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WebUser

Issue 463

Are You Secretly Being HACKED?

These tools will tell you **p50**

28 Nov - 11 Dec 2018

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Why You MUST Use 'Picture-in-Picture'

It's how EVERYONE will browse the web in 2019 **p54**



HOW TO...

INSTALL A PROCESSOR – THE EASY WAY

The trickiest PC upgrade made simple **p58**



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Onward and upward in 2019

2 018 has been a very sad year for celebrity deaths, with countless much-loved figures passing away, including Aretha Franklin, Burt Reynolds, Jim Bowen, Stephen Hawking and Stan Lee. Some tactless types would even add 'traditional software' to the list, such is the focus now on apps and online tools, and the controversies surrounding former favourites such as CCleaner, Adobe Reader and Skype.

But at *Web User*, we believe the demise of downloads to be much exaggerated, so for the eighth consecutive year, we are proud to present our roundup of the best free

programs for the year to come. Our software specialist, Wayne Williams, has picked 10 of the most promising tools for the next 12 months, as well as 10 highly recommended alternatives. From a free VPN and a secure web browser to a powerful system cleaner and backup tool, we've got everything you need to boost your PC in 2019. As the late Mr Lee was fond of saying: *Excelsior!*

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



5 Things you'll learn this issue

1 How to play music on an online keyboard by moving your head around **page 6**

2 How to use Amazon's Alexa voice assistant to perform tasks in Windows 10 **page 29**

3 How to reduce eye strain when using Google Docs by applying a dark mode **page 30**

4 How to edit mistakes from audio recordings using the new version of Audacity **page 56**



5 How to find free versions of paid-for plugins for the image editor Paint.net **page 68**

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Contents

FREE
CHARGING
CABLE

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Turn to page 62 for
special subs offers

ISSUE 463

28 NOV - 11 DEC 2018

COVER
FEATURE

BEST FREE SOFTWARE 2019

Our pick of the best new
and updated programs
for the year ahead

p40

We review Google's first
smart screen p20



Security alerts for everything
from folders to phones p50

IN DEPTH Articles on the latest tech topics

- 38 FAQ**
Facebook Portal
- 40 COVER FEATURE**
BEST FREE SOFTWARE 2019
Our new favourite programs - why we love them, how to use them and more
- 48 Web-design tools**
Six free and easy-to-use services for creating your own website
- 50 Catch them in the act!**
Get an alert when someone accesses your internet, computer, phone and more

REVIEWS Apps, sites and products on test

- 14 Best New Websites**
A feast of international dishes from Taste Atlas
- 20 Product Test**
 - Google Home Hub
 - OnePlus 6T
- 28 Best Free Software**
Protect your PC with RogueKiller Anti-Malware
- 30 Best New Browser Tools**
Add a free VPN extension to your browser
- 32 Best Free Apps**
Smart Alarm Clock's rain-sensitive wake-up call

FAVOURITES Must-read regulars

- 6 What's New Online**
Create travel itineraries in Bing Maps
- 8 Need to Know**
This fortnight's top tech news stories
- 12 Stay Safe Online**
Security advice for PC and mobile
- 16 Build a Better Site**
Expert tips, tools and practical help
- 18 What to Watch Online**
Films and TV shows you can't miss
- 27 Best Buys**
Our pick of the best new products
- 35 Take a Screen Break**
When did the PlayStation 2 launch?



- 60 Broadband Deals**
Find the best-value package for you
- 72 Inbox**
Tell us your views and opinions
- 74 Page 404**
Barry berates the banks

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WEB USER
PRINTED IN THE UK



Practical WebUser

Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

16
pages

- 52 Workshop 1**
FastStone Image Viewer
- 54 Workshop 2**
Picture-in-picture tools for Windows and your browsers
- 56 Workshop 3**
Audacity's new tools
- 57 Workshop 4**
Google's Voice Access for Android
- 58 Weekend Project**
Replace your PC's processor
- 64 Web User Masterclass**
Get more from your PC's mouse
- 66 Ask the Expert**
All your technical questions answered
- 68 Readers' Tips**
The best tips from our readers
- 71 Readers' Helpdesk**
Answers from our reader forums

Watch and work
with PiP Tool **p54**



Control Android
hands-free **p57**

Get a major speed boost by
upgrading your CPU **p58**



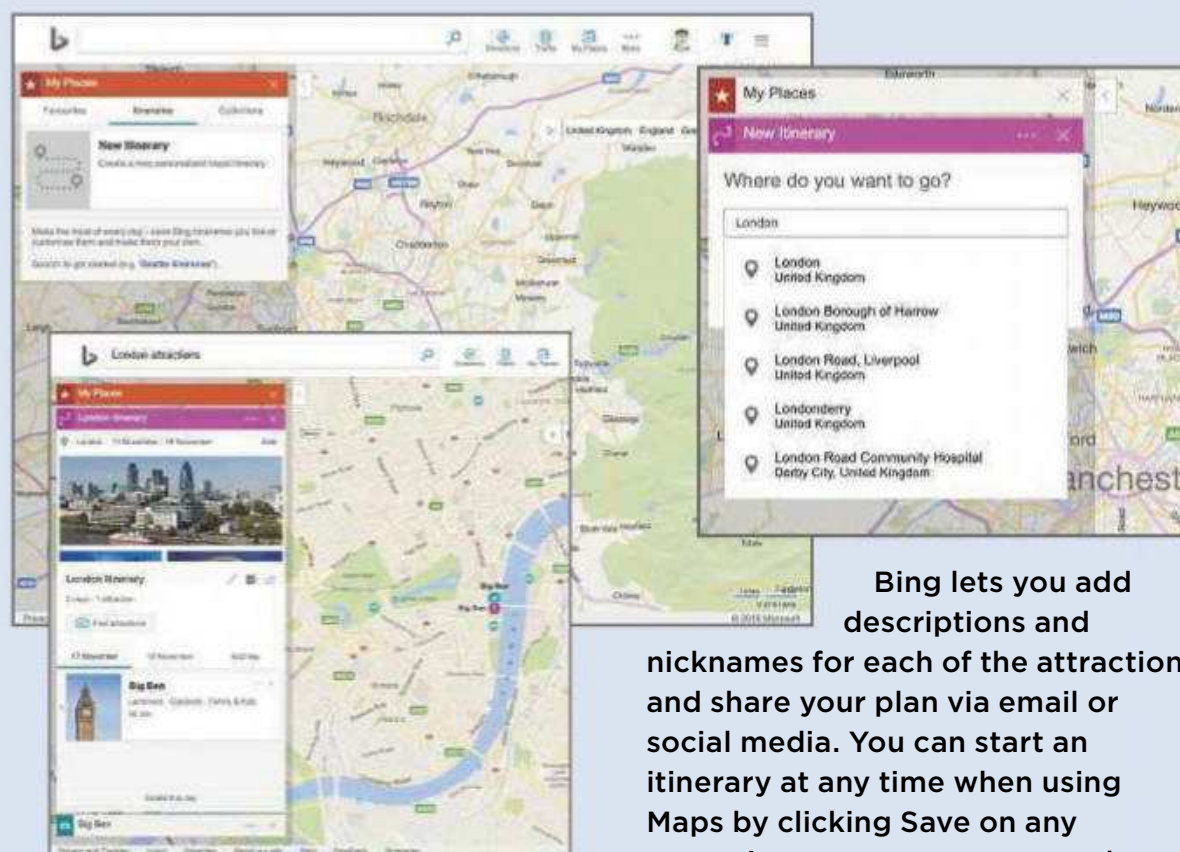
What's New Online

Create travel itineraries in Bing

When you're planning a trip to an exciting and unfamiliar destination, it's wise to have an itinerary to hand, particularly if you're planning on doing lots of sightseeing. With this in mind, Bing introduced the ability to customise its suggested itineraries earlier this year, and it's now gone much further by letting you create one from scratch.

The new itinerary tool forms part of Bing Maps and you must be signed in to use it. Once you're up and running, click My Places, then select the Itineraries tab and open New Itinerary to get going. From there, simply enter the place or places you want to go, then add the dates you have in mind and click Get Started.

Bing will then take you straight to your destination, allowing you to zoom in on key sights and add them to your itinerary with a single click. You can also select Find Attractions for a helpful list of suggestions, move



any additions from one day to another and add directions to guide you between your picks or other locations.

Bing lets you add descriptions and nicknames for each of the attractions, and share your plan via email or social media. You can start an itinerary at any time when using Maps by clicking Save on any attraction you come across and selecting 'Create a new itinerary' from the menu.

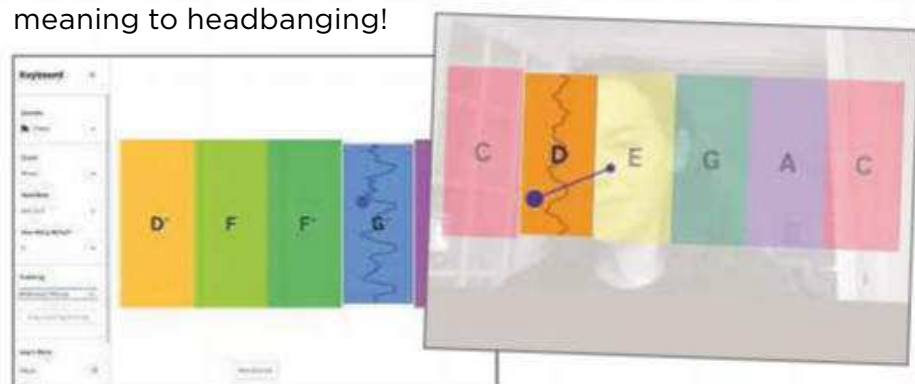
www.bing.com/maps

Play a keyboard using your face

bit.ly/face463

Google's new musical keyboard tool can be played by clicking your mouse over the notes or by using the cursor keys, but it really springs into life when you compose your tunes using your face or body. Allow the website access to your webcam and the virtual instrument will track a point – typically, your nose. You can then move your head around to play the notes in the hope of coming up with something tuneful.

It's a versatile audio offering, letting you select different sounds, from marimba and piano to guitar and synth. You can alter the scale, select how many notes you want to play around with and set the 'root note'. The keyboard can even be hooked up to MIDI instruments. It gives a whole new meaning to headbanging!



Read a novel in Facebook Messenger

bit.ly/messenger463

The best-selling crime writer James Patterson has taken to Facebook Messenger with a new interactive novel called *The Chef*. Billed as a "one-of-a-kind" literary experiment, this is presented as a series of chats that you work through by tapping a knife emoji. This reveals the story of a New Orleans police detective-cum-celebrity chef under investigation for murder.

To begin this novel experience, search for 'The Chef by James Patterson' in Messenger and tap Get Started. The story will then unfold (it takes around three hours) and you can swipe through any image carousels that appear to review evidence, or tap videos and audio to be even more immersed within the story. The traditional version of the book will be out in February – most likely as a downloadable ebook, too.



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

View eerie images of a plane crash

overexposed1948.com

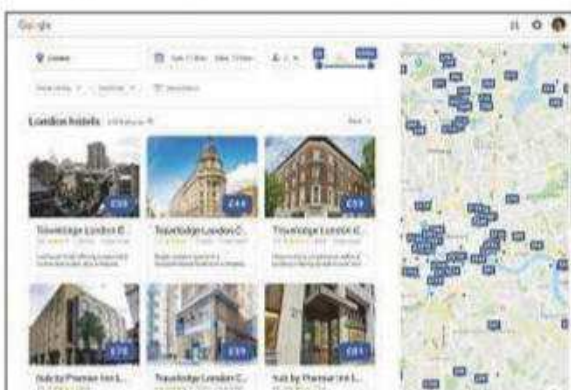
70 years ago, a four-engine B-29 crashed in Derbyshire, killing all 13 crew. To mark the anniversary, filmmaker Phil Formby visited the area, where much of the aircraft remains, and produced an immersive 360-degree panorama accompanied by an atmospheric voiceover of witness accounts. Click various points to get a closer view of the wreckage.



Quickly find a hotel with Google

bit.ly/hotel463

Need somewhere to lay your head in a hurry? Then check out Google's new hotel-search facility, which lets you enter a location, dates, the number of people and a price range to see what's available. Clicking any of the hotels (all handily pinned on a map) gives you a location summary as well as reviews from sites such as TripAdvisor, Agoda and Wotif, while selecting 'Book a Room' retrieves prices from online booking services. You can also check out photos taken by travellers and the hotels themselves.



Create personalised emoji for Gboard

bit.ly/gboard463

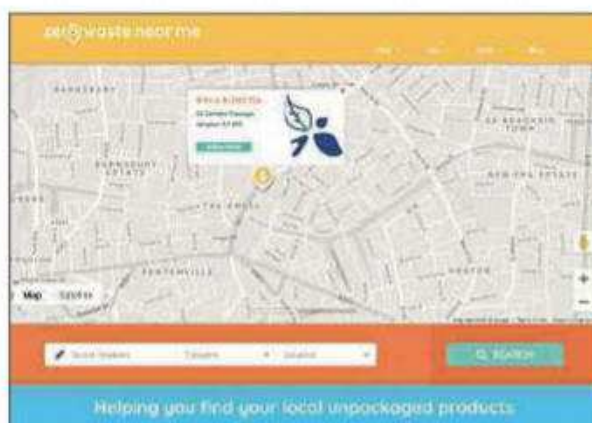
Back in issue 458, we looked at how you could create selfie stickers using Gboard that were similar to Snapchat's Bitmoji and Apple's Memoji. Now, Google is letting you create more personalised designs with an emoji style that better fits with other emoji you've come to love. Once again, Google uses AI to analyse a photo of you and come up with a customisable likeness. To make your emoji, ensure Gboard is your default keyboard for Android or iOS, tap the emoji button, select the Stickers icon, tap Mini and choose Create.



Buy food without packaging

zerowastenear.me

If you're fed up of being knee deep in unnecessary packaging when you get back from the shops, then a new site called Zero Waste Near Me will be right up your street. It lets you search by keyword or category for nearby businesses dedicated to reducing waste by selling unpackaged food. It also lists services that refill anything from your shampoo to your empty pint of beer.



NEW VOICE COMMANDS



Control Roku devices

Link your Roku device and Google Home app, then control it by uttering "on Roku" after each request. You can find programmes, control playback, adjust the volume and launch channels.



Use more shortcuts

The Siri Shortcuts app, updated with iOS 12.1, lets you create more custom voice commands, such as setting alarms and getting the weather forecast.



Use on Windows 10

You can now download the Alexa app from the Microsoft Store, allowing it to be used in Windows 10 for the first time. See our Best Free Software section (page 29) for more information.



Install Dropbox Extensions

www.dropbox.com

Dropbox has made it easier to work with documents by integrating tools from companies including Adobe, Autodesk and Pixlr. Its Extensions service cuts out the need for endless uploading, downloading and scanning.

Explore England's brownfield sites

bit.ly/brown463

This National Housing Federation map lets you view England's 17,000 brownfield sites, telling you their size, the likely owner and the land's planning authority, as well as how many homes could be built there.

Tune your turkey

thanksgiving.withspotify.com

Enter your turkey's weight (in pounds) into Spotify's tool and get a recommended temperature and cooking time, plus a playlist to while away the hours. It'll serve just as well for Christmas as Thanksgiving.



Need to Know

Privacy concerns as Google gobbles up health data

What happened?

Google has swallowed up part of an artificial-intelligence healthcare company, raising concerns about the privacy of patient data. Google bought the British AI company DeepMind (deepmind.com) back in 2014, but it was largely left to operate independently.

Over the intervening years, DeepMind has hit news headlines thanks to its gaming AI, which was the first to beat a human Go player, and its partnerships with NHS hospitals, which include automated eye scans to look for signs of disease that doctors can't spot yet.

Another DeepMind project, known as Streams, pulls in a wide range of patient data, including information on admissions and care, as well as sensitive diagnoses for diseases such as HIV and mental health issues, such as depression. The aim of Streams is to analyse that data, notifying clinicians when a patient needs treatment. However, a trial for kidney patients at Royal Free Trust in London was criticised for failing to get permission to hand over its 1.6 million patients' data to Google-owned DeepMind, with the Information Commissioner Officer saying the data-sharing deal broke the law. The deal was retroactively changed, with DeepMind publishing details of its new contracts with NHS hospitals.

That's the history behind the latest decision, which sees DeepMind Health subsumed by Google, raising concerns that the data it has gathered so far could be used by the tech giant for



other purposes. DeepMind has stressed that all patient data remains under NHS control and can't be used for anything other than Streams.

DeepMind says it wants to use Google's expertise to scale the Streams app, with the aim of making it an AI-powered assistant for nurses and doctors everywhere. This could help with patient care, but could also potentially give Google access to a swathe of medical data that could be used for anything from selling products to insurance.

How will it affect you?

No-one can force you to take part in the Streams trial, but there are worries that NHS users might feel pressured into allowing their clinician to upload their data if they are part of the tests. Thanks to the ICO ruling, DeepMind should be – and, so far, is – more careful about the data it's using and making sure it's limited to health purposes.

The risk, say privacy advocates, is that Google uses the data for other purposes, such as advertising, or sells it to data brokers, where it could affect your insurance rates, for example. There's no evidence that's happened so far, but given the history of illegal data use, as judged by the ICO, it's no wonder people are concerned.

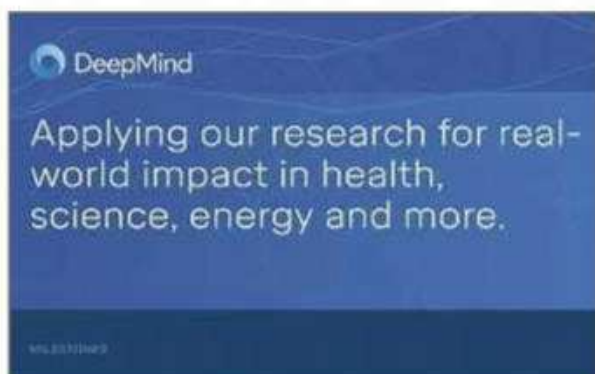
On the other hand, DeepMind and other researchers are saving hours of clinicians' time with image-scanning

tools and other analytics, particularly in the fields of eye disease and specific types of cancer. Such tools could be invaluable to the NHS and its patients if DeepMind and Google can implement them without raiding our data.

What do we think?

Google and DeepMind argue that placing this project closer to the beating heart of Google will make it easier to scale across the NHS and beyond, which is good news for the clinicians who say the app saves them time and helps improve patient care. But while Streams in particular shows promise, there's no need to rush the app out across the NHS. Health tools can't be rolled out quickly the way other technology can – it must be carefully assessed first to ensure it actually works, an idea that's central to evidence-based medicine.

There's no point in adopting Streams everywhere while it's a work in progress, so perhaps it would be wiser for DeepMind to focus on its own work, regaining the trust of patients and proving it can operate without illegally accessing data, before it sets its sights on global markets. Medicine doesn't work at the pace of Silicon Valley, and while that can be frustrating to patients and tech companies alike, it would be wiser to take a slow, sensible approach. We'll look at the question of whether or not you can trust Google with your data in next issue's cover feature.



Would you trust Google to handle your private medical data through DeepMind?

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

Free mobile VPNs are full of security flaws

What happened?

Virtual private networks (VPNs) can help to protect your privacy, provided they are secure themselves. However, as many as nine in 10 free mobile VPN apps have raised privacy concerns according to Metric Labs, which examined 30 apps available on Google Play and the Apple App Store. Flaws included not having a privacy policy, tracking user activity and admitting to sharing data.

Alongside those shocking results, the lab found that half of the free VPN apps surveyed were based in China or owned by a Chinese company. That's especially worrying, because the country has locked down VPNs, forcing providers to give authorities ready access.

How will it affect you?

Metric notes that VPNs are among the most frequently downloaded type of apps from both Apple's

and Google's stores. There are plenty of good reasons to use a VPN, whether it's to avoid tracking, to make it look as if you're based in a different country (to access geographically restricted content) or to protect yourself from snoopers while using public Wi-Fi.

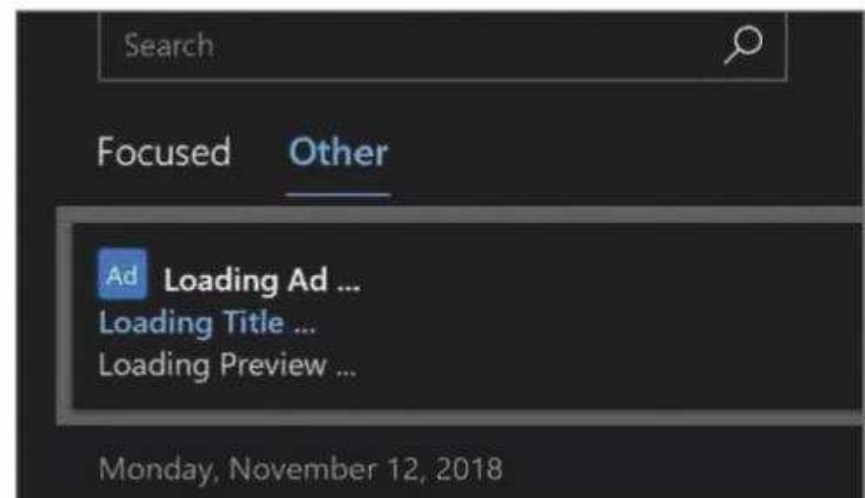
However, a VPN provider can see everything you're up to if it chooses, so if your provider can't be trusted, you're not secure. That may not matter to you, depending on why you use a VPN – if you're not worried by targeted ads, for example, you may not care that a VPN has sold your preferences to a third party. But if you want to be as secure as possible, it's worth paying for a VPN and ensuring you read the terms and conditions before you sign up.

What do we think?

Like your broadband provider, VPN services can see everything you do. However, your ISP isn't allowed to examine your traffic for advertising purposes or Hoover up your data to sell to a foreign government, and there are laws about how much access authorities have. VPNs are less closely regulated, so do your homework and remember that you get what you pay for.



Microsoft U-turn on Windows 10 Mail ads



What happened?

Keen-eyed Windows 10 users spotted boxes in the Windows Mail and Calendar client that were apparently allocated for targeted apps. The ad boxes were discovered only in beta versions of the operating system used by bug spotters as part of the Windows Insider programme. Reports suggest that adverts would have been shown to Windows users who read their email using the built-in app but weren't Office 365 subscribers. However, Microsoft said it was merely an experiment that wasn't supposed to be seen by many people, and that it has no intention of building such advertising into Windows.

How will it affect you?

The ad box was located at the top of email messages in the default Mail client. This is a free app that comes with Windows 10 when you buy the operating system – either as a download or preinstalled on your new PC. A now-deleted FAQ document on Microsoft's

website suggested the adverts would only have been shown to users who weren't shelling out for an Office 365 subscription, which costs £80 a year. Microsoft's quick U-turn means we shouldn't see adverts – either as a test or a full feature – any time soon, but it does imply that the company may be actively considering more advertising in the operating system.

What do we think?

Windows 10 is a piece of software that users have to pay for, and if Microsoft wants to make money out of email, it should charge extra for that service rather than trying to gain revenue by displaying ads. We'd be more sympathetic if Microsoft was struggling to stay afloat, but the company posted profits of more than \$8bn for the last quarter alone. The company is certainly not short of money, yet still wants to sell off our data and our screen space to advertisers. The speedy U-turn was a smart move – let's hope Microsoft has learned its lesson.

Phone shops accused of SIM-swap scams

What happened?

An undercover BBC investigation has revealed that phone shop employees are unwittingly facilitating so-called 'SIM swap' scams (bit.ly/sim463).

'SIM swapping' involves fraudsters buying stolen personal data from the dark web and using it to order replacement SIM cards. The victim's existing SIM is then cut off, leaving the criminals free to rack up massive phone bills. Con artists can also use a customer's phone number to intercept online banking codes and drain their bank accounts.

Watchdog Live, the BBC's flagship consumer affairs programme, sent former fraudster 'King Con' to multiple O2, EE, Three and Vodafone stores. Employees were secretly filmed as the scammer tried to obtain SIM cards for mobile numbers not belonging to him.

Three and EE staff requested photo identification every time – a simple check that stopped the SIM swap dead in its tracks. In two Vodafone stores, workers handed over the goods. O2 fared worst: five times out of six, a SIM was handed over – no questions asked.

Vodafone said it takes "fraud extremely seriously", adding that it will strengthen existing processes. In a statement, O2 claims photo ID is only required for pay monthly contracts, but "we're the only operator to send an



authentication code to the original SIM, notifying our customers that someone is trying to access their number in store".

Watchdog Live says it didn't receive any authentication codes.

How will it affect you?

It's worth regularly checking both your phone and bank statements. EE and Three displayed an exemplary record throughout *Watchdog's* investigation but Vodafone's PR statement blamed rogue employees, rather than taking responsibility, so its customers should keep an eye on their accounts. If you have a contract with O2, contact the company to confirm that no replacement SIM cards have been ordered in your

name. Despite pledging to introduce compulsory ID checks for all replacement pay monthly and pay-as-you-go SIMs, 80% of the BBC team's SIM-swapping attempts were successful.

What do we think?

It's staggering that ID checks aren't already compulsory, and unforgivable that companies operate two-tier security, with pay-as-you-go accounts afforded less protection. Customers are – quite literally – paying the price for corporate apathy. Kudos to EE and Three, but the two largest mobile networks need to introduce similarly stringent checks. 'Maybe tomorrow' promises aren't good enough.



FIRST LOOK

Amazon Kindle Paperwhite

bit.ly/kindle463

Once a staple of the Christmas stocking, the Kindle's popularity has plummeted – and while Amazon's updated Paperwhite will do little to reverse that trend, it's still the best e-reader on the market.

This 4th generation Paperwhite barely innovates beyond the 2015 edition, but we're not complaining: simplicity has always been the Kindle's strongest selling point. The backlit 6in E Ink screen, 300ppi resolution and a six-week-long battery life all carry across from its predecessor.

Now, add twice the storage, Bluetooth capabilities to facilitate the inclusion of Audible and an IPX8-rated

waterproof chassis built for reading in the bath or holidaying around the pool. It even manages to shave a few more millimetres off the already-svelte older model.

Measuring 167 x 116 x 8.2mm, and weighing just 182g, the device feels comfortable in the hand.

You'll notice two things missing. Despite Amazon's efforts to shoehorn Alexa into every device going, you won't find the smart assistant here. Nor are there physical buttons, although now that the touchscreen sits flush with the casing – a design cue cribbed from the premium Kindle Oasis – page-turning sweeps feel natural and elegant.

The 8GB base model (without



so-called 'special offers' – intrusive adverts) will set you back £130, but the 32GB edition is a slightly pricier £160. For those feeling particularly flush, the £220 version includes free 4G for

easy, on-the-go downloads. If you're strictly a reader, the 8GB version should do you fine – it's the equivalent of around 2,000 books. However, if you're an Audible subscriber, beware: those audiobooks will quickly chew through your limited storage.

Think of Amazon's 2018 Paperwhite as a refinement, rather than a reboot. You don't *need* to upgrade your old Kindle, but it's still a worthy addition to your Christmas list.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will 5G replace home broadband?

The mobile and internet network Three has claimed that the forthcoming 5G will offer home broadband that's good enough for people to fully ditch their copper and fibre connections. Dave Dyson, who has been CEO of the company since 2011, said there would be enough capacity on 5G to cope with demand and result in households saving money by ending their fixed-line contracts.

Speaking to the BBC ([bit.ly/three463](https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-463)), Dyson predicted that customers will use 13 times as much mobile data in 2025 as they do today.

"Maybe not for the whole country, but certainly a significant majority of the country, I strongly believe 5G can offer a good enough home broadband experience for people to effectively ditch their copper or fibre connection," said Dyson. "The challenge in terms of why we can't do that today is that the mobile networks don't have the capacity with 3G or 4G. 5G changes all of that."

Although it's not likely to roll out any time soon, 5G is said to offer download speeds of up to 10 gigabits per second or even 20Gbps, and is predicted to be the technology to accelerate the so-called Internet of Things. Dyson added: "I think for the majority of people, 5G will be a genuine alternative".



LIKELIHOOD RATING



We'd love to ditch our landlines and save paying for an increasingly unnecessary expense, but it's hard to see other ISPs such as BT and Sky giving customers that option. We also remember similar claims being made before 3G and 4G were introduced. Three already offers MiFi and HomeFi devices for accessing the internet without a landline, so the challenge will be for it to come up with a 5G package that combines fast speeds with the reliability and benefits offered by the big ISPs.



WEBOMETER



WE LIKE...



Firefox warns you about security breaches

Mozilla has updated its Firefox Quantum browser with a new version of Firefox Monitor, which tells you if the site you're visiting has suffered a security breach. It also tells you whether your login details have been leaked online.



EE to roll out 5G to 16 UK cities

EE has announced plans to roll out 5G (see story, left) to 16 cities in 2019, with London, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Belfast, Birmingham and Manchester due to be the first places to benefit from super-speedy mobile broadband connections of up to 10Gbps.



WE DON'T LIKE...



Vision Direct customers hit by cyberattack

Vision Direct has warned customers that a security breach may have exposed their card details, including CVV numbers. The contact-lens seller said anyone who entered their data in its site between 3 and 8 November could be affected.



Microsoft accused of breaching GDPR rules

Dutch investigators have put Microsoft on alert after ruling that its data collection poses a risk to user privacy. The report said that cloud services including OneDrive and Office 365 breach GDPR rules by secretly harvesting user data.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

The World's Smallest EDC Flashlight

[bit.ly/torch463](https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1234567890/the-worlds-smallest-edc-flashlight) | From £12

No more stumbling around in the dark, fumbling for your smartphone's torch – this, according to its London-based manufacturer, is "the world's smallest flashlight".

Measuring just under an inch, the LED beam is four times brighter than a traditional torch. Stowed in the base is a magnet, allowing hands-free use – no more clamping a torch between your teeth. It's even waterproof. That makes it an 'everyday carry' (EDC) essential for outdoor-types, too. Pledges start at £12 for one flashlight and keyring accessory, so you can shine wherever you go.





Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Security flaw discovered in Microsoft Edge

Security researchers have found a flaw in Microsoft's Edge browser that hackers could exploit to run commands on a user's machine. The flaw consists of two vulnerabilities, discovered by exploit developer Yushi Laing with help from Alexander Kochkov, which could allow an anonymous user to execute code remotely and potentially seize control of a user's PC.

Microsoft previously left a zero-day Edge exploit unpatched for 90 days, which led to Google's Project Zero security team disclosing the news. That flaw wasn't as severe as a remote-code execution bug, but allowed an attacker who had already seized control of a browser to bypass a second layer of security.

Laing said he would not go public with full details of the latest Edge



exploit until he had finalised his report. He initially teased the discovery with an image that appeared to show the Windows Calculator app launched from the browser.

"Microsoft has a strong commitment to security and a demonstrated track record of investigating and providing resolution as soon as possible," Microsoft's senior director Jeff Jones said in response.

bit.ly/edge463

Eurostar passengers hit by data breach

Eurostar has been forced to reset the passwords of some customers' online accounts after becoming the latest company to be hit by hackers.

A spokesperson for the cross-Channel rail service said that an "unauthorised automated attempt to access customer accounts" occurred

between 15 and 19 October.

Once the hack was identified, the company "blocked access and asked customers to reset their passwords as a precautionary measure", the spokesperson added. Eurostar also claims that no credit card details were exposed during the attack because the company "deliberately" never stores card info. However, it has yet to confirm if any data was stolen and how many customers were affected.

Eurostar alerted the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), an independent body that handles data-protection enquiries, soon after the breach was discovered, and emailed customers with the

information. The company says customers concerned about their data should email its customer support with the subject line "account password change".

bit.ly/eurostar463



Credit: EQRoy / Shutterstock.com

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Jason du Preez, CEO
of Privitar
(www.privitar.com)



Q Should we worry about how web companies treat our data?

David McFake, Twitter

A What we're seeing now is a backlash against the data revolution. Most consumers in the UK, US and France have real fears about the use of their data. They feel

violated when their data is mishandled and will stop engaging with organisations they do not trust.

Our research at Privitar points to a lack of privacy literacy amongst consumers, leading to a breakdown of communication and trust. However, the research also finds that most Brits are comfortable sharing their data where the purpose is clearly explained, which contrasts with the French who would prefer control.

Education and communication are key, and it is vital that the public feels knowledgeable and onside. We know this is possible when we compare the

“ Most Brits are comfortable sharing their data where the purpose is clearly explained **”**

so-called digital natives (18-34 year olds) against the over-55s. Younger people, who have grown up with technology and have experienced focused education in schools, feel more comfortable managing their privacy and understand how their data is used.

While we see universal privacy concerns across the UK, US and France, there are clear points of difference. While US consumers are more worried about how

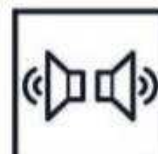
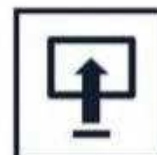
companies use their data, US businesses are less concerned by privacy risk than their French and British counterparts. Apple may have made privacy a key selling point of its products, but many US organisations are not as progressed. Given public sentiment and high-profile scandals such as Cambridge Analytica, regulatory moves being made in the US to protect users' data are no surprise.

