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# Make Your Wi-Fi Router

# UNHACKABLE

Your essential guide to blocking the web's  
fastest-growing danger p40



**Hackers Know  
It's Your  
WEAKEST  
LINK**

**+ PLUS**

**THE 'SWISS ARMY KNIFE'  
SOFTWARE YOUR PC NEEDS**

Programs that perform multiple tasks

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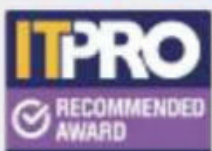
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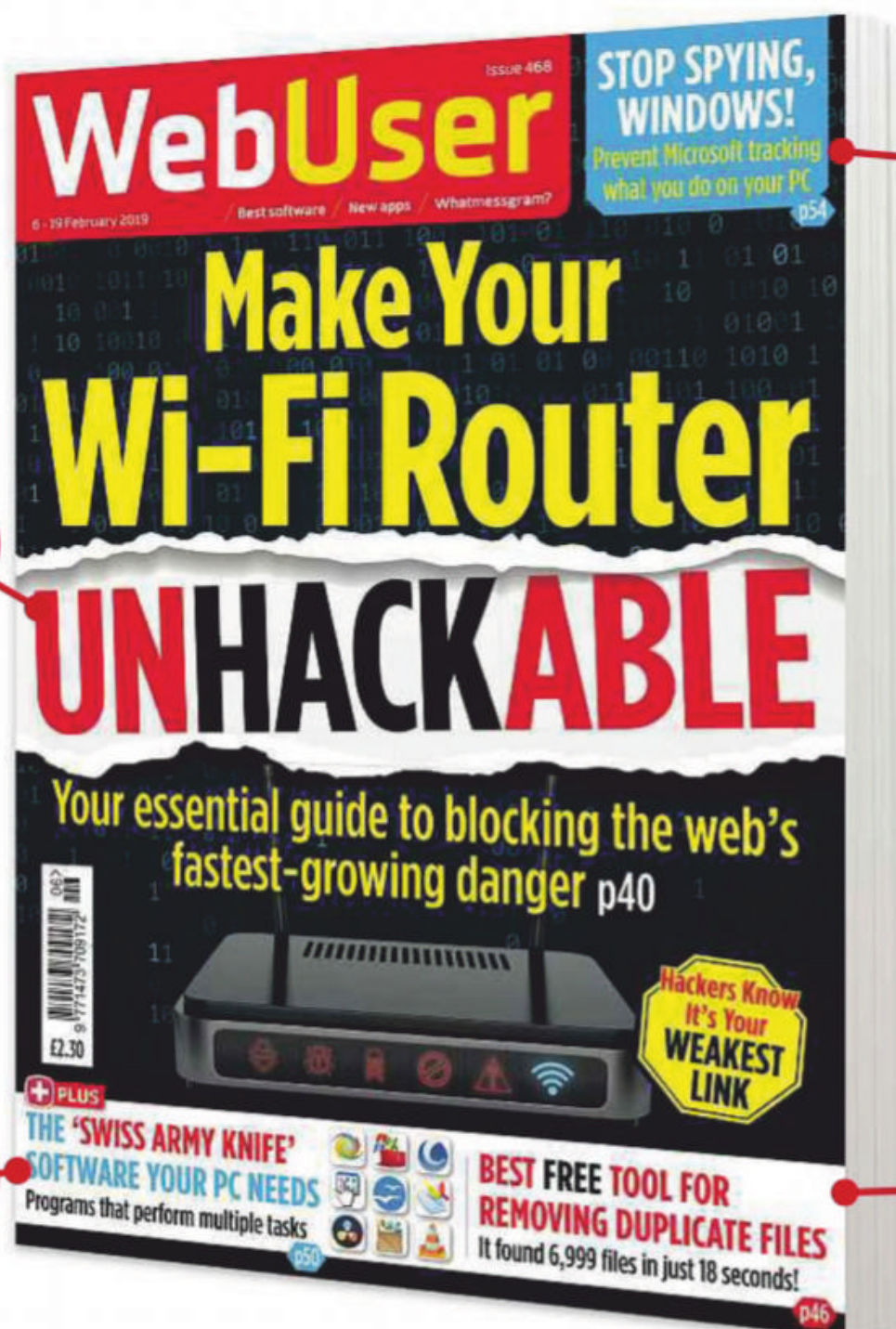
## Don't fear the router!

**Y**our router is the unsung hero of your wireless network. Without it, you wouldn't have the freedom to browse the web in any room you want, but would be shackled to the nearest phone socket via Ethernet cable. Yet routers receive little love and attention from their owners, even when manufacturers jazz up their designs to make them look like Sauron's helmet, which is why they've become such a popular target for hackers. While your poor old router works its antennas off to give you speedy Wi-Fi around your home, unscrupulous types are finding ways to exploit its weaknesses so

they can hijack your network, steal your data and spread malware.

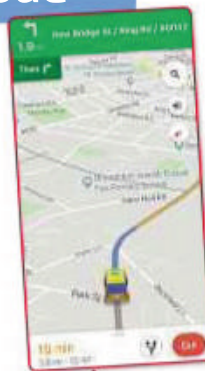
In this issue's cover feature, we explain how to lock down your router's security to stop hackers, neighbours and untrustworthy guests playing havoc with your Wi-Fi network. We reveal the scans you should run, the settings you must change and the upgrades you can perform to make your router safe and not scary.

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



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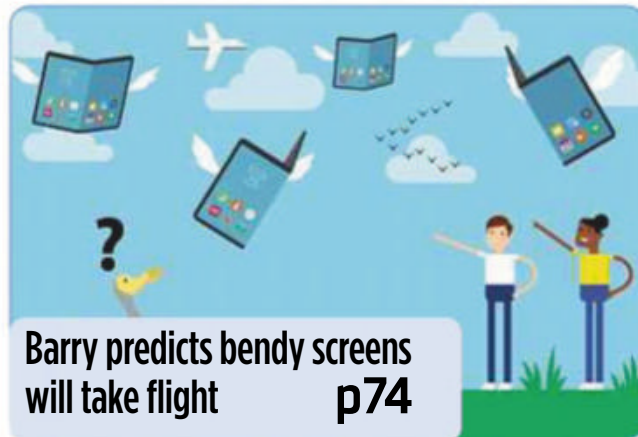
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Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

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# What's New Online

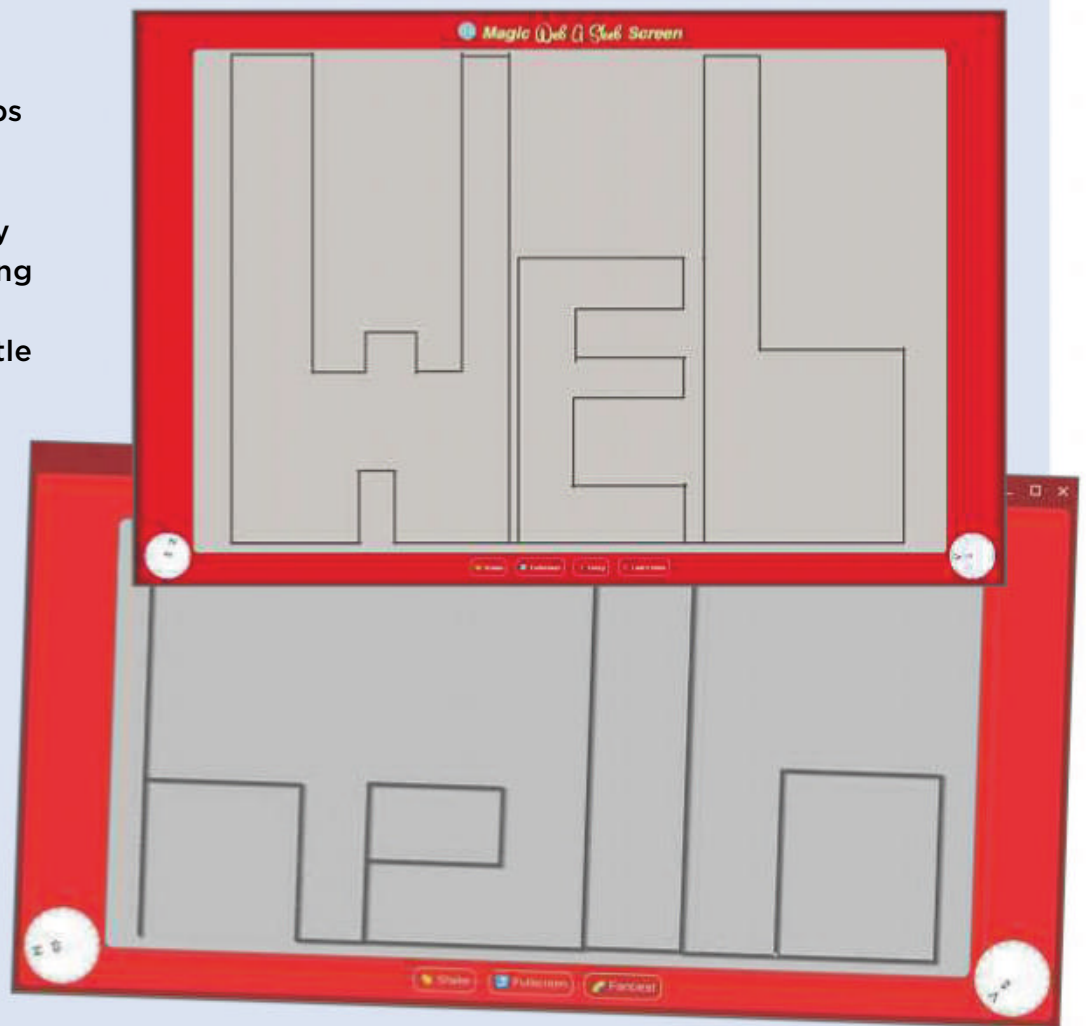
## Draw with an online Etch A Sketch

**E**tch A Sketch – the mechanical drawing toy introduced back in 1960 – is hardly cutting-edge today, but the idea of operating a couple of knobs to move a stylus vertically and horizontally to create something resembling art still feels rather magical.

London-based developer Rowan Merewood clearly thinks so because he has gone to the effort of creating a brilliant browser-based version, which he dubs (for trademark reasons) Web A Skeb. This takes a little more getting used to than the physical version because the knobs are digital and need to be twiddled by moving your mouse from one side of the screen to another.

The effect, however, is exactly the same and it really comes into its own on a touchscreen device, where you can lay thumbs on either side and operate it almost like the real thing. Created for Chrome, Web A Skeb also lets you click for a fullscreen version, cycle through three effects (fast for a normal line, fancy for shadows and fanciest for colour) and press a button to shake away your hard work. What's more, Merewood wants to see your artistic endeavours – tweet them to him at [@rowan\\_m](https://twitter.com/rowan_m).

[web-a-skeb.firebaseio.com](https://web-a-skeb.firebaseio.com)



## Check whether your passport is valid

[bit.ly/passport468](https://bit.ly/passport468)

There have been so many twists and turns surrounding Brexit that the information we're about to give you could be wrong by the time you read it. As it stands, however, a no-deal Brexit means potential trouble for anyone with less than six months to go on their passport, whereas any deal or delays could mean things continue as they are – allowing

you to return from an EU country until the day the passport is due to expire.

In any case, to help travellers, the government has launched a new passport-checking tool that asks you to specify which country you're traveling to, when you're going, your date of birth, the date your passport was issued and when it is going to expire. It will then tell you if you can safely use your passport to travel. You can also check the rules for travelling to Europe after Brexit and read up on entry requirements.

## Customise retro game screens

[deathgenerator.com](https://deathgenerator.com)

If you're looking for a meme with a difference, select one of the classic game screens on the Sierra Death Generator website and customise it with your own message. There are 100 to choose from, including Doom, King's Quest, Pokémon and Super Mario Bros, and you simply replace the existing text before tailoring it using the options provided.

These vary depending on your choice, but they range from selecting different characters, themes and levels to automatic word-wrapping and scenes. You can also play around with an MS-DOS startup screen.

Click Save once you're done and the site will prepare a PNG file for you – perfect for sharing on social media or sending to a friend. Selecting upload also makes the image available on Imgur, while some screens let you produce a GIF, too.



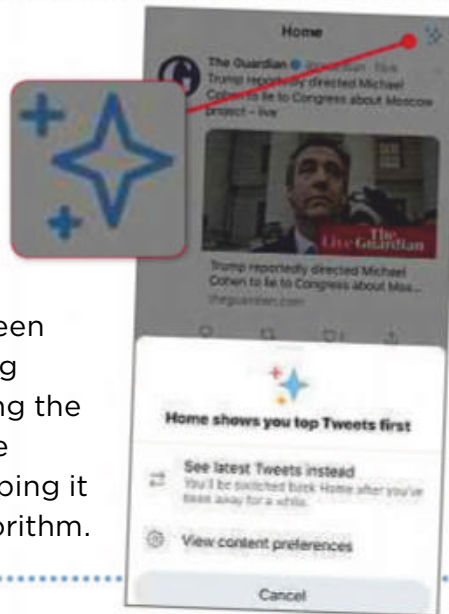


We pick the 10 best things you must do on the web this fortnight

## Read the latest tweets first

[twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

Twitter has now made it much easier to switch between the top and latest tweets on your mobile device using a button in the top-right corner of the screen. Tapping the 'sparkle' icon in the Android or iOS app gives you the option of a reverse-chronological timeline, while tapping it again lets you revert back to tweets selected by algorithm.



## NEW VOICE COMMANDS

**Auto-add punctuation**  
Dictate messages to Google Assistant and it will now detect the context and the tone of your voice, automatically adding commas, full stops and question marks.

**Take the Siri challenge**  
Say "Siri, what is one trillion to the tenth power?" to hear an interminable string of zeros being read out. Some musicians have put this to music and posted the results on social media.

**Play with The Sims**  
Fans of The Sims can now use Alexa to play a trivia game with up to four people and listen to songs from the life-simulation game. Say "Alexa, play The Sims" and "ask The Sims to play music".



## Dictate your WhatsApp messages

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

WhatsApp now lets you dictate messages by speaking into your phone's microphone. Bring up the keyboard and tap the microphone icon that appears – it's in the bottom corner in iOS; top-right on Android.

## Read *Doctor Who* scripts

[bit.ly/who468](https://bit.ly/who468)

The BBC's Writers Room has long been packed with scripts aimed at inspiring up-and-coming talent and many of them will be interested to read the latest additions: PDF copies of scripts from series 9, 10 and 11 of *Doctor Who*.

## Check for unregistered land

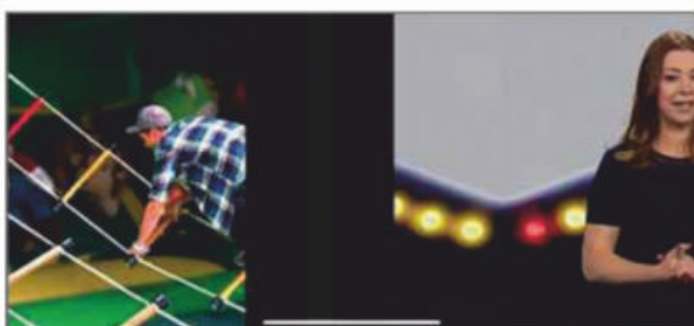
[unregistered.whoownsengland.org](https://unregistered.whoownsengland.org)

Around 15% of land in England and Wales has never been logged with the Land Registry, even though it is actually owned. View this map to see these spots – type the name of a town or city, then zoom in.

## Swipe through YouTube videos

[www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

Swiping horizontally on videos to see new content is set to become second nature now that YouTube has added the function to its smartphone app. This new feature, which is currently only available on iOS, lets you start watching before swiping left to revisit something you've already viewed, or right to see the next recommendation, raising the potential for hours of procrastination. Videos cleverly resume playback from where you left off and it's a great way to enjoy your history with minimal effort. We're sure it'll be added to Android in the near future.

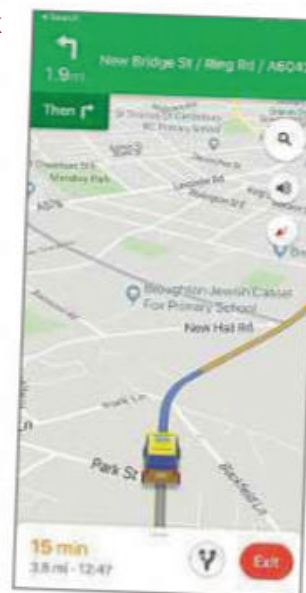


## Be alerted to speed cameras

[maps.google.co.uk](https://maps.google.co.uk)

Sat-nav services have long warned motorists about upcoming speed cameras but Google Maps has not only caught up, it's offering the service for free. Update to the latest version of the app on iOS and Android, and it will flag any change in the speed limit and tip you off to any cameras on your route, potentially helping you avoid a hefty fine and anywhere between three and 12 points on your driving licence.

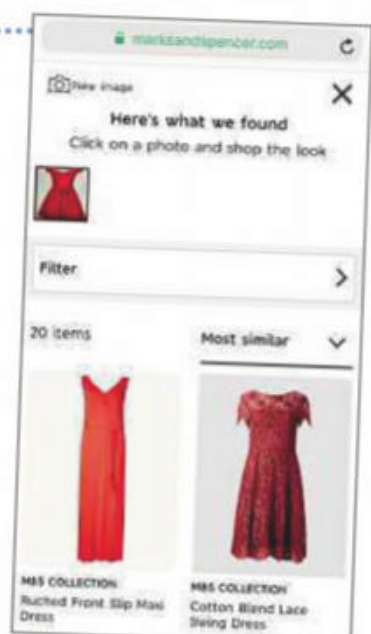
The Google-owned Waze also tells you when you're speeding but this is a welcome addition to Maps nonetheless and certainly handy for those momentary lapses.



## Find M&S clothes by taking photos

[www.marksandspencer.com](https://www.marksandspencer.com)

Marks & Spencer is helping mobile customers find the perfect outfit by snapping a photo of an item of clothing to discover a near-match. The new Style Finder, which also lets you upload images you've found on the web, is activated by tapping the camera icon in the search box and displays results in less than 10 seconds. You can then use the filters to refine the size, colour and price.







# Need to Know

## Facebook to integrate Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger

### What happened?

Facebook is planning to pull together the company's three messaging services into one platform, according to a report in the *New York Times* ([bit.ly/nytimes468](https://bit.ly/nytimes468)). Facebook has long had its own chatting app, Messenger, and bought rival service WhatsApp in 2014. Instagram, the photo-sharing tool that also let users send private messages, was bought by the company in 2012.

Currently, the three apps are completely separate but, according to the *NY Times* report, Facebook plans to unify them to the same set of code, so users of one app can message users of another without having to install each one individually: for example, if you're on WhatsApp, you can send a message to someone on Instagram.

Such a move raises privacy and security concerns, particularly among WhatsApp users. That app is end-to-end encrypted, which means that messages sent and received can't be seen by Facebook. Instagram and Messenger are not encrypted in this way, though anyone wanting extra protection in the latter can turn on the Secret Conversations mode in the app.

Rather than remove WhatsApp's



protections, it's believed the plan is to add end-to-end encryption to Instagram and Messenger. While that increased security would be welcome, there are concerns that Facebook will start linking WhatsApp users to their Facebook and Instagram accounts. It's made moves to do so previously, but was banned by the Information Commissioner's Office in 2018 under the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Facebook's purchase of both apps raised privacy concerns at the time, particularly over whether the social network would use data collected by WhatsApp and Instagram for advertising purposes. Instagram currently makes revenue by showing ads to users, but until recently WhatsApp was ad-free. It's due to start showing adverts on its Status screen soon.

Some commentators believe the integration of the messaging apps is to bolster Facebook's case against being broken up by regulators, who have been urged by privacy campaigners to split off Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger into their own companies. That would be harder to achieve if the services were more tightly entwined.

### How will it affect you?

The integration plans remain a proposal, with Facebook saying it wants to make it easier for people to chat across apps and to roll out end-to-end encryption more widely. Whatever Facebook's

decision, the changes aren't expected until 2020 at the earliest. But any changes regarding data sharing between WhatsApp and Facebook are likely to face push-back from regulators, so expect delays.

If the integrations goes ahead, anyone using WhatsApp will be able to message someone on Facebook Messenger without signing up for a Facebook account. The

same goes for Instagram. On the plus side, this will make it easier to contact friends and family who use different messaging apps to you, and giving Instagram and Messenger users end-to-end encryption will help protect data from hackers as well as Facebook itself. The main concern is whether Facebook will start hoovering up data on WhatsApp users.

If any of this makes you nervous, you can ditch all three and use Signal ([signal.org](https://signal.org)) instead. It uses the same systems as WhatsApp, but is wholly independent from Facebook. However, you'll have to convince everyone you want to contact to also install the app.

### What do we think?

Adding encryption to Messenger and Instagram would be good, but it could be done now, without melding the apps into a single codebase. Letting users message across apps will make communication easier, but it shouldn't require WhatsApp users to hand their real identity to Facebook or link their account with a Facebook profile.

Hopefully, the integration can be carried out in a secure and private way. We should be vigilant with our data, no matter what the company, but given Facebook's many missteps and abuses, we should all be extra careful when it makes a change that could affect our privacy or security. Trust is earned, and Facebook has lost ours time and again.



*The New York Times broke the story about Facebook's messaging plans*



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

## Microsoft battles fake news in Edge browser

### What happened?

Users of Microsoft's Edge browser are receiving warnings when they visit a website that may feature so-called "fake news" – and one of these flagged sites is the UK's third most popular news source, Mail Online.

The mobile version of Edge uses a system called NewsGuard, which was built by US journalists to rate sites on ownership, incorrect reports and exaggerated headlines.

Previously, NewsGuard was available as an add-on, but Microsoft now installs it automatically on all mobile editions of Edge, and plans to bring it to the desktop version, too.

dailymail.co.uk

Proceed with caution: this website generally fails to maintain basic standards of accuracy and accountability.

See the full Nutrition Label

### How will it affect you?

If you use Edge browser on your phone or tablet, you may see warnings pop up when you visit sites that are deemed to be lacking in credibility, including the online home of the *Daily Mail*.

Hover your finger over a story on the tabloid's website, and Edge will display a message advising you to "proceed with

caution", noting that the website "generally fails to maintain basic standards of accuracy and accountability".

NewsGuard is switched on by default in the mobile version of Edge, though it can be disabled in Settings under News Rating. To install the extension in the desktop version of Edge or in Chrome, Firefox or Safari, get it from [www.newsguardtech.com](http://www.newsguardtech.com).

### What do we think?

No one likes to be told what (and what not) to read, but fake news has a huge impact on what we believe, how we vote and how we live.

Even the most media-savvy people are capable of falling for false information, whether it's selling the latest wellness trend or pushing a political agenda, so any advice is welcome.

Unsurprisingly, Mail Online has challenged its negative rating; a spokesperson said the site is in discussions with NewsGuard "to have this egregiously erroneous classification resolved as soon as possible".

## Chrome update could destroy ad blockers

### What happened?

Google revealed plans to change the way add-ons function in Chrome, raising concerns among the developers of anti-tracking and ad-blocking extensions that their tools may no longer work in the browser.

Google said it was considering tweaking the system that links extensions to the browser to stop them changing data they receive from the sites that users visit.

This ability to block, modify or redirect incoming data allows privacy tools to block ads, pop-ups and tracking cookies. The change would mean ad blockers such as uBlock Origin would no longer work.

### How will it affect you?

The chances are that you have at least one privacy add-on installed in your browser, so you'd be right to be concerned that such tools may stop working and subject you to the more intrusive and annoying aspects of the web.

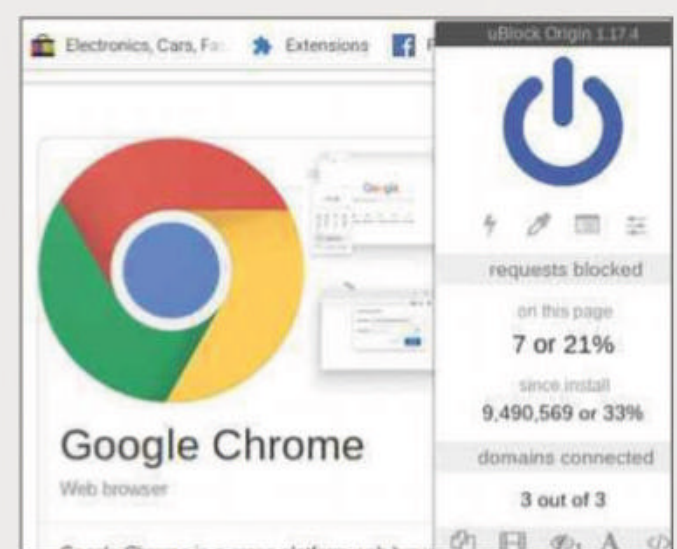
In a major backlash from developers, the creators of popular ad blocker Ghostery said: "this would basically mean that Google is destroying ad-blocking and privacy protection as we know it". However, Google has said the changes were merely a proposal, stressing that the company will work with extension makers to limit any damage.

Those developers may have to alter their code to

work with the new system, so expect an update once these changes are rolled out.

### What do we think?

We'll give Google the benefit of the doubt, as it does seem that the changes weren't intended to have a negative impact on rival ad blockers. But it's no surprise that developers of ad-blocking and anti-tracking extensions are nervous about Google's proposed changes – after all, the tech giant not only makes the bulk of its revenue from ads, but rolled



out its own limited built-in blocker last year.

Chrome needs to have an open infrastructure concerning third-party tools, otherwise it will be too easy for such blockers to be watered down. Let's hope Chrome's engineers remember that in the future.



