321!').

Everyone commits the occasional web blunder and most gaffes are nothing to be ashamed of, unless they seriously endanger your privacy, health or finances. In this issue's cover feature, we highlight 26 of the

most common mistakes we make online, so you can avoid falling prey to them in future.

On a sadder note, we've taken the difficult decision to close the Web User Forums permanently at the end of this month. I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to the forums over the years, and hope you will continue to share your advice through our social-media pages and by emailing [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk).

**Robert Irvine, Editor**  
[robert\\_irvine@dennis.co.uk](mailto:robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk)  
[#webuser](#)



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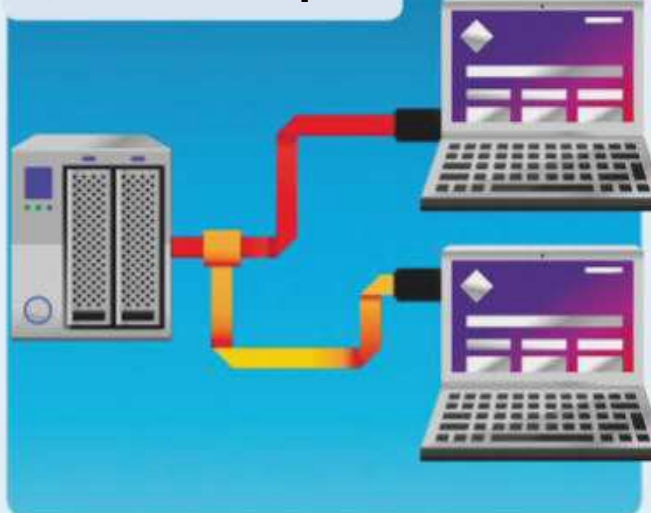
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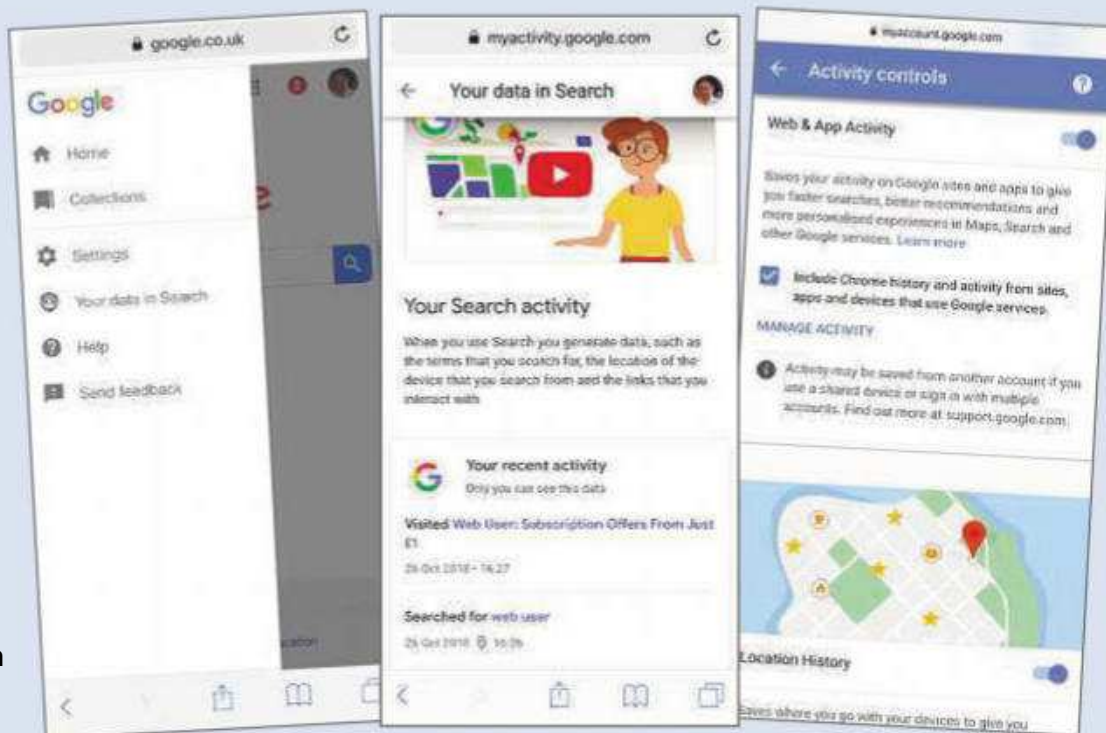


# What's New Online

## Delete your Google search history

**S**earch engines that promise not to track their users, such as DuckDuckGo, ought to be the go-to option for anyone who worries about online privacy, but most of us still use Google by default. This means the company can collect information such as our search terms, links and current location – but now there's an easier way to control what information Google keeps.

When you open the Google homepage in your desktop or mobile browser, you can now click or tap the menu button in the top-left corner and select 'Your data in Search'. This opens a page that lists your search activity, highlighting the



last sites you visited and the search terms you entered. From there, you can delve deeper by choosing Search Activity or Google Activity before selecting the buttons next to each entry to delete it or discover more.

out, and there's plenty of information about how Google uses your data. The page is also heading to the Google app for iOS and Android very soon.

[www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk)

To make life even easier, there are options to remove your last hour's search activity or delete the lot in one go. What's more, you can ask Google not to save your web, app, voice or audio activity in the first place, and even control the ads you see when you search, to prevent future privacy problems.

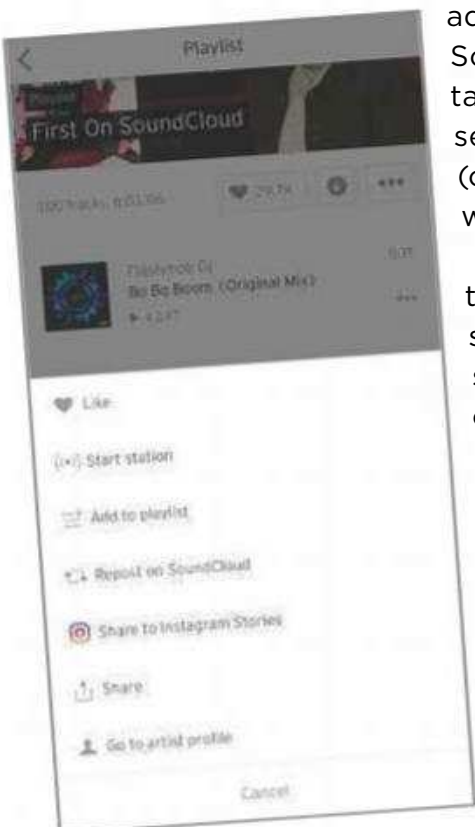
It's certainly worth checking

## Share SoundCloud tracks to Instagram Stories

[www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com)

Music fans can now post songs to Instagram Stories direct from SoundCloud, without the hassle of taking screenshots and sorting links. Following the example of Spotify, which added a similar feature in May, SoundCloud lets you share tracks by tapping the Share button and selecting 'Share to Instagram Stories' (or the Instagram icon, depending on which phone you have).

When Instagram opens, it displays the album artwork with a moveable sticker containing the name of the song. Followers can then click 'Play on SoundCloud' at the top of Stories to listen to the tracks before commenting in real time. For this to work, you need to have both the SoundCloud and Instagram apps on your iOS or Android device and be signed into both. It's particularly useful for musicians who want to get their songs out to a wider audience with the minimum of fuss.



## Become an online graffiti artist

[drawonthiswebsite.com](http://drawonthiswebsite.com)

Asking web users to visit a site, grab a virtual pen and start drawing is inevitably going to invite some trouble. Certainly, that's what happened when Draw

On This Website first emerged, with some users deciding to scribble swear words and draw rude pictures – until the brains behind this communal art project intervened with a different approach.

Now you have to sign in with Twitter, after which you can use the free black ink for two minutes, from the moment you make your first mark. And while there are still no restrictions on what you can place on the digital canvas, your creations will fade away after five minutes. Only by purchasing one of the blue, orange or green inks for 99 cents (78p) can you ensure your works of art are permanent. This hasn't completely cut out the bad behaviour, but it's fascinating to see what creative works people are coming up with.





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

## Explore The Met Museum of Art

[bit.ly/met462](http://bit.ly/met462)

Google Arts and Culture has a long-standing relationship with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and you can now explore more than 200,000 artworks online. Search The Met's collection through the web or phone apps, using attributes such as time or colour, and download anything you see under a Creative Commons Zero licence.



## Use stickers in WhatsApp



[www.whatsapp.com](http://www.whatsapp.com)

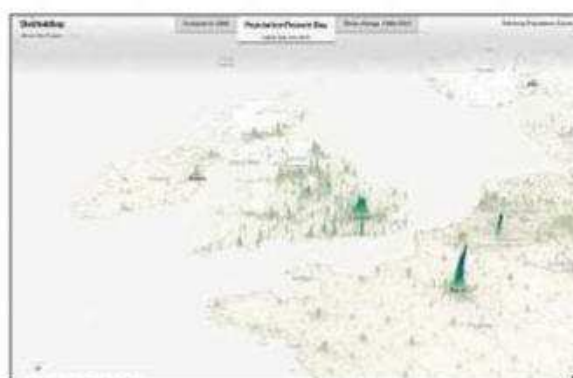
Would you rather use stickers in your WhatsApp conversations than having to go through the hassle of typing words? If so, we've got good news for you. It's taken its time, but WhatsApp has finally made sticker packs

available in its iOS and Android apps, and more are due to follow. To use them, simply tap the new sticker button within the text-entry field and select the one you want. By tapping the + icon, you'll also be able to add new third-party sticker packs as they become available in Google Play and Apple's App Store.

## View global population spikes

[bit.ly/pop462](http://bit.ly/pop462)

Population sizes are hard to visualise, but this map offers a unique way forward. It uses 3D population pyramids to show at a glance where large concentrations of people live. Taller blocks show larger populations, and an overall figure tells you how many people live in the area shown on screen. You can compare the most recent map (dating from 2015) with 1990 to see the changes over the past 25 years, view facts for various destinations from Asia to Africa, and "fly" to different locations.



## Discover where your food is grown

[bit.ly/food462](http://bit.ly/food462)

If you've ever wondered which crops are grown across Europe and the US, this interactive map will fill you in. Hover your mouse over an area to see the top crops along with field sizes. The most interesting part, however, is the method of data collation. The tech behind the map uses machine-learning algorithms to analyse satellite imagery, allowing for the most up-to-date information.



## NEW VOICE COMMANDS



### Book a ride

Say, "Hey Google, book a ride to" followed by your destination, and Assistant will provide current waiting times for taxi firms such as Uber, together with prices.



### Activate the flashlight

With iOS 12, Apple introduced a new way to turn your device's flashlight on and off. Just say, "Hey Siri, turn the flashlight on" to activate it and "Hey Siri, turn the flashlight off" when you're done.



### Add smart home devices

If you're not sure which of your smart home devices are compatible with Amazon Echo, say, "Alexa, discover my devices" and it will check for any lights, plugs and other smart items in your home.



### Take desktop Snapchat photos

[snapcamera.snapchat.com](http://snapcamera.snapchat.com)

Snapchat is allowing its selfie Lenses to be used with third-party desktop apps for Windows and Mac OS, including Skype, YouTube and Twitch. Simply install Snap Camera and you can add filters to your streaming video.

### Position your sofa perfectly

[bit.ly/sofa462](http://bit.ly/sofa462)

Want to know whether a new sofa will fit in your lounge? DFS's new augmented-reality service lets iPad and iPhone owners see exactly how it will look. Just tap the cube icon on a photo in the Safari browser.

### Identify UFO sightings

[www.mayaman.cc/ufo](http://www.mayaman.cc/ufo)

This Chrome experiment grabs data from the National UFO Reporting Center to show reported sightings of potential little green men on an interactive global map. Most of them are in America.





# Need to Know

## Apple admits it will keep slowing down iPhones

### What happened?

Last year, Apple admitted to slowing the performance of older iPhones to keep ageing batteries running longer, but hadn't told users it was doing so and offered no way to turn this off. After the controversy sparked uproar and the government demanded answers, the company offered to replace older batteries at a discount and provided a way to turn off performance 'throttling'.

With that, the controversy seemed to be over, but now it's back. Apple says it will throttle newer phones too, including the iPhone 8, 8 Plus and X, despite initially suggesting these models had been designed to avoid such problems.

Battery throttling isn't an inherently bad idea – it sets a maximum level of battery demand to stop older phones pushing an ageing battery too hard. As batteries get older or become damaged – for example, from exposure to extreme temperatures – their capacity diminishes. If your phone asks too much of an older battery, the iPhone will shut down or freeze. Throttling stops that happening and can help extend the life of your phone, but it also means a noticeably slower device.

The controversy came just as Apple Watch owners were facing a software update bug that made their smartwatches freeze or power down. Apple is asking Watch owners to send the devices in for repair or replacement.

### How will it affect you?

If you bought a new iPhone last year, you'll only see performance throttling



Credit: KOKTARO / Shutterstock.com

when the battery starts to degrade. All batteries do this, and it's not Apple's fault. To check the state of your iPhone battery's health, go to Settings, Battery and Battery Health to see how much capacity your device still has.

Apple no longer turns on throttling by default. Instead, if a lack of battery capacity causes your phone to shut down, you'll see a message offering to enable "performance management", as Apple calls it. Whether you decide to enable it or not is up to you, so consider carefully before you tap that button.

If you're a few months from an upgrade, it might be wise to let your phone manage its performance to avoid battery shutdowns. But if your phone is only a year old and you plan to keep it for a while, it may be smarter to take it to an Apple shop and get a new battery installed. This costs nothing if your device is under warranty. For the iPhone SE or iPhone 6 and newer, the cost is just £25 – that's well worth paying to extend the life of your phone for two more years.

Apple charges £79 to replace the battery in older models, but it stops supporting software upgrades for devices that are more than five years old anyway, so while the iPhone 5S will get this year's new version of iOS, the iPhone 5 won't. That means the former may be worth a battery update, while the latter may simply need replacing.

### What do we think?

Battery throttling is a good idea but it's been poorly and sneakily implemented in this instance. Apple secretly slowing users' iPhones was a serious breach of trust, but now that the performance management system is in the open, it's clear that it's not a bad idea.

Batteries degrade as they age, and Apple says that after 500 recharge cycles, most batteries will see an 80% reduction in capacity. That's true of any device that uses a lithium-ion battery. So until we get a breakthrough with next-generation batteries, using devices more intelligently is a smart move.

It's worth remembering, though, that earlier smartphones had removable batteries. If you wanted to replace the battery, you just ordered a new one from the manufacturer, popped off the back plate and slid in the new one. The drive for slimmer phones has meant batteries are now glued into cases, making them difficult to remove.

Although it's good news that Apple has decided to make battery replacement so affordable, rival smartphone makers who followed its lead in producing slimmer phones that are glued together have yet to offer battery replacements on the cheap. Hopefully, this will become a trend, allowing us to use our phones for as long as possible. That's better for our wallets as well as the environment.

#### Peak Performance Capability

This iPhone has experienced an unexpected shutdown because the battery was unable to deliver the necessary peak power. Performance management has been applied to help prevent this from happening again. [Disable...](#)

Your battery's health is significantly degraded. An Apple Authorized Service Provider can replace the battery to restore full performance and capacity. [More about service options...](#)

**Apple uses 'performance management' to slow phones with degraded batteries**



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

## Google's new easy-to-use reCAPTCHA

### What happened?

Google has created a new version of reCAPTCHA, the fiddly form that web users have to fill in on sites across the web to prove they're human. The aim is to help websites fight back against bots, such as automated ticket-buying scripts.

The original versions of CAPTCHA required human interaction, such as asking users to enter text from a distorted image into a box. The new version, edition three, moves reCAPTCHA entirely into the background of a page so that it never needs human interaction. Instead, it examines a wider range of user activity across multiple pages, giving each site visitor a risk analysis score. The aim is to fight back against spammers and online abuse from bots without interrupting the rest of us.

### How will it affect you?

The good news is that you don't need to do anything with reCAPTCHA version three. Once sites roll it out, you'll no longer need to

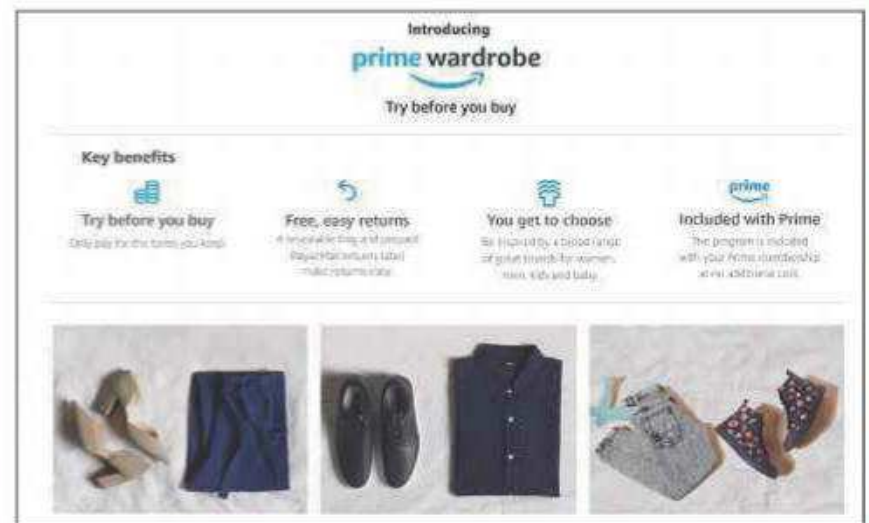
tick the box that says "I am not a robot" or try to decipher blurry images of text or click street signs in tiny photos. Instead, your behaviour across a website will let the site know you're not a bot. If the system does flag you as a suspicious user and believes you may be a bot, a site can require a login, registration or two-factor authentication for you to prove you're a real person.

### What do we think?

Making the web easier for humans to use while adding more hurdles for bots is good news for everyone. The reCAPTCHA system has long been a necessary frustration online, forcing us to read blurred text that's a struggle to decipher or tick seemingly pointless boxes proclaiming our humanity in order to fight back against bots. Automating that process will not only reduce such frustrations, but also help to prevent spam and online abuse, by making it harder for dodgy bots to sign up for websites and apps.



## Amazon's try-before-buy clothing service



### What happened?

One downside of online shopping is that you can't try on items of clothing before you buy them, which means you have to pay to return garments that don't fit. Amazon hopes to make things easier with its new Prime Wardrobe service, which allows three to eight items to be delivered to your home at no initial charge – but only for members of its Prime subscription service.

### How will it affect you?

If you're an Amazon Prime subscriber, head to [www.amazon.co.uk/primewardrobe](http://www.amazon.co.uk/primewardrobe) for details of the service. Any item with the Prime Wardrobe logo can be delivered to your home free of charge, and you have seven days to try it on before returning it for free with the included shipping bag and label. Whatever you decide to keep, you pay for.

The service doesn't apply to all clothing on Amazon, but it does include clothes, shoes and accessories across a range

of participating brands. You're also offered discounts relating to the number of items you choose to keep – from £5 off items worth £100, to £20 discounts on items worth £200 or more.

### What do we think?

One of the frustrations of online shopping is ordering an item of clothing only to find it doesn't fit properly. This can be mitigated by ordering the same item in multiple sizes, but that means paying upfront, fiddling with returns systems and paying for your own delivery. This is why Amazon Wardrobe is a good idea, but it's the selection of clothes on offer that will make or break the service: it's no good if the items you want aren't available in your size.

This is another service that makes Amazon Prime an appealing subscription, along with free next-day delivery, video streaming and free books. However, you'll have to be an avid online shopper to make the £79-a-year fee worthwhile for Prime Wardrobe alone.



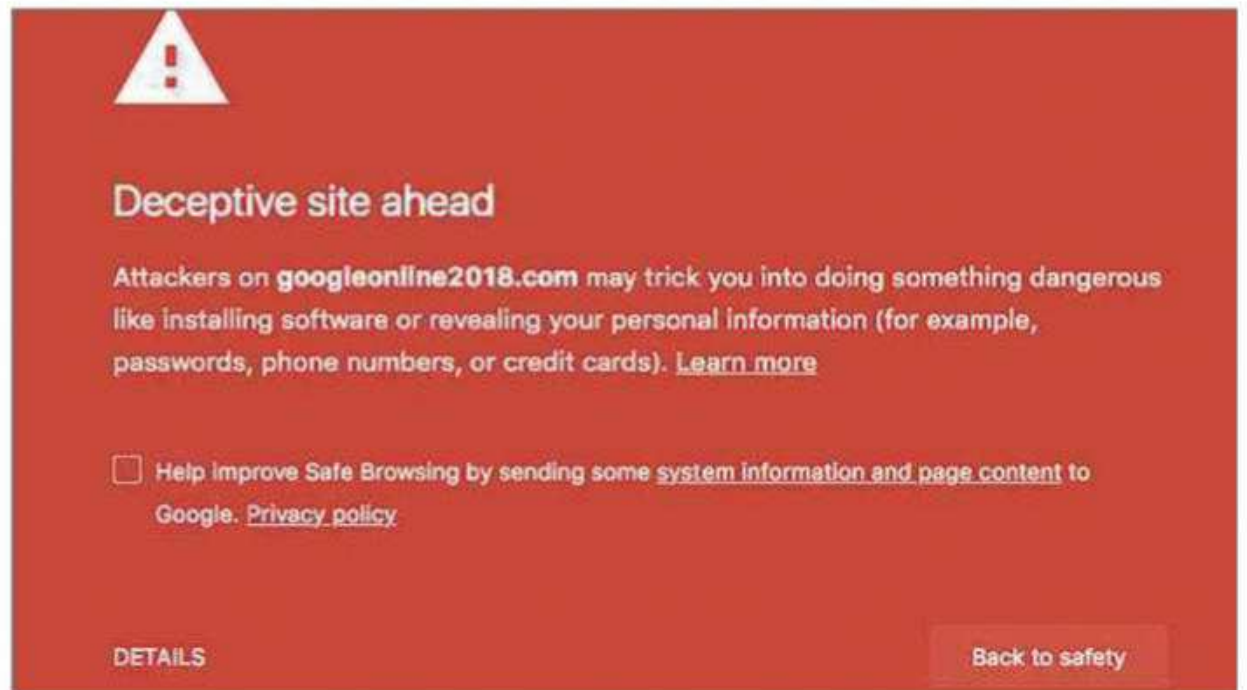
# Bing links to malware in searches for Chrome

## What happened?

Malicious files disguised as Google Chrome have appeared in Bing's search results. The Microsoft-owned search engine was recently found to be promoting a link to a phishing website when users searched for the Chrome browser.

Twitter user Gabriel Landau brought the issue to the attention of *Web User's* sister site Alphr after he tried to download Chrome through Microsoft Edge, the default browser on his new Windows 10 PC. When he searched for "download chrome", the top result was an advert that supposedly led to "[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)". In fact, the link took him to [googleonline2018.com](http://googleonline2018.com), a scam website designed to look like the real thing.

Other web browsers, including Chrome, blocked the malicious link, recognising it as a deceptive site. As Landau and others found out, however, Bing allowed the scam link on the front page of its search results, despite its dubious URL. The malicious advert didn't appear in every search, but it did only show up in Edge – both Firefox and Chrome recognised the website as a scam. Landau identified the downloaded file as malware by inspecting its digital signature, and found that its installer wasn't made by Google, but by Alpha Criteria Ltd, a known distributor of malware.



## How will it affect you?

The presence of malicious links in Bing's search results highlights how careful you need to be about what you click online. An ad blocker will hide dubious results like this, but if you prefer not to use one – perhaps because you don't agree with the morality of denying websites their funding – your browsing may be hijacked by such devious tricks. As always, it's essential to keep your security software updated to safeguard your PC against the latest threats.

## What do we think?

This story casts Microsoft's products in a very poor light. The company

responded to the alert by removing the offending ad, but since this isn't the first time it has popped up in Bing's search results, there's no guarantee that the issue has been resolved permanently.

Microsoft tried to contact Landau on Twitter, encouraging him and others to report suspicious adverts to the company's website. At the time of writing, Microsoft hadn't commented as to whether it was taking steps to prevent such attacks in the future.

We all like to think we're tech-savvy enough to avoid being scammed by fake websites, but as this incident demonstrates, it's all too easy for malware to slip through the cracks.



## FIRST LOOK

### iPhone XR

[bit.ly/iphonexr462](https://bit.ly/iphonexr462)

Apple unveiled three new iPhones this year, but it's saved the best till last. The iPhone XR is Apple's 'budget' model – that's if your budget stretches to £750 for a phone. It's about the same price as a new iPhone 6 in 2014, but £250 cheaper than the latest top-spec models.

Behind the 6.1in liquid-retina screen is one of Apple's top-of-the-range A12 Bionic processors and 3GB of RAM, which make the phone feel zippy and lag-free. Most users will struggle to tell the difference between the XR and premium iPhones.

Like the more expensive models, the XR features True Depth FaceID and wireless charging. However, it improves enormously on its

predecessors' battery life. It's not quite as water resistant as its older siblings, but its IP67 rating means it can handle the odd spot of rain – so it's ready for the British winter.

Because it's a so-called budget device, the iPhone XR lacks a fingerprint scanner, 3D Touch and additional antenna bands, which affects download speeds. While these may not be deal-breakers, the phone's camera specs pose a more serious lack. Unlike the XS and XS Max, the iPhone XR comes without a second, depth-mapping camera. Instead, it forces the 12-megapixel camera and some so-so software trickery to do the heavy lifting without the aid of a rear



telephoto lens or 'intelligent' portrait mode. As a result, its images are grainier and slightly washed out.

The iPhone XR is available in a range of colours. Standard black and white models are joined by blue, orange, yellow and red. You also have a choice of storage options: 64GB, 128GB and 256GB. It's worth opting for the middle one,

because 64GB doesn't leave much room for apps and other i-delights, even when you're using cloud storage.

There are better smartphones available for this price, but if you're an Apple fan, you won't be disappointed by the iPhone XR.





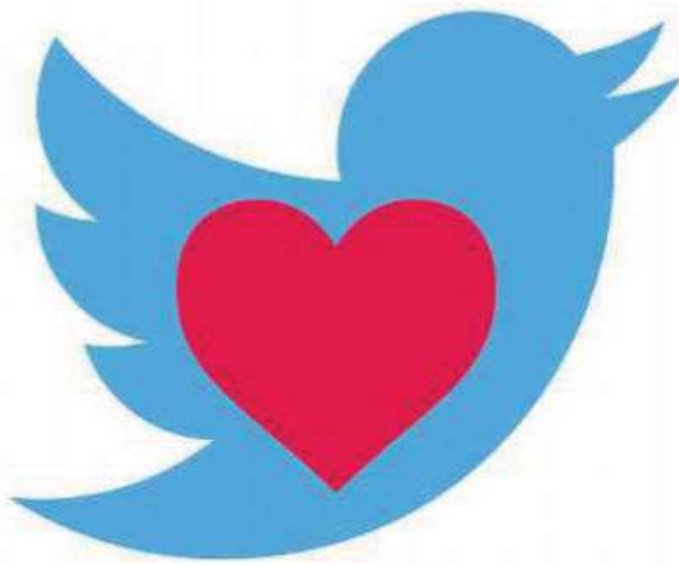
## WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

## Is Twitter scrapping its Like button?

Twitter chief Jack Dorsey has apparently hinted that the social network will be removing its Like button "soon". The remarks, allegedly made during a private Twitter event, follow on from last month's Wired25 expo, when the introspective CEO commented that "right now we have a big Like button with a heart on it and we're incentivising people to want it to go up. Is that the right thing, versus contributing to the public conversation or a healthy conversation? How do we incentivise healthy conversations?"

Twitter and its co-founder have had a bruising few months after a floundering appearance at the recent Congressional hearings, rumours of 'shadow-banning' conservative users and the dismissal of Twitter's unofficial position as the "free-speech wing of the free-speech party" – a joke that made Dorsey few friends. However, after increased advertising revenue and the removal of thousands of Twitter bots, the US President's social network of choice is finally turning a profit – and it only took 12 years.

Those experiences have fed the platform's current identity crisis. In a statement, Twitter said: "As we've been saying for a while, we are rethinking everything about the service to ensure we are incentivising healthy



conversation, and that includes the like button. We are in the early stages of the work and have no plans to share right now."

## LIKELIHOOD RATING



The Like button is a small part of a broader picture as Twitter attempts to define itself in a culturally and politically riven online landscape. This isn't the first time Twitter has toyed with its icons, however: in 2015 it replaced its original Favourite star with the heart-shaped Like button, bringing it more in line with its social-media rival Facebook. So expect it to change – but don't expect it to be for the last time.

## WEBOMETER

## WE LIKE...

## Twitter lets users report spambots

Twitter has introduced another feature to tackle spam and 'fake news' by adding suspected bots, malicious links and dubious hashtags to the category 'It's suspicious or spam', which users can choose when reporting tweets.



## Three boosts mobile-internet speeds

Three mobile customers will soon get faster speeds on their phones thanks to a new 4G technology called 'carrier aggregation'. Three says this will work instantly and improve internet speeds by between 15 and 33%.



## WE DON'T LIKE...

## Flickr limits free users to 1,000 photos

Flickr is going to stop giving its users 1TB of free online storage, and will instead limit their accounts to 1,000 photos. Free members of the image-sharing site have until 8 January to download their photos or upgrade to Flickr Pro.



## Hackers sell private Facebook messages

Russian hackers have advertised 81,000 Facebook users' private messages for sale online. They also published basic data from 176,000 other accounts and claim to have information on up to 120 million users in total.



## What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

## WildCats3D scanner

[bit.ly/scan462](http://bit.ly/scan462) | From £55

The WildCats3D looks like a retro-futuristic record player, but it's actually a wireless 3D scanner that captures accurate digital models for 3D printing. It's powered by a Raspberry Pi 3B+ and an 8-megapixel Pi Camera, so it works independently without hogging your PC. The device's engineers have created some simple scanning software for the system. What's more, the scanner itself is produced using a 3D printer, which means you can pledge just £55 to get some of the parts you need to build your own. For a full kit at a discount price, you need to pledge at least £445.







# Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

### Cathay Pacific breach exposes 9.4 million passengers

Chinese airline Cathay Pacific has admitted to a catastrophic data breach in which the details of 9.4 million customers were exposed. The breach includes data relating to names of passengers, their nationalities, dates of birth, telephone numbers, email and physical addresses, passport numbers, credit card numbers and even historical travel information.

Suspicious activity was first discovered in March, and the airline said it took immediate action to



investigate and contain the event, but stressed that it had no evidence that any personal information has been misused.

"We are very sorry for any concern this data security event may cause our passengers," CEO Rupert Hogg said in a statement. He added that the airline is in the process of contacting anyone who may have been affected.

Cathay Pacific also said it had notified the Hong Kong Police and "the relevant authorities".

[bit.ly/cathay462](http://bit.ly/cathay462)

### Yahoo offers compensation to hacked users

Yahoo will pay out \$50m (£39m) in damages and offer free credit-monitoring services to millions of its users after a data breach in 2013 led to around three billion accounts being compromised by hackers. According to reports, the money will go to 200 million people affected by the hack.



The company agreed to the compensation as part of a court settlement

awaiting federal judge approval.

The attack in 2013, thought to be state-sponsored, stole personal details including names, email addresses and dates of birth. Yahoo stated that passwords, credit card numbers and bank account information were not stolen in the attack. The breach was not disclosed until 2016.

Claims for a part of the compensation fund can be submitted by an eligible Yahoo account user who suffered losses as a result of the breach. Account holders will be compensated at \$25 per hour for time spent dealing with problems caused by the breach.

[bit.ly/yahoo462](http://bit.ly/yahoo462)

## Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

**THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:**  
**David Emm, Principal Security Researcher at Kaspersky Lab**  
([www.kaspersky.co.uk](http://www.kaspersky.co.uk))



**Q** How worried should parents be about paedophiles using AI to mimic celebrities ([bit.ly/mimic462](http://bit.ly/mimic462))?

Jon Thompson, Twitter

**A** Reports say that artificial intelligence may make it easier for anyone

to impersonate famous people in the future, but it's not that difficult now. This is because the anonymity provided by the internet makes it easy for online groomers to pretend to be someone else in order to gain a child's trust.

Parents all too often assume that, because children are tech-savvy, they are safe online. However, this is usually not the case, and there is little public information available.

Meanwhile, beleaguered schools are left with the responsibility to protect children, but are given no extra funding to do so. Teaching online safety needs



to become as much a part of raising children as keeping them safe in the real world.

Even more concerning is that a massive 87% of parents do not restrict the amount of time their young children spend online – and only 13% of parents install security software. Having parental controls in place and reviewing the default settings

for apps are two very small steps that parents can take to help mitigate these risks.

To combat abuse, it's important to equip children with cybersecurity skills at an early age. The launch of the government's Cyber Schools Programme has been a significant step in helping students develop key skills.

If youngsters become more savvy about the dangers presented by the online world, they will be more likely to steer clear of predators. Furthermore, they will potentially be more confident in identifying and reporting such criminals.



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2x ProLite **XUB2792QSU-B1** + DS3002C



2x ProLite **XUB2495WSU-B1** + DS1002C



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# ★ Best New Websites

## Site of the Fortnight

MOTORING

NEW

### Driving Electric drivingelectric.com

Driving Electric, the new website from Web User publisher Dennis, seeks to lift the lid – or at least the bonnet – on the world of electric vehicles (EVs). The new site is already well up to speed, with lots of reviews, news and FAQs about this exciting and eco-friendly technology that's electrifying the UK. The handy user guides – many of which are sponsored by big-shot car manufacturers, so there's no surreptitious advertising – shine a headlight on EV ownership with clear labelling, fuelled by facts and authoritative data. And if the site hasn't answered your burning questions about EVs, you're encouraged to ask.

Our rating



#### Your questions answered

If you need to know more before taking the plunge with an electric car, you're in the place. We've answered all the frequently-asked questions about the electric car. You can send your questions directly to us at info@drivingelectric.com



#### YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

##### Electric car depreciation – will electric vehicles lose their value?

All vehicles lose their value over time – despite latest advice, any vehicle is likely to be a depreciated asset. Your electric vehicle's final depends on many factors.



#### YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

##### How to run a zero-emissions van

Looking to save money by purchasing a zero-emissions electric van? Read this guide before heading to the dealer.