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great resolution
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★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

FOOD & DRINK

NEW

Taste Atlas

www.tasteatlas.com

Feast your eyes on this hub of world food and you may think it's bitten off more than it can chew. Its aim – to guide you to the best global dishes and restaurants – will take some time to fully achieve its potential, but it's already proving appetising. While the featured dishes are largely stereotypical (fish and chips and Yorkshire pudding in the UK, pizza and pasta in Italy), you can search by food or nation, read insightful overviews, rate dishes, see the most popular foods and check out recipes. More content is being added daily and there's already an encouraging level of interaction. Just don't browse on an empty stomach!

Our rating



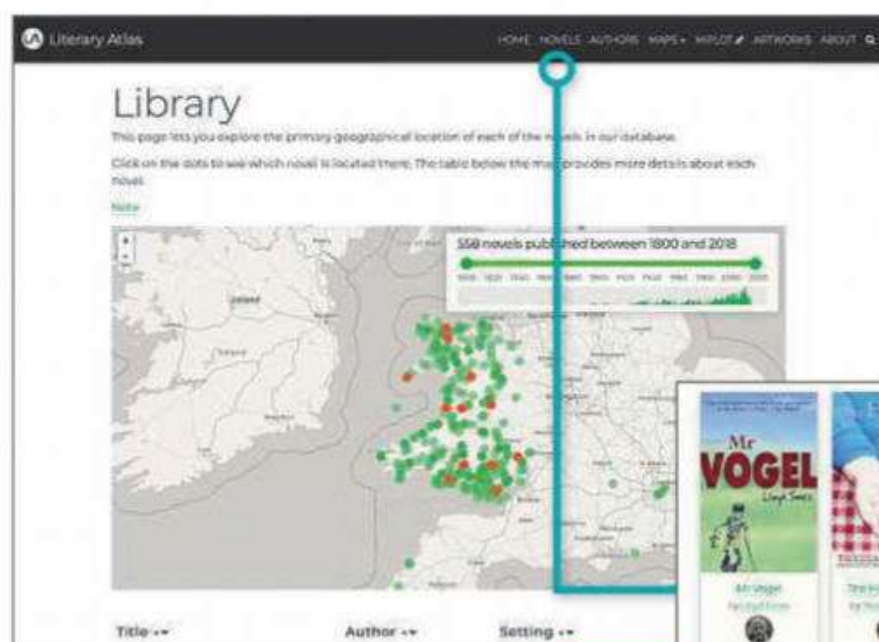
POPULAR DISHES

Each country or area has a list of typical food that you can sort by popularity, rating and location



ILLUSTRATED MAPS

Taste Atlas tries to match food to its origins, pinning dishes on a map with an accompanying foodie photo



LITERATURE

Literary Atlas

literaryatlas.wales/en

Books rely on the imagination of their readers but it's also interesting to visit the locations they describe in real life. With the help of this site, you can do just that – especially if your favourite novel is primarily set in Wales. Literary Atlas plots on a map of Cymru one setting from each of 558 books published after 1800, but also picks out 12 specific novels for a more in-depth look. For these, you can visit pages that mix plot and character summaries, photos, mini-maps and, in some cases, audio interviews and sketches. You can also read about the 12 authors, discover the locations of writers' plaques and enjoy specially commissioned artworks.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

NEWS

Shetland News

www.shetnews.co.uk

Local media is having a tough time right now but at least *Shetland News* appears valued. More than 300 readers have ponied up money to keep the publisher running and fund the two-journalist operation's website redesign. In truth, the homepage is a bit messy: adverts down the sides prove distracting (yet necessary to keep the site afloat) and your eyes will often jump around the headlines. Get past that, however, and the design is far cleaner, letting you enjoy the regularly updated news, well-written features and readers' letters. We particularly like the drop-down menus for speedy navigation.

Our rating



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



RECOMMENDATIONS

Discover top places to eat, read what critics have to say and log in to give your own opinion



RECIPES

Some – but by no means all – of the dishes are accompanied by an easy-to-follow recipe



RELAUNCH

NATURE

IUCN Red List

www.iucnredlist.org

This site devoted to highlighting threatened species has had a breath of new life, making it easier to find and enjoy information via an improved search facility, enlightening infographic and promising news section. Pages are clearer, detailing each of the thousands of animals, plant and fungi found in the IUCN's bulging database, accompanied by large photos and prominent conservation statuses, along with in-depth reports about their habitats, current threats and the actions being taken. A link the old website lets you see the actual improvements.

Our rating



NEW

GAMING

Sega Shop

segashop.co.uk

Brits apparently spend £117m a year on video game-related merchandise and that figure may rise now that Sega has partnered with Numskull Designs for its new online shopping portal. Packed with clothes, accessories, mugs, prints and gifts based on the Japanese giant's main franchises, it's sure to appeal to hardcore gamers. What's more, the site makes it easy to browse and buy with clear options across the top of the screen, filtered searches, bold images of the colourful products and a simple checkout. You can even get 15% off your first order when you sign up for the newsletter.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

DIY

MyToolShed

www.mytoolshed.co.uk

This online purveyor of power tools and pliers has been spruced up to help you find the right equipment for your DIY jobs. As you search by keyword, name or brand, it makes light work of site navigation, so you can browse a host of categories or just take advantage of the selection of highlighted products on the homepage. Buying decisions are made easy with top quality product photos, descriptions and specs, while checkout is fast with plenty of delivery options included. There's also an informative blog, broken down into buying guides, how-tos, offers and competitions.

Our rating



Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

1&1 rebrands and offers personal service



Web host 1&1 has changed its name to 1&1 Ionos, and can now be found at www.ionos.co.uk. The result of a merger with another company, 1&1 Ionos has announced that its prices and services will remain the same for existing customers, with the sole addition of a new form of customer service. This provides every customer with their own 'personal consultant', who can be contacted for support and sales enquiries.

Check whether visitors read your pages

Tools that give you an insight into

how well your site is doing, such as Google Analytics (analytics.google.com), measure a vast range of information. One of the most useful but often overlooked of these measurements is 'Average Time on Page', which you'll find in the Site Content section. Time how long it takes you to read through a page and compare it to the average found in Analytics. If it falls short, ask yourself why visitors to the page aren't staying to read it. You may spot a glaring error that's putting people off or it may not be delivering what search engines are promising.

Deal of the Fortnight

PlanetHippo (www.planethippo.co.uk) is offering to host a single site – with 1GB of storage, a database, an email address and unlimited bandwidth – for £1.20 per month.

Web-building Helpdesk

Q When I search for a review online, I sometimes see the star rating in Google's results. How do I get my star ratings to appear?

Philip Legg, via email

A You need to use a markup system called Structured Data. In your site's HTML, you add a new code to the top of the page to let Google know that your page includes these special elements. You then mark them up with the correct marker, so Google knows where to pull them from. For a star rating, for example, you need to add code that tells Google what the score is, what it's out of, and what the lowest possible score is. You can find out more about Structured Data reviews at bit.ly/revi463. There's also a brilliant step-by-step guide to the whole concept at bit.ly/struc463.

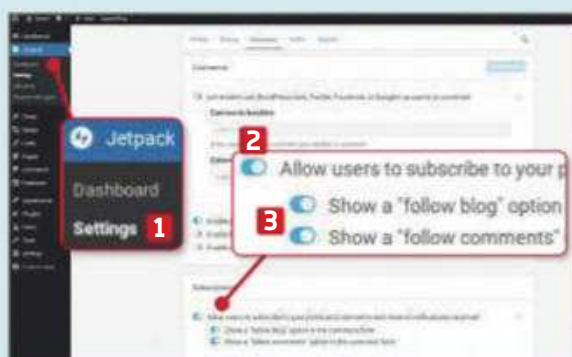
Andy Shaw, Technical & Reviews Editor,
Web User



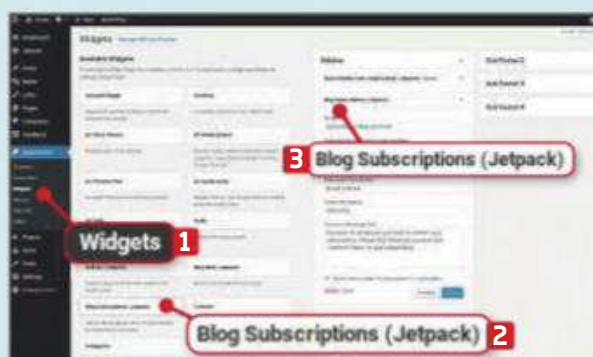
MINI WORKSHOP | Automatically alert subscribers when you update your site

Jetpack: jetpack.com | 10 mins | WordPress website with Jetpack installed

Even a site you enjoyed visiting can slip your memory. Jetpack's Subscription tool lets you remind people that your site exists by sending anyone who opts in an automated email when your site updates



1 Make sure the Jetpack add-on is installed, then click Settings in the menu. **1** Click the Discussions tab. In the Subscriptions section, switch on the main 'Allow users to subscribe...' option **2** to enable subscriptions. Click the other switches **3** to control whether you want to add the option to your comments section.



2 A good location to place your invitation for readers to subscribe is in your Widgets, which probably appear in a sidebar on your site. Click Appearance, then Widgets. **1** Drag 'Blog Subscriptions (Jetpack)' **2** and drop it into the appropriate place on the widget area of your choice. **3**



3 Fill in the form with the information you want to include that you hope will encourage people to subscribe. The Success Message Text **1** only appears when someone has agreed to subscribe. If you don't have many subscribers, you might want to untick 'Show total number of subscribers'. **2**



SEAMLESS, SECURE WHOLE-HOME WI-FI

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Antivirus

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



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Bandwidth Prioritisation

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

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What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight

NOWTV



See the triumphant return of Jim Carrey in *Kidding*

From 29 November

Jim Carrey and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* director Michel Gondry are reunited for this beguiling 10-part comedy-drama, inspired by the imploding life of a fictional 1970s US kids' TV personality called Mr Pickles. The character, based on real-life presenter Mr Rogers, was never a household name in the UK, so there's no need to get hung up on whether Carrey turns in a decent impersonation – just sit back and enjoy his first major dramatic role in years, alongside indie favourites Catherine Keener (*Capote*) and Frank Langella (*Frost/Nixon*).

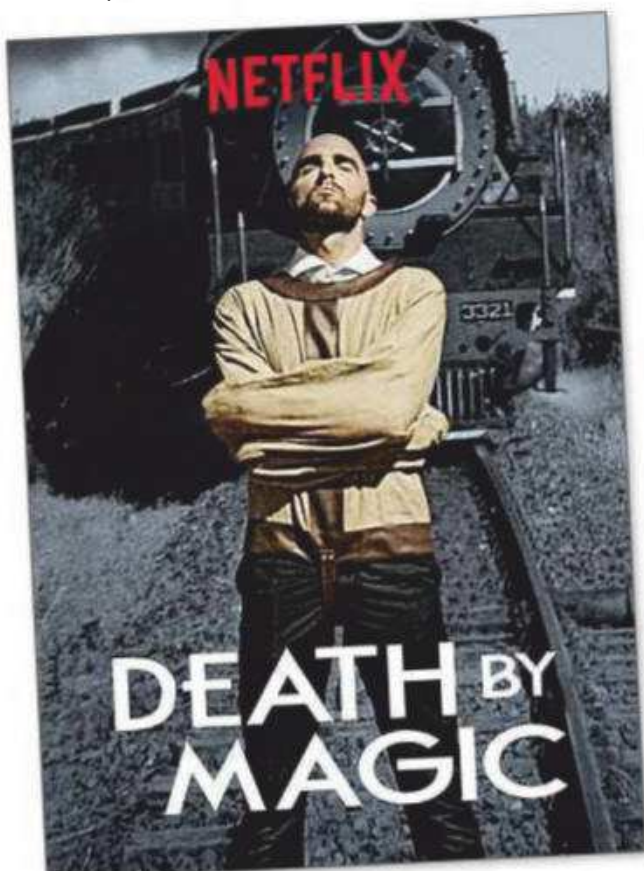
Kidding premiered in September and IMDb users' verdicts range from "heartbreaking and amazing" to "bravo!". Sky Atlantic has the UK rights, so you can watch it online with a Now TV Entertainment Pass (£7.99 per month after a 14-day free trial: bit.ly/nowntv463). The trailer offers a sneak peek: bit.ly/kidding463.

If *Kidding* leaves you wanting more Carrey, you can watch *Eternal Sunshine...* on Amazon Prime Video (bit.ly/sunshine463), and the superb 2017 documentary *Jim & Andy: The Great Beyond* on Netflix (bit.ly/jimandy463). You can also check out his drawings on Twitter (@JimCarrey). Talented swine!

N Watch Brit illusionist DMC dice with *Death By Magic*

From 30 November

Sharp-suited and extravagantly-monikered magician Drummond Money-Coutts, more pronounceably known as DMC, started out as a card sharp on the streets of London.



He's now reached the glittering heights of Netflix, which has sent him round the globe to recreate stunts that famously killed other magicians. What could possibly go wrong?

There's no trailer at the time of writing, but you can bookmark *Death By Magic*'s Netflix page (bit.ly/magic463) and get to know DMC from his YouTube channel (bit.ly/dmc463).

N Unravel a Cold War conspiracy in *1983*

From 30 November

What if the Cold War had never ended? What if Poland had never broken free of Soviet rule in 1983 – all because of a government conspiracy? That's the dystopian premise of this eight-part drama, in which a Polish student and rebellious cop uncover a plot that kept the Iron Curtain pulled firmly shut.

Don't let the political theme and subtitles put you off – the first Polish Netflix Original has all the hallmarks of a classic spy thriller. Oscar-nominated director Agnieszka Holland honed her craft directing episodes of *The Wire*, *House of Cards* and *The Killing*, while



lead actor Robert Więckiewicz is hailed as Poland's answer to Christopher Eccleston, with a CV including *Walesa: Man of Hope* (currently on Amazon Prime Video: bit.ly/walesa463). Watch *1983*'s trailer on Netflix, with or without a subscription: bit.ly/1983-463.

Watch Emmy winner *The Marvelous Mrs Maisel*

From 5 December

Rachel Brosnahan is becoming one of the faces of streaming TV. Soon after her breakthrough role as Rachel Posner in Netflix's *House of Cards*, she was cast in this Amazon Prime Original as Miriam 'Midge' Maisel – a 1950s New York housewife who discovers a knack for

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

stand-up comedy – and promptly won a Golden Globe and Emmy for her performance.



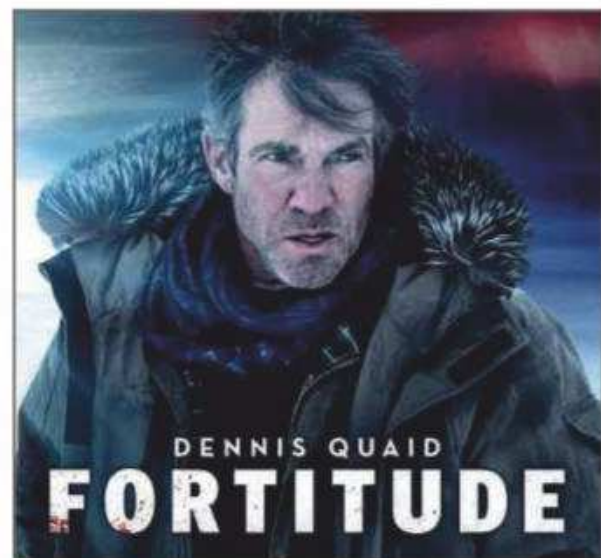
The Marvelous

Mrs Maisel is a thoroughly US affair, with strong overtones of Broadway jazz-hands, but it's also witty and very watchable. Season 2 arrives on 5 December, and you can watch the official trailer at bit.ly/maisel463.

Strap yourself in for the *Fortitude* finale

From 6 December

Surreal Arctic thriller *Fortitude* is back for “one final trip” in this four-part grand finale, which promises to keep up the mad, murderous, mesmerising pace to the final chilling (and chilly) moment. The outstanding cast includes Dennis Quaid (*The Day After Tomorrow*), Richard Dormer (*Game of Thrones*), Sofie Gråbøl (*The Killing*) and a host of psychopathic polar bears. The setting



In case you missed it...

David Attenborough's latest blockbuster

Dynasties is on the BBC iPlayer in glorious Ultra HD (bit.ly/dynasties463). Sir David is heading to Netflix for his next show, *Our Planet*. It won't screen until spring 2019, but you can already watch the trailer: bit.ly/planet463.

Another BBC favourite jumping ship is *The Last Kingdom*, whose third



season is now available exclusively on Netflix (bit.ly/kingdom463). New

Netflix Originals include dog-umentary series *Dogs*, about our deep emotional bond with our four-legged friends (bit.ly/dogs463); global culinary competition *Final Table* (bit.ly/table463); and festive film *The Christmas Chronicles*, starring Kurt Russell as a rough n' ready Santa (bit.ly/chronicles463).

Hulu finally goes global

Streaming service Hulu will finally become available outside the US, meaning UK and international audiences can watch hit Hulu shows such as *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Rescue Me*, subject to licensing.

The news follows Disney's purchase of 21st Century Fox Entertainment, according to Comicbook.com (bit.ly/disney463). The buyout gives Disney a 60% controlling stake in Hulu, whose on-demand catalogue also includes *South Park*, *Parks and Recreation* and *The X-Files*.

But while Disney Chairman Bob Iger has confirmed he'll take Hulu global following the deal's completion next year, licensing restrictions will still limit what audiences can see in different territories, as with Netflix and Amazon.

Meanwhile Disney is preparing to launch its own streaming service, Disney+, to exclusively house its own studios' content. The service is scheduled for take-off by the end of 2019 (bit.ly/displus463).



may evoke Scandi noir, but the tone is closer to *Twin Peaks* and *Fargo*.

Curiouser and curiouser, *Fortitude* is an Amazon Prime Original in the US, but over here it's broadcast on Sky Atlantic. So if you didn't catch the first two seasons, you can watch them on Now TV (bit.ly/fortitude463), where Season 3 arrives on 6 December. Watch the trailer at bit.ly/fortrail463.

Watch 10 new episodes of *Vikings*

From 29 November

The History channel has gone full *Game of Thrones* in its grim, realistic depiction of the Vikings, and the result is a huge hit with a sixth season already underway. Meanwhile, here's part two of Season 5, with Ivar the Boneless (Alex Høgh Andersen) now King. Jonathan Rhys Myers (*The Tudors*) also appears as a warrior bishop described by creator

Michael Hirst as “totally berserk”, with returning turns from Clive Standing (*Everest*) and Kathryn Winnick (*Bones*).

Ten new episodes arrive weekly on Amazon, a day after airing on History in the US. Seasons 1-4, and Season ‘5a’, are available to watch on-demand on Amazon (bit.ly/vikings463). You can watch the trailer at bit.ly/viktrail463, and get the latest on the forthcoming *Vikings* app at bit.ly/vikapp463.





Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

Google Home Hub

Google's first smart screen is its best value smart device yet

The Google Home Hub is the tech giant's riposte to the Amazon Echo Show. It's no surprise that the addition of a 7in display makes this a more attractive proposition than a basic smart speaker but until you've used it, you really don't know what you're missing.

Screen-friendly features

The Google Home Hub is powered by the same virtual assistant found on Android smartphones and Google's range of smart speakers. However, the accompanying 7in touch-sensitive display means it can visually present its findings to you, whether that's a weather forecast, a list of upcoming events or Google Maps directions.

As you'd expect, you can use the Google Home Hub to play music and YouTube videos, view cooking instructions and display your best snaps from Google Photos. It also includes Home View, which lets you manage any smart devices you may have dotted around your home – lights, thermostats, cameras, media devices and so on – from a single drop-down menu.

Last but not least, you can also use the Google Home Hub to make free audio calls to mobiles and landlines. Google has chosen not to include a camera, presumably for privacy reasons, so while you can make video calls with



the device, the person on the other end won't be able to see you.

Build, design and use

The Home Hub looks like a 7in tablet stuck on a large pumice stone. The 'stone' is actually the device's speaker, but the screen can't be detached from it. The overall effect is more functional than attractive, and while the

device is small enough to be unobtrusive, it needs to be within reach of a wall socket.

The Google Home Hub's 7in display has a resolution of 1,024 x 600 pixels, which is lower than you'll find on similarly-sized tablets. However, because you'll be viewing the screen from a distance, rather than held in your hands, the low resolution isn't so obvious. We found that colours were rich and

accurate, with good contrast.

By default, the screen displays the weather and any forthcoming events on the first page. Swiping shows recommendations from Spotify and YouTube, along with "Top stories for you", which are also sourced from YouTube. The smart display also has two persistent cards showing tips for other things you can do with your Home Hub.

To open Home View, which lets you control your smart gadgets and send messages to other Google Home speakers, you simply swipe down from the top of the screen. We've only used the Home Hub with other Google

“ You can effortlessly display your favourite snaps in a never-ending slideshow at the touch of a button ”



devices so far, such as the Chromecast and Chromecast Audio, but it already makes operating them much easier.

Aside from this, though, you're still encouraged to control the Home Hub using your voice; the screen is only there to enhance the response you'd already get from a standard speaker. Ask how cold it is outside, for example, and the Home Hub will give a verbal response, but also detail the weather forecast for the next six hours in an at-a-glance graphic. Ask how long it'll take to drive somewhere, and the Home Hub illustrates any areas affected by bad traffic and lets you expand the map to look at the route in detail. It can find recipes and walk you through step-by-step instructions on screen, and you can also benefit from seeing countdown timers, calculations, translations and to-do lists displayed.

On the downside, although the Home Hub boasts that it can play live TV, we were disappointed to see this only works via YouTube. Also, unlike the Echo Show, there's no web browser.

The provision of a screen allows for a wider range of choices. With a speaker, you need to know what you want to listen to, for example, and

instruct the device accordingly. With the Home Hub you can command it to "open Spotify" so you can peruse a number of albums and playlists based on your recent listening.

Photos, sound and price

The Home Hub's integration with Google Photos is a major bonus. Among its various options, the Google Photos app displays a slideshow of snaps when the Home Hub is not in use. It's a similar feature to that on the Chromecast, except you're more likely to see your pictures on the Home Hub because the display is always on.

This may not initially seem like much of a selling point, but we take more photos than ever these days and they often end up hidden away on mobile devices and hard drives, never to be seen again. The ability to effortlessly display your favourite snaps in a never-ending slideshow at the touch of a button ensures that they get an airing. Unlike the digital photo frames of old, the Home Hub can change the images it displays at the tap of a button, so there's no messing around with memory sticks or SD cards.

At £139, the Hub is the best-priced smart screen

we've reviewed to date. It's only £10 more than the original Google Home smart speaker (£129) and £260 less than the beefed-up Google Home Max speaker (£399). Its best-known rival is the Amazon Echo Show, which has a 10in display and costs £219.99, though there's a cheaper model from Lenovo called the Smart Display, available in both 8in and 10in versions, which starts at £159.

As you'd expect from its low price and modest footprint, the Home Hub's sound quality isn't designed to blow you away, though it's a step up from the Home Mini. It's perfectly adequate as a kitchen or bedside radio, but we wouldn't recommend using it as your main speaker for listening to music.

PRODUCT INFO

Google Home Hub

Price: £139

Buy from Google:

bit.ly/homehub463

SPECIFICATIONS

- 7in LCD touchscreen
- Dual-band 802.11b/g/n/ac
- Bluetooth 5.0
- 178 x 118 x 67mm
- 480g
- Colour choice of Aqua, Chalk, Charcoal or Sand

FOR

- ✓ Great value
- ✓ Controls compatible smart devices
- ✓ Displays Google Photos

AGAINST

- ✗ Low-resolution display
- ✗ Average sound quality
- ✗ No Netflix or BBC iPlayer

LARGER SCREEN

Amazon Echo Show,
£219.99

bit.ly/ech463



INCLUDES WEBCAM

Lenovo Smart Display,
£159

bit.ly/len463



OUR VERDICT



Bar a few small gripes with the way its software works – it seems impossible to clear recipes and videos you're finished with manually, for example – we love the Home Hub. Swiping through its interface, tablet users might find it sparse, but it's more about what you command it to do than

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

what you can tap. Its low price and ability to double up as a digital photo frame make it impossible not to recommend as our pick of Google's Home speakers.

OnePlus 6T

The OnePlus 6T is a new phone built on the foundations of the already great OnePlus 6

OnePlus has earned itself a reputation for sleek, powerful smartphones that manage to equal or better big-name flagship models that cost up to twice the price. Recently, however, inflation has taken its toll: while the OnePlus 3 launched at £309, just over two years later the OnePlus 6T costs £499. If you're feeling really flush, you can get a version with 8GB of memory and 256GB of storage for £579. But it's worth remembering that all phone prices have shot up during this period:

PRODUCT INFO

OnePlus 6T

Price: £499

Buy from Amazon:
bit.ly/op6t463

SPECIFICATIONS

- 2.8GHz octa-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 845 processor
- Adreno 630 graphics processor
- 6.41in display
- 2,340 x 1,080 pixels resolution
- 6GB or 8GB RAM memory
- 128GB or 256GB storage
- 3,700mAh (non-removable) battery
- Dual-band 802.11a/b/g/n/ac Wi-Fi
- Bluetooth 5.0
- NFC enabled
- OxygenOS operating system (based on Android Pie)
- 185g
- 158 x 75 x 8.2mm

FOR

- ✓ Unbeatable performance
- ✓ Competitively priced
- ✓ In-screen fingerprint reader

AGAINST

- ✗ No 3.5mm headphone jack
- ✗ More cheaper phones on the way

the OnePlus 3's Samsung rival was the £569 Galaxy S7, and this year's Galaxy S9 launched at £739 (up 30%).

The 6T is a refinement of the OnePlus 6, which launched earlier in the year. It uses the same Qualcomm Snapdragon 845 processor, which is still a great chip, and this is the cheapest phone to date that comes supplied with one. The fingerprint sensor is now built into the screen, which has grown from 6.28in to 6.41in and covers almost the entire front of the phone (if you don't count the notch at the top, which is smaller than that on the OnePlus 6).

Another upgrade is a physically bigger battery, up



slot, so you can't expand the storage.

In our standard looping-video battery test, the OnePlus 6T lasted 15 hours and 47 minutes before shutting down. While this is

battery drain per hour. In our tests, it produced 99.6% of the sRGB colour standard, which is very good indeed.

We put the 8GB/128GB model through its paces with our usual benchmark tests to see how it compared to other recent flagship phones. It performed superbly well, matching the best current Android devices for overall performance.

The 16-megapixel camera is identical to the one built into the OnePlus 6, but this is no disappointment – it takes excellent shots, particularly in good light. It doesn't quite match up to the latest cameras on OnePlus's biggest rivals, though, so if photography is your thing, you might want to consider other options.

“ The OnePlus 6T matches the best current Android devices for overall performance ”

400mAh from the OnePlus 6, although the extra space this requires has meant ditching the 3.5mm headphone jack, so you can only use Bluetooth or USB Type-C headphones. There's also no memory-card

a good result, it's not as impressive as the OnePlus 6, which lasted 17 hours and 18 minutes in the same test, despite its smaller battery.

The OLED screen provides perfect contrast and dark, inky black. There's an always-on display that shows the time and date, if you're happy with an extra 1% or so



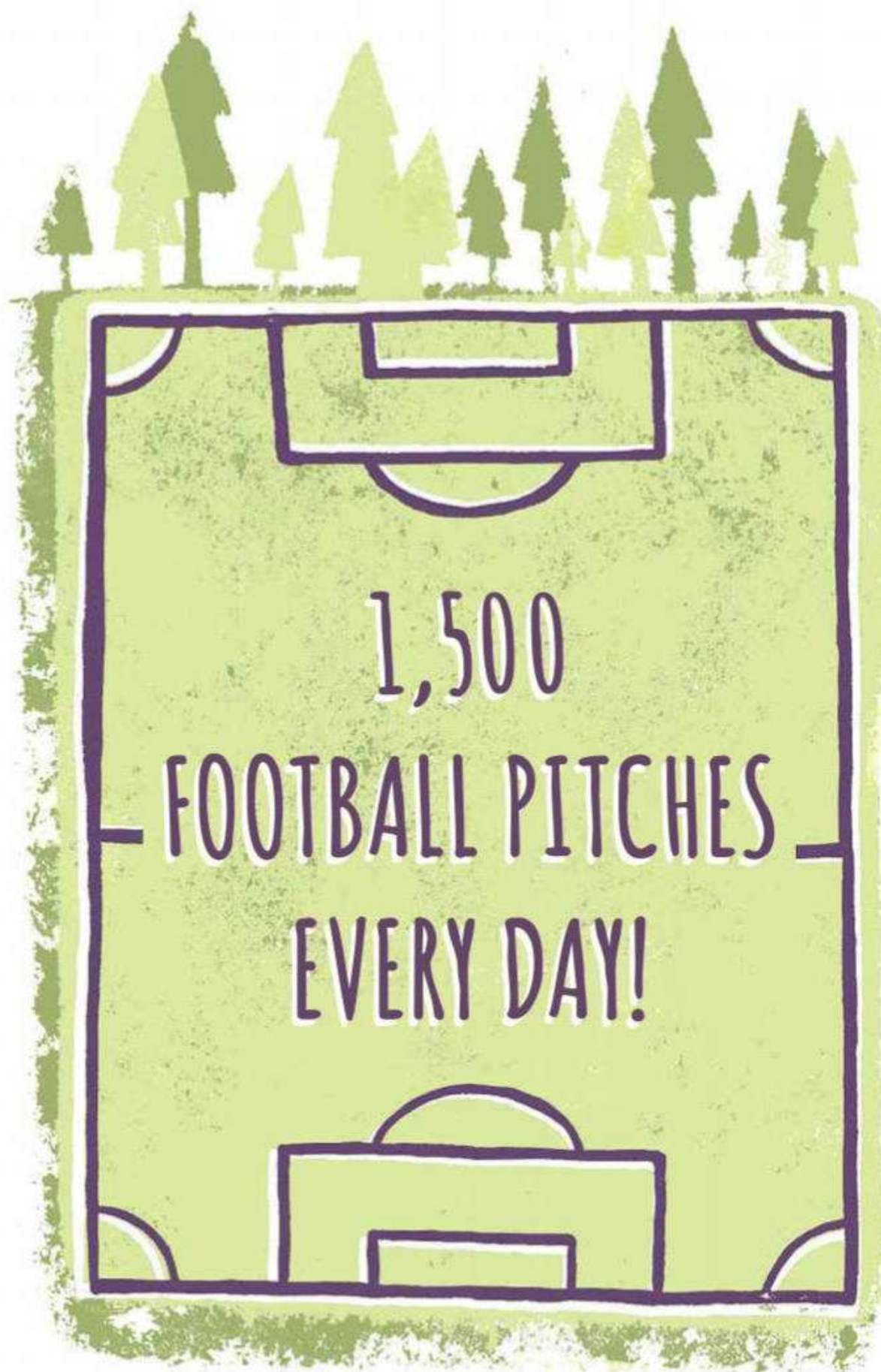
OUR VERDICT



The 6T is another fine phone from OnePlus, and the balance it walks between price and performance means it offers 99% of what its more expensive rivals do, but at only 60% of the price. We predict that it will

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

remain our favourite Android phone until the OnePlus 7 arrives in 2019.



Did you know that European forests, which provide wood for making paper and many other products, have been growing by over 1,500 football pitches every day!

Love magazines? You'll love them even more knowing they're made from natural, renewable and recyclable wood.

UNFAO, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005-2015

Two Sides is a global initiative promoting the responsible use of print and paper which, when sourced from certified or sustainably managed forests, is a uniquely powerful and natural communications medium.

There are some great reasons to [#LovePaper](#)
Discover them now,
twosides.info



BEST NEW CHRISTMAS GADGETS

CHILLBLAST FUSION BLIZZARD GAMING PC

chillblast.com/blizzard
£1499.99 incl. VAT and delivery

This award-winning PC is Chillblast's recommend computer at this price point. With a powerful Intel Core i5-8600k hex core CPU and GeForce 1070 Ti GPU, it has the power needed to blast through Fortnite, PUBG and all of 2019's AAA PC games.



iiyama G-MASTER BLACK HAWK 75HZ GB2730HSU-B1

Amazon
£169.99 Inc Vat

The iiyama Black Hawk 27" Gamer Display features a full HD 1ms LCD Display, adding real power to your gaming experience. Armed with Black Tuner function and FreeSync Technology, it lets you respond to every situation with clarity.

D-LINK MYDLINK™ PRO WIRE-FREE CAMERA KIT (DCS-2802KT-EU)

Amazon
£459.99 inc VAT

The mydlink Pro Wire Free cameras are discreet, weatherproof, and completely wire free, so you can place them indoors or outdoors. Built-in night vision allows you to see up to 7.5 metres, and the hub's built-in 100+ decibel alarm is a great deterrent.



NUU MOBILE G2/G3

nuumobile.com/christmas
£169.99/£199.99

Don't spend a fortune on a new phone. The NUU G2 (5.99in) and NUU G3 (5.7in) both include 18:9 HD Plus cinematic screens, with powerful octa-core processors and 64GB storage with 4GB RAM. Both phones have rear dual cameras, and they include high-end features for an amazing price. Plus 2 Year Warranty and UK customer support. View website for latest deals.