# Microsoft splits Cortana from Windows search

## What happened?

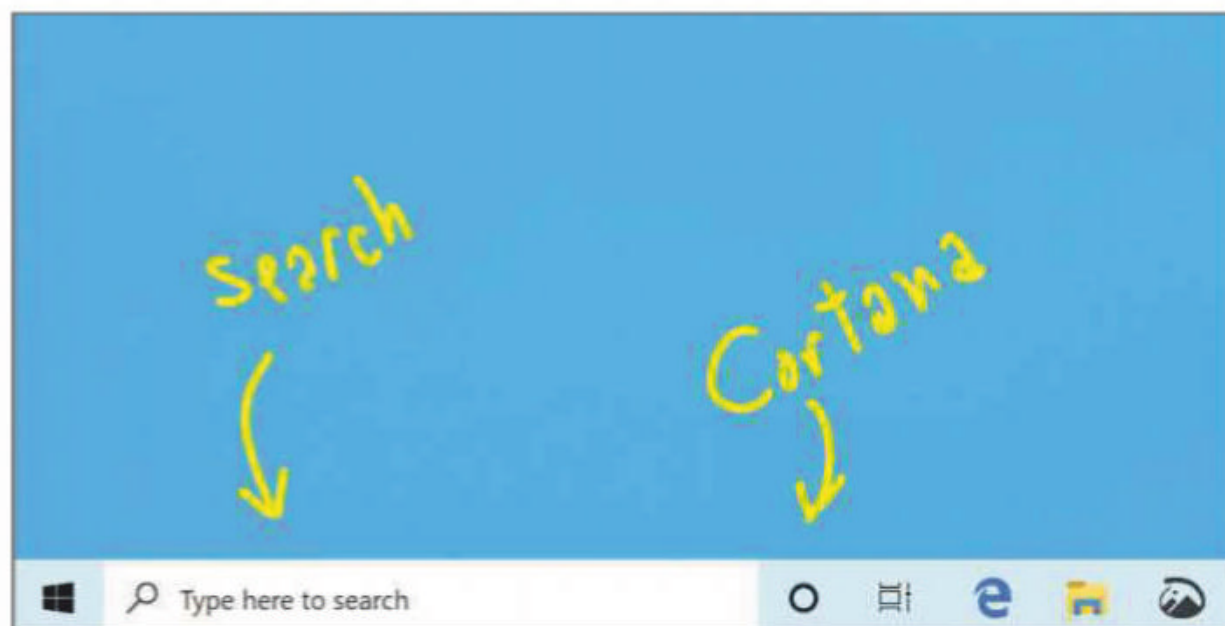
Microsoft revealed that it will be splitting its Cortana virtual assistant and search box in the next build of Windows 10, so that voice searches are handled separately from text-based ones in the Windows taskbar ([bit.ly/cortana468](https://bit.ly/cortana468)).

The change is likely to appear in the April Windows 10 update, the next scheduled major release. From that update on, anyone wanting to search their computer for a file or folder will be directed to the text-based search tool, while those wanting to use voice-based searches will use a new Cortana voice-controlled feature instead.

"This change is one of several we've made throughout this release to improve your experience in this space, including updating the search landing page design, enhancing your search results, and integrating Microsoft To-Do with Cortana," said Microsoft.

"Decoupling Search and Cortana in the taskbar [will] enable each experience to innovate independently to best serve their target audiences and use cases".

Microsoft testers who are enrolled in the company's Windows Insider scheme have already been playing around with the update in the preview build for the April update and, apparently, the tech giant has had some encouraging feedback on the decision from early participants.



## How will it affect you?

Presumably, these changes have been made following extensive research into the differences between the way people use Cortana and text-based searches. It will allow Microsoft to focus on improving the accuracy of text-based searches without simultaneously getting caught up in voice recognition. This is good news if, like many Windows 10 users, you find Cortana to be more of a hindrance than a help.

If you like the idea of voice assistants but find Cortana lacking, it's worth noting that Amazon's more popular assistant, Alexa, is also available for Windows 10. The free Alexa app ([bit.ly/alexa468](https://bit.ly/alexa468)) lets you check your calendar,

create lists, play music, get answers to questions and more.

## What do we think?

When Microsoft launched Windows 10 in July 2015, it trumpeted Cortana as one of the revolutionary new features designed to change the way we use our PCs. But most users either ignore the virtual assistant or disable it completely, so separating Cortana from the search box seems like a sensible move.

Voice assistants in smart speakers make sense because you have to be able to issue command hands-free, but most of us prefer to type our searches when using our computers, however old-fashioned that may seem.



## FIRST LOOK

### Microsoft Surface Headphones

[bit.ly/headphones468](https://bit.ly/headphones468)

Microsoft's range of Surface products includes tablets, laptops, desktop PCs – and the company is now taking on audio specialists such as Bose, Nuraphone and Sony by producing a set of noise-cancelling headphones.

The Microsoft Surface Headphones are Bluetooth-based wireless headphones that isolate you from the outside world through the magic of active noise-cancelling (ANC) technology. They have intuitive touch controls and big twisty dials that let you adjust the volume and tweak the level of external noise cancellation.

Weighing 292g, these headphones aren't too heavy, and the ear pads are very soft, so you can wear them for

long periods without discomfort. They also clamp firmly to your head, so they won't fly off if you wear them while jogging.

On either side of the ear cups, you'll find touch-sensitive media controls. These are impressively versatile – when listening to music you can tap once to play/pause, double-tap to skip or triple-tap to go backwards; when a call comes in you can double-tap to answer it, or decline with a long press.

There are two built-in mics to pick up your voice, so it's a fully hands-free experience. The headphones are charged via a USB-C port: a quick five minutes of fast-charging gives you



almost an hour of playback, and on a full battery you'll get around 15 hours of use.

The Surface Headphones aren't as expensive as a Surface tablet or laptop, but at £329 they're far from cheap. For this price, you'd expect

uncompromising audio quality, which is not quite what you get. While the instrument separation is excellent, and there's a real punch to the bass, the sound is uncontrolled in the mid-range, with vocals not as forward as they should be. For superior headphones at the same price, consider the Sony WH-1000XM3, which deliver more effective isolation and a more refined overall sound.





## WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

## Is Amazon launching a game-streaming service?

Amazon is investing in a new game-streaming service, according to two insiders with knowledge of the plan.

Game streaming has been gaining momentum. While Sony has for a long time offered the subscription-based PlayStation Now, Google recently teamed up with Ubisoft to offer a stream-only version of *Assassin's Creed: Odyssey*. Meanwhile, Microsoft has announced plans for a 'Netflix for games', dubbed Project xCloud.

The advantages of streaming games is clear: right now, games have to be downloaded before they can be played, but if you stream them instead, players can instantly jump in – provided their internet speeds are good enough. It's also handy for those with less powerful computers, since all the heavy lifting is undertaken by a company's own computers. That not only removes barriers, leading to more sales, but also means gamers could theoretically play graphically intensive games such as *Grand Theft Auto* on their mobile devices (although whether they'd want to is another matter entirely).

This wouldn't be Amazon's first foray into gaming. In 2014, it bought live-streaming platform Twitch for around £750m. However, since then, the technology giant has failed to capitalise



on any gaming endeavours.

If the rumours are true, that's all about to change.

## LIKELIHOOD RATING



With the next generation of consoles due soon, we wouldn't be surprised to see Amazon enter a market currently dominated by Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo. It's almost as if the company has been planning this for years: Twitch is already under its belt; its Amazon Web Services is the world's largest cloud-computing service, ready-made to take on game streaming; and its Fire tablets are ideal for streaming high-end games on the go and at home. And it would make total sense for the games service to be tied to Amazon Prime.

## WEBOMETER

## WE LIKE...

## Google launches phishing quiz

Google's new Phishing Quiz ([phishingquiz.withgoogle.com](http://phishingquiz.withgoogle.com)) tests your knowledge of emails that trick you into clicking dodgy links. The quiz shows you eight example messages and asks you to rate them as 'phishing' or 'legitimate'.



## YouTube bans dangerous pranks

YouTube has banned videos of "pranks with a perceived danger of serious physical injury", and will remove such content from its site. Recent examples include the Bird Box Challenge, in which people try to perform tasks blindfolded.



## WE DON'T LIKE...

## Security flaws found in VPN apps

One in four of the most downloaded free VPN apps for Android have been found to leak users' private data. The study by Top10VPN ([www.top10vpn.com](http://www.top10vpn.com)) also discovered that 18% of the apps it tested contained some form of malware.



## Facebook let kids run up bills

Facebook allowed children to run up huge bills on their parents' credit cards, according to a lawsuit settled by the company in the US. The social network refused to issue refunds on in-app game purchases made by minors.



## What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

## Doogee S90

[bit.ly/doogee468](http://bit.ly/doogee468) | From £231

It's been a long time since we saw a smartphone as impressive as the Doogee S90. This huge (6.2in), rugged handset is described as "unbreakable", being dust-proof, shatter-proof and able to survive in 1.5m of water for two weeks. It's powered by an octa-core 2GHz processor and offers 6GB of RAM, 128GB of built-in storage and a 16- and 8-megapixel dual camera. The Doogee S90 can also be customised with modules to turn it into a walkie talkie, night-vision camera and gamepad. It's far exceeded its funding goal of £7,650 – get in there quick before 14 February.





# Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

### Massive data leak could be the biggest ever

Nearly 2.7 billion records containing 773 million unique email addresses and more than 21 million unique passwords have been compromised and published online. The massive data leak, dubbed Collection1, is made up of individual breaches from “literally thousands of different sources”, according to security researcher Troy Hunt, who announced his findings in a blog post ([bit.ly/collection468](http://bit.ly/collection468)). This collection exceeds 87GB in size and contains 12,000 individual files. It represents one of the biggest, if not *the* biggest, leaks of personal data in history.

“People take lists like these that contain our email addresses and passwords, then they attempt to see where else they work,” Hunt said. “The success of this approach is predicated on the fact that people reuse the same credentials on



multiple services. Perhaps your personal data is on this list because you signed up to a forum many years ago you've long since forgotten

about, but because it has subsequently been breached and you've been using that same password all over the place, you've got a serious problem.” Hunt recommended that people either use a dedicated password manager or a notebook and pen to manage all their personal login details. He also railed against password reuse, saying online users need to “avoid that to the fullest extent possible”.

[bit.ly/leak468](http://bit.ly/leak468)

### Reddit users told to change passwords

Reddit locked the accounts of a large number of users and forced them to reset their passwords after a string of major internet security breaches, including the huge Collection1 leak (see story, left).

The site blamed a “security concern” for implementing the reset for some members, claiming it targeted users who were likely to have set weak passwords or were reusing their details used across multiple sites. “By ‘security concern’, we mean unusual activity that did not correspond to the account’s normal behavior that may indicate unauthorised access,” Reddit said. “The most common explanation for this is the use of very simple passwords or the reuse of credentials across multiple websites or services.”

[bit.ly/reddit468](http://bit.ly/reddit468)



## Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

**THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:**  
**Daniel Markuson,**  
**Internet Security**  
**Expert at NordVPN**  
**([nordvpn.com](http://nordvpn.com))**



**Q** How can I find out if my accounts have been breached?

Josh Cross, Twitter

**A** Troy Hunt (see first story, above) runs an excellent website called Have I Been Pwned ([haveibeenpwned.com](http://haveibeenpwned.com)) where you can enter

your email address or your password to see if it's contained in any of the many breach lists the site has collected. People generally trust the website, but it's always a good idea to take a few safety precautions.

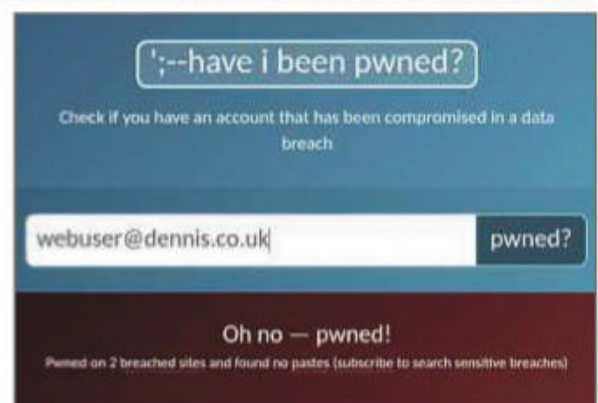
To stay safe while using Have I Been Pwned, use incognito mode, a secure browser, a security extension or all three, to make it harder to track you across multiple visits to Have I Been Pwned. You should also use a VPN to hide your IP address and change your apparent location.

These tools will help ensure that if you enter multiple passwords and email

addresses, it will be very difficult to track and identify you. Whether or not you trust Have I Been Pwned, no site is impossible to hack and this one probably isn't well-liked by criminal hackers. As such, users of the website could potentially be targeted and tracked as part of a malicious attack on the site. The wisest approach is to err on the side of caution.

If Have I Been Pwned reveals that one of your accounts has been compromised, the first step is

to change your password. The next steps will depend on the type of account that was compromised: if it's your bank account, call your bank and ask what it can do to keep your money safe; if it's your email account, check your history for strange messages that may have been sent as part of a scam attack.





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# ★ Best New Websites

## Site of the Fortnight

HEALTH

NEW

### Music for Dementia 2020

[bit.ly/music468](http://bit.ly/music468)

Music can help people who are struggling to connect with a world that no longer makes sense, but it's easy to forget, with our Spotify-primed and YouTube-loaded phones, that dementia sufferers often don't have easy access to music. New site Music for Dementia 2020 is campaigning to change that by bringing together politicians, care workers and artists. The campaign boasts the support of Paul '19 Hardcastle, although it's disheartening to see precious few politicians offer their backing. Still, at least there's an option to nominate so-called everyday superstars.

Our rating



#### Music brings people together

- Shared music engagement enables individuals to enjoy music with others, it facilitates shared, quality time with friends, family and carers.
- Music creates communities, offering inclusive, meaningful social experiences.
- Music supports active participation and enhances awareness of others.
- Music enables relationship building.
- Music is a readily accessible medium that supports people to be in the here and now.
- Music resonates deeply with people, tapping into their identity and their experiences. It enables individuals living with dementia to stay connected to who they are, the people and their world around them.



#### IN TUNE

Discover info backed up by the campaign's research on how lives are improved just by listening to music

#### HELPING HAND

Research valuable tips that include ways to introduce daily music sessions and how to create the most effective playlist



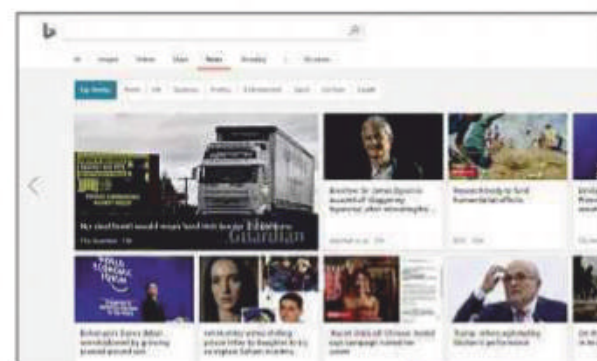
CULTURE

### Kids in Museums

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

There should be more children in museums – though, presumably, not stampeding past the exhibits to loot the gift shop. Kids in Museums aims to find ways of making UK museums more family-oriented through a series of programmes and workshops. The site is stacked with resources, including the charming, if demanding, Kids Manifesto – eight recommendations for museums to make collections more engaging for youngsters, written by youngsters (you don't have to sign up to anything to read it). Most intriguing is Takeover Day, where young people contribute to the success of running a museum, from handling social media to becoming acting director.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

NEWS

### Bing News

[www.bing.com/news](http://www.bing.com/news)

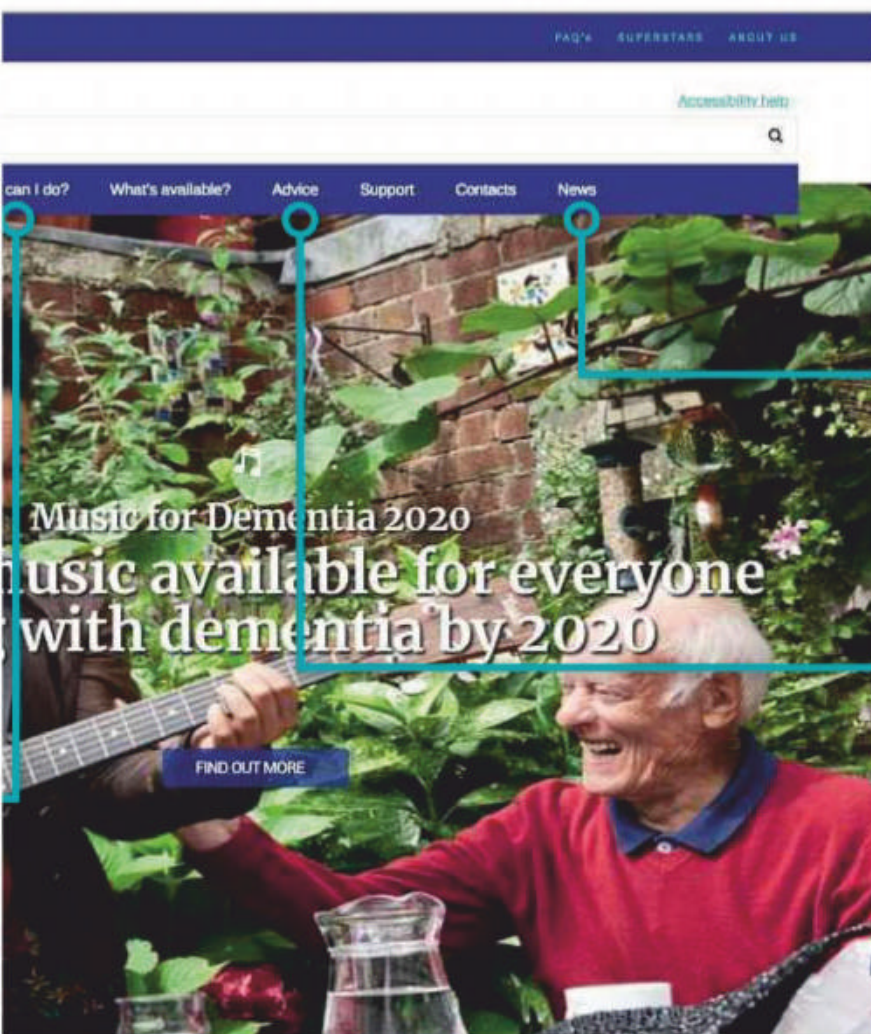
Unless you use Edge, Bing News isn't likely to be your first port of call for the latest news – but its new look might convince you, if you favour simplicity. Bing News' redesign, subtly pushed out without fanfare, looks a lot like the old version. True, articles have been crammed closer together, publication logos have been removed, the layout is more mobile-friendly and navigation has received a timid revamp, with arrows that let you jump to topics such as World News and Sport. But, ostensibly, this is the same old Bing News. Google News needn't panic just yet.

Our rating





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



#### Upcoming events

Listed below are the upcoming music and dementia events held within the UK. If you would like to include your event please [contact us](#).

- 4 February 2019 – HC UK Conf. – Improving Dementia Care in Hospital: Ensuring Adherence to the NICE 2018 Guidance – London
- 11 February 2019 – Words Music Action – An event to inspire creative partnerships for health and wellbeing – Guildford
- 14-15 February 2019 – Dementia Fest 2019 – Recent developments in research, clinical issues and policy – London
- 28 February 2019 – Dementia Pathfinders – Making Music with People with Dementia – Salisbury
- 11 March 2019 – HC UK Conf. – Improving End of Life Care for People with Dementia – London
- 19-20 March 2019 – Alzheimer's Research – UK Conference – Harrogate
- 16 May 2019 – Arts & Dementia Best Practice Conference 2019 – Towards Social Prescribing – London
- 21 – 22 May 2019 – Alzheimer's Society – Annual Conference – London
- 11-12 July 2019 – 2nd International Social Prescribing Network Conference – You can register your interest for this conference by [contacting the organisers](#).
- 9 – 10 October 2019 – Care Show – NEC Birmingham

#### MEET AND GREET

Hover over the News tab to view 'Upcoming events' running throughout the year across the country

#### MUSIC ADVICE

Advice for those looking to bring music to sufferers is plentiful – whether you're a relative, carer or musician

#### Advice for care home professionals

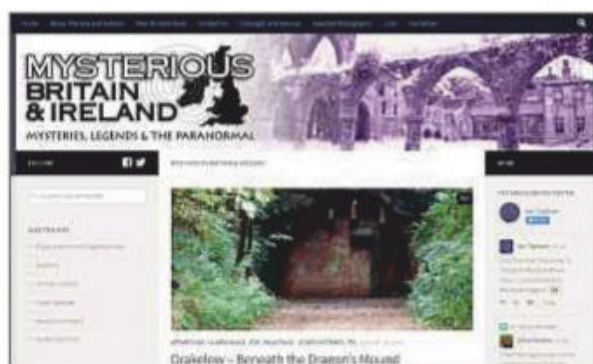
Live Music Now have created a bank of resources to help you bring music into the lives of care home residents.

Please explore their Toolkit for Care Homes, which outlines:

1. What the benefits of music are for care homes and their residents.
2. What a music session may look like.
3. Practical first steps to get you started.

Some of the key benefits of having music in your care home include:

- Improving the quality of life for residents, including those living with dementia, and bringing other health issues – in turn, this can help their carers and family feel more positive.
- Staff motivation and morale – care staff involved with music can feel more motivated and enjoy their work more.
- Happier places for residents and staff – homes that incorporate music and offer musical provision regularly into their care offer are known for being places residents and staff want to be and enjoy being in.
- Meeting Care Quality Commission standards – an effective music programme can address each of the five questions they consider when making their quality assessment of a care home.
- To find out more about how music can impact on a care home's QCC assessment, please read Live Music Now's report [Music and the Care Quality Commission](#), which outlines how music can



RELAUNCH

#### CULTURE

### Mysterious Britain

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

The UK has a long and frankly terrifying history of paranormal activity, from ghosts to UFOs, and you'll find them all here at Mysterious Britain, a folklore site that collects and documents British-based 'X-files'. The site is run by a top paranormal investigator and a team of volunteer contributors, which allows it to include nationally famous tales and local legends you've never heard before – if your town has experienced ghostly going-ons, get in touch. When scouring the database, you can use the 'gazetteer maps' to search via county and pinpoint supernatural locations near you.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

#### FARMING

### WWOOF UK

[www.woof.org.uk](http://www.woof.org.uk)

Are you a Wwoofer? Do you regularly go Wwoofing? No need to keep it to yourself with the new-look Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms. The site acts as a social hub and information portal for those looking to volunteer their time on organic farms. Clicking 'Find a Host' shows a list of farmers seeking hands-on help, alongside a map, short bio and stunning images of the farm that turns the process more into a dating app than a volunteer website. This is about more than planting potatoes, though. It's an ethical experience – a chance to learn more about other cultures.

Our rating



NEW

#### POLITICS

### Prepare for EU Exit

[euexit.campaign.gov.uk](http://euexit.campaign.gov.uk)

Whichever way you voted, we could all do with a sober assessment on how the process of leaving the EU may affect us. The Government's 'Prepare for EU Exit', unveiled mere months before we leave the EU, details almost every scenario you may face (all part of the politicians' plan to appear 'no deal-ready'). While the homepage is fresh and easily navigated, clicking any of the four primary options – for individuals, businesses, EU nationals, and expats – reveals a site that's easy to get lost in, with every click redirecting you to yet another text-heavy list of links. Useful, but lazy.

Our rating





# BACK ISSUES DISC 2018

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2018 Back Issues Disc

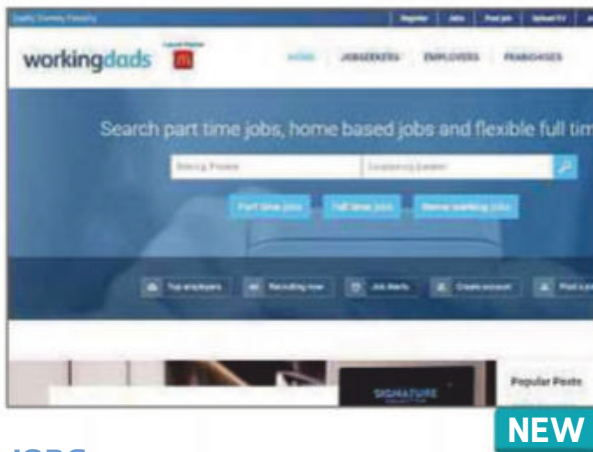
Our **2018 Back Issues Disc** containing all 26 issues from last year is now on sale from Amazon

For more information, visit [bit.ly/wudisc18](http://bit.ly/wudisc18) or search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon

You can still buy our **2017 Back Issues Disc** from [bit.ly/wudisc17](http://bit.ly/wudisc17)







NEW

## JOBS

# Working Dads

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

Juggling children and work is a tough gig, but a new website for parents has launched that takes the hassle out of finding part-time, home-based or flexible jobs. Working Dads, partnered with McDonald's, is a classic job-search site that aims to help fathers find employment that fits their child-centred schedule. Unlike many new sites, there's already a healthy number of jobs listed from notable employers, including UBS and the Coastguard. Browse the news feed, too, for valuable articles on parental leave and expert Q&As. Franchises also get a look in, for those who want to be their own boss.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

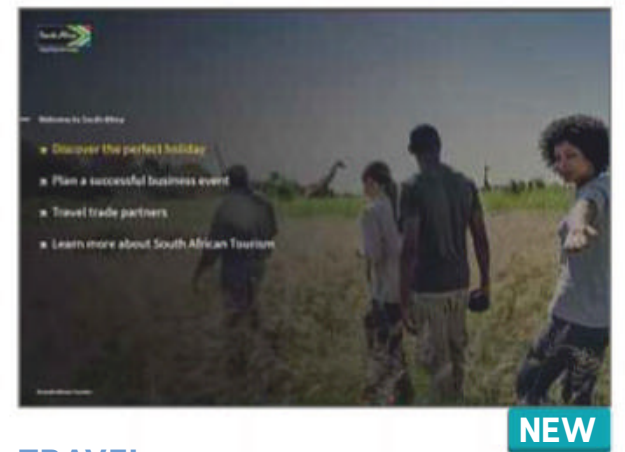
## CULTURE

# The Yorkshire Shepherdess

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

Amanda Owen, better known as the Yorkshire Shepherdess, first came to public attention in ITV's *The Dales* and has since written two books about her rural lifestyle. Her relaunched site isn't as polished as it could be, but that only adds to its rustic appeal. Fans will delight in exploring Amanda's charming journey from suburbia to the Dales through her writing and photos. There's even an option to rent out a shepherd's hut on her farm. If nothing else, visit this site to see some incredible images of 'God's own country', which are helpfully organised by season.