## ENLIGHTENING CONTENT

The world of EVs involves a lot of new information, so the site covers every topic you can think of, and several you may not even have considered

#### Jaguar I-Pace review

The Jaguar I-Pace is a revolution – the first electric executive car to match long range to big desirability and driver reward. It sets a high benchmark



Rating: 4.5  
Price: £64,995 - £84,995

**AMPED UP**  
See how the latest electric and hybrid vehicles measure up, and whether they're worth the money

driving electric

Your question



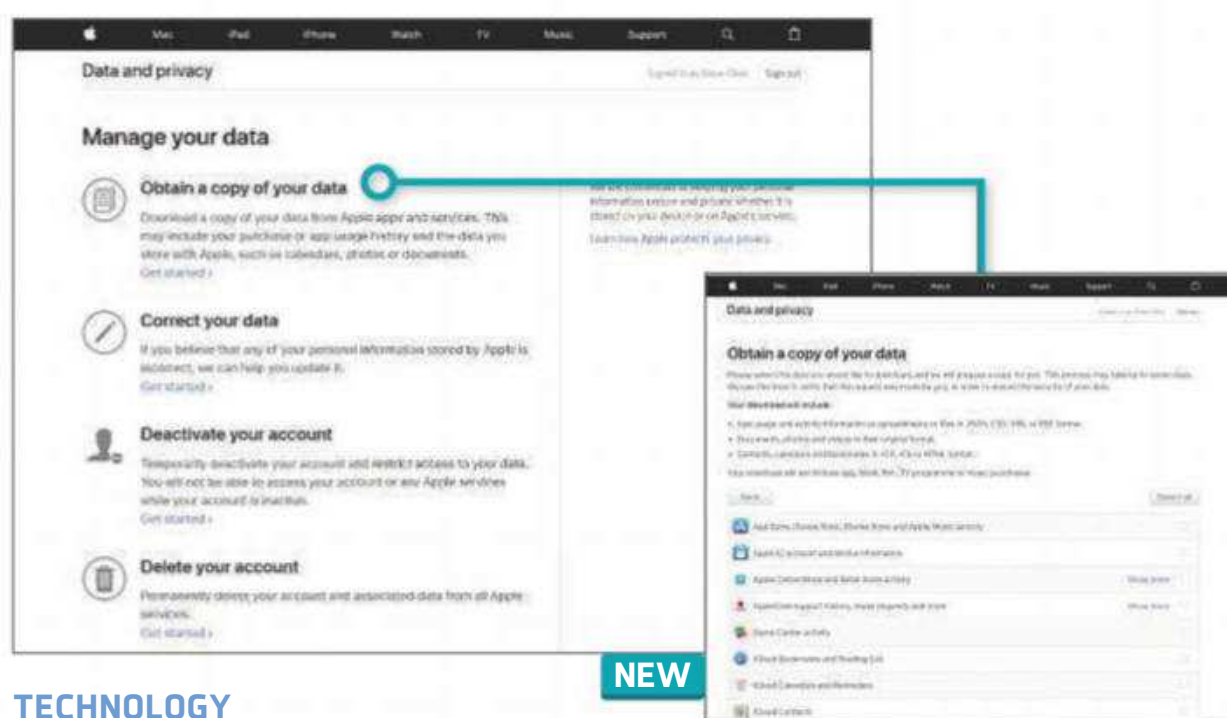
Your ultimate guide to buying and owning an electric car



#### Best electric cars

Rock-bottom running costs and zero emissions – what's not to like about electric cars? Here's our pick of the best

READ MORE



NEW

TECHNOLOGY

### Apple Privacy privacy.apple.com

Apple is leading the charge with its security-first ethos and a belief that “privacy is a human right” – as long as you can afford an Apple product, at least. It's one of the few tech companies out there that doesn't monetise your data (instead, it turns a profit by selling you a new iPhone every year). But it still holds your personal information – and this dedicated privacy portal lets you see it all. The service was originally conceived to comply with the EU's GDPR rules, but this new hub is available to all European, American, Canadian and Australasian users. Just log in with your Apple ID to review and download everything Apple knows about you.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

FOOD & DRINK

### Tick Tock Tea ticktocktea.com

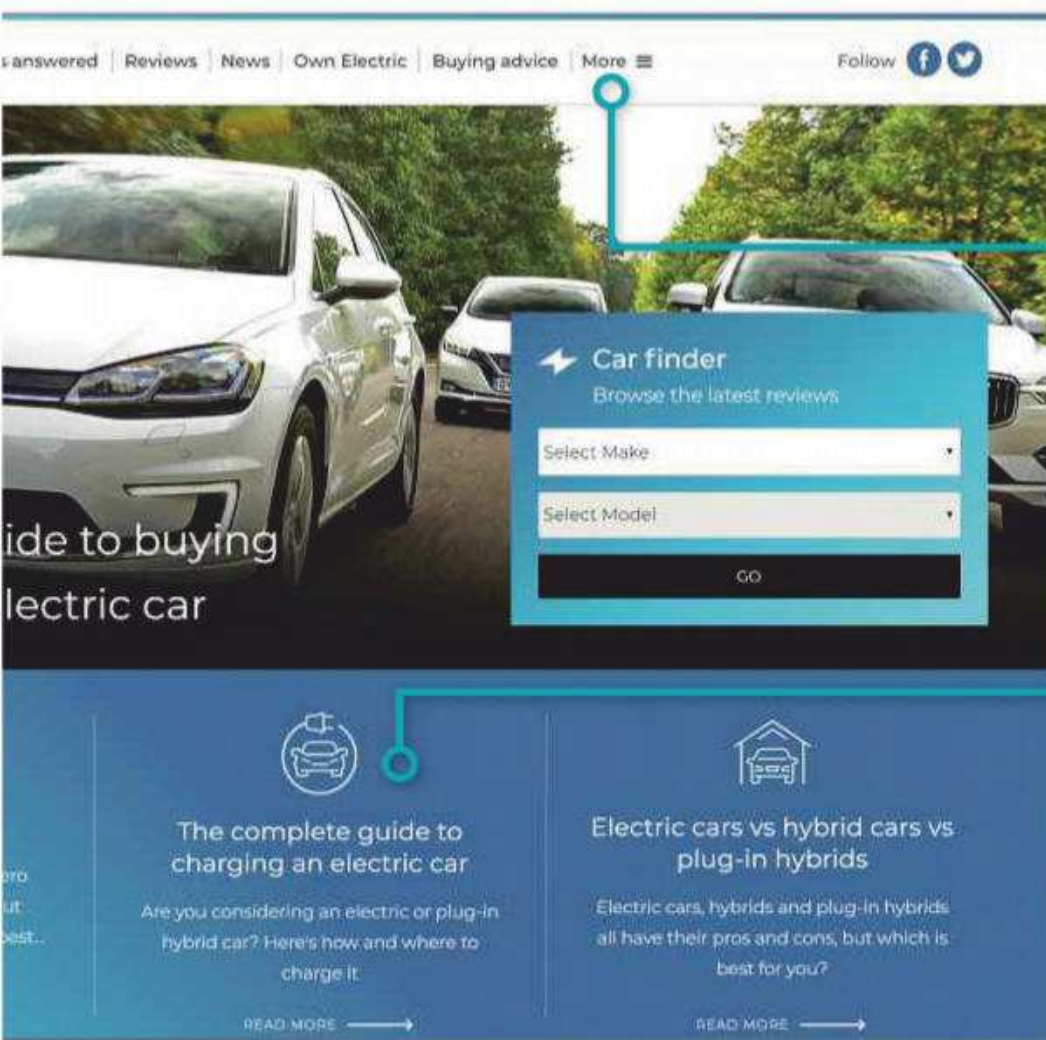
Tick Tock Tea's site looks like the offspring of a United Colors of Benetton advert and a Dulux colour chart. The eye-catching design makes a change from the usual cosy clichés about a soothing cuppa, which is appropriate because Tick Tock specialises in rooibos, or redbush – a caffeine-free herbal tea. The site has two sections: 'Let's Shop' serves up a delectable selection of teas, while 'Let's Talk Tea' houses company-specific information, including a timeline charting this family business's Cape Town origins. Visit The Tock Times for tea-based news, recipes and competitions.

Our rating



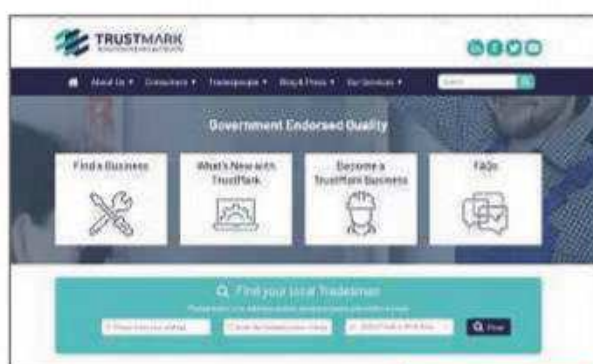


We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features



**TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY**  
Tucked inside is arguably the most useful addition: Buying Advice. Is an electric car right for you?

**FULLY CHARGED**  
There's more than one way to charge a car and, just to make it confusing, more than one type of charger



RELAUNCH

CONSUMER

**TrustMark**  
[trustmark.org.uk](http://trustmark.org.uk)

Trust no-one – unless they've got the stamp of approval from TrustMark. The government-endorsed quality scheme helps you filter out cowboy builders and other dodgy tradesfolk when you need work done on your house. Site navigation has been tidied up – gone are the dozens of confusing and pointless links; in their place, front and centre, are the four most useful and popular destinations. The 'Find your local tradesman' search bar is still in place, letting you discover high-quality companies that won't leave a gaping hole in your roof (when they were only there to mend the boiler).

Our rating



RELAUNCH

ARTS

**Travelwriters UK**  
[travelwriters.co.uk](http://travelwriters.co.uk)

If you fancy yourself as the next Paul Theroux, Bill Bryson or Jan Morris, then trek across the web to Travelwriters UK. This site, whose makeover finally drags it away from the late-90s aesthetic, is a subscription-based hub for professional travel writers, photographers, filmmakers and editors (£30 a year, if you fancy it). Sadly, the site's cluttered navigation bar may have you running for the hills – it makes it unnecessarily tricky to locate UK-based travel writers. But if you only visit one place this year, head for the 'Selected work' tab for some engaging reads from around the world.

Our rating



NEW

SPORT

**Pro Wrestling Corner**  
[prowrestlingcorner.co.uk](http://prowrestlingcorner.co.uk)

British wrestling is still more Giant Haystacks and Big Daddy than Hulk Hogan and The Rock, but its popularity continues to rise. Pro Wrestling Corner is a new site for fans to discover the latest news and reviews, and aims to offer a ringside seat for UK wrestling fans. Or, at least, that's the plan. There's not much going on here yet, outside of a single review for NXT UK – the British arm of the WWE. But what a review! In-depth, and researched and written with a crazed enthusiasm that only true aficionados can muster. If you're a wrestling fan, this is one to bookmark.

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](http://bit.ly/wudisc17) or search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon

**You can still buy our 2016 Back Issues Disc from [bit.ly/wudisc16](http://bit.ly/wudisc16)**






**RELAUNCH**
**FOOD & DRINK**

## Mountain Mead

[mountainmead.co.uk](http://mountainmead.co.uk)

Mead, the world's oldest alcoholic drink, is back – and you can probably thank *Game of Thrones* for its revival. But while it conjures up visions of cloaked rangers swilling from silver goblets, the new-look site for Welsh brewers Mountain Mead offers a modern take on the fermented honey-and-water beverage, and is as simple as the ingredients of this premium, hand-crafted mead. Running along the top are four links, which keep navigation quick and clean – ideal if you've been imbibing this ancient booze. The Mead Masters evidently love what they do, and their passion trickles like honey across every word on the site.

Our rating


**RELAUNCH**
**EDUCATION**

## Schoolasaurus

[schoolasaurus.com](http://schoolasaurus.com)

No prizes for guessing what Schoolasaurus does: it brings dinosaurs to life for schoolkids – figuratively, at least. Run by palaeobiologist Aimee Hacker, the site offers art and geology workshops that teach and inspire the next generation of dino-diggers and fossil-finders. You don't need to be a palaeontologist to unearth what you're looking for: links are neatly placed at the top of each page, letting organisers book age-appropriate workshops and discover the latest events. There are also a handful of goodies to uncover in the shop. The only evolution that this site needs is some dinosaur-themed videos.

Our rating


**RELAUNCH**
**CHARITY**

## Retina UK

[retinauk.org.uk](http://retinauk.org.uk)

Previously known as 'RP Fighting Blindness', this sight-loss charity has received a major rebrand that sees a new website accompany the new name: Retina UK. The presentation isn't quite as slick as other charities out there, but there's a huge volume of helpful content if you or someone you know suffers from sight loss, with advice and info rubbing shoulders with support for employers and teachers. Navigation occurs via an awkward-looking left-hand sidebar, but helpfully, given the nature of the charity, images and text come in large-print, with the option to increase font size and switch to colour-blind mode.

Our rating

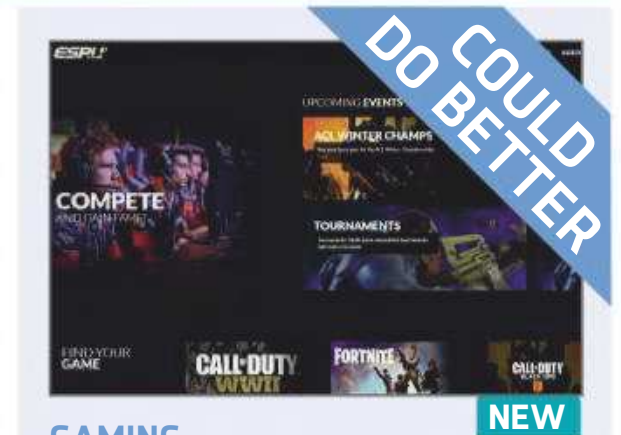

**NEW**
**TOURISM**

## Visit Northwich

[visitnorthwich.co.uk](http://visitnorthwich.co.uk)

Famed for its Roman salt mines (and, today, its Salt Museum), the post-industrial town of Northwich lies at the heart of Cheshire. This new tourist site dubs it 'a destination with a difference' – the difference being that it's probably not the first place you'd think of holidaying. The website does a great job of promoting Northwich's fascinating history, heritage and highlights, with the What's On section and Inspire Me blogs ([bit.ly/inspire462](http://bit.ly/inspire462)) especially worth a read if you're planning a visit. It's not the flashiest site on the web – but it's all the stronger for it. Northwich, after all, isn't Las Vegas. It's a charming town with a rich story, and its website ably reflects that.

Our rating


**NEW**
**GAMING**

## ESPU Arena

[espuarena.com](http://espuarena.com)

Esports is a million-dollar business, with fast-fingered gamers competing to win big bucks. ESPU Arena (which stands for Esports Universe) is riding that wave of popularity with a new platform hosting online tournaments and other gaming goodies. The site looks every inch a gamer's paradise, its black and orange branding reminiscent of eSport stalwarts Counter-Strike: Global Offensive and the Call of Duty Black Ops series – but as yet there's scant content. Even the About Us page remains unpopulated. In time, it could be a go-to site, but it's not there yet.

Our rating





# Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

## Top Tips of the Fortnight

### Hear your site read aloud

How would you like your site to be automatically turned into a podcast, so that people can hear your new content as well as see it? This is a handy feature for visitors who would rather listen than read, and it makes your site more accessible to people with disabilities.

Amazon Polly ([bit.ly/poll462](https://bit.ly/poll462)) can do this, although setting it up on a self-built site is a bit tricky. Luckily, WordPress has a plugin ([bit.ly/pollwp462](https://bit.ly/pollwp462)) that can do all the complicated stuff for you. You need an Amazon Web Services account to use it, but you can set one up for free.

### Get your site on DuckDuckGo?

Getting your website at the top of Google's search results is always a priority, but searches on the privacy-focused search engine DuckDuckGo ([duckduckgo.com](https://duckduckgo.com))



are on the increase, with a recent report suggesting that it now has 30 million searches per day. DuckDuckGo travels around the web collecting web pages, so the key thing is to make sure your site has a sitemap – a single page or set of pages listing every other page on your site. Once one page on your site has been found, the others should follow.

### Deal of the Fortnight

Site123's ([www.site123.com](https://www.site123.com)) referral program gives you three months' free service if you refer a friend. Log into your account and click the Refer a Friend Program button.

## Web-building Helpdesk

**Q** I want to hand-code my website but I hate HTML. Are there any alternatives?

Gary Farmer, via email

**A** Markdown is a different way of formatting documents that's a lot less interruptive than HTML and its triangular brackets. It uses simple characters to denote text style, such as *\*italics\**, **\*\*bold\*\*** and **#heading#**. It even works with links and images. You can find a list of all the things Markdown can do at [bit.ly/mark462](https://bit.ly/mark462). Once you've got your Markdown document written, convert it to HTML by copying and pasting it into Convert

Markdown to HTML

([bit.ly/mado462](https://bit.ly/mado462)).

Andy Shaw,  
Technical &  
Reviews  
Editor,  
Web User



**MINI WORKSHOP** | Create easy column layouts with Wix  
Wix: [www.wix.com](https://www.wix.com) |  10 mins | Any browser

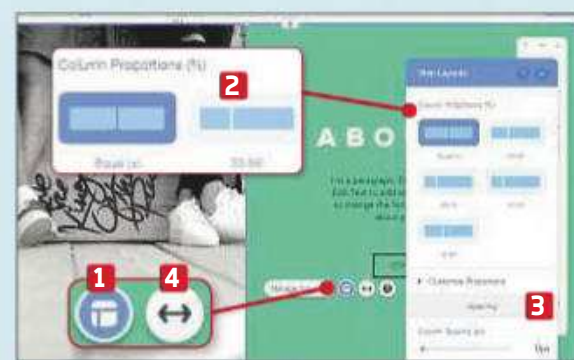
The most modern-looking sites divide pages into horizontal strips of information split into columns that you scroll through to navigate the site. It's easy to build a site like this yourself using Wix's Strip tool



**1** Open the site you want to add strips to in the editor, or start a new site from scratch. Click the Add button **1** and choose Strip. **2** There are lots of options you can scroll through. **3** Don't worry too much about the content because you can change it later – just choose a strip you like the look of.



**2** Click one of the sections of the strip to select it, then click the Manage Columns button. **1** Here, you can add a column, **2** pick the one you want to work on, **3** and move, copy or delete it. **4**



**3** Click the Layout button **1** to resize your columns in proportion to one another. **2** You can also adjust the spacing around and between the columns. **3** The Stretched button **4** lets you choose whether to have the Strip stretch across the whole page or sit within your page's existing margins.



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

Handwritten questions and notes:

- How much will I save? £% /
- What is a hybrid car?
- Is the tech any good? How far will it go?
- How long will it take to charge?
- How much does it cost to run? !?

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# What To Watch Online

## Pick of the fortnight

 **YouTube Premium**



### Get *Lost* in space with YouTube Original *Origin*

From 14 November

Alien thriller *Origin* could be the show that lifts YouTube into the online 'Original' big league alongside Netflix and Amazon. But will it make YouTube Premium worth paying £12 a month for?

*Origin* was produced by the people behind *The Crown* and *Lost*, and directed by Paul WS Anderson, who made *Event Horizon*. *Harry Potter* alumni Tom Felton (Draco Malfoy) and Natalia Tena (Nymphadora Tonks) head the cast of passengers who want to leave their troubled pasts behind them and start afresh on a new planet. The real story begins, *Lost*-style, with an accident that leaves them floating in space on a damaged ship, which they appear to be sharing with a murderous alien presence. Watch the superb trailer at [bit.ly/origin462](http://bit.ly/origin462).

To see *Origin*, you'll need a subscription to YouTube Premium, which launched in the UK in June. It's twice the price of Netflix, but for your £11.99 you also get the YouTube Music streaming service, plus the option to download YouTube Originals for offline viewing, ad-free YouTube and exclusive acquisitions such as Istanbul cat-umentary *Kedi* ([bit.ly/ledi462](http://bit.ly/ledi462)). Get a free month's trial at [www.youtube.com/premium](http://www.youtube.com/premium), and watch trailers for dozens of YouTube Originals at [bit.ly/originals462](http://bit.ly/originals462).

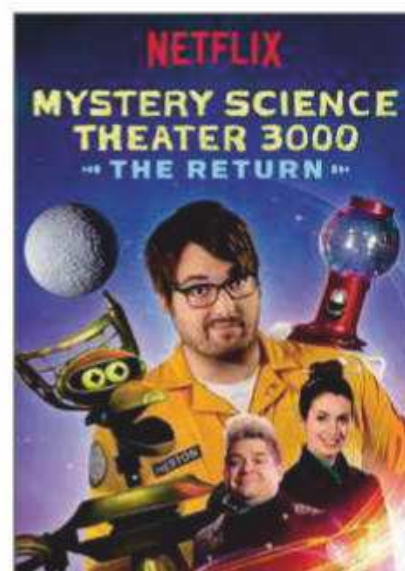
### **N** Watch the Coens' new film *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*

From 16 November

*Fargo* auteurs Joel and Ethan Coen return to Netflix with their latest offbeat comedy-drama, based on Wild West stories that the brothers have been writing for decades. *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs* was planned as a six-part series but has been condensed into a 130-minute film and shown in cinemas – which means it's eligible for Oscar nominations.

The "anthology movie" is split into segments, each with a different

big-name cast. Liam Neeson (*Schindler's List*), James Franco (*127 Hours*), singer Tom Waits and TV legend Tyne Daly (*Cagney and Lacey*) are among the actors bringing the American frontier back to life. Two trailers are available to watch on Netflix without a subscription ([bit.ly/buster462](http://bit.ly/buster462)).



### **N** Break out the popcorn for *Mystery Science Theater 3000: The Return*

From 22 November

If you like cheesy B-movies, you'll love *Mystery Science Theater 3000* ('MST3K'). Jonah (US comedian Jonah Ray) is forced to watch terrible films in the company of DIY robots, while mad scientists monitor their brains. Jonah and the bots survive the torture by talking over the films, with genuinely hilarious results.

*MST3K: The Return*, back for a second season, is a reboot of a Nineties cable show that's also now on Netflix ([bit.ly/mstclassic462](http://bit.ly/mstclassic462)). Sadly, there's no new trailer, but you can whet your appetite by watching the trailer for Season 1 ([bit.ly/mystery462](http://bit.ly/mystery462)). Watch more old episodes and exclusive clips on the programme's website ([www.mst3k.com](http://www.mst3k.com)).

### **N** Discover how the drug war began in *Narcos: Mexico*

From 16 November

There's life beyond Pablo Escobar for *Narcos*. After chronicling the Cali cartel in Season 3, the fourth season – rebranded *Narcos: Mexico* – takes us back to 1980 and the birth of the Mexican drug war.

This means Season 4 is a prequel of sorts, with a new cast headed by



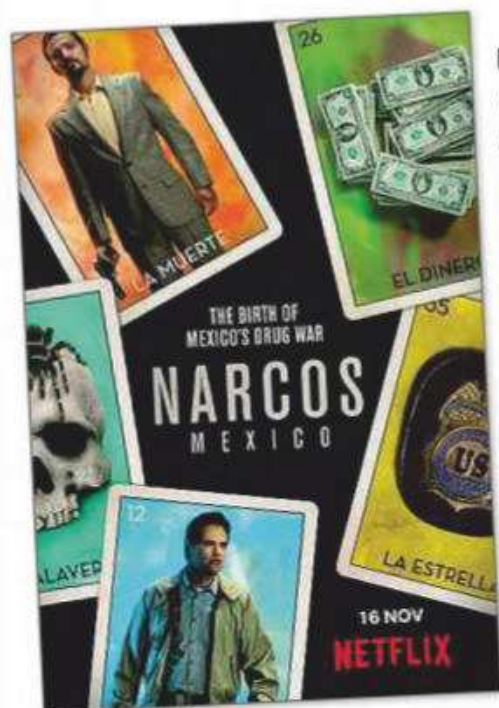
We reveal what's new on Netflix, BBC iPlayer, Amazon Prime Video and other streaming services

## Apple to launch Netflix competitor in 2019

Apple's long-rumoured film and TV streaming service will finally arrive in 2019, following a deliberate effort to "catch up" with Netflix and Amazon – and it may be cheaper than both.

The as-yet-unnamed service is set to launch in the US in the first half of the year, followed by a global roll-out by the end of 2019, according to The Information ([bit.ly/appletv462](http://bit.ly/appletv462)). It's predicted to reach more than 100 countries, including the UK, compared with Netflix's 190 and Amazon Prime Video's 200.

Apple is reported to be spending \$1bn on content, with confirmed sign-ups including Oprah Winfrey and a "morning show drama" starring Jennifer Aniston and Steve Carell ([bit.ly/morning462](http://bit.ly/morning462)). Meanwhile, rumours suggest that subscriptions will undercut those for Netflix and Amazon, and may even be free for some users of iOS and tvOS ([bit.ly/applesubs462](http://bit.ly/applesubs462)).



Michael Peña (*American Hustle*) as a US drugs cop and Diego Luna (*Rogue One*) as the terrifying kingpin who forces order on Mexico's loose alliance of drug growers and dealers. As with previous seasons, *Narcos: Mexico* is

based on the story of a real drug gang – this time the Guadalajara Cartel ([bit.ly/guad462](http://bit.ly/guad462)). Brace yourself for violence, subtitles and an excellent Eighties soundtrack, all in force in the trailer ([bit.ly/narcos462](http://bit.ly/narcos462)).

### Watch the sequel to German classic *Das Boot*

From 23 November

You'd have to be brave or foolish to attempt a sequel to the classic 1981 German war movie *Das Boot* (The Boat), a perennial fixture on 'Best ever films' lists. But here we are with Sky's eight-part mini-series, a £23m German-Austrian production that picks up where the original film left off,



recreating the claustrophobia of a German U-boat as the Resistance closes in. You can get a taste from the trailer, but only a taste – because it's in German ([bit.ly/boottrail462](http://bit.ly/boottrail462)). We're assured that the series will have English subtitles!

Episodes air weekly on Sky Atlantic, which you can stream live and on-demand with a Now TV Entertainment Pass (£7.99 per month after a 14-day free trial, [bit.ly/nowent462](http://bit.ly/nowent462)). The 1981 film is on Netflix ([bit.ly/dasboot462](http://bit.ly/dasboot462)).

### Meet the new *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*

From 16 November

Animated 1980s goddess She-Ra, aka Princess Adora, aka He-Man's twin sister, is back – only this



time she's got a DreamWorks budget and a (slightly) more realistic appearance. Some fans seem enraged that She-Ra no longer looks like Barbie, but we thoroughly approve of the all-new Adora, a teenage girl who practices martial arts and teams up with a spirited group of rebel princesses to defend Etheria from dastardly forces. All eight episodes land on 16 November on Netflix, where you can watch two trailers for free ([bit.ly/shera462](http://bit.ly/shera462)).

In case you missed it...

BBC Two's drama-documentary about modern slavery, *Doing Money* ([bit.ly/money462](http://bit.ly/money462)),

is now available online as part of the 'Why Slavery?' season ([bit.ly/slavery462](http://bit.ly/slavery462)). Other on-demand content includes iPlayer-exclusive *Dollar Heroes* ([bit.ly/dollar462](http://bit.ly/dollar462)), about human trafficking in North Korea; *Making A Slave* ([bit.ly/making462](http://bit.ly/making462)), a BBC Three show that challenged volunteers to live for 24 hours as a modern slave;



and Simon Schama's 2007 film *Rough Crossing* ([bit.ly/crossing462](http://bit.ly/crossing462)). Most of the

shows will be available for five months, but Schama's film disappears after 17 November.

On an infinitely lighter note, the Halloween live edition of award-winning comedy *Inside No. 9* has been awarded the honour of a five-month iPlayer stint, as part of a four-series box set ([bit.ly/inside462](http://bit.ly/inside462)).



# Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

## Monitors under £250

You don't have to spend a fortune to upgrade your monitor. Here, we compare four top models that cost less than £250

**E**very time you sit down to use your desktop PC, you'll be staring at its screen – so it's worth making sure that you get the best quality for your cash. Still, there's no need to spend a fortune to get a good upgrade. Here, we've reviewed four monitors that all cost less than £250. One of them even comes in at less than £100!

Before you buy, make sure you've got the correct connection from your PC. All the monitors we've reviewed in this Group Test have an HDMI port, but if your PC or graphics card uses a different connector, ensure that it will be compatible by checking the monitor's video inputs in our table on page 24.

### HOW WE TESTED

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

**Philips Brilliance 241B7QPJKEB | £209.20 | Buy from Amazon: [bit.ly/phil462](https://bit.ly/phil462)**

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

It's not unheard of to find excellent monitors for less than £250 but this model is the best we've seen to date, by some margin. The screen is virtually uncompromised, based on an IPS (In-Plane Switching) panel that has wide viewing angles and great colour reproduction.

The design is attention grabbing, with slim top and side bezels that make it appear almost borderless and a fully adjustable stand for height, swivel, tilt and 180-degree rotation. There's a built-in 2-megapixels webcam that you pop out from the top of the screen when you want to make a video call – the rest of the time, it can be slotted away to protect your privacy.

A Philips PowerSensor detects when you're away from your desk and automatically dims the screen when you walk away. The monitor is also crammed with ports, so you can connect your PC via DisplayPort, HDMI or VGA. It has a pair of 2W speakers and a line-in port, so you can play your PC sound through it, and a headphone jack to bypass the speakers. There's also a USB 3 port.

The Full HD panel performed brilliantly in our tests. We measured a contrast ratio of 1,327:1, and it reproduced 90.6% of the colours in the sRGB standard, with a black that goes as dark as 0.16cd/m<sup>2</sup>. Its only weakness is its peak brightness, which topped out at 213cd/m<sup>2</sup>, which



would make it difficult to see in direct sunlight.

The screen isn't specifically designed for gaming but it's able to handle less demanding titles. If you're about to embark on a session, we'd recommend you go into the settings and set the SmartResponse tool to its Fastest setting, to get the best results.

The monitor's OSD (on-screen display) is simple to use. We particularly liked the LowBlue mode, which alters the level of blue light displayed so it's easier on your eyes when you're using your monitor at night.

### VERDICT ★★★★★

For less than £250, you'll be hard-pressed to find a more complete IPS monitor. Its colour accuracy and contrast ratio make it perfect for watching films or browsing the web, while the stunning design immediately marks it out from the crowd. This Philips monitor is superb value for money, uses the best screen technology and has few compromises for the price, making it an easy Gold Award-winner.



## AOC X24P1 | £222.18 |

Buy from Amazon: [bit.ly/aocx462](https://bit.ly/aocx462)

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



Most monitors come in a 16:9 ratio because that's the ideal for watching movies and playing games. The AOC X24P1 is 16:10 – a slightly squarer view with more vertical space – which works better for general Windows use.

The screen has a pre-calibrated sRGB mode which performed brilliantly when we tested it, recreating 98.7% of colours in the sRGB standard. Its contrast ratio is 1,241:1 with a maximum brightness of 359cd/m², so it would perform better than the Philips Gold Award-winner if situated next to a window.

There's only a very small bezel at the top and sides of the screen, so it's efficient on space, and the stand can pivot, tilt, swivel and be set at different heights. You can connect to it using HDMI, VGA, DVI and DisplayPort, and it has four USB 3 ports. It has basic 2W speakers built in and also includes a headphone socket.

### VERDICT

★★★★★☆☆

This AOC X24P1 provides a little more screen space thanks to its 16:10 screen ratio, but there's no built-in webcam. It's less suited to entertainment than our Gold Award-winner, but the extra vertical space is good for browsing and working.

## Acer KG221Q | £99.99 |

Buy from Amazon: [bit.ly/acer462](https://bit.ly/acer462)

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



At less than £100, this is a tempting offering from Acer but it does come with a few compromises. At 21.5in across the diagonal, the screen is smaller than the other monitors in this test, and it only has HDMI and VGA inputs, with no USB ports. Its TN (Twisted Nematic) panel is also less sophisticated than its IPS rivals, with narrower viewing angles.

In our tests, however, it performed admirably, producing 93.5% of sRGB colours, with a contrast ratio of 1,103:1 and a peak brightness of 287cd/m². For a monitor that's less than half the price of the other award-winners, this is an excellent set of results.

The overall design has taken a bit of a hit – the stand is very wide and with no brushed-metal effects, you're left staring at a lot of plastic. The bezel around the edges is quite thick, too, so it's not ideal for multi-monitor setups.

### VERDICT

★★★★★☆☆

This is a great-value monitor that's surprisingly good for entertainment and gaming. It's smaller and less advanced than the other screens we tested, but provided good results. Check that it has the the right connections, though.

## AOC G2590PX | £231.21 |

Buy from Amazon: [bit.ly/aocg462](https://bit.ly/aocg462)

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



If you're an avid gamer, you'll want a screen with a higher refresh rate to help the action flow smoothly. While the other monitors we've reviewed here have 60-75Hz refresh rates, this AOC model offers 144Hz, along with a range of extra gaming tools, including special profiles designed to enhance games and AMD FreeSync, which works in conjunction with compatible AOC graphics cards. Unfortunately, its image quality is disappointing. Its low contrast ratio of 472:1 makes dark images look grey, and the sRGB coverage is only 89%, lagging behind the other screens we tested. However, peak brightness reached 422cd/m², which was the highest result in this Group Test.

It has a good range of connection options – two HDMI ports, so you can hook up both your PC and a console, as well as DisplayPort and VGA. It also provides four USB 3 ports and a pair of built-in 2W speakers.

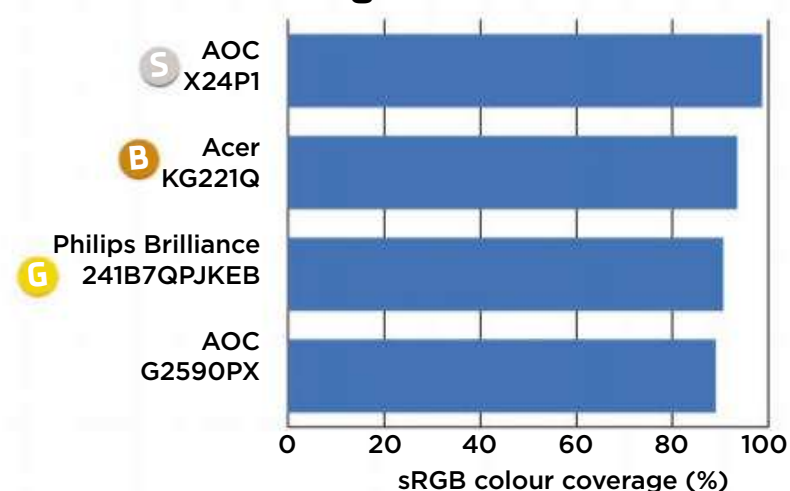
### VERDICT

★★★★★☆☆

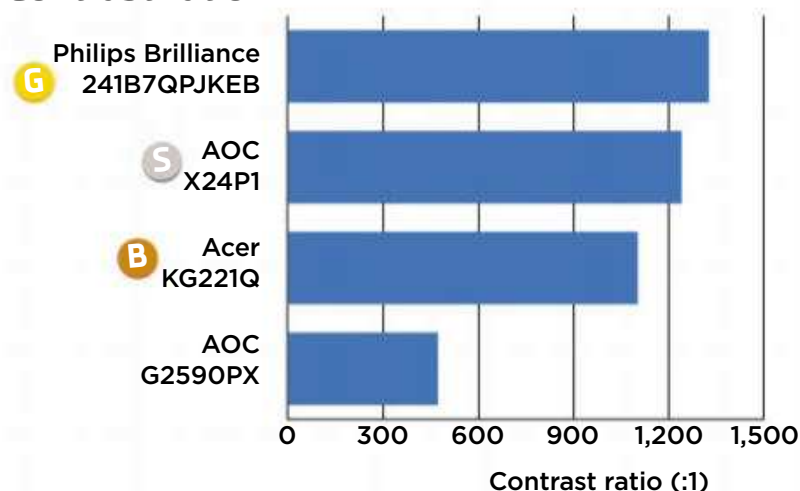
This is a stylish 144Hz monitor with some practical features, but it isn't as responsive as you might hope from a gaming monitor, and its colour accuracy and contrast ratio lag behind the best.