NIKON Z 6 + NIKKOR Z 24-70MM F/4 S KIT

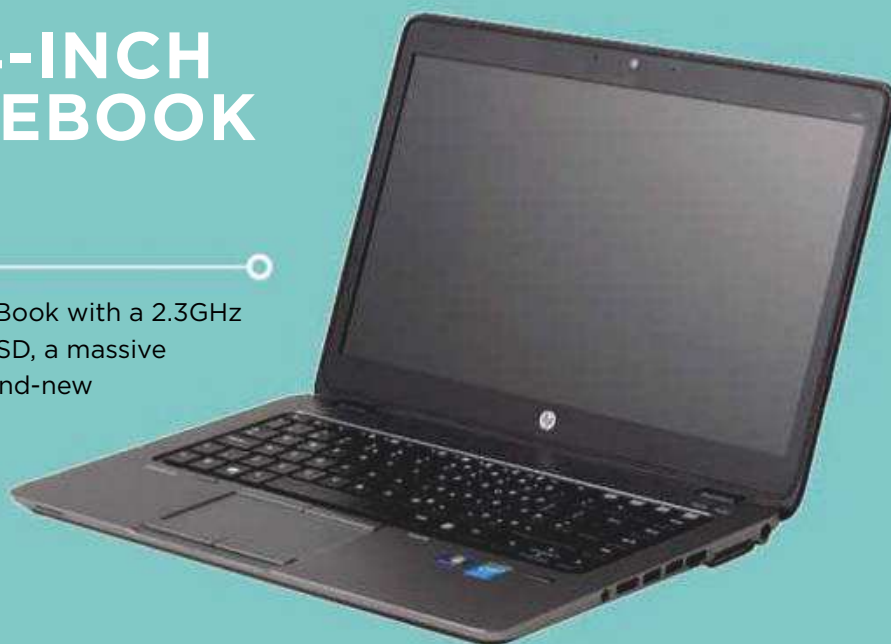
nikon.co.uk
£2,699

This Christmas, treat yourself to one of Nikon's brand new mirrorless cameras – the Nikon Z 6. With an ultra-wide mount, full-frame sensor, blazing burst speeds and edge-to-edge sharpness, this camera, along with the new NIKKOR Z 24-70mm f/4 S lens, offers the freedom to create more – in stunning detail. What's more, with built-in Wi-Fi® and Bluetooth®, the Z 6 allows you to quickly connect to any smart device, via Nikon's SnapBridge app, to instantly share JPEGs and shoot stills and video remotely.

HP 840 G2 14-INCH CORE I5 ELITEBOOK

softoption.buytech.store
£499 incl. VAT

This is a refurbished HP 840 G2 EliteBook with a 2.3GHz processor, upgraded with a 240GB SSD, a massive 8GB RAM, Windows 10 Pro and a brand-new battery. We've also included a 2-year extended warranty to give you total peace of mind!



SEAGATE BACKUP PLUS 2TB SLIM PORTABLE HARD DRIVE

Amazon, Argos, PC World
£74.99

Seagate's Slim hard drive is an easy way to protect and share your digital life. Ready to go with up to 2 TB of storage space for your most important files, the classic black design features a sleek and protective metal finish.



SEAGATE IRONWOLF 4TB NAS

Amazon, Ebuyer
£104.99

For everything NAS, there's IronWolf. Always on and always working, IronWolf is enhanced with AgileArray technology for optimal reliability and system agility. Multi-user technology and extreme workload rates allow IronWolf to perform and scale up with your enterprise. Enable your IronWolf Health Management delivering superior user experience, prevents intervention and enables secure recovery.



PS4 GAME DRIVE 2TB

Amazon, Argos, PC World
£79.99

Boost your console's storage capacity with the Seagate Game Drive for PS4, the only external drive designed exclusively for PlayStation 4. 2TB capacity gives you storage for 50+ PS4 games. Plug-and-play setup will have your drive game-ready in moments. With Seagate Game Drive you can also take your entire game library to a friend's house and play on their console. Seagate Game Drive is compatible with PS4, PS4 Slim and PS4 Pro.



ISTORAGE DATASHUR PRO

istorage-uk.com

£49-£129

An easy to use, encrypted USB 3.0 flash drive. With no software required, it can be used with any operating system. Certified to FIPS 140-2 Level 3, NLNCSA DEP-V & NATO Restricted government accreditations. Capacities from 4GB-64GB, RRP £49-£129. For 15% off, enter ISDP15 at istorage-uk.com
*T&Cs apply. Ends 31/12/18.



iiyama RED EAGLE 144HZ GB2560HSU-B1

Amazon

£220.78 Inc Vat

Join the pro-squad with the Red Eagle GB2560HSU-B1, a 24.5" Full HD gaming monitor with a 144Hz refresh rate, 1ms response time and AMD's FreeSync technology. This monitor is made for pro gamers.



KINGSTON CANVAS REACT MICROSD 128GB

Ebuyer.com

£35.49

Kingston's Canvas React is designed to be as fast as you are, when you're capturing 4K video or taking stunning burst-mode photos, when the action never stops. Whether you're using the latest DSLR, mirrorless camera or flagship Android phone, you can be confident that your memories will be safe.



XBOX GAME DRIVE WHITE 2TB

Amazon, Argos, PC World

£79.99

Exclusively for Xbox. Will you be hailed for your kingdom of games? For your portable powerhouse? Or for fearlessly sprinting into the action? Choose your legacy with this external Xbox game drive.



Web User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE

SMART SPEAKER

Google Home Hub

£139 from bit.ly/homehub463

Tested: Issue 463

Its low price, seamless integration with Google services and ability to double as a digital photo frame make the Google Home Hub the best smart screen we've seen.

KEY SPECS

7in LCD touch screen ■ 1,024 x 600-pixels resolution ■ Dual-band 802.11b/g/n/ac ■ Bluetooth 5.0 ■ 178 x 118 x 67mm ■ 480g ■ Choice of Aqua, Chalk, Charcoal or Sand ■ One-year return-to-base warranty



NEW!

MONITOR

Philips Brilliance 241B7QPKEB

£209.20 from 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



TABLET

Amazon Fire HD 8

£79.99 from bit.ly/amazon461

Tested: Issue 461

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

KEY SPECS

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



BUDGET SMARTPHONE

Motorola Moto E5 Plus

£149 from bit.ly/motoplus460

Tested: Issue 460

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

KEY SPECS

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



LAPTOP

Acer Aspire 5

£629.99 from bit.ly/acer458

Tested: Issue 458

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

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 1.6GHz Intel Core i5-8250U processor ■ 256GB SSD ■ 8GB memory ■ 15.6in, 1,920 x 1,080-pixels screen ■ 1 x USB 2, 2 x USB 3, 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

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



Best Free Software

ANTI-MALWARE TOOL

RogueKiller Anti-Malware 13

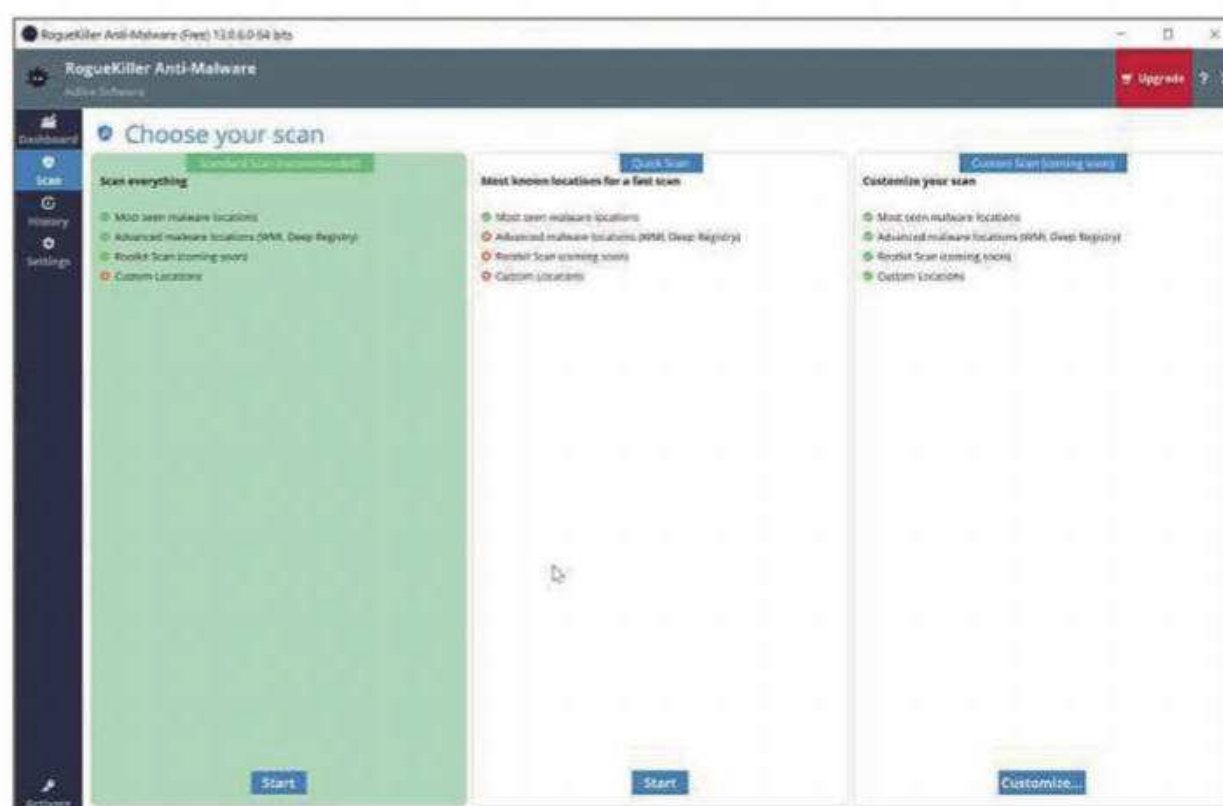
bit.ly/rogue463

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 27.8MB

Windows 10's built-in antivirus tool Defender claims to keep you safe from malware but you may prefer to protect your PC using a third-party anti-malware tool. One powerful free option is RogueKiller Anti-Malware, which not only keeps your PC safe but can also check suspicious items using Google's cloud-based VirusTotal service.

Version 13 of RogueKiller Anti-Malware is a major update and introduces a newly designed interface. The overall program has been simplified, with the advanced tools and expert mode from the previous release spun off into a separate program called Adlice Diag (bit.ly/diag463).



The scan engine has been rewritten and is now much faster and more reliable, thanks to the use of multi-threading, code optimisation and fingerprinting; and there's a new Quick Scan option which targets areas where malware is typically found, such as Registry entries, program folders, and startup entries. There's also a new Command Scanner, which detects legitimate files that are being used for malicious purposes (it doesn't remove the files, though). Other additions include a PDB (program database format) scanner and digital-signature

scanner, and the program is now much better at cleaning up after itself if you decide to uninstall it.

There's a Custom Scan option coming soon (possibly in the next update) that will target the main and advanced malware locations, as well as custom areas. A rootkit scanner is also planned for inclusion at some point in the future.

This free release is actually a cut-down version of the full RogueKiller Anti-Malware, which offers additional features, such as automatic updates and command-line support, and costs from \$19 (£14.60).



MINI WORKSHOP | Check for threats using RogueKiller Anti-Malware



1 Get started with RogueKiller Anti-Malware by clicking Scan **1** in the sidebar, and choosing to run either a Standard **2** or Quick scan. **3** The Custom scan **4** option is currently unavailable. Your chosen scan will begin and you'll be able to pause or cancel it at any time. A Standard scan will take quite a while to complete, so be patient!

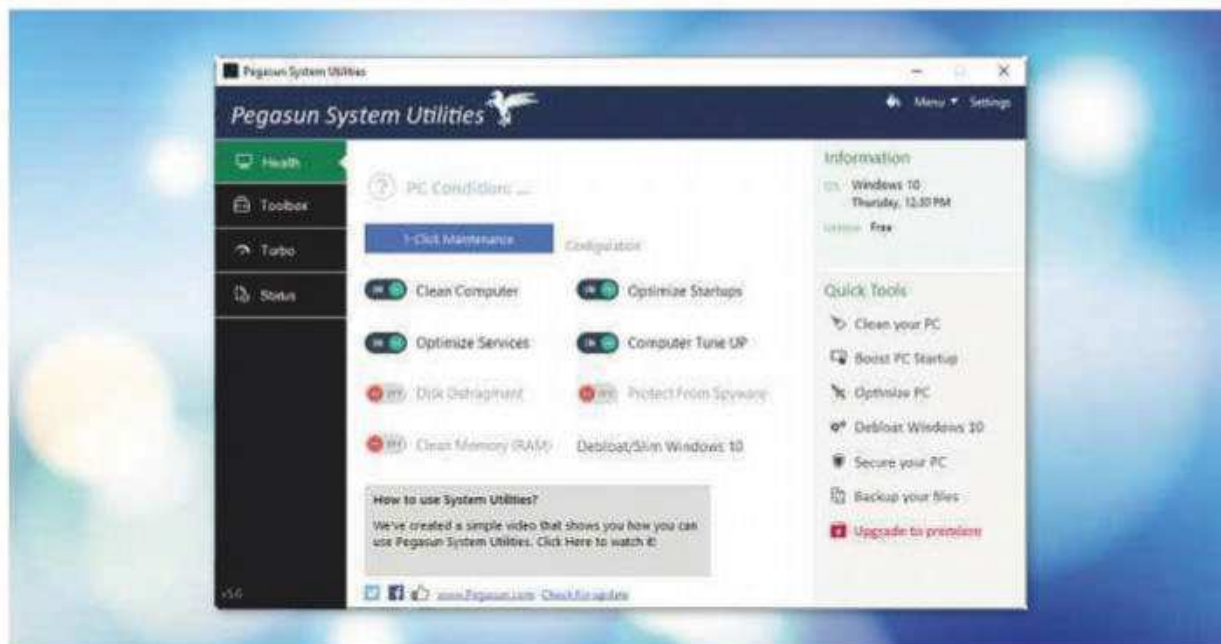


2 When the scan finishes, click the Results button. You'll be presented with a list of possible found threats. Each entry identifies the type of threat found and its location. Click the More information link **1** under an item to find out more about it. Untick **2** any you know to be safe, then click Removal. **3**



3 Click History **1** to see the scans you've run, the number of detections, and so on. **2** Click the Quarantine tab **3** to view and delete found items. Settings **4** lets you configure the program, including changing the theme and enabling or disabling the kernel driver, which can help find and remove some rootkits.

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



SYSTEM TOOL

Pegasus System Utilities 5

pegasun.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 4.9MB

Originally called Synei System Utilities, this program's tools clean and optimise your PC. The Health section's customisable 1-Click Maintenance tool runs through a sequence of fixes, or you can manually launch elements such as Clean Computer, Optimise Startup and Disk Defragment. The Turbo module promises to boost your PC's performance. Note that the website still refers to System Utilities 2017/System Utilities 4, but clicking the download button gets you the latest version.



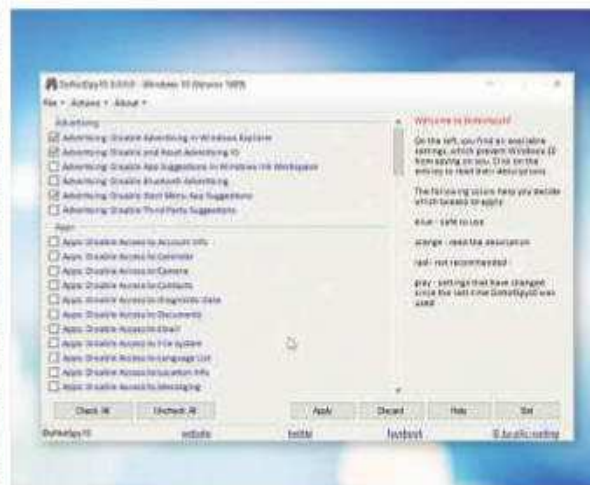
SYSTEM TOOL

Service Security Editor 2

bit.ly/ssed463

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10
File size: 392KB

This tiny program lets you easily stop, start, pause or modify any Windows service. For example, you can use it to prevent Windows Update from running. Launch the program (it doesn't require installation) and select the service you want to make changes to from the drop-down menu, then click Open. Select the user to perform the action (most likely Admin), then select the options you want to apply.



PRIVACY TOOL

DoNotSpy10 5

bit.ly/notspy463

Min requirements: Windows 10
File size: 1.8MB

DoNotSpy10 offers a simple front end that lets you easily manage all Windows 10's privacy-related features from a single screen. The new version adds support for the October 2018 Update (Windows 10 1809), optimises the software's code and groups the various settings so they are easier to manage. It also lets you disable clipboard history. Make sure you decline any unwanted changes during installation.

New Windows Apps

Alexa

bit.ly/alexa463

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 103.7MB

Amazon's popular personal assistant arrives on Windows 10 to challenge Cortana. It can check your calendar, create lists, play music, answer questions, read the news and much more.



HEIC Image Converter Tool

bit.ly/heic463

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 21.5MB

This app converts HEIC images – Apple's name for the new HEIF (High Efficiency Image Format) standard – to PNG or JPEG formats. Conversions all run locally on your computer.



(unofficial) Notepad++

bit.ly/note463

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 22.52MB

This app is an unofficial version of the open-source Notepad++, a more powerful alternative to the Windows Notepad. Most of the original program's functionality is available here.





Best New Browser Tools

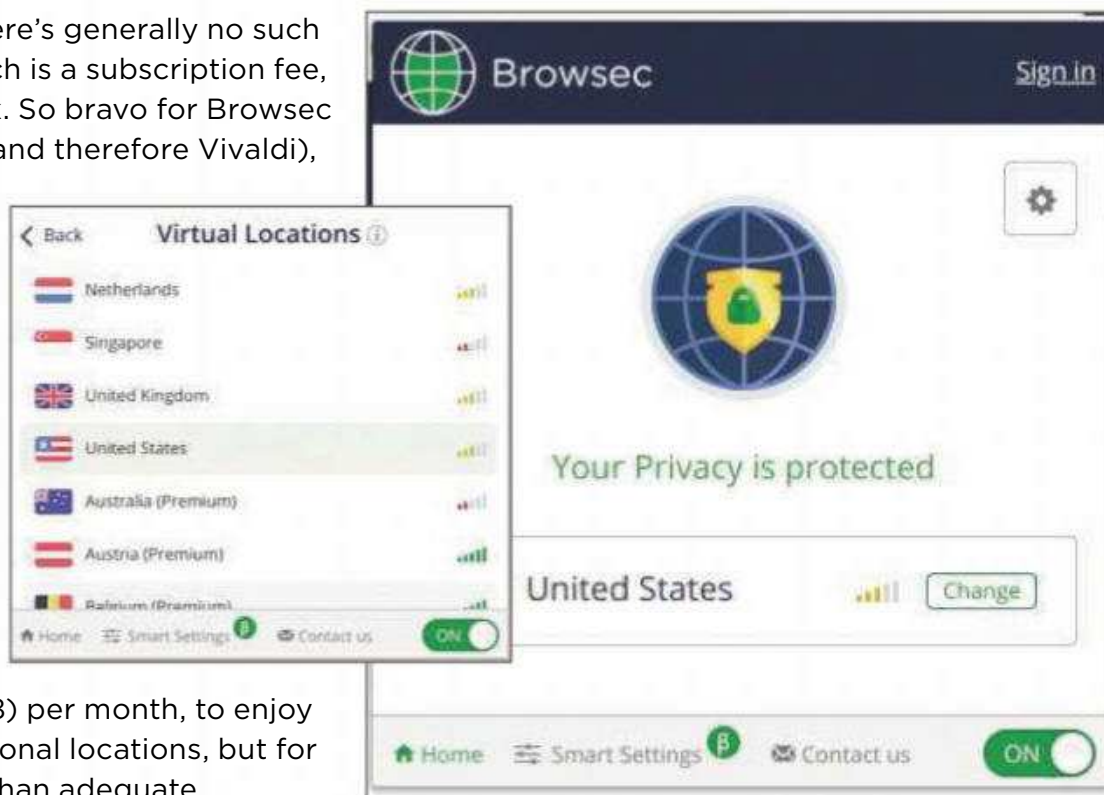


CHROME

Access blocked content using a free VPN

Just as there's no such thing as a free lunch, there's generally no such thing as a free VPN extension – usually, the catch is a subscription fee, limited usage or the fact the thing doesn't work. So bravo for Browsec (browsec.com), which is available for Chrome (and therefore Vivaldi), Firefox and Opera, and gives you the benefits of a paid-for VPN – encrypting your traffic, hiding your data and unblocking restricted content – without charging you a penny. You don't need to register to use Browsec – just install the add-on and click 'Protect me' – and, unlike most free VPNs, it offers the US and UK among its choice of servers, so you can access blocked American services and British ones from abroad. Protection can be switched on and off with a single click, and disabled automatically on specific websites.

Naturally, Browsec encourages you to upgrade to its paid-for version, for \$3.33 (£2.58) per month, to enjoy faster browsing speeds and servers in 34 additional locations, but for your basic VPN needs, the free option is more than adequate.



Close Chrome using your keyboard

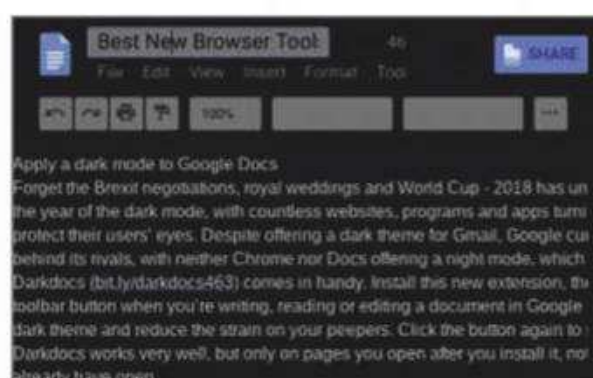
While it's easy enough to click the 'X' in the top-right corner of your browser to close it, many of us prefer to use keyboard shortcuts. Until its latest version (70), Chrome let you press Ctrl+Shift+Q for a speedy exit, but some users complained that this shortcut was too similar to Ctrl+Shift+T (which reopens closed tabs), and led to accidentally closing active windows. From now on, when you want to close Chrome, you'll need to press Alt+F to open the browser's main menu, followed by X (for exit!). If you try the old shortcut, you'll see a message about the change, but we thought we'd get in there first!

Apply a dark mode to Google Docs

Forget the Brexit negotiations, royal weddings and World Cup – 2018 has undoubtedly been the year of the dark mode, with countless websites,

programs and apps embracing the night to protect their users' eyes. Despite offering a dark theme for Gmail, Google currently lags behind its rivals, with neither Chrome nor Docs offering a night mode, which is where Darkdocs (bit.ly/darkdocs463) comes in handy. Install this new extension, then click its moon toolbar button when you're writing, reading or editing a document in Google Docs to apply a dark theme and reduce the strain on your peepers. Click the button again to switch it off.

Darkdocs works very well, but only on pages you open after you install it, not on those you already have open.



Check if you're syncing your data

The best thing about syncing is also the worst: the fact that it works unobtrusively and automatically in the background, so you don't even know it's happening. This saves you having to update data manually on different devices, but also means you could be sharing more data than you realise. To address the latter concern, Google has tweaked Chrome's interface in version 70 to show if you're actively syncing browser data such as your bookmarks, passwords, extensions, history and open tabs across desktop and mobile devices. Simply click your profile picture in the top-right corner to check if Chrome says 'Syncing to...[your Gmail address]' or 'Not syncing'.



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



FIREFOX

Block trackers by default in Firefox 63

Firefox has long provided Tracking Protection to stop websites following you around the web – unlike Chrome, which merely offers a weedy ‘Send a “Do Not Track” request’ option – and the latest version of the browser (63) improves this further. Mozilla has addressed the threat of ‘cross-site tracking’, whereby invasive third-party cookies bypass its built-in protection, by letting you specifically target these devious trackers.

To activate Firefox’s new Enhanced Tracking Protection, either click the Tools menu or the three-line ‘hamburger’ menu and choose Options. Click Privacy & Security on the left and, under ‘Choose what to block’, ensure that Trackers is enabled, along with Third-Party Cookies. You can also opt to block *all* third-party cookies – not just those that track you – but this may prevent some websites from working properly.



Switch between different search engines

If you regularly switch between different search engines in Firefox, you’ll find ContextSearch (bit.ly/context463) to be an invaluable browsing companion. It adds a host of extra search engines to your right-click menu, so you can quickly highlight words on web pages and look them up using the most appropriate

service. Built-in options include Bing, DuckDuckGo, YouTube, Twitter and Wikipedia, although annoyingly only Amazon.com rather than Amazon.co.uk. You can also add

further search engines you have installed in Firefox, by choosing Import, browsing to your Profiles folder and selecting the file ‘search.json.mozlz4’.

ContextSearch lets you customise the size of its menu and icons – and the order of the search engines – to suit your needs, and use various mouse and

keyboard shortcuts to decide how its search results are opened.

Password-protect your bookmarks

There are certain pages you bookmark when browsing the web privately that you might want to hide from other people – perhaps you’ve saved a link to a surprise gift, for example. You can prevent nosy parkers from viewing your secret sites by installing Private Bookmarks (bit.ly/private463), which lets you create a special password-protected bookmark folder in private-browsing mode. Click the add-on’s toolbar button and enter a password of between eight and 128 characters that contains at least one number (make sure it’s one you can remember!). You can now bookmark pages privately by clicking the white and purple star button in your address bar. Sites are saved to a Private Bookmarks folder that locks automatically.

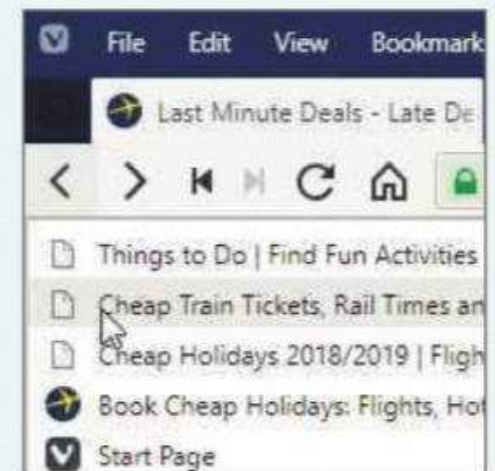


OTHER BROWSERS



Middle-click to open new tabs

After passing the milestone of Vivaldi’s second stable version (see our workshop in Issue 461), the browser’s developer isn’t dragging its feet and has already released several ‘snapshots’ (beta versions) that add useful new features. The most recent of these (at the time of writing, Snapshot 1350.4) lets you open pages you’ve previously visited in new tabs – rather than the current one – using your mouse. Just click and hold the Back or Forward button, highlight an entry and press the middle button on your mouse to open that page in a new tab.



Privacy Badger coming to Edge

With its powerful blocking of invisible trackers and its brilliant logo, Privacy Badger (bit.ly/badger463) has long been one of our favourite tools for defying web spies. Reports suggest that it will soon be coming to Microsoft’s Edge browser after the add-on’s developer, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, posted on GitHub that “we’ve decided we can go ahead and publish in Microsoft Store”, all but confirming that an Edge version is on its way. Privacy Badger is already available for Chrome, Vivaldi, Firefox and Opera.





Best Free Apps



App of the Fortnight

CLOCK

Smart Alarm Clock

bit.ly/smartalarm463



Alarm clocks are an essential part of pretty much everyone's lives. But the truth is they haven't evolved an awful lot over the years. Even the alarm clock built into your smartphone is pretty un-smart. Yes, you can set multiple alarms and – if you have Google Assistant or Siri – you can set an alarm using your voice. But, other than that, they basically just make a loud noise at a specific time of day, just like your trusty Goodmans/Dixons/Woolworths model did decades ago.

Smart Alarm Clock aims to drag the humble alarm clock kicking and screaming into the 21st Century. For starters, it allows you to fine-tune the alarm itself. In addition to choosing from a selection of different alert sounds, you can also set the volume you want it to ring at and whether or not you want your device to vibrate. There's a simple tool for setting the alarm on a regular schedule and you can even

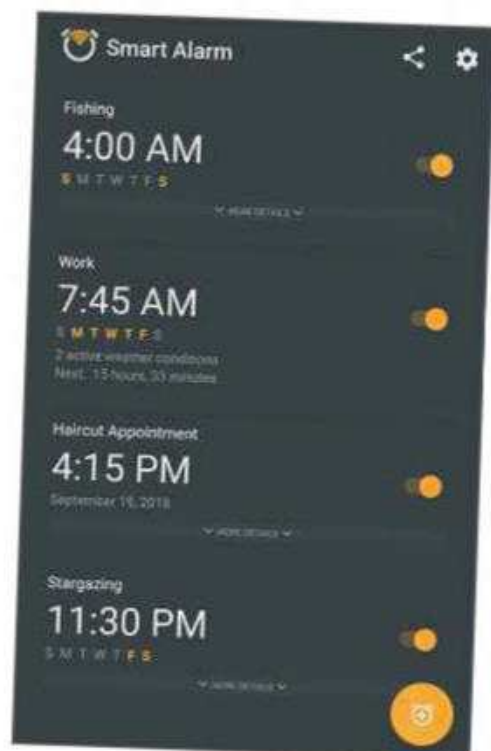
set an alarm for a specific date.

If you're in the habit of switching off your alarm only to drift straight back to sleep again, Smart Alarm Clock has the solution, in the shape of a heavily customisable snooze function that lets you specify the interval between alarms and the number of times it recurs.

Finally, and perhaps most cleverly, the app allows you to set specific behaviour based on what the weather conditions are at the time it is set to go off. So, if you're usually up with the lark for an early-morning run but would prefer a couple

of hours extra kip if it's pouring with rain, you can tell Smart Alarm Clock to check the weather before it disturbs your slumber.

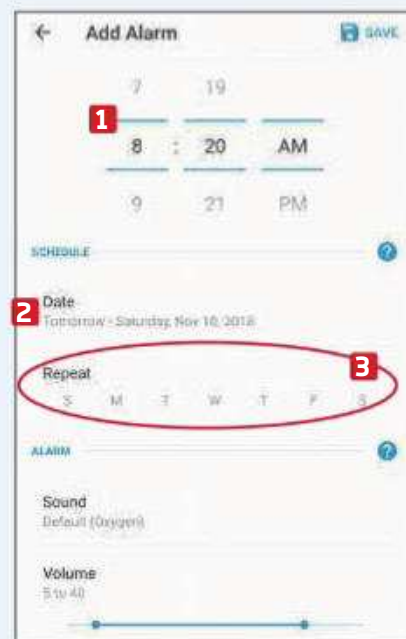
NEW



MINI WORKSHOP

Set and customise smart alarms

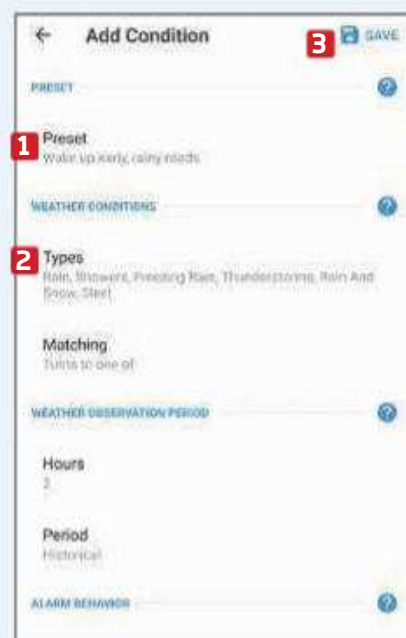
1 Open Smart Alarm Clock and press the '+' sign in the bottom right-hand corner of the main screen. Use the number dials **1** to set the time you want the alarm to sound. By default, your alarm will be set for today, but you can select the Date **2** and choose the day you want the alarm to ring or tap the days listed under Repeat **3** to set a recurring alarm.



2 Under Alarm, press Sound **1** to select the type of ringtone you want to use as your alarm sound, then use the slider under Volume **2** to set its loudness. Select Vibration **3** to enable a vibrating alert – there are three different styles to choose from. Tap Name **4** to give your alarm a title – 'Get up for work', for example. Enable Snooze **5** and select your preferences below, if required.



3 Scroll down to Weather Adjustment and tap Add Condition. Preset **1** provides a range of common options, such as 'Wake up early, rainy roads' or 'Cancel alarm, too much rain'. This will automatically set your parameters, but these can be customised. Under Weather Conditions, for example, tap Types **2** and select a specific type of weather – such as thunderstorms. When you're finished, tap Save. **3**





Our rating



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

MESSAGING

Facebook Messenger

bit.ly/messdroid463
bit.ly/messios463
 (varies) 

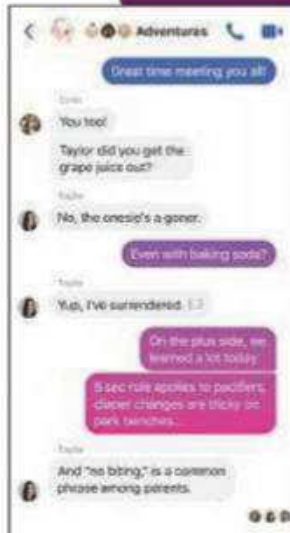
Facebook's popular Messenger app has had a facelift. For a while its interface has felt messy, so it's great that the latest update effectively re-skins the entire app with a fresh, understated look that has less on-screen clutter and fewer tabs to contend with. The app also offers more personalisation, including the ability to customise your chat bubbles with colour gradients. The new-look Messenger is a work in progress – Facebook promises that further improvements and features, including a dark mode, are on the horizon.