Our rating



NEW

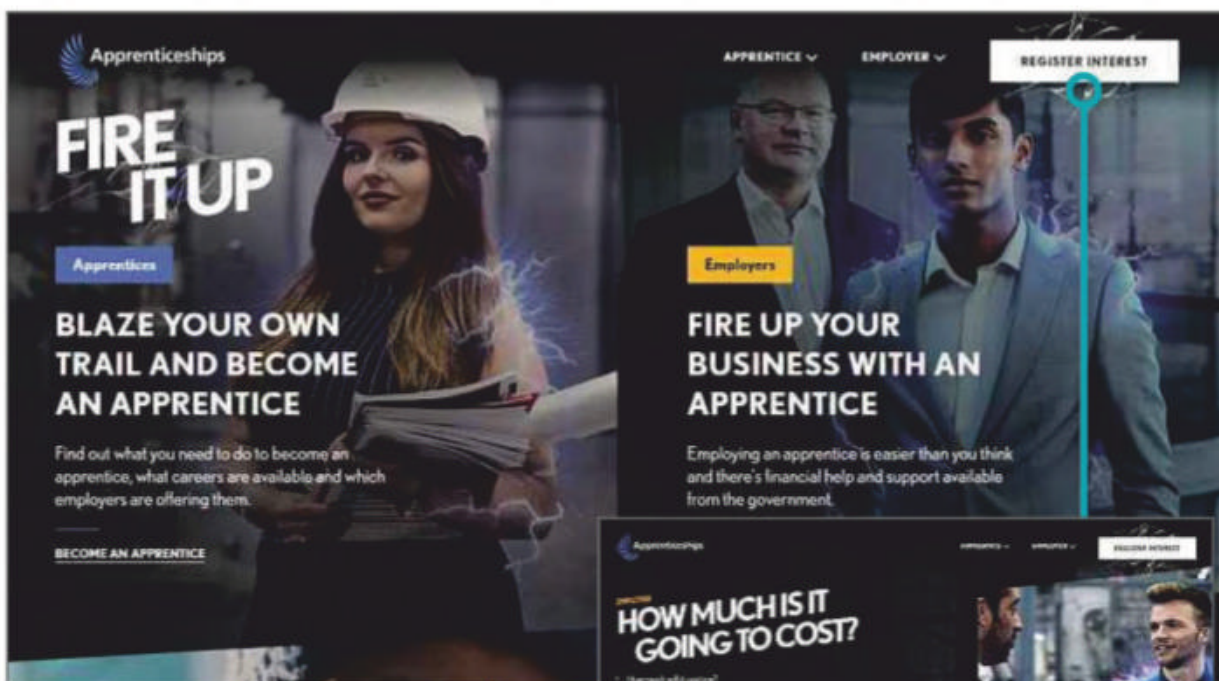
## TRAVEL

# South Africa

[www.southafrica.net](http://www.southafrica.net)

South Africa is a breathtakingly beautiful country – but don't just take our word for it; check out this new website, designed to encourage tourism to the area. This one-stop shop highlights the best places to go, the best activities to do, and absolutely everything you need to know before you travel ([bit.ly/saknow468](http://bit.ly/saknow468)). Watch the site's Bakkies Stories series ([bit.ly/bakkies468](http://bit.ly/bakkies468)), a 14-parter featuring three young UK travellers on a 10-day road trip. It's cringeworthy marketing, but South Africa's beautiful sights make it worthwhile. And when you're ready to book, hit those persistent buttons at the side of the screen.

Our rating



NEW

## JOBS

# Apprenticeships

[www.apprenticeships.gov.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk)

For decades, Britain has been crying out for more government support for apprenticeships, and it seems someone in Whitehall has finally responded. The Government's excellent new Apprenticeships website has a bold design that cuts through any confusion with a simple portal offering information to both apprentices and employers. There's a useful apprenticeship search, which works like any online job search, although this currently only works in England, which could either hint at a gradual UK-wide roll-out or a missed opportunity. Elsewhere, you can discover real-life stories of apprentices or register interest with the click of a button.

Our rating



NEW

## SHOPPING

# Click and Shop Coupons

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

This has to be one of the worst executions of a good idea we've seen in a long time. With its stock images, low-quality resolution and Times New Roman fonts, it looks more like an ad-riddled scam site than a money-saving resource. Navigating the site is a pain – links tend to shunt you to other websites, such as Wowcher, or to text-only pages presumably designed for Google's clever search algorithms rather than bargain-hunters. It also lacks any must-have discounts.

Our rating





# Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

## Top Tips of the Fortnight



### Get a free website

If all you want to do is create a simple website, you don't need a paid-for web host. 1mb.site ([1mb.site](http://1mb.site)) has everything you need for free, as long as your site is no larger than 1MB in size. If you host images and the like elsewhere, this is plenty of space. Best of all, the service has a great tool for entering HTML, which colour-codes text as you enter it. There are also some useful templates to get you started, and it's compatible with loads of modern web technologies, which makes it a great tool for experimentation.

### Brighten WordPress

WordPress.com sites have just had a new dashboard theme added, which lets you brighten up your back end. Go to your WordPress.com website and click your account picture in the

top-right corner. Choose Account Settings and scroll down to Dashboard Colour Scheme, then find and select Classic Bright to give it a try. If you are running a self-hosted site ([wordpress.org](http://wordpress.org)), you'll find even more options to try. Click Users, Your Profile, and you'll see eight options to choose from.

### Deal of the Fortnight

123 Reg ([www.123-reg.co.uk](http://www.123-reg.co.uk)) has up to 30% off its web hosting packages. For example, the Essentials package usually costs £5.99 but is currently available for £4.19.

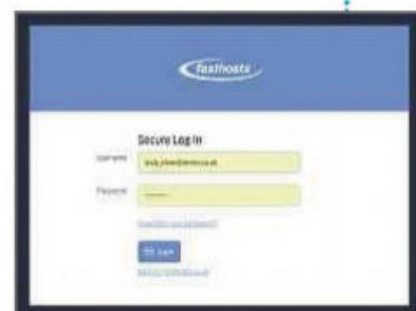
## Web-building Helpdesk

**Q** I want to build a small, simple website with just a few pages, using HTML and CSS. I've paid for hosting, but is there anything I need to do to protect my site from hackers?

Danny Davies, via email

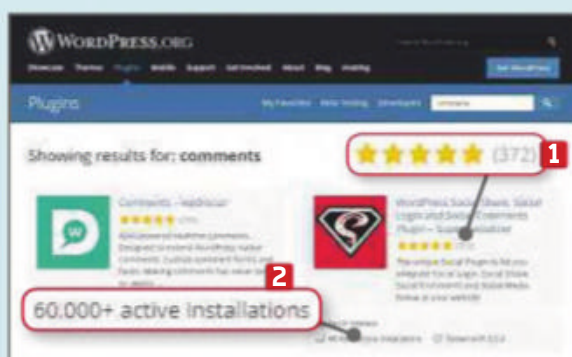
**A** Your host should look after that kind of thing for you. The weakest link is likely to be a vulnerability in the username and password combinations you use to get to the site's control panel and to upload files via FTP. You can counter this with a strong, unique password. If your host offers two-factor authentication, so much the better. A basic website is more secure than a WordPress site, for example, because it's less obvious how to sign in and adjust the code.

Andy Shaw, Technical & Reviews Editor, Web User

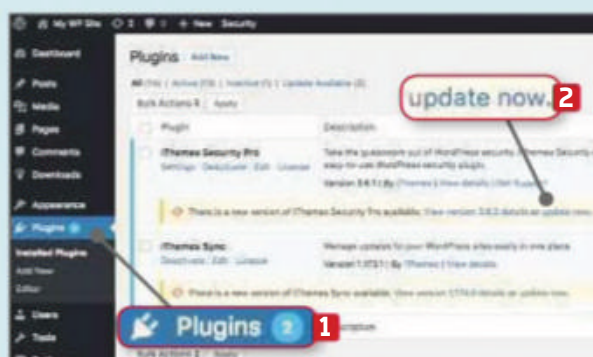


## MINI WORKSHOP | Ensure your WordPress plugins are safe WordPress: [wordpress.org](http://wordpress.org) | 10 mins | Any WordPress website

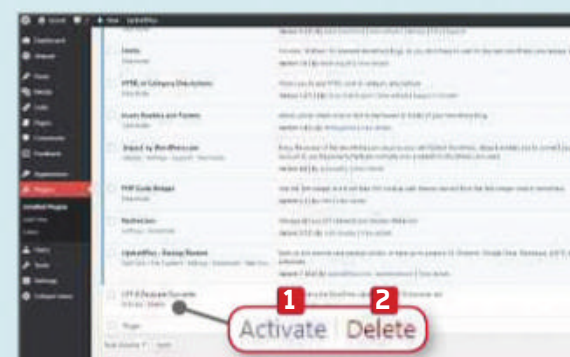
WordPress plugins provide access to thousands of extra tools and features. On the downside, these add-ons can create vulnerabilities that let hackers take over your site. Here's how to minimise the risk



**1** You can search for plugins at [wordpress.org/plugins](http://wordpress.org/plugins). When choosing one, make sure it has a good star rating, **1** with plenty of users **2** and lots of positive reviews. Go back and check regularly that the plugin you're using is the best one for the job.



**2** WordPress can sometimes seem awash with updates, especially if you haven't added anything to your site for a while. Don't neglect your plugin updates, though. If there's a number next to the Plugin option on the menu, **1** click it. Under the plugin that needs updating, click the 'update now' link. **2**

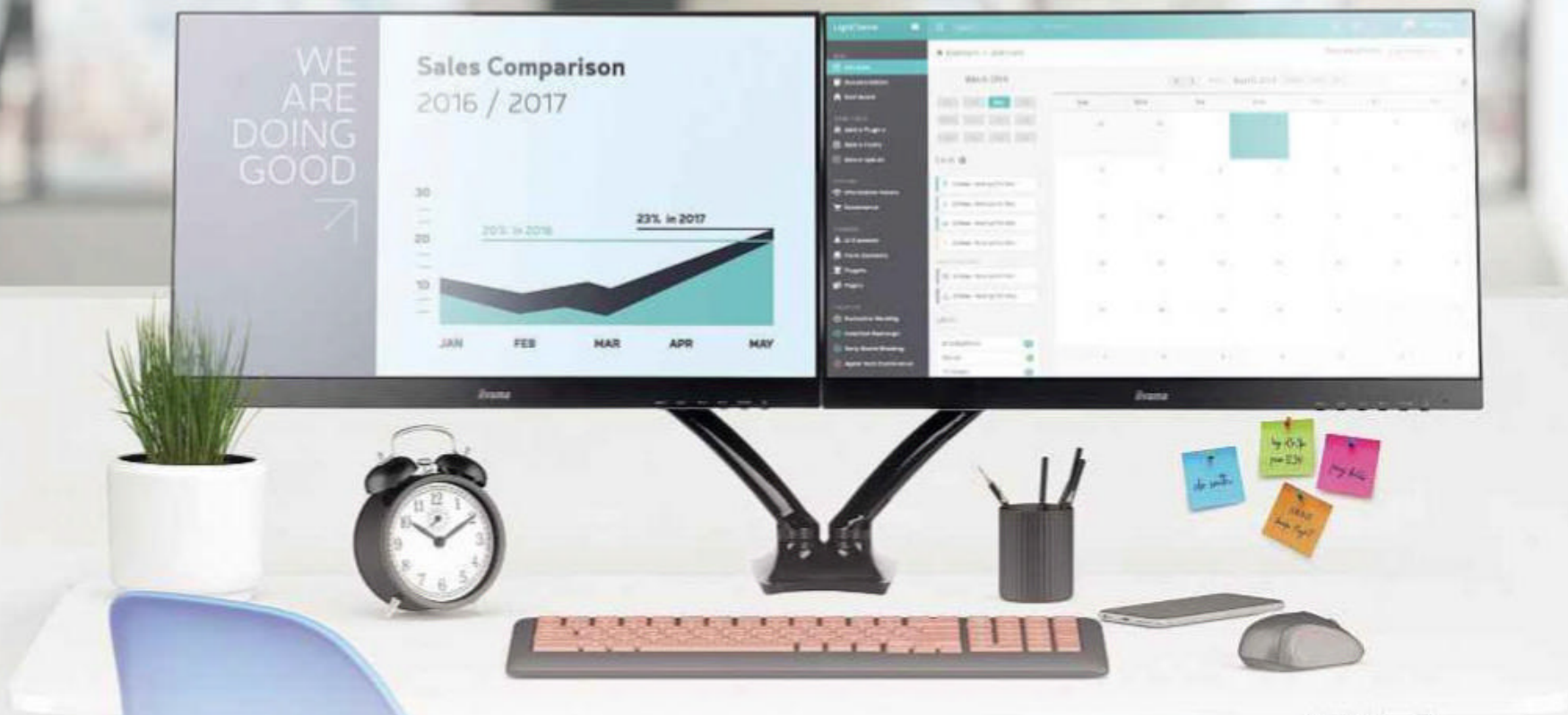


**3** If you've had your site for a while, make sure it doesn't contain any redundant plugins that you've deactivated and not deleted. It's better to remove them from your site and reinstall them, if and when you need to. Find an inactive plugin (it will have an Activate link) **1** and click Delete. **2**



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# What To Watch Online

## Pick of the fortnight

**NETFLIX**

### Watch Netflix's new iPhone-shot film *High Flying Bird*

From 8 February

Netflix is on a proper film roll. After scoring big hits with meme-spawning *Bird Box* and multi-Oscar-nominated *Roma*, can a 90-minute iPhone video by *Ocean's Eleven* director Steven Soderbergh fly even higher?

Soderbergh shot his new feature *High Flying Bird* entirely on an Apple smartphone, then edited it on a MacBook Pro laptop (see photo, right). It's not the first time he's done it. Soderbergh's 2018 thriller *Unsane* was filmed on iPhone in just 10 days (watch it on Now TV: [bit.ly/unsane468](https://bit.ly/unsane468)). *High Flying Bird* moves even further away from traditional filmmaking by screening on Netflix instead of cinemas.

Tech aside, the film has an excellent pedigree, with a script by *Moonlight* writer Tarell Alvin McCraney and *Moonlight*'s André Holland starring as a basketball agent who plays dangerous games off the court. Kyle MacLachlan (*Twin Peaks*), Zachary Quinto (*Star Trek*), Sonja Sohn (*The Wire*) and a brace of famous NBA athletes flesh out a top cast. Another cinematic slam-dunk for Netflix? Warm up with the official HD trailer at [bit.ly/flying468](https://bit.ly/flying468).



### **N** Watch podcast-inspired chiller *Dirty John*

From 14 February

Netflix's new eight-part thriller arrives on 14 February, but we wouldn't recommend cosying up with your Valentine to watch it. Based on a hit true-crime podcast, *Dirty John* dramatises the hair-raising tale of con man 'Dirty' John Meehan (Eric Bana from *Munich*) and Debra Newell (Connie Britton from *Nashville*), a businesswoman he seduced online. It's

no spoiler to say they didn't live happily ever after.

Watch the latest trailer on Netflix, no subscription needed ([bit.ly/dirtyjohn468](https://bit.ly/dirtyjohn468)). We also recommend the superb original podcast,

which you can stream and download free via Acast: [bit.ly/dirtyacast468](https://bit.ly/dirtyacast468).

### **NOW** Watch Sky's sequel to classic war film *Das Boot*

From 6 February

Sky Austria has bravely made a sequel to 1981's *Das Boot*, widely regarded as the greatest war movie ever. This eight-part drama, delayed from last autumn, picks up the action in 1942 and splits it between the claustrophobic German U-boat and the French resistance on land. The mainly German cast includes Vincent Kartheiser (Pete in *Mad Men*) and Tom Wlaschiha (Jaen in *Game of Thrones*).

Episodes air weekly on Sky Atlantic, which you can stream live and on-demand via Now TV with an Entertainment Pass (£7.99 per month

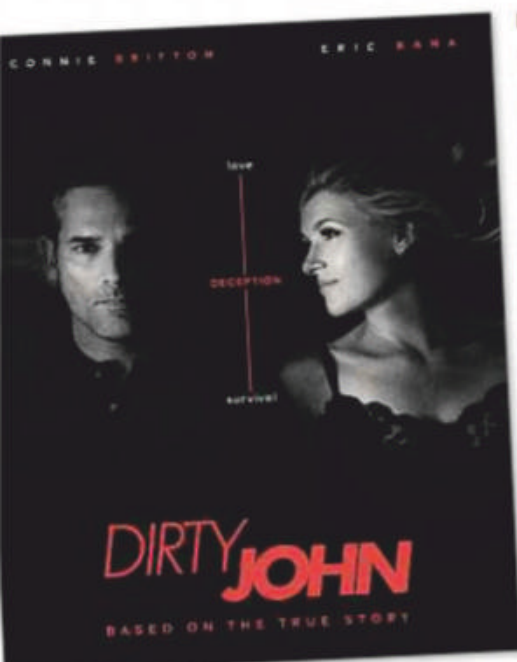


after a 14-day trial, [bit.ly/nowent468](https://bit.ly/nowent468)). Dive in with the trailer at [bit.ly/dasboot468](https://bit.ly/dasboot468) (click the closed-caption icon for English subtitles).

### **amazon** Rediscover a 1990s tabloid storm in *Lorena*

From 15 February

It's easy to dismiss the tale of Lorena Bobbitt, who sliced off her husband's manhood in summer 1993, as sordid black comedy. But Lorena had suffered years of domestic abuse at the hands of John Wayne Bobbitt, and her retaliation made her a tabloid joke figure. *BBC Witness* briefly revisited the case last year ([bit.ly/bbcbobbitt468](https://bit.ly/bbcbobbitt468)), but now





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

a four-part Amazon docuseries from *BlackKkKlansman* producer Jordan Peele digs deeper. Lorena and John both take part, and Whoopi Goldberg narrates. Watch the trailer at [bit.ly/lorena468](http://bit.ly/lorena468).



### **Laugh (or you'll cry) at the headlines**

Topical satire emerges from hibernation this month. Netflix's *Patriot Act*, with US stand-up Hasan Minhaj, returns with seven new episodes on 10 February at [bit.ly/patriot468](http://bit.ly/patriot468).

Over on Now TV, British comedian John Oliver has a new season of HBO's *Last Week Tonight* on 19 February, with episodes airing on Sky Atlantic and streaming via Now TV. Watch the trailer at [bit.ly/lastweek468](http://bit.ly/lastweek468).

*The Last Leg* – originally intended as a one-off for the London 2012 Paralympics – has just begun its 16th series on Channel 4. Stream weekly episodes live and on-demand via All4 at [bit.ly/lastleg468](http://bit.ly/lastleg468).

### **Survive *The Walking Dead* – again**

**From 11 February**

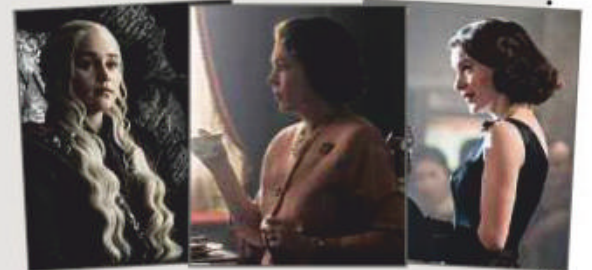
*The Walking Dead* are reanimating once again for the second part of Season 9 on Fox UK, which you can stream via Now TV. As you'll know if you've been

## Streaming subscriptions soar in the UK

The number of UK homes using more than one paid-for streaming service rocketed 40% last year, according to the latest report from TV body BARB.

BARB's Establishment Survey ([bit.ly/barb468](http://bit.ly/barb468)) reveals that households using one or more of Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Now TV rose 22% in the year to September 2018 to reach 11.6 million. Just under 4 million homes now have at least two subscriptions.

Netflix remains the top paid-for streaming service in British homes, and its lead is widening. It's now viewed in 9.7 million UK homes, up 30% year on year. Amazon Prime is up 28% to nearly 5 million, with Now TV up 12% to 2 million. BARB also revealed that the 'Beast from the East' in late February 2018 triggered a streaming spike almost as big as Christmas, as people chose Netflix-and-chill over chilblains.



watching, we left our plucky survivors rebuilding civilisation and facing a fate even worse than walkers. Catch up with the mid-Season 9 trailer on YouTube at [bit.ly/walking468](http://bit.ly/walking468).

The new episodes arrive one a week for eight weeks at [bit.ly/nowdead468](http://bit.ly/nowdead468), where you can also stream all nine previous seasons on-demand with an Entertainment Pass.

### **Save the world with *The Umbrella Academy***

**From 15 February**

Netflix's latest comic adaptation is a bit

different from the usual DC/Marvel fare. Ellen Page (*Juno*) stars as one of seven adopted super-powered siblings whose billionaire dad is reassembling them in a bid to save the world. A parallel world, that is, in which John F Kennedy was never shot.

*The Umbrella Academy* co-stars

singer Mary J Blige and Cameron Britton from *Mindhunter*, and the script is adapted from comics by Gerard Way, former singer in My Chemical Romance. The latest trailer may help you make sense of it all: [bit.ly/umbrella468](http://bit.ly/umbrella468).



**In case you missed it...**

You wait months for a new episode of George RR Martin's fantasy *Nightflyers*

(pictured), then 10 arrive at once – so fast that we couldn't include them in our last issue. Fly through them all on Netflix at [bit.ly/nightflyers468](http://bit.ly/nightflyers468).

FX's *American Crime Story: The Assassination of Gianni Versace*, arguably the best TV drama of 2018, is now available on Netflix. It's already been shown



twice by the BBC, but iPlayer expiry dates meant you could never watch

more than four of its 10 episodes at once. At last, you can treat yourself to a one-sitting binge.

Another FX crime drama, *Sons of Anarchy* spin-off *Mayans MC*, has just begun screening on BBC Two. Stream episodes live and on-demand via the iPlayer.





# Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

## Xiaomi Pocophone F1

Xiaomi storms into the UK with a great-value Android phone that's as powerful as rivals that cost twice as much

**X**iaomi (pronounced “shh-OW-mee”) might not be a household name in the UK, but the popularity of the brand in Asia makes it the fourth most popular smartphone manufacturer in the world. Now it's aiming to make inroads here by launching its powerful but affordable Android phones.

### Specs, build and pricing

The Pocophone F1 is a slightly cheaper alternative to Xiaomi's flashy flagship, the Mi 8 Pro, which is also new to the UK. However, we think the Pocophone is the more interesting of the two, particularly because Xiaomi hasn't scrimped on the specs.

By some feat of technical wizardry, the Pocophone is fitted with Qualcomm's fastest-ever mobile processor, the Snapdragon 845 – the same chip that powers phones costing at least twice the price. Pair that with 6GB of memory, and a choice of either 64GB or 128GB of storage, and you're looking at a mid-range tour de force. At £324, it's incredibly good value – roughly £170 cheaper than the excellent OnePlus 6T (reviewed in Issue 463, [bit.ly/webuser463](http://bit.ly/webuser463)).

However, there's a chink in the Pocophone's armour.

Xiaomi has been forced to cut a few corners in the design: the Pocophone F1's all-plastic chassis is uninspiring when compared to the sleek slabs of metal and glass we've grown used to.

On the bright side, the silver-tinted chamfered edge round the screen adds a dash of class, and the rounded corners and sides ensure that the phone fits comfortably in the palm. The rear-mounted circular fingerprint reader is easy to reach, too.

You even get a 3.5mm headphone jack on the phone's top edge, which is refreshing, and its 4,000mAh battery is topped up via a USB Type-C charging port on the bottom edge. The dual-SIM slot on the left edge also allows for storage expansion up to 256GB, while the volume rocker sits next to a slightly rounded rectangular power button on the right.

### Screen and camera

The Pocophone F1 follows the trend for tall, thin displays with a screen that's 6.18in, with an 18:9 ratio and a resolution of 2,246 x 1,080 pixels. Its pixel density of 403ppi (pixels per inch) makes for ample sharpness, but you have to put up with a wide notch jutting into the top of the screen (unless you



“By some feat of technical wizardry, the Pocophone is fitted with Qualcomm's fastest-ever mobile processor”





“ The phone is capable of capturing truly stunning images, and its video capabilities are just as good ”

opt to hide it by reducing the screen space).

The superb IPS display is capable of producing 91.7% of the sRGB standard's colours. The contrast ratio of 1,371:1 also does justice to images captured with the Pocophone's dual rear camera. Its maximum screen brightness of 446cd/m<sup>2</sup> (candles per square metre) is good enough for outdoor use, though it may not be quite bright enough for using in direct sunlight.

Rather than offering a secondary wide-angle lens or a 2x telephoto zoom sensor, the Pocophone's secondary rear-mounted camera senses the depth of a scene to create effects such as background blurring around portraits. The main camera takes photos up to 12 megapixels.

The phone captured some truly stunning images. Shots of London's bustling skyline were bursting with crisp detail and accurate colours, with the HDR mode successfully lighting up shadowy areas. Still images hold up very well under scrutiny, especially in low-light conditions, with minimal graininess.

Video capabilities are just as good, even if the recording modes are limited – for instance, 4K footage can only be captured at 30fps (frames per second) and there's no built-in stabilisation. There are plenty of alternative shooting

modes on offer, including 120fps super-slow-motion and time-lapse capture.

## Performance, battery and interface

The Qualcomm octa-core 2.8GHz Snapdragon 845 is the same chip used in most of 2018's pricey top-end phones and, with its 6GB of memory, you can expect very similar benchmark results. It stormed through Geekbench 4's duo of single- and multi-core processor benchmarks, achieving near-identical scores to the OnePlus 6T and Pixel 3, and blazing past similarly priced competitors such as the Vivo V11 and Nokia 7.1.