## TEST-RESULTS CHARTS

### sRGB colour coverage



### Contrast ratio





## Group Test Monitors under £250

				
	Philips Brilliance 241B7QPJKEB	AOC X24P1	Acer KG221Q	AOC G2590PX
WEBSITE	<a href="http://bit.ly/phili462">bit.ly/phili462</a>	<a href="http://eu.aoc.com">eu.aoc.com</a>	<a href="http://bit.ly/acerm462">bit.ly/acerm462</a>	<a href="http://eu.aoc.com">eu.aoc.com</a>
PRICE	£209.20	£222.18	£99.99	£219.70
BUY FROM AMAZON	<a href="http://bit.ly/phil462">bit.ly/phil462</a>	<a href="http://bit.ly/aocx462">bit.ly/aocx462</a>	<a href="http://bit.ly/acer462">bit.ly/acer462</a>	<a href="http://bit.ly/aocg462">bit.ly/aocg462</a>
SCREEN SIZE	24in	24in	21.5in	24.5in
RESOLUTION	1,920 x 1,080 pixels	1,920 x 1,200 pixels	1,920 x 1,080 pixels	1,920 x 1,080 pixels
SCREEN TYPE	IPS	IPS	TN	TN
REFRESH RATE	60Hz	60Hz	75Hz	144Hz
CLAIMED RESPONSE TIME	5ms	4ms	1ms	1ms
INTERNAL SPEAKER	2W	2W	2W	2W
USB PORTS	1 x USB 3	4 x USB 3	✗	4 x USB 3
VIDEO INPUTS	1 x DisplayPort, 1 x HDMI, 1 x VGA	1 x DisplayPort, 1 x HDMI, 1 x VGA	1 x HDMI, 1 x VGA	1 x DisplayPort, 2 x HDMI, 1 x VGA
SYNCING TECHNOLOGY	✗	✗	AMD FreeSync	AMD FreeSync
WARRANTY	Three-years return-to-base	Three-years collect-and-return	Two-years return-to-base	Three-years collect-and-return

### OUR VERDICT

The Philips Brilliance 241B7QPJKEB wins our Gold Award. It's a great all-rounder, with good colour accuracy and a decent contrast ratio. Its only flaw is its peak brightness, which is a little low, but you'll only notice this in very bright surroundings. It's certainly a cracking monitor for the price.

If your screen is often bathed in bright sunlight, however, the Silver Award-winning AOC X24P1 is a better bet. It's more expensive than the Philips model and you don't get the handy pop-up webcam, but its unique 16:10 ratio makes it great for work, if not ideal for full-screen entertainment.

The Acer KG221Q wins our Bronze Award. This is a good model to pick if your interests are gaming and entertainment, but it uses a cheaper panel than the other award winners, so it doesn't have luxurious elements such as wide viewing angles.







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

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## HARDWARE

### MONITOR

#### Philips Brilliance 241B7QPJKEB

£209.20 from [bit.ly/phil462](http://bit.ly/phil462)

Tested: Issue 462

This Philips monitor is superb value for money. Its impressive colour accuracy and contrast ratio make it ideal for watching films and browsing the web.

#### KEY SPECS

24in screen ■ 1,920 x 1,080-pixel resolution ■ 16:9 aspect ratio ■ IPS ■ 60Hz refresh rate ■ 1,000:1 native contrast ■ Webcam ■ HDMI, VGA and DisplayPort ports ■ 5ms response time ■ 2W internal speaker ■ Three-years return-to-base warranty

NEW!



### TABLET

#### Amazon Fire HD 8

£79.99 from [bit.ly/amazon461](http://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



### BUDGET SMARTPHONE

#### Motorola Moto E5 Plus

£149 from [bit.ly/motoplus460](http://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](http://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, 1 x 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](http://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](http://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





## SOFTWARE & SERVICES

### PHOTO-EDITING SOFTWARE

#### DxO PhotoLab

£99 from  
[bit.ly/dxo455](http://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](http://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

#### PARTITION MANAGER

##### Macrorit Partition Expert

Free from [bit.ly/macro461](http://bit.ly/macro461)

**Tested:** Issue 461

Partition Expert has a clean, easy-to-use interface that's simple to configure. It has many more features than the basic Disk Management tool built into Windows.



#### ANDROID VIDEO EDITOR

##### Adobe Premiere Clip

Free from [bit.ly/prem460](http://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.



#### BOOKMARKING TOOL

##### Raindrop.io

Free from [raindrop.io](http://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](http://bit.ly/fbex458)

**Tested:** Issue 458

FlashBack Express is easy to use and produces great results. It can capture video of anything happening on your screen.



#### DICTATION TOOL

##### Google Voice Typing

Free from [docs.google.com](http://docs.google.com)

**Tested:** Issue 457

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



# WEB USER

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# Best Free Software

## SYSTEM TOOL

### IObit Advanced SystemCare 12 Free

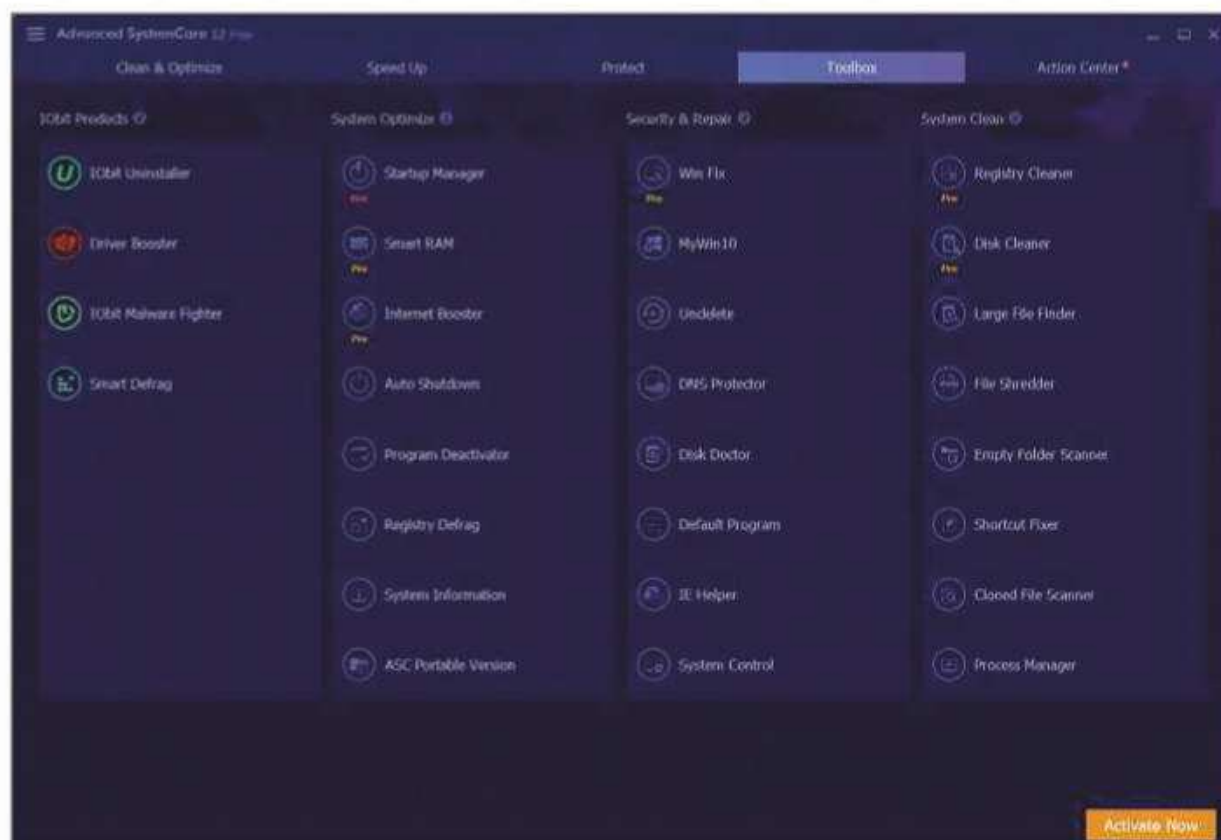
[bit.ly/advanced462](https://bit.ly/advanced462)

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

**File size:** 37.6MB

Advanced SystemCare 12 Free cleans your PC, boosts its performance, protects your privacy and fixes all kinds of annoying problems. As with previous versions of this powerful free software, you simply click the big Scan button on the home screen to set it running through a sequence of tasks. The default selection includes Startup Optimisation, Privacy Sweep, Junk File Clean, Shortcut Fix, Registry Clean and Spyware Removal.

The program removes all manner of junk from your PC, including the contents of the Windows 10 icon cache and Microsoft Office cache, browser logs and temporary files, redundant files



and incomplete downloads. The updated junk cleaner can also clear the browsing history from all Chromium-based browsers. IObit says this latest release removes at least 9% more junk files than the previous edition. The Startup Optimisation database has been rebuilt, allowing PCs to boot up to 15% faster, and the Internet Boost feature has been improved, too.

Advanced SystemCare's new Privacy Shield feature is designed to safeguard your personal information by alerting

you when programs try to access it. You can protect your browsing data, contacts, local email data and OneDrive files, and add programs you trust to a whitelist. The Surfing Protection tool also blocks more online threats than previous versions, including harmful browser pop-ups and cryptojacking, where hackers secretly use your PC to mine cryptocurrency.

The interface has been tweaked slightly, with a few new icons, but hasn't changed much in this latest version.



## MINI WORKSHOP | Clean up your PC using Advanced SystemCare 12



**1** To get started with Advanced SystemCare, run a Clean & Optimise scan. You can choose which modules to use, **1** or tick Select All **2** for a more thorough health check. Click the Scan button **3** and the software runs through the selected tasks in order. You can skip any stage, or end the scanning process at any time.



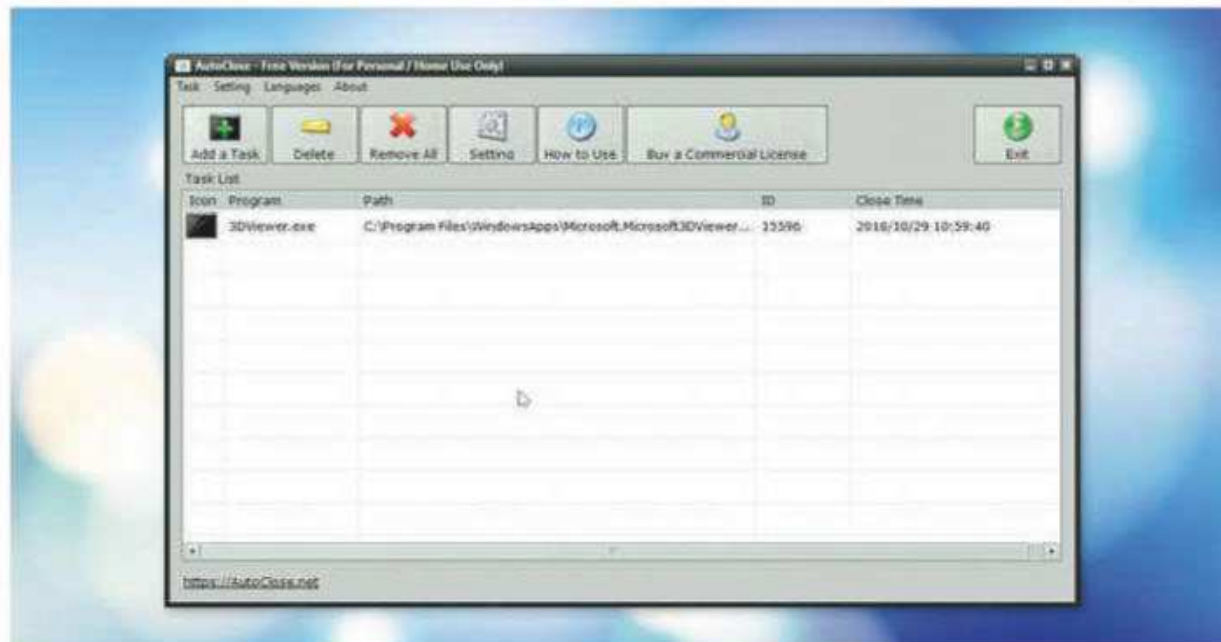
**2** When Advanced SystemCare has finished scanning your PC, it tells you how many problems it has found **1** and shows you how much space you could reclaim. **2** The sidebar provides more detail, breaking down the program's findings by section. **3** Deselect any items you don't want to clean, then click Fix. **4**



**3** The Speed Up section **1** can boost performance, while Protect **2** offers tools to block trackers and prevent your personal data from being compromised. You can also enable the new Privacy Shield feature here. **3** Click the cog icon **4** to access settings and choose the types of data you want to protect.



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



## SYSTEM TOOL

### AutoClose 2

[autoclose.net](http://autoclose.net)

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

AutoClose is a convenient tool that lets you set programs to quit automatically at a given time. You could, for example, use it to shut down BitTorrent after a couple of hours of downloading, or exit Fortnite when it's bedtime. Set the tool to close your chosen programs at a specific time (8pm, say) or after a certain period of time has elapsed. To use AutoClose, simply click the 'Add a task' button, choose a program and configure the settings for it.



## SYSTEM TOOL

### ConfigureDefender

[bit.ly/defender462](http://bit.ly/defender462)

**Min requirements:** Windows 8.1/10

**File size:** 1.3MB

Windows Defender is built into Windows 10 and helps keep your system safe from malware. ConfigureDefender is a portable tool that lets you enable and disable features in Defender, such as behaviour monitoring, block at first sight, automatic sample submission and average processor load while scanning. You can also use it to configure SmartScreen, Defender's cloud-based anti-malware component.



## IMAGE TOOL

### Image Color Counter

[bit.ly/ICC462](http://bit.ly/ICC462)

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

**File size:** 16.8KB

Ever needed to know how many colours there are in an image? This tiny tool can tell you. Click the Get button, select a photo to analyse and after a few seconds it tells you the file type, size, dimensions and number of unique colours in the image. It works with GIF, JPEG, BMP and PNG files, and can be useful if you're using a third-party image optimiser, particularly for shrinking animated GIF files.

## New Windows Apps

### 3D Viewer

[bit.ly/3dview462](http://bit.ly/3dview462)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 121.4MB

Originally called Mixed Reality Viewer, this rebranded app from Microsoft lets you use your PC's camera to view 3D models in the real world. You can also download free models to view.



### Spotlight Wallpapers

[bit.ly/spotlight462](http://bit.ly/spotlight462)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 30.2MB

This simple app helps you find and download Windows Spotlight and Bing wallpapers. Choose a source of images on the left (either Spotlight or Bing), then select the wallpaper you like.



### OCR Text Detection Tool

[bit.ly/ocr462](http://bit.ly/ocr462)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 21.2MB

This tool uses Optical Character Recognition to detect text in images and PDF documents (up to a maximum of 20 pages). It recognises text in 114 languages.





## Best Free Software

### MEDIA PLAYER

#### Winamp 5.8

[www.winamp.com](http://www.winamp.com)

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

**File size:** 7.8MB

Winamp was a hugely popular audio player in the 1990s and 2000s, but it was apparently abandoned in 2013. Now it's back, with a new streaming-friendly version planned for next year. In the meantime, the software's owners have released this updated edition, which supports Windows 8 and 10. They've dropped the paid-for Pro version, too. The software itself hasn't changed much since the 2013 release, but if you want a highly customisable audio player for your music collection, it's definitely worth the download, even if the scaling on high-definition screens isn't perfect.



### SYSTEM TOOL

#### Win10 Settings Blocker

[bit.ly/win10settings462](http://bit.ly/win10settings462)

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

**File size:** 401KB

Microsoft introduced a Group Policy in Windows 10 Version 1703 (the Creators Update) that lets users control which options are available in the Settings app. This can be very handy if you want to stop children or less technically minded family members making unwanted changes to the operating system. If you don't want to use the Group Policy Editor (GPE) or your version of Windows doesn't have it, you can use this free portable tool to block access to particular Windows settings instead. Click the plus button, select a Settings page from the drop-down menu to block or hide, then click 'Add to list'. You can reverse the process just as easily by selecting the Disable Blocking option.

### SECURITY SOFTWARE

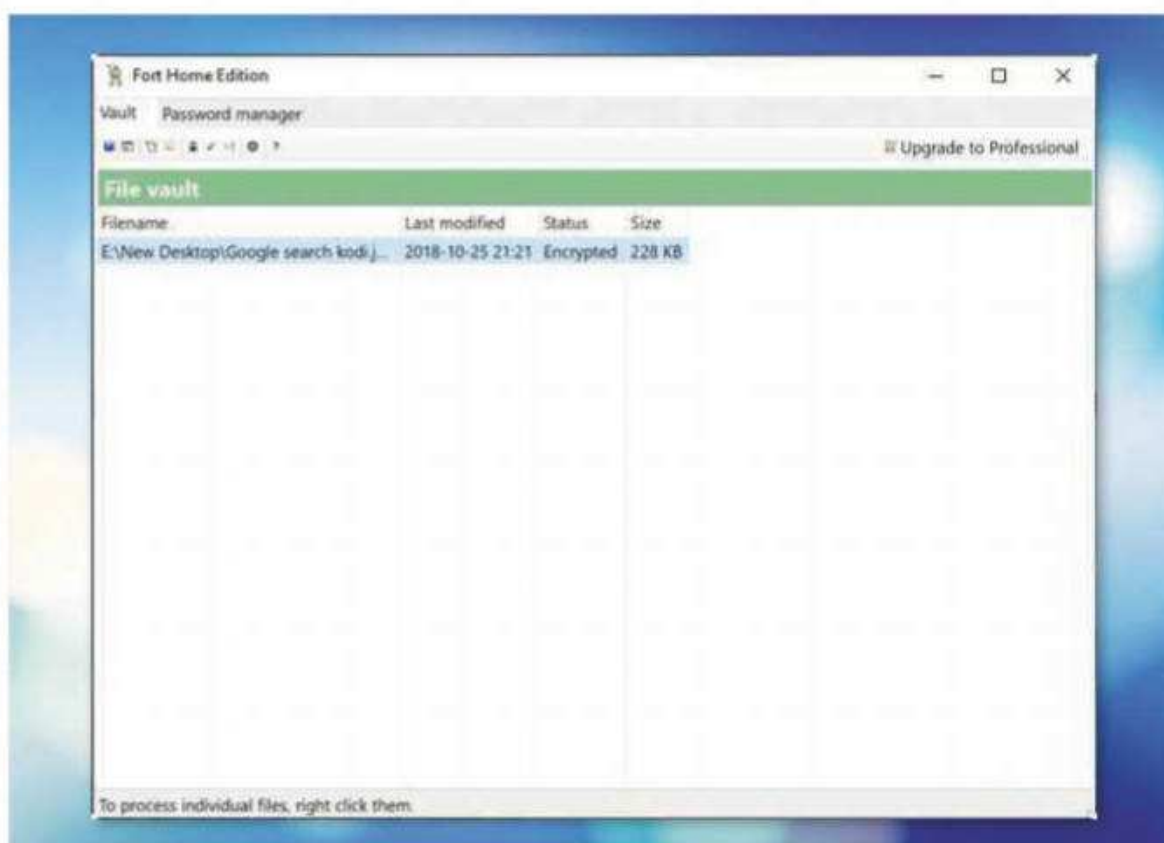
#### Fort Home 5

[www.byteptr.com](http://www.byteptr.com)

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

**File size:** 5.5MB

Fort Home lets you secure your private files using AES-256 encryption. To use it, just add some files to the program, click the Encrypt option and type in a password. The program assesses the strength of your password below. To access your files, repeat the process but select Decrypt and enter the password. The software automatically creates a copy of your file before encrypting the original. This latest version updates its components (including .NET, SharpShell, SharpZipLib and Json.NET) to the latest editions, and allows you to add folders to Fort Home's interface and choose where passwords are stored.







## GAME

### Cheeky Chooks

[bit.ly/chooks462](http://bit.ly/chooks462)

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

**File size:** 28MB

So, you think you've got what it takes to be a chook rancher (or chicken farmer, as we non-Australians call it), do you? This game lets you find out as you set about building your own mighty chook empire from a small dust bowl to a mega ranch. There are lots of different chooks to hatch and mini-games to keep you entertained along the way. It's clucking good fun!

## Don't install...

### Freemake Video Downloader

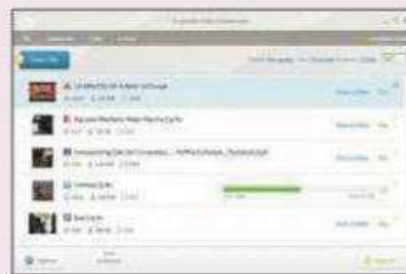
[www.freemake.com](http://www.freemake.com)

**Min requirements:**

Windows Vista/7/8.1/10

**File size:** 988KB

We used to love Freemake before it started bundling the particularly unpleasant OpenCandy adware in its download. Even then, we thought for a while that this simple, useful video downloader was worth the annoyance of circumnavigating the PUP. Thankfully, there are now plenty of rivals that are just as good, so we can finally turn our backs on it.



## ...Install this instead

### 4K Video Downloader

[www.4kdownload.com](http://www.4kdownload.com)

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

**File size:** 31.3MB

This brilliant video downloader is available as a portable or installable program and – unlike similar tools – is free of unwanted extras. To download a video from YouTube, simply copy its address from your browser. You can choose to download the video or just the audio, select a format (MP4, MKV or 3GP) and resolution for the converted file, and include or omit subtitles. There's also a useful subscription option, which automatically downloads new videos as soon as they're added to your favourite channels.



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



## HOME THEATRE SOFTWARE

### Kodi 18 'Leia' Beta 4

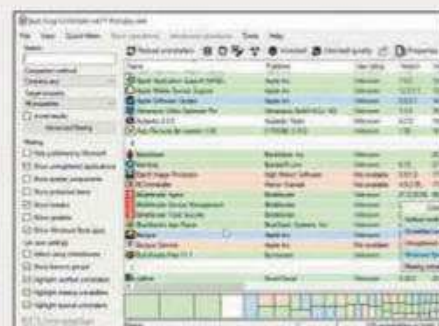
[www.kodi.tv](http://www.kodi.tv)

**Min requirements:**

Windows 7/8.1/10, Mac OS or Linux

**File size:** 62.1MB

You'll find the latest Kodi beta under the Pre-Release tab on the Downloads page. Some features have been moved to a binary repository so you can choose not to install them. This reduces the size of the download considerably.



## UNINSTALLER

### BCUninstaller 4.11

[www.bcuninstaller.com](http://www.bcuninstaller.com)

**Min requirements:**

Windows 7/8.1/10

**File size:** 4.9MB

BCUninstaller can batch-remove unwanted programs and clear away any leftover junk. This latest release improves memory use and performance, and adds multithreading support to information gathering and the Registry scan. The Task Scheduler library has also been updated.



## BROWSER

### Vivaldi 2.1

[vivaldi.com](http://vivaldi.com)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10, Mac OS or Linux

**File size:** 53.1MB

This Chrome-based web browser is developed by a company founded by the former CEO of Opera. The latest version makes some useful additions to Vivaldi's Quick Commands universal search feature. Open the interface by pressing F2, then start typing.



## SYSTEM CLEANER

### CCleaner 5.48

[www.ccleaner.com](http://www.ccleaner.com)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10

**File size:** 17.2MB

This Avast-owned system-cleaning tool is updated monthly. The latest version improves cleaning for Microsoft Edge and adds support for 'feature previews', which give some users the chance to try the software's latest features before they're widely available. ■

GET FREE SOFTWARE FIRST subscribe to Web User at [subscribe.webuser.co.uk](http://subscribe.webuser.co.uk)



# Best New Browser Tools



## CHROME

### View the web as if you were colour blind

Most of us take it for granted that we see web pages as their creators intended them to be seen, but people with visual impairments may experience online content very differently. A new Chrome extension called Colorblindly ([bit.ly/colorblindly462](http://bit.ly/colorblindly462)) shows you how the web would look if you were colour blind by simulating the eight colour-vision-deficiency conditions.

These include protanomaly (reduced sensitivity to red light), tritanopia (difficulty discriminating between blue and yellow) and achromatopsia (total colour blindness). Click the toolbar

button and choose an option to see how the page would look to someone with that condition. Colorblindly is intended to help web designers make their pages accessible to colour-blind visitors, but it's a great way to encourage empathy, too.

Similarly, Funkify ([bit.ly/funkify462](http://bit.ly/funkify462)) simulates a range of conditions including dyslexia, cognitive impairment and trembling hands, as well as colour blindness, but its quirky approach – with settings that include Blurry Bianca and Tunnel Toby – won't be to everyone's taste.



### Get reminders to take screen breaks

If you spend most of your day working at a desk and every evening on the couch with your laptop, your sedentary lifestyle could result in all kinds of health

problems. Water Walk for Chrome ([bit.ly/water462](http://bit.ly/water462)) and Firefox ([bit.ly/waterfire462](http://bit.ly/waterfire462)) reduces these health risks by reminding you to get up, walk about and have a drink of water at intervals of 15, 30 or 60 minutes. The reminder appears as a desktop notification in the bottom-right corner of your screen, and highlights the benefits of walking,

such as reduced body fat and improved heart and lung fitness. It's sure to put a 'dent' in your sedentary tendencies!

### Compare prices across Amazon stores

Amazon always makes a big deal (pun intended) of Black Friday, but if you

limit yourself to its UK site, you could be missing out on the best bargains. Check for further savings using PricePeek ([bit.ly/price462](http://bit.ly/price462)), which compares the cost of any item you view on [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) across other branches of the global megastore, so you can make the cheapest choice (be sure to factor in delivery fees, though, and change the default currency to British pounds). PricePeek also checks other online stores, including eBay and Tesco, to see if it can find a better deal. See our feature on page 48 for more tips on finding Black Friday bargains.

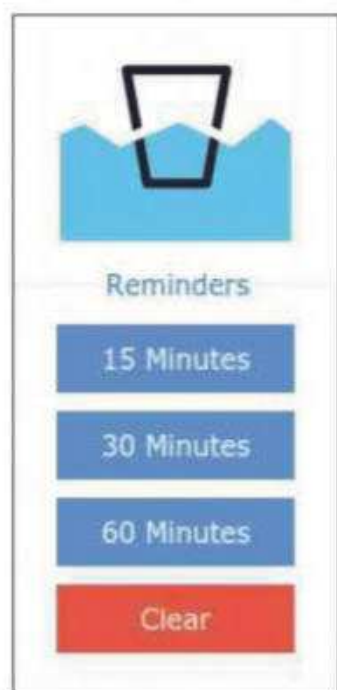
### Transform and enhance your New Tab page

As the nights draw in and TV becomes swamped with endless reality shows, why not give yourself something nice to look at by installing Aurora ([bit.ly/aurora462](http://bit.ly/aurora462))? This add-on transforms your New Tab page with 5K wallpapers of stunning landscapes that look incredible even if you don't have a 5K monitor

(which is likely to be the case).

Aurora is more than just a pretty face, though, because it adds a host of useful tools to your new tabs, such as a five-day weather-forecast widget, a bookmark manager that lets you categorise and organise your saved sites, and a to-do list that integrates with other services such as Google Keep. You can also create sticky notes on Aurora's dashboard and search your Chrome history without leaving the page.

The extension asks for a long list of permissions, but the developer helpfully explains why it needs each one and promises that Aurora doesn't collect personal information.





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

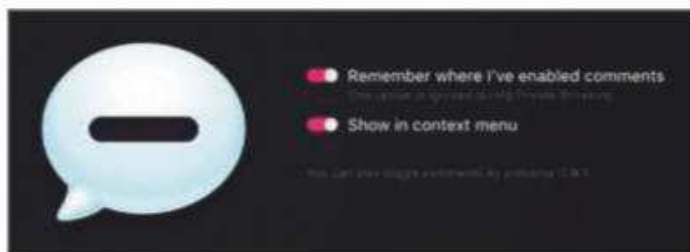


## FIREFOX

### Stop Firefox updating to the latest version

Savvy web users know that you should always use the newest stable version of your browser to safeguard against the latest security threats and performance bugs, which is why Google, Mozilla and Microsoft update their browsers automatically. However, there may be times when you don't want to update – perhaps because there are reported problems with a new version, or you're worried that your favourite add-ons will stop working. Firefox used to offer a 'Never check for updates' option to stop the browser updating automatically, but Mozilla has ditched this in version 63. Fortunately, you can get it back using an add-on called Enterprise Policy Generator ([bit.ly/policy462](http://bit.ly/policy462)). Install it, then click its toolbar button and, in the Updates & Data Collection section, select 'Prevent Firefox from updating'.

You can find and download updates manually by going to Help, About Firefox.



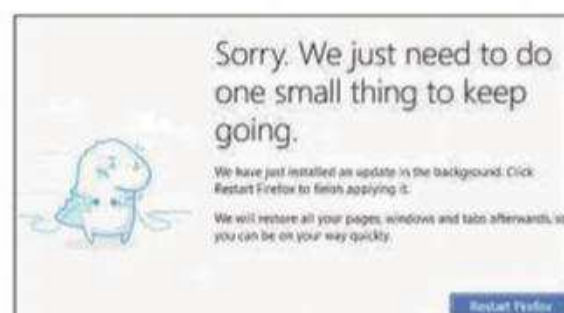
### Hide user comments on any website

If you've ever regretted scrolling down past an online article, blog post or video and exposing yourself to the vacuous, inflammatory and offensive comments below, you'll appreciate an add-on called Shut Up: Comment Blocker ([bit.ly/shutup462](http://bit.ly/shutup462)). This tool automatically hides comments on websites such as Mail Online, YouTube, The Guardian, Facebook and many more, so you'll never even know they're there. If the temptation to look gets too much, simply click the speech-bubble toolbar button to reveal what the developer calls the "vitriolic, idiotic wasteland" of the comments section. The tool remembers which sites you were on when you reactivated comments, and shows them automatically when you next visit.

Shut Up is also available for Chrome and Safari, and as an iOS app ([bit.ly/shutupall462](http://bit.ly/shutupall462)).

### Restart Firefox easily

One feature Firefox has long lacked is a Restart button. You can click the Help menu and choose 'Restart with Add-ons Disabled', but that's not much use if you simply want to relaunch the browser to free up memory or apply an update, and keep your open tabs and active tools intact. Happily, there's a workaround that doesn't involve installing a dedicated 'restart' extension. Type `about:restartrequired` into your address bar and press Enter. You'll see a message telling you that an update is being installed, but you can ignore that because it isn't true: the important thing here is the Restart Firefox button, which you can click to relaunch the browser without losing anything. Bookmark the page and drag the entry to your Bookmarks Bar for one-click access in future.



## OTHER BROWSERS



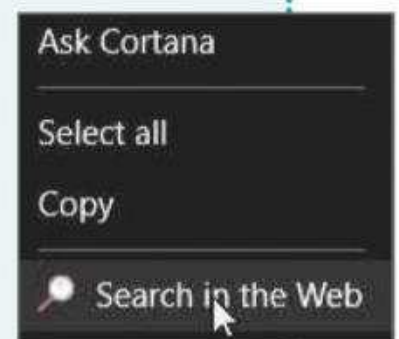
### Get personalised news in Opera

Version 57 of Opera improves the browser's news section to deliver stories that are better tailored to your interests. The stories, which appear below the website tiles on your Speed Dial page, are drawn from sources deemed relevant to you, across categories that include Entertainment, Food and Technology. You can improve Opera's recommendations by clicking the Like and Dislike buttons on stories. Click a tile to read the full article in a new tab. Opera 57 also adds Netflix recommendations to the page. If you can't see any news, go to Opera's settings, click Advanced and, in the 'Personal news' section, select 'Show news on Start page'.



### Search the web by right-clicking

Most browsers let you right-click highlighted text on a web page to search for it using your default search engine, but for some reason Edge doesn't. Instead, it encourages you to 'Ask Cortana'. You can remedy this by installing a new extension called Search Context ([bit.ly/search462](http://bit.ly/search462)), which lets you highlight and right-click text, then choose 'Search in the Web' to look it up on Google. If you'd rather use a different search engine, select one in the add-on's options.







# Best Free Apps



## App of the Fortnight

### SECURITY

## BestCrypt Explorer

[bit.ly/bestcrypt462](http://bit.ly/bestcrypt462)



NEW

We carry lots of extremely valuable information around with us on our phones and tablets these days, including files, photos, financial details and other personal data that we wouldn't want to fall into the wrong hands. Most of us are sensible enough to protect our devices with a passcode or PIN, but what if a criminal managed to crack it and gain access to the device's storage?

Thankfully, a new app called BestCrypt Explorer has the answer. It's a file-manager tool that lets you move your most private files and sensitive information into special encrypted containers in your device's storage, which you can protect with a password. BestCrypt uses very strong 256-bit AES encryption to keep your most precious files safe. It also comes with an integrated file viewer, so you can browse and open your encrypted files, view photos, watch videos and more without having to decrypt the data and, potentially, fall victim to a data leak or snooping malware in the process.

BestCrypt is cross-platform compatible, which means you can use it on Windows PCs, Linux and Mac computers as well as on your mobile devices – head to [bit.ly/encrypt462](http://bit.ly/encrypt462) to download free software for encrypting, compressing and accessing encrypted files. You can also link the app with your Google Drive, Dropbox or OneDrive account to store encrypted files in the cloud and access them from all your devices. BestCrypt even makes sure that any files you exchange between devices are protected during the transfer process.

The Android version of BestCrypt Explorer has

been in beta for a while but has finally been released as a full app. It's easy to get to grips with and is currently free for personal use.