Our rating



UPDATED



BROWSER

Opera for Android

bit.ly/opera463
 (varies)

Are you fed up with tapping through endless GDPR pop-ups? If so, then the latest update for Opera's Android browser may have the answer. Opera is gradually rolling out a new feature with an option to 'block cookie dialogs', banishing those pesky and persistent pop-ups. The bad news is that, under EU law, Opera may be in violation of GDPR by allowing users to enable this feature. Plus, by blocking the on-screen messages, you may be effectively allowing all website cookies, which isn't ideal.



Our rating



UPDATED



EMAIL

InboxIt

bit.ly/inboxit463
 4

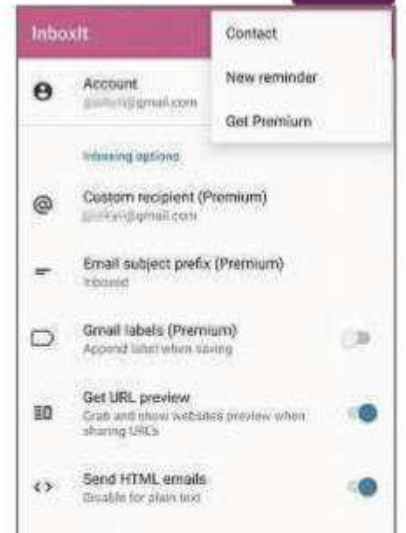
Do you regularly email web pages to yourself to read later? If so, then this clever little app is exactly what you need. Basically, it does exactly what you're already doing – email links to yourself – but it does so without you actually having to launch your email app, type an address, enter a subject and send your message. Instead, InboxIt provides a handy shortcut in your Share menu that lets you send yourself a link in a single tap. The premium version costs 99p and lets you send links to other recipients, too.



Our rating



NEW



VIDEO

Clips

bit.ly/clips463
 11.1

Apple has added a crop of interesting new features to its free video app, many of which are designed to take advantage of the company's latest hardware. The new Selfie Screens, for example, harnesses the power of the TrueDepth camera system found in the iPhone X and up, and drops you into a series of different animated backgrounds – including scenes from Disney's Incredibles 2. The Clips update also brings some new filters that transform your recordings into a black-and-white comic, watercolour painting or aged film. Other additions include more stickers and text labels, as well as 17 new royalty-free soundtracks.



Our rating



UPDATED



GAME

Ghostbusters World

bit.ly/ghostdroid463
bit.ly/ghostios463
 6  8

If you've always dreamed of being a ghostbuster, then you need to download this app, which is, effectively, a Ghostbusters version of Pokémon Go. The idea is that hundreds of ghosts have invaded the land of the living and it's up to you with your trusty proton pack/mobile phone to find and capture them all. The game uses augmented reality to place ghostly enemies in the real world and you can hunt them down using in-game maps. As an added bonus, it's possible to team up with friends for multiplayer boss raids featuring familiar baddies, such as the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man.



Our rating



NEW



5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

PARENTING

Heimdall Parental Control

bit.ly/heimdall463

Price: £8.49

 **5**

This app keeps your phone safe from meddling kids by letting you prevent the installation of new apps, limit the duration of calls and block unsuitable content. It's free to download, but full protection (and peace of mind) will cost you.



Price: £8.99

 **4.1**  **9**

The latest version of Sega's popular footie-management game has arrived with new leagues and licenses to explore. The tablet-friendly 'Touch' version is available separately for £19.99.

FOOD

Mary's Recipes

bit.ly/marydroid463

bit.ly/maryios463

Price: £2.79 (Android), £2.99 (iOS)

 **4.4**  **11**

Healthy eating has never been tastier, thanks to this app from The Royal Society of Medicine's nutrition expert, Maria Kardakova. Included are printable weekly planners, quick recipes and more.



EDUCATION

Russian History in Cats

bit.ly/catdroid463

bit.ly/catios463

Price: £2.89 (Android), £2.99 (iOS)

 **4.1**  **8**

Interested in Russian history? Love cats? Then this is the app for you. It offers 37 chapters about medieval Russian history, accompanied by feline animations, games and music.



GAME

Shining Force Classics

bit.ly/shiningdroid463

bit.ly/shiningios463

Price: £4.99

 **4.4**  **8.2**

Enjoy a spot of retro dungeon-crawling action with three brilliant Sega Mega Drive classics – Shining in the Darkness, Shining Force: The Legacy of Great Intention and Shining Force II – on one app.



SIMULATION

Football Manager 2019 Mobile

bit.ly/footdroid463

bit.ly/footios463



Heimdall Parental Control



Russian History in Cats



Football Manager 2019 Mobile



Mary's Recipes



Shining Force Classics

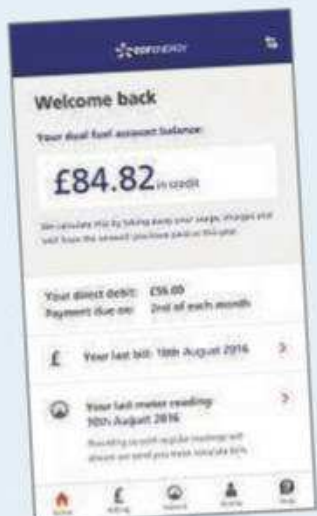


Don't install...

EDF Energy

bit.ly/dontinstall463

Many energy providers now offer mobile apps, but it's a shame that EDF's offering – which promises to make it “easier to manage your energy account on the go” – actually makes life more frustrating. Currently, the app has many overwhelmingly negative reviews on Google Play, several from users whose smart meters won't sync properly, but mostly from people who just can't get the app to work at all.



...Install this instead

uSwitch

bit.ly/uswitchdroid463

bit.ly/uswitchios463

 **4.4**  **9**

These days, nobody needs to put up with shoddy service, sky-high bills or unsuitable tariffs. If you're unhappy with any aspect of your current energy provider, then you can just switch to another one. Switching suppliers is more straightforward than you might think – especially if you have the uSwitch app installed. It lets you scan your current bill via your phone's camera, compares providers to help you find the best plan, and allows you to switch to a new supplier with a few taps. In addition to switching energy providers, the app lets you switch broadband deals, credit cards, phone tariffs and more.





Take a Screen Break

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

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

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



CAN YOU GUESS THE FAMOUS PEOPLE FROM THE EMOJI?

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

GUESS THE TECHNOLOGY YEAR

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

- 1** Sony launches the PlayStation 2, which goes on to become the best-selling video-game console of all time. It's also the first to offer DVD playback.

- 2** Microsoft releases a new version of its desktop operating system, called Windows ME. It faces heavy criticism from users for its stability issues.

- 3** The dot-com bubble, in which internet companies are substantially overvalued, reaches its peak and then bursts, losing investors trillions.

- 4** BT claims it owns the patent to hyperlinks and asks ISPs in the US to pay for the privilege of using them. It loses its case two years later.

- 5** Intel launches its Pentium 4 processor, which becomes the subject of a class-action lawsuit over false claims about its superior speed.

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 4 Nero Standard 2019

Nero Standard 2019 is the perfect companion for your digital life, letting you organise and play all your music, videos, photos, slideshows, movies and TV shows. You can also create DVDs and Blu-rays with numerous menu templates. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'nero' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.nero.com and 'like' www.facebook.com/nerosoftware.



**WORTH
£74.95
EACH**

WIN 1 OF 6 Instinct Solar Charger AM 123

This rugged outdoor solar charger has a 10,000mAh lithium-polymer battery that's powerful enough to charge a smartphone at least four times. You can recharge it via USB or by letting the built-in solar panel do its work. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'instinct' in the subject line. For more info, visit www.xtorm.eu and follow [@A_solar](https://twitter.com/A_solar) on Twitter.



**WORTH
£49
EACH**

BEST NEW CHRISTMAS GADGETS

SEAGATE FIRECUDA 2TB LAPTOP 2.5"

SCAN
£89.98

Games are getting better and videos are getting sharper. With up to 2TB of storage, FireCuda makes deleting games and files to free up disk space a thing of the past. Perfect for gamers and creative professionals who want it all - now!



GT OMEGA RACING PRO COCKPIT SUPREME

gtomegaracing.com
RRP: £499.95

The GT Omega Pro cockpit comes packaged with many accessories to create the ultimate racing experience. It has a complete steel frame with black powder coat finish, and a sturdy design with clear pedal access. Compatible with all common electronic steering wheels and pedals.

COSMIC EARS LUNA

cosmicears.com/luna
RRP: £699

Cosmic Ears have released their striking new LUNA model, the 'go to' in-ear earphone for A-list artists, musicians and audiophiles. Using 10 speakers you'll hear every beat and instrument, just like the professionals. A blow-your-mind sound with unparalleled comfort.



OLYMPUS OM-D E-M1 MARK III

Olympus
From £544.99*

Wherever you go on your travels, the OM-D E-M10 Mark III is there with you. Clear, blur-free images and crisp handheld 4K movies are made possible by the 5-axis image stabilisation. High speed focusing captures the shots you want. You can then share your pictures instantly with built-in Wi-Fi or use your smartphone to control and edit. **£85 Cashback on any body or body lens combination runs until 15/01/19*





LENOVO T440s ULTRABOOK

softoption.buytech.store
£399 incl. VAT

This premium refurbished Lenovo T440s UltraBook, running Windows 10 Pro, has a Core i7 1.9GHz processor, 240GB SSD, a huge 12GB RAM, and a brand new battery. It comes with a two-year extended warranty to give you total peace of mind.



REFLEX PERFECTION PILLOW

reflexpillow.com/uk-magazines
RRP: £70 + free delivery

Special reader offer! Perfection Pillow: a medically certified pillow with patented design helping eradicate neck pain, snoring and insomnia. It succeeds due to unique design - a head dip and dedicated shoulder slot cradles head, neck and shoulders giving optimum support and aligning body correctly keeping airways open for optimum intake of oxygen while sleeping.



KINGSTON DATALOCKER +G3 32GB

Ebuyer.com
£37.49

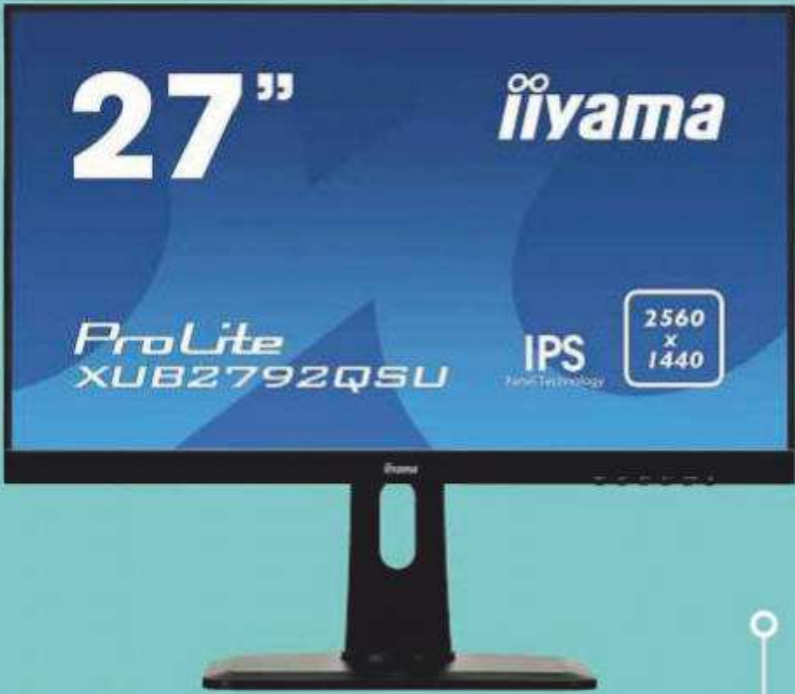
Put a lock on your personal data with Kingston's DataTraveler® Locker+ G3. It's a safe and convenient way to secure receipts, bank statements and other sensitive documents, with hardware encryption and password protection for a double layer of security. The drive locks down and reformats after 10 failed login attempts, so users can rest assured that their data is safe even if the drive is lost or stolen.



LACIE RUGGED RAID PRO 4TB

CCK Media, Jigsaw24, ProTape
£319.00

For over a decade, LaCie Rugged portable hard drives have thrived where only the toughest survive — the film sets, photo shoots, and music studios of the world's most influential creative pros. Why? Because LaCie Rugged products are the industry's most trusted way to capture and transport data in the field.



iiyama PROLITE XUB2792QSU-B1

Amazon
£288.63 Inc Vat

Enjoy the best of both worlds with the ProLite XUB2792QSU-B1. A 27" ultra-slim bezel monitor with an IPS panel, WQHD resolution for crystal-clear images and a lot of on-screen space. Equipped with FreeSync technology for fluent gameplay. Also available in white.



? FAQ

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

Facebook Portal

Would you welcome a Facebook camera in your home? Mark Zuckerberg hopes so. **David Crookes** examines the pros and cons

What is it?

Facebook Portal is a new attempt by the social-media giant to become even more integrated with our homes. It's arriving as one of two devices providing a way to enjoy video calls over the internet with your friends and family via a camera, screen and microphone, using Amazon's personal digital assistant, Alexa.

So, like an Amazon Echo Show?

Yes, very much so. It's also similar to Google's new Home Hub (see our review on page 20), although that device doesn't have a camera.

However, Portal (portal.facebook.com) hopes to make its mark with its unique way of capturing video chats. Rather than remain static, the camera uses artificial intelligence to detect where people are, panning and zooming to keep everyone in view. Facebook says

Portal is similar to but creepier than the Echo Show

you'll feel like you're in the same room as the people you're talking to.

How do the two devices differ?

The standard Portal has a 10in, 1,280 x 800-pixel landscape display that's fixed within its casing, with a speaker that runs horizontally along the bottom. The higher-spec Portal+ ups the display size to 15.6in and the resolution to 1,920 x 1,080 HD, and its screen can rotate 90-degrees so it can be used in both landscape and portrait mode.

Is the camera any good?

It's pretty decent, as it happens. The camera peers from the top of each device, although it protrudes more prominently on the Portal+. In both cases, however, the camera offers 12-megapixel resolution, 8x zoom and 140-degree field of view, which makes videos look sharp while displaying more of your background surroundings.



The Portal+ has a rotatable screen for capturing vertical moments

Does it pick up sound well?

It does indeed. Both Portals contain a four-microphone array and are able to detect 360-degree sound, so it won't matter where you are in relation to the device – you certainly don't need to be face-on for your voice to be clear. Where the Portals excel, however, is in their use of artificial intelligence to ensure the microphone best picks up on the voices of whoever is talking, while minimising any background noise. As for the voices of those you're talking to, these are pumped through a single 4in bass



speaker and two tweeters with high-range frequency.

So who can I call?



Entertain your children by pretending to be a cartoon cat

because you can turn yourself into a range of colourful characters.

What does Alexa bring to the table?

We thought you'd never ask. Alexa allows the device to be hands-free, letting you make calls by saying: "Hey Portal, call [name]". Aside from that, it offers all the available skills of the digital assistant with the benefit of having a screen. So you could, for example, ask for the weather or a recipe, set a timer, build a shopping list and control your heating during the cold winter months.

Does it play music and videos?

If a friend also has a Portal, you'll be able to share music with each other – but even if they don't, you can take advantage of the partnerships Facebook has struck with a few companies, such as listening to tracks from Spotify. Facebook Watch

Because Facebook is behind the Portal, it only allows you to call the friends and connections you have in Messenger. The person you call doesn't have to own a Portal, because the chats you initiate can be received on a phone or tablet with Messenger installed – up to seven people can participate in a group call. Portal also lets you use augmented-reality effects through a feature called Story Time, which is particularly fun if you're chatting to children



Check out the Portal website and discover that you can't buy one yet

lets you stream videos on your Portal, but there is no live television or YouTube available.

With no web browser, no way of sending and receiving Messenger messages and no support for Instagram and WhatsApp (despite both services being owned by Facebook), you may find the Portal rather restrictive, and end up using it purely to display your Facebook photos and videos (which kick in when Portal is not in use).

So is the Portal worth buying?

Well, this is probably the right time to drop the bombshell: Portal isn't available in the UK and there's no word about when it might appear. So the answer here is academic at the moment (for the record, the Portal costs \$199 – about £153 – and the Portal+ is \$349 – about £268). Perhaps the wider question is whether you'd actually want one if and when it arrives, or if you're more than happy using one of the many other video-chat services that's already out there. After all, Portal doesn't really offer much that's new.

Are there any privacy concerns?

Of course! Facebook couldn't really have announced this product at a worse time. In September, the company admitted that 50 million Facebook accounts had been hacked by attackers exploiting a vulnerability, allowing them to steal



Facebook claims the Portal is "private by design" – but who believes it?

access tokens which could be used to take over people's accounts. In light of that, launching a device with a speaker and a camera aimed at living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms may appear ill-judged, and critics have been quick to seize on this.

What does Facebook say?

To be fair, the company was acutely aware that this issue would come up right from the start so it talks of the devices being "private by design". It has gone to great lengths to explain that the built-in AI technology runs locally rather than on Facebook's servers, and stresses that the camera does not use facial recognition. Likewise, it says it doesn't listen to anything you say, view anything you do or retain any contents of the calls you make, promising that the only thing sent to the servers are the voice commands, which you can later delete. Seems like Facebook doth protest too much!

But isn't the camera constantly on?

Facebook says the camera and microphone can be turned off with a single tap, and has even put a camera cover in the box for people wary of being filmed without their knowledge. It also says that the screen will remain locked unless a four to 12-digit passcode is entered – but that still hasn't completely put fears to bed.

Is Facebook doing enough to reassure people?

Not according to journalists at the website Recode (www.recode.net), who discovered that Facebook could use the Portal's data to target you with ads. Specifically, the company can collect info about who you call and the apps you use on Portal, using the same data that's collected on any Messenger-enabled device. This news has proved rather embarrassing for Facebook, with the company claiming that it doesn't intend to use such information. Effectively, you'll have to trust Facebook to safeguard your privacy which, understandably, many people are very sceptical about.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FACEBOOK PHONE?

The Portal is by no means Facebook's first attempt to marry its social wizardry with specifically designed hardware. Back in April 2013, it announced the Android smartphone, HTC First, which sported a user-interface layer called Facebook Home. This replaced the standard lock screen and home screen and was supposed to provide a window into what was happening with your friends.

To that end, the HTC First let users view and post content on Facebook via the replacement home screen and chat via Facebook Messenger or SMS

from any app using so-called "chat heads". Home was also made available as a free download for other phones but few people bothered and the price of the HTC First dropped from \$99 to 99 cents within a month. It seems people weren't willing to have their handsets so thoroughly dominated by Facebook – and who can blame them?



BEST FREE SOFTWARE 2019

Discover the downloads of tomorrow today. *Web User* software maestro **Wayne Williams** highlights his favourite new and updated programs for 2019 and reveals what's so good about them

COVER
FEATURE

The old saying that “you get what you pay for” isn’t necessarily true when it comes to software. There are plenty of great programs and apps available to download for free – if you know where to look. Free software isn’t without its risks, however – some

downloads come bundled with ‘crapware’, bombard you with nag screens and adverts, or fail to deliver the bold claims emblazoned on their websites.

To celebrate the imminent New Year, I’ve identified 10

of the most promising new programs and new versions for 2019. Whatever you’re looking for – be it a system cleaner, VPN, image editor, media centre, music player or web browser – there’s something in this feature to meet your needs.

Over the next eight pages, I’ll introduce you to my new favourite programs, tell you why I think you’ll love them, explain how I personally use them and highlight any pitfalls to be aware of. I’ll also suggest some alternatives for you to consider instead.

And if that’s not enough free software for you, we’ve still got our regular section on page 28 – albeit slightly shorter this issue to make room for this feature!



1

VPN

Speedify 7

speedify.com

Min requirements:

Windows 7/8.1/10 or Mac OS

File size: 52.9MB

Why I Like It

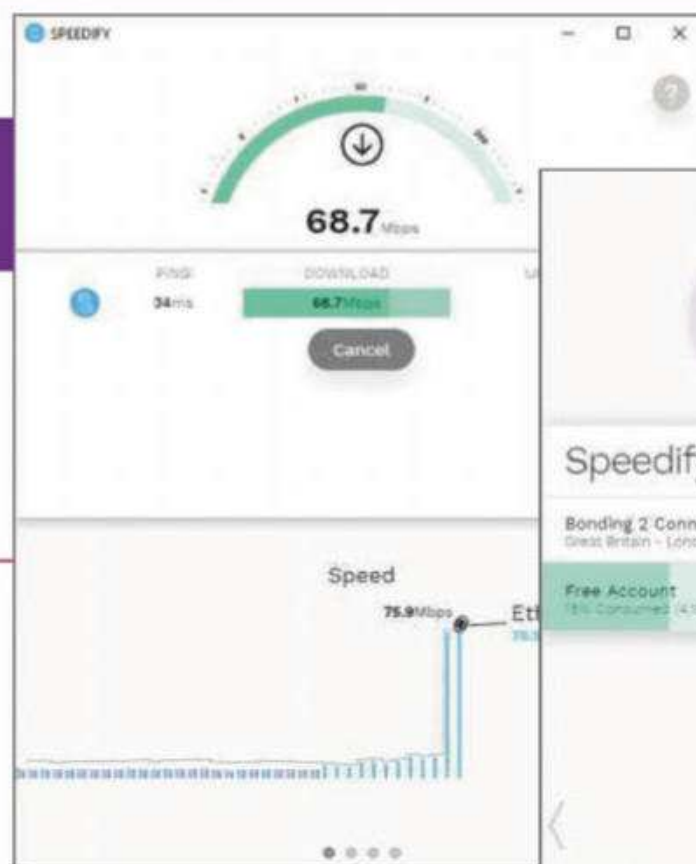
VPNs (virtual private networks) are a vital part of our browsing arsenal these days. They disguise where you're browsing from, which prevents sites from snooping on your activity, and help you overcome unreasonable geographic – and legal – restrictions.

The Speedify VPN is available for Windows, Mac, Android and iOS, and lives up to its name by using a clever feature called 'channel bonding' (combining multiple internet connections) to deliver a fast and reliable connection. It's very easy to use, BitTorrent-friendly (unlike many free VPNs) and has a network that's spread across 28 countries.

The free version, which provides VPN access on one device, gives you a very reasonable 5GB of encrypted traffic a month. A paid-for plan with unlimited data costs £8.99 a month.

How I Use It

I like that Speedify lets you click any of the connection methods – Ethernet or Wi-Fi, for example – to prioritise that means of accessing the web. It can be

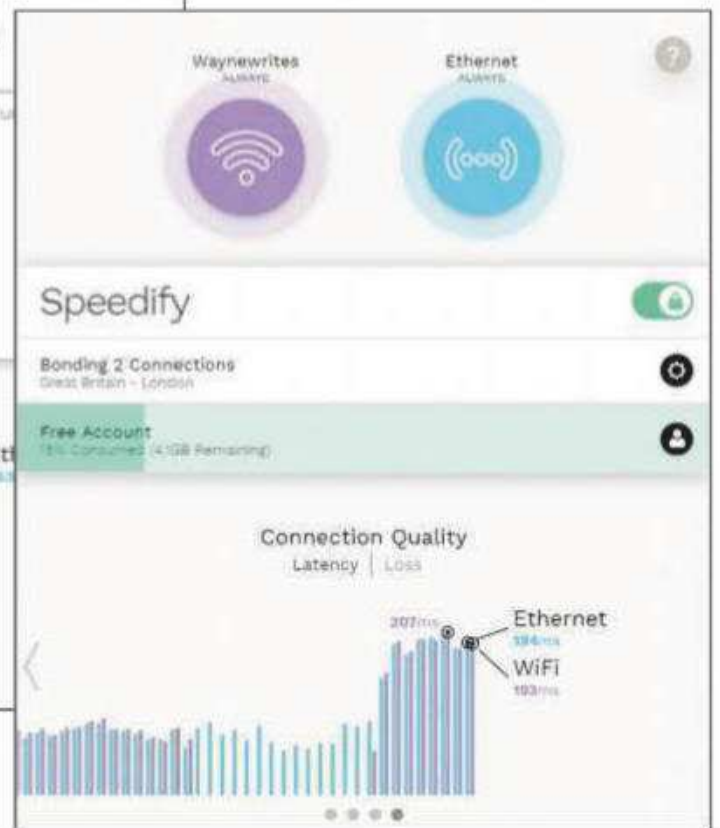


the main, secondary or backup connection, so you can switch between fast but unprotected browsing, or slower but safer with the VPN enabled.

You can also manage the data-transfer rate, monthly and daily limit, and reset your data usage. Speedify comes with its own built-in speed test that you can run from the main screen, which is great for making sure you have the best speed configuration available.

What I Don't Like

Speedify's headquarters is in the US (Philadelphia), one of the so-called Five Eyes countries, which isn't great news if you value your privacy. It doesn't log you, but it may keep some identifying details, and the company will comply with all lawful court orders. Additionally,



there aren't as many servers as we'd ideally like, and Speedify doesn't work with US Netflix either.

TRY THIS INSTEAD

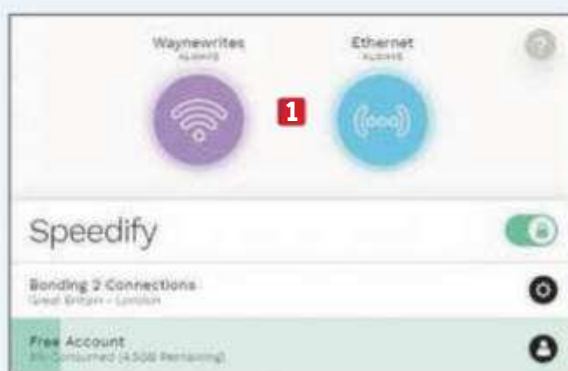
WindScribe

windscribe.com

The free version of this VPN gives you a generous 10GB a month of data, unlimited connections and access to more than 10 countries. Upgrading to a paid-for version offers servers in 100 cities across 55 countries and costs from \$9 (£6.90) a month.



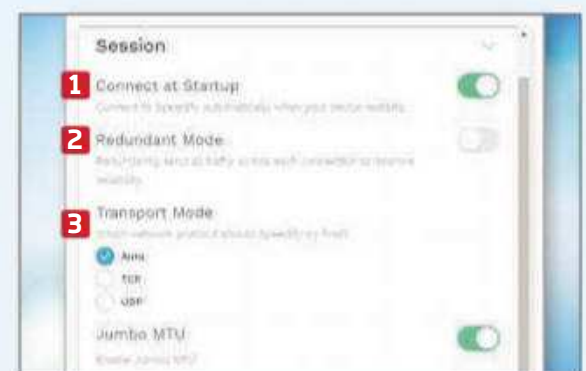
MINI WORKSHOP | Protect your browsing using Speedify



1 Speedify uses channel bonding to speed up the VPN. When you run the software, it automatically looks for connections it can use – including Ethernet, Wi-Fi, tethered phones, 3G/4G dongles and so on. Any available (in-use) connections are shown at the top of the interface **1** when the VPN is active.



2 Speedify automatically connects to the nearest (fastest) server. To change this, click the cog icon next to the connection. In the window that slides up, you can choose between the fastest server, **1** a torrent-friendly one **2** or make a selection based on location. **3** Click More **4** to reveal additional countries.



3 The Session screen lets you choose between setting Speedify to start when Windows loads (not wise if using the free version) **1** or using Redundant Mode, which improves reliability. **2** You can choose which network protocol Speedify should try first **3** and further secure your browsing on the Privacy tab.



Kodi 18 'Leia'

kodi.tv

Min requirements:

Windows 7/8.1/10, Mac OS or Linux

File size: 82.7MB

Why I Like It

Kodi is a fantastic free media centre for organising and playing all your videos, music and photos. Its support for third-party plugins means you can expand it in whatever way you like, adding new features, including the ability to stream content across devices.

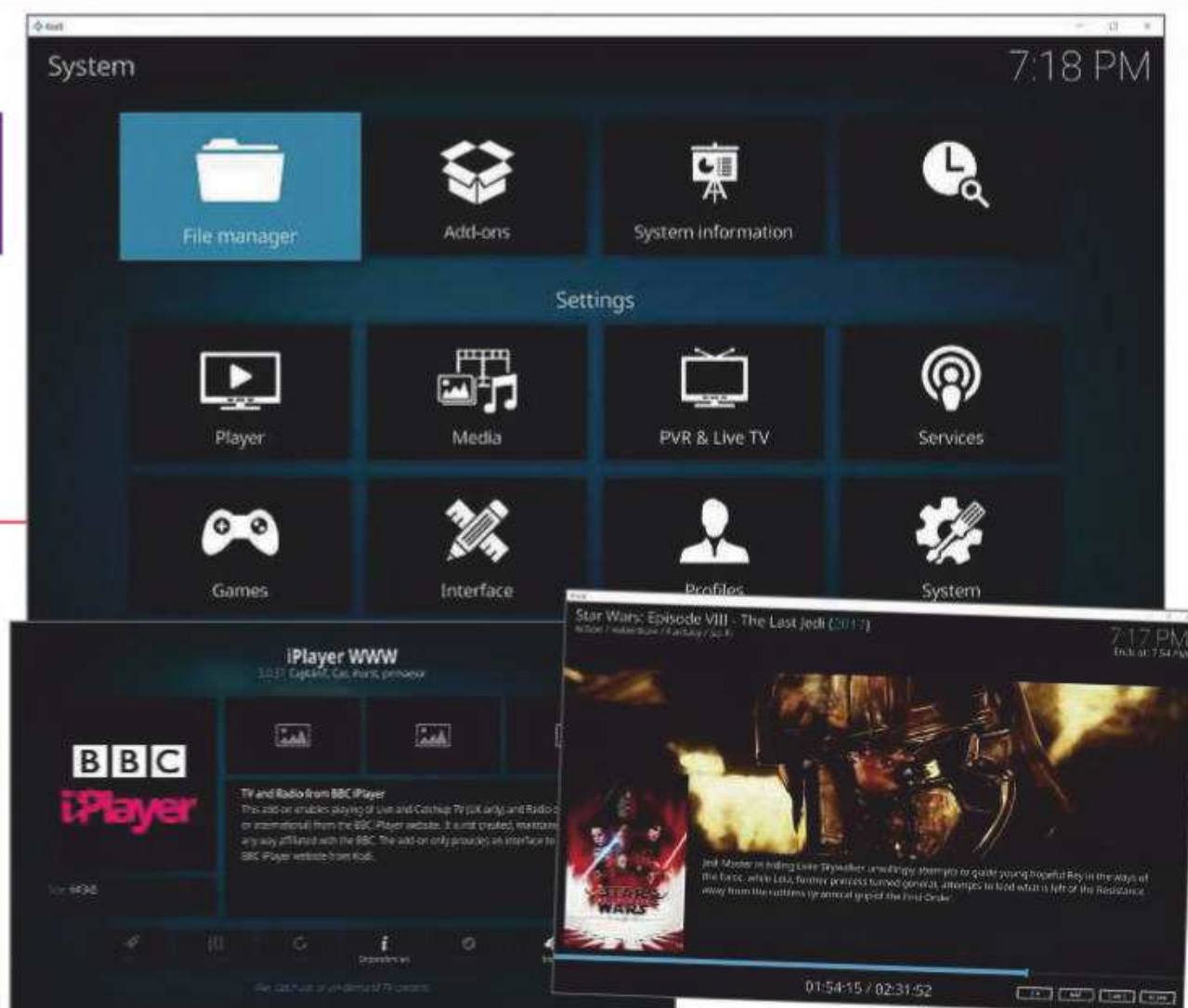
Kodi 18 (codenamed Leia) is a major update to the software. Its interface has been overhauled and the PVR (personal video recorder) and Live TV components have been rewritten to make them smarter and easier to use.

There's also a new Games window - to keep the program streamlined, certain features have been made optional and are now available to download from a binary addons repository.

Importantly, publishers can now add DRM (Digital Rights Management) to their official add-ons, which helps combat Kodi's somewhat undeserved reputation as a shady tool for piracy.

How I Use It

Something I always install in Kodi is iPlayer WWW, which is an unofficial third-party add-on for BBC iPlayer.



It lets me watch catch-up and on-demand content, as well as tune into any BBC channels live (you'll need a TV licence to do this legally). To install this, select Add-ons, then click Download. Go into Video Add-ons and scroll down until you see iPlayer WWW. Select this entry, then click the Install button and click OK. You can now access the BBC content through the Add-ons screen.

What I Don't Like

After all this time, Kodi still isn't especially user-friendly. Once you've learned how to install add-ons and configure the software, it soon becomes

second nature, but for first-time users it's nowhere near as intuitive as it could be, and finding the location of different menu items is often a struggle.