Graphics performance is equally potent. The Pocophone reached a perfect score of 59 in the GFXBench GL Manhattan 3.0 on-screen

gaming test, and will effortlessly run any Android game you can think of.

Typically, such power comes at a cost to the phone's overall battery life. Thankfully, the Pocophone has taken no such hit and was capable of playing for 15 hours and 29 minutes in our continuous video-playback test, though that isn't as long-lasting as the OnePlus 6T or Vivo V11.

There are a couple of downsides. Pocophone F1 isn't certified for dust- or water-resistance, so you'll have to be careful to avoid any bathroom or kitchen mishaps, and keep it out of the rain. Then again, the OnePlus 6T isn't protected from the elements, either, and that phone costs considerably more.

The lack of NFC is a bigger problem. You won't be able to use the Pocophone F1 for your contactless payments via Google Pay, for instance, which is a bit of a pain if you're used to tapping your phone to make purchases.

Finally, although the phone runs Android 8.1, Xiaomi has been heavy-handed with additional software. For the most part, it functions as you'd expect but the app icons are childlike and unsophisticated, and the Settings menu behaves differently, making it harder to use. App notifications don't always show up at the top of the screen, either. However, these are minor issues and can be remedied with your preferred launcher.

## OUR VERDICT



Xiaomi has planted its flag firmly in UK soil with the Pocophone F1, entering the field of mid-priced phones with high-end specs previously dominated by the likes of OnePlus.

This particular model focuses on hard-hitting internal components, only cutting corners in the build and presentation.

More expensive phones

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

may use more robust materials with a classier design, but it's a sacrifice we think is worth making to get a phone that performs just as well but for a lot less money.

## PRODUCT INFO

### Xiaomi Pocophone F1

Price: £324

Buy from Amazon: [bit.ly/xia468](https://bit.ly/xia468)

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Octa-core 2.8GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 845 processor
- 6GB of memory
- 6.18in 2,246 x 1,080 pixels IPS screen
- 20 megapixels front camera
- 12- and 5-megapixels rear camera
- 3.5mm headphone jack
- USB Type-C
- 64GB or 128GB storage
- Memory-card slot (supports up to 256GB)
- 802.11ac Wi-Fi
- 180g
- 156 x 75 x 8.8mm

## FOR

- ✓ Great value for money
- ✓ Colour-accurate screen
- ✓ Long battery life

## AGAINST

- ✗ No certified dust or water protection
- ✗ No NFC

## BETTER BATTERY

OnePlus 6T, £499

[bit.ly/onep468](https://bit.ly/onep468)



## EVEN CHEAPER

Motorola Moto G6, £199.99

[bit.ly/motog468](https://bit.ly/motog468)





# Amazon Echo Show (2nd Gen)

Hot on the heels of competition from Google, Amazon has updated its Echo Show – the smart speaker with a screen

**W**hen it comes to keeping its smart speakers up to date, Amazon isn't resting on its laurels. The latest device to get a serious refresh is the Amazon Echo Show, the Alexa-powered model that's equipped with a screen.

Since the original Show launched (we reviewed it in Issue 441, [bit.ly/webuser441](http://bit.ly/webuser441)), Google has brought out its own smart screen – the Google Home Hub, which we reviewed in Issue 463 ([bit.ly/webuser463](http://bit.ly/webuser463)). To leapfrog Google, Amazon has refined its design, giving it a larger, sharper 10in screen (much larger than the Home Hub's 7in version), while improving

the speaker and microphones.

## Design and build

The design looks cleaner than before but it's no more expensive than the original at £219.99, though the Home Hub is still significantly cheaper at £139. As before, the Echo Show has a front-facing camera for video calls, which the Home Hub doesn't.

Amazon has lowered the screen, which now dominates the unit, and moved the larger speaker behind it, so it has a bigger footprint than the previous version but is shorter overall.

The wider bezel at the top houses the camera and far-field microphones, along with physical mute and volume buttons. On the rear is the mains socket (there's no battery option) and a micro-USB port. The unit has no 3.5mm port, however, so you can't connect headphones or other speakers.

## Sound and vision

This version of the Echo Show is a significant improvement on its predecessor. The screen has better contrast and the colours are punchier, while the touch surface feels smooth and silky. However, we found the bass overbearing and had to reduce it using the speaker's equaliser settings. We also found that the sound distorted at higher volume.

The device's microphone setup is better, though, and more sensitive to the Alexa wake word than before, with less requirement for us to



repeat ourselves during testing.

There's been a range of enhancements made to the device's software interface, too. You can now control any smart-home devices you own by dragging a finger down from the top of the touchscreen and tapping Lights & More to see a scrollable list with toggle switches. This is a boon if you have a lot of smart devices

because using voice-only controls means you have to remember the names of your gadgets to operate them.

You can now browse the web on the Echo Show via either Firefox or the Amazon Silk browser, which gives you access to YouTube and other streaming-video services including Amazon Prime (but not Netflix). Amazon promises that video calls to Skype users are coming soon.

## PRODUCT INFO

### Amazon Echo Show (2nd Gen)

**Price:** £219.99

**Buy from Amazon:** [bit.ly/ech468](http://bit.ly/ech468)

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Intel Atom x5-Z8350 processor
- 10.1in touchscreen display
- 5-megapixels camera
- Dual-band 802.11a/b/g/nc Wi-Fi
- 246 x 174 x 107mm

## FOR

- ✓ Big screen
- ✓ Better sound
- ✓ More sensitive microphones

## AGAINST

- ✗ Doesn't make the most of extra size
- ✗ Bass is a bit overbearing

## OUR VERDICT



Overall, the 2nd-generation Echo Show is a big improvement on the original. The screen is bigger, brighter and nicer to use, and the device sounds great at everyday volume. Its microphone array is also more sensitive.

Although it's an excellent smart speaker, it could be slicker. The large

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

touchscreen is crying out for a better interface and while there have been some improvements, we reckon there's more that could be done with it.



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## UV500 Encrypted SSD

Kingston's UV500 SSD dramatically improves your system's responsiveness with incredible boot, loading and transfer times compared to mechanical hard drives. It uses a Marvell 88SS1074 controller and 3D NAND Flash to power through daily tasks and improve productivity. Perfect for your desktops, small-form-factor PCs and laptops.

[kingston.com/ssd/business](http://kingston.com/ssd/business)







# Web User's Best Buys

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

## HARDWARE

### MINI PC

#### Lenovo IdeaCentre 620s

£479 from [bit.ly/lenovo467](https://bit.ly/lenovo467)

Tested: Issue 467

This compact PC crams in more power for entertainment, work and gaming than you might think, and includes decent graphics performance at an affordable price.



#### KEY SPECS

Quad-core 2.4GHz Intel Core i5-7400T processor ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 8GB memory ■ 4 x USB 2 ports ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ 4GB Nvidia GeForce graphics adapter ■ Windows 10 Home ■ 224 x 212 x 102mm ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

### BUDGET SMARTPHONE

#### Motorola Moto G6

£199.99 from [bit.ly/motog466](https://bit.ly/motog466)

Tested: Issue 466

A budget phone that looks good, feels natural to use and takes great photos, the Motorola Moto G6 offers powerful features found in handsets that cost twice as much.



#### KEY SPECS

Octa-core 1.8GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 450 processor ■ 3GB RAM ■ 64GB storage ■ 5.7in, 2,160 x 1,080-pixel screen ■ 12-megapixel rear camera, 8-megapixel front camera ■ 154 x 72 x 8.3mm ■ 167g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

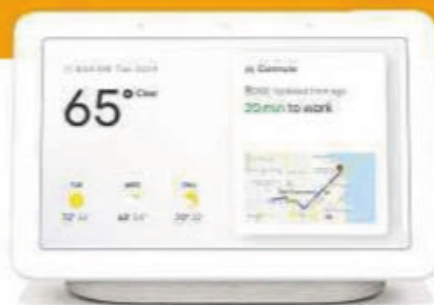
### SMART SPEAKER

#### Google Home Hub

£139 from [bit.ly/homehub463](https://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

### MONITOR

#### Philips Brilliance 241B7QPJKEB

£209.20 from [bit.ly/phil462](https://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](https://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 ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

### LAPTOP

#### Acer Aspire 5

£629.99 from [bit.ly/acer458](https://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



## SOFTWARE & SERVICES

### PHOTO-EDITING SOFTWARE

#### DxO PhotoLab

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

**Tested:** Issue 455

If you're put off by Adobe's subscription costs, DxO PhotoLab is the best alternative for managing and editing your photos. Its interface is streamlined and elegant, and the editing and image quality are exceptional. It's also very simple to use and comes with lots of sophisticated tools.

#### KEY FEATURES

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



### VIDEO-EDITING SOFTWARE

#### Adobe Premiere Elements 2018

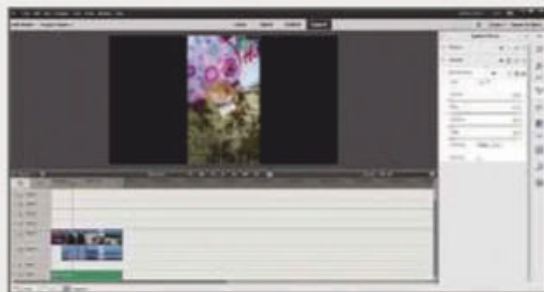
£86.56 from  
[www.adobe.com/uk](https://www.adobe.com/uk)

**Tested:** Issue 453

With its clean interface and sackful of special effects, Elements performs just about every action you'll ever need from a consumer-level video-editing suite. It's a powerful beast and rendering is super-speedy, even when exporting at 4K – but note that it only runs on 64-bit systems.

#### KEY FEATURES

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



### Web User Gold Award winners

#### PRIVATE BROWSER

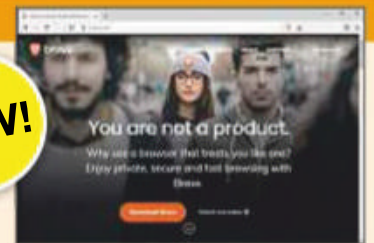
##### Brave

Free from [brave.com](https://brave.com)

**Tested:** Issue 467

For everyday use, Brave is like Chrome on steroids, and when you want maximum privacy, it offers a quick and convenient switch to Tor.

**NEW!**



#### PHOTO CLEANER

##### AVG Cleaner

Free from [bit.ly/avgcleaner466](https://bit.ly/avgcleaner466)

**Tested:** Issue 466

AVG Cleaner is a delight to use and is packed with handy features that go beyond merely tidying up photos on your Android phone.



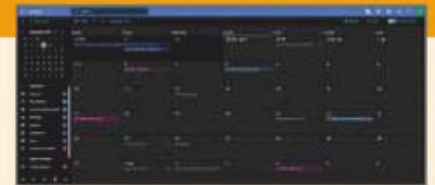
#### ONLINE CALENDAR

##### Microsoft Outlook

Free from [bit.ly/outlook465](https://bit.ly/outlook465)

**Tested:** Issue 465

This excellent cross-platform calendar organises your life – on any account, wherever you are, with whatever device you use.



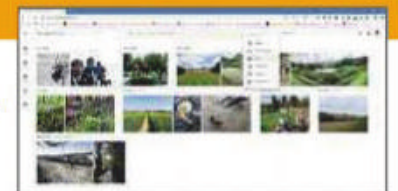
#### PHOTO-SHARING SERVICE

##### Google Photos

Free from [photos.google.com](https://photos.google.com)

**Tested:** Issue 464

Simple and smart, Google Photos has overtaken Flickr as the best way to share photos online. Its unlimited free storage is unbeatable and its Assistant is invaluable.



#### WEBSITE-BUILDING TOOL

##### Wix

Free from [www.wix.com](https://www.wix.com)

**Tested:** Issue 463

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.



# WEB USER

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## SYSTEM TOOL

### Ashampoo WinOptimizer 2019

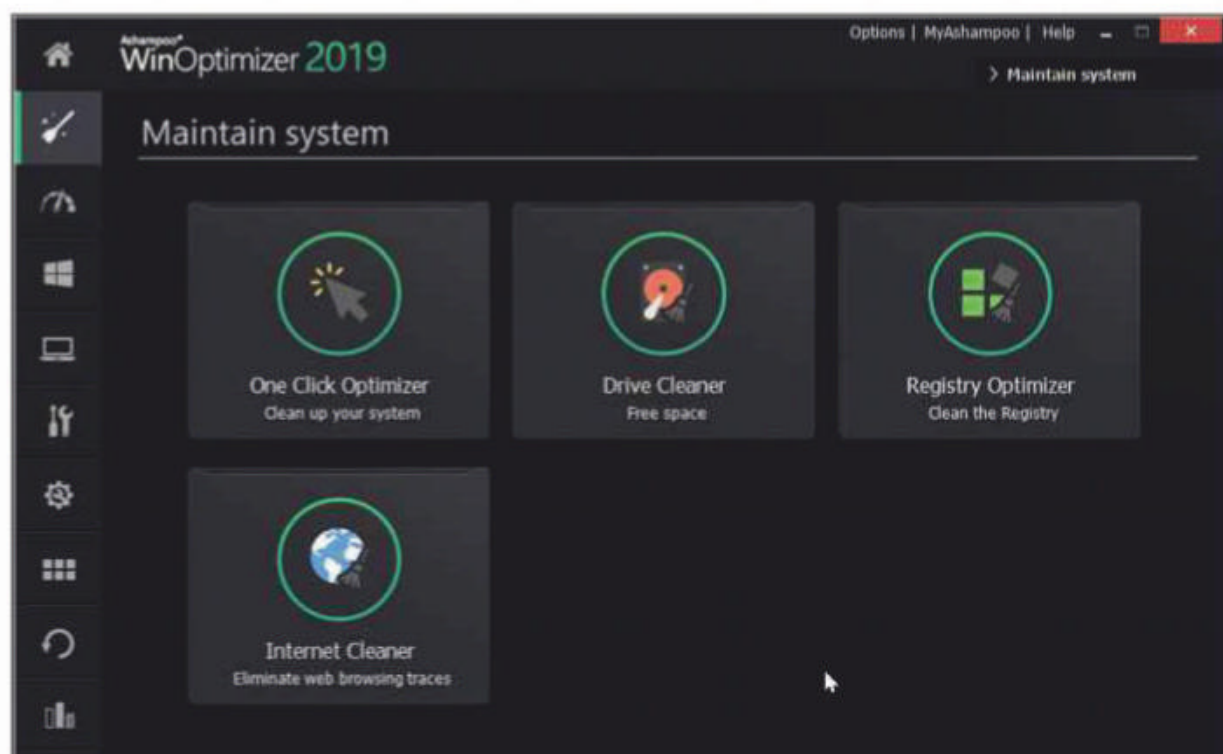
[bit.ly/ashampoo468](http://bit.ly/ashampoo468)

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

**File size:** 19MB

This full version of Ashampoo WinOptimizer originally cost £19.99, but it's now available for free. It offers a number of powerful tools for cleaning and speeding up your PC, brought together in one simple interface.

There are sections for maintaining your system – One-Click Optimiser, Drive Cleaner, Registry Optimiser and Internet Cleaner; improving performance – Service Manager, Startup Tuner, Internet Tuner, Process Manager, Uninstall Manager and SSD Wizard; customising Windows – Tweaking, Antispy, Win10 Privacy Control, File Associator and Context Menu Manager; and analysing your system – System Information, Diskspace Explorer, System



Benchmark, HDD Benchmark, HDD Inspector and Font Manager; as well as three file tools – File Wiper, File Manipulator and Link Checker.

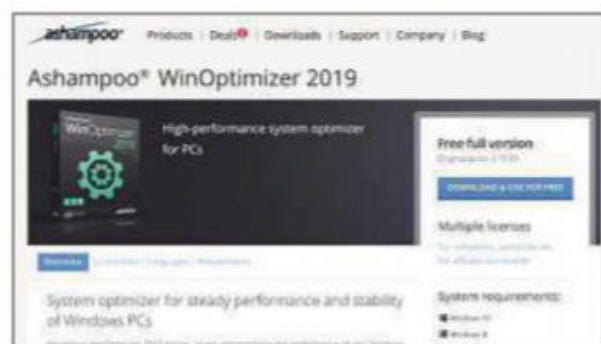
Ashampoo WinOptimizer lets you run any of its tools separately, or use the One-Click Optimiser to run the Internet Cleaner, Drive Cleaner and Registry Optimiser components in sequence. You can choose whether the program automatically fixes any problems it finds, or whether you'd prefer to address them yourself. Any changes the program makes to the system settings or Registry can be undone through the Backups screen.

Browsing through each section

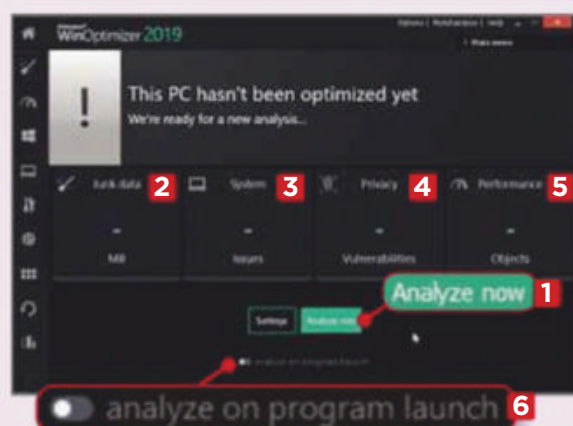
reveals a lot of tools, but it's only when you choose a particular one that you realise there's even more to the software. Select Tweaking under Customise Windows, for example, and you'll find lots of customisable settings sorted into categories such as Devices, Drives, System, Desktop and Explorer. There are even sections for Firefox, Internet Explorer and 'Other' software.

Additionally, the Statistics page provides a handy view of how you use the software, reporting on files, folders and Registry keys that have been scanned or deleted.

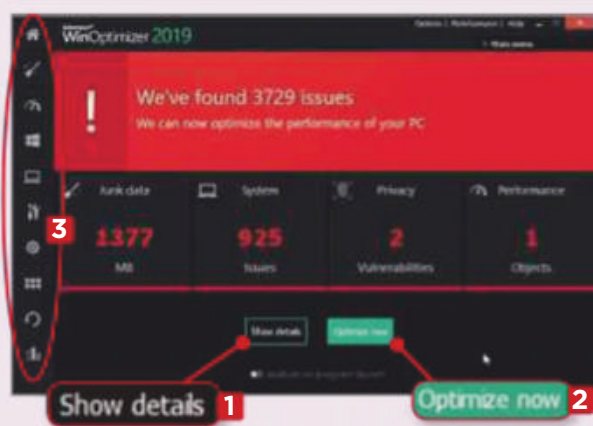
See our feature on page 50 for details of more all-in-one software suites.



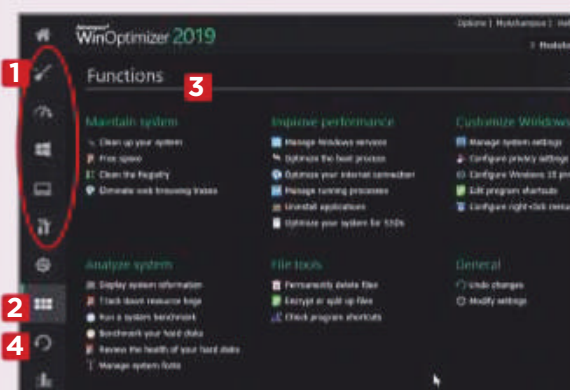
## MINI WORKSHOP | Speed up your PC using Ashampoo WinOptimizer 2019



**1** Start from the home screen and click the 'Analyze now' button. **1** The scan launches, checking your system for junk data, **2** system issues, **3** privacy vulnerabilities **4** and performance problems. **5** You can set the scan to run the moment you launch the software. **6**



**2** When the scan has finished, click 'Show details' **1** to see the results. You can drill down by clicking each section and deselecting anything you don't want to remove. Click the 'Optimize now' button **2** to fix all the found problems. To cancel, just select a different section in the sidebar. **3**



**3** You'll find lots of tools in the different sidebar sections. These are Maintain System, Improve Performance, Customise Windows, Analyse System and File Tools. **1** If you prefer, you can click Functions **2** and run each tool separately from there. **3** The Backup section **4** lets you undo any changes you've made.



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

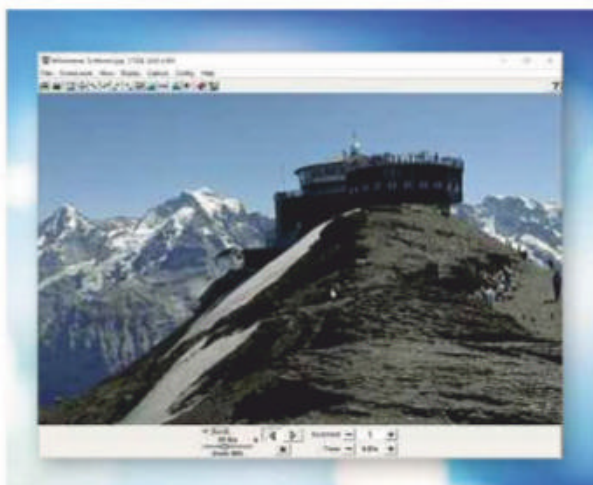


## MUSIC PLAYER WACUP Preview

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

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 8.7MB

Winamp is now being developed again and big changes are promised for the once-popular audio player. WACUP – the Winamp Community Update Project – is a third-party version of Winamp based on the old 5.666 build. This is the first preview release, and comes after three years of development. It includes crash and security fixes, better performance, support for Big Bento modern skins and plugins, and improvements to command-line and media-format support.

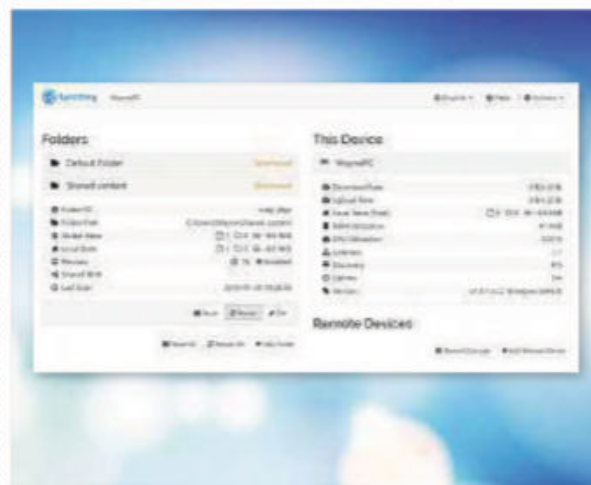


## PANORAMA VIEWER WPanorama 12

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

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

WPanorama displays panoramic images that can be scrolled horizontally or vertically. You can control the picture movement with your mouse or the interface controls, adjust the speed and view panoramas in a screen saver. The software comes with a 360° Swiss image, and lets you download more than four thousand other panoramas from the website, or display your own photos in JPEG or BMP format.



## SHARING TOOL Syncthing

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

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10, Mac OS or Linux **File size:** 7.8MB

Syncthing makes it easy to share content between two or more PCs, without using the cloud. It works through your browser, continuously synchronising files between connected computers. Just run the program and the interface will open in a new browser window, then add folders to share and devices to share them with. You can see the upload and download rate, as well as memory and processor usage.

## New Windows Apps

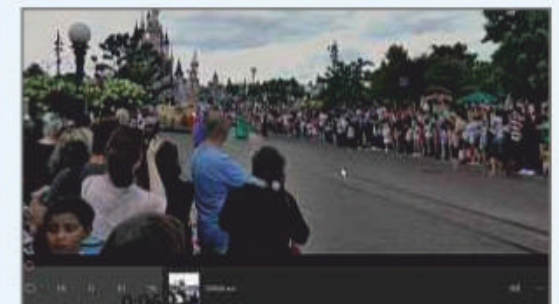
### Free Media Player - Sonca Lite

[bit.ly/sonca468](http://bit.ly/sonca468)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 53.66MB

This ad-supported media player can handle video and audio files stored either locally or in cloud services such as Dropbox and Microsoft OneDrive. You can favourite files and bookmark items.



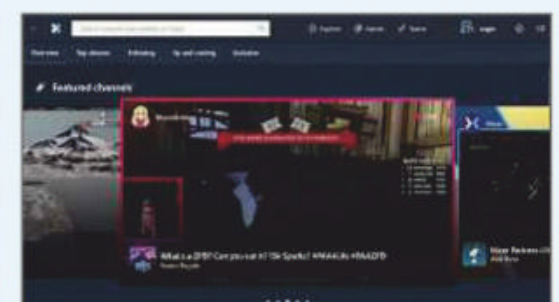
### Mixplay for Mixer

[bit.ly/mixplay468](http://bit.ly/mixplay468)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 47.88MB

Formerly known as Mixer Go, this is a client you can use to watch live streams on Mixer ([mixer.com](http://mixer.com)), interact with channels and users, and manage your own channel if you have one.



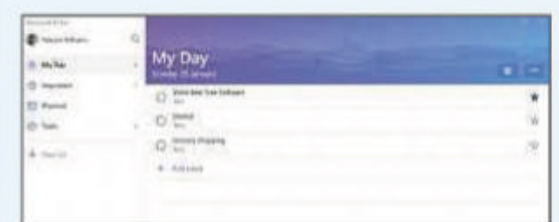
### Microsoft To-Do

[bit.ly/todo468](http://bit.ly/todo468)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 41.45MB

Microsoft To-Do is a simple to-do list and note-taking app that makes it easy to plan your day. The updated app can now add multiple lists to the Start menu.