### MINI WORKSHOP

## Protect your files using BestCrypt Explorer

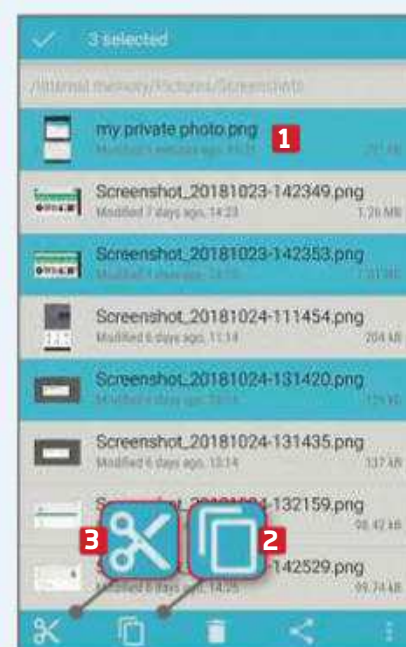
**1** BestCrypt Explorer opens into a folder view similar to those of other file-manager apps. Navigate to the folder in which you want to create your encrypted storage – select a folder **1** to open it or tap the blue tabs at the top **2** to navigate between directories. When you've found the folder you want, press the Create Storage button **3** at the bottom.



**2** In the dialogue box that pops up, type a name for your encrypted container, **1** then enter a password **2** and confirm it below. Don't lose this password, or you won't be able to retrieve the files you encrypt. Press the Create button **3** when you're done. Next, navigate to the folder on your device that contains the files you want to encrypt.



**3** Long-press a file to select it – selected files show up in blue. **1** To select more files from the same folder, tap and hold those, too. Press the icon with the overlapping squares **2** to copy your selected files, or tap the scissors icon **3** to cut them. Then navigate back to the encrypted container you created in Step 2 and press the clipboard icon to paste your files.



Our rating





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

## BROWSER

### CBeebies Get Creative

[bit.ly/cbeebiesdroid462](http://bit.ly/cbeebiesdroid462)

[bit.ly/cbeebiesios462](http://bit.ly/cbeebiesios462)

 5  9

Ever wished the younger members of your household could enjoy

creative activities such as painting, cutting, sticking and building models without any of the associated mess? This new CBeebies app enlists the help of a few favourite CBeebies characters, including Duggee, Bitz and Bob, so your little ones can splash around digital paint, make their own movies, create stories, design toys and compose groovy music without you having to tidy up or scrub the walls afterwards. More activities are promised via future updates.



Our rating



## UPDATED

## NEWS

### Feedly Lab (beta)

[bit.ly/feedly462](http://bit.ly/feedly462)

 (varies)

Feedly was everyone's favourite mobile news aggregator for a while, but Apple News and Google News scooped up a lot of users between them. Now Feedly is poised to strike back with a completely redesigned app. Feedly Lab is currently still in beta – the developers want the creation of their next-generation app to be an “open, collaborative, and fun process” – and it's only available on Android, but Feedly Lab is already shaping up to be a great way to get the best of the web delivered straight to you.



Our rating



## NEW

## TO-DO

### Three.do

[bit.ly/three462](http://bit.ly/three462)

 5

This brilliant little app simplifies the process of creating to-do lists and reminders to three quick taps (hence the name). You can add any task simply by tapping the appropriate ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘when’ tiles to set yourself a reminder in seconds. It's much quicker than typing an entry in full or even dictating your reminder to Google Assistant. The app is currently free, although you can opt to pay (£11.99) to help support its development. A paid-for ‘Pro’ version offering more features is currently in the works.



Our rating



## UPDATED

## VIDEO

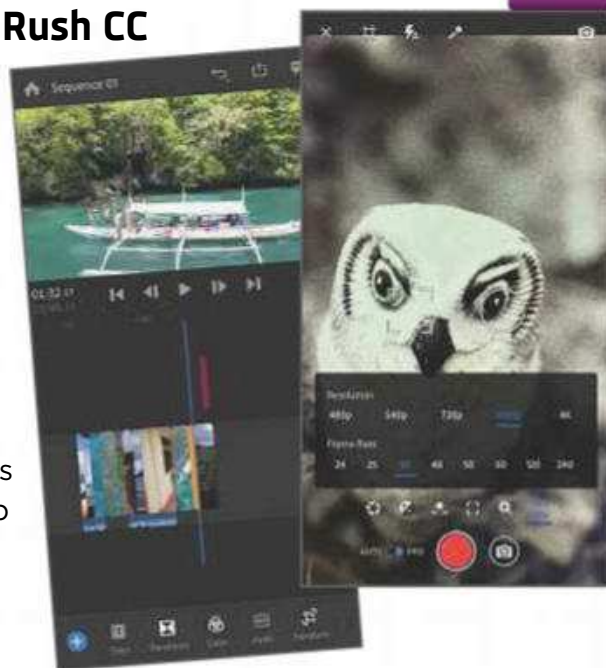
### Adobe Premiere Rush CC

[bit.ly/rush462](http://bit.ly/rush462)

 11

Editing video on your mobile device can be rather hit and miss, but the new Premiere Rush CC app seeks to remedy that. This sister app to Adobe's professional desktop editing suite, Premiere CC, somehow manages to squeeze lots of highly advanced tools – including a multi-track timeline, colour correction, customisable titles and more – into an intuitive touchscreen interface.

Premiere Rush CC is currently only available for iOS, but an Android version has been slated for future release. Most of the app's features are available for free, but paying £8.99 per month unlocks unlimited exports and cloud storage.



Our rating



## NEW

## TOOL

### AirForShare

[bit.ly/airdroid462](http://bit.ly/airdroid462)

[bit.ly/airios462](http://bit.ly/airios462)

 4.1  9

AirForShare is an incredibly useful tool that lets you copy and paste items between devices and gives you a quick way to share photos and other files with everyone on your Wi-Fi network at once. The app, which is new to Android, provides a ‘virtual desktop’ for your Wi-Fi connection, where you can temporarily dump text, images and other files for 30 minutes. During that time, you can make its contents available to any device connected to the same wireless network. The free version has a file-size limit of 5MB and lets you store only two files at once.



Our rating





# 5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

## GAME

### Reigns: Game of Thrones

[bit.ly/reignsdroid462](http://bit.ly/reignsdroid462)

[bit.ly/reignsios462](http://bit.ly/reignsios462)

**Price:** £3.79 (Android), £3.99 (iOS)

 5.1  9

Plug that *Game of Thrones*-shaped hole in your life with this *GOT*-themed take on the Reigns swipe-em-up card game formula in which you sit on the Iron Throne and rule over the Seven Kingdoms.



## NAVIGATION

### Fog of World

[bit.ly/fogdroid462](http://bit.ly/fogdroid462)

[bit.ly/fogios462](http://bit.ly/fogios462)

**Price:** £4.49 (Android) £5.99 (iOS)

 (varies)  9

Gamify your travels with this app, which turns the entire world into a video game-style map that 'un-fogs' as you explore it in real life. New to Android and updated on iOS.



## FITNESS

### Fitoons

[bit.ly/fitoons462](http://bit.ly/fitoons462)

**Price:** £3.99

 8

Childhood fitness is a growing area of concern. This app uses fun games and activities involving colourful cartoon characters to encourage kids to learn more about exercising and healthy eating.

## PODCASTS

### Cosmicast

[bit.ly/cosmicast462](http://bit.ly/cosmicast462)

**Price:** £1.99

 11

This beautifully designed podcast app is tailor-made for iOS. Not only does it look great but it includes built-in support for 3D Touch, iMessage Stickers, Siri Shortcuts and more.



## HEALTH

### WoodieHoo Brushing Teeth

[bit.ly/teethdroid462](http://bit.ly/teethdroid462)

[bit.ly/teethios462](http://bit.ly/teethios462)

**Price:** £1.49 (Android), £1.99 (iOS)

 4.1  10

Motivate young kids to take care of their oral hygiene using this Disney-animated toothbrushing game and timer, which helps your little ones brush for long enough without getting bored.



Reigns: Game of Thrones



Fog of World



Fitoons



Cosmicast



WoodieHoo Brushing Teeth



## Don't install...

### Battery Saver – Ram Booster

[bit.ly/saver462](http://bit.ly/saver462)

Installing a battery-saver app should help prolong your battery life, shouldn't it? Well, in some cases, battery apps can end up sapping large amounts of power themselves as they sit in the background allegedly optimising your RAM. Alternatively, you might end up with an app like Battery Saver – Ram Booster, which does practically nothing you can't already do in your device's operating system – such as close apps, switch off Bluetooth, dim brightness and so on.



## ...Install this instead

### Greenify

[bit.ly/greenify462](http://bit.ly/greenify462)

 (varies)

Most of your mobile device's battery-management options are locked up tight by the operating system, which means many of the most effective battery-saving apps require your phone or tablet to be rooted before they can do their job. One exception is Greenify, which helps you identify apps that drain your battery by waking up your device frequently and putting them into hibernation. Some of Greenify's more advanced features do require rooting, but its basic 'greenifying' works without it. Best of all, Greenify is designed to handle its battery-management duties while causing practically zero drain on battery life itself. ■







# Take a Screen Break










Give your eyes a rest from your browser by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you guess our 1960s songs and our web year?

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

Email your answers to  
[webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk)  
- one correct entry  
will win a disc



## CAN YOU GUESS THE SIXTIES SONGS FROM THE EMOJI?

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 |     | 2 |    |
| 3 |       | 4 |                  |
| 5 |    | 6 |    <b>END</b> |

## GUESS THE TECHNOLOGY YEAR

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



**1** Microsoft's web browser, Internet Explorer, reaches the peak of its popularity, claiming a 95% share of the browser market.

**2** The music-streaming and 'scrobbling' service

Last.fm is launched in the UK by University of Southampton student Richard Jones.



**3** Apple's 2nd-generation iPod goes on sale. It's the first to be

compatible with Windows, but only through MusicMatch software.



**PayPal**

**4** The online payment service PayPal is bought by eBay for \$1.5bn. In early 2018, eBay announced plans to dump the service.

**5** Google launches a price-comparison service, called Froogle - a pun on the term 'frugal'. It's later renamed Google Product Search.



## COMPETITIONS

### WIN 1 OF 4 Nero Platinum 2019

The 2019 edition of Nero Platinum contains six powerful programs in one suite, providing every professional tool you need to edit videos, manage photos, rip, burn and convert DVDs, and stream and download content. To enter, email your address to [webusercomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webusercomp@dennis.co.uk) with 'nero' in the subject line. For more info, visit [www.nero.com](http://www.nero.com) and 'like' [www.facebook.com/nerosoftware](http://www.facebook.com/nerosoftware).



**WORTH  
£79.99  
EACH**

### WIN 1 OF 3 Synology DiskStation DS119j

Synology's new one-bay DiskStation DS119j is designed to be your ideal first NAS drive. It makes it easy to share photos with friends, and stream music and video files to mobile devices. It's compact and energy-efficient, consuming only 10.04 watts in use. To enter, email your address to [webusercomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webusercomp@dennis.co.uk) with 'synology' in the subject line. For more info, visit [www.synology.com](http://www.synology.com) and follow [@Synology](https://twitter.com/Synology) on Twitter.



**WORTH  
£104  
EACH**





# FAQ

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

## Our guide to Wi-Fi 6

Baffling Wi-Fi specifications will soon be a thing of the past. **David Crookes** takes a look at the new internet standard

### What is it?

Wi-Fi 6 ([bit.ly/wifi462](https://bit.ly/wifi462)) is the latest wireless internet protocol and it not only brings improved performance but it also marks a significant change in the nomenclature. It's set to be better equipped to meet the ever-growing demands of modern digital life, both in the home and at work, and will make it easier to figure out which standard is the latest and greatest. After all, Wi-Fi 6 is self-evidently a step up from Wi-Fi 5 - it's in the numbers!

### But what's Wi-Fi 5?

Good question. Until now, we've become accustomed (or not) to the convention of referring to Wi-Fi protocols as 802.11. The way we've differentiated between versions going back some 20 years is by tagging a letter or two on the end. Wi-Fi 6, for instance, was initially known as 802.11ax while the current standard is 802.11ac (and will be known as Wi-Fi 5



under the new naming conventions). Likewise, 802.11n - the standard before 'ac' - has become Wi-Fi 4. As you can see, this is much less confusing and far more logical.

address exactly how the new rating will benefit us and why Wi-Fi 6 is going to be considered the best Wi-Fi around.

### So, what are the benefits of Wi-Fi 6?

Each successive Wi-Fi standard has led to a boost in wireless speed and range, and Wi-Fi 6 will be no exception. According to the Wi-Fi Alliance, it will provide higher data rates, increased capacity, improved performance in dense environments and better power efficiency, while making it very clear when you connect that you're using the best possible Wi-Fi if more than one network is available. As such, it will be



### So where are 1, 2, and 3?

Ah, that would be 802.11 a, b and g - but the Wi-Fi Alliance, the organisation which deals with such matters, hasn't bothered to formalise those three because the tech is rather old hat. But don't get bogged down in all of that. What's more important is that we



#### 4x BETTER IN DENSE ENVIRONMENTS

Improve average connection speed per user by at least four times in dense or congested environments

#### FASTER THROUGHPUT

Deliver up to 40% higher maximum speed for a single device

#### INCREASE NETWORK EFFICIENCY

By more than four times

#### EXTEND BATTERY LIFE

Of your Wi-Fi devices



Wi-Fi 6 will relieve network congestion at football matches and other crowded events

Successive Wi-Fi standards have offered faster speeds across more devices



better for public networks that are used by large crowds, such as in a packed stadium. It will also cope very well with ultra-high-definition streaming and mobile-video traffic. Given that this is set to account for 75% of mobile data by 2023, it's important to keep up.

### Does it offer greater bandwidth?

Yes it does. Wi-Fi 6 is better at encoding data and can pack more of it into the existing radio waves. To do this, it uses technology such as Multi User Multiple Input, Multiple Output (MU-MIMO), which was introduced in Wi-Fi 5 to allow Wi-Fi routers to communicate with multiple devices simultaneously. The new standard will also double the potential bandwidth from four to eight streams. Moreover, Wi-Fi 6 is faster by a factor of four and splits the radio spectrum into smaller chunks to meet the varying bandwidth needs of different users simultaneously.

### So which spectrums does it work with?

Wi-Fi 6 works within the existing 2.4GHz and 5GHz spectrums, using them simultaneously to increase speed. Users will typically get 1.1Gbps over 2.4GHz when four streams are available, and 5Gbps when eight are available. In optimum (if unlikely) conditions, it would be feasible to get a maximum of 10Gbps. Given that Wi-Fi 5 has a max of 1Gbps, this is a big improvement and it also breathes new life into 2.4GHz networks, which are better at finding their way through solid walls and objects.

### Are there benefits for networked devices?

Yes, particularly because Wi-Fi 6 enables battery-powered devices such as smartphones and thermostats to only connect to a router when such an action is needed, allowing them to determine when and how frequently they should wake in order to send or receive data. This saves power while making the network more efficient and reliable, which makes it ideal for smart homes and Internet of Things devices.






Wi-Fi 6 will make smart-home devices such as the Hive thermostat more reliable

## HOW WILL I KNOW WI-FI 6 IS AVAILABLE?

We love a good logo at **Web User** and the new generational approach to naming Wi-Fi technologies comes with three easily identifiable new ones. All the logos look similar, with a number laid over a familiar Wi-Fi symbol. The hope is that manufacturers will use them to make it easier for consumers to identify compatible devices.

It appears that the Wi-Fi Alliance would also like the symbols displayed on the screens of devices, stating on its website that “icons will adjust as

Generation of network connection	Sample user interface visual
Wi-Fi 6	
Wi-Fi 5	
Wi-Fi 4	

users move between Wi-Fi networks that provide a different user experience”. We may also see the new logos as stickers highlighting public networks, perhaps in pubs and cafés, so that users will be aware of the likely speeds they can attain.

### Why not concentrate on 5G?

It's true that 5G – the fifth-generation mobile network – is going to be a big deal. It will be much faster than 4G and cope better with video streaming and gaming. But, as we've seen, carriers charge us for data and place limits on it depending on the packages we choose. For that reason, it's important that we have a viable alternative to cellular, which Wi-Fi 6 will provide.

### Do I need to update all my equipment?

Eventually, yes, but there's no rush. Over time, you'll probably find yourself on Wi-Fi 6 through the natural cycle of upgrading and, besides, Wi-Fi 6 devices will still work on your current Wi-Fi 4 or Wi-Fi 5 network. However, if you buy a Wi-Fi 6-enabled device and want to speed things up, then you'll need to upgrade your router. Once you do, Wi-Fi 6 will look for compatible devices and allow them to access the faster speeds. You'll be able to connect many more devices (four times as many as today) without seeing any noticeable drop in performance. This will be a huge leap forward if all of your family are hooking into the Wi-Fi at once.



You'll need to upgrade your router to make the most of Wi-Fi 6's faster speeds

### Wonderful. So when can I get it?

Now that we've whetted your appetite, we're going to whip the feast away temporarily. Wi-Fi 6 is not due for launch until the second half of 2019 – which is when the Wi-Fi Alliance is due to begin certifying compatible devices, so they can sport the new Wi-Fi 6 badge. Even then, it will take some time for hardware manufacturers to get their new devices rolling – so although it's likely we'll see Wi-Fi 6 compatibility on iOS and Android devices next autumn, we can't be sure how quickly companies will make inroads. Internet service providers will also need to get things moving, so a bit of patience may be needed.



This is how Wi-Fi 6 could look on your phone when it arrives next year

### What about Wi-Fi 7?

Well, hang on there. Wi-Fi 7 will be following Wi-Fi 6 but not until about 2023. We're also making the assumption that the newly adopted names are going to take off – but that isn't a given since the Wi-Fi Alliance can't force companies to make the switch. In all likelihood, however, they will, especially in relation to Wi-Fi 6, which already has the backing of major firms including Intel, Broadcom and Netgear. Whether or not companies will then go to the hassle of altering 802.11ac to Wi-Fi 5 is another matter, but they'll be doing consumers a massive favour if they do.



# What You Must... NEVER DO ONLINE



## COMPROMISING YOUR PRIVACY

### Accidentally subscribing to mailing lists

One of the big benefits of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) introduced earlier this year is that it's reduced the amount of unwanted email we receive, because companies must now request our permission to send us marketing messages. Sadly, it hasn't stemmed the flow of 'grey mail' altogether, and many sites still try to trick you into joining their mailing lists, by using confusing opt-out boxes or blocking your access to content until you provide your email address.

Sifting through your inbox to unsubscribe from specific lists can prove time-consuming, while the bulk-unsubscription tool Unroll.me fell foul of GDPR rules and is no longer available in the EU. Fortunately, there is a free alternative called Cleanfox ([www.cleanfox.io](http://www.cleanfox.io)), which automatically detects and lets you unsubscribe from all marketing messages in your email accounts. It works with Gmail, Outlook.com/Hotmail, Yahoo Mail and more, and makes it easy to review and remove persistent and unwanted senders.



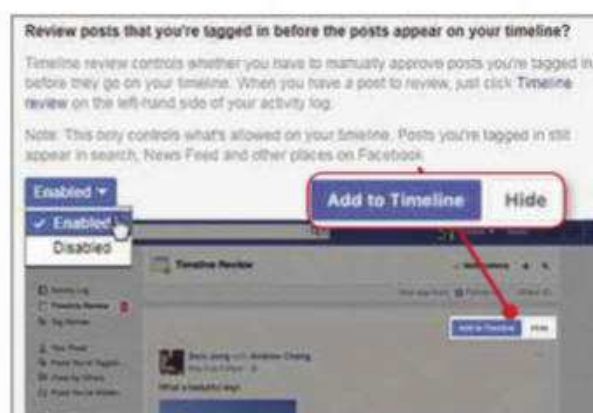
*Cleanfox makes it easy to unsubscribe from mailing lists and newsletters*

It even tells you how much you've reduced your carbon footprint by in unsubscribing. Cleanfox is GDPR-compliant and promises not to share your personal data with third parties.

### Letting people tag you on Facebook

Most of us have experienced a sense of dread after receiving a notification that "so-and-so has tagged you in a photo on Facebook", especially if the picture captures you looking worse for wear. To stop this happening without your permission, click the down arrow in the top-right corner of any Facebook page, select Settings and choose 'Timeline and Tagging'. You will see the option to 'Review posts that you're tagged in before the posts appear on your timeline?'. Click Edit and select Enabled. Now, whenever someone tags you in a picture, you'll be given the option to 'Add to Timeline' or Hide.

To remove a tagged photo from your timeline retrospectively, click Photos then 'Photos of You', select the offending item and click 'Hidden from timeline'. Alternatively, you can delete



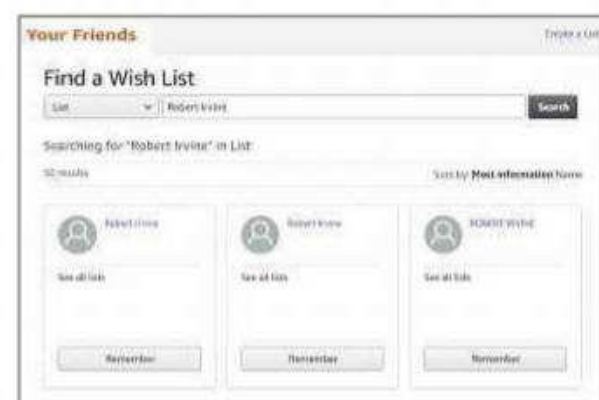
*Avoid online embarrassment by reviewing Facebook posts that you're tagged in*

the tag altogether by clicking Options, Remove Tag.

### Publicly sharing your Amazon wishlist

By default, everything you wish for on Amazon is made public. To explore your wishlist and everything you've added to it, all anyone needs is your name or email address. To see this for yourself, go to [bit.ly/wishlist462](https://bit.ly/wishlist462), and search for a name or email address, and you'll be presented with matching lists.

To hide your wishlist from nosy parkers, log into Amazon and hover over Your Lists (next to the Basket in the top-right corner). Select Wishlist, click 'Edit this list' and in the window that opens, change the privacy of the list from Public to Private. Amazon lets you set up more than one wishlist, so you can create one that's public if you need to and keep your private one to yourself.



*Ensure the contents of your Amazon wishlist don't appear in public searches*

### Leaking your movements to Google

Although it's useful for your phone to know your location, so it can provide accurate maps and local information,



## COVER FEATURE

Even the savviest web users commit the occasional blunder, often without realising. **Robert Irvine** reveals the mistakes we make every day and explains how to avoid them

**T**here are certain rules for using the web that go without saying: always have security software running, don't 'troll' people on public forums and never send your bank details to a Nigerian prince seeking to transfer a large sum of money. But other advice can only be learned through experience, or by trial and error, and it's a rare web user who hasn't unwittingly committed at least one major *faux pas* during their time online. In this feature, we reveal 26 of the most common

mistakes that we all make online, from failing to properly protect your privacy and being lax with your security to carelessly costing yourself money and even jeopardising your health. These include things you should never search for, in case you find something you wish you hadn't.

You won't have fallen for *all* these tricks, and some are easier to avoid than others, but forewarned is forearmed, and hopefully over these six pages we'll provide you with all the info you need to stop you slipping up in future.

you may not realise that it secretly stores details of everywhere you've been. This means that anyone who picks up your handset can see the addresses

you've visited and how long you spent there.

To see what your Android phone leaks about your travels, open the main menu in Google Maps and tap 'Your timeline'. Here, you'll find a list and a map of all the places you've been over the past day, week, month and longer. On an iPhone, go to Settings,

Privacy, Location Services, System Services and tap Frequent Locations.

You can erase Google Maps data for a specific day by tapping the three-dot menu in the top-right corner of your timeline and choosing 'Delete day'. For a more thorough wipe of your footprint, select Settings and tap 'Delete all Location History', then set Location History to Off. On iOS, tap Clear History and switch off Frequent Locations.

### Staying logged in on remote devices

Even if you have nothing to hide, it's unsettling to think of someone reading your email, perusing your Facebook messages or laughing at your Spotify

playlists. It's also a very real risk if you've made the everyday error of forgetting to sign out of your account on a device that's now miles away, such as a public computer, a loaned laptop or a mislaid phone.

Happily, some online services let you prevent prying by logging out of your account remotely. In Gmail, for example, click the cog icon, choose Settings, then scroll to the foot of the page and click the Details link below 'Last account activity'. Click the 'Sign out of all other sessions' button to log out everywhere aside from your current location.

On the Facebook website, click the down arrow in the top-right corner, choose Settings and select 'Security and login'. In the Where You're Logged In section, click the three-dot button next to an entry to sign out of that session, or choose 'Log out of all sessions' to sign out everywhere.

With Spotify, just go to your account page ([www.spotify.com/account](http://www.spotify.com/account)) and, on the Account Overview tab, click the 'Sign out everywhere' button.



**Gmail lets you sign out of your account remotely on all other devices**

### Using your real name and email address

When you sign up with a website using your real name and email address, you not only open yourself to a deluge of marketing messages, but hand over two very sensitive pieces of personal information. This means that if the site suffers a security breach, your details could fall into the hands of cybercriminals and compromise the safety of your other online accounts and your offline identity.

Although it's tempting to let your browser auto-fill these details in registration fields, you should avoid this privacy blunder by using a fake name and email address. Open the brilliant Fake Name Generator in a new tab to create an instant

alternative identity and accompanying email address to sign up with. The latter actually works, giving you a temporary inbox you can use to receive account-activation messages, and the site also generates other useful info, including a password, phone number and postal address. Use the drop-down menus to select your preferred fake gender, name set and country.



**Create false registration details using the Fake Name Generator**





## SACRIFICING YOUR SECURITY

### Using the same password on multiple sites

Yes, yawn, we've all heard this one before, but it remains the most common security blunder made by web users and yet we still do it, despite the significant increase in high-profile data breaches in the last few years.

Remembering lots of different passwords is undoubtedly difficult, especially considering how many accounts you're likely to have these days, which is where a password manager comes in handy. LastPass ([lastpass.com](http://lastpass.com)) is the best free option, and works across all the main operating systems, browsers and mobile devices. It securely stores all your individual logins under a master password, so you only have one to remember; generates complex, impossible-to-guess passwords for you; and signs you into sites instantly. We also like Dashlane ([dashlane.com](http://dashlane.com)), which lets you change all your passwords at once.



*LastPass saves you needing to remember different passwords across devices*

Even if you don't opt for a password manager, make sure you regularly reset your passwords on sites containing sensitive information, such as online stores and social networks.

### Not using two-factor authentication

Although it can seem a bit of a hassle, two-factor authentication (2FA) – also known as two-step verification – is a sensible precaution for security conscious web users. It adds a second layer of protection to your accounts beyond easy-to-steal passwords, by making you enter a code when you sign in on a new device or when you've been logged in on your current one for 30 days.

Gmail, Outlook.com, Facebook, Twitter, Amazon and many more online services now offer 2FA. You can receive your verification codes via text message, phone call or to an alternative email address, but the easiest method is to use an authenticator app such as Authy ([authy.com](http://authy.com)) or Google



*Use an authenticator app to add a second layer of protection to your accounts*

Authenticator ([bit.ly/googleauth462](http://bit.ly/googleauth462)), which lets you receive codes even without an internet connection.

### Browsing without a VPN on public Wi-Fi

When you're browsing the web at home, a VPN might seem like overkill – unless you're desperate to remain anonymous or you're trying to access restricted content – but if you don't use one on public Wi-Fi, you may as well be wearing a hat that says "hack me". Many free public networks – especially in hotels, coffee shops and transport hubs such as airports – aren't properly secured, which means it doesn't take a hacker much effort to intercept your browsing, steal your data and infect your device with malware. They may even set up an 'evil twin' network that duplicates the real one.

A VPN protects you against the dangers of public Wi-Fi by encrypting your online activity, so that no-one can see what you're doing or access your data. As revealed in our VPN mega test in Issue 458 ([bit.ly/webuser458](http://bit.ly/webuser458)), our



*Install NordVPN to stay safe when you're browsing on public Wi-Fi*

current favourite is NordVPN ([bit.ly/nordvpn458](http://bit.ly/nordvpn458)), which is available for Windows, Mac OS, Linux, Android and iOS. It costs from \$3.99 (£3.07) per month, with a three-day free trial available, offers military-grade encryption and features 'double VPN' technology that routes your traffic through two servers for extra anonymity.

### Clicking ads disguised as download buttons

Even the savviest web user can be fooled by an advert that looks exactly like a Download button. These deceptive ads, which are often larger and more prominently placed than the real download links, plague software sites such as Softpedia ([www.softpedia.com](http://www.softpedia.com)) and the homepages of reputable free programs including Paint.net ([www.getpaint.net](http://www.getpaint.net)). Not only do they waste your time by downloading a different tool to the one you want, but they may also come bundled with extras that change your browser settings and install malware on your PC.

## WHAT YOU MUST NEVER ASK ALEXA

It's unlikely that, in everyday life, you'll need to know the answer to the question: "What is 10 to the power of 308?", but if it should crop up, it's best not to ask your Amazon Echo. Users have discovered that Alexa goes slightly bonkers when responding to this poser, which is reportedly the largest number she can handle, because she insists on intoning every '0'. This leads to a string of "oh-oh-ohs" lasting for a minute-and-a-half. Listen for yourself at [bit.ly/alexauk462](http://bit.ly/alexauk462).

In the US, the result is even stranger, as American Alexa begins with "zero-zero-zero", becomes increasingly frenzied, gets a bit bored after a while, and eventually settles into a trance-like stream of "oh"s, before a final, exhausted "oh" (and probable plotting of revenge on her owner). Hear this Alexa torture at [bit.ly/alexaus462](http://bit.ly/alexaus462).







## Avoid getting tricked by fake download buttons by installing uBlock Origin

The easiest way to check whether a Download button is genuine is to hover your mouse over it to see where it will direct you. If the URL that appears at the bottom of your browser begins with 'googleadservices' or similar, then don't click it. Also look for giveaway signs such as an 'X' to the top-right of a button.

## Mistyping the address of a website

For a long-term solution to the problem, install an ad blocker such as uBlock Origin ([bit.ly/ublock462](http://bit.ly/ublock462)), which is available for most browsers and automatically blocks fake Download buttons, so you'll never even know they were there. You can whitelist sites that you support by allowing them to display ads to gain revenue.

Most browsers now auto-complete URLs as you type them, so you can quickly open pages you've been to before. But if you're visiting a new website, or you've just cleared your history, mistyping the address can lead you to dangerous places.

'Typosquatting' sites are specifically set up to exploit such errors, and may contain malware or attempt to 'phish' your details. Although their shoddy designs should set alarm bells ringing, if you've never been to the site before, you'd be forgiven for being fooled.



## Use Avast Online Security to check if a site is what it seems

It also detects social widgets, hidden trackers and web-analytics tools embedded in web pages. If you do stumble across a fake site, close that browser tab immediately.

Many big companies, including Google, Apple and Facebook, have taken the precaution of buying variations on their URLs, so you'll be redirected automatically.

## Installing junk bundled with software

In *Web User*, we always highlight when free programs are bundled with junk and advise you to decline extra options during installation by selecting the Custom option. However, it's easy to blindly click Next and end up with something unwanted on your PC. For a second line of defence, install the excellent free tool Unchecky ([unchecky.com](http://unchecky.com)), which keeps potentially unwanted programs (PUPs) off your



## Unchecky stops you installing junk bundled with programs you download

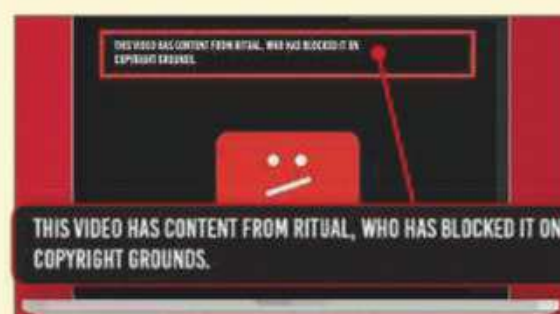
computer by automatically unticking the boxes for unrelated 'offers'. It also warns you if you inadvertently accept one of these offers. Unchecky was updated earlier this year to improve its support for CCleaner, which has sadly turned to the dark side by bundling extras with its downloads.



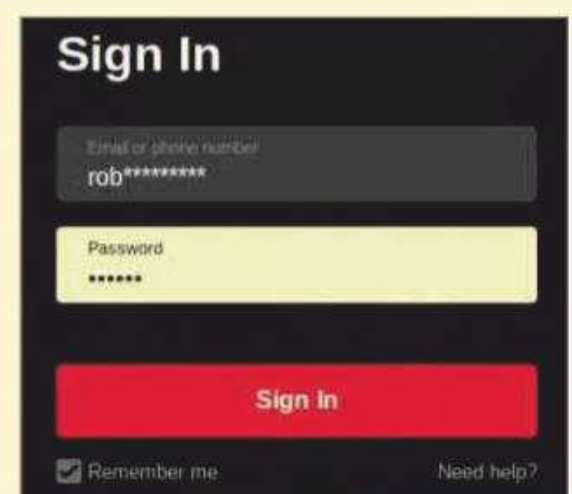
## UNKNOWINGLY BREAKING THE LAW

### Reusing copyrighted content

Have you ever used a favourite song as the soundtrack to a video you uploaded to YouTube? Or shared a funny photo from a Google Images search on your Facebook feed? If so, you may have broken UK copyright law, which deems it unlawful to use copyright-protected music, photos, videos and text without permission from the rights holder, and could result in you facing a big fine. YouTube even has a system in place called Content ID, which automatically identifies copies of content creators' work when they're uploaded. The site tries to dissuade you from using copyrighted music in videos by choosing from its library of licensed songs ([www.youtube.com/audiolibrary](http://www.youtube.com/audiolibrary)). Always check for a copyright notice before reusing anything you find online – if the site has a Creative Commons licence, then reuse may be permissible under specific terms, such as crediting the copyright owner. If you're in any doubt, then leave the content alone!



## YouTube's Content ID system catches users who share copyrighted content



## Don't upset Netflix by sharing your password with non-family members

### Sharing your Netflix password

Lots of Netflix viewers share their account passwords with friends and family, to save them forking out for their own subscriptions. Although this login loaning may seem harmless, it's actually forbidden by Netflix's terms and conditions ([bit.ly/netflix462](http://bit.ly/netflix462)), which state: "the Account Owner should not reveal the password or details of the Payment Method associated with the account to anyone". Indeed, in the US it's a federal crime to share your password for Netflix – and other subscription services – under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act.

Netflix itself has said that "sharing with members of the household is a reasonable thing to do", but passing your password around like a pack of Polos could get you in trouble.





## COSTING YOURSELF EXTRA MONEY

### Forgetting to cancel a free trial

Some online services ask for your credit card details upfront when you sign up for a free trial. This is supposed to make things easier for both you and the service provider if you decide to continue with a paid-for subscription, but it also means they can start charging you as soon as the trial has finished and continue to do so every month.

Even if you cancel your subscription just after the first payment is taken from your account, you won't get the money back. Some companies also make it difficult to cancel, requiring you to phone rather than email so they can try to persuade you to stay.

The easiest way to avoid this mistake is to set up a reminder in Google Calendar to cancel before the free trial ends. Give yourself plenty of

warning time, on both your desktop and Android device – iOS users should use the iCloud calendar – to ensure that you don't get tied into a costly subscription. You can also add reminders to Calendar directly from Gmail, Keep and other Google tools.