TRY THIS INSTEAD

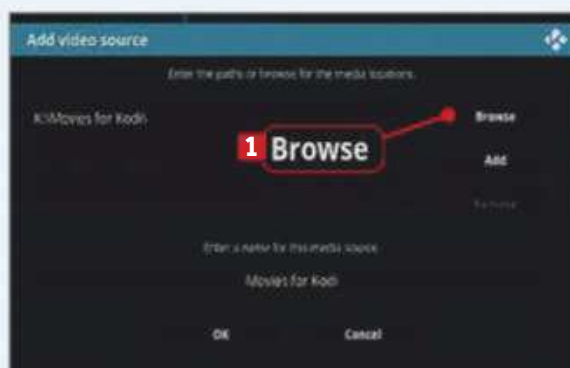
MediaPortal

www.team-mediaportal.com

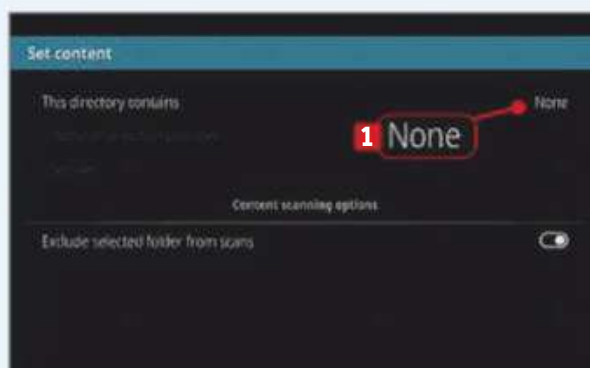
MediaPortal is a similar tool to Kodi and can handle any media, including movies, DVDs, music and radio, as well as stream content to other devices on your network.



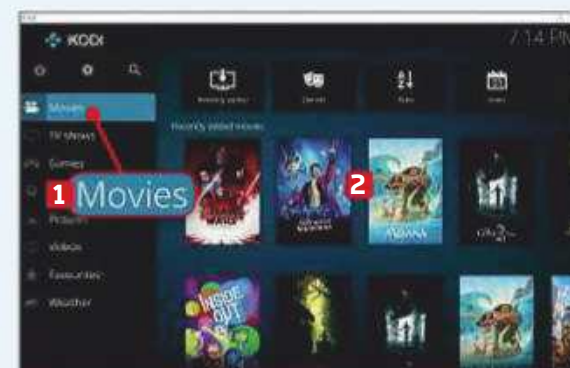
MINI WORKSHOP | Get started with Kodi 18 'Leia'



1 Once you've installed Kodi, the first thing you'll want to do is add some content to watch. You can select either Movies, TV Shows or Videos - depending on what you want to add. We'll select Movies. In the window that opens, click 'Add videos'. Click Browse **1** and navigate to the folder you want to add.



2 Enter a name for this media source, then click Add. You can now add more sources and remove unwanted ones. Click OK. In the new window, click None **1** next to 'This directory contains' and select a type of media - Movies, in our case. Configure any scanning options you want to change, then click OK.



3 Say Yes when asked if you want to refresh information for all items. Kodi will attempt to find matches for all the movies in that source and download details for them. When you go into the Movies folder, **1** you should see thumbnails of your content. **2** Click one to start watching it.



TeamViewer 14

bit.ly/teamviewer463

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10
File size: 21.5MB

Why I Like It

Before free software such as TeamViewer became available, fixing PC problems for my friends and family members (which goes with the territory as a technology journalist) usually involved driving over to see them or taking part in a series of long and frequently fraught phone calls. TeamViewer does away with all that by letting you remotely take control of another person's PC from the comfort of your home or office (with their permission, naturally), so you can solve whatever problems they're having.

TeamViewer also lets you chat remotely with the people you're helping, share files quickly and easily, and even switch direction so they can take control of your PC. The latest version of the program offers improved performance over slower connections and overall better connection quality, as well as a new design that includes a now *de rigueur* dark mode.

How I Use It

My favourite TeamViewer feature is



the handy whiteboard option, which lets you draw and add text to the remote PC's screen. Once you're connected to the other computer, click the Whiteboard (paint-brush icon) in TeamViewer's corner menu and you'll be able to access a pen and highlighter, along with erase, shape and text tools. The participant on the remote system will also be able to access and use the whiteboard, so they can respond to your comments.

What I Don't Like

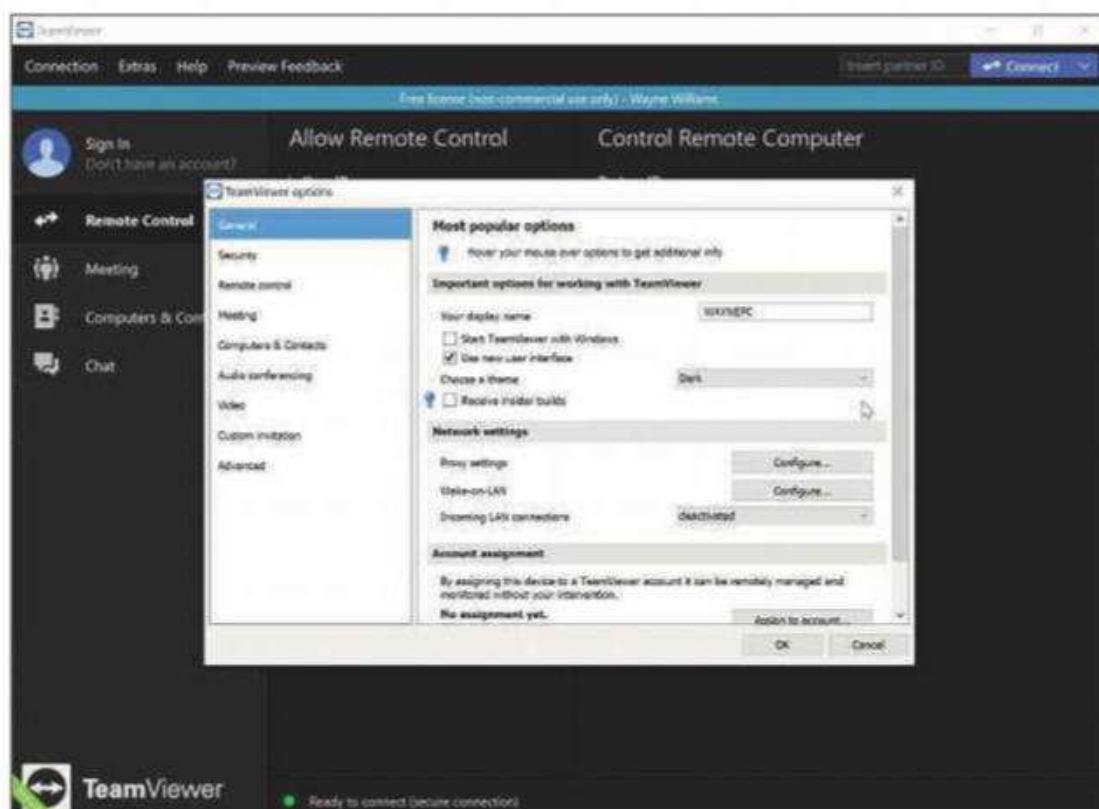
Some TeamViewer features – such as remote script execution and service-camp integration – are aimed at businesses, which most home users won't be interested in. They create clutter but, in fairness, are easily ignored and better than having locked options.

TRY THIS INSTEAD

AnyDesk

anydesk.com

This remote-access software is similar to TeamViewer and free for personal use. It's available for Windows, Mac OS, Linux, Android, iOS and Raspberry Pi, and offers a useful file-browser mode.



MINI WORKSHOP

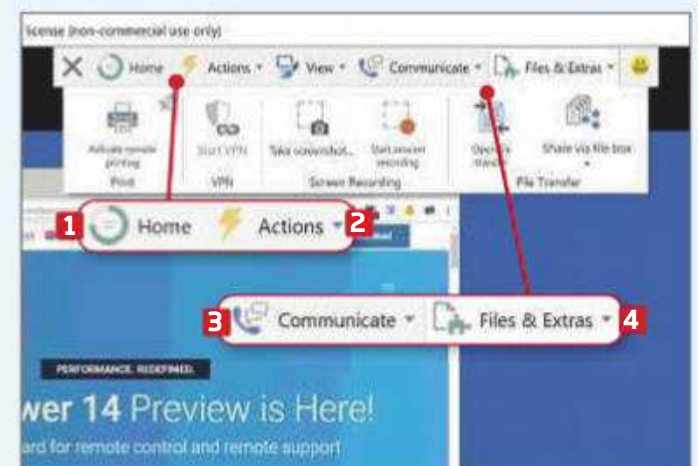
Connect to a remote PC using TeamViewer 14



1 Install the TeamViewer software on your PC, choosing the Basic installation option and selecting Personal/Non-commercial use. Click Accept-Finish, then run (or install) the software on the PC you want to connect to. Type the ID from that device into the Partner ID box on your PC **1** and click the Connect button. **2**



2 A box pops up asking for the password displayed on the remote computer. Enter this, then click Log On. The connection will be made, giving you full control over the other system. The toolbar at the top of the screen **1** provides access to a range of controls. Click View **2** to adjust the scaling, quality and performance. **3**



3 The Home **1** button takes you to the TeamViewer dashboard where you can view information about the remote system. Actions **2** lets you run useful tasks, such as locking or rebooting the other PC. You can start a chat under Communicate, **3** and copy files and record the remote screen under Files & Extras. **4**



WEB BROWSER

Brave 1.0

bit.ly/brave463

Min requirements:

Windows 7/8.1/10, Mac OS or Linux

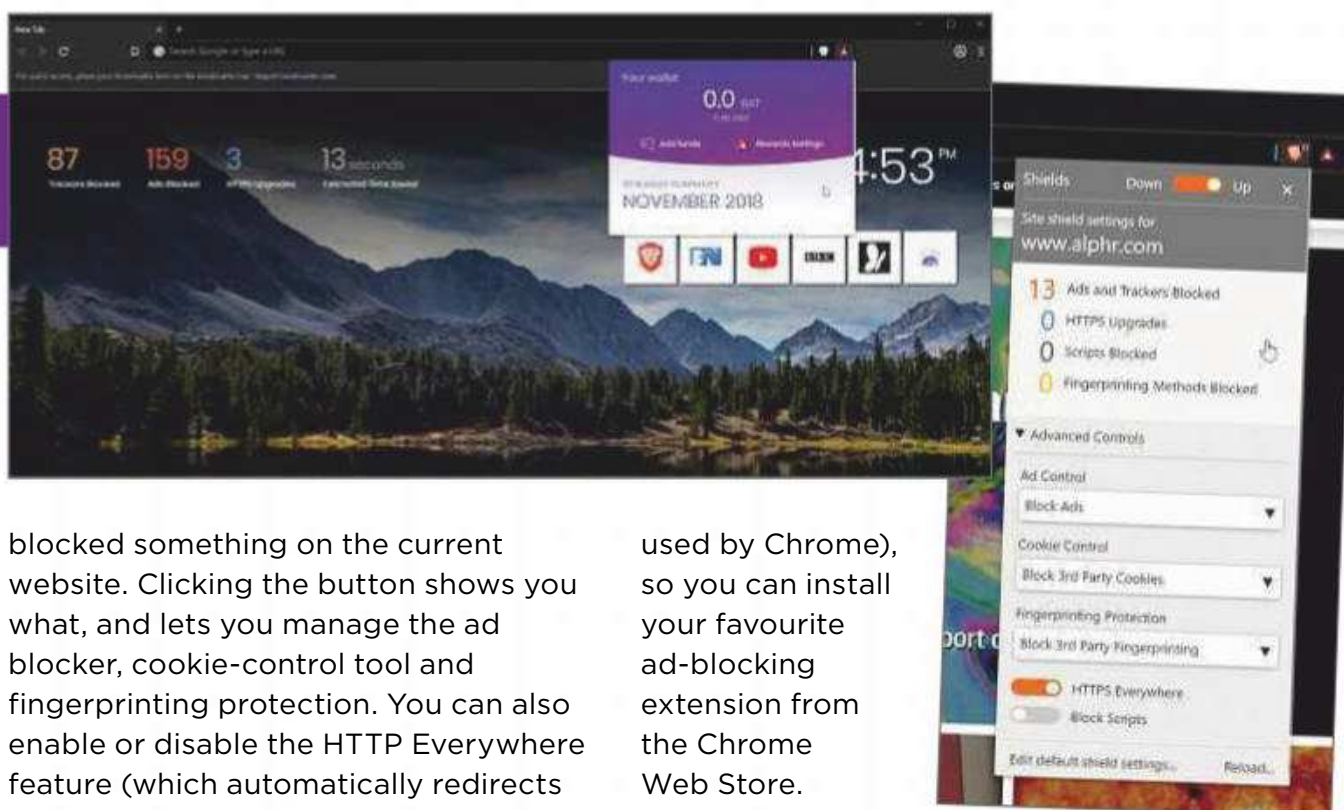
File size: 1.1MB (installer)

Why I Like It

Most people use one of the big five browsers – Chrome, Firefox, Opera, Safari or Microsoft Edge – but there are some excellent lesser-known ones. Brave was created by the former CEO of Mozilla, the organisation behind Firefox. It loads pages twice as fast as other browsers, blocks ads and trackers, offers a host of useful security tools and doesn't store or sell your browsing data. I also like that its optional Brave Rewards feature lets you make a monetary contribution to your favourite sites.

How I Use It

The Shields button, to the right of the address bar, shows that the browser has



blocked something on the current website. Clicking the button shows you what, and lets you manage the ad blocker, cookie-control tool and fingerprinting protection. You can also enable or disable the HTTP Everywhere feature (which automatically redirects you to the secure version of websites) and block scripts. It's like having an array of popular security extensions built into your browser.

What I Don't Like

If you're used to third-party ad-blockers such as uBlock Origin, you may find that Brave's own solution isn't as effective or customisable. That said, as of this new beta version, Brave is now based on Chromium (the open-source browser

used by Chrome), so you can install your favourite ad-blocking extension from the Chrome Web Store.

TRY THIS INSTEAD

Vivaldi

vivaldi.com

This Chrome-based web browser comes from the former CEO of Opera. Like Brave it's regularly updated and offers lots of useful features, such as tab stacking.



MUSIC PLAYER

Dopamine 2

bit.ly/dopa463

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 45MB

Why I Like It

Most people nowadays get their music from streaming services such as Spotify, but if you have a large collection of ripped CDs and downloaded tracks, then a music organiser/player is essential. Dopamine is an excellent choice that can handle all the major audio formats, including WAV, MP3, Ogg Vorbis, FLAC, WMA and AAC. It guides you through the setup process and helps you add content, and the newest version – Dopamine 2 – improves the already attractive interface and introduces new Folder View and Smart Playlists functionality.

How I Use It

Dopamine is highly configurable. Click the three-line 'hamburger' button next



to search and select Settings.

Under Appearance, you can have the software's theme change based on the Windows colour or the current album cover colour, and toggle transparency on or off. It's also possible to change the program's behaviour, playback options and online functionality.

What I Don't Like

The first main version of Dopamine used a sizeable chunk of system memory, and this is still the case in the newest release. It won't be a problem for most people, but if you have a low-spec machine then it's something to be aware

of. Also, you can't easily delete songs and albums through the software.

TRY THIS INSTEAD

MusicBee

getmusicbee.com

MusicBee makes it very easy to organise, find and play songs on your computer. It can also import tracks from Windows Media Library and iTunes, or your choice of music folders.





Spybot Identity Monitor 3

bit.ly/spybot463

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 7.4MB

Why I Like It

Data breaches are becoming frighteningly common these days. Gemalto's Breach Level Index (breachlevelindex.com) reports that 4.5 billion data records were compromised worldwide in the first half of 2018, and this year we've seen leaks affecting Facebook, British Airways, Eurostar, Butlins, Dixons Carphone, Thomas Cook and Ticketmaster, among others.

Spybot Identity Monitor lets you check to see if your information has fallen into the hands of hackers, so you can change your password and take any



What I Don't Like

Spybot Identity Monitor works well and is easy to use, but it's not always obvious how to get back to the main screen. You may need to click Close, or the corner X in the bottom-

other necessary actions to keep your data and accounts safe. It lets you add as many accounts and usernames as you need to check, and uses the Have I Been Pwned service to look for leaks.

How I Use It

Getting started with Spybot Identity Monitor is simply a matter of clicking the My Accounts button, then clicking the buttons at the top to either add an email address or a username. While I am always careful to use different passwords for different services, I do frequently rely on the same username, so it's good to be able to check for this as well as passwords. Look out for a Workshop on Spybot Identity Monitor in the next issue of *Web User*.

right corner. If you're not paying attention, you could accidentally quit the program by clicking the top-right 'X'.

TRY THIS INSTEAD

Have I Been Pwned



haveibeenpwned.com

If you just want to check whether your email addresses have been compromised, you can simply visit the Have I Been Pwned website. You have to check each email individually, though, which can be time-consuming.



TweakPower

kurtzimmermann.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 11.5MB

Why I Like It

TweakPower is a system-cleaning tool that removes junk files and optimises your PC's performance. The dashboard tells you everything you could wish to know about your computer's status, including installed security software, hard-drive health, bootup and shutdown times, and hardware details.

You can choose what to clean up – browser, system, plugins and Registry – and there are lots of handy maintenance tools for tasks such as speeding up startup, uninstalling software and finding and deleting duplicate files.

How I Use It

Windows Experience Index (WEI, for



short) is a basic benchmarking tool found in Windows 7 (and Vista) that rates the various components in your PC and presents you with an overall score out of 10, along with sub-scores for the various components. Microsoft dropped WEI from Windows 8 onwards, so I'm pleased that TweakPower has a version you can access through Tools, Performance Index.

What I Don't Like

Like many similar programs, TweakPower exaggerates the number of problems found so your PC looks like it's in a worse state than it actually is. The fact that your browser stores cookies or

caches websites isn't actually a "problem", but is presented as such.

TRY THIS INSTEAD

Iobit Advanced SystemCare 12



bit.ly/advanced462

Advanced SystemCare cleans your system, boosts performance, protects your privacy and fixes all kinds of PC problems. A recent update has made it much faster.

8

ANTIVIRUS
TOOL

Avira Free Antivirus 2019

bit.ly/avira463

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

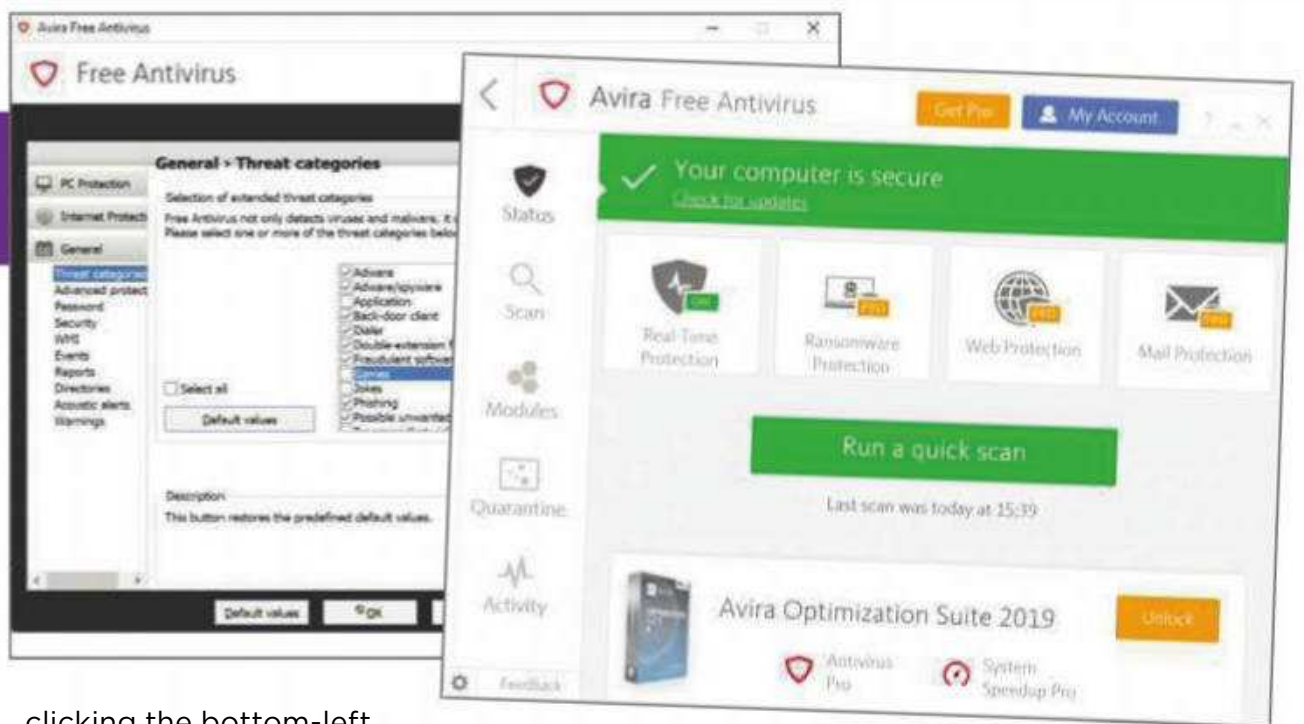
File size: 5.2MB

Why I Like It

There's a tendency for antivirus programs to come stuffed with features you don't need and will never use. Avira Free Antivirus keeps things simple, while protecting your PC from most threats. It can also run alongside any existing security tools you might have installed, and won't demand that you remove them, protecting your browsing and giving you the option to install various free additional tools.

How I Use It

Although Avira Free Antivirus looks – and is – very straightforward to use,



clicking the bottom-left

cog icon gives you access to a wealth of useful settings that let you configure the program in whatever way you like. You can enable and disable audio alerts, choose the threat categories you want protecting from, and much more. It's definitely worth delving into this because there's a lot to discover.

What I Don't Like

Some people will no doubt appreciate the opportunity to install free extras such as Home Guard, Safe Shopping, Password Manager, Phantom VPN and Privacy Pal, but it's a pain having to click through screen after screen when

you just want to install the antivirus software.

TRY THIS INSTEAD

Avast Free Antivirus



www.avast.com

As well as safeguarding you from the latest threats, this software keeps an eye on applications to make sure they don't go bad, and spots weakness in your home Wi-Fi.

9

IMAGE
EDITOR

Fenophoto 5.5

fenophoto.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 98.3MB



Why I Like It

I use Photoshop for major image work, but if I need to quickly improve or fix photos I've taken with my phone, then Fenophoto is one of my first choices. The software can quickly rotate, flip and crop images, and offers lots of handy photo-correction tools, such as auto levels and auto gamma, the ability to equalise shadows, red-eye correction, denoise, sharpening, and batch and command-line processing. It handles all the major image formats, including RAW. It's also updated regularly, with new features and improvements.

How I Use It

It's easy to make quick enhancements to your photos in Fenophoto by picking one of the presets at the top – Default, Nature, Denoise, Color, Gamma, Light, People or Empty – and clicking the Apply button. You can customise the settings for each of the presets.

What I Don't Like

Although Fenophoto does a great job of fixing and enhancing images, its interface looks ugly and is riddled with spelling mistakes (well, translation

issues), which doesn't inspire confidence.

TRY THIS INSTEAD

Paint.net

getpaint.net



Paint.net is one of the best free drawing tools/image editors around and offers all the features you could possibly want, as well as lots of filters and support for third-party plug-ins.

10

BACKUP
TOOL

MiniTool ShadowMaker Free 3

bit.ly/shadow463

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 79.5MB

Why I Like It

There are lots of backup programs available for Windows, but this latest version of MiniTool ShadowMaker Free is definitely one of the better options. The software makes it easy to back up your system and hard drives, and offers a choice of backup methods: Full, which includes all files; Incremental, which backs up only the files that have changed since the last backup; and Differential, which targets items that have changed since the last full backup.

MiniTool ShadowMaker Free includes the option to schedule backups at a frequency that suits you. It also lets you perform a remote backup over a network and can create a rescue disk, which saves you having to download a separate tool. The new version of the



program adds support for file-synchronisation and enhances ShadowMaker's backup efficiency.

How I Use It

Creating a backup is straightforward enough, but you can also use the software to create a clone of a drive, which is handy if you're planning to upgrade to a bigger drive, or move from an HDD to an SSD. To access this feature, go into Tools and click the Clone Disk tile. In the window that opens, select your source and target drives, and then click OK.

What I Don't Like

The interface is a bit inconsistent – some screens are dark, while others are white and light grey. Certain features – such as Command Line Interface support – are only available in the paid-for edition, but they aren't greyed out so you only discover this when you actually try to use them – and can't.



TRY THIS INSTEAD

Macrium Reflect

bit.ly/macrium463

Macrium Reflect creates a copy of your hard drive so you can restore your system if you suffer a hardware malfunction or major malware infection, such as a ransomware attack. It was recently updated with some new features.

TOP 5 TOOLS IN 2018

Here are the tools you've liked most over the last year, as determined by the number of your clicks on our Bitly links

1 Clean Master

This free CCleaner rival removes unwanted and unnecessary files from your PC.

2 Acrylic Wi-Fi Scanner

View all the wireless networks in local range and the channels they're using.

3 IObit Driver Booster

Scan your system for old and missing drivers, and update them in one click.

4 SUMo Updater

This free tool tells you which programs on your PC urgently need updating.

5 uBlock Origin

The powerful, lightweight ad blocker is a perennial *Web User* favourite. ■



NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 12 December 2018

STAY 100% ANONYMOUS ON Google

Get all the benefits of Google's best tools with none of the privacy concerns



PLUS...

STOP USING FLICKR

Best free alternatives to the online photo-sharing service

LOCK WINDOWS SETTINGS

Prevent anyone from messing around with your system

SPEED UP YOUR BROWSER

Secret hacks to turbocharge Chrome, Firefox and Edge

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SUBSCRIBE.WEBUSER.CO.UK

Best free online website-building tools

The quickest way to get a website online is to use a site-building service – preferably one that provides web hosting. **Andy Shaw** looks at six services that get your site up and running with the least amount of fuss



Wix | www.wix.com | ★★★★★

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

WebUser
GOLD
AWARD

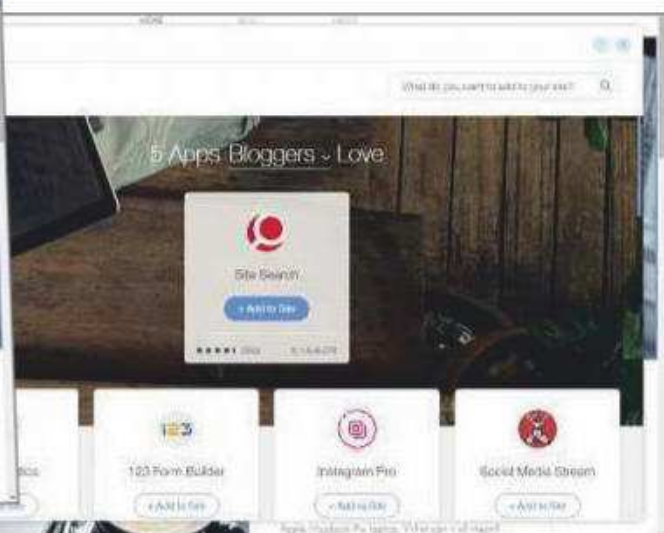
What we liked:

It sounds like a DIY emporium when you say its name aloud, but Wix provides far more than just the basic nuts and bolts

for website building. In fact, you get a brilliant array of templates, tools and add-ons for creating a stunning website that's as complex and personalised as you want it to be.

Wix's basic web-building tools are the best you'll find in this test. You can choose to build a site using one of two approaches: either the design-focused, broad-brush ADI tool, which lets you choose high concepts of colour and topic, then creates a design it thinks you'll like; or you can use the plentiful supply of templates, many of which are free. After this initial process, your site is completely customisable, so if you don't like an element, or want to change things from one page to the next, that's completely within your power.

The Editor lets you make changes and add content to your site. Its superb interface is driven by a simple menu down the side and context-sensitive elements that appear when you click



a relevant part of the page design. The menu is visual and dynamic without unnecessary faff – the perfect balance of design and function – popping out options as you click it. Typefaces are illustrated to show how they'll look on your site, while backgrounds and design elements always offer illustrative thumbnails. Likewise, the contextual panels bring up buttons that, when clicked, pop out into more useful panels.

What's more, a Wix website doesn't remain static once you've published it because you can animate almost every element on a page. If used with subtlety, these tools provide everything you need to create a dynamic and sophisticated-looking website.

How it can be improved:

Wix's free tools are so brilliant that it can feel frustrating when you come across an element that you need to pay for. We're splitting hairs, though – in all honesty, Wix's paid-for tools are great value, too.

OUR VERDICT

Wix is easy to master and has virtually no limits. Its wealth of add-ons can be used to create any kind of site you want, such as its Code tools (still in beta) that let you create programmable database-driven content.

WordPress.com | wordpress.com | ★★★★★☆
FEATURES ★★★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★★★☆



What we liked:

WordPress is a content-management system that originated as a blogging tool, but it can create a standard website, too.

There are two ways to use it: upload it to a webhost from wordpress.org (most web hosts do this automatically); or go to wordpress.com and create a site on WordPress's own servers. Both options are free, but the former provides more control, while the latter, which we're looking at here, includes paid-for add-ons such as a personalised domain name.

To build your site, first choose a template – there are thousands, including many free ones. You then create new pages by filling out a form and entering the title, words, images and the like, which are automatically transferred to the template.

How it can be improved:

Compared to the other site-building tools here, WordPress's page-by-page approach is inflexible and doesn't offer WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You



Get) design. However, that's also its strength because it lets you build as many pages as you like without getting bogged down in detail.

OUR VERDICT

WordPress.com provides a great foundation for getting started with the ubiquitous WordPress system. It's not as easy to tweak the individual pages of a WordPress site as it is with the other site-building tools we've reviewed, but your site will be infinitely expandable and you're provided with a solid base for growing an ambitious website.

Weebly | www.weebly.com | ★★★★★☆
FEATURES ★★★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★★★☆



What we liked:

Weebly is more like Wix than WordPress, in that it's another online web-building tool for creating attractive, modern-looking websites.

It provides the means for building a range of sites for free, from blogs to basic online shops.

The interface uses drag-and-drop tools: you simply pick up an element from the menu of options on the left, then drag it to the position you require on the page on the right. As you hover elements over the page, other items shuffle and shift out of the way to make room, then expand further as you add content to them.

The sites created in Weebly adapt automatically depending on whether they're viewed on a desktop monitor or a mobile device.

How it can be improved:

Weebly's interface is dull and grey. The buttons helpfully display icons as well as text to tell you what each one does, but



the monochrome colour scheme means they lack the at-a-glance obviousness of the other tools we've reviewed.

Also, Weebly's apps and add-ons aren't as comprehensive as those available in Wix.

OUR VERDICT

Weebly's service is similar to Wix but it can't match our Gold Award-winner's innovation and superior interface. The underlying functionality is sound, but it could do with a splash of colour and an overall refresh of its interface.

BEST OF THE REST

Jimdo

www.jimdo.com

Jimdo's interface ditches standard menus in favour of pop-up panels. So, if you want to add an element to a page, just click an empty space and you'll be presented with a range of items you can add, including pictures, text, videos, forms and tables. In theory, this means you only see the menus you are currently using, but we found our page soon became cluttered with panels and buttons obscuring our site design.



Site123

www.site123.com

Site123 lets you create a simple, smart-looking website with very little fuss, but we found the interface too basic.

It focuses on working around existing templates, and pages are then



added using a content-management system, which at least looks less like an online form than WordPress's equivalent. However, Site123 just doesn't have as many tools and features as its rivals.

Silex

www.silex.me

Silex's free web-design tool is the only service here that doesn't offer to host your site. Its web-building service is a little like using a standard PC page-layout program, but once you've built your site, you have to download it and upload it elsewhere. If you want a more traditional web-page design that you craft yourself, Silex is a decent tool for the job, but its lack of hosting is an inconvenience.





Catch **them** in the act!

No matter how well-protected your computer is, systems can be compromised. **Steve Clark** reveals the best tools that alert you when someone accesses your internet, computer, phone and more

When new devices connect to your network

Worried that someone is leeching off your internet? An easy way to find out for sure is to use NirSoft's Wireless Network Watcher (www.nirsoft.net), which lists connected devices on your network. Wringing every last function out of this feature-rich program would take days, but even at its most basic, it reveals plenty about network activity.

Run Wireless Network Watcher, then click the column marked Last Detected On until it displays a down-arrow so the newest device to connect always shows at the top. This helps you spot any unknown devices a glance.

To set up alerts for potentially rogue devices, enter Options and turn on Beep On New Device and Beep On Disconnected Device. Remember to turn up your volume. Now, head into Device Options. Here, you can set your own connection and disconnection alerts if you don't like the defaults – maybe an

air-raid warning siren (bit.ly/raid463)? Finally, create a log by selecting View and choosing HTML Report – All Items.

When changes are made to your system

If you're concerned about ransomware, or just don't want anyone toying with your rig, download WinPatrol (www.winpatrol.com) – your digital guard dog. Features include controlling startup programs and delaying chosen programs from running at boot-up, which speeds up your computer.