## ASTRONOMY SOFTWARE

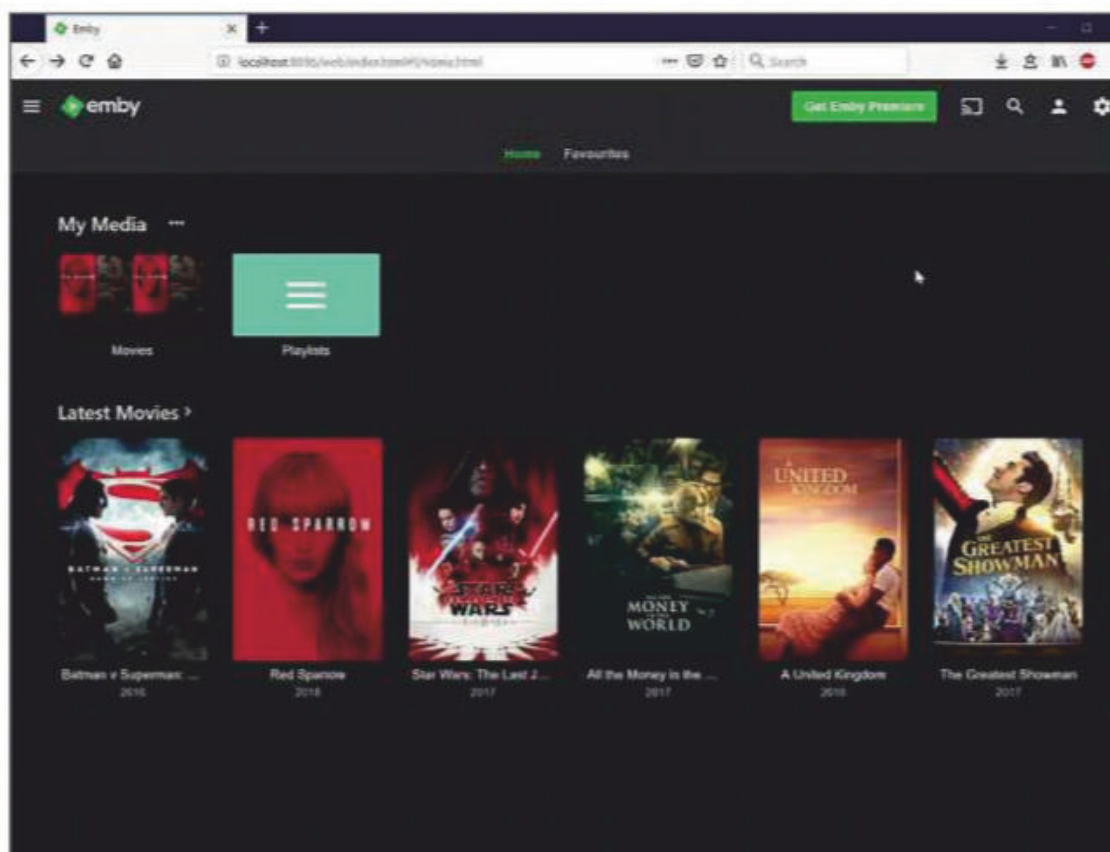
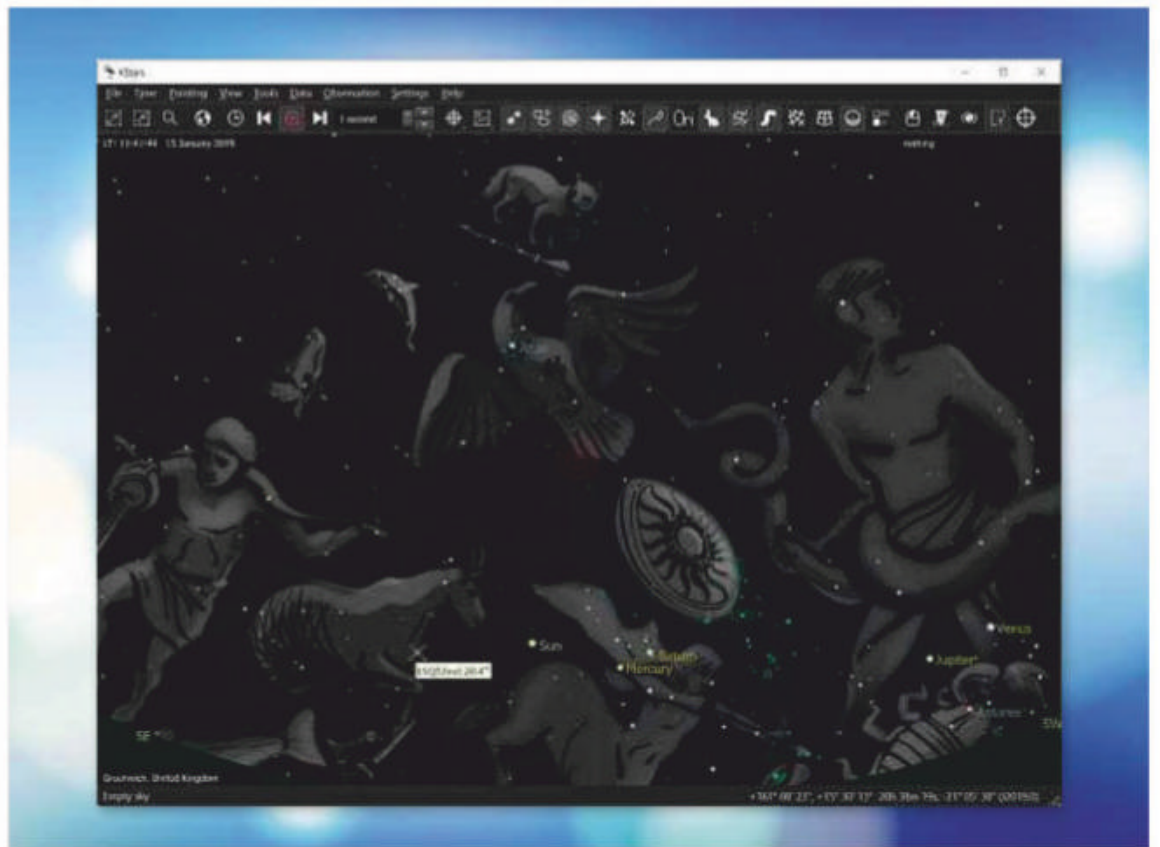
### KStars 3

[bit.ly/kstars468](http://bit.ly/kstars468)

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10, Mac OS or Linux **File size:** 76.3MB

KStars is an open-source astronomy program that accurately displays the night sky as seen from anywhere on Earth, and at any date and time. It can show details of all eight planets in our solar system, the Sun and Moon, 100 million stars and 13,000 deep-sky objects, as well as thousands of comets, asteroids, supernovas and satellites. We especially like the 'What's up Tonight' tool, which shows you what to look out for once the sun sets.

This updated version of KStars gains a new XPlanet Solar System Viewer that can display high-res images of the planets and moons, and improves the FITS (Flexible Image Transport System).



## MEDIA SERVER

### Emby 4

[emby.media](http://emby.media)

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10, Mac OS or Linux **File size:** 785KB (installer)

Emby is a free, open-source alternative to Plex that lets you store your videos and music in a central location, and stream the content to other connected devices, including Amazon Fire TV, Chromecast, Android, and iPhone or iPad. You can stream live TV, sync personal media to mobile devices for offline access, schedule tasks, create user accounts for friends and family, and much more. This latest version features a major database upgrade with improved performance, and removes all telemetry gathering and anonymous usage reporting. Hardware acceleration has been rebuilt from the ground up. The paid-for Premiere version offers a new Emby Live TV guide.

## IMAGE EDITOR

### FastStone Photo Resizer 4

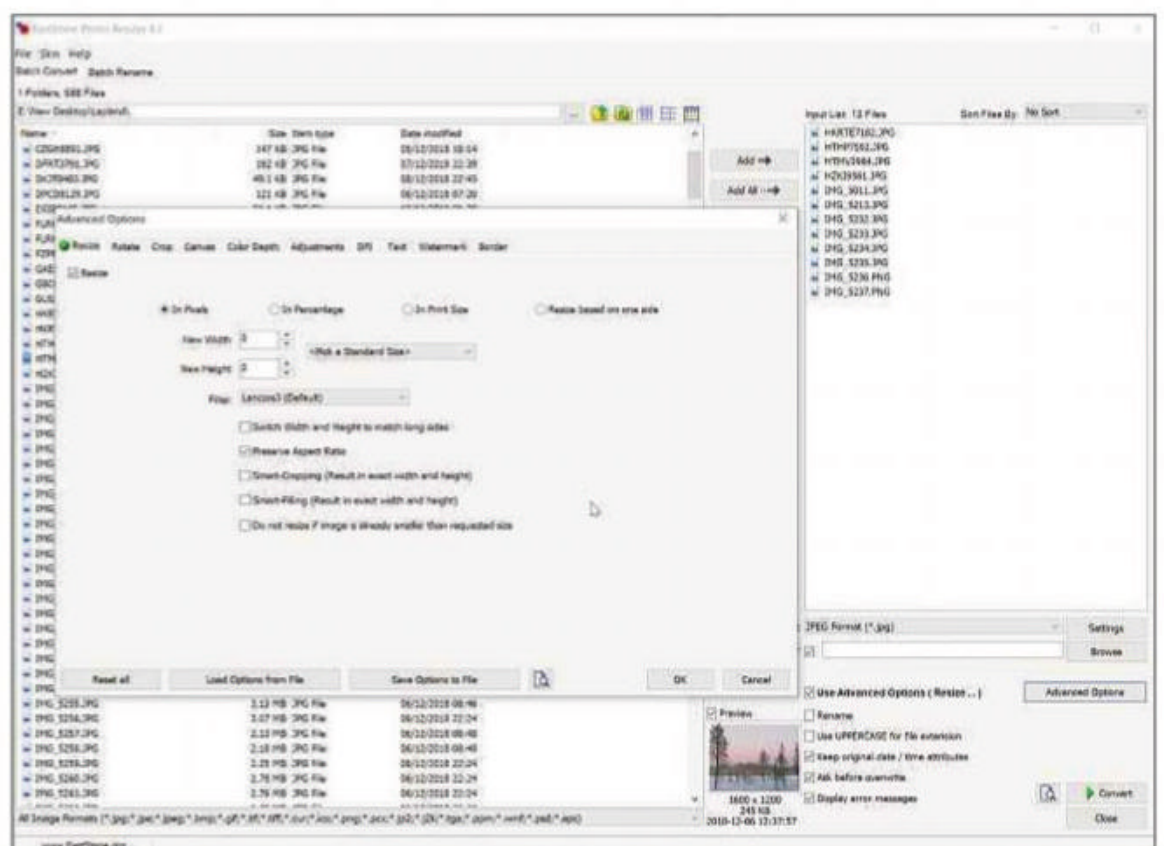
[bit.ly/fresize468](http://bit.ly/fresize468)

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

**File size:** 1.7MB

If you need to reduce the size of photos for sharing via email or posting online, FastStone Photo Resizer is the perfect tool for the job. It can batch-resize multiple images, and lets you specify a new width and height, or pick a standard size. You can choose to resize your photos in pixels, percentage or print size, and includes options for smart-cropping and smart-filling.

As well as resizing photos, FastStone can also convert them, rename them and apply a wealth of effects. Changes to the new version include fixing a bug which stopped the program from displaying file properties under the preview image.







## GAME

### Eole

[bit.ly/eole468](http://bit.ly/eole468)

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

**File size:** 616MB

Eole is described as a “contemplative flying simulator”. The idea of this relaxing game is to fly around the floating islands of Eole, taking in the scenic fantasy splendour. The game can be played with either a keyboard and mouse or a flight stick controller, but be warned that it requires a fairly powerful PC due to the high quality graphics. Chocks away!

## Don't install...

### InstallAware Virtualization

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

**Min requirements:**

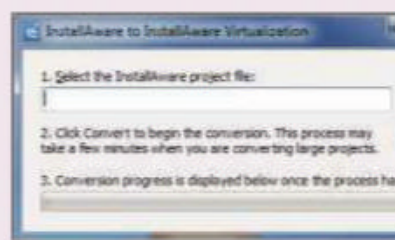
Windows XP/

Vista/7/8.1/10

**File size:** 32.2MB

This program ‘virtualises’ desktop programs to turn them into portable tools, so you can run the software on other computers without having to install it. This sounds great until you see the whopping price tag of \$1,999 – and no, we didn’t miss a decimal point!

You can try it for free for 30 days, but we wouldn’t recommend it.



## ...Install this instead

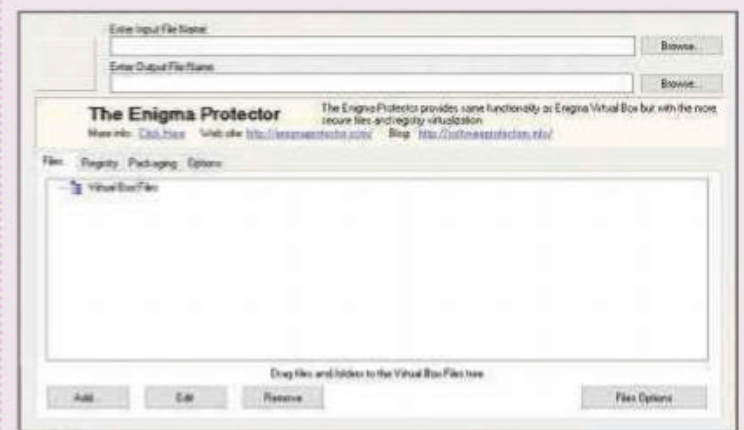
### Enigma Virtual Box

[bit.ly/enigma468](http://bit.ly/enigma468)

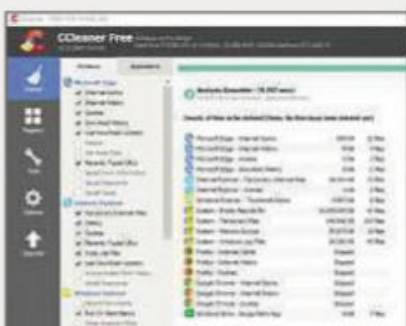
**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10

**File size:** 6.9MB

Portable versions of software are handy because they can be carried around and run from a USB memory stick. However, not every program you want to use will be available as a portable app, particularly commercial software. Enigma Virtual Box lets you package up your existing installed software, so it can be run directly from a USB drive. Just open Enigma Virtual Box, select the main executable file of the program on your hard drive, add files or folders it uses to the list, and click Process. Unlike other, similar tools, Enigma Virtual Box is completely free to use.



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



## SYSTEM CLEANER

### CCleaner 5.52

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

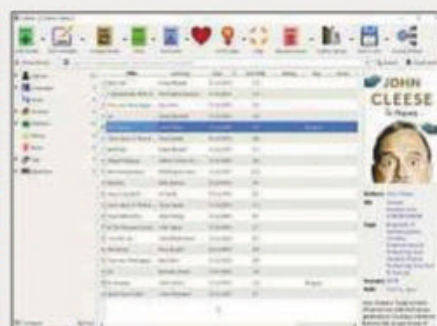
**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/

Vista/7/8.1/10

**File size:** 18.4MB

This popular system-cleaning tool gets updated every month. The latest version features code refactoring for improved stability, and localisation improvements to several pages including licence Information. It also fixes a number of bugs.



## EBOOK MANAGER

### Calibre 3.38.1

[calibre-ebook.com](http://calibre-ebook.com)

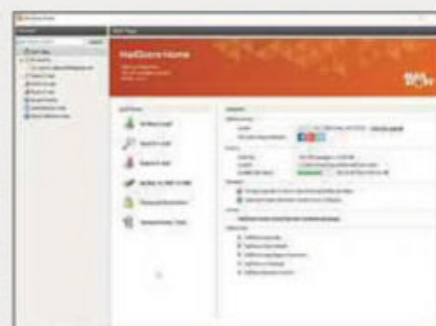
**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10,

Mac OS X or Linux

**File size:** 60.6MB

The latest version of the popular ebook manager introduces some additional options in the edit book feature. It also lets you set unaccented characters to match their accented equivalents in the Tag Browser’s Find function, and fixes some bugs.



## BACKUP TOOL

### MailStore Home 11.2.1

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

**Min requirements:**

Windows 7/8.1/10

**File size:** 10.5MB

MailStore Home backs up your emails and works with all types of mail services including Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook.com, Thunderbird and SeaMonkey. This update fixes various bugs, including a problem that affected archiving in Microsoft Exchange and Microsoft Office 365.



## MEDIA PLAYER

### Zoom Player 14.5 Free

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

**Min requirements:**

Windows 7/8.1/10

**File size:** 31MB

Zoom Player is a versatile free media player that is able to handle most common audio and video formats, and play DVDs. This latest release adds extended video-streaming support for sites including Facebook and Vimeo, and improves skin switching. ■

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





# Best New Browser Tools

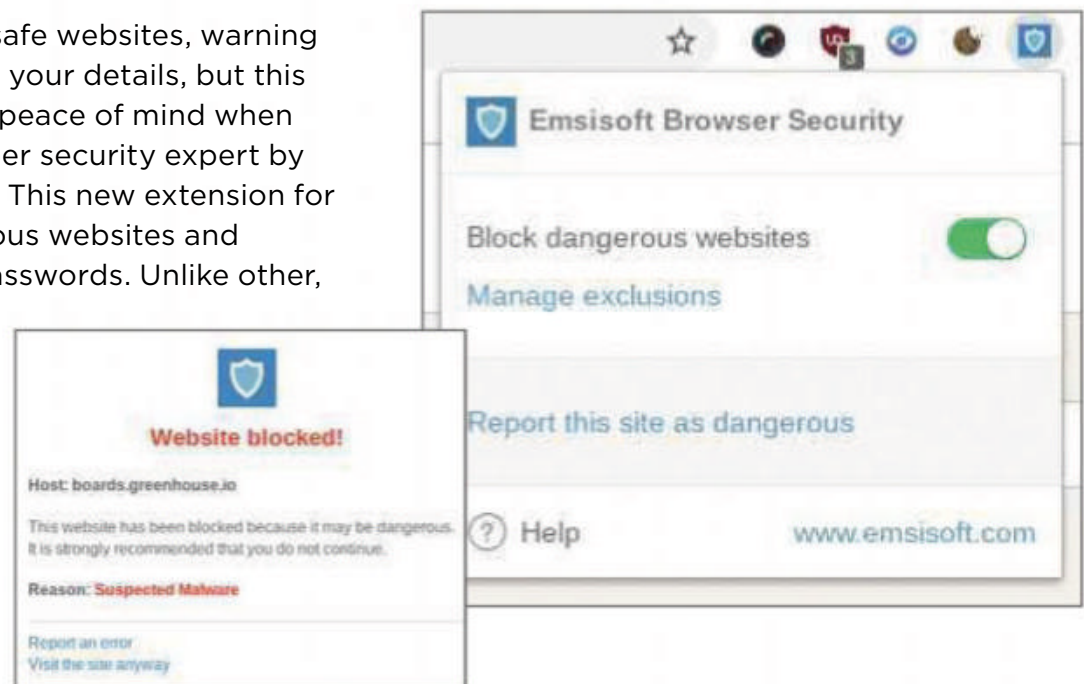


## CHROME

### Block dangerous sites and phishing scams

Chrome now offers built-in protection against unsafe websites, warning you when a page contains malware or may 'phish' your details, but this isn't particularly sophisticated or reliable. For full peace of mind when you're browsing the web, get protected by a proper security expert by using Emsisoft Browser Security ([bit.ly/emsi468](http://bit.ly/emsi468)). This new extension for Chrome and Firefox automatically blocks dangerous websites and prevents phishing attacks that try to steal your passwords. Unlike other, similar tools, it does so without tracking your online activities, by using patterns to identify threats rather than a list of dodgy sites.

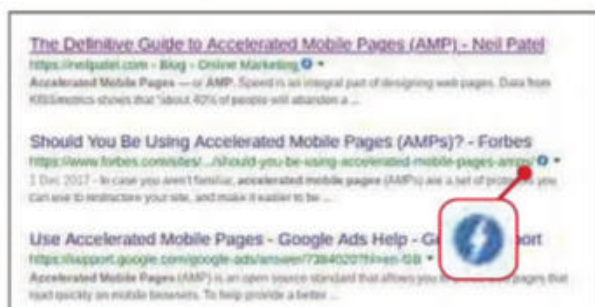
Once installed, the add-on starts working instantly with no configuration necessary, although you can add sites to its exclusions list if it wrongly flags them as risky, then override warnings to visit them anyway. There's also an option to report the current site as dangerous to help Emsisoft improve its accuracy.



### Speed up web pages by loading mobile versions

Many websites now offer mobile versions of their pages using a Google-developed technology called Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP). This streamlines their content, removes unnecessary elements and significantly reduces how much data they use, so pages load quickly on your phone or tablet. AMP is only available in mobile web browsers, but a new tool called AMP Browser Extension ([bit.ly/amp468](http://bit.ly/amp468)) brings its speed and simplicity to Chrome on your desktop, too.

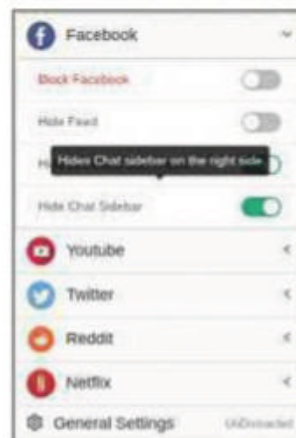
The add-on accelerates your browsing by automatically loading AMP or MIP (Mobile Instant Pages) versions of websites when available. You can also switch between lightweight mobile and full-blown desktop pages by clicking its toolbar button. It won't work on all websites, but AMP Browser Extension helpfully highlights Google search results that support AMP with its blue lightning symbol.



### Hide distractions on your favourite sites

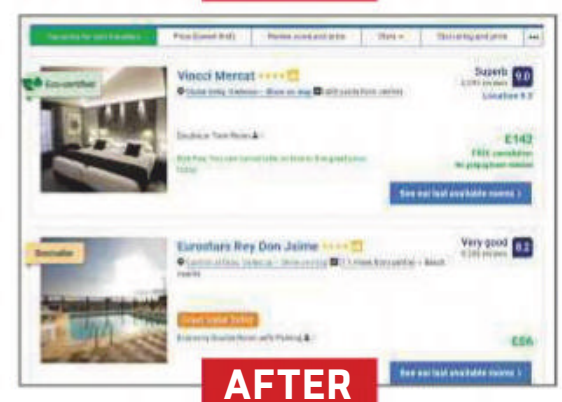
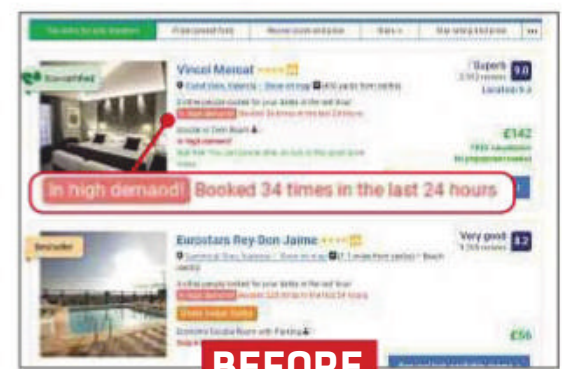
The trouble with tools that aim to make you more 'productive' by blocking time-wasting sites is that you start resenting them and end up uninstalling them. A far better approach is to let you access said sites but hide their most distracting features, which is the idea behind UnDistracted ([bit.ly/undistracted468](http://bit.ly/undistracted468)).

This Chrome extension hides elements on your favourite websites that usually divert your attention, such as the chat sidebar on Facebook, trending topics on Twitter, recommendations on YouTube and 'continue watching' nudges on Netflix. You can choose which parts of each site you want to filter, or block the whole thing and be redirected to a specific URL. All the filters can be paused when you want unrestricted access.



### Stop Booking.com pressuring you to book

Booking.com is one of the most popular websites for booking hotels, flights and holidays, but like other travel operators



it often gets pushy. Browse the site and you're frequently pestered by hysterical messages such as "In high demand! Booked 34 times in the last 24 hours" and "Only 4 rooms left at this price!". This is supposed to coerce you into booking as quickly as possible, but it can also raise your blood pressure and make you feel stressed. ShutUpBookingCom ([bit.ly/booking468](http://bit.ly/booking468)), as its name suggests, silences these nags so you can peruse holiday accommodation at your leisure. If only it worked in Expedia, too.



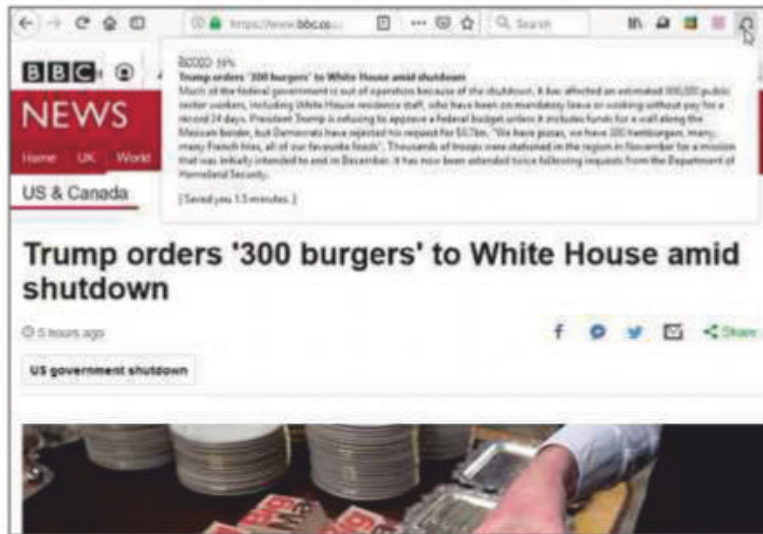
This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Vivaldi and more



## FIREFOX

# Summarise long web articles

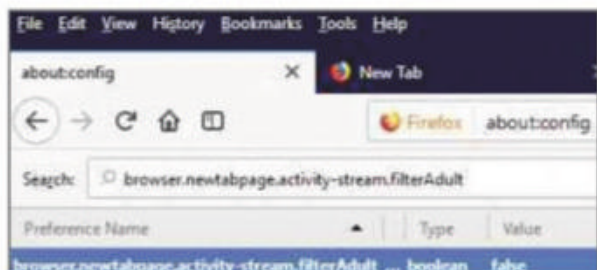
There's so much interesting content on the web and so little time to read it, which means you never get to finish or digest many articles and news stories. A new Firefox add-on called Summarize the Internet ([bit.ly/sum468](http://bit.ly/sum468)) solves this problem by giving you the gist of the current page without you needing to read the whole thing. Just click its toolbar button for a summary of the article's content, which focuses on the writer's "most important points and conclusions, while filtering out weak arguments, baseless speculation and asides". That's the theory, at least: we found the add-on's approach rather hit and miss, although it does helpfully tell you how much time you've saved by summarising and how much the text has been reduced by – typically 20-50%.