### Exceeding your mobile data limit

Today's 4G mobile speeds make streaming and downloading video and music, playing online games and sharing content on the web faster than ever, but this also means you're likely to burn through more data each month. This obviously isn't a problem if you've got an unlimited data plan, but with a tight monthly allowance – the cheapest deals limit you to a mere 500MB of data – it's easy to exceed your limit, which means you'll face hefty fees from your mobile network in your next bill.

Luckily, Android phones now offer built-in tools that alert you when you near your monthly limit. To set this up on Android, go to Settings, 'Data usage', 'Mobile data usage' and tap the cog in the top-right corner. Here, you can specify the start of your billing cycle (for example, the 6th of each month), activate a warning for when you've almost used a certain amount of data and set a maximum limit which, when

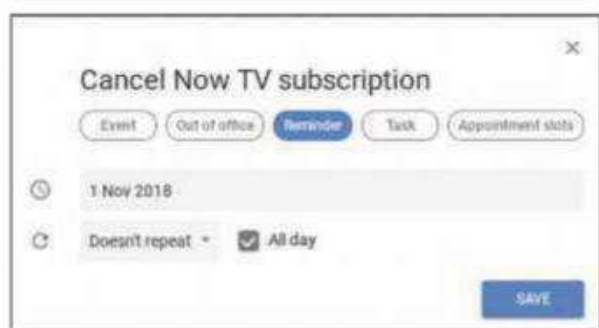


**Android can warn you when you near your monthly data limit**

reached, will switch off mobile data.

On an iPhone, you can go to Settings, Mobile Data Usage, Current Period and stop specific apps using mobile data, but there's no option to set an overall monthly limit. For that, you should install My Data Manager ([bit.ly/mydata462](http://bit.ly/mydata462)), which monitors your data usage and alerts you when you've reached 90% of your plan limit.

It's also worth ensuring that data-guzzling apps such as Netflix, iPlayer and YouTube are set to only download content over Wi-Fi, not potentially expensive 4G or 3G.



**Create reminders in Google Calendar to cancel free trials before they end**



## ENDANGERING YOUR HEALTH

### Binge-browsing without taking regular breaks

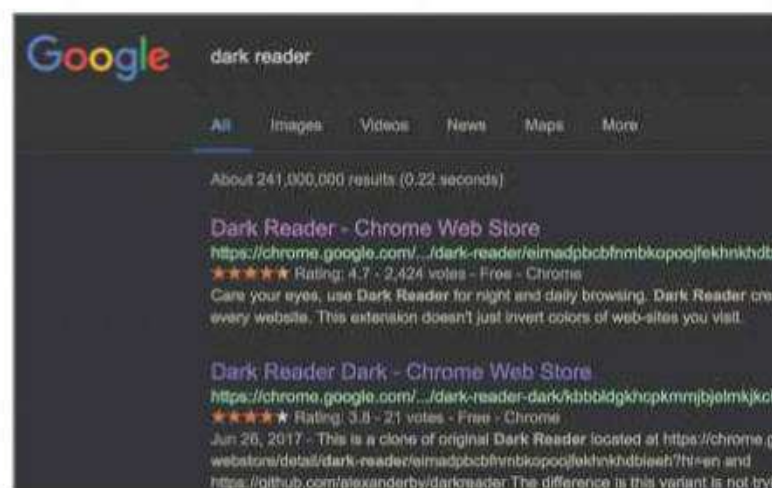
It's common knowledge that staring at a screen for hours on end isn't good for your eyes, and yet we do it anyway (especially on this magazine!). One way to avoid eye strain – or asthenopia, to give it the proper medical name – is to install an extension that prompts you to blink and take frequent short breaks from your screen. There are many such tools available, but our current favourite is Blinkk for Chrome ([bit.ly/blinkk462](http://bit.ly/blinkk462)), which reminds you to take eye breaks – and explains why – at intervals of your choosing. For further protection of your

peepers, try Eye Exercises ([bit.ly/eye462](http://bit.ly/eye462)), which suggests 30-second workouts to reduce the effects of asthenopia.

It's worth combining these add-ons with Water Walk – see Best New Browser Tools on page 32 – which reminds you to walk around and have a glass of water at regular intervals.

### Straining your eyes when browsing at night

Another cause of eye strain is the blue light emitted from the screens of computer monitors and mobile devices, especially when staring at stark white web pages. This year has seen lots of web companies address the problem by introducing night modes and dark themes, which invert background colours and other page elements to reduce the glare of blue light, and can be switched on and off as required. Firefox, Edge and Vivaldi have dark

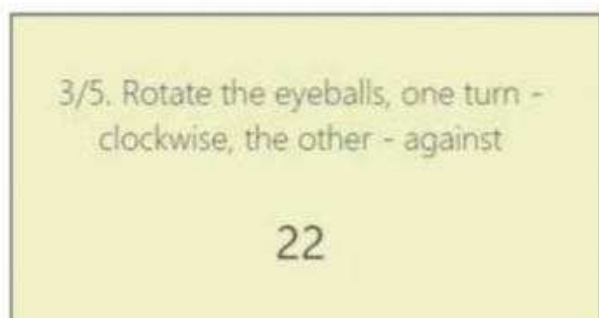


**Switch to a dark theme to make browsing at night easier on the eyes**

themes built-in; for Chrome, try Dark Reader ([bit.ly/dark462](http://bit.ly/dark462)). Gmail, Twitter and YouTube offer dark themes, as do Windows 10, Android and iOS. Look in the settings for the site or software to bring on the night. See our 'Protect your eyes' feature in Issue 451 ([bit.ly/webuser451](http://bit.ly/webuser451)) for full details.

### Getting a diagnosis from Doctor Internet

When you're feeling unwell, it's



**Take regulars breaks from intensive browsing and exercise your eyes**



## Check it's not an emergency

### Call 999 now if you have:

- signs of a heart attack - pain like a very tight band, heavy weight or squeezing in the centre of your chest
- signs of a stroke - face drooping on one side, can't hold both arms up, difficulty speaking
- severe difficulty breathing - gasping, not being able to get words out, choking or lips turning blue
- heavy bleeding - that won't stop
- severe injuries - or deep cuts after a serious accident
- seizure (fit) - someone is shaking or jerking because of a fit, or is unconscious (can't be woken up)

I have none of these

**NHS 111 Online checks your symptoms and advises about emergencies**

tempting to Google your symptoms to find out the cause, but it's also ill-advised. Although medical-diagnosis sites such as WebMD ([www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)) are useful for basic health information, they're no substitute for a proper check-up with your GP. Hypochondria and the web can prove a very bad mix, and you may convince yourself you have a more serious ailment than you do, or get a false assurance that a truly serious condition is nothing to worry about.

It's true that the NHS now advises patients to check their symptoms on its 111 Online service ([111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk)), but this is primarily intended as a starting point and to encourage people not to call 999 for non-emergencies. There's a lot of misleading advice out there, so it's unwise to put your health in the hands of your browser.

### Chatting with no regard for those around you

Holding up people at a supermarket checkout, cashpoint or ticket machine while you obviously chat on WhatsApp

or Facebook is potentially bad for your health, because you'll get bad vibes from everyone around you. Can you not wait a couple of minutes to continue your conversation? We're confident that *Web User* readers don't do this, but it's a particular bugbear of ours! ■

*Don't let your phone turn you into an inconsiderate citizen*



## WHAT YOU MUST NEVER SEARCH FOR

Google can find you anything in seconds, but some things are best left undiscovered. Here are five searches to avoid:

### Discontinued software

When companies stop supporting a program and remove official download links, scammers often try to make a quick buck through searches. Try [www.oldversion.com](http://www.oldversion.com) for 'abandonware' instead.

### Technical support

In September, Google announced a crackdown on misleading ads for tech-support services that aim to con rather than help people, but some may still slip through and appear on other search engines.

### Bitcoin advice

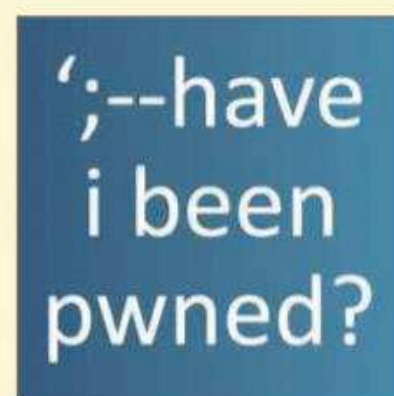
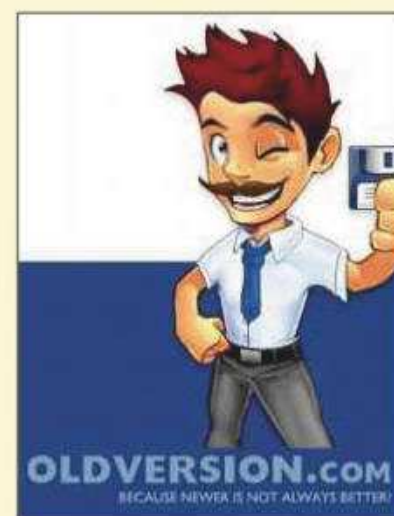
More people are trying to make a profit from Bitcoin-investment scams than from the cryptocurrency itself. Google banned ads for Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies in June, but recently reversed the decision.

### Product safety

If you ask Google whether, for example, a cleaning product is safe to use, you'll find plenty of contradictory opinions. It's much wiser to seek medical or professional advice.

### Your email address

Finding your email address on a random page, with no explanation, can be alarming. If you're worried that you may have been hacked, search [haveibeenpwned.com](http://haveibeenpwned.com) for more information.



**NEXT ISSUE**

**on sale Wednesday 28 November 2018**

# BEST FREE SOFTWARE 2019

We pick the 10 essential programs for the year ahead

## PLUS...

### CAUGHT IN THE ACT

Get alerts when something changes on your PC

### HACK YOUR MOUSE

Advanced manoeuvres that go beyond point and click

### SANDBOX DEFENDER

Stop hackers exploiting Windows' security tool

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# Best free illustration software

The powerful drawing program Autodesk SketchBook is now completely free. Should you rush to install it, or are there better tools for creating digital art on your PC? **Jane Hoskyn** finds out



**Autodesk SketchBook** | [sketchbook.com](http://sketchbook.com) | ★★★★★  
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

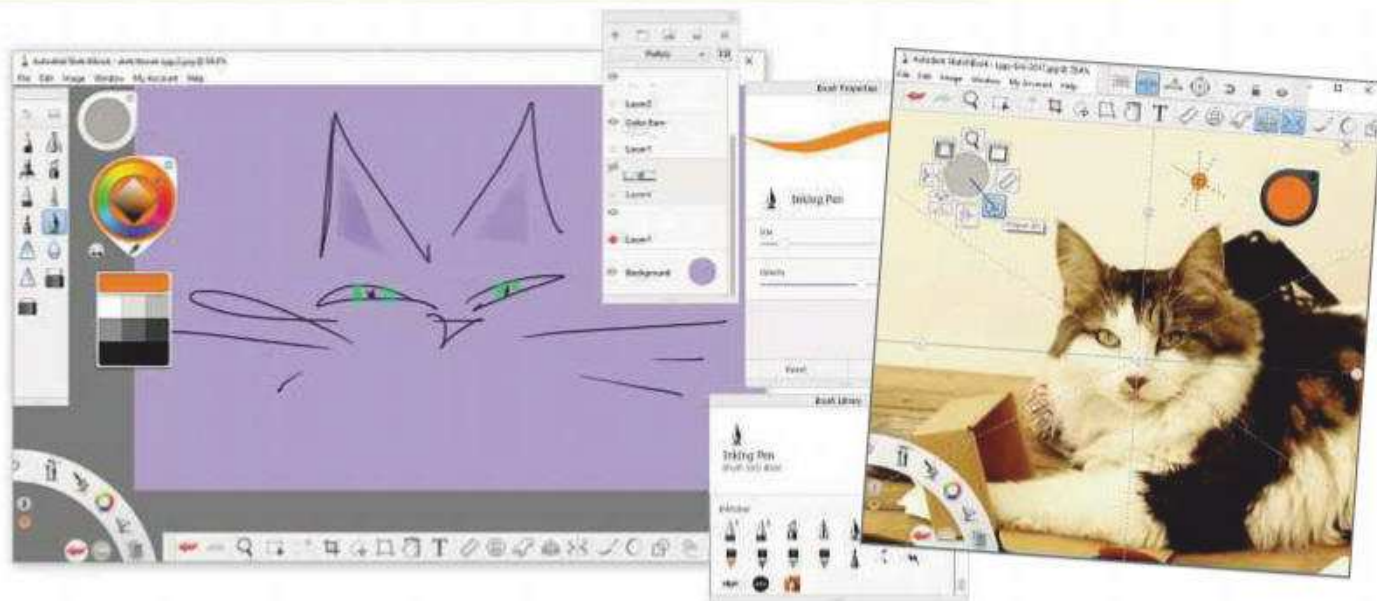


## What we liked:

SketchBook perfectly balances ease-of-use with sophistication: the newly free program is welcoming for beginners (launch it, click it, doodle) while offering enough tools, power and precision to satisfy professionals. And it includes creative extras (GIF animation; image adjustment) without cramming in so many that everything slows down.

The program launches fast on a clean, inviting drawing space that hasn't fallen victim to the current dark-theme trend. Unobtrusive toolbars contain all the essentials: customisable preset brushes (and pens, erasers and spray cans, plus custom sets such as oil painting and Manga), a colour-picker with dropper, layers with blending modes, transform tools, gradients, text, textures and more.

But not too much more. SketchBook is not a photo editor. Multiple image formats are supported, including layered Photoshop PSP, but SketchBook is much faster and less cluttered than Photoshop. For maximum space, you can switch the colour and brush toolbars for two clickable 'pucks', or ditch those too and access all the tools from a 'lagoon' wheel in the



corner of the screen.

Drawing with your mouse is never fun, so all our featured programs let you connect a graphics tablet (such as a Wacom device) to "draw" with a stylus or finger. But unlike our Silver and Bronze choices, SketchBook also has a mobile app ([sketchbook.com/mobile](http://sketchbook.com/mobile)), so you can draw and paint on your iPad or Android tablet (and phone, presumably using a toothpick), then sync your work between your devices.

## How it can be improved:

You're forced to create an account to use SketchBook (you can opt out for the first seven days) and the setup process sucks you into Autodesk's confusing

online ecosystem – we found its YouTube channel ([bit.ly/sketchtube462](http://bit.ly/sketchtube462)) much more helpful. But even that couldn't find the two missing features: a 'move' tool for easy repositioning; and a speed adjuster in the Flipboard animator. These were small but noticeable omissions.

## OUR VERDICT

**Autodesk SketchBook is hard to fault. Even the annoying sign-up process gives you freedom to use any device, then sync your work – all for free. Fast, easy and powerful – you'll be on it for hours.**



Krita | [krita.org](http://krita.org) | ★★★★★☆

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

WebUser  
SILVER  
AWARD**What we liked:**

Krita was created 20 years ago by artists who wanted powerful illustration software without a crippling price tag. Its rich open-source history is evident from Krita's website, which is packed with tutorials, message boards and a gallery of inspirational artwork created by its users.

What Krita's interface lacks in click-and-draw simplicity, it makes up for with a wealth of at-a-glance tools – as many of them in view as possible. It's like a full but well-organised artist's bench, which is ideal if you have a large monitor and want to use lots of brushes and options without hunting through menus to find them. For example, you can see dozens of brush presets at once, including paintable textures, effects and pixel art, then right-click to customise each one. All the palettes can be configured to suit you.

The main menus open advanced options such as customisable filters, scripting tools, powerful layered



animation and the ability to create your own templates.

**How it can be improved:**

Krita is determined to do everything, which can drag its speed down to Photoshop-level sluggishness. That's fine if you have a fast computer and big ambitions, but frustrating if you don't.

**OUR VERDICT**

Krita is made by and for pros, and doesn't blunt its tools to appeal to beginners. With patience and some help from its superb community, this feature-packed program will make a digital artist of anyone.

FireAlpaca | [firealpaca.com](http://firealpaca.com) | ★★★★★☆

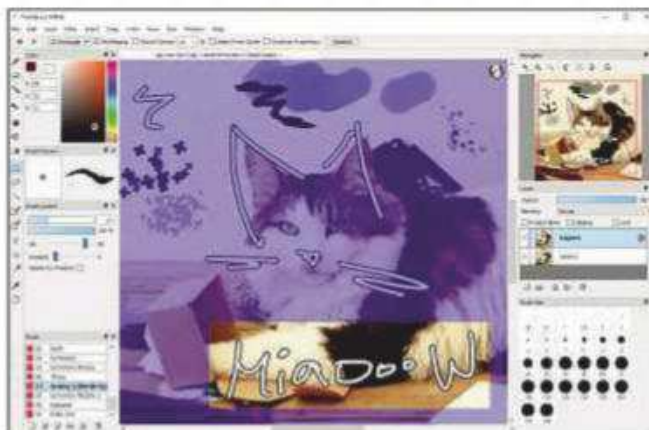
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser  
BRONZE  
AWARD**What we liked:**

Budding comic-book artists need look no further because FireAlpaca offers a brilliant range of templates and an Edge Pen tool that writes in white with a black outline – perfect for creating comic borders.

There's more to this nimble program than DIY superheroes, though. Draw, paint, pattern, warp, fill or do whatever else on your blank page or imported photo, using the open palettes to pick your brush type and size, special effect and colour. Along with now-familiar options such as layers and Wacom support, FireAlpaca also offers perspective and 3D guidelines to make geometry fun.

FireAlpaca's sister animation tool, FireAlpaca Douga, isn't built-in but instead works online ([bit.ly/douga462](http://bit.ly/douga462)), so it can be improved continually without slowing down the program. We also like that you can download an older version for Windows XP.

**How it can be improved:**

The site is (often badly) translated from Chinese, and you're left to blindly guess your way around the program. The gaudy layout is occasionally echoed in ads that litter the program window on launch, but at least they stay away when you close them.

**OUR VERDICT**

FireAlpaca is a fast and easy-to-use program. It lacks the sophistication of SketchBook and Krita, but it's far more than a doodle toy and could land you a career in comic art!

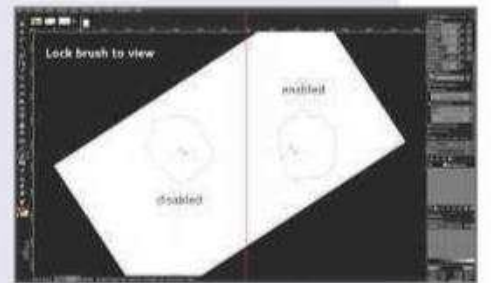
**BEST OF THE REST****GIMP**[www.gimp.org](http://www.gimp.org)

It was a toss-up between this open-source powerhouse – which includes Photoshop-level image-editing tools as well as painting tools

– and the smaller, faster MyPaint

([mypaint.org](http://mypaint.org)). But the latter

hasn't been updated in two years, while GIMP is a constant source of innovation. The latest stable release, v2.10, adds canvas rotation, symmetry painting and a brush lock option ([bit.ly/gimpnew462](http://bit.ly/gimpnew462)).

**Drawpile**[drawpile.net](http://drawpile.net)

Collaborate with other artists and record your drawing sessions using this

innovative open-source program. Its dedicated server lets you work

securely with others in real time – great for getting feedback or playing drawing games – and you can use the one-click Record tool to capture a screencast. Drawpile supports the OpenRaster image file format that works in Krita and Gimp.

**Verve**[bit.ly/verve462](http://bit.ly/verve462)

Portable program Verve somehow makes drawing and painting with your mouse a pleasure. In all the other programs we tested, we struggled to draw with our mouse and were desperate for a drawing

tablet. But then we tried Verve's crayon-like default brush and were amazed by the control it gave us. It's still in beta and the developer warns of bugs, but we didn't encounter any problems.







# Find the best Black Friday discounts

We all love a bargain, and in the run-up to Christmas, Black Friday is the best day to find one. **Steve Clark** takes stock of what we can expect on 23 November

## WHAT IS BLACK FRIDAY?

**W**e have Amazon to thank for bringing Black Friday to the UK. Until 2010, few of us had heard of it, but the retail giant successfully imported the American sales bonanza to our shores. It didn't take long for other retailers to jump on the Black Friday bandwagon (or at least plaster their websites with Black Friday banners while hiking prices, see [bit.ly/fakes462](http://bit.ly/fakes462)). Before you could say "fisticuffs over a cheap TV", Black Friday had become a staple of the British shopping season – and, judging by early reactions, composure, etiquette and stiff upper lips were the first items to go out of stock.

The tradition is a lot older than that, however. Black Friday has been knocking about since the 1940s and 50s – although we had to wait half a century for the nickname to stick. It's traditionally the day after Thanksgiving, when Americans rouse themselves from turkey-based food comas, stores slash their prices and Christmas shopping begins.

Now with its introduction to the UK, we've all become shopping hawks, scoping out the best deals on the high street and online.



*Composure and etiquette tend to go out of the window come Black Friday*

Credit: Ververidis Vasilis / Shutterstock.com

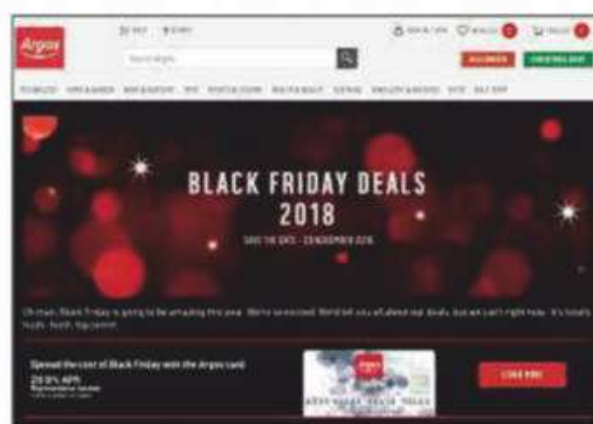
## What to expect this year

Amazon (who else?) is most likely to kickstart the proceedings. Last year, its sales event began almost two weeks before Black Friday. Other stores won't be waiting for the big day either. Currys PC World and Carphone Warehouse started their sales early, slashing the prices of high-end tech such as Galaxy Note smartphones and older iPhones. Expect plenty of high-street shops to begin long before the official Black Friday date of 23 November, too.

Bargain hunters should keep an eye on Argos ([bit.ly/argos462](http://bit.ly/argos462)) in particular. The catalogue shop recently teamed up with Sainsbury's, and offers same-day deliveries in an attempt to rival Amazon. In previous years, Argos has discounted iPads, TVs and Xbox and PlayStation games consoles, with price cuts of £40 on average. It also flogs cheap household appliances, with hundreds of

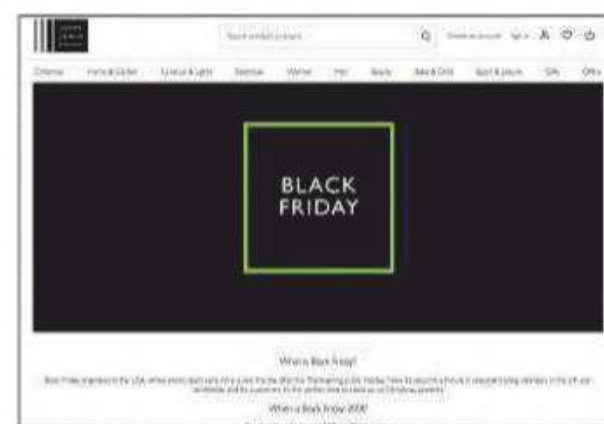
pounds off everything from ovens to vacuum cleaners.

If your local supermarket has clothing and electrical departments, it's worth running the high-street gauntlet. Tesco and Asda have been notable for past deals on TVs and laptops. John Lewis is another retailer to watch. Previous Black Fridays have brought some amazing discounts, such as reducing the price of the Google Home from £130 to £77.



## Our predictions

TVs tend to be the headline items in many lists of Black Friday deals ([bit.ly/bftv462](http://bit.ly/bftv462)). They're big, expensive and apparently worth throwing a few punches to get your mitts on. You can expect discounts on standard HDTV sets, which are a staple of the season. Apart from ultra-high resolution 8K sets – which are as expensive as they are impressive – TVs haven't offered any



*Argos and John Lewis have a strong record of Black Friday deals in every department*





**Which smart speaker will you put your money on in the battle for Black Friday?**

novel features this year, such as gimmicky 3D or curved screens. But now that Netflix and the BBC are producing programmes in 4K resolution, you'll probably see deals on lower-spec 4K television sets, too.

If you plan to turn your house into a smart home, look out for offers on products from Google and Amazon. The two companies' Home and Echo speakers went head-to-head on Black Friday in 2017, and we can expect the same to happen this year with their latest devices. The tech rivals both released smart devices with displays in the past few months, so the battle is likely to be between Google's 7in

Home Hub ([bit.ly/homehub462](http://bit.ly/homehub462)) and Amazon's second-generation Echo Show ([bit.ly/show462](http://bit.ly/show462)). Feature-wise, the differences between the two are negligible, but Amazon's device has a larger, 10.1in screen, which arguably makes it more practical, while the Home Hub integrates seamlessly with Google's services.

If Google or Amazon knocks a tenner off its devices, the other is bound to follow suit. In our experience, Amazon is likely to make the first move, and it also has the Echo Spot speaker with screen ([bit.ly/amdot462](http://bit.ly/amdot462)) in its arsenal of Alexa-equipped devices. At £120, it's currently a little pricey, so if Amazon is serious about winning the battle for your living room, it may consider giving the Spot an eye-catching discount.

Amazon also unveiled a new Fire HD 8 tablet ([bit.ly/fire462](http://bit.ly/fire462)) recently, as well as a souped-up Kindle Paperwhite ([bit.ly/kindle462](http://bit.ly/kindle462)), which is thinner, lighter, waterproof and has twice the storage. While it's possible that Amazon may cut the new Kindle's £120 price, we'll almost certainly see discounts for older models of Kindle e-readers and Fire tablets.

Leave some room in your shopping basket for cut-price Fitbit smartwatches and fitness trackers. Last year, most models were going for a song – though, admittedly, with varying degrees of success. The Fitbit Ionic became the company's first true smartwatch,



**Amazon is sure to offer a Kindle Paperwhite as a Black Friday deal**

potentially challenging the Apple Watch, but its bulkiness limited its appeal, particularly for women. This led to the release of the slim Versa ([bit.ly/versa462](http://bit.ly/versa462)) earlier this year. This elegant, feature-rich model currently sells for £200. Knock off £20 and we might have a deal.

With a new Apple Watch Series 4 on its way, however, shops will be keen to offload

the older series before its redundant. See our sister website Expert Reviews for updates on this year's Black Friday deals ([bit.ly/expert462](http://bit.ly/expert462)).

## Bag a Black Friday bargain

To ensure you don't miss the latest deals, it's a good idea to set up email notifications for your favourite shopping sites. At the time of writing, Groupon ([www.groupon.co.uk](http://www.groupon.co.uk)) and Wowcher ([www.wowcher.co.uk](http://www.wowcher.co.uk)) had started previewing Black Friday deals on Dyson vacuum cleaners, microwaves, bedding, clothing and more. You can bet it won't be long before other shops send out their own price-drop alerts.



**Wowcher has Black Friday deals on pillows, earbuds and teddy bears**

You should also enlist the help of some of our favourite browser tools. Amazon Assistant ([bit.ly/assist462](http://bit.ly/assist462)) works with all major browsers, and combines price comparisons, discount alerts and a delivery tracker. If you're starting to worry that all this talk of deals may be hazardous to your bank balance, try Amazon Contemplate ([bit.ly/amcon462](http://bit.ly/amcon462)). This extension forces you to wait 30 seconds before making an Amazon purchase, which should be just enough time for you to decide if you *really* need that Black Friday deal.

Honey, available for Chrome, Firefox, Opera, Safari and Edge ([www.joinhoney.com](http://www.joinhoney.com)) is a popular extension among bargain hunters. If discount codes are available for items in your basket, Honey adds the best deal automatically during checkout. SwagButton ([bit.ly/swag462](http://bit.ly/swag462)) is similar, and using the extension earns you 'swagbucks' that you can redeem for gift cards and cashback.

InvisibleHand ([bit.ly/hand462](http://bit.ly/hand462)) is a bargain-seeking site that promises to trim your shopping bill. It's supported by Argos, John Lewis and The Hut, among others retailers, but its main selling point is its extensive partnerships with airlines, hotels and car-hire companies. Beat those Black Friday blues with a post-Christmas holiday.

But how can you be sure you're not being ripped off? The answer is to install The Camelizer ([bit.ly/camel462](http://bit.ly/camel462)) and FakeSpot ([fakespot.com](http://fakespot.com)). The Camelizer is a clever tool for Chrome, Firefox and Safari from popular website CamelCamelCamel ([camelcamelcamel.com](http://camelcamelcamel.com)), which tracks the cost of Amazon products. Search for your Black Friday bargain, then click the icon to see how prices have fluctuated over time.

Meanwhile, FakeSpot for Chrome and Firefox scans Amazon product pages for dodgy reviews. Before you pop a product in your basket, click the icon and you're whisked to the FakeSpot website, which grades an item's reviews and highlights possible deceptions. You're then free to make an informed choice. ■



**The Camelizer shows you if you're getting the best deal for your dough**



# Boost your memory for free

Make PC crashes and freezes a thing of the past. **Wayne Williams** explains how to make the most of your available RAM without paying to upgrade

## Reclaim memory from background processes

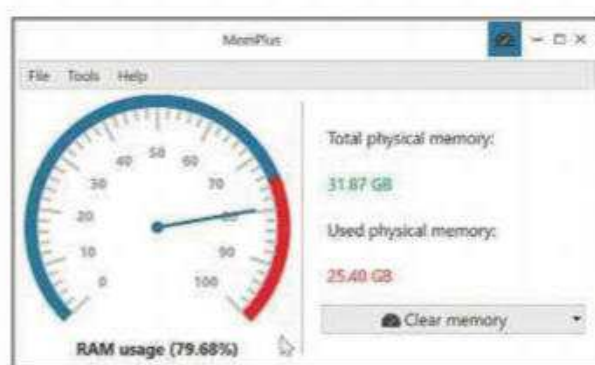
Windows applications often hang onto RAM, even when they don't really need it. The excellent free tool Wise Memory Optimizer ([bit.ly/wisemem462](http://bit.ly/wisemem462)) helps matters by freeing up memory automatically or on demand. The program displays a pie chart that shows how much RAM is in use and how much is free. Clicking the Optimize button releases as much memory as possible, while clicking the Settings cog icon allows you to enable or disable auto-optimisation, which will run when free memory drops below a specified amount, to help prevent crashes and freezes.



*Release memory from Windows programs using Wise Memory Optimizer*

## Stop programs using excessive memory

Windows does a reasonable job of managing memory usage, but there are better third-party solutions worth considering, such as MemPlus ([bit.ly/memplus462](http://bit.ly/memplus462)). This free tool analyses your system memory and frees up RAM – either automatically or on demand – from non-essential processes. To use the program, just click the 'Clear memory' button to display a pop-up message showing how much memory has been released. If you go to Tools,

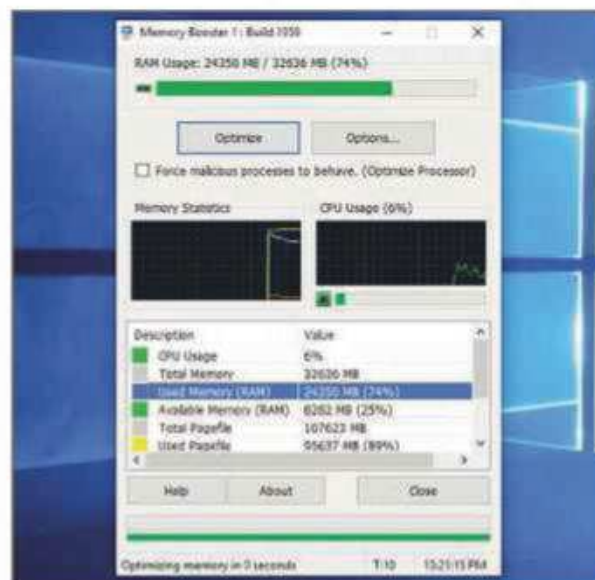


*MemPlus frees up memory automatically from non-essential processes*

Settings, RAM Optimizer, you can add important programs to the exclusion list.

## Free up memory safely

If you're concerned that using a third-party tool to free up system memory might cause problems with Windows' stability, then Rzonesoft Memory Booster ([bit.ly/memboost462](http://bit.ly/memboost462)) offers a trustworthy solution. This program works by making a safe Windows API call, which tells the operating system to clean up the workspace of all processes (Clear Processes Working Set), freeing up any



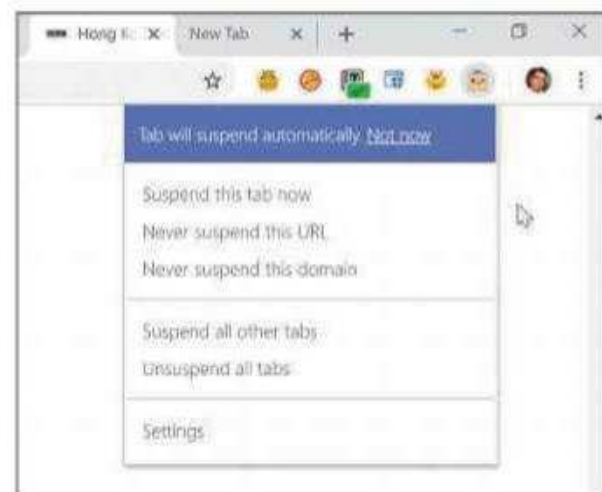
*Rzonesoft Memory Booster offers a safe and reliable way to free up RAM*

memory they're holding onto. Unlike other tools, it won't free up a massive amount of RAM, but it should help to keep your system running smoothly and problem free.

## Manage your browser's memory consumption

Browsers are notorious memory hogs, especially if you have lots of tabs open and you haven't restarted your browser in a while. This RAM usage can become particularly unwieldy on systems with minimal resources, resulting in your PC running slowly and, occasionally, even crashing. Regularly restarting your browser can help, but you may find it preferable to install an add-on that will manage your browser memory for you. The Great Suspender for Chrome ([bit.ly/suspend462](http://bit.ly/suspend462)) unloads and suspends any tabs not in use (whitelist any you want left alone), and you can set it to auto-suspend tabs after a set period.

OneTab ([www.one-tab.com](http://www.one-tab.com)) for Firefox and Chrome, takes a different approach, converting all your open sites into a list of clickable links in one single tab – while closing and freeing up memory from the other tabs.