After recoiling at how badly designed the user interface is – it's visually busy, crammed with 15 tabs and provides absolutely no directions for use – you can start monitoring changes to your computer's files and folders.

WinPatrol can be used as a purely passive program. Leave it chugging away in the background and whenever a new program runs, or attempts to install, it'll give you a visual and audio

alert. You're then able to accept or reject any changes. Don't recognise the program? Reckon it might be malware or worse? Block it from running and ruining your PC.

It's worth noting that this only halts programs – you'll need to track them down in WinPatrol to begin the process of properly removing the threat.

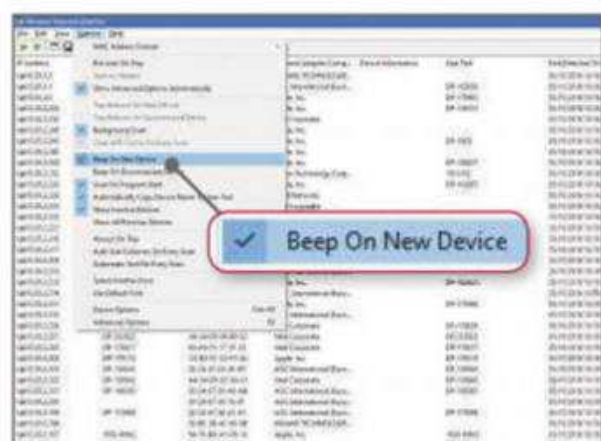
When someone accesses your shared files

Sharing is caring. It's also usually secure if you do so over your own network (just be sure to change your default Wi-Fi password). Don't be lulled into a false sense of security, though. Download Net Share Monitor (bit.ly/net463) to keep a close eye on all shared folders.

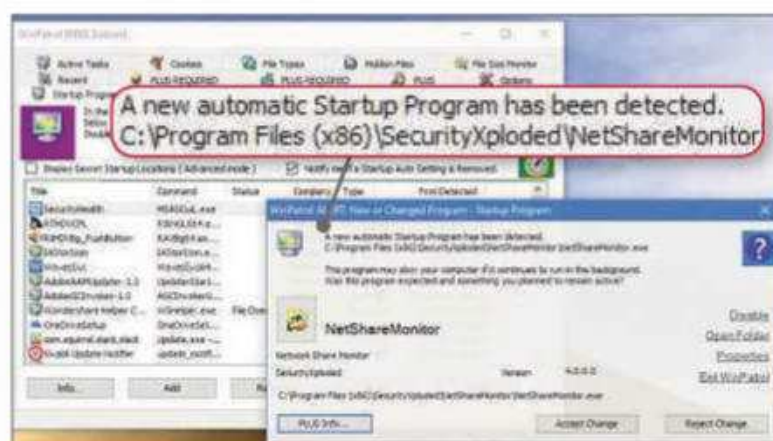
It's a pleasantly minimalist tool. Just three tabs sit in the window: Active Sessions logs remote users; Accessed Files displays which folders and files remote users are currently connected to; and Shared Files lists the network's shared folders.

Microsoft offers a helpful guide to sharing folders at bit.ly/share463. Once complete, let the tool go to work. Net Share Monitor automatically finds and scans shared folders, with no additional setup required. The instant that changes are detected, it'll beep and flash, while logging details in a separate file.

For a cloud-storage



Find out when devices are connecting to your Wi-Fi network



WinPatrol helps protect your system from malware and even worse



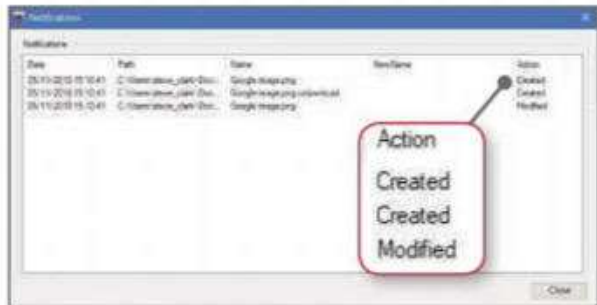
Track every change when sharing over your network

alternative, OneDrive (onedrive.live.com) sends emails and push notifications to your phone whenever other users open shared files and make alterations.

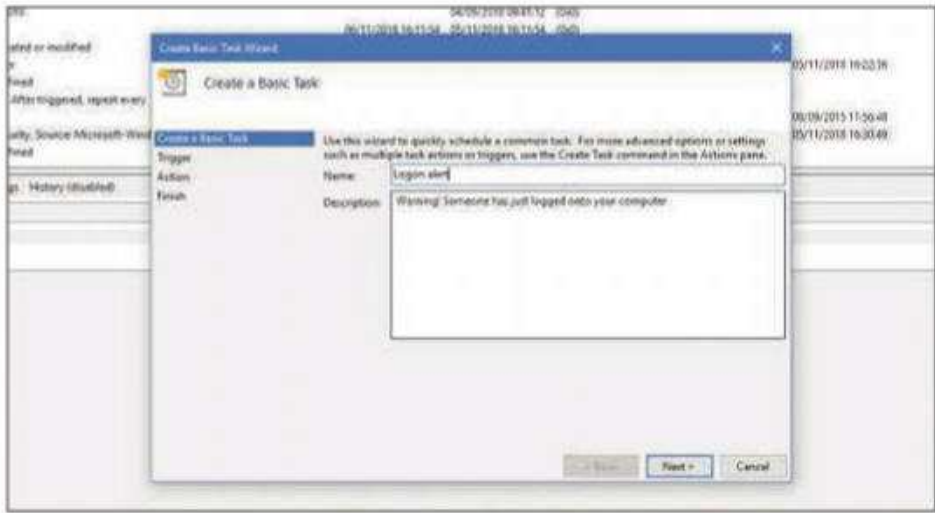
When changes are made to your folders

FolderMonitor (bit.ly/folder463) is the local equivalent of Net Share Monitor. After you download it, the program's likely to be lurking in your system tray, so double-click the icon and force it to open. Right-click anywhere in the window and select 'Add folder', then find the folder you want to observe and click OK to add it to the watch list. Alternatively, 'Add path' lets you cast a wider net (for instance, placing every folder in This PC under surveillance).

When a folder is added to FolderMonitor, right-click it to open FolderMonitor Options. Choose the events you want to check for - Created, Changed, Renamed and Deleted. Now,



Place folders under surveillance with FolderMonitor



Set up an automatic alert when someone logs into your computer

when an unscrupulous someone takes remote control, it triggers an unmissable alarm, warning you of changes to any folder that's under surveillance.

When someone logs into your PC

Need to keep your computer under lock and key while you're away? Use Microsoft's Task Scheduler to send an email every time someone logs into your machine.

Ironically, in order to run this, you'll need to turn on 'Less secure apps' (bit.ly/lsa463) for your Google account - as such, we suggest creating a dummy Gmail address specifically for these notifications.

First, download and extract SendEmail (bit.ly/send463). Then, step through the following instructions.

Open Windows Task Scheduler. On the Actions panel, click Create Basic Task and give it a name and description. In the Trigger tab, tick 'When a specific event is logged', then click Next. Under Log, use the drop-down to select Security, and under Source, choose 'Microsoft Windows security auditing'. Type 4624 in the ID box and click Next. On the Action page, check 'Start a

program' and choose SendEmail. In the 'Add arguments' box, type the following, replacing everything in square brackets with your own data: -f [fromemail]@gmail.com -t [toemail]@gmail.com

-u [Subject line, for example Did you log on?] -m [Message, for example Someone's logged onto your computer] -s smtp.gmail.com:587 -xu [fromemail]@gmail.com -xp [fromemail password] -o tls=yes

Once that's done, test the automated alert by locking and unlocking your computer. You should receive an email warning you of the login.

When an app tries to spy on you

Have you ever downloaded a seemingly innocuous app and wondered "Why does it need to access my microphone and camera?". Well, it could be that the developers are spying on you. Even legitimate apps like Facebook have come under fire for supposedly listening in (for targeted advertising reasons, of course).

To take control, check every app's permissions in Settings, then revoke access to sensitive tools such as the microphone, camera, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi and location (or ditch the app entirely if you don't trust it).

For extra protection, you can download D-Vasive (bit.ly/spy463), created by self-proclaimed 'cybersecurity legend' John McAfee. It costs £4.49 but we've yet to find a free alternative that fully replicates D-Vasive's protective security measures, sending alerts every time an app activates smartphone tools that may record, track or otherwise spy on you. Whenever a warning flashes, you can instantly shut that app down. ■



D-Vasive Anti Spy monitors apps that may be watching you

GET ALERTS WHEN ACCOUNTS ARE BREACHED

Is it time to change your username and password - again? It seems like every week brings a fresh hack or cyber-attack to worry about.

Have I Been Pwned (haveibeenpwned.com) cross-references your email address against accounts that have been hacked, stolen and sold on the dark web. As well as searching its database, you can protect yourself against future breaches by setting up



Have you been pwned?

email notifications via bit.ly/pwnme463, so you're informed as soon as the attack happens and can immediately change your login.

For extra security, install the HackNotice extension for Chrome (bit.ly/hackex463).

This handy browser tool tells you when you're visiting a site that's been hacked. You can even set up a watchlist for sites you regularly visit, or those that store personal data.



Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

View and edit photos with no fuss

FastStone's popular free image viewer and editor has a ton of new tools. We talk you through them

FastStone Image Viewer: www.faststone.org | 20 mins | 7, 8, 10

There's a lot more to FastStone Image Viewer than its name suggests. As well as a photo browser, it provides a way to edit and convert files. Its interface isn't particularly attractive, but if you look beyond that you'll find a handy tool that doesn't demand too much from your PC and is packed with features. You can use it to convert or rename selected images in batches, rotate JPEGs without losing

quality, remove metadata, compare images, watch videos, build a musical slideshow and more besides. It supports all the major graphics formats and can even open RAW photo files.

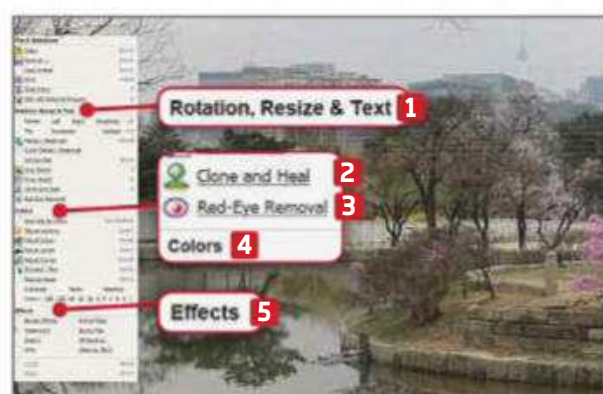
This latest update boosts the software's performance, improves support for the touch interface and makes a number of other useful additions. If you haven't used FastStone Image Viewer in a while, here's what you've been missing.



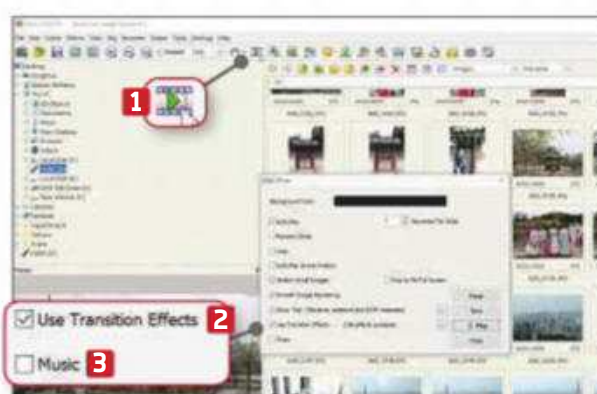
1 To use the image viewer, click a drive or folder **1** to see thumbnails of the photos and videos it contains. **2** Select an image to preview it. **3** Hover your mouse over a thumbnail to see when the photo was taken, as well as its resolution and format. **4**



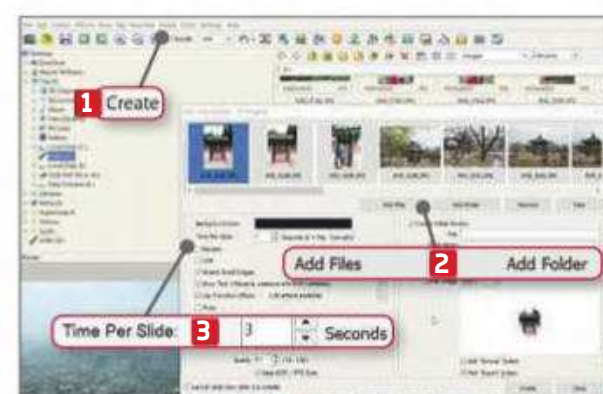
2 Double-click a thumbnail or image preview to open the picture full screen. Menus are hidden on the edges of the screen. Move your mouse to the top to reveal a film strip, **1** to the right to display the file and attributes menu **2** and to the left to show the editing menu. **3** The navigator is at the bottom. **4**



3 From the Edit menu, you can Rotate and Resize text **1** or select the 'Clone and Heal' tool **2** and Red-Eye Removal to fix problems. **3** You can also adjust the colours, **4** levels and lighting, and apply a number of effects, **5** such as making the image look like a sketch or an oil painting.



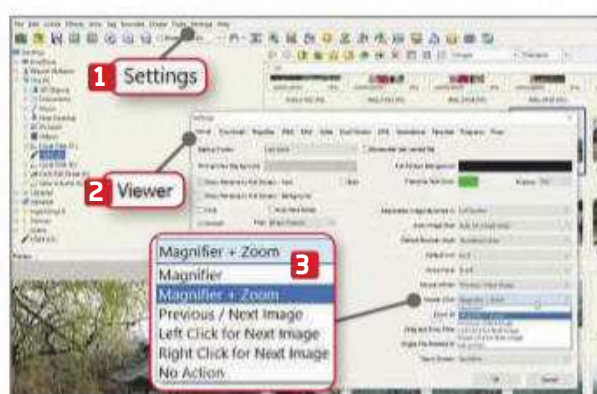
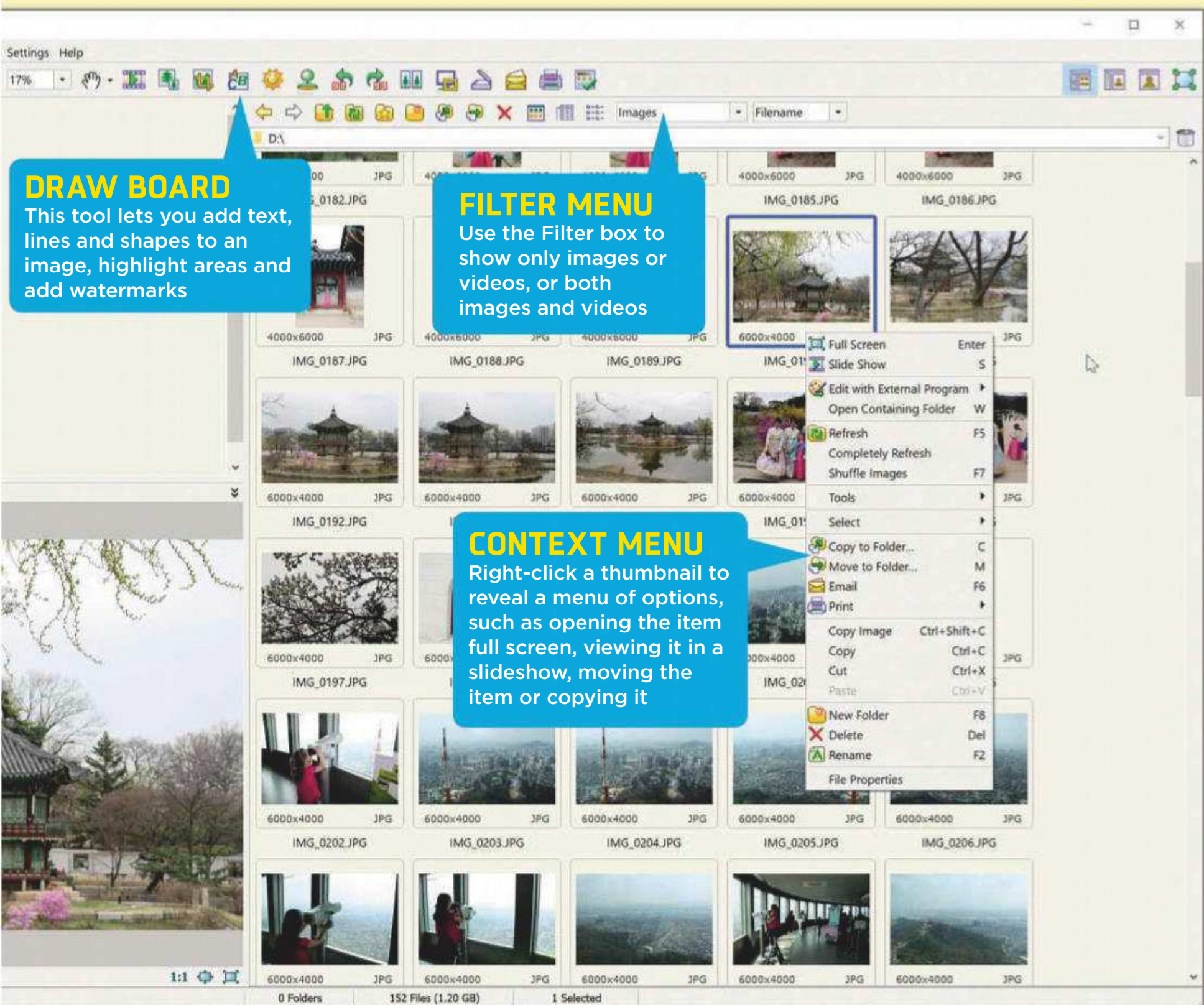
4 To view a slideshow of images and videos in a folder, either select this option from the left-hand menu in full-screen mode or click the Slide Show button in the main interface. **1** You can select which transition effects to use from the 156 on offer, **2** and add music. **3**



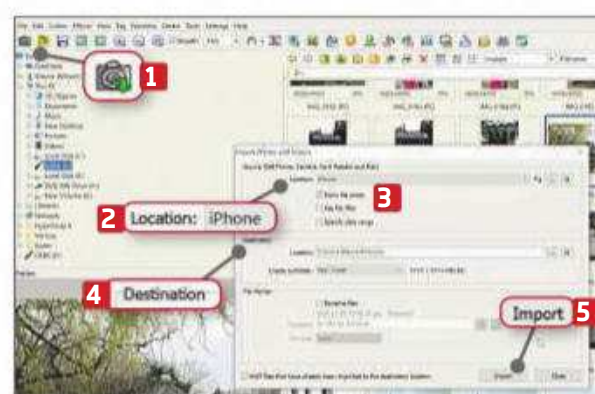
5 The Slide Show Builder in the Create menu **1** gives you many of the same options. To select your images, choose Add Files or Add Folder. **2** You can set the Time Per Slide to anything from a second to an hour (3,600 seconds). **3** Set it to '0' if you prefer to advance the slideshow by manually clicking.

TAG
File tagging makes it easier to track down favourite images. Once enabled, a tick box appears beside every thumbnail





6 Activating full-screen mode selects the magnifier. By default, clicking and holding the mouse button zooms in and lets you pan around the image. If you don't find this action useful, go to Settings, **1** click the Viewer tab **2** and, under Mouse Click, choose a different action. **3**



7 FastStone Image Viewer now lets you import photos and videos from phones, digital cameras and card readers. Connect your device to your PC, then click 'Import Photos and Videos'. **1** Select your device under Location, **2** choose from the options available **3** and pick a destination. **4** Click Import. **5**



8 As well as displaying images, the software can play videos. In full-screen mode, right-click a playing clip to see the menu. Recent additions to the menu include options to Auto-Play Current Video **1** and Loop Current Video. **2** The play bar **3** now appears when you move the mouse.



Get Picture-in-Picture modes across all your programs

PiP Tool: bit.ly/pip463 | 20 mins | Windows Vista +



EXPERT TIP

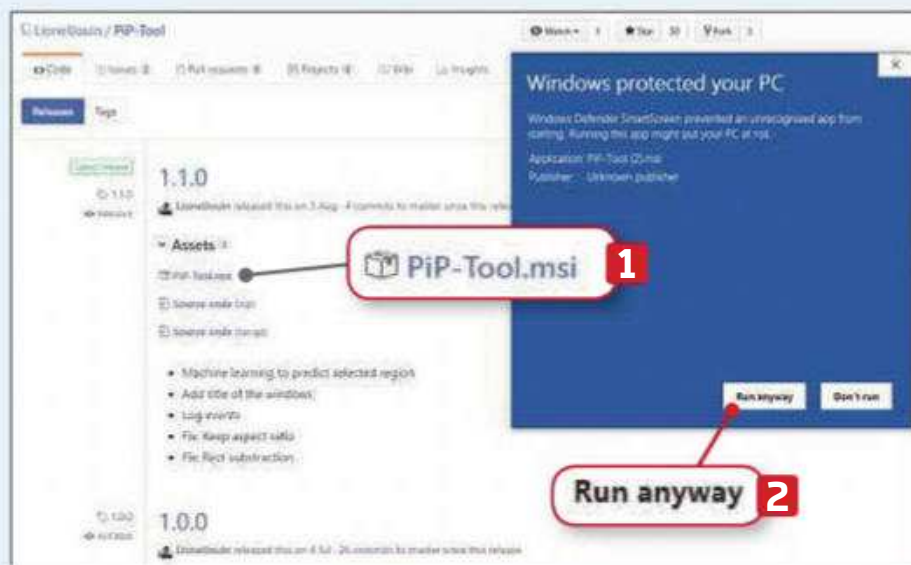
Steve Clark says

PiP Tool doesn't work with minimised windows: if you're watching a picture-in-picture video, you have to keep that window open but hidden on the desktop, or the video stops playing. However, while the PiP window is designed to be 'always on top', it can be minimised. Pin the app to your taskbar by searching for it in the Start bar. Right-click it and when the PiP display is on-screen, click the taskbar icon to hide the window.

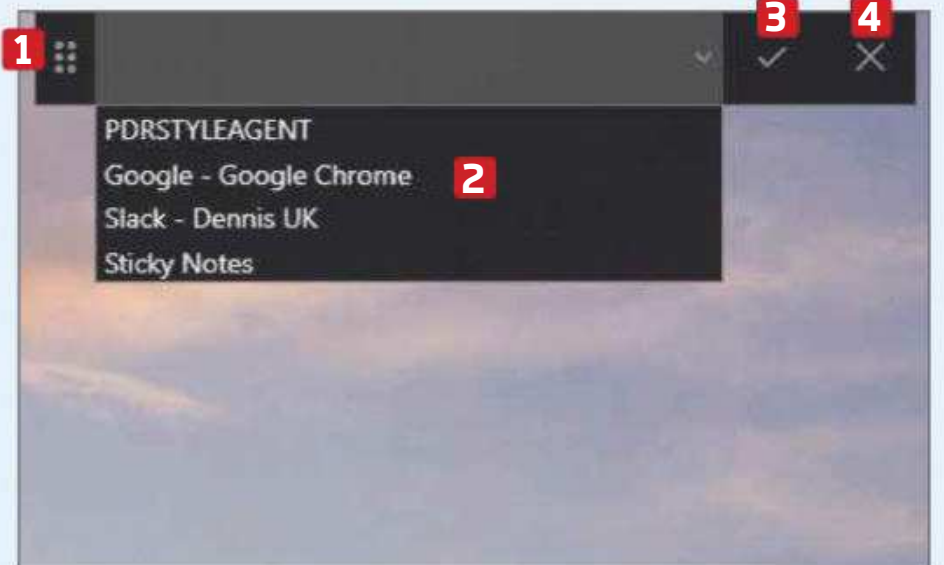
A second screen has many uses, such as displaying messages and info while you work and showing companion apps for games. But if you don't have the room for two screens, picture-in-picture (PiP) mode can deliver a similar experience on a single monitor.

PiP is growing in popularity: Android 8.0 can handle it; Chrome and Opera both feature a miniplayer for YouTube; even Microsoft's Film & TV app has a Mini View option. But it's still limited to a handful of apps and programs.

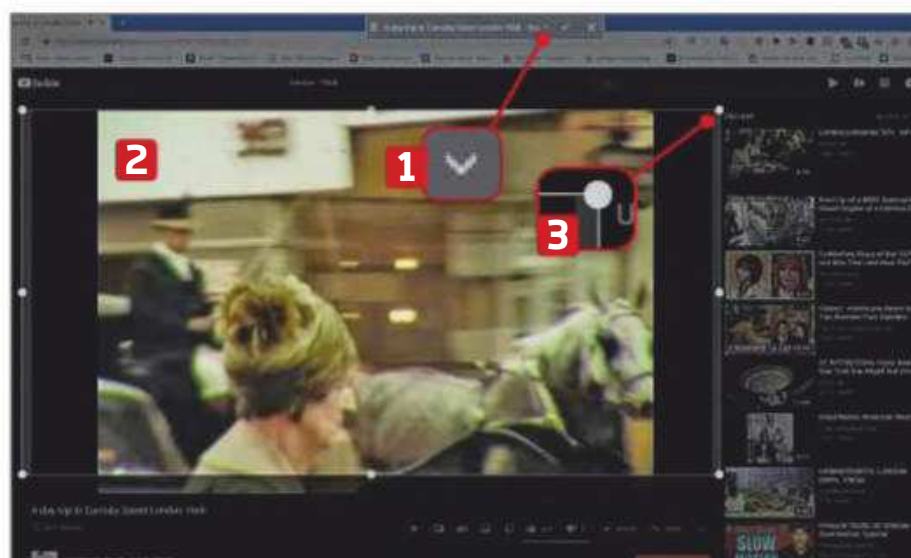
PiP Tool for Windows, available from GitHub (github.com), works with any Windows program. Whether you want to watch a video while you browse or avoid jumping between multiple tabs, this tool lets you customise PiP to suit your needs.



1 Note that GitHub is an experimental environment so you should first back up your PC and always proceed with caution. The easiest way to download and install PiP Tool is to head to bit.ly/piprel463. Here, you'll find the latest version of the installer. Click the MSI file **1** and grant any permissions it requires to get the app up and running. **2**



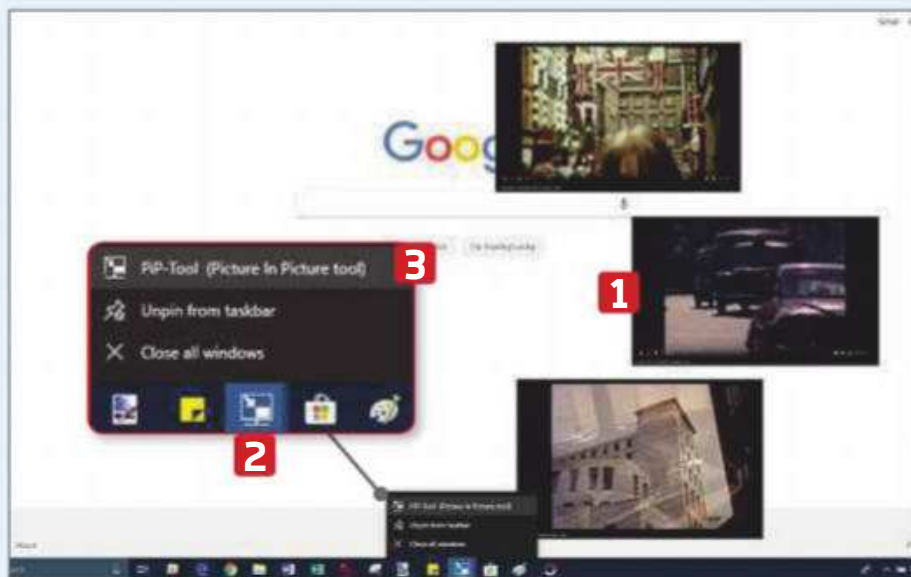
2 Run PiP Tool from the Start menu - you might need to search for it. It opens in a black bar with four options: 'Drag this window', **1** 'Select a window', **2** 'Enter in PiP mode' **3** and Quit. **4** To reposition the bar at the top of the screen, press and hold 'Drag this window', which lets you move it along a lateral plane.



3 Click the arrow **1** to reveal a drop-down menu of open windows. Select which window you want to 'PiP'. Doing so displays a selection box **2** and greys out much of the screen. Drag the box into place, then use the image handles **3** to resize it. The PiP tool predicts the area and size you'll require through machine learning, so, over time, this will change.



4 After highlighting an area, click the tick button **1** or 'Enter in PiP mode' to confirm your selection. Your chosen area shrinks down into a pop-out box. **2** Once it's active, you're able to tab across to other windows or open programs, while the PiP remains on-screen and 'always on top'.



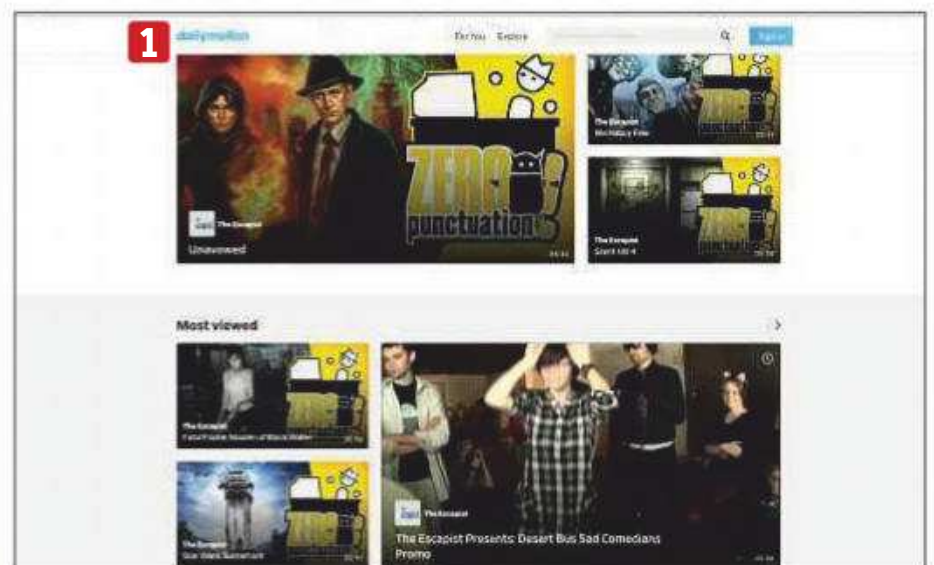
5 To move the window, press and hold anywhere in the pop-out box, then drag and drop it into position. The tool lets you have multiple PiP displays. **1** To do this, open another instance of the app – we found this easiest by right-clicking the icon pinned to the taskbar **2** and choosing 'PiP-Tool (Picture in Picture tool)'. **3** Repeat steps 3 and 4.



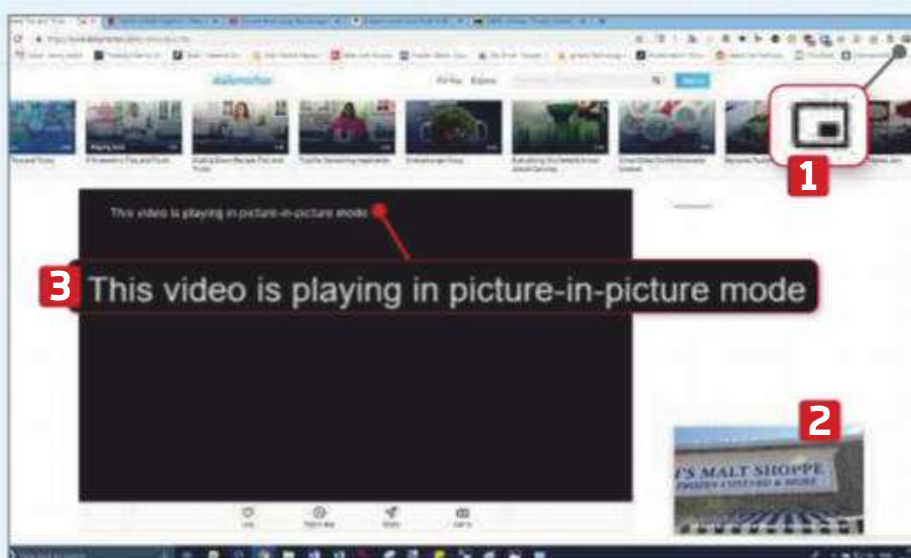
6 Hover your mouse over the PiP box. A ribbon appears above the box **1** with two options: 'Select a new window' **2** and 'Quit', **3** which closes picture-in-picture mode. Click 'Select a new window' to close your current PiP and reopen the first tool **4** to select a new window. Choose a different window or adjust the size or region of your original PiP.



7 There are two further resize options available. Move your cursor to the bottom-right corner to reveal a double-headed arrow **1** that lets you rescale the window. Windows 10's snap mode is also supported: drag the PiP to the far edge of the screen and it grows to take up half the screen. Drag the box back downward to restore the original size.



8 Most people use picture-in-picture to watch videos while performing other tasks. The Chrome extension Picture-in-Picture (bit.ly/pipex463) only works for video sites, but offers more services than Chrome's option. Start by navigating to your chosen video site – we found it works on YouTube, DailyMotion, **1** Netflix, Amazon, Twitter and IMDb.