## Disable Firefox's adult-content filter

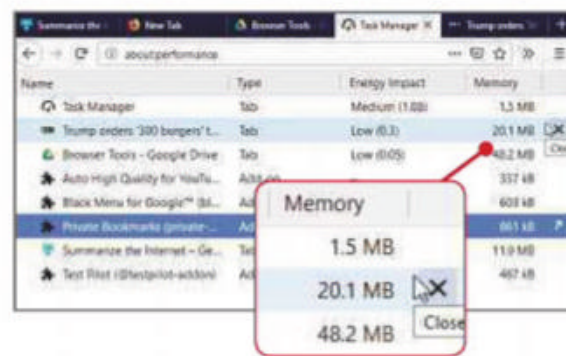
Firefox's New Tab page displays Top Sites (your most visited websites) and Highlights (pages you visited or bookmarked recently) to give you one-click access to interesting content. It won't, however, show shortcuts to sites of an adult nature – not, as you might imagine, to spare your blushes if you share your computer, but to avoid upsetting advertisers who paid for 'sponsored tiles' on the page.

Mozilla dropped these ads in 2015, but the secret adult-content filter remains, which you may regard as unnecessary 'nannying' or censorship. To turn it off, type `about:config` into the address bar, press Enter, accept the 'Here be dragons' risk and find the preference 'browser.newtabpage.activity-stream.filterAdult'. Double-click this to set its value to 'false' and Firefox will stop being so coy on your new tabs (you can change it back to 'true' when required).



## Identify and stop the worst memory hogs

In this section in Issue 465, we wrote about Firefox's new Task Manager, which makes it easy to monitor which tabs, extensions and processes are currently running in the browser. To access it, type `about:performance` into your address bar and press Enter.



Firefox 65 improves this handy feature further by adding a Memory column to the Task Manager, which lets you see at a glance the amount of memory used by each item, so you can quickly identify the biggest resource hogs.

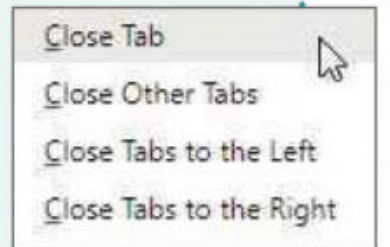
To terminate a greedy tab, hover your mouse over that entry and click the 'Close tab' option in the final column. For memory-hungry extensions, click the arrow icon to open them in the Add-ons Manager and disable or remove them there.

## OTHER BROWSERS



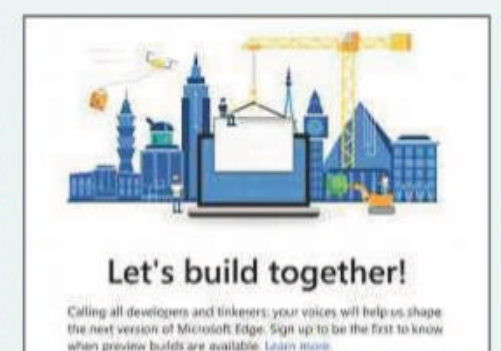
### Close pinned tabs quickly in Vivaldi

Pinning tabs in your browser ensures you don't lose important pages, but once you're finished with them, it makes sense to close them. Oddly, unlike Chrome and Firefox, Vivaldi doesn't offer a Close Tab option for pinned tabs – instead, you need to unpin the tab first before closing it. However, there is a way to fix this. Click the Tools menu, choose Settings and click Tabs. Scroll down to Tab Features and, in the Pinned Tabs section, select 'Close as Other Tabs'. This adds a Close Tab option to the right-click menu of any pinned tabs.



### Test Chromium-based Edge

You've no doubt heard by now that the next version of Microsoft's Edge browser will be based on Chromium, the same code used by Chrome and Vivaldi. Although a release date for the revamped browser has yet to be confirmed, you can sign up to be first in line when preview builds become available. Just visit Microsoft's Edge Insider site ([bit.ly/edge468](http://bit.ly/edge468)), enter your name and email address and click 'Count me in'. The previews are aimed at "developers and tinkerers", but you can just take part to salve your curiosity about Chromium-based Edge.







# Best Free Apps



## App of the Fortnight

### TOOLS

#### ActionDash

[bit.ly/actiondash468](http://bit.ly/actiondash468)



Looking after our digital health is an increasingly important part of our lives, which is why Google recently launched a brilliant tool called Digital Wellbeing. This is designed to provide you with a picture of your digital habits so you can better understand and manage how you use your device. The problem is that, like many of Google's best new Android features, Digital Wellbeing isn't actually available to the majority of Android users – it's currently locked to Google Pixel and Android One devices running Android 9 (Pie).

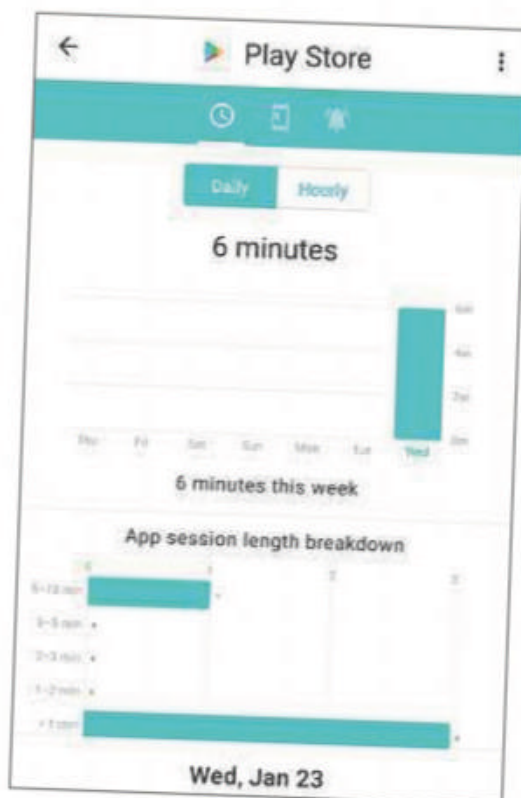
That's a shame, especially when Apple's equivalent (Screen Time) is available to users of any device that can run iOS 12. For Pie-less, non-Pixel users, though, all is not lost, because now they can just install ActionDash instead.

ActionDash is a great new third-party app that offers almost everything that Digital Wellbeing does, while providing a few bonuses of its own. Just like Google's tool, you can use ActionDash to track your device and app usage.

The app produces detailed statistics and graphical reports that let you visualise hourly, daily or weekly usage. ActionDash can break down the length of a session for each individual app and provide a daily notification to keep you up to date with your current habits. The only significant feature currently missing is the ability to limit specific app usage. That said, ActionDash's interface is, in some ways, easier to navigate than Digital Wellbeing's. It's much more swipe-friendly, for example.

ActionDash is free but, by paying £4.49 for the Plus version, you can remove all ads and unlock extra features, including the ability to view your full usage history (the free version only shows the last seven days), along with advanced customisation options and statistics.

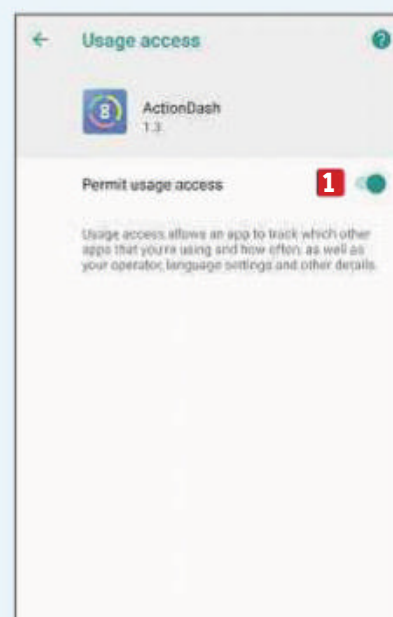
NEW



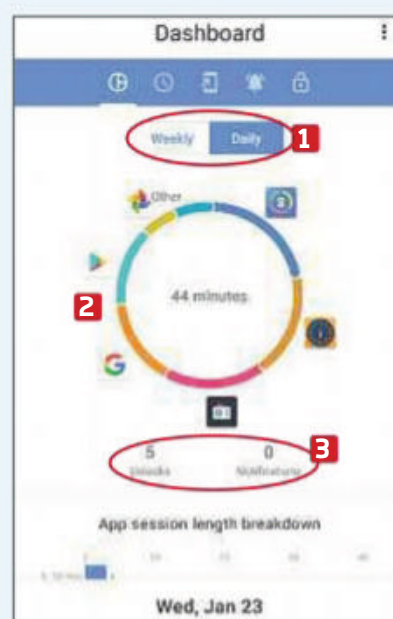
### MINI WORKSHOP

#### Improve your digital wellbeing using ActionDash

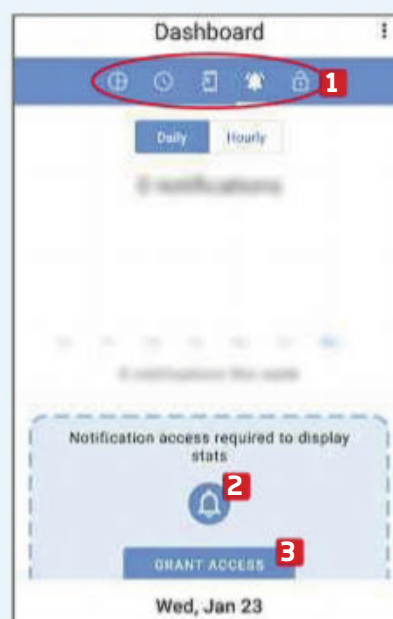
**1** To use ActionDash, you need to allow it access to your device's usage data. Open the ActionDash app, press Grant Access, then select ActionDash in the list of 'Apps with usage access'. Tap the switch next to 'Permit usage access' **1** to enable it. Now return to the app itself and work through the introduction screens, if you wish. Once you're done, you'll be presented with the main dashboard.



**2** In the centre of the Dashboard, you'll see a graphical summary of your recent app usage. Press the Weekly or Daily buttons **1** to change this view. Select individual app icons **2** to view details about each app you've used and tap Back to return to the main dashboard. Below the main graph, you'll see the number of times you've unlocked your device and how many notifications you've received. **3**



**3** The five icons across the top of the screen **1** take you to the different sections of the app, which offer detailed stats for usage times, launches, notifications and unlocks. You can swipe left and right to navigate back and forth through the sections. To allow notification stats, press the bell icon, **2** then choose Grant Access **3** and tap the switch next to ActionDash.



Welcome to ActionDash!



We just need one thing from you...

Before ActionDash can dazzle & enlighten you with insights about your phone use, we need Usage Access.

GRANT ACCESS



Our rating





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

### KIDS

NEW



#### Wonderscope

[bit.ly/wonderscope468](http://bit.ly/wonderscope468)
 11

When it's used well, augmented reality (AR) can be magical. Wonderscope is a fun new app for kids that makes brilliant use of AR to bring stories to life. As each interactive tale unfolds, characters, scenery and other elements from the story pop up in your kitchen, garden or wherever you happen to be. Wonderscope has a growing library of stories, including a modern take on Little Red Riding Hood. The app itself is free, but additional stories need to be bought via in-app purchases.



Our rating



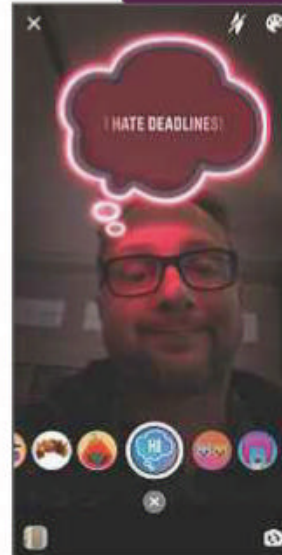
### SOCIAL

UPDATED

#### Messenger

[bit.ly/messdroid468](http://bit.ly/messdroid468)
[bit.ly/messios468](http://bit.ly/messios468)
 (varies)  9

The latest updates to Facebook's instant communication app introduce a number of new features and interface improvements, including a simplified design that organises everything into three almost-omnipresent tabs: People (to help you find your friends), Chat (which provides access to all your messages) and Explore (which helps you discover brands, discounts, games and more). New camera tools, such as an enhanced Selfie Mode, and new filters and animations you can apply to your photos, have also been added.



Our rating



### TV

UPDATED

#### UKTV Play

[bit.ly/uktvandroid468](http://bit.ly/uktvandroid468)
[bit.ly/uktvios468](http://bit.ly/uktvios468)
 4.4  9

UKTV (home to Dave, Drama, Yesterday and Really) is in the process of updating its on-demand service, UKTV Play, using machine learning, Netflix-style algorithms and account syncing, with the aim of offering more personalisation. This means the app will learn your viewing habits and present you with personalised recommendations for what to watch next. It also means that you can pick up where you left off and find your favourites, whether you're watching on a mobile device, set-top box or smart TV.



Our rating



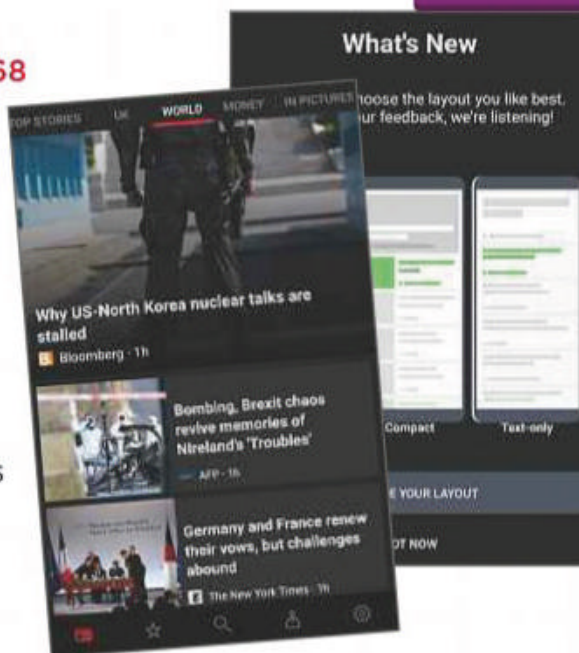
### NEWS

UPDATED

#### Microsoft News

[bit.ly/msnewsdroid468](http://bit.ly/msnewsdroid468)
[bit.ly/msnewsios468](http://bit.ly/msnewsios468)
 5  9

Third-party news apps don't get much love these days, given that many people either stick to using the built-in apps that come with their phone (Apple News for iOS and Google News for Android), or get all their news from social media. But it's worth considering other options, particularly when they offer handy customisation features, as Microsoft's updated News app does. The app works in much the same way as others of its type, aggregating stories from a variety of sources, but the latest update has the advantage of letting you choose from three different views – Standard, Compact or Text-only.



Our rating



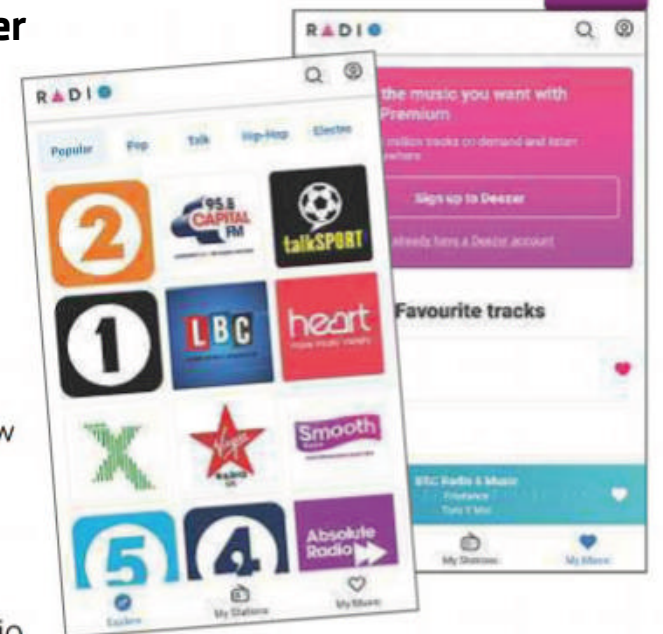
### RADIO

NEW

#### Radio by Deezer

[bit.ly/deezer468](http://bit.ly/deezer468)
 4.4

You may know Deezer from its Spotify-like free and premium music-subscription services. Well, now the streaming company is expanding into TuneIn territory with this new Radio by Deezer app. Currently exclusive to Android (an iOS version is in the pipeline) and entirely advert-free, Radio by Deezer lets you listen to more than 30,000 music, sports, news and talk radio stations from around the world – no subscription required. Podcast support is currently missing but it's an otherwise ultra-slick package, with lots of UK FM and internet radio stations on tap. You can also save your favourite songs to listen to on Deezer itself.



Our rating





# 5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

## WEATHER

### Overdrop Weather

[bit.ly/overdrop468](http://bit.ly/overdrop468)

Price: £3.19



Few weather apps are as smart or as accurate as Overdrop. Premium features include alternative themes, customisable notifications and a choice of sleek weather widgets.



## REFERENCE

### Eclipse Guide

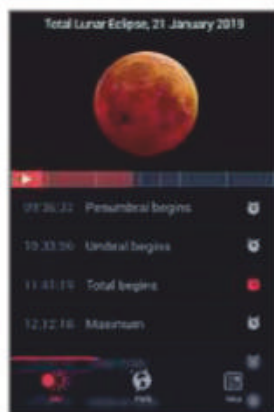
[bit.ly/eclipsedroid468](http://bit.ly/eclipsedroid468)

[bit.ly/eclipseios468](http://bit.ly/eclipseios468)

Price: 99p



Want to make sure you don't miss the next Super Blood Wolf Moon eclipse on 16 May 2022? Then grab this handy guide to all the most exciting lunar and solar events.



## GAME

### Ding Dong XL

[bit.ly/dingdroid468](http://bit.ly/dingdroid468)

[bit.ly/dingios468](http://bit.ly/dingios468)

Price: 69p (Android), 99p (iOS)



Super-simple gameplay (tap to 'ding' or 'dong' your ball up or down the screen while avoiding obstacles and collecting power-ups) meets beautiful graphics in this addictive game.

## ART

### Pencil Sketch HD

[bit.ly/pencil468](http://bit.ly/pencil468)

Price: £1.39



This app makes your photos look like hand-drawn sketches. The premium version is currently discounted and comes with all brushes unlocked and handy built-in photo-editing tools.



## KIDS

### Freddy Fox Lost His Conkers

[bit.ly/foxdroid468](http://bit.ly/foxdroid468)

[bit.ly/foxios468](http://bit.ly/foxios468)

Price: 99p



A gently educational interactive storybook about cute, animated animals, plus lots of fart noises. If you can think of a better way to keep the little ones amused, then let us know!



Overdrop Weather



Eclipse Guide



Ding Dong XL



Pencil Sketch HD



Freddy Fox Lost His Conkers

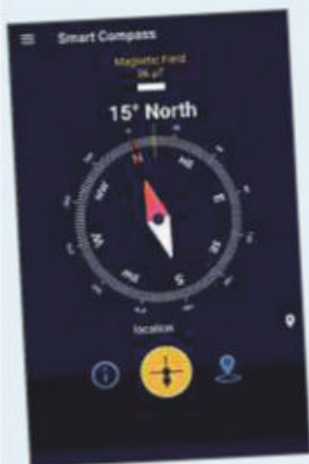


## Don't install...

### Compass Pro for Android

[bit.ly/compass468](http://bit.ly/compass468)

We're not totally averse to adverts – they support app development, allowing us to use lots of great apps for free. Sadly, there's nothing great about Compass Pro for Android – unless you count 'great big disappointment'. Its ads appear full-screen, obscuring the entire app and making it very awkward to use. Worse still, even after calibration, we couldn't get the app to recognise the difference between north and south, which ruins the whole point.



## ...Install this instead

### Compass Galaxy

[bit.ly/galaxy468](http://bit.ly/galaxy468)



Despite its name, this fantastic compass app doesn't only work on Samsung Galaxy devices, but is compatible with any Android phone or tablet running Jelly Bean or later (iPhones have a built-in compass, so don't need an app). Unlike other, similar compass tools, it's both free to use and free of ads, keeping things simple rather than locking features as in-app purchases. Before you start using Compass Galaxy, you'll first need to calibrate the app by pointing your device away from you and tracing a figure-of-eight shape with it. Once this is done, you can enjoy accurate, reliable navigation wherever you go. ■







# Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your browser by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you guess our Motown-song emoji and our tech year?

**WIN A  
WEB USER  
2018 BACK  
ISSUES DISC!**

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



## CAN YOU GUESS THE MOTOWN SONGS 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!

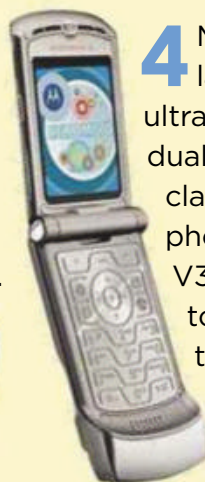
**1** Apple launches its iTunes digital music store in the UK, a year after its US

debut. It initially offers a catalogue of around 700,000 songs.



**2** Google hits the stock market, valued at \$27bn and with shares costing \$85. Today, you'll pay upwards of \$1,000 per share.

**3** The first stable version of streaming software Xbox Media Center (XBMC) is released. It's later given the snappier name Kodi.



**4** Motorola launches its ultra-thin, dual-screen clamshell phone, the RAZR V3. It goes on to sell more than 130 million units worldwide.

**5** Creator of the web, Tim Berners-Lee, becomes a 'Sir' when he is knighted for his "services to the global development of the internet".



## COMPETITIONS

### WIN 1 OF 3 KitSound Miami Bluetooth speakers

KitSound's Miami Bluetooth speaker delivers rich and vibrant audio, thanks to the passive bass radiator that has been crafted into the speaker. Place it on a table and it'll use the surface to increase the clarity of the bass. To enter, email your address to [webusercomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webusercomp@dennis.co.uk) with 'miami' in the subject line. For more details, visit [www.kitsound.co.uk](http://www.kitsound.co.uk) and follow [@KitSoundUK](https://twitter.com/KitSoundUK) on Twitter.



WORTH  
£30  
EACH

### WIN 1 OF 6 Shield Wallet iPhone XR cases

Hex's new Shield Wallet for the iPhone XR wraps its custom-moulded case with premium genuine leather. It has a hole for the phone's camera, and two RFID-blocking slots to protect your contactless cards. To enter, email your address to [webusercomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webusercomp@dennis.co.uk) with 'shield' in the subject line. For more details, visit [hexbrand.co.uk](http://hexbrand.co.uk) and follow [@hex\\_brand](https://twitter.com/hex_brand) on Twitter.



WORTH  
£35  
EACH





# FAQ

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

## Best of CES 2019

Get a glimpse of future tech as **David Crookes** rounds up the most innovative gadgets from this year's Consumer Electronics Show



### SAMSUNG BOTS [bit.ly/samsung468](https://bit.ly/samsung468)

#### Why are they interesting?

It's said that the robot revolution could eventually destroy humans, but at least three of Samsung's four newly unveiled machines appear to be on our side.

Bot Care aims to monitor the health of elderly people in their homes – detecting falls, encouraging exercise and measuring heart rate, respiration, blood pressure and sleep. The Bot Air may look like a bin but it will monitor the environment and purify the air, while Samsung GEMS (Gait Enhancing & Motivating System) is an exoskeleton for the hips, knees and ankles that aids mobility.

Bot Retail is perhaps the only worry in the robots vs humans stakes because it has the potential to replace shop assistants and waiting staff: orders can be placed on its

touchscreen, with items made available via shelves on its back.

#### When are they out?

All the bots are early prototypes so they won't be available for a while yet.

#### How much will they cost?

Given that the bots are still at an early stage, no pricing information is available yet.

#### Do I really need them?

If you need constant monitoring, then Bot Care could give you greater independence, and GEMS will help if you're recovering from an accident. Bot Air could ease respiratory problems and Bot Retail could speed up the process of ordering stuff on the high street.

### ROYOLE FLEXIBLE KEYBOARD [www.royole.com](http://www.royole.com)

#### Why is it interesting?

Following the November launch of the FlexPai – a foldable 7.8in AMOLED-screen phone that can be bent in two and converted into a tablet – Chinese startup Royole also showcased a flexible Bluetooth keyboard at this year's CES. Transparent and thin, it's laid on a flat surface and rolls back into a tube at the touch of a button.

#### How much will it cost?

There's no word on the price as yet.

#### When's it out?

Royole says it intends to launch the keyboard this summer.

#### Do I really need one?

If you enjoy the convenience of a full Qwerty keyboard but don't like the hassle of carting one around, then yes – although this model isn't the most comfortable thing to use.

See page 74 for Barry Collins' views on Royole's flexible delights.



### BARISIEUR [www.barisieur.com](http://www.barisieur.com)

#### Why is it interesting?

Wake up and smell the coffee! This updated version of the humble teasmade wakes you up with its built-in alarm and serves you a nice cup of joe once you stir from your slumber. British-made, it's inspired by Scandinavian design and looks similar to a vinyl record player. It also makes tea.

#### When's it out?

You can buy it right now in stylish black or white.

#### How much will it cost?

A staggering £345, which is enough to wake you up by itself.

#### Do I really need one?

If you love your morning coffee (or tea), Barisieur beats nipping to the kitchen to put the kettle on.





**LG SIGNATURE OLED TV R** [bit.ly/lg468](http://bit.ly/lg468)**Why is it interesting?**

Are the days of TVs dominating the living room – even when they're not in use – coming to an end? LG's latest 65in offering is the world's first rollable OLED television, which you can unfurl when you're ready to settle down to watch a show and pack away after the credits roll. The massive telly includes Amazon's Alexa voice assistant, supports Apple AirPlay 2 (which allows videos to be played direct from Apple devices) and can be partially unrolled if all you want is to display the time, weather and photos.