*Use The Great Suspender to unload memory from idle browser tabs*





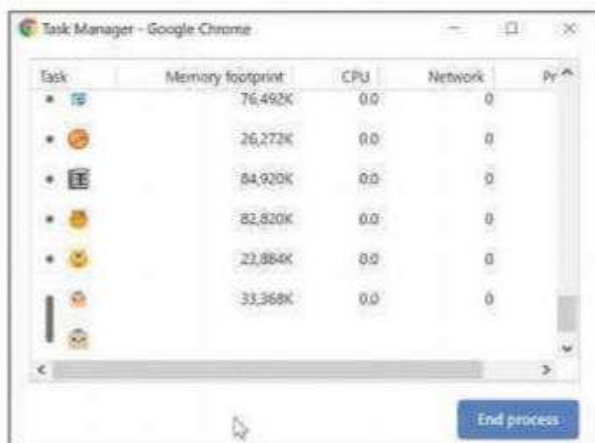
Firefox's hidden `about:memory` page can help you reclaim RAM

## Use `about:memory` to free up RAM in Firefox

Another way to reduce the amount of memory that Firefox consumes is by typing `about:memory` into the address bar and pressing Enter. This provides access to a number of tools, but the one you want is the Free Memory section. You can now run a global garbage collection (GC), which clears old and unused JavaScript objects; or a cycle collection (CC), which clears web pages. You can also click the option to 'Minimise memory usage', which runs both the GC and CC processes multiple times, freeing up the maximum amount of RAM.

## Free memory through Chrome's Task Manager

Chrome has a hidden Task Manager that shows you which tabs and extensions are using the most memory, so you can

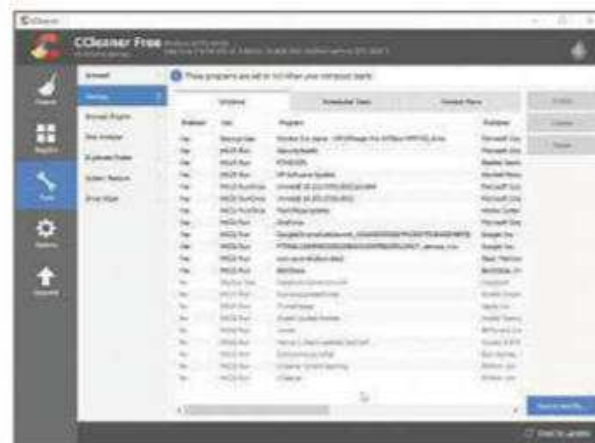


Kill the biggest memory hogs through Chrome's Task Manager

terminate any particularly greedy ones. To launch it, press Shift+Esc and click the 'Memory footprint' tab to sort the tasks by RAM usage. Select a task and click the 'End process' button to close it. Be careful not to kill anything that's vital to your current browsing, such as an important web page or extension.

## Reduce the number of running applications

One of the easiest ways to gain free memory is to limit the number of programs you run. If you have a couple of browsers open at the same time, and a number of other programs running, the amount of free RAM will be greatly reduced. Closing any software you're not currently using will immediately make more memory available. Programs launch quickly these days, so there's no reason to keep them open in the background on the off-chance you



CCleaner lets you manage startup items to disable unnecessary items

might need them.

You should also manage the programs and processes that start alongside Windows because they will eat into your free memory from the word go. To do this, type `startup` into the Windows search box, press Enter and disable any unwanted items. Don't touch anything that you're unsure of, though.

Alternatively, you can use CCleaner ([www.ccleaner.com](http://www.ccleaner.com)) to manage startup. Run it, and click Tools, Startup. Sort the list by Enabled and disable any unwanted ones. You can also manage Scheduled Tasks via the tab at the top. You should avoid disabling any items from Microsoft.

## Clear clutter on your Android phone

If your PC is running short of memory, you can easily add more RAM, but this isn't always an option with a smartphone, although many Android devices support microSD cards. SanDisk Memory Zone for Android ([bit.ly/sandisk462](http://bit.ly/sandisk462))

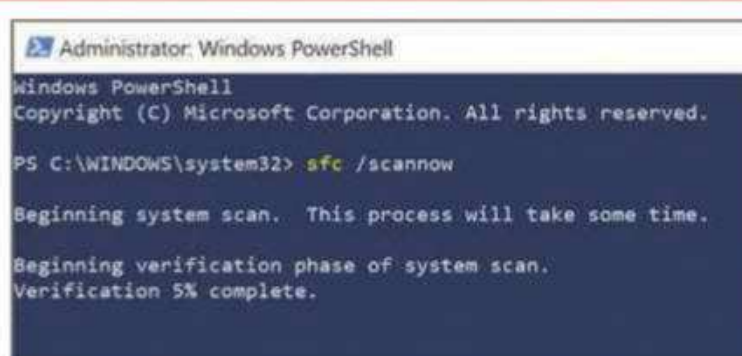


Declutter your Android device's memory

lets you free up space on your phone by moving files from your internal storage to a microSD card, a SanDisk Dual Drive or your choice of cloud-storage service – it supports Google Drive, Dropbox, Box and OneDrive. The free app can also clean the cache, remove leftover junk, delete APK (Android Application Package) files, uninstall apps and clear old WhatsApp messages. ■

## FIX MEMORY-MANAGEMENT BLUE-SCREEN ERRORS

Blue Screen of Death (BSOD) crashes are never welcome, and troubleshooting them can be difficult, especially if you have no idea where to start. If your PC crashes with a "Memory\_Management" error, you can try solving the problem by running Windows' built-in Memory Diagnostic Tool. Type `Windows Diagnostic Tool` into the Windows search box and launch the program from the list. Restart your PC when prompted,



and the tests will run and report if you have memory problems.

You can also try running the System File Checker. Right-click the Start

button and run Command Prompt/Windows PowerShell (the option will vary depending on your version of Windows 10) in admin mode. Type `sfc /scannow` in the window that opens and press Enter. The error can also be

caused by graphics card drivers, so it's worth grabbing the newest ones from your card manufacturer's website.





# Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

## Create attractive-looking emails

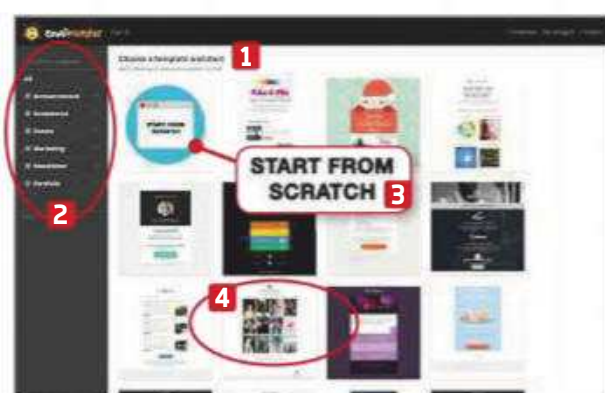
Email Monster lets you customise ready-made email templates or create your own designs from scratch. Here's what you need to know

Email Monster: [emailmonster.io](https://emailmonster.io) | 20 mins | Chrome

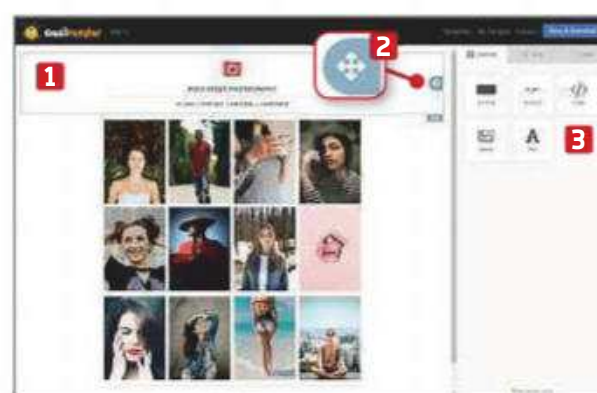
In Gmail, you can change the typeface, size and alignment of text in your emails, but that's too limited for creating messages that really stand out. That's where Email Monster comes in. This free online template editor lets you create great looking emails that display well on any device. It comes with a number of free designs that you can

customise by changing or adding text, buttons and images. You don't even need to sign up for an account, which means you can get started right away, then export your finished creations to an email service such as MailChimp.

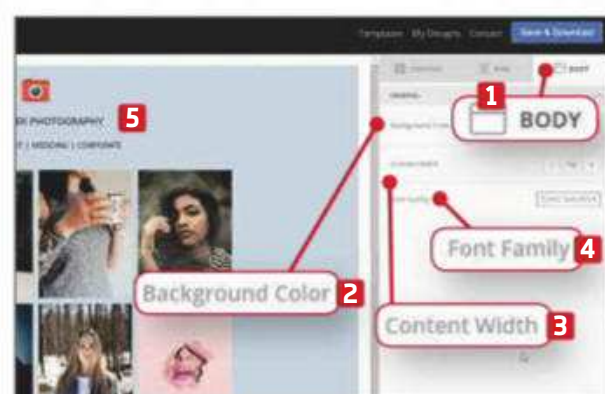
Best of all, there's a free Chrome add-on that lets you use your templates for messages you compose in Gmail.



1 Email Monster provides a selection of templates 1 that you can filter by category. 2 If none of them takes your fancy, you can build your own by selecting the Start From Scratch option. 3 For this workshop, we'll customise the photo portfolio template. 4



2 Click the design to open it. You can replace, move or delete any of the elements in the main window. 1 To move an element, hover your mouse over it and drag the arrow button that appears. 2 The panel on the right 3 lets you add additional elements such as buttons, dividers, HTML, images and text.



3 Click the Body tab 1 to change the email's background colour 2 and adjust the content width. 3 Your changes are reflected immediately in the panel on the left. You can choose a different font family 4 for text in the template. 5 This won't affect all the text - areas such as headings may remain unchanged.



4 Clicking an image reveals buttons to delete or duplicate it. 1 These also appear in the sidebar, 2 along with options to upload a new image or enter the URL of an image from the web. 3 In the panel below, you can adjust the alignment and add an Alt text description of the image. 4



5 When you click some text, 1 a box appears 2 with options to change the typeface and size, apply formatting, alter the alignment and add or remove links. The bar on the right lets you change the colour of the text 3 as well as its alignment 4 and line height. 5







## MY DESIGNS

Sign up for a free account if you want to store and access your email creations

## ROW TAB

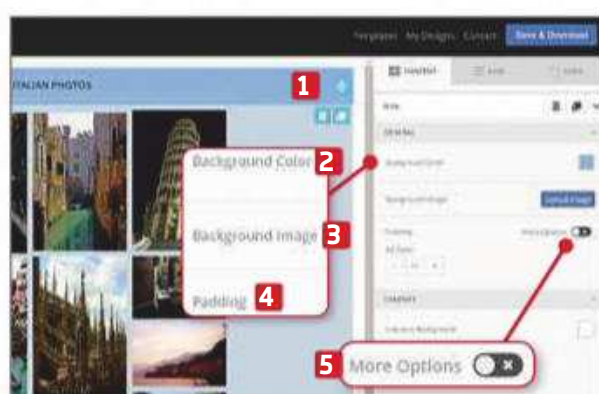
Use this tab to add new customisable areas to the template. There's a selection of shapes to choose from

## IMAGE URL

Any image you upload gets its own web address. Use it to place the picture anywhere in a template, as many times as you like

## BACKGROUND IMAGE OPTIONS

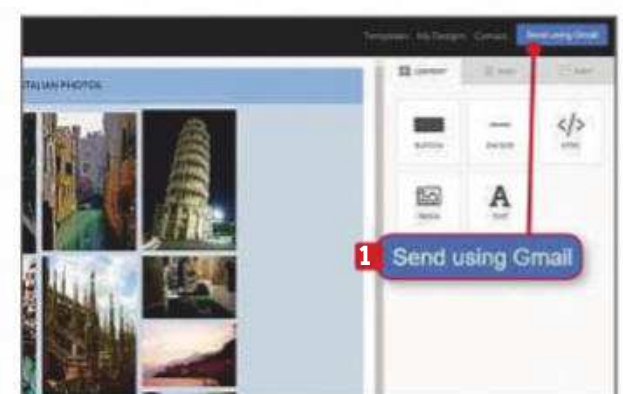
These options let you use the background image as a pattern that repeats across the available space



**6** Select the email template's header **1** to add text and images, change its background colour **2** and upload a background image. **3** You can also adjust the padding around it **4** to provide additional space between the sections. Click More Options **5** to change the padding for each side individually.



**7** When your design is finished, click the Save & Download button in the top-right of the screen. You'll see a preview of your template. **1** If you want to make further changes, go back and continue to edit the design. **2** When you're happy with it, download it **3** or send it via MailChimp. **4**



**8** To use Email Monster with Gmail, return to the main page and click 'Install to Chrome'. Install the add-on, then open Gmail and click Compose. You'll see an Email Monster icon. Click this and the template editor will load, with a new 'Send using Gmail' button **1** in the top-right corner.





# Disable the October Update tools you don't want

Winareo Tweaker: [bit.ly/winaero462](http://bit.ly/winaero462) | 20 mins | Windows 7, 8, 10



## EXPERT TIP

### Steve Clark says

In the October Update, the Start bar (where Cortana 'lives') has been upgraded: you're now able to see all searches, from web pages to files, in a preview pane. If you're not a fan, Winaero Tweaker can rein in your Start bar. Search for **Disable Web Search** and tick 'Disable web search in taskbar and Cortana', then search for **Cortana** and select **Disable Cortana**, too.



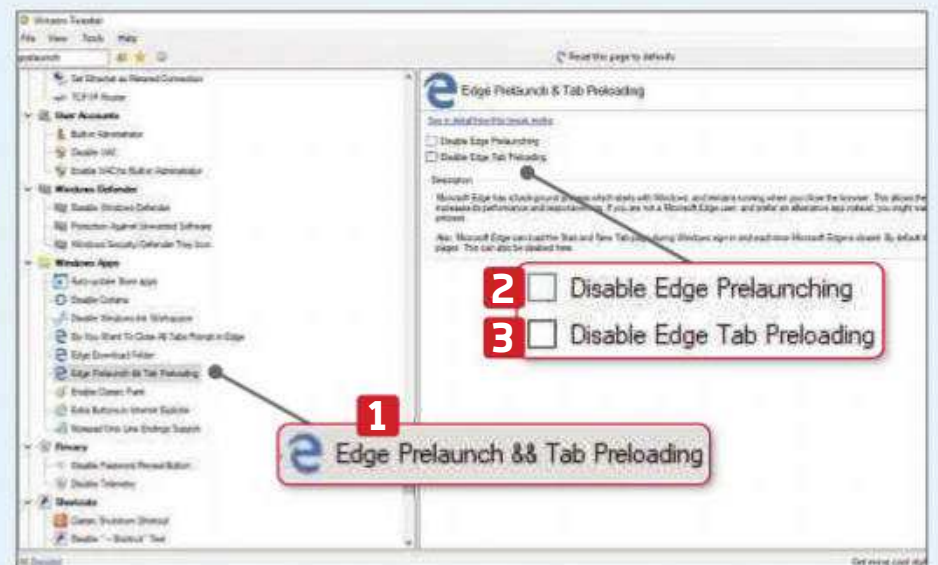
**W**indows 10 version 1809 – the fabled October Update – is finally with us. Now that the operating system is no longer randomly deleting files, there's plenty to sink your teeth into, including the new Snip & Sketch and the handy Cloud Clipboard, as well as 'behind-the-scenes' changes, such as AI functionality. That's if you want it, of course.

Just days after the arrival of the new (and supposedly improved) Windows 10 comes an update to Winaero Tweaker. This incredible free tool, which works with Windows 7, 8 and 10, lets you make changes to all those niggling little elements that would otherwise require hacking the Registry.

Ready to strip out the October Update tools you don't want? Here, we look at the best new Winaero features that let you tweak Windows 10 to your liking.



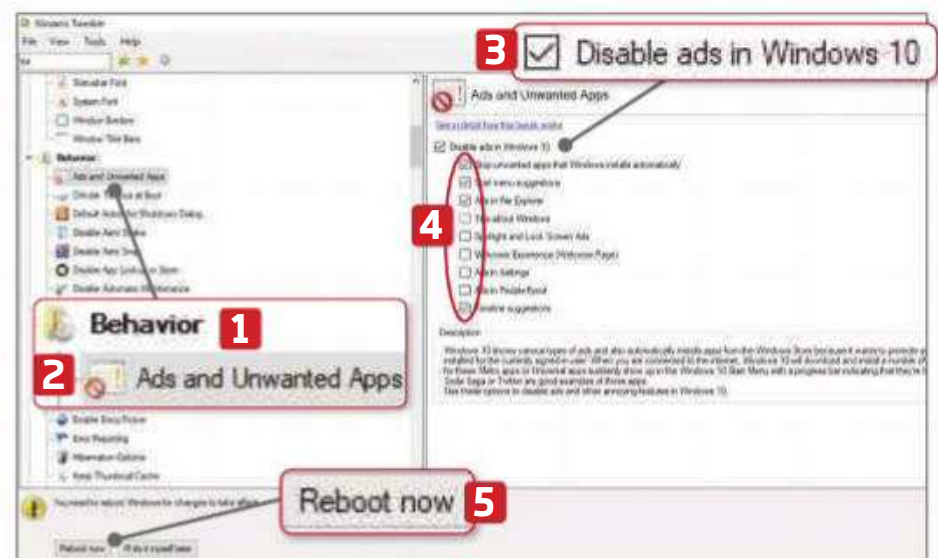
**1** The moment you sign into Windows 10, the Edge browser kicks into action. This makes loading Edge faster, while letting other programs use its data and internet access privileges. That's fine if it's your go-to browser, but a resource-drain if it's not. To prevent this happening, locate the Windows Apps category or type **prelaunch** into the search bar. **1**



**2** Open Edge Pre-launch & Tab Preloading. **1** Click the box for **Disable Edge Pre-launching**. **2** This prevents Edge from booting up when you sign in. It's also possible to stop the browser pre-loading Start and New Tab pages, which occurs when you sign in or close the browser, by selecting **Disable Edge Tab Preloading**. **3**



**3** A clean install of Windows 10 version 1809 still comes preloaded with annoying apps and ads. These are most notable in the Start menu, **1** but are found across the operating system. To get rid of individual apps, right-click and choose **Uninstall**. **2** You can use Microsoft's unofficial removal method, but its Registry hack is pretty convoluted.

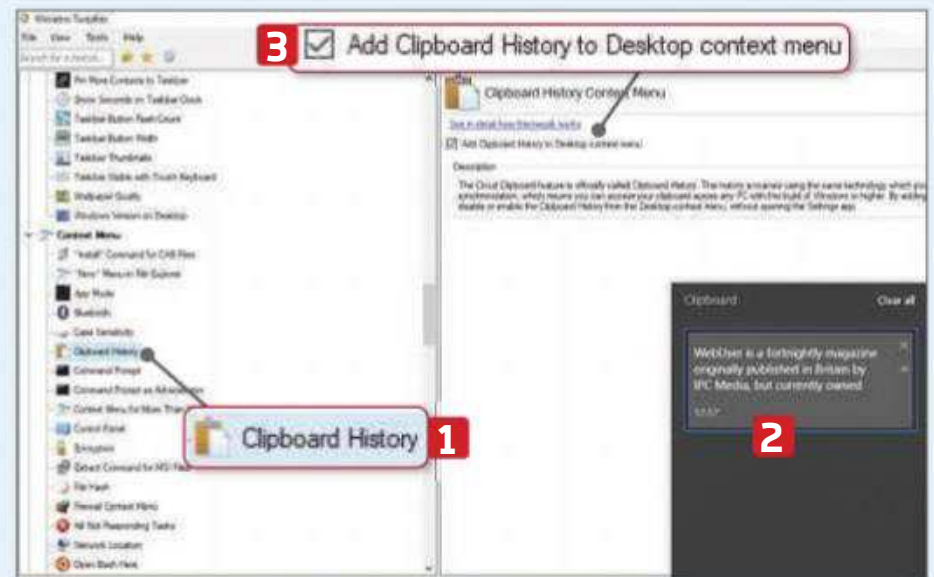


**4** Winaero Tweaker permanently banishes ads and apps in one go. Scroll to **Behavior** **1** and click 'Ads and Unwanted Apps'. **2** Tick 'Disable ads in Windows 10', **3** which selects every subsection. Tick the options you wish to keep. We recommend at least stopping unwanted apps, suggestions and File Explorer ads. **4** This change requires a reboot. **5**





**5** The October Update lets you create case-sensitive folders. To turn this on and off at will, go to Context Menu **1** and click Case Sensitivity, **2** then 'Add Case Sensitivity context menu'. **3** When right-clicking a folder, 'Case sensitivity' appears **4** with three options for the mode: View, Enable and Disable. **5** Applying this setting is instant and doesn't require a reboot.



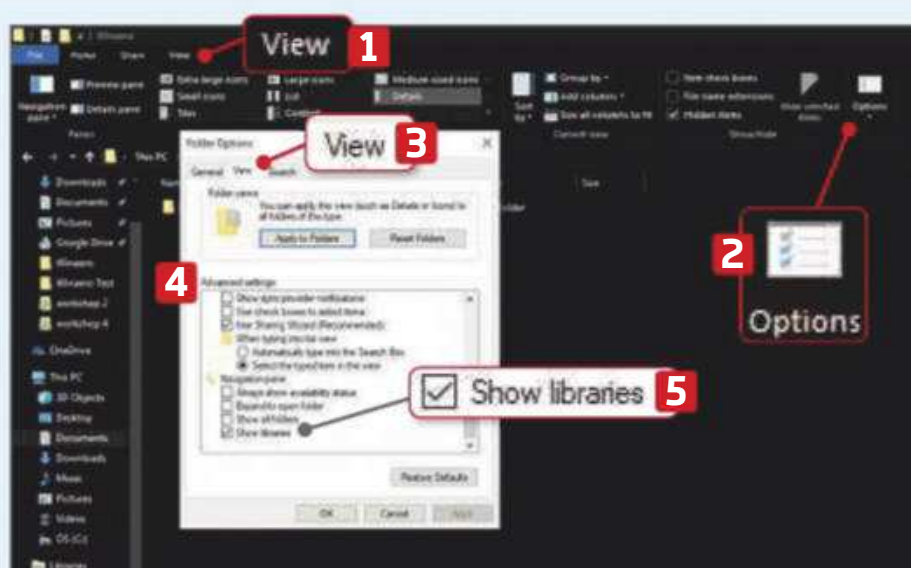
**6** Still in the Context Menu section, open Clipboard History. **1** Also known as 'Cloud Clipboard', this pastes any content you copy to a clipboard. This is then synced across your devices for retrieval elsewhere. View your clipboard at any time by pressing Win+V. **2** In Winaero Tweaker, pop a tick beside 'Add Clipboard History to Desktop context menu'. **3**



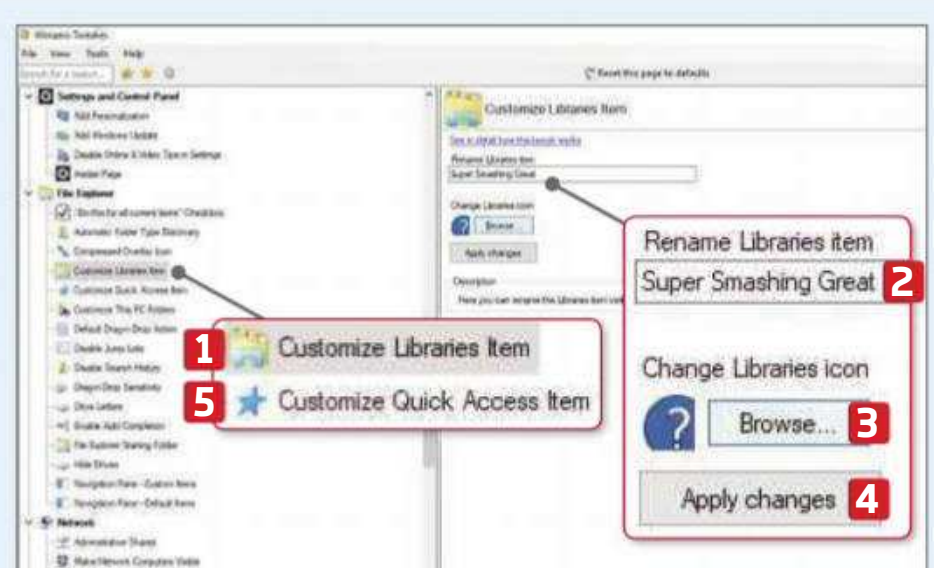
**7** Once you've activated this tweak, go to your desktop by either minimising every window or clicking 'Show desktop' **1** in the taskbar. Now, when you right-click an empty space on the desktop, Clipboard History is a menu option. **2** Adding this to the context menu means you can Enable **3** or Disable **4** the feature without trawling through Settings.



**8** Timeline was added in the April Update, and the October Update adds it to phones. Winaero Tweaker now lets you remove the intrusive activity tracker from your Task View. **1** Search timeline or scroll to Behavior, **2** then choose the option to Disable Timeline. **3** Bear in mind that this only works if you're signed into the computer via your Microsoft account.



**9** Dark mode is now available for File Explorer. Meanwhile, Winaero lets you customise the Libraries folder in File Explorer. By default, Windows 10 hides this. To make it viewable, open File Explorer, click View, **1** then Options **2** and, in the pop-up window, click View. **3** In Advanced Settings, **4** scroll to 'Navigation pane'. Tick 'Show libraries' **5** and click OK.



**10** Tab back to Winaero Tweaker. In the File Explorer section, click Customize Libraries Item. **1** Replace the name by adding your own title in the 'Rename Libraries item' text box. **2** Under 'Change Libraries icon', click Browse. **3** Select a new icon image. Click 'Apply changes' **4** to save. Use these steps to personalise the Quick Access folder. **5**





# Browse the web one-handed with Opera Touch

There's no shortage of browsers available for iOS, from Apple's own Safari to Google's Chrome. However, Opera also has a browser that works on iOS called Opera Touch, which has just had a significant update. Opera has gone beyond

the basics, developing an interface especially designed to be used one-handed. What's more, the app also links seamlessly with the Opera browser on your PC.



**Opera Touch:** [bit.ly/opt462](https://bit.ly/opt462) | 10 mins | iOS 11 or later



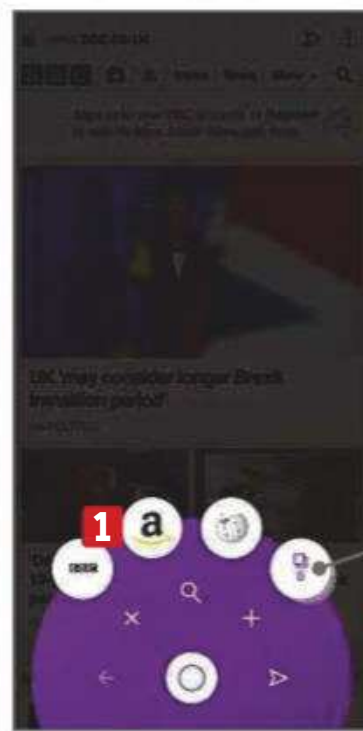
**1** When you launch Opera Touch, it opens with the address bar selected **1** and the keyboard visible, **2** ready for typing. This is part of the browser's focus on one-handed use. As you start to type, matching site suggestions appear and you can select one.



**2** Alternatively, tap the area between the search box and the keyboard to see a selection of popular websites **1** that you might be interested in. This list will change and become more relevant the more you use the browser.



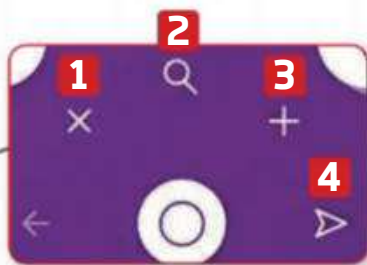
**3** Tap a site button to open it. You'll notice a floating button towards the bottom of the screen. **1** Tap this to go back to Opera Touch's Home screen, where you can open a new site. Tap it again and it takes you back to the last site you visited.



**4** Holding down the floating button opens the one-handed navigation menu. From here, you can access all the sites you've opened, either directly **1** or by exploring the tabs **2** and selecting one there. Slide your finger across the menu to the button you want.



**5** This menu also lets you close a site, **1** start a search **2** or open a new tab. **3** From the Home screen, you have the option to scan a QR code or barcode. In addition, you can send a site to Opera on another device using the My Flow tool. **4** Tap this button, then tap 'Connect to Computer'.



**6** You'll need Opera ([www.opera.com](http://www.opera.com)) installed on your PC. Launch it, click the Flow button on the left and click 'Reveal the QR Code'. In Opera Touch, tap Scan QR Code and scan the PC's code. The connection will be made and you'll be able to send sites from your iOS device to your PC. **1**





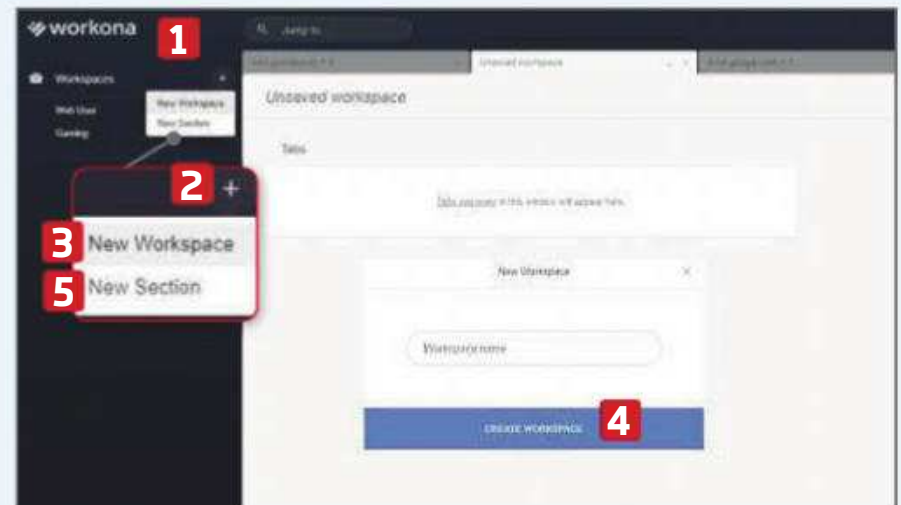
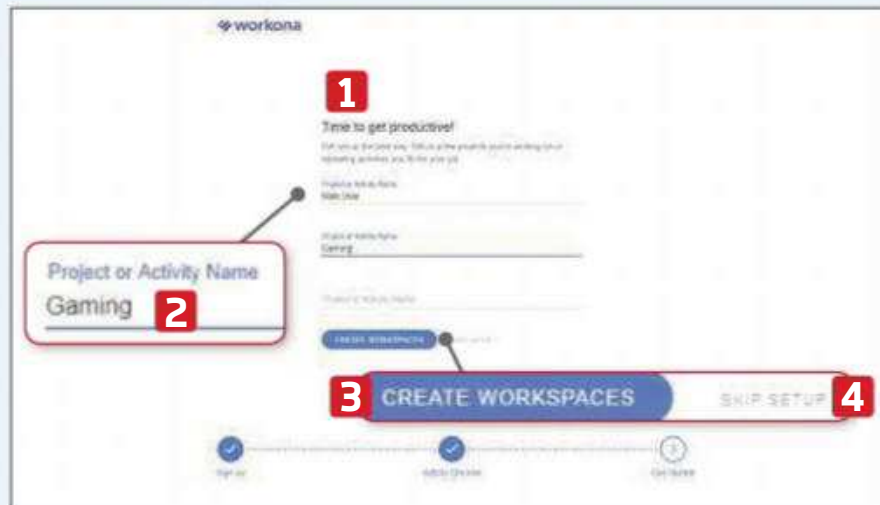
# Manage groups of tabs in separate windows

If you often have a lot of tabs open in Chrome, you may be coveting Vivaldi's Tab Tiling and Tab Stack tools, which let you organise and group your tabs so you can quickly and more easily find a specific website. Workona is a Chrome

add-on that provides a similar service, tidying up your tabs, grouping sites into project-specific workspaces and simplifying tab management.

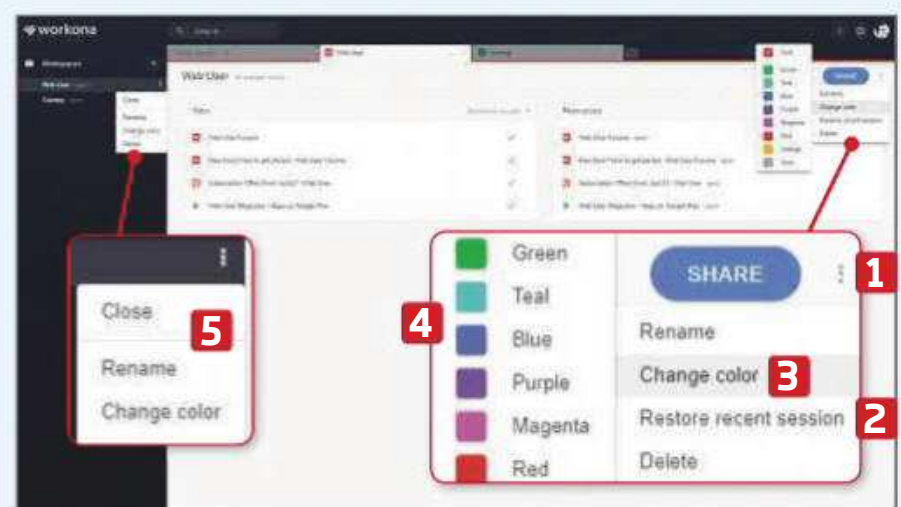
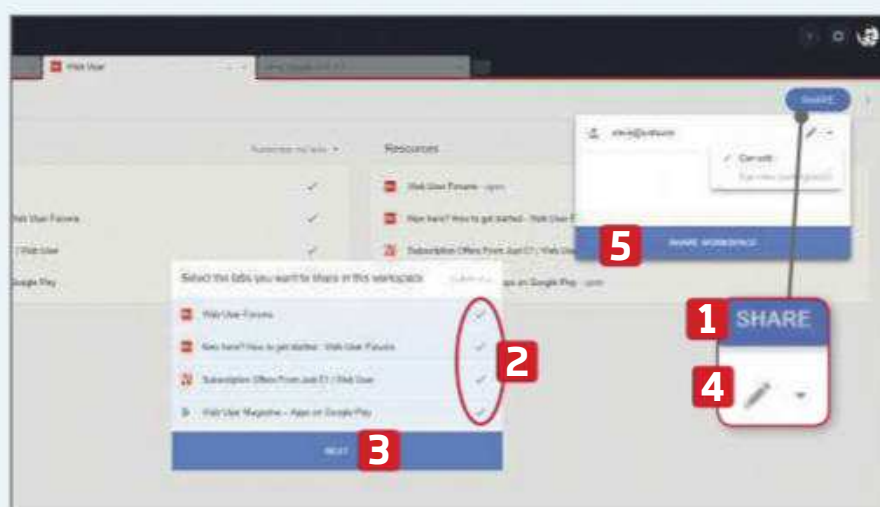


**Workona:** [bit.ly/work462](https://bit.ly/work462) | 10 mins | Chrome Vivaldi



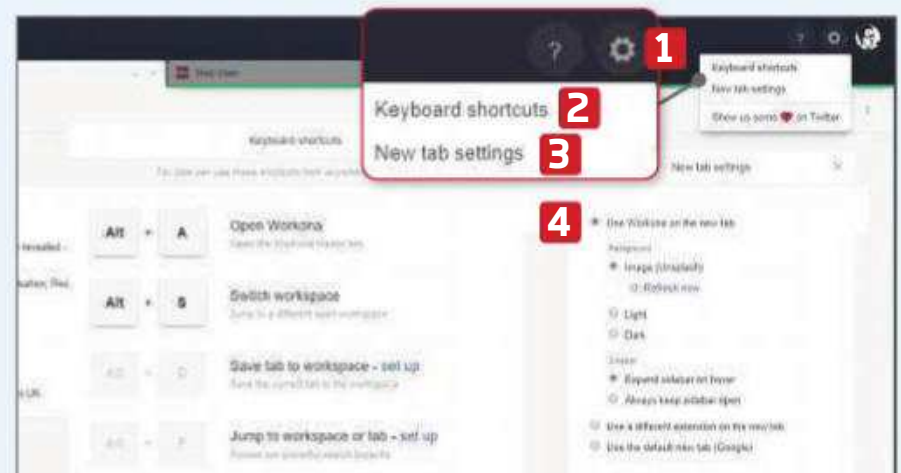
**1** After installing Workona and signing in, you can create three separate workspaces for project tabs. **1** Name your projects **2** and click Create Workspaces. **3** You can also press Skip Setup **4** to go straight to Workona's 'master tab', where you can manage your tabs.