9 If the video doesn't autoplay, you'll need to manually click Play – the add-on won't work on videos that are paused or aren't playing. Click the browser tool icon (a big screen with a small screen inside). **1** Your video pops out and remains 'always on top'. **2** An alert on the main site reads 'This video is playing in picture-in-picture mode.' **3**



10 Hover over the PiP window to see two options: Play/Pause **1** and Close. **2** Place your mouse in the corner or at the edges of the window to reveal a double-headed arrow for resizing the box. **3** You can also drag and drop the window to your preferred position. If you click 'X' to close the window, the video resumes on the main site.



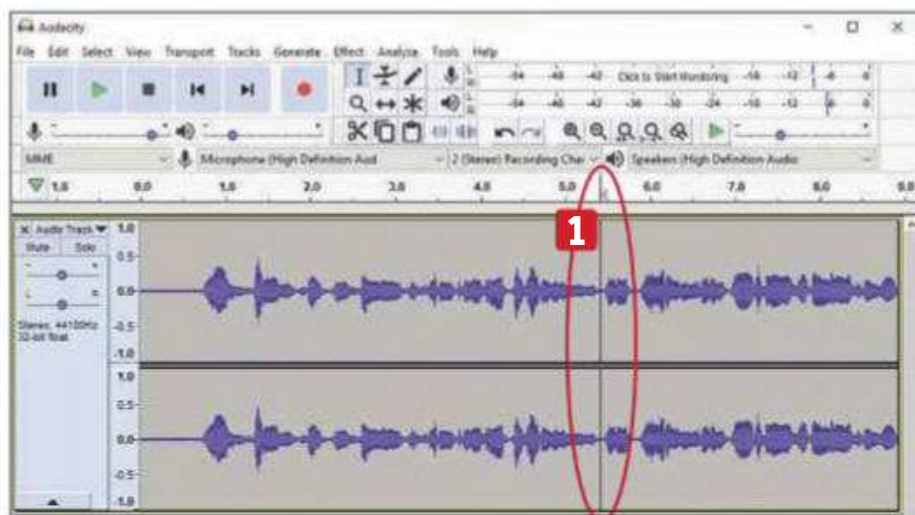
Edit audio files fast with Audacity's new tools

If you create your own audio files, you'll know how time-consuming it can be to go back and edit them, especially if you make a lot of mistakes. With Audacity's new 'Punch and Roll' tools, you can edit as you go, rolling back and

recording over unwanted sections of audio. There are also new Playhead/Recordhead tools that make it quicker and easier to find the bits you want to edit.



Audacity: www.audacityteam.org | 10 mins | 7, 8, 10 Mac OS 10.7+ Linux



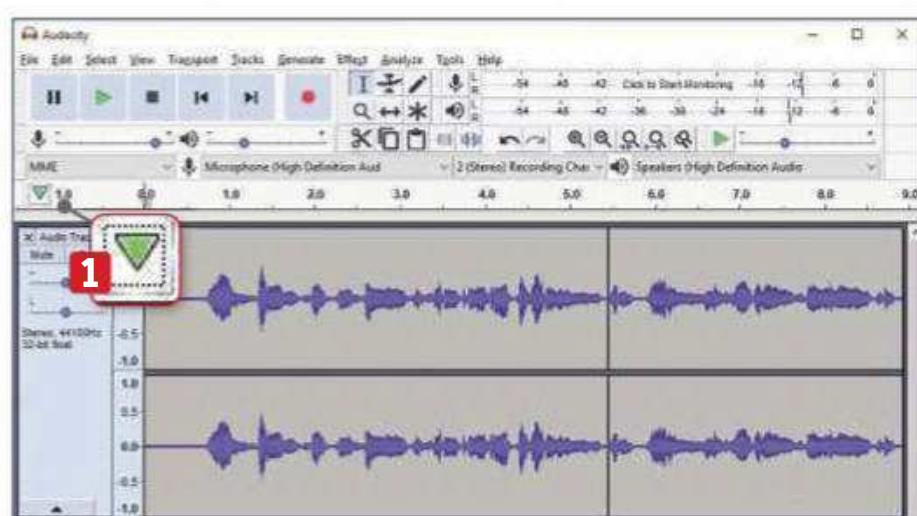
1 Think of 'Punch and Roll' as a similar process to recording to tape – you can rewind to a position before you went wrong and re-record over the top of the error. Stop your current recording, then listen back to it and locate the place where you want to record from and click on it. **1**



2 Open the Transport menu **1** and select Recording, 'Punch and Roll Record' **2** or press Shift+D. The player will go back a few seconds before the position you've marked and start playing. When it gets to the section you've marked, the audio will cut out and you can record over your mistake.



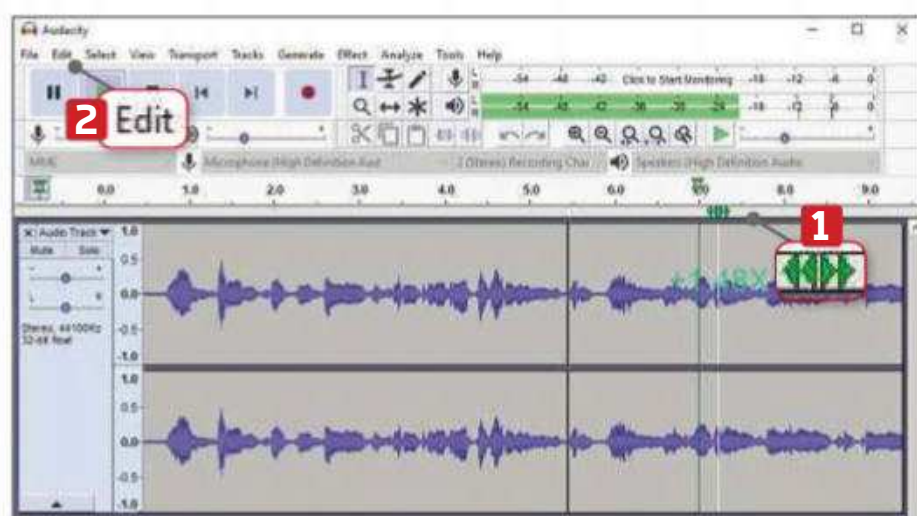
3 The new wave form appears as you record. **1** Everything after the point you marked will be erased from the original. **2** However, if you change your mind, you can choose Undo Record from the Edit menu. **3**



4 By default, when playing back or recording, Audacity moves through the waveform from right to left, refreshing the screen to the next 'page' as it gets to the end. It's easier and smoother if you pin the Playhead/Recordhead, so it's the waveform that scrolls instead. Click the arrow. **1**



5 The head turns into a pin **1** once you start playing back a recording and defaults to the centre of the display. In the latest version, you can move this by clicking and dragging it. We found it was easier to work with if moved to the right, showing more of the waveform we've recorded on the left. **2**



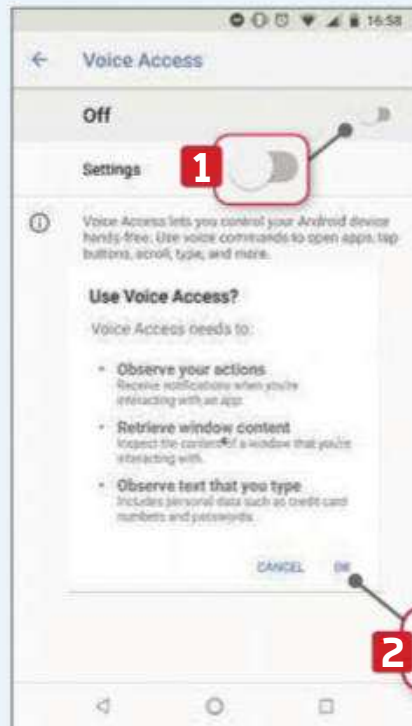
6 The Playhead unpins itself if you're 'scrubbing' (dragging along the grey bar below the numberline to scroll through your audio) **1** but you can now lock it here. Click Edit, **2** Preferences, Playback and untick 'Always scrub unpinned'. Scrubbing makes it quicker to find mistakes and edit the track.



Control your Android device hands-free

Google's Voice Access app lets you navigate your entire phone – from opening apps to scrolling through websites – just by using your voice. And since Google currently offers the smartest, most accurate voice assistant, **Voice Access: bit.ly/va463 | 10 mins | Android 5+**

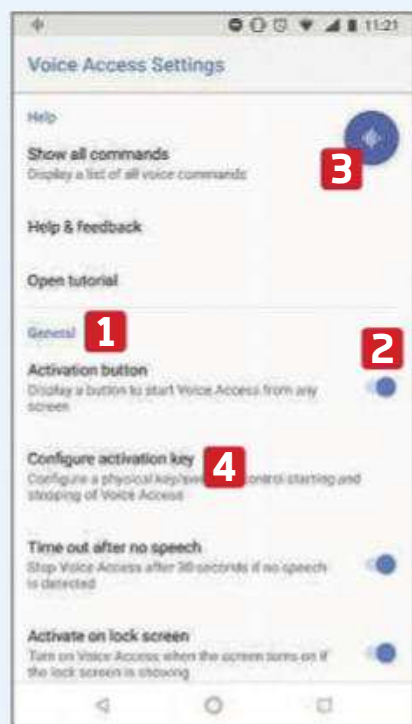
it makes controlling your Android smartphone a breeze. For a full list of available commands, visit bit.ly/command463 or open the app and select 'Show all commands.'



1 When you first launch the app, you're prompted to enable Voice Access in Accessibility Settings – you'll need to use your hands to do this! Tap OK to be taken to the Accessibility area. Tap Voice Access and toggle the switch to On. **1** When the permissions are displayed, tap OK **2** to confirm.



2 After granting additional permissions, such as phone access, you're walked through a tutorial. Follow each of the five steps. **1** These present the prompts you can use to navigate your phone **2** after using the wake words "OK Google". This also familiarises you with the app's 'number label' layout. **3**



3 Using "OK Google" requires Voice Match – turn this on in the Google Home app (bit.ly/home463). Alternatively, pull down the notification bar and tap Voice Access Settings. Under General, **1** switch on the 'Activation button' **2** to add a permanent icon **3** to your screen. Tap 'Configure activation key' **4** to select a physical button that launches the app.



4 Start Voice Access using one of the three available methods – voice, button or icon. **1** At the top of the screen, the dots **2** show that the app is listening. By saying any on-screen number, **3** Voice Access taps the area and opens the app. Your voice-selection is displayed next to the bouncing Google dots. **4**



5 Your spoken requests are confirmed in the top-right corner. **1** Most actions and voice commands, such as "scroll right" or "open [app]", are instant. However, apps resting in the dock or quick-launch area **2** offer additional options when selected. **3** These actions traditionally require pressing and holding the icon.



6 You can unlock your phone without touching it, as long as you use PIN unlock. Toggle on 'Unlock with Voice Match' via the Google app settings (bit.ly/goog463). **1** Open Voice Access, **2** then choose 'Activate on lock screen'. When locked, say "OK Google". Random words are assigned to each number on the PIN panel for a secure voice-unlock method.

Weekend Project

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

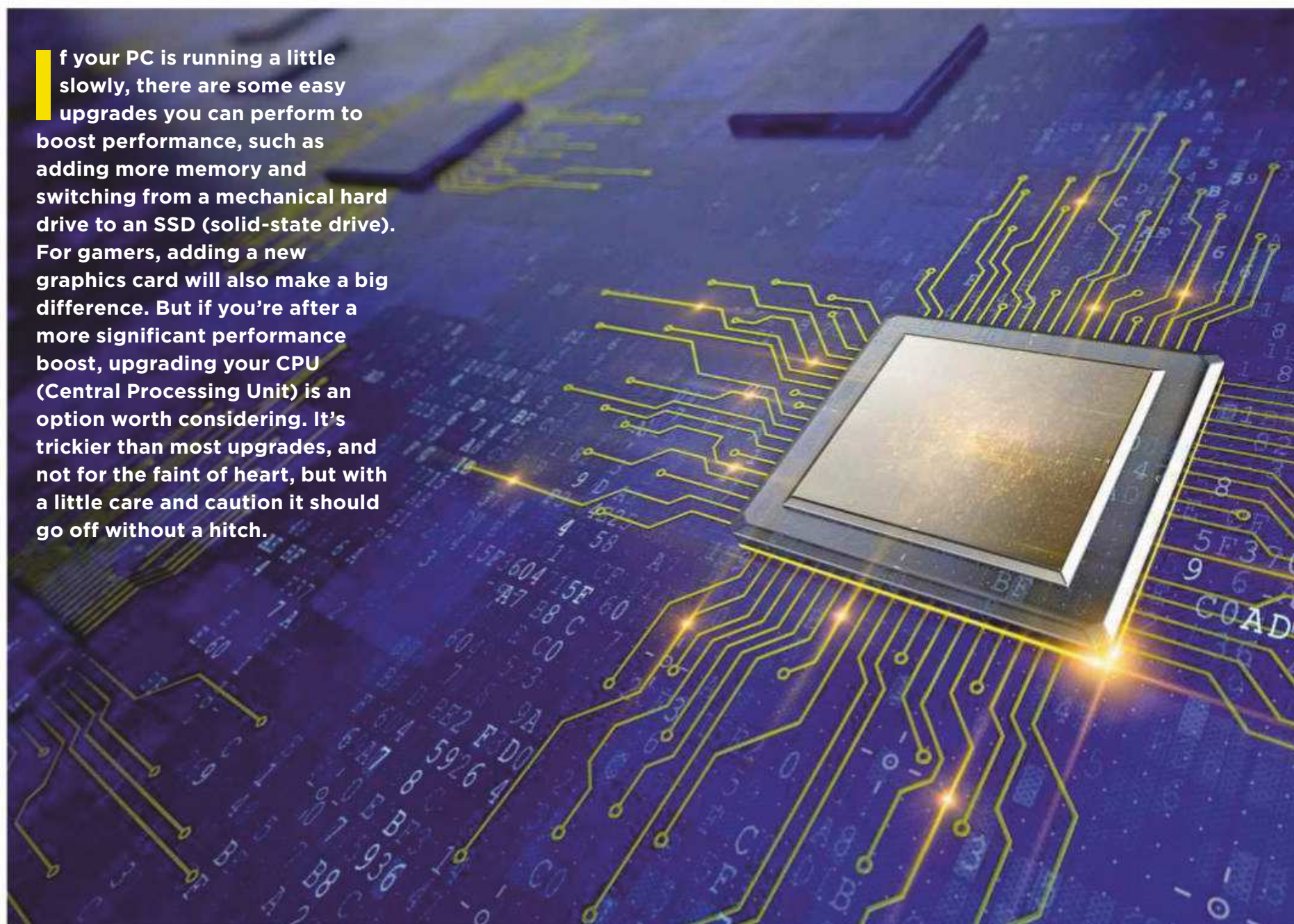


How to...

Upgrade your PC's processor

Wayne Williams shows you how to get a significant speed boost from your PC by upgrading the CPU

If your PC is running a little slowly, there are some easy upgrades you can perform to boost performance, such as adding more memory and switching from a mechanical hard drive to an SSD (solid-state drive). For gamers, adding a new graphics card will also make a big difference. But if you're after a more significant performance boost, upgrading your CPU (Central Processing Unit) is an option worth considering. It's trickier than most upgrades, and not for the faint of heart, but with a little care and caution it should go off without a hitch.



What you need

First, you'll need a new CPU. You can choose a processor from Intel or AMD, but which one you go for will depend on your motherboard and the type of chip it supports. And while you might be able to simply replace your current CPU with a newer and faster model, your existing motherboard might not be compatible with the latest choices, which means you may need to upgrade that, too.

Adding a new motherboard at the same time as a new CPU isn't much more difficult – once you've attached your processor, it just means screwing the board into place and attaching cables. However, you need to make sure it fits your case, otherwise you'll end up having to buy a new one of those, too. And there may be other upgrades involved because a new board might require different RAM memory modules, depending on the age

of your old setup, or you may choose to add some extra memory for an even bigger performance boost.

Even if you don't upgrade your motherboard, you will need a CPU cooler and some thermal paste (also known as Thermal Interface Material – or TIM) because CPUs can get incredibly hot, and heat and electrical components aren't a good mix. We show you how to upgrade an Intel processor in our Mini



To install a CPU on an AMD AM4 system, you first need to lift the handle next to the socket



Apply the thermal paste to your chip in a cross shape

Workshop, right.

When doing any work inside your PC, make sure it's switched off at the wall but still plugged in. Earth yourself by touching something that's grounded, such as a radiator, or – even better – wear an anti-static wrist strap (bit.ly/eb463).

Upgrade an AMD processor

The method for upgrading an AMD chip is much the same as for upgrading an Intel one – it's just the enclosure that's slightly different. All you need to do is lift the handle next to the socket, then carefully drop in the CPU, making sure the triangle on the processor points at the one on the board. Push down the handle to lock the chip firmly into place.

Install a cooler

Your cooler may come with Thermal Interface Material (TIM) already applied, but if it doesn't, you will need to apply it yourself using a

syringe. It's very straightforward – just apply the paste in a thin cross shape from corner to corner on your processor's heat spreader. The pressure from the mount will spread it out across the chip.

Once you've done this, you need to attach the CPU cooler itself. This can be the most awkward part, depending on how much room you have on your motherboard, and whether you're installing an air or liquid cooling system. We show you how to install an air cooler in our Mini Workshop on page 61.

Troubleshooting

Provided you've followed the steps correctly, the CPU should power up without problems. If it doesn't, check that all the cables are tightly secured and that anything you removed previously, such as the memory, has been replaced correctly. If that doesn't fix the problem, try reseating the CPU and see if that works.



AMD's Ryzen CPUs are designed to deliver high-performance gaming



MINI WORKSHOP Install an Intel processor



1 The exact installation process may vary depending on your system, but most PCs require you to push down on the front of the handle next to the CPU, then lift it up, unlocking the CPU socket protector. Next, raise the cover, revealing the socket you'll be inserting the chip into.







2 The next step is the trickiest part. Check the socket and the processor for the little triangle **1** which denotes where 'pin 1' goes. With this as your guide, carefully lower the CPU into the socket from the side and drop it into position. It should go in without any problems. Don't force it if it doesn't.



3 Once the chip is in place, lower the cover and make sure to slide the edge under the screw at the front. **1** Lower the handle **2** back down and lock it into place. Your CPU is now in place and secure. The final stage is to add a CPU cooler to keep the processor from overheating.

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4		Virgin Media: Player Bundle + Fibre Broadband + Weekend Calls	£32.00 (£51 after 12 months)	12 months	108Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£384.00

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CAN I UPGRADE A LAPTOP CPU?

In short, probably not. A lot of modern laptops have the CPU soldered to the motherboard (what's known as a BGA or Ball Grid Array package). Others, such as Microsoft's Surface laptop, are so filled with glue it's pretty much impossible to get inside them without destroying the components.

That's not to say that you definitely can't upgrade your laptop's processor – it just depends on what's inside. So how can you check if the CPU is upgradable or not? Well, one option is to take the laptop apart and have a look – although a software tool such as HWiNFO (www.hwinfo.com) offers



HWiNFO should tell you if your laptop processor is capable of being upgraded

a much easier solution and doesn't require you to open the case. Install the free version on your PC (there's also a

portable version available) and run it. Expand the Motherboard section on the left, and expand SMBIOS DMI. Click Processor in the left-hand column, then look for Processor in the right-hand column: if it says BGA, you won't be able to upgrade it; if it says ZIF (Zero Insertion Force) then you probably can. It may also simply state Unknown, which isn't very helpful, but if you click the processor name under 'Central Processor(s)' on the left, and look under CPU Platform (or in the floating System Summary box), you may find some clues because BGA chips will be listed as such.

Overclock your CPU

Provided your PC's processor is working properly, you can set about eking out a little extra performance. The standard clock speed of the CPU is calculated by taking the base clock and applying a multiplier to it. For example, if your base clock is 100MHz and your multiplier is 35, your CPU frequency will be 100MHz x 35, which equals 3,500MHz, or 3.5GHz. By increasing the multiplier, you increase the CPU frequency, speeding it up. You may also need to tweak the CPU core voltage (VCORE) to ensure everything remains stable.

The easiest way to overclock the CPU is to go into the BIOS by rebooting your

PC and pressing whatever key is required to enter setup. Look for the performance or overclocking options, and find the CPU Multiplier settings. Only overclock your processor by small increments (start by increasing it by one point – such as from 35 to 36), and make sure everything still runs properly. If your system becomes unstable, drop the figure back down again. ■



You will probably be able to overclock the processor directly by going into your PC's BIOS



MINI WORKSHOP | Install an air cooler



1 The first step is to remove any fans that are attached to your air cooler. This will make it much easier to install. You now need to attach the cooler to the mounting system around the CPU socket, screwing in each corner a bit at a time, to make sure it's not lopsided.



2 Once you've screwed in the heatsink, reattach the fans you removed previously. Make sure the power cables face downward. The rear of the fan (the plastic bars in front of the blade) should face the back of your case and the back of your motherboard. If this isn't possible, direct the airflow upwards.



3 The final stage is to plug the cooler's power connector into the CPU cooler fan header on the motherboard. Some advanced coolers require additional power from a Molex or SATA connection. Finish putting everything back together (re-attach any cables, memory, drives and the like), then power up your PC.

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Use an old PC to create your own Spotify

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Web User Masterclass

Make your PC's mouse easier to use and customise the pointer with fun designs

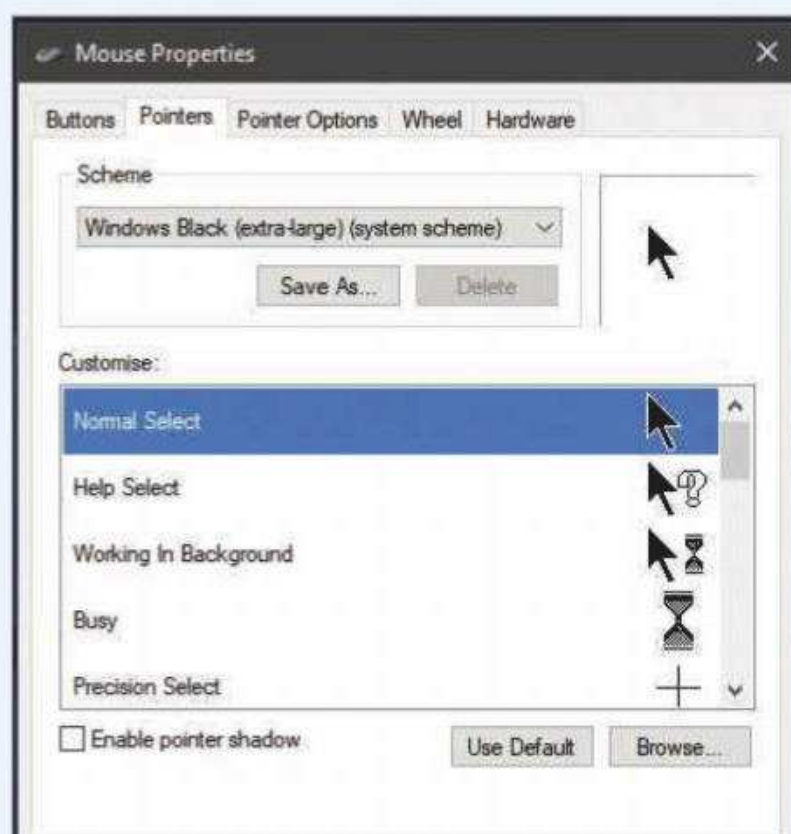
Change your mouse pointer

It's easy to customise the look of Windows by changing the background image and colours, but did you know that you can also change the appearance of the mouse pointer? Open the Control Panel and, in 'Small icons' view, click Mouse. Select the Pointers tab and click the scheme at the top. A menu lists different collections of mouse pointers.

Mouse schemes include standard, inverted and black versions, in normal, large and extra-large sizes. Select a scheme to preview the available pointers and click Apply to make the change. Try each scheme in the list to see which one works best for you.

The mouse pointer changes depending on various conditions. For example, a 'busy' indicator in some schemes is denoted by a circle and in others is represented as an hourglass.

Switch to an alternative mouse pointer scheme, such as this high-contrast black one



Solve wireless pointer problems

Sometimes, the mouse pointer becomes difficult to control and moving the mouse makes the pointer on the screen move erratically. This can make it difficult to position and unresponsive. If you're using a wireless mouse, this might be caused by a weak battery. Mouse batteries last a surprisingly long time but they don't last forever. As soon as you start noticing problems, swap the batteries for fresh ones and see if it fixes the problem.

Clean up the fluff

If you have an older mouse, it may still use a rubber ball in an enclosure in the base, which will pick up a lot of dirt and fluff. To clean it, flip the mouse on its back, remove the cover that holds the

ball in place and take it out. Scrape off any dirt and fluff that's stuck to the rollers and give the inside a good clean. Put the ball and cover back and the mouse will work like new.

Modern mice are optical and shine a coloured light on the work surface to detect movement, but they can still be impeded by fluff and dirt. If there are problems controlling the pointer and you've ruled out the batteries, turn the mouse over and clean it. The mouse slides over pads on the corners, which may be clogged. Also clean the cover that the light shines through.



Mice are susceptible to gathering grime but older models can be dismantled and thoroughly cleaned

The desk surface or mouse mat can also affect the responsiveness of your mouse. Clean the desk under the mouse with a damp cloth to eliminate sweat and dirt left behind from your hand, because this can also make mouse movements harder to detect.

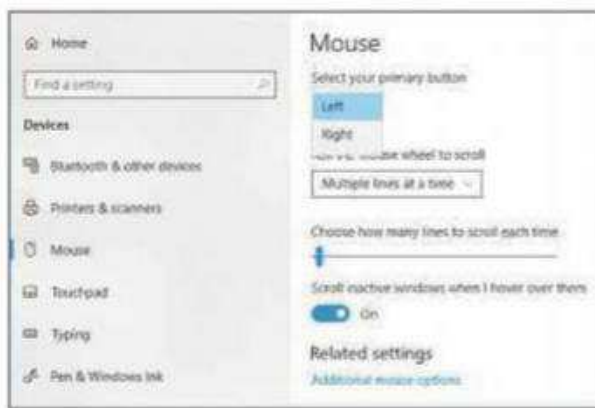
Customise your mouse buttons

We often talk about left- and right-clicking items in Windows, but if you're left handed, you might prefer to think of them as the primary and secondary buttons. The default

mouse setup is for the left button to be the primary, with the right as secondary. If you are left-handed, however, you might want to reverse the order of primary and secondary.

Open the Control Panel, go to 'Small icons' view and click Mouse. Select the Buttons tab. At the top, there is an option to 'Switch primary and secondary buttons'. We will continue to tell you to left- or right-click things, but remember that these are reversed.

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.



If you move the mouse over to your other hand, you can swap the buttons over, too

A simple mouse is symmetrical and fits either hand, but some specialised models are shaped for a better fit and a right-handed model might feel awkward if used on the left. However, you can get left-handed mice that are ergonomically shaped to be used with the left hand. Search Google, Amazon and eBay to find them.

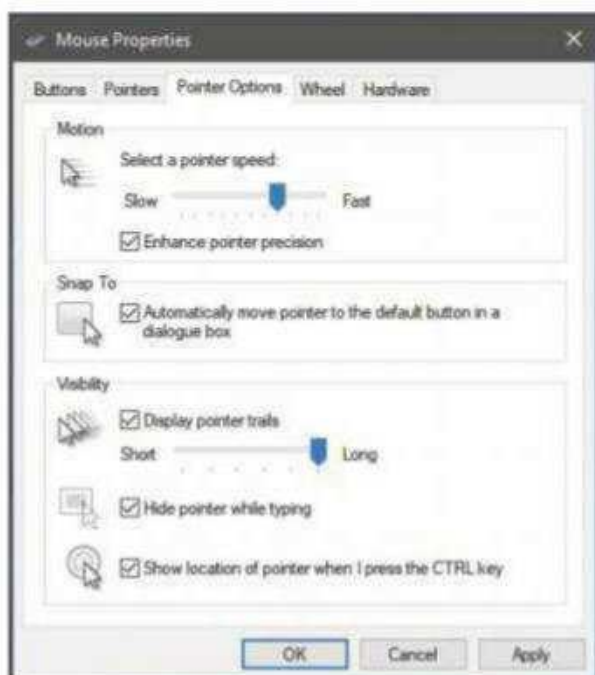
Slow-click your mouse

If you find it difficult to double-click and your attempts sometimes don't register, go to Control Panel, Mouse and on the Buttons tab, use the slider to set the double-click speed. Drag it to the Slow or Fast end, and test it by double-clicking the icon next to the slider.

Improve mouse visibility

Go to Control Panel, Mouse and select the Pointer Options tab. In the Visibility section, you'll see an option to display pointer trails and another to show the pointer location when the Ctrl key is pressed. Select them and click Apply to try them. You may find they improve the visibility of your pointer on the screen.

There's also an option to snap the mouse pointer to the default button whenever one appears in a window. This means you don't need to find the mouse or position it – just click. It's a useful time saver.



Use the Pointer Options to make the mouse easier to see

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Replace the mouse pointers

Windows provides a range of different mouse-pointer schemes, but they're all a bit boring. A web search for mouse pointers provides many more exciting alternatives and sites such as Cursors-4U (www.cursors-4u.com) contain some great ones. Browse the site and find a collection of mouse pointers you like. Download the ZIP file and extract the contents.

Open the Control Panel, click Mouse and select the Pointers tab. Select the first pointer, click the Browse button and find and select the first pointer in the collection you downloaded. Continue by selecting the second pointer in the window, clicking browse and choosing the second pointer you downloaded, and so on. After assigning all the pointers, click Save As in the Scheme section to save the changes, then click Apply.



Download mouse pointers from the web and create your own custom scheme

Hover to activate

Clicking one of several open windows on your desktop makes it the active one. If that window is partially covered, clicking it brings it to the foreground. With a few tweaks, you can achieve the same result just by hovering your mouse over the window and not having to click anything.

Open Control Panel, choose the 'Ease of Access Centre', then 'Make the mouse easier to use'. Under 'Make it easier to manage windows', tick the box 'Activate a window by hovering over it with the mouse'. Click Apply, then open a few windows on the desktop and move the mouse over them to see how it works. It takes a

bit of getting used to but you may end up preferring it.

Ditch the mouse

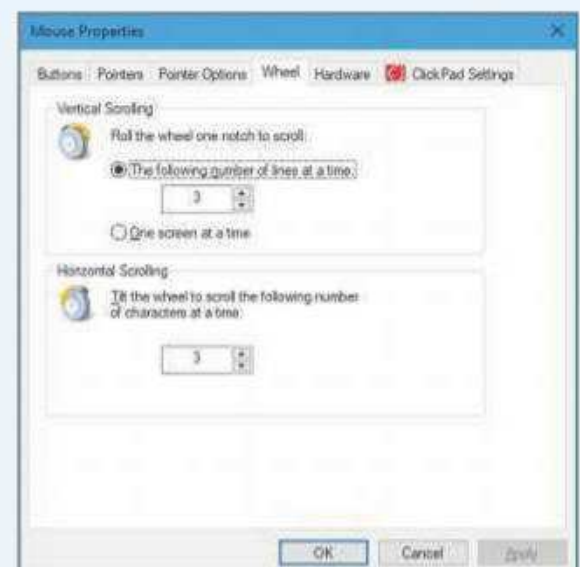
If you prefer to keep your hands on the keyboard instead of reaching for the mouse, it's possible to control the pointer with your keyboard. Open the Control Panel's 'Ease of Access Centre', then choose 'Make the mouse easier to use'. Enable 'Turn on Mouse Keys' and click 'Set up Mouse Keys'. On a full-size desktop keyboard, use the arrow keys on the numeric keypad on the right to move the pointer. Use the sliders to set the speed and acceleration.

Spin, click and tilt the wheel

Your mouse will have two buttons (left and right) and possibly a wheel in the middle. This wheel can sometimes be clicked to operate as a third button if the software you are using is designed to use a middle click. Try clicking the wheel and pushing up and down on a web page in Chrome, for example.

If the mouse wheel can be tilted to the left or right, this provides extra functions. Push the wheel sideways to tilt it. This feature is less common but try it, because you might have a mouse that supports it.

Open the Control Panel, open 'Small icons view', and click Mouse. Select the Wheel tab. In this section, you can set the number of lines a web page or document scrolls when you spin the mouse wheel. You may also see horizontal scrolling options that allow you to set the number of characters you scroll left or right when you tilt the mouse wheel in that direction.



Some mouse wheels tilt and can act as buttons. Set the options here

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



NETWORKING

Share files between Windows 10 PCs

Q Since the Windows 10 1803 update, I've had problems connecting to other computers on my local network. I've searched the internet and it seems to be a widespread problem, but none of the solutions I've tried has worked. I want to copy files from one Windows 10 PC to another, but I can't.

After following some suggested changes, I can now see my other computers, but Windows 10 keeps showing an error message saying the connection isn't available. I know that's not true because I can ping the other computers and connect to them using a Windows 7 PC – so it must be something to do with Windows 10.