**When's it out?**

LG says the television will be rolled out (pun intended) later this year, although we're not sure it will reach the UK.

**How much will it cost?**

No price details were forthcoming, but you're unlikely to get much change from £8,000.

**Do I really need one?**

If your current TV takes up too much space, and you have a fat wallet, then it's worth considering. Alternatively, you could check out one of the 8K TVs exhibited at CES: Sony showed off its 85in and 98in sets and, although 8K shows and movies are thin on the ground right now, both will upscale 4K content.

**SONY 360 REALITY AUDIO** [bit.ly/sony468](http://bit.ly/sony468)**Why is it interesting?**

Having changed the way we listened to music by introducing the Walkman in 1979, Sony now wants to go further by replicating the experience of listening to live music. 360 Reality Audio removes the need for multiple speakers by mapping vocals, chorus, instruments and effects at suitable distances and angles, before beaming them from a single source to immerse you in sound from all directions. This object-based spatial audio technology also works with headphones.

**When's it out?**

Sony is working on the new audio format, which it says will support speakers that can project sound in all directions, while developing an app to use in conjunction with the headphones, measuring the hearing characteristics of the user's ear so it can optimise the sound to suit. It's also signing up music labels and streaming services including Deezer, Tidal and Qobuz to offer the format, which will be compliant with the open audio standard MPEG-H 3D Audio.

**How much will it cost?**

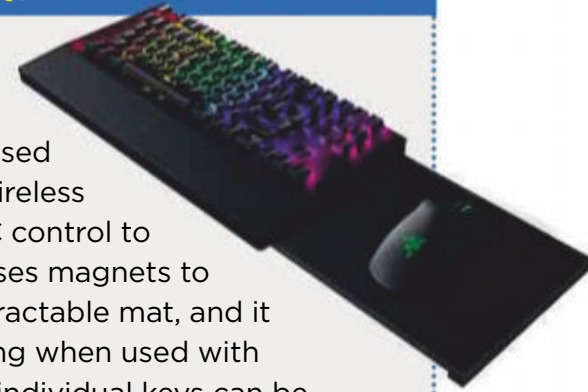
The idea is that 360 Reality Audio will be offered on premium plans by music-streaming services. As an example, Deezer Premium costs £9.99 per month.

**Do I really need it?**

Most of us want to enjoy our tunes in the best way possible, so this latest development is music to our ears.

**RAZER TURRET** [bit.ly/razer468](http://bit.ly/razer468)**Why is it interesting?**

Created in partnership with Microsoft and designed to be used while sitting on the sofa, this wireless keyboard and mouse brings PC control to the Xbox One. Its metal base uses magnets to stop the mouse falling off a retractable mat, and it makes for more accurate gaming when used with supported titles. The colour of individual keys can be customised thanks to Chroma RGB lighting and there's a dedicated Xbox key replacing the Windows one, which sends you straight to the main menu.

**When's it out?**

You can preorder the Razer Turret right now and it looks set to be available before the end of March.

**How much will it cost?**

A gasp-worthy £249 – not far off the price of the console itself!

**Do I really need one?**

If you're a hardcore gamer and enjoy playing the likes of Gears of War 5, Children of Morta and Fortnite, you may prefer this keyboard-mouse combo to a controller.

**NREAL LIGHT** [www.nreal.ai](http://www.nreal.ai)**Why is it interesting?**

These spectacles may not look ultra stylish, but they can be worn comfortably for many hours, weigh just 85g and, crucially, offer augmented reality, which means images and video are overlaid on the real world. They are also rather technologically advanced, with a 1080p display for each eye, a 52-degree field of view, head-tracking sensors and a small, separate unit dubbed 'Toast'. This packs in a Qualcomm Snapdragon 845 processor, runs a customised version of Android and provides the necessary power.

Created in China by an engineer who used to work for Magic Leap – a US startup making its own head-mounted virtual-retinal display – the Nreal Light specs are compatible with smartphones and let the wearer watch videos, play games and engage in meetings.

**When's it out?**

Nreal Light is due to be released later this year.

**How much will it cost?**

Nreal Light is likely to set you back around \$1,000 (£779). For that you'll get the glasses, box and controller.

**Do I really need one?**

Perhaps not yet: we've seen a few stabs at this kind of tech – from Microsoft's HoloLens and Google Glass to Magic Leap One and Snapchat Spectacles – so it's maybe a little short-sighted to plunge in right now.



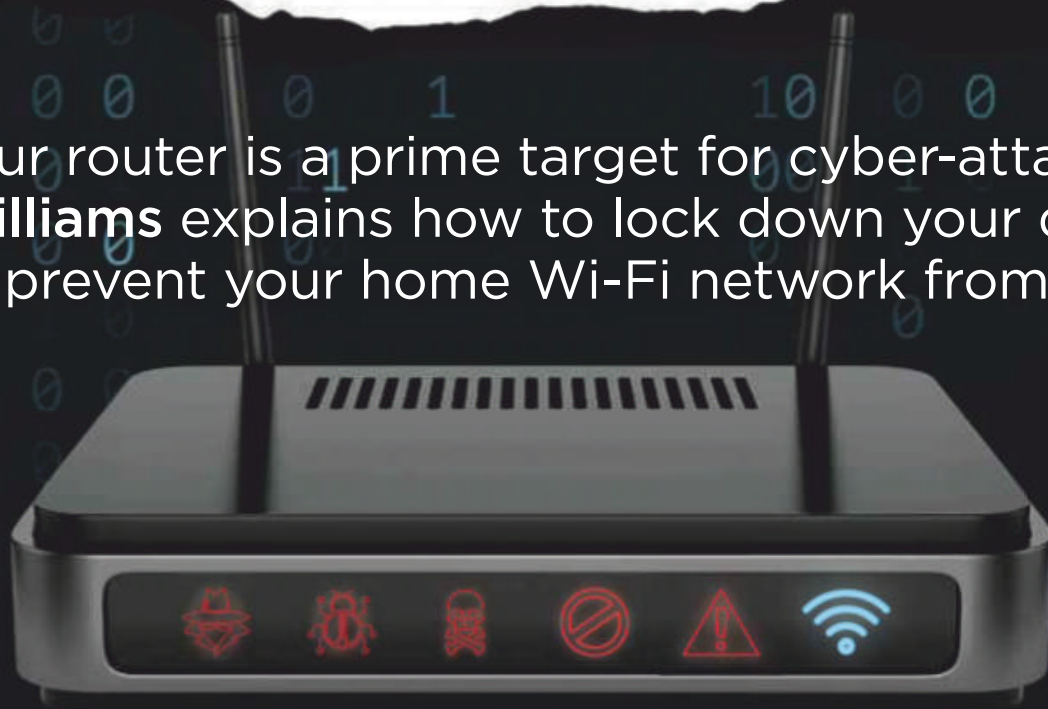


# Make Your Wi-Fi Router

# UNHACKABLE

COVER  
FEATURE

Your router is a prime target for cyber-attacks. **Wayne Williams** explains how to lock down your device's security to prevent your home Wi-Fi network from being hacked



**A**s long as you're receiving fast, reliable Wi-Fi, it's easy to take your router for granted. Unlike your PC, printer or tablet, it's not something you need to pay much attention to: you just set it up, connect your devices to the network and let it do its job. Sadly, this *laissez-faire* attitude toward routers is exactly what makes them so vulnerable to hackers, and has led to an increase in the number of attacks launched on them. Recent examples include the Russian hacking group Fancy Bear infecting routers with malware (see boxout on page 44); and serious

breaches of the WPA and WPA2 protocols that encrypt Wi-Fi data.

Worryingly, security company Avast warned in its 2019 Predictions report that the worst router-based attacks are "yet to come" ([bit.ly/avast468](https://bit.ly/avast468)). Meanwhile, 60% of web users have never updated their routers' firmware, leaving them open to hacks that exploit known vulnerabilities.

In this feature, we explain how you can tweak your router's security settings to make it impervious to the latest attacks – before it's too late.

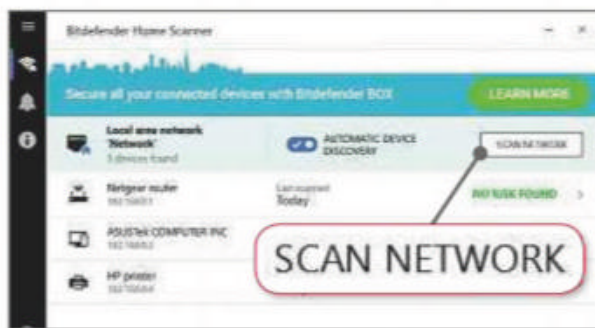


## CHECK YOUR ROUTER SECURITY

### Scan your network for intruders

Provided your router is protected with the latest encryption and a strong password, outsiders shouldn't be able to access your network. But if you want to be 100% sure there are no trespassers, especially considering the recent security scares, then you should download Bitdefender Home Scanner ([bit.ly/bitdefender468](http://bit.ly/bitdefender468)). Run this free program, confirm you're connected to your home network and it will scan for connected devices, so you can see at a glance if there's anything accessing your network that shouldn't be.

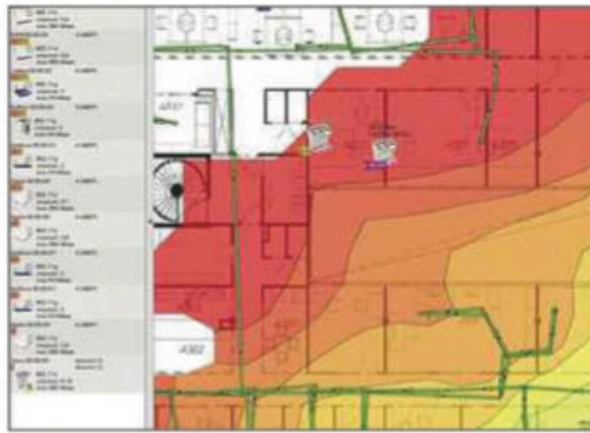
You can get real-time alerts from Home Scanner every time an unknown device connects to your Wi-Fi, so you can block the threat immediately. The program will also look for vulnerable, poorly encrypted devices and passwords, so you can fix those, too.



**Bitdefender Home Scanner alerts you to unauthorised devices on your Wi-Fi**

### Move your router

Wireless signals from a router are weakened by obstacles such as walls, floors and furniture, but they aren't completely blocked. This is obviously a good thing within the confines of your home, but not so great if your router is positioned close to an outside wall, because your network will be visible to your neighbours and anyone passing by. You can avoid this – or at least reduce the quality of the signal to outsiders –



**Create a heatmap of your home to identify the safest position for your router**

by making sure your router is positioned toward the centre of your home. If the device has adjustable aerials, point them away from outside walls.

Use the free tool Ekahau Heatmapper ([bit.ly/heatmap468](http://bit.ly/heatmap468)) to create a Wi-Fi heatmap of your home, so you can identify the best place for your router.

### Find out if your router has been hacked

When you type a web address into your browser, there is a small but noticeable delay before the page starts to load. This is because the browser has to ask a DNS (Domain Name System) server for the IP address of the site before it's able to load it. Unfortunately, it's possible for attackers to spoof that address and redirect you to a fake site. This is known as DNS hijacking, and can also alter the ads you see while browsing to show you malicious ones.

F-Secure Router Checker ([bit.ly/fsecure468](http://bit.ly/fsecure468)) is a free online service that quickly scans your router looking for suspicious settings. There's nothing to download: just click the blue 'Check your router' button and a second or two later (it really is that quick), the tool will tell you what it's found. Hopefully, you'll see a green banner informing you that

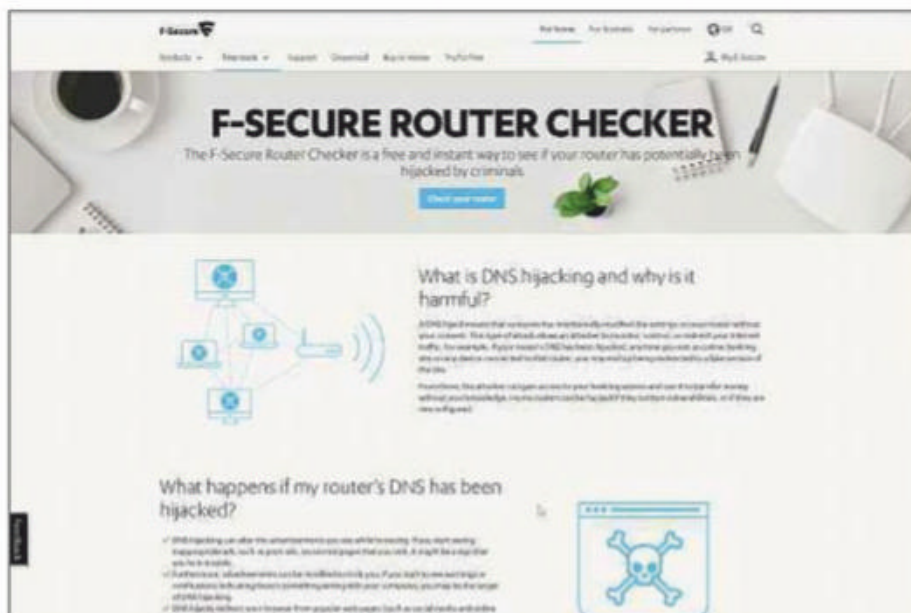
'No issues were found on your router'. If not, you'll be advised what to do next and will be able to see details of what the scan discovered.

### Check if UPnP is compromising your security

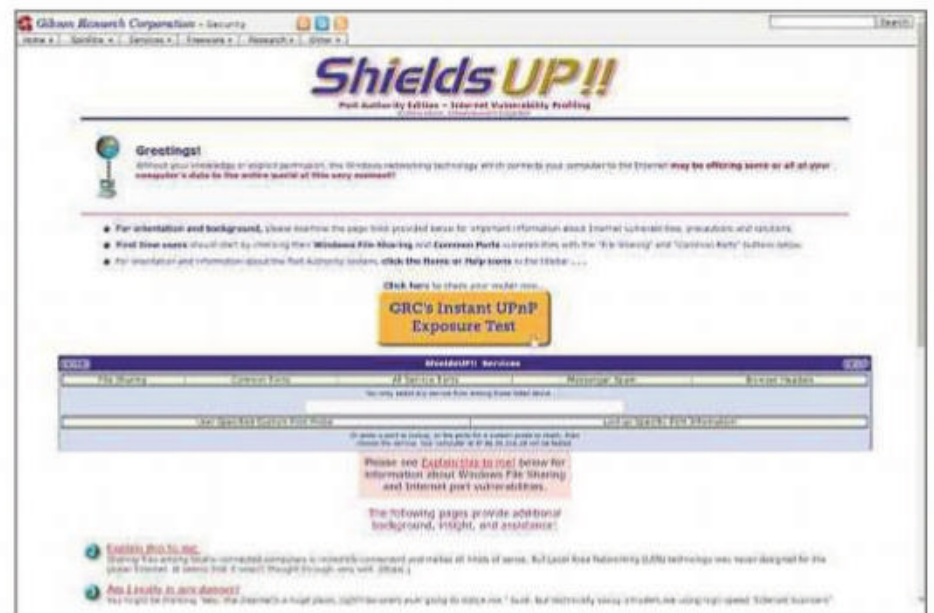
UPnP (Universal Plug and Play) lets newly connected devices communicate with other devices on the same Wi-Fi network; and, if necessary, configures your router to allow for port access to the internet. It's very convenient, because it requires zero configuration from the user; however, UPnP is also a security risk because not only can malware use it to get through your firewall, but incorrectly configured routers with UPnP enabled could allow hackers to gain access to connected devices. In an attack at the start of the year, hackers exploited UPnP to hijack numerous smart TVs and Chromecasts, and played a PewDiePie YouTube video on them ([bit.ly/upnp468](http://bit.ly/upnp468)).

If you don't use peer-to-peer (P2P) software or VoIP, and you don't play games over the internet, then you should consider disabling UPnP through your router's settings screen. Alternatively, most routers have what's often referred to as 'Stealth Mode'. When activated, this hides the status of open ports, making them less obvious to hackers.

To enable the Stealth Mode feature, log into your router settings page and look for something called 'Port Scan Detection' or an option to not respond to PING commands. Virgin Super Hub users will find the Port Scan Detection feature in the Firewall Settings. You can use the ShieldsUP test ([bit.ly/shields468](http://bit.ly/shields468)) to check the status of your port protection. Just click the button and this online tool will run a scan and report its findings.



**Detect DNS hijacking by scanning your Wi-Fi using the free online tool F-Secure Router Checker**



**Run a scan with ShieldsUp to make sure that UPnP hasn't left your router's ports vulnerable to hackers**



## SETTINGS YOU MUST CHANGE

### Change your router login

One of the first things you must do once you've set up your router is change the default login details. Sites such as Router Passwords ([www.routerpasswords.com](http://www.routerpasswords.com)) let anyone find the default passwords for most makes and models, which is handy if you forget yours, but just as useful for attackers who want to gain access to your settings. These default logins are sometimes as simple as 'admin' for the username, and 'admin', 'password' or blank for the password. The default password for Virgin Super Hubs is 'changeme', which offers a big hint for what you should be doing!

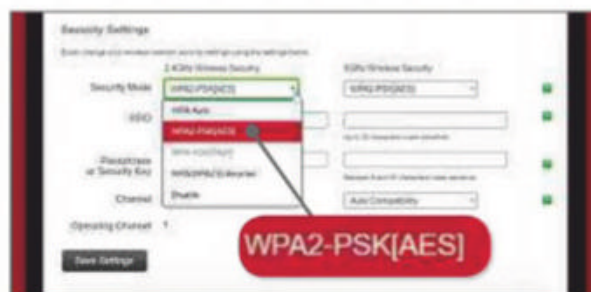
When you come up with a new login, follow the usual password advice of avoiding any obvious choices, and use a combination of letters and numbers rather than straight dictionary words or your children's/pet's/own name. Write the details down and store them somewhere safe (don't just stick them on your router).



Anyone can find the default login details for your router at Router Passwords

### Upgrade your router security

Most web users know that you need to secure your wireless network to prevent just anyone from accessing it, but not



Make sure that your router is using the strongest encryption available

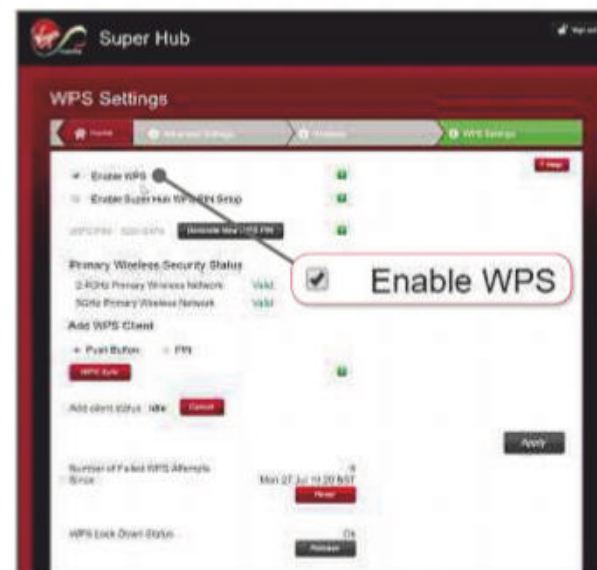
everyone uses the most powerful option. Your router offers a selection of encryption methods that probably include WEP (Wired Equivalent Privacy), WPA (Wi-Fi Protected Access) and WPA2 (Wi-Fi Protected Access 2). There might be more letters after each one – WPA2-PSK[AES], for example – but don't worry about that. The standard you need to be using is WPA2 – or better yet, WPA3 (see page 45) if you have a new router and it's available – so make sure you switch to one of these in your router's security settings.

### Disable Remote Access

Remote Access lets you log into your router over the internet. If you're at work or in a coffee shop, and feel the burning need to reconfigure your router, then you'll need Remote Access enabled to do this. However, this feature introduces an unnecessary security risk to your network, and should be turned off. It will be disabled by default on most routers, but it's worth checking in the settings just to make sure.

### Deactivate the WPS feature

WPS (Wi-Fi Protected Setup) was created to simplify the process of adding devices to a network, to avoid the need to enter a long passphrase.



WPS may make life easier but it also renders your network less secure

The idea is that you press a button on your router, then press the WPS button on the device you want to add to your network (or use a PIN) and the connection is made. While this makes the process a lot easier, WPS has been proven to be unsafe – it's much more vulnerable to a brute-force attack than a passphrase, taking fewer than 11,000 guesses to crack the PIN – and it can be exploited so hackers gain access to your Wi-Fi passwords. For this reason, you should disable WPS (if possible) in your router settings.

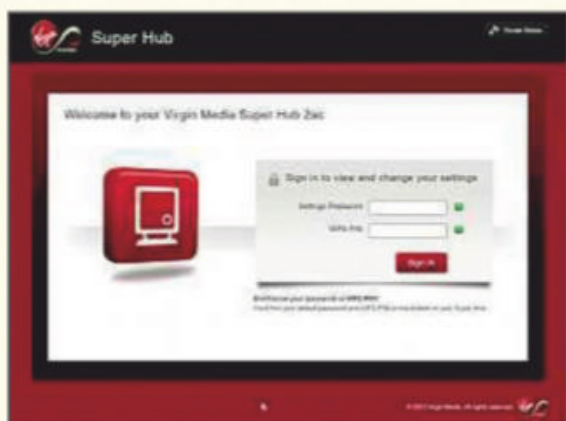
### Activate your router's firewall

There's a good chance that your router has a built-in firewall, which should be enabled by default. This firewall controls all incoming and outgoing network traffic, waving through the good and blocking the bad. To make sure your firewall is running, go into your router settings and check that the option is enabled. You can probably change the Firewall Protection level here, too. A lot

## HOW TO ACCESS YOUR ROUTER'S SECURITY SETTINGS



The process for accessing your router's settings is the same for most makes and models, but there are



some exceptions. In most cases, you just type the relevant router-settings address in your web browser. This can usually be found somewhere on the router itself (check the underside) or in the manual. The username and password you need to log in should be printed there, too, unless you've already changed these details (which, in fact, you should have).

For example, the address for Virgin Media's Super Hub is <http://192.168.0.1> (or [192.168.100.1](http://192.168.100.1), if you're using Modem Mode). You'll find detailed

instructions for it at [bit.ly/vhub468](http://bit.ly/vhub468).

For BT's Smart Hubs, the address is [192.168.1.254](http://192.168.1.254) – see [bit.ly/bthub468](http://bit.ly/bthub468) for configuration information. Meanwhile, Sky Hub's address is [192.168.0.1](http://192.168.0.1), and TalkTalk's Wi-Fi Hub settings can be accessed at [192.168.1.1](http://192.168.1.1).

You can try connecting to your router via HTTPS rather than HTTP (<https://192.x.x.x>) because this is more secure, but you may find the protocol isn't supported by less security-conscious manufacturers.





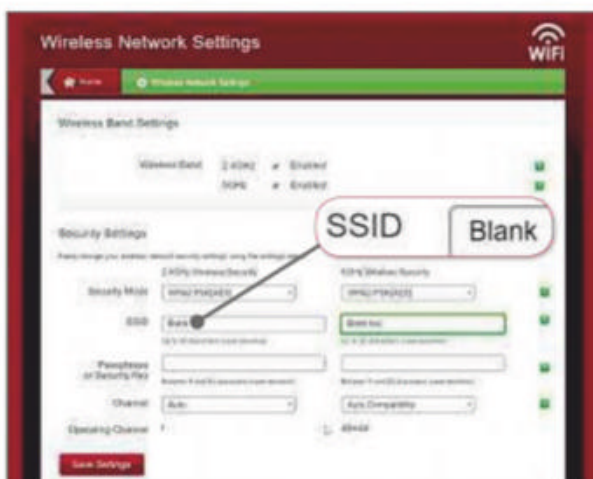
**Check your router's firewall is on but don't set the protection too high**

of routers offer you a choice of low, medium and high protection levels, which change how aggressive the firewall's protection is. Set it to high, and you might encounter problems, such as your VPN not working properly, although there may be passthrough options you can use to solve this. You may also have the option to enable features such as port scan and IP flood detection for additional protection.

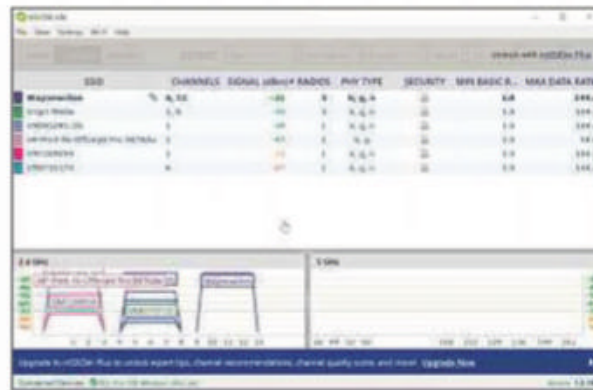
## Change the default SSID

A Service Set Identifier (SSID) is used to announce a wireless network's presence. When a Wi-Fi-enabled computer or device searches for a network to connect to, it's this information it's looking for. The default SSID on a lot of routers gives away the brand or ISP name, which means that if a hacker knows you're on a BT Hub because the SSID says so, it makes hacking you that little bit easier.

For that reason alone, we definitely recommend you change the default SSID the moment you get a new router. Make sure its new name doesn't include any identifiable information, such as your surname. There's nothing to stop you using an amusing SSID, such as 'GCHQ Listening Post' or 'Nothing to see here'. Just avoid using anything too intriguing – you don't want to make your network more enticing to hackers than it might otherwise be.



**Change the SSID on your router to stop hackers knowing its model**



**Hiding your SSID won't foil hackers who use the network scanner inSSIDer**

## Hide your SSID

As well as changing the SSID, you could turn it off completely (in router settings) to make your wireless network invisible. You'll still be able to connect to it, but you'll need to manually enter the correct SSID. The theory is that by not broadcasting your details, hackers can't see your network, so they won't try to break into it. While this approach offers a small, additional layer of security, it can also cause problems because certain devices aren't able to connect to a network if its SSID isn't visible.