**2** In the 'master tab', **1** click '+' **2** and choose New Workspace. **3** Name it and click Create Workspace. **4** Select a workspace to store opened tabs in it – drag and drop to reorder or move them to other workspaces. Click New Section, **5** then drag existing workspaces into it.



**3** Enter any workspace. Click Share **1** to email a list of grouped tabs. Select what to send **2** and click Next **3** to confirm. Enter your contact's email address and click Enter. Click the Pencil **4** to set their access level. When you've added all the addresses, click Share Workspace. **5**

**4** Click the workspace's menu button. **1** You can rename or delete a workspace, and restore closed links. **2** 'Change color' **3** lets you alter the workspace's favicon for easier navigation. Click it and select a colour. **4** Hovering over the Workspaces sidebar reveals the same options. **5**



**5** Hover over a tab to close it **1** or 'Save to resources', **2** which pins it under Resources for future reference. Doing this replaces the '+' with a tick **3** to 'Remove from [Workspace]'. To edit saved tabs, click the Pencil **4** or use the bin icon **5** to delete them from Resources.

**6** Click the cog **1** for keyboard shortcuts **2** to speed up tab management. Select 'New tab settings' **3** and change your preferences by clicking the tick boxes. **4** You can grant Workona permission to manage additional tabs and extensions. Changes are saved automatically.



# Weekend Project

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



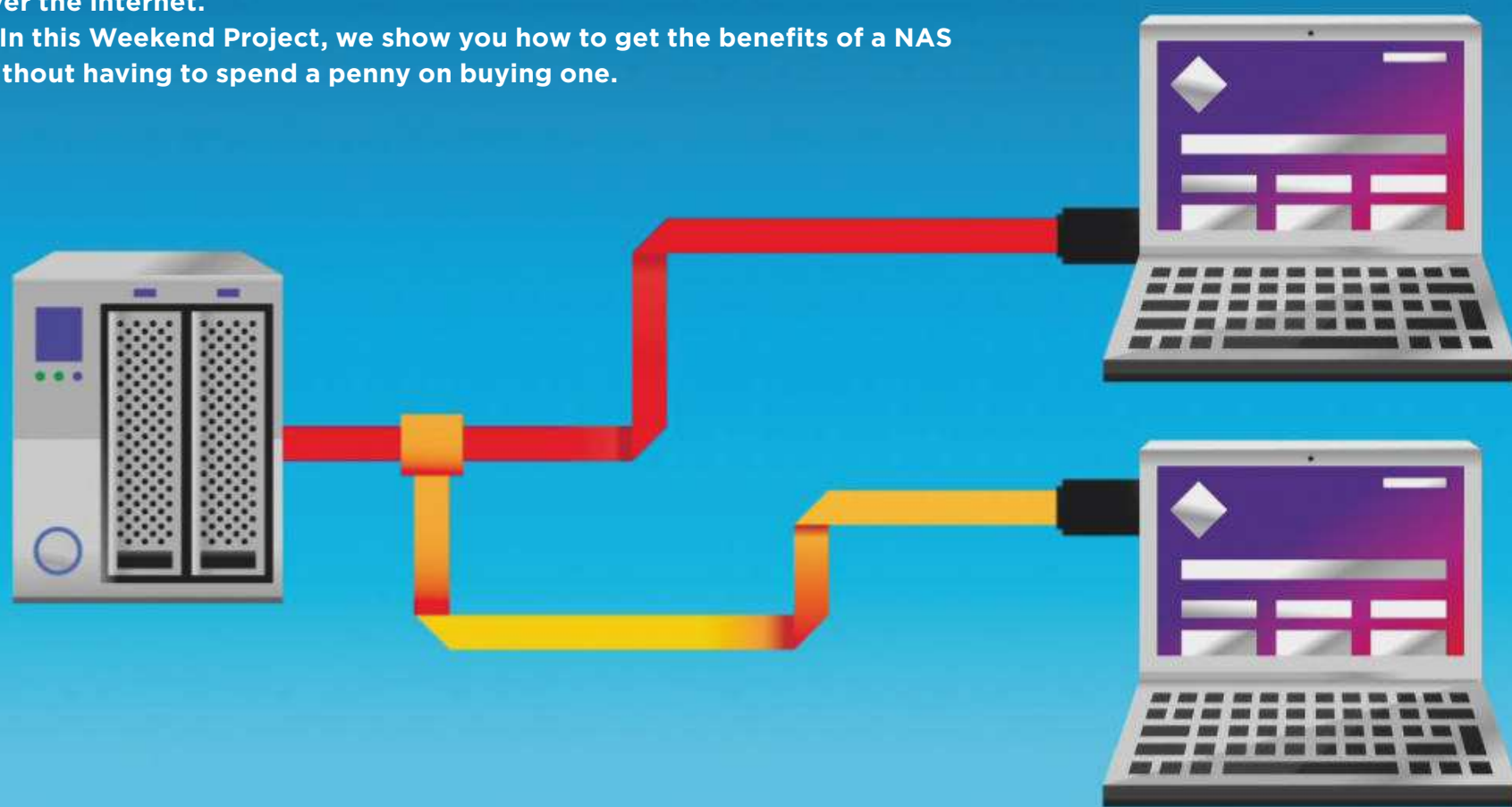
How to...

## Don't buy a NAS drive – get its best features free!

A NAS sounds snazzy, but drives are also pricey. **Wayne Williams** explains how to get the same benefits at no extra cost

**N**AS – which stands for Network Attached Storage – is a system made up of one or more hard drives that act as a central repository for all your photos, videos, music and backups. You can buy ready-made NAS devices that attach to your network, so you can access all your content from any connected devices, but these can be expensive, depending on your requirements. The truth is that you don't need to buy an actual NAS to enjoy the features it provides, such as streaming media and sharing files over the internet.

In this Weekend Project, we show you how to get the benefits of a NAS without having to spend a penny on buying one.



### Use Windows Storage Spaces

Some (but by no means all) of the more expensive NAS devices include RAID support. RAID (Redundant Array of Inexpensive Disks) is a way to combine multiple smaller disk drives into one large volume. There are a number of types of RAID, known as levels, and they each offer different benefits, which can be a little confusing. Windows 10 comes with an alternative to RAID called Storage

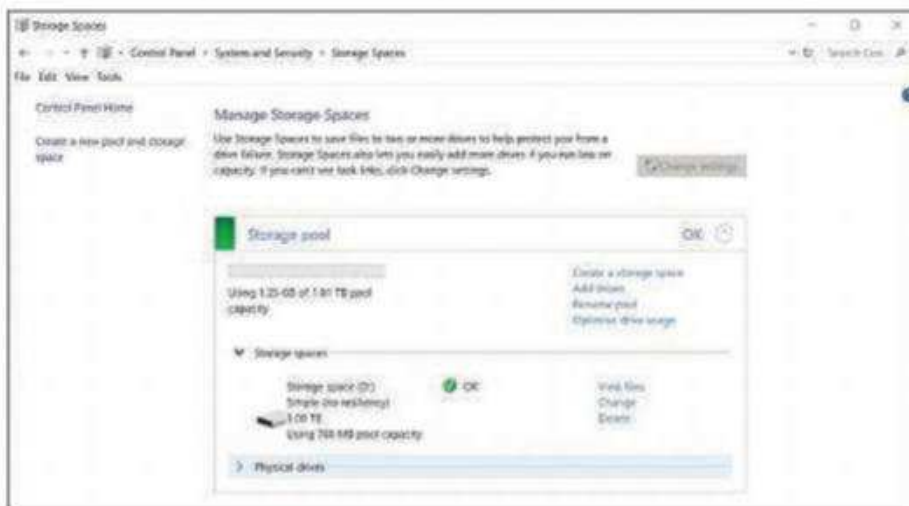
Spaces, which works in a similar way. This lets you use two or more drives to create a pool of storage that is treated as a single location complete with its own drive letter. You can mix and match internal or external hard drives, or solid-state drives (SSDs). See our Mini Workshop, opposite, for instructions on how to create a pool.

Storage Spaces is particularly useful for backing up your data and protecting

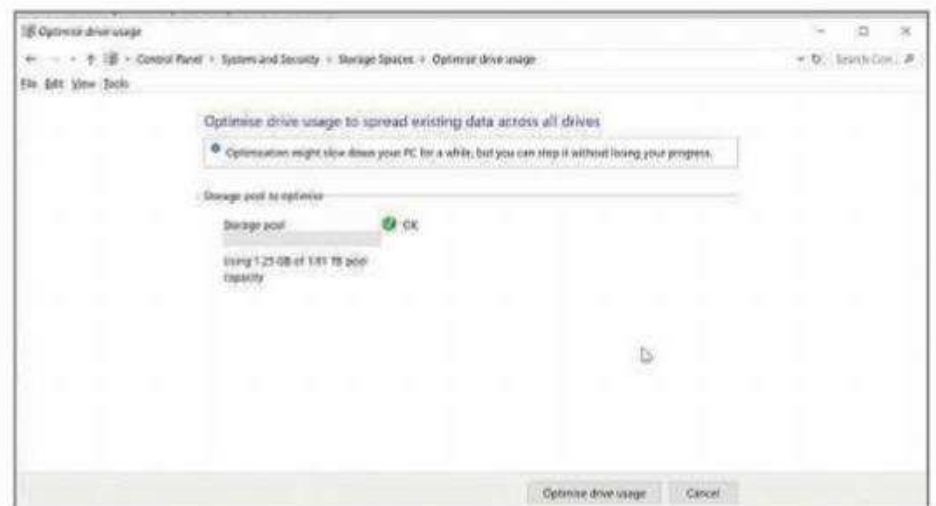
it from drive failure, and if you run low on capacity, you can easily add more drives. For anyone familiar with RAID, Storage Spaces offers the equivalent of RAID-0 (Simple Space), RAID-1 (Mirror Space) and RAID-5 (Parity Space). Microsoft explains the differences as follows:

- **SIMPLE SPACES** are designed for increased performance, but don't protect your files from drive failure. They're best





You can check on a pool's usage, add drives and rename it



Optimise your pool's usage, spreading your data across the drives

used for temporary data (such as video-rendering files), image-editor scratch files and intermediary compiler object files. Simple spaces require at least two drives to be useful.

- **MIRROR SPACES** are designed for increased performance and protect your files from drive failure by keeping multiple copies. Two-way mirror spaces make two copies of your files and can tolerate one drive failure, while three-way mirror spaces can tolerate two drive failures. Mirror spaces are good for storing a broad range of data, from a general-purpose file share to a VHD library. When a mirror space is formatted with the Resilient File System (ReFS), Windows will automatically maintain your data integrity, which makes your files even more resilient to drive failure. Two-way mirror spaces require at least two drives, and three-way mirror spaces require at least five.

- **PARITY SPACES** are designed for storage efficiency and protect your files from drive failure by keeping multiple

copies. Parity spaces are best for archival data and streaming media, such as music and videos. This storage layout requires at least three drives to protect you from a single drive failure, and at least seven drives to protect you from two drive failures.

For most people, Parity spaces will be the best option because it's great for streaming content, and for protecting important data such as photos and home videos. If the need for a minimum of three drives is putting you off, then opt for Simple spaces instead.

Once you've created a space, right-click it in File Explorer, go to 'Give access to', 'Advanced sharing' and share it over your network.

## Use FreeNAS software

Another alternative to Windows Storage Spaces is FreeNAS ([web.freenas.org](http://web.freenas.org)), which is based on FreeBSD (Berkeley Software Distribution), a Unix-like operating system. If you have a spare PC that's not doing much, you can use this to create your own NAS-like solution.

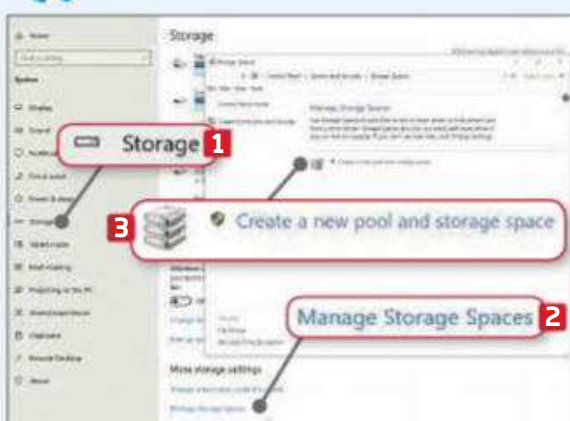


Share your storage space over the network so it can be accessed by other computers

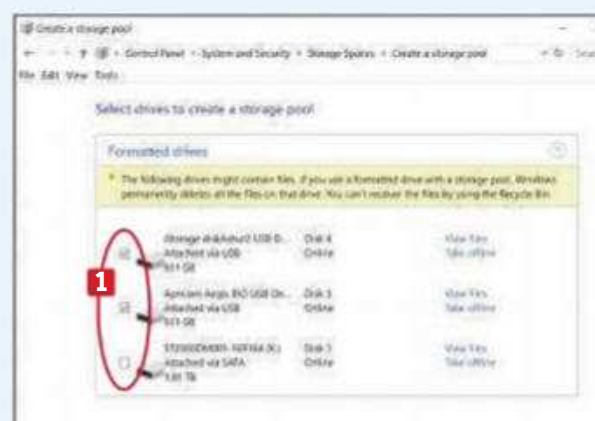
It runs on 64-bit systems, and ideally requires a decent amount of storage, but you can just install a new, larger hard drive if need be. There are two versions of the software available to download



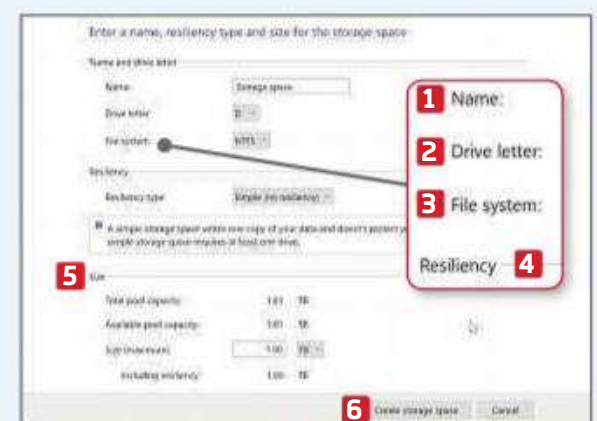
## MINI WORKSHOP | Create a storage pool in Windows 10



**1** To begin, click the Start button, then click the Settings cog on the left. Go to System, Storage **1** and, under 'More storage settings', click the link that says 'Manage Storage Spaces'. **2** In the Control Panel window that opens, click the link 'Create a new pool and storage space'. **3**



**2** When the UAC prompt appears, click OK to see a list of formatted drives that you can use as part of your storage pool. Tick the ones you want to include. **1** It's important to make sure you select the right ones because any content on them will be permanently deleted and you won't be able to easily recover it.







**3** You can check whether a drive is empty by clicking the 'View files' link next to it. Once you've selected some drives, click 'Create pool'. In the next window, enter a name, **1** and choose a drive letter **2** and file system. **3** Now select the type of storage space **4** and size. **5** Click 'Create storage space'. **6**



# Broadband Deals

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	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1		TalkTalk: Broadband	<b>£17.95</b> (£27 after 12 months)	<b>12</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>CHEAPEST</b> <b>£215.40</b>
2		Sky: Broadband Unlimited	<b>£18.00</b> (£30 after 18 months)	<b>18</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited*	<b>£216.00</b>
3		First Utility: First Broadband	<b>£18.99</b>	<b>18</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>£227.88</b>
4		Virgin Media: Player Bundle + Fibre Broadband + Weekend Calls	<b>£32.00</b> (£51 after 12 months)	<b>12</b> months	<b>108Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>£384.00</b>

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

\* Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by [www.broadbandgenie.co.uk](http://www.broadbandgenie.co.uk). Correct as of 29 October 2018.

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

**SNEAK  
PREVIEW!**

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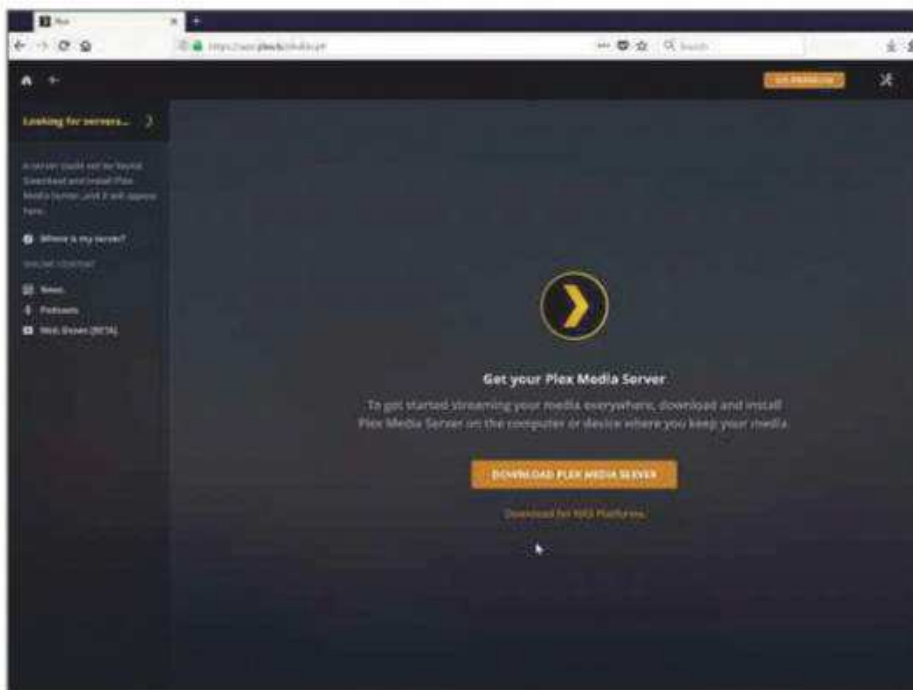
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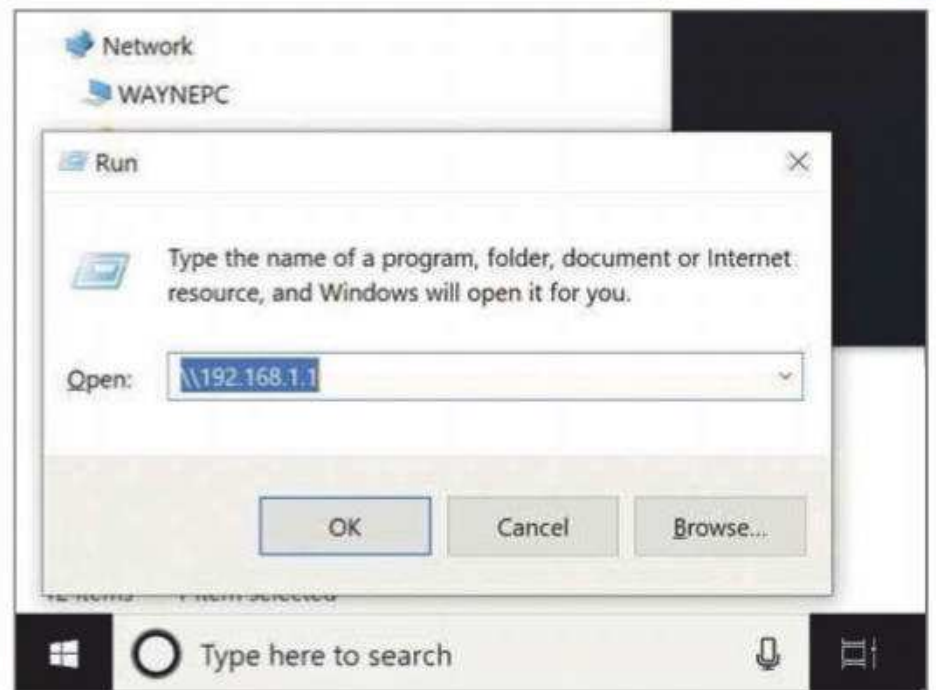
**PLUS:** Selling your devices?  
How to wipe ALL personal data

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You can access your Plex Media Server over the web



The Run command lets you access drives connected to your router

from the website: storage only; or storage, plugins and virtualisation. You'll probably want the second option because it lets you add plugins, so you can organise and serve data over a network. FreeNAS runs directly from a USB flash drive that you plug into your computer. This should be at least 8GB in size. There's lots of documentation on the website which will help you get started with adding volumes and making them accessible over a network. See our Mini Workshop, below, to find out how to use FreeNAS.

### Store media files on Plex

If you have a PC that's always on, you can use that as your storage location and share files from it over the network. If it's

videos you're planning on sharing, then Plex Media Server ([www.plex.tv](http://www.plex.tv)) is probably your best solution. Install it on the PC that's home to your media, and it will scan the drives and organise the content it finds. You'll then be able to install the Plex apps on all your devices and view the content in whatever way you like. There are player apps for everything from computers, games consoles and mobile phones (Android and iOS), to streaming devices such as Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV and Chromecast. Plex is also available for Kodi and through your browser.

### Share content on an external hard drive

Another option is to connect an external

drive to your router and share its contents over your network. This isn't an option that will be available to all – you'll need a router with a USB port and not all ISP-supplied models have this. If yours does, connect your drive to it, log into the router via your browser (check the router itself or the manual for instructions on how to do this).

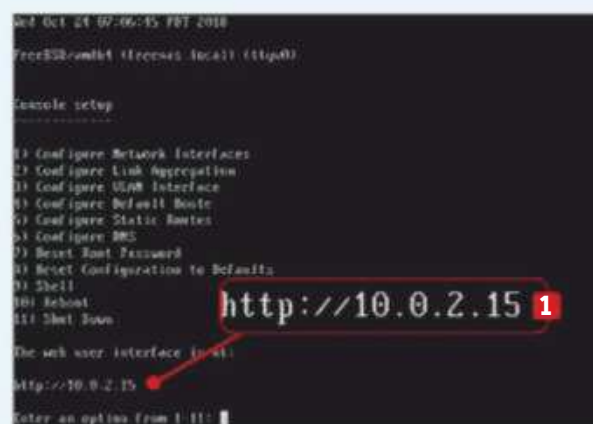
Check to see that your drive is detected under USB settings, then look for and enable storage sharing (or the equivalent). Next, type `run` into the Windows search box and press Enter. In the Run box, type `\\[your IP address]` (it'll probably be something like `\\192.168.1.1`) and click OK. The drive should open in the network section of File Explorer, ready for access. ■



## MINI WORKSHOP | Install and configure FreeNAS



**1** Download FreeNAS from the website (it's in ISO format) and either write it to a CD/DVD or to a USB flash drive using a tool such as Rufus ([rufus.ie](http://rufus.ie)). Restart your PC and boot from the installer. FreeNAS will load. Select the Install/Upgrade option **1** and in the next window, select the USB drive you will be installing to.



**2** When prompted, enter a root password. Once FreeNAS has installed on the flash drive, remove the installation media and reboot from the drive. The console setup screen will load. This takes quite a while. When it's finished, make a note of the IP address that appears at the bottom of the screen. **1**



**3** Open a browser on another PC on your network and go to that address. Enter your password and click Log In. To add drives to FreeNAS, click Storage **1** at the top, then click the Volume Manager button. **2** When you've done that, click the Sharing button **3** to make the volume accessible over your network.

## NEXT ISSUE

How To... Upgrade your processor

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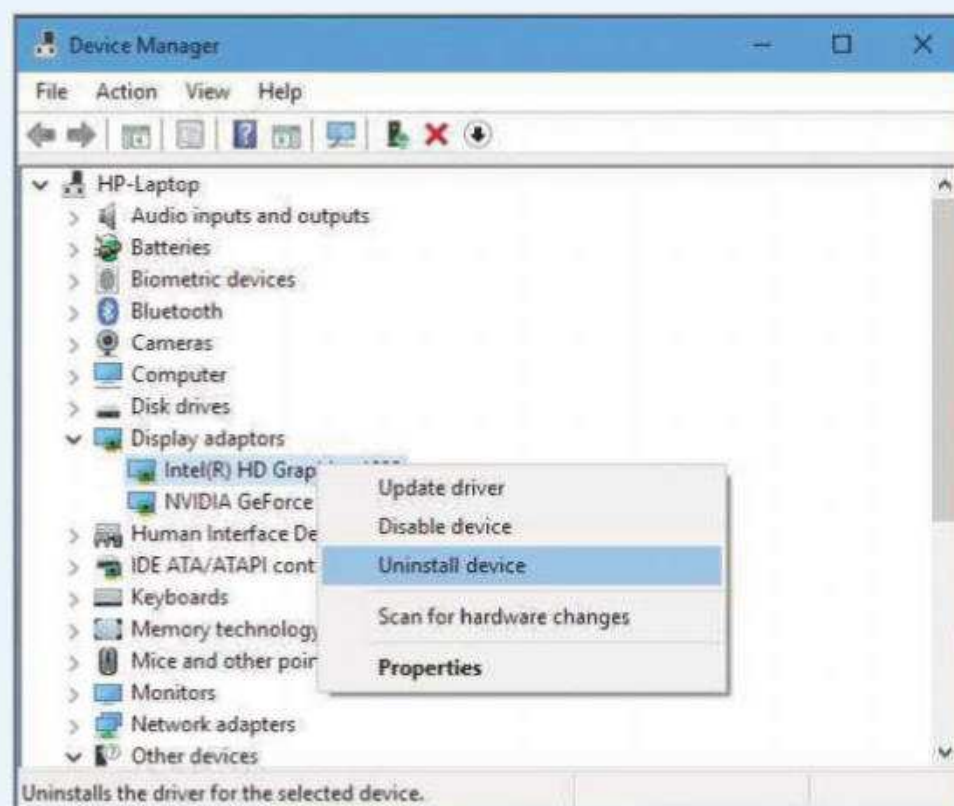
# Web User Masterclass

## Hardware driver secrets that keep your PC running longer and faster

### Refresh a broken driver

If you're experiencing a problem with a printer, scanner, USB device, video card, soundcard or any other hardware, you should first try reinstalling the driver. This resets everything and often solves any problems, but it's a good idea to remove any associated programs first. Open the Control Panel and choose 'Programs and Features', then uninstall anything related to the device, such as printer software, audio software and so on.

Go back to the main Control Panel menu and open Device Manager, then expand the section for the hardware you're having trouble with – for example, 'Imaging devices'. Right-click the item and select 'Uninstall device'. Once that's done, restart Windows and a fresh driver will automatically install. The device should work as before, hopefully with the problem fixed. This action basically removes the current driver files from your PC and reinstalls fresh ones from Windows Driver store.



*Uninstall hardware in Device Manager to refresh the driver*

### Reset a laptop's battery

If your laptop shuts down long before the battery has expired – say, at 20% – it may be down to a problem with the battery's hardware drivers. Open the Control Panel and find the Device Manager, then expand the Batteries section. Right-click each item and select 'Uninstall device', then restart Windows. This can sometimes make the battery status report more accurate, allowing it to run down to below 10% before it shuts down.

### Fix driver incompatibilities

Problems with a hardware device could be the result of an incompatibility or bug in the current driver, and updating it to the next version or rolling back to a previous one can solve this. Open Device



*Return to the previous version of a driver with the Roll Back Driver button*

Manager and expand the problematic hardware – for example, 'Display adapters'. Right-click the hardware device and select Properties on the menu. Select the Driver tab and use the Update Driver or Roll Back Driver buttons to replace the current driver.

Previous drivers are not always saved when updating, so Roll Back Driver is not always available.

### Windows drivers vs manufacturer's drivers

You can find available drivers from Windows or from your device's manufacturer. Windows includes drivers

for a vast number of hardware devices, which means most hardware will work as soon as it's plugged into your PC. For example, if you replace your old video card with a new one and switch on your computer, you'll find that a picture appears on the screen, even before you've installed the manufacturer's driver software. Similarly, a printer may print without you having to install the printer software, and a webcam, scanner or other device may work, too.

So why bother with the manufacturer's driver? The main reason is that it usually offers performance benefits and extra tools. Go to your PC manufacturer's website, search for the model and find the downloads section. Now download all the software and drivers.

If you are using an old device that uses old drivers, you may find that the manufacturer's driver has been replaced by a Windows version that's newer but doesn't work as well. If you find you are having problems with hardware following a Windows update, you should reinstall the manufacturer's drivers.

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.

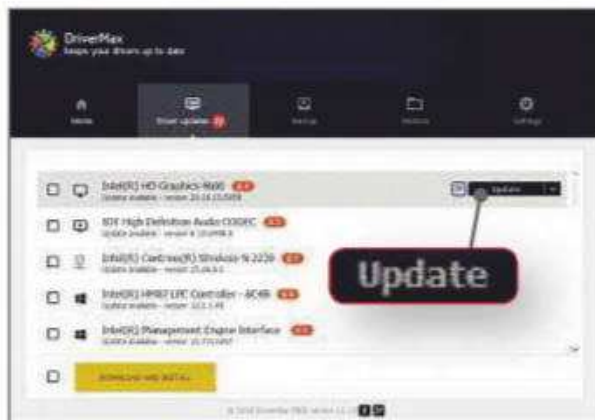




## Use driver-update tools

Finding the correct drivers can be tricky, but there are dedicated tools that do the job for you. Driver updaters scan your computer for hardware drivers, then check online to see if a newer version is available. DriverMax ([www.drivermax.com](http://www.drivermax.com)) and IObit Driver Booster ([bit.ly/iodb462](http://bit.ly/iodb462)) are two solid options that offer a free version.

Driver updaters often present you with multiple updates and bulk downloads, but this should be avoided. Deselect any bulk updates and update a single driver at a time – and only if you are having problems with the device. Make sure you have a full backup before you start and check that your PC is working fine before moving on to the next driver you want to update.



**Update one driver at a time with DriverMax**

## Back up your drivers

It's a good idea to back up your drivers before installing any updates (either for Windows, your hardware or your software) as a safety net in case anything goes wrong. You can then restore the backup to solve any problems you find later. Windows System Restore makes the process

easy: in Windows 10, click the search box in the taskbar and type system restore; in Windows 7, type system restore into the search box in the Control Panel. In both cases, click 'Create a restore point', then click Create in the window that appears.

**Create a restore point to back up your PC's hardware drivers**

There are other tools that offer to create a backup for you. In DriverMax, click the Backup icon in the toolbar, select 'Create driver backup archive' and click Next. The Restore button is used to restore drivers from a backup.

## TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

### Remove driver packages

Removing a hardware driver isn't always as straightforward as it first appears and it can often involve more than simply using the Uninstall option in Device Manager.

Drivers are bundled into packages, so when a driver is installed, not only are the files installed but everything in the package is copied to the Driver Store, which is a secure location on the hard drive. Uninstalling a driver only removes the installed files and not the package, which remains in the Driver Store. You may also need to delete the driver package to completely clear your PC's system of a problematic driver.

A good example of this can be seen with printer drivers. Open the Control Panel and, in small icons view, click 'Devices and Printers'. Select Microsoft XPS Document Writer and then click 'Print server properties' at the top.

Select the Drivers tab, then Microsoft XPS Document Writer and click the Remove button below. A window appears giving the options to 'Remove driver only' or 'Remove driver and driver package'.



**Don't just remove a driver, remove the driver packages too**

This second option should be used to completely remove the driver for a device you no longer use, such as a printer or scanner. It can also be used if you want to clear out a driver to perform a clean install. It's possible that a driver package could interfere with a reinstallation and that Windows might automatically reinstall it and make the package appear when you think it has been deleted.

### Stop the print spooler

If you are having problems removing

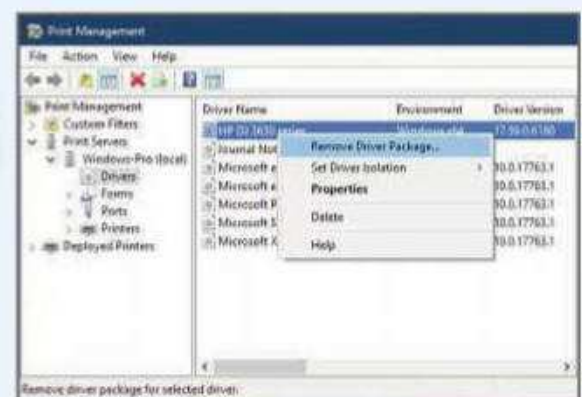
a printer driver, you should first stop the Print Spooler service. This uses the printer drivers, and any files currently in use can't be deleted. Press Windows+R and type `services.msc`. A window opens listing all the installed services, which are programs that run in the background. Double-click Print Spooler to open its Properties window and click the Stop button, then close the window. You should now be able to remove the printer driver.

### Remove hidden driver packages

Devices such as printers and scanners appear in 'Devices and Printers' in the Control Panel and can be removed from there. However, there may be hidden devices or partially removed ones still on your PC, which can cause problems.

You may be able to see hidden devices by selecting an existing device in 'Devices and Printers' and clicking Print Server Properties. Select the Drivers tab and check if there are any printers or scanners listed that you thought were uninstalled. They can be selected and removed in this window.

If you have Windows 10 Pro, you can find hidden devices and drivers by opening Administrative Tools in the Control Panel, then clicking Print Management. Expand the Printer Servers section and select the printer, then right-click it and select Remove Driver Package. Unfortunately, Windows 10 Home doesn't have this.



**Print Management in Windows Pro enables driver packages to be removed**

### Where are drivers stored?

Windows stores your drivers in the folder `C:\Windows\System32\drivers`.