I'm running Windows 10 Home and Pro on various PCs, along with a couple of Windows 7 Pro PCs. All of them use Norton Security, which I've tried disabling. I've also added the physical addresses of the various computers to the Norton Security firewall as trusted machines.

Peter J Bullous, via email

A On all your computers, open the Control Panel and click Windows Defender Firewall. Make sure you're connected to a private network, because sharing options are severely restricted for public networks for security reasons. It's best to turn off the firewall when setting up network connections because it rules out one possible cause of problems. Click 'Turn Windows Defender Firewall on or off'. Also, disable the firewall in any other security software.

Open the Control Panel, choose 'Network and Sharing Centre', then click 'Change advanced sharing settings'. The Private settings should be displayed. Select 'Turn on network discovery' and 'Turn on automatic setup of network-connected devices'.



Enable the sharing options in 'Network and Sharing Centre'

Turn on 'file and printer sharing'.

Expand the All Networks section, select 'Turn on sharing so that anyone with network access...' and click 'Use 128-bit encryption to help protect file sharing connections'. Select 'Turn off password protected sharing'. Save the changes and restart Windows.

This should allow one computer to connect to another and access the C:\Users\Public folder to exchange files. If there's a problem, try selecting 'Turn on password protected sharing' and create a user account on each computer. When connecting to a computer, you will be asked to log in with the username and password.

Sometimes computers refuse to connect to each other, no matter what, and one workaround is to use online storage such as OneDrive (onedrive.live.com). On any computer you sign into with your Microsoft ID (which can be a Windows, Outlook, OneDrive or Xbox login), the OneDrive folder is synced. Files put in OneDrive on one computer appear on all other computers that are signed in with the same account. It's one way to transfer files but its speed depends on having a good internet connection for both downloads and uploads.

If you don't want to create an account on each computer, go to the OneDrive website, log in and download files to your computer. You can also create a shared OneDrive folder that any of your accounts can access.

EMAIL

Stop Facebook emails

Q I switched to Outlook.com for my email a couple of months ago, which I use in conjunction with the Windows 10 Mail app. I'm updating all my online accounts with my new address and it has mostly worked fine, but there's a problem with Facebook. It seems that every post and update on Facebook now appears in my Outlook inbox. This didn't happen with my old email, so is it a problem with Outlook?

Tom Collins, via email

A If you're receiving emails from Facebook, it's because Facebook is set to send them – it has nothing to do with Outlook.com. It's possible that a rule was set up in your previous email account to automatically delete them on arrival, which is why you weren't seeing them before the switch. You can create a rule in Outlook to delete them, but there's a better solution.

Go to Facebook, click the down arrow in the top-left corner and choose Settings. Click Notifications in the menu on the left, then click Email. There are more than 50 different events that can trigger an email, such as posts from friends, posts you are tagged with, likes on your posts and so on. Turn them all off if you don't want Facebook to send you emails, or just turn on the most important ones.

All those notifications can be displayed on your phone or tablet, and on your desktop computer when Chrome is being used to browse the web. These options can be disabled or enabled as you prefer, too.



Switch off any notifications from Facebook that you don't want



GENERAL PC

Make text easier to read

Q Recently, web pages on my PC became almost unreadable. The characters were sort of 'broken up' – a bit like writing on a brick with a stick of chalk. I had just updated Chrome to version 70 and, thinking this might be the problem, I tried Edge – but it was the same. It didn't seem to affect anything other than these browsers.

Fortunately, it was much better after restarting Windows. What went wrong and is this a sign of future problems?

Neil Dawson, via email

A Something may have gone wrong with the web fonts used by browsers, either when Windows started or during the Chrome update. Sometimes one-off problems can be cured by restarting Windows. As a side note, restarting is a more thorough reset than simply switching off and back on again because in the latter option, Windows goes into a sort of sleep mode so that it can restart quicker.

There are some general checks you can make to ensure that Windows is working properly and some font tweaks you can make to improve the appearance of text on screen. Right-click the Start button, select 'Windows PowerShell (Admin)' and, in the window, type `sfc /scannow` and press Enter. This checks all Windows files and repairs any problems it finds.

Open the Control Panel and, in 'Small icons view', click Fonts, 'Font settings', then 'Restore default font settings'. Return to Fonts and click 'Adjust ClearType text'. Make sure the feature is turned on, then follow the steps to choose the optimum font display for your PC's screen.



Use the ClearType tool to choose the best way to display fonts on your screen

GENERAL PC

Change the photo viewer

Q The Windows 10 Photos app won't let me change the default to another media viewer, such as VLC or Windows

Media Player. It only lets me change to an editing program, such as Photoshop Elements or the Paint app.

When I removed Photos from Windows, Paint was assigned as the default tool for opening images. I've tried to change this but Photos and Paint won't budge. If I open a folder and right-click 'Open with', it opens the image in my preferred program. However, it reverts back to the default after I close it.

I've run System Restore, which simply reinstalled the Photos app. I used the Command Prompt to check for hard-drive errors but nothing was found. I even spent three hours with Microsoft support. They reinstalled Windows 10 but all that happened was I had to catch up with updates from April onwards.

Arthur Brookes, via email

A Default applications and file associations are similar but not quite the same: a default application can be set, such as for photo editing, but a different program can be associated with a specific file type, such as JPEG images. Open the Settings app (Windows+i), click Apps and select 'Default apps' on the left, then click the selected Photo Viewer on the right. You can make any program in the list the default application by selecting it.

If you associate an application with a file type, simply double-clicking a file opens it in that application. There are a couple of ways to change associations and one is through Settings, Apps, 'Default apps'. Scroll down and click 'Choose applications by file type'. Every type of file is listed. Click one, such as JPEG, to select an application from a list.

When selecting default applications or file associations, Windows 10 might not list all the programs on your computer and push Windows Store apps instead. If you don't see VLC as an option, for example, try installing

the Windows Store version. It should then appear on the list.

The best way to set file associations is to right-click a file in Explorer (such as a JPEG image), select 'Open with', then 'Choose another app'. You may need to expand the list, then scroll down to the bottom and click 'More



Use 'Open with' to select a program to launch a particular file

apps' to see everything. Tick the box 'Always use this app to open .jpg files' and select the app you want to use.

A major Windows 10 update may reset the file associations back to the Photos app. You can't stop this – you just have to switch it back again.

SOFTWARE

Solve WhatsApp silence

Q I have the WhatsApp app for Windows running on my PC. However, I can't record anything and the microphone can't be accessed or found. I ran the Recording Audio troubleshooter in the Settings app but it didn't find any problems with the microphone.

Sarah Morgan, via email

A This could be a permissions problem, which we've seen before with some Windows Store apps. Open Settings (Windows+i) and click Privacy. Find Microphone in the list of items on the left and make sure access for the device is on. Scroll down the list of apps on the right and turn on the switch next to any app that needs microphone access, such as WhatsApp.

EMAIL

Ignore an unwanted email account

Q I discovered an Outlook email account that's been set up with my name and login details. I didn't create it and I don't need it. Could this be a case of identity theft?

Jack Wilkins, via email

A Microsoft provides multiple web services that you access from one account. If you created a Microsoft ID

for a Windows 10 user account, and you use Xbox or OneDrive, you'll automatically get an Outlook email account, too. Google and Apple work in a similar way: if you use Google Drive or Google Photos, for example, you automatically get a Gmail account.

If you don't want the Outlook email account, just ignore it. You don't have to use it.



This fortnight, Roland has been trying alternatives to Google+ now that the social-network experiment has ended

Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. Please send questions and answers to webuser@dennis.co.uk



TOP TIP

SOFTWARE

Find free versions of paid-for plugins in Paint.net

When I was running Windows 7, I had the free Nik plugins (nikcollection.dxo.com) for Paint.net (www.getpaint.net). This included Silver Efex Pro 2, which I frequently used for my black and white photography. I lost this when I updated to Windows 10 and searching online, I found that it's no longer available for free. Delving into Paint.net's Effects folder, I could see the plugin, but it just wouldn't appear in the drop-down menu.

I went back into the program files and clicked the Nik files. I was asked if I wanted to install them and, after clicking Yes, I got back the menu box I had before, which let me open it within Paint.net. I clicked Silver Efex



Bring previously free plugins back to Paint.net

Pro 2 and it opened! The first thing I did was pin it to the taskbar, so I can use it as a standalone program.

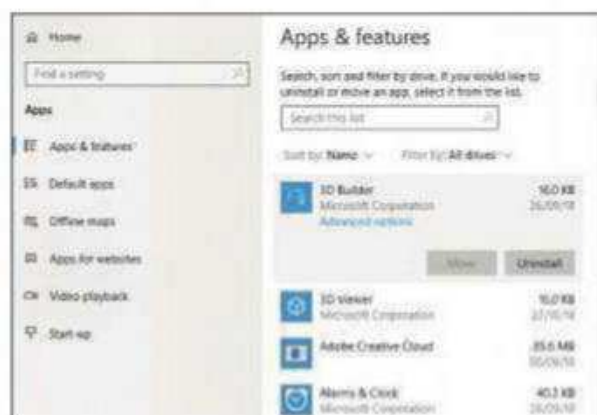
I'm sure this trick will work with other programs in the Nik package. One word of caution, however: when you first open it, you're asked if you want to update. Unfortunately, you can only update if you purchase the new program.

Colin South, via email

GENERAL PC

Uninstall unwanted Windows apps

If you don't find all Windows 10's bundled apps useful, there's no reason to keep them. Unfortunately, not all of them can be removed, so you have to try each one to see if it's possible. Go to the Settings app (Windows+i) and click Apps. All the installed apps are listed and clicking one expands it to show the Uninstall button. Remove any you don't



Some (but not all) bundled Windows apps can be uninstalled if you don't need them

want by clicking its Uninstall option.

I read that the latest Windows update allows more apps to be removed than previously, so it's worth checking these regularly.

Adam Watson, via email

APPS

Track deliveries on your iPhone

Sarah Cayman wrote to you in Issue 462 (bit.ly/webuser462) regarding parcel-tracking apps on Android. There is a similar app for iPhones called Arrive (bit.ly/arrive463) which, by the sounds of it, works a little better than Android's ParcelTrack. Sign in with your Google address and the app scans the inbox for tracking information, which is relayed through the app and notifications. If you don't have a Google account or don't want to risk the app abusing your email, input the parcel tracking number to see where your delivery is.

Michael Deed, via email

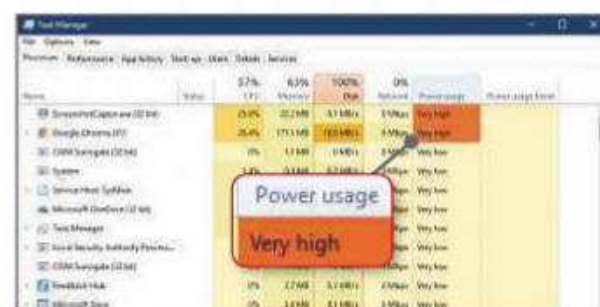
GENERAL PC

Identify battery hogs

I switched from a desktop PC to a laptop because I like being able to use a computer while sitting on the sofa. I noticed after the latest Windows 10 update that Task Manager now shows the power usage of apps. Pressing Shift+Ctrl+Esc opens Task Manager and reveals two extra columns on the Processes tab: 'Power usage' – which shows the current battery power usage by apps; and 'Power usage trend' – which is a long-term power usage indicator.

You can now see which apps are draining the battery in a Live Task Manager window. If you spot the battery level falling fast, Task Manager can tell you which app is responsible.

Jimmy Chatterton, via email



See which apps are using most battery power in Task Manager

BROWSERS

Download web pages as single files

It's possible to save web pages as complete HTML files, but it's a slow and clunky process. Instead, I use the SingleFile add-on. Download it for Chrome (bit.ly/singlechrome463) or Firefox (bit.ly/singlefox463), or get it for Opera and Edge from GitHub (bit.ly/file463).

Once it's installed, and you want to quickly download a web page, just click the SingleFile icon. I have one extra tip, courtesy of the developer: 'Wait until the page is fully loaded. You may need to scroll down the entire page to be sure all elements are loaded.'

Jon Simons, via email



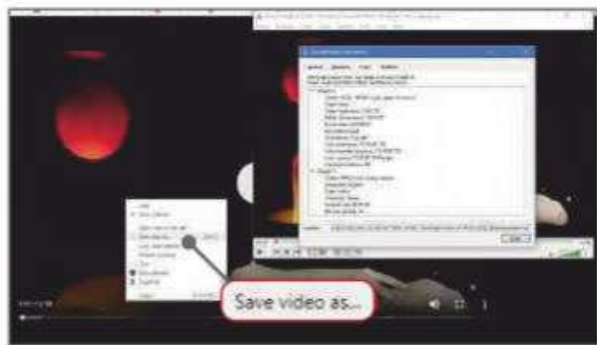
SOFTWARE

Download YouTube videos with VLC

One of my favourite pieces of software is VLC Media Player (I know many *Web User* readers feel the same). It's versatile, does everything I need and is easy for an old codger like me to use! Today, my grandson showed me a nifty little trick I thought I'd share: using VLC to download YouTube videos.

Open the media player and click Media, Open Network Stream. Paste the URL of a video into the box, which VLC starts to stream. Click Tools, Codec Information and look for the box called Location. Copy the link in that box and paste it into your browser. When your video starts playing, right-click and select 'Save video as'. This saves a copy of the video so you can watch it whenever you want, even if you're offline.

Bjorn Marten, via email



Use VLC to create offline copies of YouTube videos

WEBSITE

Make music with your body

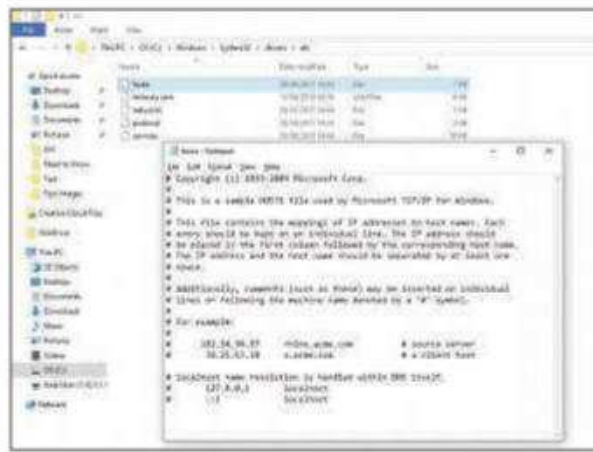
Google often experiments with tools and technologies. There's one called Clarion Lite (bit.ly/clar463) that provides a fascinating way to make music. Open the website in Chrome and select one of the coloured patterns on the left. Move your mouse around the screen to play notes. You can choose from several different musical instruments, but the fun bit is the tracking, which can be set to Body. This uses your PC's camera to track your body movements and turns them into 'music'. I use that term loosely: 'sounds' is probably more accurate. It's weird, but loads of fun, and if you have kids or grandchildren, they will enjoy jumping around to make music. It could keep them entertained for a bit!

Jason Osborne, via email

GENERAL PC

Get 'Find album info' to work

Does anyone else sometimes encounter a problem with Windows Media Player, where it flat-out refuses to find information about the album you're listening to? The reason for this is that the IP address is switched into a Windows Hosts file. To get around this, go to C:\Windows\System32\drivers\



If Windows Media Player isn't working properly, try hacking the Hosts file

etc. Inside the folder, you'll find a file called 'hosts'. Right-click it and choose to open it with Notepad. You're looking for '218.213.82.redir.metaservices.microsoft.com'. If you see 0.0.0.0., change the numbers to 218.213.82 and save the file.

Copy the file over to the folder you found it in and delete the '.txt' extension. Windows Media Player should now be able to find your album info.

Ricky Chatham, via email

SOFTWARE

Combine all your Spotify songs into one playlist

Have you ever wanted to create a single Spotify playlist from all the songs you love? Just pop all your favourite tracks into one uber-playlist by opening the

desktop app and clicking File, New Playlist. Call it something suitable and save it. Press Songs in the left-hand sidebar, select them all using Ctrl+A, then drag them over to your super-playlist. Click Play to start listening.

Joshua Chung, via email

ANDROID

Change app permissions

When you install an app on an Android phone, it asks for permission to access a range of information and hardware functions. If you tapped through the messages without thinking and want to go back and see what you gave an app permission to access – or you've just changed your mind about an app – open your phone's Settings and go to Apps. Tap an app you want to view or change, then tap Permissions on the Application Info screen. There are switches for all the permissions, which you can use to choose what the app can access.



Choose what an app can access on your phone

Richard Wright, via email

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

GENERAL PC

Protect every folder with OneDrive

This may be more of an almost-blunder than a full-on catastrophe, but it almost resulted in me losing everything on my computer after an accidental encounter with a well-known cola brand. My machine got to know the sugary liquid so intimately that it was 'RIP computer'.

At least all the contents were safe since, just two days before, I'd activated Microsoft's new folder protection on OneDrive. This syncs all your desktop folders to OneDrive, which also makes it easier to move files between a computer and the cloud. It's not on by default, but after my close call, I suggest you do the same.

To get it going, click the OneDrive icon in the notification area to the right of your Taskbar. Open the three-dot menu labelled More and select Settings. In the next window, tab over



Let Microsoft help guard important OneDrive folders

to Auto Save. Right at the top is a section that says 'Protect your important folders'. Press the 'Update folders' button next to this and choose the folders you want to sync. Finally, click 'Start protection' to keep your files safe.

Bonz, via email

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?

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



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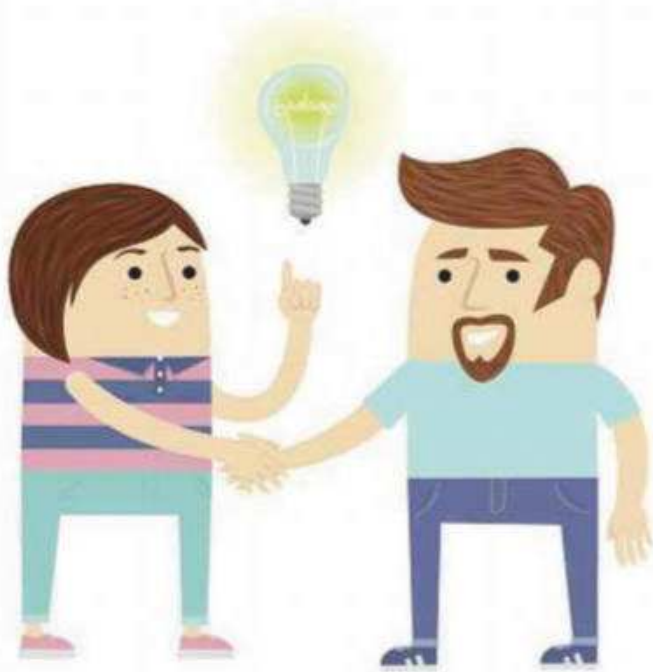
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Readers' Helpdesk

Can you help your fellow readers with their computer problems? Send your questions and answers to webuser@dennis.co.uk

WINDOWS 10

Stop Windows 10 installing unwanted apps

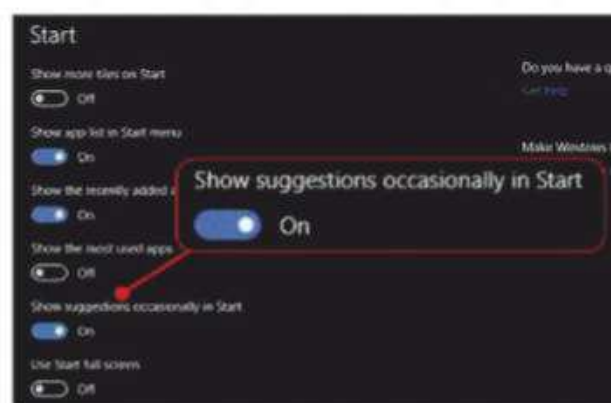
Q Windows 10 has a nasty habit of downloading unwanted apps and games on my computer. For all the current chatter about intelligent machines, it boggles my mind that Microsoft thinks I'd be interested in playing Disneyland Adventures or the terminally dull Candy Crush Saga. Worse still, my computer is an old HP with very limited storage. It doesn't matter what settings I try to change, some rubbish game or app always seems to be downloaded or advertised without my approval. Does anyone know how to stop this bloatware being installed on my computer?

Tim Belsen, via email

A Windows 10 has always featured unwanted apps – a trade-off for Microsoft's 'free' operating system. Uninstall the apps you don't want, then open the Microsoft Store app and go to Settings. The first option is 'Update apps automatically'. Turn this off. To hide ads in your Start menu, go to Settings (Windows+i), Personalisation, Start and toggle 'Show suggestions occasionally in Start' to off. That should put an end to your Candy Crush nightmares.

Happily, Microsoft has promised that a forthcoming update will let you remove more of these built-in apps, including Groove Music, Snip & Sketch and even the Calculator.

Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User



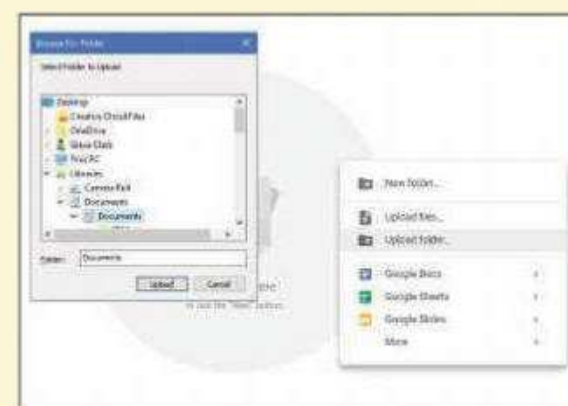
It's game over for unwanted apps

READERS RESPOND

USB vs online storage

A In issue 462 of *Web User*, a forum user was advised to copy their Windows 7 Favourites folder to a USB memory stick, then paste the contents to their Windows 10 computer. I believe it's far more reliable to use a cloud-storage service.

I use Google Drive, which lets me right-click and select 'Upload folder'. I can then choose the folder and click Upload. This lets me retrieve the folder on any other computer where I'm



Use Google's cloud storage to share folders across devices

signed in. I believe OneDrive works in a similar fashion.

Philip Vanderbilt, via email

CAN YOU HELP?

webuser@dennis.co.uk

Following the closure of our forums, you can now seek help or suggest solutions to other readers' problems by emailing webuser@dennis.co.uk or via www.facebook.com/webusermagazine or twitter.com/webusermagazine.

FIREFOX

Q I love the new Firefox updates. However, it bothers me that adding a new site to my bookmarks opens a pop-up asking me to confirm my location. Is there any way to get rid of this and reduce my clicks by one?

Hannah Goulet, via email

CHROME

Q Web address autofill has made my life so much easier but just one accidental visit to 'facebok.com' has turned it into a nightmare. Can anyone tell me how I can stop Chrome auto-filling the wrong URL?

Fraser Benstead, via email

SMART SPEAKERS

Don't let guests abuse Alexa

Q I love showing off Alexa to visiting friends and family but I'm concerned that when they use the Amazon Echo, they may start toying with other smart home features, call my contacts or even accidentally buy things on Amazon. Is there a way to limit their access without removing an otherwise useful device from the guest room?

Michael Carmichael, via email

A The Amazon Echo doesn't support guest accounts, but you can limit what others can do with it. If you don't want to disable voice shopping, set up what Amazon calls a voice code (bit.ly/pin463). Once activated, Alexa will ask for a four-digit PIN number before

processing purchases. You'll also want to remove any Skills that use credit or debit cards. Next, in the Alexa app, turn off calling, messaging and the intercom-style Drop-in feature for every device. Depending on circumstances, you may also want to create a bespoke Alexa Skill Blueprint – Amazon already offers a house-guest template (bit.ly/guest463).

Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User



Limit what guests can do with your Amazon Echo

Star Email

We shouldn't be afraid of Alexa

I had to laugh at Larry Meilack's email in Issue 462, saying that the thought of Amazon's Alexa voice assistant taking over the world was "one of the scariest statements that I've read in recent times". Alexa is hardly the psychotic HAL from 2001 – it's a virtual robot that lives in your Echo speaker and uses machine-learning to analyse what you're saying so it can respond accordingly.

Alexa doesn't actually have a mind of its own, nor is it plotting to seize control of your home and turn all your appliances against you. It's designed to serve us, not the other way round, and

can be switched on and off just like your TV, computer and other electrical devices. It's supposed to be useful, not scary!

Personally, I find my Alexa-controlled Echo to be one of the handiest gadgets I've ever owned. Need the weather forecast? Ask Alexa. Want to play some music without having to get up? Alexa's got it sorted. Got to look up something online, but your phone's charging in the other room? Alexa's only too happy to help.



Back
Issues
disc
winner



It can do funny things, too, like make animal noises and tell you naff jokes.

Alexa is nothing to be afraid of, and nor are other voice assistants like Siri and Google Assistant. Only 10 years ago, we'd have thought

these things the stuff of sci-fi fantasy, so we should be pleased that we have them now and that they're so easy to use – rather than cowering in fear!

Ewan Hobbs, via email

Motorola phones are rubbish

Regarding your review of the Moto E5 phone in Issue 460 – as far as my wife and myself are concerned, Motorola phones are absolute rubbish. They're preloaded with so much crapware they're almost unusable, with no instructions on how to remove these apps or shift them to external storage. I can't even find a manual on the web.

We are both in our 70s and my wife only bought the Motorola because her Nokia

Windows Phone stopped working. The worst thing is that in three nights she has "lost" £6 from her pay-as-you-go SIM for no reason. She only uses the phone on our own Wi-Fi network, which is obviously free, and does not play games or visit 'funny' websites. So the piece of junk is going back as soon as possible.

John C Kent, via email

Three-space typing doesn't look right

What on Earth is Patricia M Smith (Star Email, Issue 461) going on about? You don't insert three spaces after a full stop, you just have one. Otherwise it looks like there's something missing. Maybe in the old days of typewriters it looked okay, but we have computers nowadays and touchscreen phones, and having to enter



extra spaces after punctuation marks is both unnecessary and unsightly. It just doesn't look right.

If I paid someone to type my will and it was all gappy, I would make them do it again. More spaces also means more paper when printing documents, which is

bad for the environment. Patricia needs to give up her antiquated ways and join the 21st Century!

Peter Buckley, via email

Xenu works best for checking links

In Issue 461's Build a Better Site, you recommend Dr Link Check (www.drlinkcheck.com) for testing all the links on a website. I just tried it and it took over eight minutes to check 1,000+ links, whereas Xenu's Link Sleuth (bit.ly/xenu463), a previous recommendation of yours, took just 50 seconds!

I'd also like to say that your magazine

Quiz Answers: Issue 462

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Sunshine Superman |  |  |
| 2 | California Dreamin' |  |  |
| 3 | House of the Rising Sun |  |  |
| 4 | Waterloo Sunset |  |  |
| 5 | Crying in the Chapel |  |  |
| 6 | The Carnival is Over |  |  |

WINNER!

Well done to **Beth Kirby** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



TECH YEAR

2002



has saved me a fortune over the years. Among the programs I regularly use from your recommendation are: Paint .net, Xenu, Auto Hot Key, Filezilla and Spartan Clips. You must have saved me weeks of work since I subscribed!

*John Harris,
www.walkinginengland.co.uk*

Good credit hurt my score

My lad bought me a subscription to your super magazine and I do enjoy it. I'm a pensioner with my own house, car paid for and no debts, which is an enviable position, I know. I decided to use Experian (purely out of interest) and found there was a minus mark against my credit score (999, by the way) as I only have a £1,000 limit on my credit card. I asked for this limit specifically so if there are any fraud problems with my card I would, theoretically, only lose a grand. My bank frequently offers to extend my credit limit but I always decline. Now I find that this move is detrimental to my credit score. What a crazy world!

Peter Roberts BA, via email

Don't blame users for Window woes

What a bizarre email from Mark Chorley (Inbox, Issue 462) saying we should stop moaning about any problems we experience with Windows 10. Does Mark work for Microsoft, by any chance?!

I think Windows 10 users are perfectly entitled to grumble if the operating system they rely on proves to be buggy and unstable. We are constantly told how we should keep our software up to date, and don't expect that a major update – issued by Microsoft itself – will cause serious problems with our computers.

Whenever a new version of Windows 10 becomes available, I wait a few weeks because there are always problems and, contrary to what Mr Chorley says, these are not the fault of users.

Natasha Hodgson, via email



What you say...

GOOGLE IS REPORTEDLY PLANNING TO LAUNCH A SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE FOR PLAY STORE APPS. WOULD YOU SIGN UP?

Definitely not. I pay for Netflix and Amazon Prime, and stopped the TV tax. That's enough for me.

Dean Stockton

Nope. I pay enough for music and TV subscriptions. Hardly ever download paid-for apps. If I do, I use my Google Rewards credit (bit.ly/rewards463).

Caroline Alderson

Nope. There are far too many subscription-based models. It's become tiresome now.

George McPhail

NHS MEDICAL DIRECTOR STEPHEN POWIS WANTS MORE OUTPATIENTS APPOINTMENTS DONE ON SKYPE (bit.ly/skypenhs463). WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I'd be lucky to get an appointment within three weeks, never mind Skype or any other internet communication.

Brian Brown

Face to face. No other way. How do they examine you on Skype? It's a stupid idea.

Geoffrey Boow

I'm not entirely sure how this is supposed to help cut hospital visits. The only people who really need this service are those who physically can't get to the surgery, in which case they wouldn't be able to get to the hospital either. But to answer your question, I'd always prefer to see my doctor in person.

Lee Dodgson

I think sensitive medical needs are best handled face to face. I am a technology person. I'd be happy to Skype a bank manager or insurance salesperson. Not a doctor, though.

Stephen Parry @StephenParry80

DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE GETTING TO SLEEP AT NIGHT AFTER USING A COMPUTER OR PHONE SCREEN?

No problem at all. On my LG phone, I have set the screen to be eye-friendly after midnight while I play Angry Birds in bed.

Colin Leonard

I find the opposite. The more screen time I have, the more tired I become. I always finish reading my emails, tweets and news in bed which tires me nicely for sleep time.

Gary Olsen

I use the screen-filter app Night Shift (bit.ly/nightshift463), which gets five stars from me. Blue LED light is harmful to the health if you check it out properly. It damages the eyes and reduces melatonin.

Liz F Lambeth

WHATSAPP HAS CONFIRMED IT WILL START SHOWING ADVERTS SOON (bit.ly/whatsapp463). WILL THAT PUT YOU OFF USING IT?

I used to use Kik (www.kik.com). I switched to WhatsApp because most of my friends used it. If the ads on WhatsApp are too intrusive, I'll be happy to return to Kik.

Marie Davies

Facebook has them and we're still here. Don't see why I'd stop using WhatsApp.

Adrian Millington

It will make no difference to me. I use WhatsApp just long enough to send a message and then close it until the next time.

Nat Grove

! Page 404



Banks should do more to warn us of post-contract rip-offs, argues **Barry Collins**

You can bank on unfair loyalty penalties

In the run-up to Brexit, as we try to redefine Britain and work out what we are good at, it's reassuring to know we're still world leaders at one thing: complaining. In fact, we don't just complain, we super-complain.

Citizens Advice recently issued a 'super-complaint' about something that's been getting on my Alan Whickers for some time: the loyalty penalty. Stick with a mobile phone company, a utility provider or a broadband firm for longer than your stipulated contract term and you're likely to get stiffed.

This happened to me very recently, in fact, when having let my utility bills lapse out of contract onto the standard tariff, my Direct Debit shot up from £65 per month to £130 per month. Of course, the utility firm in question had written and warned me of the price hike – in the fifth paragraph of an email that looked like one of those regular e-statements that I toss on the virtual fire. And though I left the provider the second I discovered this heist, they still got three months of double bubble – which is, of course, precisely why they do it.

Citizens Advice reckons I'm far from the only mug out there. It claims that eight out of 10 bill payers are being "charged significantly higher prices for remaining with their existing supplier in at least one essential market", costing us consumers several billion pounds per year. Citizens Advice wants the Competition and Markets Authority to "introduce strong, long-lasting solutions to prevent people from being ripped off

“ Banks are accessories to the crime. They take their monthly fee from you, but offer little in return ”



by the loyalty penalty”.

It's hard to disagree with any of that, but waiting for a government body to take action is like waiting for a rock to die. There will be never-ending consultations, appeals and implementation periods, which will see

any meaningful action kicked so far into the long grass that you'll need Ray Mears to find it.

While we're waiting, wouldn't it be nice if the people we pay to look after

our money did something about it? For example, it would be a trivial piece of coding for the banks to send you a mobile alert every time one of your Direct Debits was increased.

When you signed up for a new broadband provider or utility company

online, how much effort would it take for a bank to notice the new payee, prompt you to enter the length of your contract, and then send you a reminder three months before that contract elapsed that it's time to strike a new deal? The 'smart' bank could even partner with one of those comparison sites to check the latest prices for you, crush the rip-off merchants and earn itself a referral fee in the process. Everyone's a winner.

Instead, banks are accessories to the crime. They take their monthly fee from you, but offer little in return. They'll perhaps send you an alert when you've run out of money, or have dipped into a chargeable overdraft, but by then – of course – it's too late.

The irony is that our useless banks are the companies that have the greatest customer loyalty of them all. It really doesn't pay to stay put.

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