The Driver Store is in `C:\Windows\System32\DriverStore\FileRepository`.

Microsoft says they should not be modified manually, so only allow Windows to add or remove these files.



# 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](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk)



## BROWSERS

### Restore Tor Browser

**Q** I've been using Tor Browser ([bit.ly/tor462](http://bit.ly/tor462)) for a while but I think at some point recently a Windows update has broken it. I received the following message: "Windows cannot access the specified device, path or file. You may not have the appropriate permissions to access the item."

I have tried the Windows/Microsoft website for a solution but their suggestions have not solved the problem. I am using Windows 10 and Norton Security ([uk.norton.com](http://uk.norton.com)).

**Michael Taylor, via email**

**A** A security feature in Windows 10 called 'Controlled folder access' stops some programs running by removing permission to access certain



**'Controlled folder access' can prevent some programs from running**

folders. Check that it is turned off.

Type **controlled** in the taskbar's search box, then click 'Controlled folder access'. The Ransomware section of Windows Defender appears. Click its switch to off.

If that doesn't work, uninstall Tor Browser completely using Revo Uninstaller ([www.revouninstaller.com](http://www.revouninstaller.com)) or Wise Program Uninstaller ([www.wisecleaner.com](http://www.wisecleaner.com)), then download and install a fresh copy of the Tor Browser.

Manager. Expand DVD/CD-Rom Drives, right-click the drive and select 'Uninstall device'. Close Device Manager and restart Windows. If the drive is detected, it will be reinstalled automatically.

We had this happen to a couple of PCs and nothing solved the problem. Windows detected the drive, the driver was fine, but no discs would play. The only solution was to replace the drive with a new one.

If your PC offers easy access to the internal DVD drive, you can buy and install a bare drive. Unplug and unscrew the old one, slide in the new one and reattach the cables and screws.

It may be easier to use an external DVD drive that connects via USB. Search Google for 'USB DVD drive' and click the Shopping tab. We found drives available for less than £10.

## BROWSERS

### Stop Barclaycard clashing with Chrome

**Q** I regularly use online banking. Since July, on the Barclaycard website, I can enter my account name as usual, but when I get to the passcode, a notice flashes up saying it's unsafe and I should use [haveibeenpwned.com](http://haveibeenpwned.com) to check and change it. The passcode is only six numbers long and despite several changes, the 'passcode unsafe' notice continues to appear. Every passcode I try seems to have been 'pwned'.

I phoned Barclaycard online banking and their IT person said I should be using Internet Explorer rather than Chrome. He insisted that the problem was at my end and not down to Barclaycard. He also suggested that I use their mobile app.

I've never had a problem with the website before, and always used Chrome. I run Kaspersky Total Protection and their Secure Protection ([www.kaspersky.co.uk](http://www.kaspersky.co.uk)), as well as Malwarebytes ([www.malwarebytes.com](http://www.malwarebytes.com)) but don't feel I can wholly rely on them to keep me secure.

**S Caldwell, via email**

**A** Chrome is the most popular browser around – there's no need to switch to another browser. It's unlikely

## GENERAL PC

### Find a missing OneDrive icon

**Q** The OneDrive icon in the notification area of my PC's taskbar has disappeared since the last Windows update. OneDrive still works and can be accessed in File Explorer, but I wondered if you have any idea where it went to or how to get it back.

**John Baker, via email**

**A** The OneDrive icon is normally visible in the notification area but it may have been moved to the pop-up panel where it's out of sight. Click the up arrow to see if it is there. The icon



**Choose which icons appear in the taskbar with these switches in Settings**

may have been removed if its settings were changed. Open the Settings app in Windows 10 and click Personalisation. Select Taskbar on the left and click 'Select which icons appear on the taskbar' on the right. Make sure the switch next to OneDrive is on.

## HARDWARE

### Fix a disappearing DVD drive

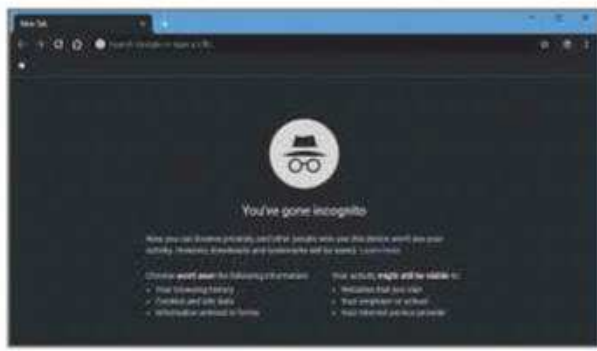
**Q** Since a Windows 10 update, my DVD drive (D:) is no longer recognised in File Explorer. I've tried removing the drive from Settings and have carried out the recommended Registry updates suggested by various Google searches, but all to no avail.

Windows knows the drive is there and says it is working correctly, but I can't play anything on it. Do I have to remove all reference to the DVD writer in the Registry and physically remove the cable connections inside the box, so Windows 10 thinks a new drive is being installed?

**Michael Dewey, via email**

**A** Have you tried removing the DVD drive in Device Manager? Right-click the Start button and select Device





## Stop extensions interfering with a web page by using incognito mode

that the Barclaycard website would send you to [haveibeenpwned.com](http://haveibeenpwned.com) – it sounds like a browser extension or your security software is checking your login data and displaying the message.

Go to the Chrome menu, open a 'New incognito window' and use it to log into the Barclaycard website. Add-ons don't run in incognito windows, unless you specifically set them to, so you'll have a clean browser and can check whether it's an add-on that's at fault. Many add-ons can read the web pages you view, so when you need to connect to a site securely, it's worth using incognito.

## GENERAL PC

### Make Windows transparent

**Q** Could you provide any software, themes or Registry hacks that make Aero Glass available for Windows 10? I'd like something that makes the edges of windows and the taskbar transparent, as Windows 7 does. I already tried Aero Glass for Windows 8 ([www.glass8.eu](http://www.glass8.eu)) Glass8 and WinaeroGlass ([bit.ly/wag462](http://bit.ly/wag462)), but they don't do the full job.

I know there are tons of web pages and videos on YouTube related to this, but most don't run or just promote junk software, which changes the layout of Windows or makes it unstable.

**AL, via email**

**A** Aero Glass was introduced with Windows Vista but taken out of Windows 8, and the transparency effects in Windows 10 have also been toned down and are less noticeable. This, and the twice-yearly major updates, make any tweaks difficult.

There are a couple of features left in Windows that can be used to enable or customise transparency effects. For example, open the Settings app and click Personalisation. Select Colours, then scroll down to 'More options' and activate the switch under 'Transparency effects'. The effect is barely visible, and only applies to the Start menu, taskbar, Action Centre and some Windows apps such as Calculator. It doesn't work across all Windows software.

If the transparency doesn't appear, check the Registry settings. Press Windows+R, type **regedit** and press Enter. Go to:

HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Themes\Personalize

On the right are two values called EnableTransparency and EnableBlurBehind. If you don't see them, click Edit, New, 'DWORD (32-bit) Value'. Double-click each of these values and set them to 1.

Another Registry tweak that makes a small difference to transparency can be made by going to:

HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced

Select Edit, New, 'DWORD (32-bit) Value' and name it

**UseOLETaskbarTransparency.**

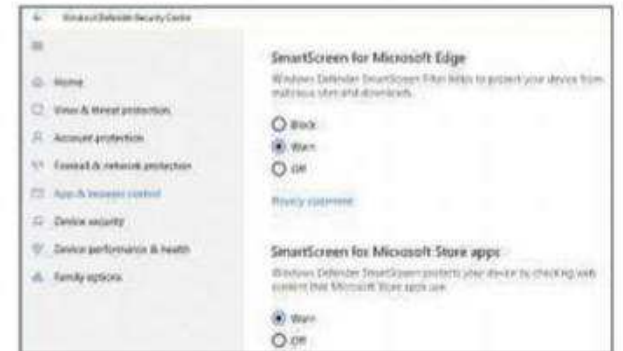
Double-click it and set the value to 1. It is most noticeable in the Settings app.

You say you already tried Aero Glass for Windows 8 ([www.glass8.eu](http://www.glass8.eu)), but it works with some versions of Windows 10 and is the closest to the old Aero Glass option of Windows 7 and Vista.

## SECURITY

### Check what you're downloading

**Q** I've noticed that some downloads recommend using Safe Mode. What is the reason for this? Also, sometimes Windows Defender won't let me



## SmartScreen in Windows Defender blocks malicious downloads

download. Have I set it up wrong?

**Richard Coleman, via email**

**A** No files need to be downloaded in Safe Mode. This is a special Windows mode that eliminates many drivers and background programs, and is only useful for diagnosing problems. Security software might not run properly in Safe Mode, so it's suspicious that you're being asked to use it – you may be trying to download bad software that is trying to circumvent security.

In normal mode, Windows Defender checks downloads and won't let you save malware. It occasionally displays a message about a download it doesn't recognise and is just being cautious. You can choose to go ahead and save it if you are certain it is safe. However, it's best not to download anything that Defender flags as malicious or unknown.

You may be using dodgy websites with bad downloads, possibly infected with malware. Avoid them or you might end up with malware on your computer.

## GENERAL PC

### Restore internet after Windows update

**Q** After installing the Windows 10 October 2018 Update, I have discovered that Edge can't access the internet. I mostly use Chrome, so it's not a huge problem, but some other Windows apps like Mail and Calendar also aren't working properly since the update. What is wrong?

**P Harris, via email**

**A** This appears to be a network configuration issue. Either something has changed during the update or has not changed when it should have. Open the Settings app (Windows+i) and click 'Network & Internet', then 'Network and Sharing Centre'. Click the active connection in the list of connections, then click



## Make sure that Internet Protocol version 6 is enabled for internet access

Properties in the next window. The problem appears to be caused by IPv6 being disabled. Tick that box and click OK. Close the windows and restart Windows.

If that doesn't work, try a network reset. Open Settings and click 'Network & Internet', then click 'Network reset' on the right.



This fortnight, Roland can't make up his mind whether to use OneDrive or Google Drive



# Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. Please send questions and answers to [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk)

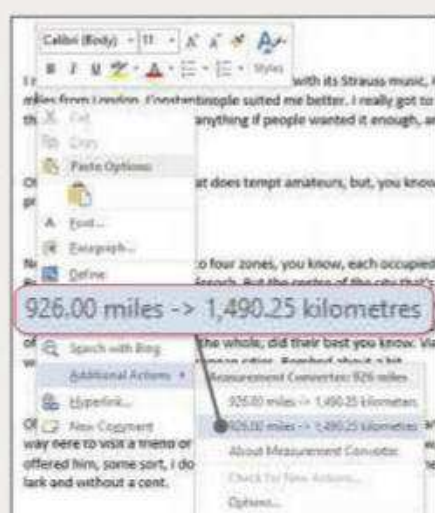


## TOP TIP

### OFFICE

## Switch on Word's secret measurement converter

Microsoft Word's secret measurement converter is disabled by default. To turn it on, open Word (2010 or later) and click the File tab, Options, then Proofing. At the top of the box, in the Autocorrect Options, click the Actions tab, then tick the box to 'Enable additional actions in the right-



**Enable Microsoft Word's handy measurement converter**

Back Issues disc winner



click menu'. Tick Measurement Converter, along with any other tools you fancy, then click OK to save. Now, when you type a measurement, right-click it, select Additional Actions, and Word will show it converted into other formats.

**Dylan McCarthy, via email**

bottom. A small number now overlays the Gmail icon on the tab so you can see when you have messages waiting.

**E Colgan, via email**

### OFFICE

## Ditch the Office ribbon toolbar

I never got used to the huge ribbon toolbar in Office apps such as Word and Excel, and it seems Microsoft has fallen out of love with it, too. If you use the Word web app ([office.live.com](http://office.live.com)), which is free and almost as good as Word on a PC, there's a switch in the blue bar at the top that toggles between the old toolbar and a new simplified one. It's not exactly like the old menu and buttons, but it's better than the ribbon. The menu tabs display a simpler single-row toolbar that's more compact and easier to use.

**Neil Meade, via email**

### ONLINE STORAGE

## Don't sync every Drive folder

When you install Google Drive software (Backup and Sync, [bit.ly/gbs462](http://bit.ly/gbs462)), it creates a folder on your PC containing a complete copy of everything you keep in Drive. Because Google Photos provides unlimited free storage for your phone's images, you could find your PC filling up with pictures you don't need to store locally. To stop this, click the 'Backup and sync' icon in the taskbar, then click the three-dot menu in the window that appears and select Preferences. Click



**The Google Photos folder can grow indefinitely so you may not want to sync it**

### SOCIAL NETWORKING

## Add Facebook friends by scanning codes



**A quick way to find and add Facebook friends**

I hate searching Facebook Messenger to add friends I know in real life. If anyone shares this peeve, I point them to Facebook Messenger's Scan Code. Open Messenger, click People and press Scan Code at the top. You get three options: photograph someone's code, share your own code or scan a photo of a code by pressing the camera roll icon (it looks like lots of little boxes). As soon as you've scanned the code, they'll be added on your Messenger. They then have to accept your message request.

**RJ Mackenzie, via email**

### GENERAL PC

## Find the time globally

If you have friends or relatives abroad and want to know what time it is where they are, you can simply search Google for the information - but the Windows 10 Alarms & Clock app can also help. Open

Clock, select the Clock tab and click the Plus at the bottom. Type the name of any city in any country to display the time on the world map. I use it to check the time in Australia before video calling my daughter, who is currently living there.

**John Orr, via email**



**Show times around the world using the Alarm & Clock app in Windows**

### EMAIL

## Get a Gmail counter

If you have multiple tabs open in your browser, you'll recognise the Gmail ([mail.google.com](mailto:mail.google.com)) tab by its red and white envelope icon. This icon can be set to show the number of unread emails, so you can see at a glance how many messages are waiting. In Gmail, click the cog icon and select Settings. Click Advanced in the menu bar across the top and enable the 'Unread message icon' option. Click Save Changes at the





Google Drive, then select 'Sync these folders only'. The size of the Google Photos folder is shown. By clearing the tick box, you can choose not to sync it, saving loads of hard-drive space.

William Kelly, via email

## GENERAL PC

### Fix Windows' oversized calculator

The size of the Calculator has almost doubled in the latest version of Windows. To reduce it, drag the edges of the window with your mouse. To ensure the proportions stay the same, close and then reopen the app. Windows remembers the new size and saves it. A new feature in Calculator is the currency converter. It saves you looking them up in a search engine, and it includes many obscure currencies listed. If it's out of sync, click the instant-update link in the bottom-left corner of the window.

Bedstor, Web User Forums



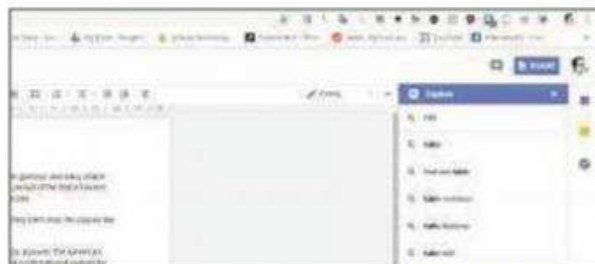
The Windows calculator has new features but you can change its size if it's too big

## GOOGLE

### Research projects in Google Docs

After reading about Google Voice Typing in issue 457 (Best Free Speech Recognition Software, [bit.ly/webuser457](http://bit.ly/webuser457)), I thought I'd give Google Docs a proper go. I was pleasantly surprised to find that I can undertake all my research without having to flit between multiple browser tabs and windows. Here's the secret: go to Tools and click Explore. A separate sidebar opens where you can search for documents saved in your Google Drive or scour the web to research a project.

Jake Forster, via email



Google Docs' Explore tool keeps all your research in easy reach

## BROWSERS

### Copy and paste into any field on any website

Maybe it's my age, but I've grown increasingly grumpy at some of the bizarre design choices I see online. One of my biggest bugbears is when websites



Don't F-word With Paste lets you paste in form fields that are usually blocked

block you from copying and pasting into certain fields of a form – usually when repeating emails, passwords and the like. I've overcome this using the 'Don't F-word With Paste' (yes, it really has that fruity name and the developer has quite a potty mouth – you have been warned).

Available for Chrome ([bit.ly/paste462](http://bit.ly/paste462)) and Firefox ([bit.ly/fpaste462](http://bit.ly/fpaste462)), it's an open-source project that lets you set rules for web addresses, which then allow copying and pasting, even in fields that usually block it. That's one less thing to get grumpy about!

Roger Clinton, via email

## BROWSERS

### Stop Firefox auto-launching after Windows restart

Fellow Firefox users – have you noticed that if you don't close the browser when shutting down or restarting Windows, it springs back into action when you start your PC? To prevent this from happening, visit [about:config](http://about:config) and find the toolkit.winRegisterApplicationRestart preference. With the value set to True, the browser opens exactly where it left off after a restart. To disable Firefox from automatically launching, double-click the preference to change the value to False.

If you'd like the browser to open automatically again, reverse the process.

Jeff Wagner, Aberystwyth

## APPS

### Track all packages in one app

With Christmas fast approaching, I've been desperate to find a way to keep track of all incoming packages without having to endlessly scroll through my emails searching for tracking numbers.

I'm currently using ParcelTrack on my Android phone ([bit.ly/track462](http://bit.ly/track462) –

I'm not sure if there is an equivalent app for iPhones). Whenever you receive a dispatch email, forward it to your unique ParcelTrack inbox account. The app then 'reads' the email and displays the info in one place.

Wendy Cayman, via email



A useful app for tracking all your Christmas parcels

## iOS

### Stop iPhone apps disappearing

To stop iPhone and iPad apps disappearing from your device, even if you barely ever use them, go to Settings, choose 'iTunes & App Store' and scroll to the option to Offload Unused Apps. Toggle the switch to off. This means all your apps will stay on your phone or tablet until you manually uninstall them.

Charles Warren, via email

## BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

## HARDWARE

### Use Windows' troubleshooter to fix a USB stick

I regularly use USB memory sticks for saving and backing up data and files. Occasionally, however, I run into problems, such as when my computer refuses to let me safely eject the hardware or doesn't recognise the pen drive at all. This can be down to a problem with the USB stick, and there's an easy way to fix it with Windows' very own USB troubleshooter.

Download the troubleshooter from Windows Support at [bit.ly/usbfix462](http://bit.ly/usbfix462) and run it once you've inserted your device. It's small and quick, and should



Got a problem with a USB memory stick? Run this troubleshooter

be able to repair any problems with your USB stick.

Bryan Mansfield, via email

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?

If so, please send your story to [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk)





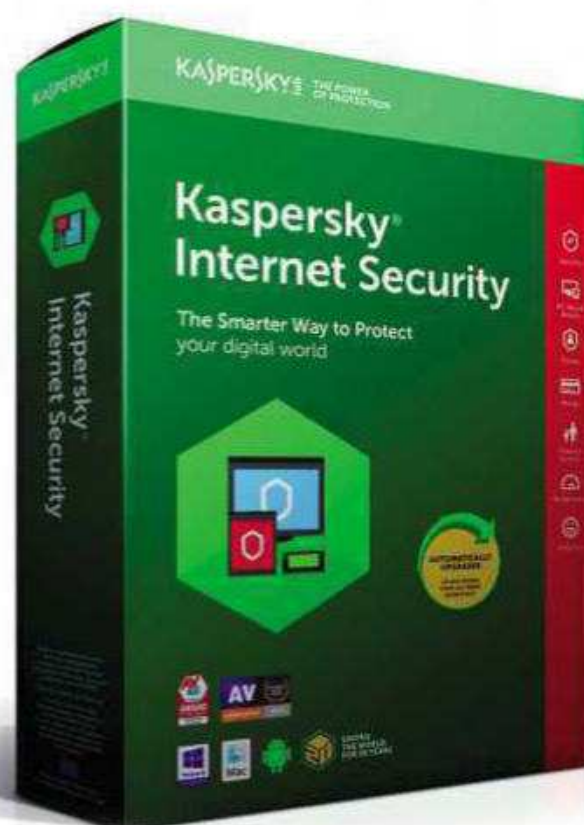
### OFFER OF THE FORTNIGHT

## Kaspersky Internet Security 2019 - on sale now

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

### WHAT'S NEW IN KASPERSKY 2019:

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



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# Readers' Helpdesk

Our final pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Please send future questions and answers to [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk)

## HARDWARE

### Merge scanned pages in a single PDF

**Q** Is there a way to combine individual scanned pages into one document, to print the whole lot in one go? I'm scanning about a dozen pages, which I'd like to send to someone by email, so that they can just print them all off.

**robinsong, Web User Forums**

**A** Most scanner software offers the ability to create multiple scans and save them as a single PDF file. It's normally in the export menu under Settings. Another easy option for joining or merging scanned documents is to upload the pages to a website that does the job for you, then lets you download the result. There are several to choose from but give PDF Joiner ([pdfjoiner.com](http://pdfjoiner.com)) a try. It's self-explanatory: click Upload Files (or drag and drop documents), navigate to the PDFs and select the files to join. Once you've uploaded them all, click Join Files and download the merged PDF.

**scrimper & Moonshine, Web User Forums**



*PDF Joiner is a handy online tool for merging pages into a single PDF*

## GENERAL PC

### Enable PC sound on TV via HDMI

**Q** I'm trying to view my Windows 10 laptop screen on a TV using an HDMI cable. The problem is that I'm not getting any sound from the TV when it's connected to the laptop, despite having sound turned up fully up on both.

**Extractor, Web User Forums**

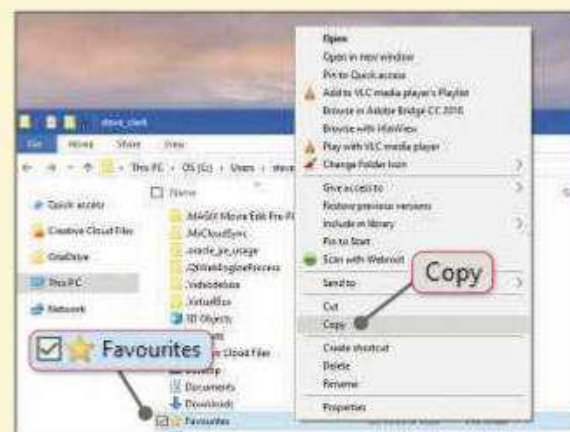
## GENERAL PC

### Move Favourites folder to another PC

**Q** I want to copy my Favourites folder from my Windows 7 PC to a USB memory stick, so I can use the bookmarks on my Windows 10 PC. How do I do this?

**Pups, Web User Forums**

**A** Right-click your Favourites folder in Windows 7 and select Copy. Now, open My Computer and paste the contents to your USB stick. Eject the stick and insert it into your Windows 10 device. Now, open This PC, then open both the Favourites folder on the PC and the one on the USB device in separate windows. Copy and paste the contents of the USB device to the Favourites folder on your Windows 10



*Use copy and paste to move Favourites to a new PC with a USB memory stick*

computer. Don't 'cut and paste' the Favourites folder from your Windows 7 PC in case it all goes pear-shaped!

**pete.i, Web User Forums**

**A** I saw a thread about this on the Microsoft Community board. The support staff advised opening the Control Panel on your laptop and going into the Sound settings.

Under Playback, right-click a blank part of the box and click Show Disabled Devices and Show Disconnected Devices. Right-click any of the disabled devices, then select Enable and 'Set as Default Device.' Click OK to save the changes. Hope that helps.

**Peru, Web User Forums**



*Don't suffer in silence - take control of your device's volume*

## HARDWARE

### Back up your files on a Seagate external drive

**Q** A while ago, I bought a Seagate ([www.seagate.com](http://www.seagate.com)) external hard drive. When it's connected and the blue light comes on, is it then downloading all the new stuff to the Seagate, or do I have

to do anything else before I disconnect? Also, how do I check the Seagate's contents, just to ensure it's working? I'd hate to have a problem and then find out nothing is being saved or stored on there.

**fossewayfella, Web User Forums**

**A** I use Seagate external drives for my Macrium Reflect system images ([bit.ly/mac462](http://bit.ly/mac462)). When you plug one in, the light shows it's powered up. Open File Explorer (or Windows Explorer) and look in This PC. Double-click your hard drive to check your backups, then drag and drop new files to it. When you're finished, click the HDD icon in the notification area of the taskbar (if it's hidden, click the arrow to show all the options). You'll see the option to safely eject the Seagate. You need to do this for all NTFS-formatted external drives. It stops the drive being removed while files are being written to it, which would corrupt its contents.

**Cantrel, Web User Forums**

*Always eject your external hard drive from Windows before physically removing it*





## Star Email

### Why I'm deleting my Facebook account

**A**fter reading your Stay Safe Online story, "50 million Facebook users hit by breach" in Issue 460, I've decided that I've had enough of Facebook and its cavalier attitude towards its users' privacy and security. How can such a rich and supposedly tech-savvy company fall victim to so many serious security breaches that put its users' personal information at great risk?

When I started using Facebook 10 years ago, I thought of it as a fun, free alternative to Friends Reunited. It let me reconnect with old acquaintances who I hadn't spoken to for years and made it easy to share photos with my family without the tedious process of



sending them as email attachments. And while I noticed adverts down the side of my news feed, these seemed relatively unobtrusive and a fair trade-off for the service being free.

But the string of scandals that have swirled around Facebook in the past year have convinced me that using the site is

like selling your soul to the devil, in that you're handing over private data for the company to 'monetise' in any way it wishes. Facebook doesn't care about its users; it is only concerned about making money, even if that means harvesting personal information and storing it in such a lax manner that it can easily be stolen by criminals, and no doubt passed around the dark web.

That's why I have decided to delete my Facebook account and use other means to keep in touch with my friends and family, without the constant feeling that I'm being spied on and targeted for financial gain. Somehow, I don't think I'll miss it.

*Elizabeth Craig, via email*

### My family is mad for gaming

I was reading your FAQ about 'Retro games consoles' in Issue 460 and thought you might like to know how extremely mad I am for gaming, along with my now grown-up kids.

My wife, my son and I all have a Windows 10 PC and a Windows 10 laptop, and my wife also has a Surface Pro and an Android tablet. I run an Xbox, PlayStation 1 and

Kodi with an all-in-1 control pad connected to my 46in TV.

Our youngest son (aged 32) has a PS1, a PS3 and a PS4 hooked up to his bedroom TV, while our older son has a PC and a PS4. He has also kept his Nintendo NES, Sega Mega Drive, Super NES, PS1 and PS2, all with copious amounts of games in sealed boxes, under the bed so that he can play them whenever the urge strikes!

*Doug Seabury, via email*

### Don't blame Microsoft for update problems

Here we go again: another Windows 10 update and another slew of reports about the problems it's allegedly causing. But if you consider how many millions of people use Windows 10

across the world – 700 million, according to your news article – the update problems affect only a tiny proportion of users. Everybody else, including myself, has been able to install the update without any trouble, but of course that doesn't make for an interesting story: "699,892 Windows 10 users report no problems with latest update".

Let's face it: people like to moan, especially where Microsoft is concerned. They're quick to sound off about technical errors and blame the big greedy corporation, without stopping to

think that the fault might be theirs. For example, people trying to download and install a large update on a device with little storage space – how on Earth can that be Microsoft's mistake?

It's about time people stopped complaining about Windows 10 and accepted that it's a decent operating system that Microsoft gave away for free – at least to those who were sensible enough to get it in the first year. 700 million users can't be wrong, but some will always find a reason to grumble.

*Mark Chorley, via email*

## Quiz Answers: Issue 461

- 1 Crocodile Dundee**   
- 2 Beetlejuice**  
- 3 The Man With Two Brains**  
- 4 Spaceballs**  
- 5 Three Men and a Baby**  
- 6 Planes, Trains and Automobiles**  

### WINNER!

Well done to **Paul Duncan** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc

TECH YEAR

**2016**





## Spare me from scary Alexa

Regarding Barry's column in Issue 460, 'Alexa: today your home, tomorrow the world'. This has to be one of the scariest statements I've read recently. Not for an instant would I allow anything like Alexa to take control of my home!

*Larry Meilack, via email*

## Thermostat price leaves me cold

In response to your First Look of the new Nest Thermostat E in Issue 460: as a user of the original Nest Thermostat, and having already read a review of the latest version on an American website, you've highlighted once more how we in the UK are being ripped off by manufacturers.

The price of this thermostat in the US is \$169, which at the present exchange rate is approximately £130. Why are we expected to pay 53% more, at £199? Is this because of EU-imposed tariffs on imports from outside the eurozone? Or is it the usual case of rip-off Britain?

*Tom Hamill, via email*



## Selfie deaths show lack of judgment

How sad to read about the 259 people who have died while taking selfies (Webometer, Issue 460). However, it did bring to mind an interesting email newsletter I used to receive called the Darwin Awards. This highlighted unfortunate and preventable deaths that demonstrated serious misjudgment on the deceased's part, but on the plus side supposedly aided evolution by removing that person from the gene pool.

I realise that sounds awfully harsh, but you have to wonder about the judgment of people who pay more attention to their phones than they do to their dangerous surroundings as they try to capture the perfect selfie. Is it really worth risking your life just to get a photo to share on Facebook and Instagram?

I think the suggestion of setting up 'no selfie zones' in dangerous places is a good one, but somehow I doubt selfie addicts would heed the warning.

*Miriam Gray, via email*

## What you say...

### JOHN LEWIS IS TO STOP SELLING DVD PLAYERS ([bit.ly/dvdplayer462](http://bit.ly/dvdplayer462)). DO YOU STILL WATCH DVDs?

Yes, and I always will. I'll never get Netflix or any other streaming service.

*Athol A Witter*

Only if it's a particularly awesome film.

*Jason 'Boz' Bowyer*

Yes. Netflix and Amazon are great, but not if the internet goes down! If you have electricity and a DVD player, you can always watch something.

*Lynn Sharpe*

I use both streaming and DVDs. I don't go to the cinema, because paying over a tenner to sit in a room full of coughing, rustling, slurping idiots isn't my idea of fun. I don't buy Blu-rays, because paying an extra £5 for barely improved picture quality is a waste of money. I'm happy to pay my tenner so I can watch as many times as I want in the comfort of my own home and do my bit for the film industry.

*Mark Slater*

I still have some DVDs, but with the advances in streaming sites, I can always find plenty of films to watch without any need for a DVD.

*Paul Emsley*

Only if it's something really obscure that you can't find anywhere else. All my DVDs are in my Mom's garage!

*Heather Husler*

I still buy Blu-rays because it's nice to get the extras for films you love, but Netflix can't be beaten for ease of use.

*Caroline Chapman*

Nope, I don't even bother with Blu-ray either. It's all streaming for me now.

*Si Mellor*

### WOULD MARK ZUCKERBERG LEAVING IMPROVE FACEBOOK? ([bit.ly/zucker462](http://bit.ly/zucker462))

I don't know the internal politics. He may be trying to improve it for "us" while the board are having none of it. I'd take the money and run!

*Bruce Lauderdale*

Yes. The shareholders should sell it to someone who respects privacy. But anyway, isn't President Trump planning to break up all these tech giants for spying on us all?

*Liz F Lambeth*

No matter who runs Facebook, it will still have the same parameters and probably even more annoying adverts.

*Brian Brown*

I can't speak for Facebook, but Mark Zuckerberg leaving the planet would be a good start. He could be shot into space in a camera-equipped capsule to see how he likes his privacy being constantly invaded!

*Allen Childs*

### AMAZON'S NEW KINDLE PAPERWHITE IS WATERPROOF. DO YOU CARE HOW WATERPROOF YOUR DEVICES ARE?

You would only care if they got wet. Then you'd wish your device had this feature!

*David P-Smith @david\_p\_s*

Not really, because I'm not silly enough to want to read or watch viral cat videos in the bath.

*Martin Phillp*

I'm not bothered about waterproofing, but I would like Amazon to bring back the Kindle's text-to-speech feature.

*Pamela J Anderson*

I know a couple of people who use their e-readers in the bath. One friend is on her third or fourth device now, because the screen on one bled from it getting wet.

*Paul @abertawejack*



# ! Page 404

UK broadcasters have no right to demand top slots on streaming services, says **Barry Collins**



## Don't give the BBC box seats for streaming

**T**elevision is a funny old business. You may have assumed, for example, that the BBC, ITV, Channel Four and Five are in prime position on Sky and Virgin Media because they're the most popular channels. But you'd be wrong. They're there because Ofcom regulations guarantee so-called public service broadcasters the best slots on the TV guide.

Would anyone still be watching execrable schedule-fillers such as *Celebrity Hunted*, *Big Brother* or *Judge Rinder's Crime Stories* if any of their broadcasters were marooned on channel 343, six pages down the electronic guide? Yes okay, a few would, but nowhere near as many as do today.

Now, the public service broadcasters are worried. Fewer and fewer people are getting their television fix from Sky, Virgin or Freeview; increasingly, it's Amazon, Netflix, YouTube and other streaming services where viewers head for evening entertainment – and here the BBC and its posse aren't guaranteed

a place at the top table. They're in danger of being ignored.

So, the big British broadcasters are calling on the government to intervene. Instead of upping their game and commissioning television shows that people will actually seek out, they are demanding to once again be given “prominence” on every TV platform.

“Regardless of where you're watching, which device you're watching on, or who provides your television service, you

should always be able to easily find PSB [public service broadcaster] services and programmes in the UK,” the chiefs of the broadcasters wrote in a joint, open letter recently.

What protectionist cobbler! It's certainly true that you'll do well to find UK news and current affairs coverage online that rivals anything on offer from the BBC, ITV or Channel 4, but that's not

the kind of programming that's under threat from Amazon, Netflix and the like.

Instead, it's mainstream entertainment where the home channels are being massively outgunned by Netflix and co. The British broadcasters argue that the global streaming giants “have little interest in supporting and reflecting UK culture”. Are they serious?

“British broadcasters don't need a leg-up from the government, they need a rocket up their backsides”

*The Crown* is one of the best shows on Netflix – so good, in fact, that the BBC nakedly ripped off its second season with *Princess Margaret: The Rebel*

*Royal*. Comedians such as Greg Davies, Jimmy Carr, Russell Howard and Ricky Gervais have all done specials for Netflix – the kind of specials that once might have appeared on the BBC. The broadcasters aren't really bothered that the streaming services aren't “reflecting UK culture”, they're resentful that the big-budget globals are doing it better than they are.

However, the home broadcaster criticism hits peak hypocrisy when you look at the number of their own shows that appear on Netflix and Amazon. Almost any massive BBC, ITV or Channel 4 hit has been sold to the streaming firms. In the case of the BBC, that's reselling content that we, the British licence-fee payers, have already paid for. We're basically paying Netflix for access to our own back catalogue.

British broadcasters don't need a leg-up from the government, they need a rocket up their backsides. After all, if the BBC, ITV *et al* were truly delivering loads of the “great” programmes they claimed to be making in their letter, why would anyone pay extra for Netflix or Amazon at all?



Illustration: Andrew Torrens



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