It's also true that hiding the SSID will only really deter casual snoopers, because tools such as inSSIDer ([bit.ly/inssider468](http://bit.ly/inssider468)), which hackers routinely use, can easily find networks that are hidden in this way.

## Set up guest accounts

Guest Network Access provides a way for friends and visitors to securely connect to your home Wi-Fi without being able to access your entire network. The process varies depending on your router, but you should be able to set up the guest networks on either 2.4GHz or 5GHz bands, or both. In addition, you can change the SSID (so guests know which one they are connecting to) and security type. You can set a password for the guest account and choose whether or not to

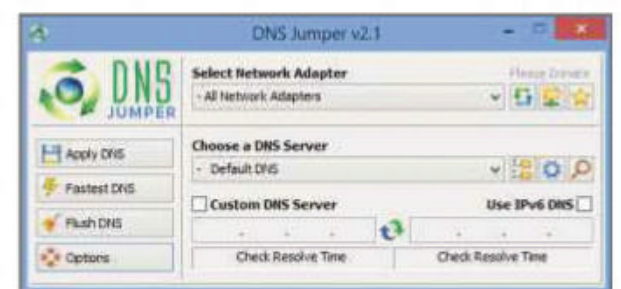


**Set up guest accounts to let other people use your Wi-Fi securely**

broadcast its SSID. You can also optionally enable MAC filtering, which provides you with additional security. All Wi-Fi devices have a unique identifier called a MAC (media access control) address, and when MAC filtering is on, you'll be able to choose which hardware is allowed to access your network.

## Change the DNS

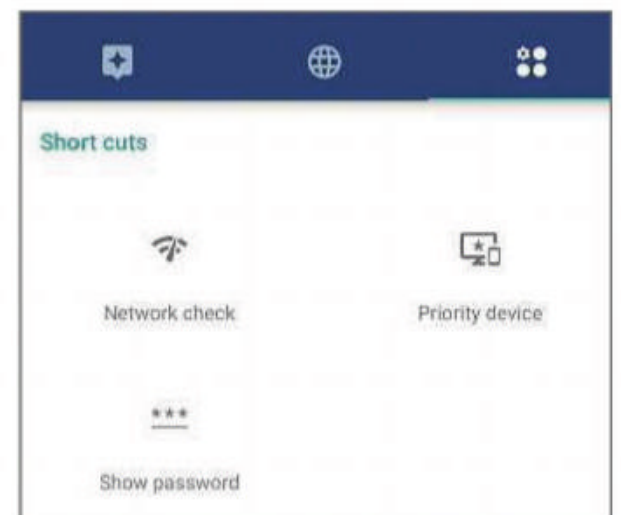
Changing the default DNS server supplied by your ISP provides several benefits. It will probably be faster, and you'll be less likely to fall victim to so-called man-in-the-middle attacks, where you get redirected to a fake website. Unfortunately, many of the routers supplied by ISPs in the UK don't let you change the DNS. You can get around this by changing it on your PC – either manually, or by using a program such as DNS Jumper ([bit.ly/jump468](http://bit.ly/jump468)).



**Boost your security by changing your DNS server using DNS Jumper**

## PIN-protect your phone

If you have a mesh-router system such as Google Wifi, which is set up and configured using an app, it's vital that you PIN-protect your phone (you should do this anyway, just in case your phone is lost or stolen). Google's Wifi app gives anyone using it complete control over all access points – they can set up new managers, pause connections, view and share the Wi-Fi password, and more. Google Wifi is linked to your Google account, but there's currently no way to lock the app other than by locking the whole phone.



**Mesh routers are configured via mobile apps, so make sure your phone has a PIN**





## UPDATE YOUR SOFTWARE

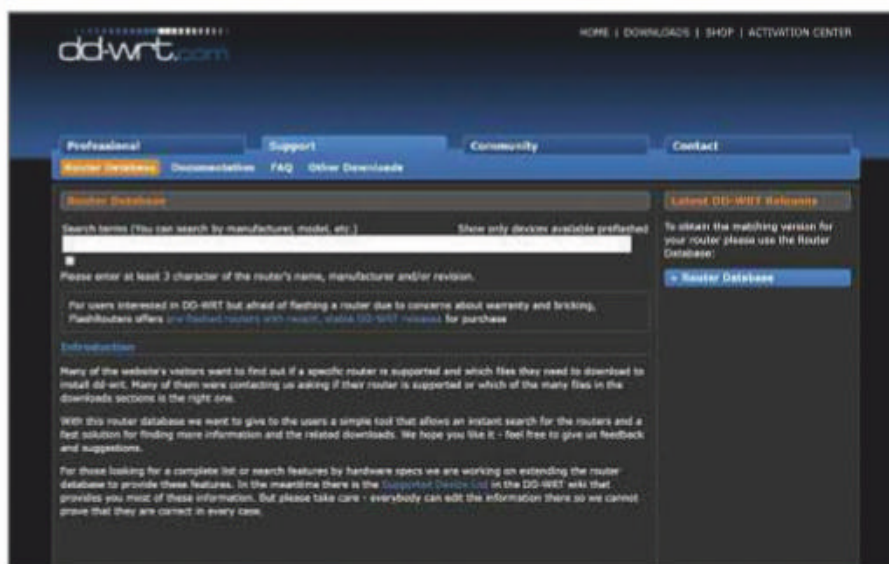
### Update your router firmware

Just as software is occasionally patched to fix bugs, plug security holes, improve performance and security, and introduce new features, so is firmware. Firmware is software written to the ROM – where it stays “firmly” in place – on hardware devices such as routers. If you’ve had your router for some time, and haven’t updated its firmware, it’s worth checking to see if there’s a new version for you to install.

Some routers automatically update themselves, so you don’t need to do anything, but if yours doesn’t, go into your router settings and see if you can find an upgrade option. Failing that, go to the manufacturer’s website, look for the support section and see if you can download the updated firmware from there. If you can, you’ll just need to upload it to your router manually. Your manual, or the website, will likely explain how to do this.

### Replace your router firmware

This is probably the most extreme action you can take, but replacing an older router’s built-in firmware with an open-source alternative such as DD-WRT ([dd-wrt.com](http://dd-wrt.com)), OpenWRT ([openwrt.org](http://openwrt.org)) or Tomato ([tomato.groov.pl](http://tomato.groov.pl)), can introduce lots of additional functionality including security features that were previously missing. The process of replacing the firmware involves ‘flashing’ the ROM



*Search the DD-WRT database to get the correct firmware for your router*

(so called because the ROM is usually flash memory). It’s relatively easy to do – not much different from downloading a program and installing it on your PC – but it’s not without risks.

To install DD-WRT, you’ll first need to find your router in the database at [bit.ly/ddwrt468](http://bit.ly/ddwrt468) and download the correct image. Follow the installation instructions on the DD-WRT Wiki ([bit.ly/ddwiki468](http://bit.ly/ddwiki468)) and look out for our Weekend Project about DD-WRT in the next issue of *Web User*.

### Install a router VPN

You can easily install a VPN on your computers and mobile devices, but if you want protection across your entire network, then installing one on your router is the smartest move. You won’t

need to worry about starting and stopping it because the VPN will always be on, protecting all your devices – including the ones that can’t normally run VPN software, such as games consoles.

ExpressVPN ([bit.ly/exvpn468](http://bit.ly/exvpn468)) is a good example of a VPN that you can run on a router. It doesn’t run on every

model (check the list on the website for details), although it can be configured to run on DD-WRT firmware. A subscription costs from \$8.32 (£6.42) per month.



*Install ExpressVPN on your router to protect your entire Wi-Fi network*

## REBOOT OR RESET TO PROTECT YOUR ROUTER



Last year, it was discovered that over half a million home and office routers from a range of manufacturers had been infected with malware called VPNFilter, an attack that was linked to the Russian hacking group Fancy Bear ([bit.ly/fancy468](http://bit.ly/fancy468)). The malware, which quickly spread across the globe, was able to exploit devices, collect personal information, block network traffic and even render the host router inoperable.

Thankfully, the way to protect your router from VPNFilter is as simple as it gets – just turn off your device at the mains for 30 seconds or so, then turn it back on again.

If you want to go a step further, you can reset your router back to its factory settings, thoroughly wiping the malware. There should be a Reset button or hole on the device that lets you do this. You’ll need to update the router afterwards with the latest firmware (if updates are available), change the username and password and then reconnect your various devices.



## UPGRADE YOUR HARDWARE

### Replace your router

If your router is very old, you should consider either buying a new one or contacting your ISP to see if they will send you an up-to-date replacement. In the latter case, you may have to make a financial contribution, but you might be lucky and get one for free. Newer routers offer both improved performance (speed and coverage) and security, including support for the latest encryption standards.



Credit: Weihao.chiu / Wikipedia

### Have a modem *and* a router

Most ISPs provide a combination modem router consisting of a modem (which connects to the internet) and a router (which links devices to the internet) in a single product. However, you can put this device into modem mode (which disables Wi-Fi and most of the device's Ethernet ports) and connect a different, more powerful router to it. This can provide you with more advanced features to play around with, and lets you easily upgrade your router as and when you need to – modem technology doesn't age as fast as router tech.

### Get a commercial-grade router

For total peace of mind about your home network, routers specifically aimed at businesses are worth considering because they're unlikely

## HOW WPA3 WILL BOOST YOUR SECURITY

Currently, the vast majority of Wi-Fi networks are secured using WPA2 encryption. 'WPA', or Wi-Fi Protected Access, prevents unauthorised users from accessing your network. WPA2 is much more advanced, but it debuted in 2004, so a replacement is long overdue. In June last year, the Wi-Fi Alliance ([www.wi-fi.org](http://www.wi-fi.org)) – the body that promotes Wi-Fi technology and certifies Wi-Fi products – introduced WPA3, the next-generation standard. A number of manufacturers are already producing WPA3-compatible products, and many more are planned.

WPA3 adds new features to simplify Wi-Fi security, enable more robust authentication and deliver increased cryptographic strength for highly sensitive data. The standard uses the latest security methods, and will even make public, open Wi-Fi networks more secure by encrypting the traffic between your device and the access point. WPA3 will also make it easier to connect smart devices without a screen to your Wi-Fi, and protect your network from brute-force attacks, where combinations of usernames and passwords are repeatedly attempted until entry is successfully gained.

WPA3 was the subject of our FAQ in Issue 443, which you can find on our new 2018 Back Issues Disc ([bit.ly/wudisc18](http://bit.ly/wudisc18)).



to have unsafe features such as WPS and UPnP enabled, and may come with additional security features built in.

The Synology RT2600AC Wi-Fi AC 2600 Gigabit router ([bit.ly/syno468](http://bit.ly/syno468)) is a good example. It's priced at around £216, but can function as a NAS (Network Attached Storage) device and comes with

a built-in VPN. We reviewed the Synology router in our Group Test in Issue 456 ([bit.ly/webuser456](http://bit.ly/webuser456)). ■

*Synology's RT2600AC router offers powerful built-in security features*



## NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 20 February 2019

# SECRET TIPS FOR VLC

Discover the best hidden tools in the world's favourite media player



## PLUS...

- ✚ **FIX YOUR VPN PROBLEMS**  
Don't let a bad connection stop you being anonymous
- ✚ **MASTER YOUR ADD-ONS**  
Take back control of Chrome and Firefox extensions
- ✚ **RECOVER LOST MONEY**  
The digital refunds you didn't realise you could claim

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# Remove PC junk using a free duplicate file finder

Is your computer riddled with duplicate files and photos that are taking up valuable space and slowing it down? **Steve Clark** battles his PC dopplegangers with the best duplicate file finders available for Windows



**Duplicate Cleaner Free** | [bit.ly/dc468](http://bit.ly/dc468) | ★★★★★  
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser  
GOLD  
AWARD

## What we liked:

It's fast. That's the first thing you'll notice when you run Duplicate Cleaner Free – a forgettable, say-what-you-see name for an unforgettably brilliant tool. In our tests, it took just 18 seconds to scan our entire hard drive and find 6,999 duplicate files, while individual folders were scanned in less than a second.

Launching the software presents you with a home screen that directs you to all the key areas. Two further tabs – 'Search criteria' and 'Scan location' – make navigation just as quick as the scanner itself. Simply set your search criteria, which includes the option to search by filename or extension, and select a file-type filter, so the tool only displays audio or image files in the results. Choose where to look for duplicates – from a specific folder to your entire hard drive – then click the 'Start scan' button.

You'll barely have time to blink before the results overview pops up. The tool lists every duplicate, but this can be

overwhelming so we recommend using the toolbar buttons to switch the view to groups or thumbnails. Double-clicking any listed item displays a preview, so you can be sure you're removing the correct files.

Once the results are in, the sidebar offers a variety of ways to mark files for removal, which is handy for mass-deleting selected duplicates without having to tick the box of every

individual result. This fine level of control extends all the way to the final step, where 'File removal' lets you cast the unwanted doubles into the Recycle Bin or just scrap them entirely.

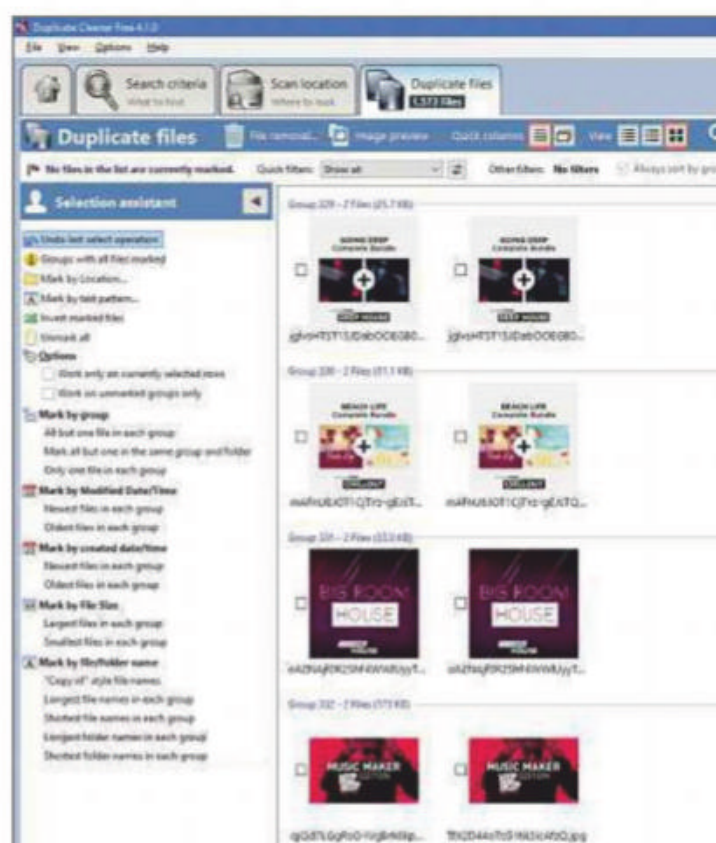
Congratulations – your computer is now a duplicate-free zone!

## How it can be improved:

The tool is so simple and efficient that there's very little that can be improved. It's a tad cheeky to offer the dedicated 'Image mode' and 'Audio mode' under the 'Search criteria', only to find these are locked away in the Pro version – especially since most of the other paid-for options are out of sight. The 'Image preview' button would also benefit from a rethink: while useful for scrolling through pictures, it also displays blank previews for non-images, which makes for a lot of wasted clicks.

## OUR VERDICT

Streamlined design and rapid performance make this tool the must-have duplicate file killer. It makes clearing out your computer or managing all your files a breeze. The Pro version is available for a one-off payment of £23.95.





**AllDup** | [bit.ly/all468](http://bit.ly/all468) | ★★★★★☆  
 FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser  
SILVER  
AWARD

#### What we liked:

AllDup's Quickstart Guide is reassuringly simple.

There are no idiosyncratic tools to master – just select your source folders,

decide on what you want to

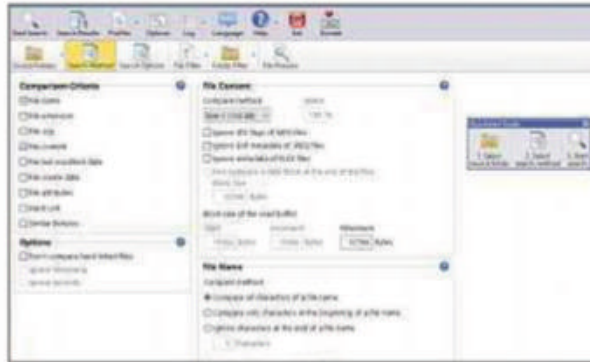
find and click Start. Clicking each one takes you to a corresponding screen in step-by-step fashion, to build your search.

All the actions you need are contained in the toolbars along the top of the screen, while drop-down menus let you fine-tune what you're looking for and what you want to filter out.

Once the results are in, you'll find a range of display options under Columns and Groups, as well as bulk-select actions such as 'Remove all groups with a certain number of files'. Thankfully, the preview pane displays both images and file location – without it, the results list would be baffling, unless you have an encyclopaedic knowledge of every file on your computer.

#### How it can be improved:

AllDup is skilled at locating most



duplicates but it's not as efficient when removing them from your computer, because it demands a lot of clicking options, ticking boxes and deleting or moving files. On the plus side, it gives you complete control over junking duplicates, but it's not the most instinctive way to handle things.

#### OUR VERDICT

AllDup is the 'almost' of free duplicate file finders: almost as fast, almost as intuitive and almost as comprehensive as Duplicate Cleaner Free. It also struggled to find certain duplicate audio files we created specifically for this test.

**DupeGuru** | [bit.ly/guru468](http://bit.ly/guru468) | ★★★★★☆  
 FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser  
BRONZE  
AWARD

#### What we liked:

The utilitarian DupeGuru is so confident of its prowess, it can feel like it's not even trying, with a window so sparse it's verging on threadbare.

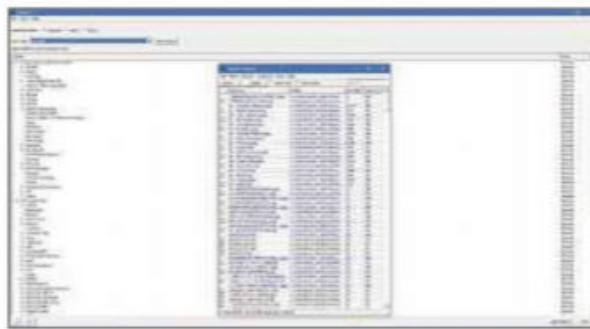
Select what to search for (Standard, Music or Picture), point it at a location and let it loose. That's it.

The results list is ugly but thorough. Primary files are highlighted in blue (and can't be removed by mistake), with duplicates nested below. Clicking these opens the file location, letting you properly review doubled-up files before using the Actions button to move, copy or dump them in the Recycle Bin.

The software boasts an enhanced duplicate-image finder. It's slower than the standard scan but worth the wait, because it features the clever ability to distinguish between true duplicates and images that are merely similar.

#### How it can be improved:

While Duplicate Cleaner Free's simple tool is effortlessly graceful, DupeGuru's



uncomplicated interface feels basic. You won't find detailed options to narrow down a search, which means it's best used only for quick checks. It's not even that fast compared to others on our list. While we appreciate the tool's bish-bash-bosh nature, additional filters and options wouldn't go amiss.

#### OUR VERDICT

DupeGuru is an effective, no-nonsense duplicate-finder. It's a tidy program that does just what it needs to – no more, and certainly no less. It's a question of taste. More experienced readers are likely to opt for a richer tool.

## BEST OF THE REST

### Auslogics Duplicate File Finder

[bit.ly/ausd468](http://bit.ly/ausd468)

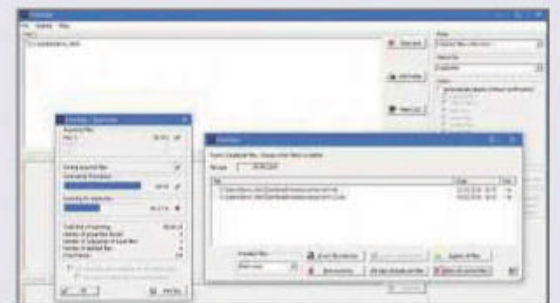
The Auslogics Duplicate File Finder is an attractive beast, displaying its search selection and results pane in a single window. It's easy to determine which file types to search for and view past results. However, selecting folders or drives to scan is a pain – you have to slog through the drop-downs until you reach the right one. For performance alone, it's worth downloading, despite the occasional adverts for other Auslogics products.



### CloneSpy

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

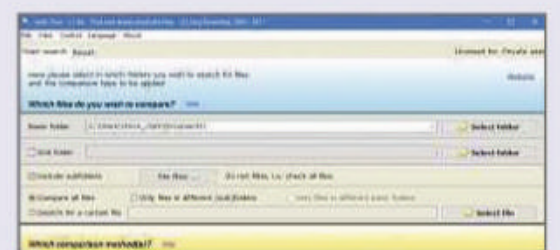
CloneSpy is incredibly easy to use, but it's marked by a major failure: unless you wait for the full scan, which takes time, you have to determine the action of every duplicate file, one by one. It's a good idea, in theory, because the tool continues to scan, but this 'time-saver' is anything but. Only use it if you've got plenty of time on your hands or just a handful of duplicates.



### Anti-Twin

[bit.ly/twin468](http://bit.ly/twin468)

Anti-Twin is a neat little clean-up tool. We like its built-in pop-up preview pane, though it can get in the way when marking files for removal. However, the software hasn't seen an update since 2010. If you try Anti-Twin, be sure to increase 'Limit to' beyond the default 1,000 because this setting meant it failed to catch many of our known duplicates.





# Recover lost passwords **WITHOUT** resetting

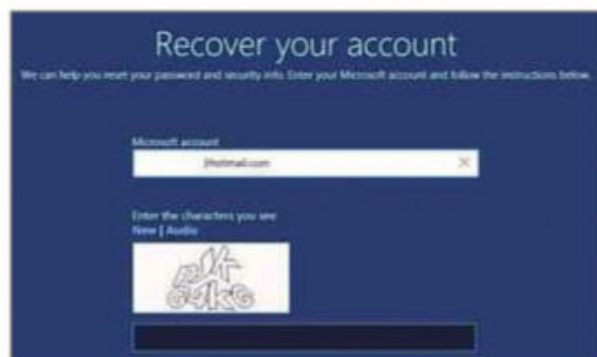


Forgetting an important login needn't force you to restore factory settings. **Robert Irvine** explains the easiest ways to regain access to your accounts

## YOUR WINDOWS PASSWORD



Getting locked out of your PC because you've forgotten your Windows password is very frustrating, but if you usually log in using a Microsoft account, it's easy to resolve. Select 'I forgot my password' and on the 'Recover your account' screen, type your email address, enter the characters you see and select Next. On the 'Verify your identity' screen,



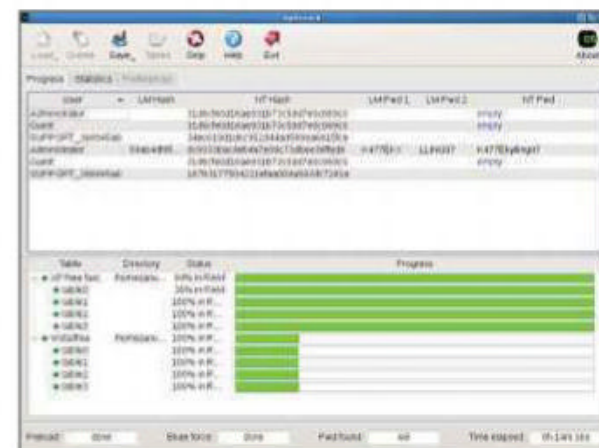
Microsoft helps recover your Windows account if you forget your password

choose to receive your security code as a text or email message and select 'Send code'. When you get the code on a separate device, enter it on your PC and follow the instructions to reset your password and log into Windows.

If, however, you sign into your PC locally rather than using a Microsoft account, things get trickier and scarier. On its official Help page ([bit.ly/winpass468](http://bit.ly/winpass468)), Microsoft states that if you forget your local password "you can't recover it. Instead, you'll need to reset your PC", which means losing all your data, programs and settings. That's obviously far from ideal, but fortunately there's a workaround using the powerful free 'password cracker' Ophcrack ([ophcrack.sourceforge.net](http://ophcrack.sourceforge.net)).

Download the LiveCD version of Ophcrack on another computer (the Vista/7 one will work on Windows 10)

and burn the ISO file to a USB memory stick, using the excellent free tool Rufus ([rufus.ie](http://rufus.ie)). Boot the locked PC from the USB drive (on some PCs you may have to go into the BIOS settings to change the boot order) and Ophcrack will reveal the passwords for your user account(s), without you needing to reset your PC.



Ophcrack reveals the passwords for all the user accounts on your computer

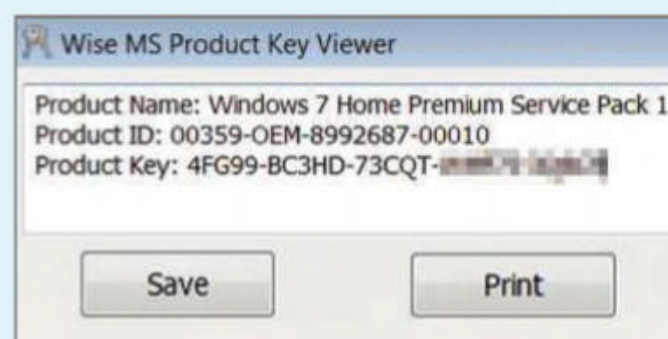
## RECOVER LOST LICENCE KEYS

Unlike a password, your 25-character Windows licence key – also known as the product key – isn't something you're ever likely to memorise. This makes things all the more difficult when you find that you need one – for example, if you want to reinstall Windows. On older PCs, this key was provided on a Certificate of Authenticity label on the case, but Windows 10 machines don't externally display this information.

The key is stored in the Windows Registry, but in a binary format that won't prove much use.

Happily, you can find your product key in a jiffy using the free program Wise Windows Key Finder ([bit.ly/wisekey468](http://bit.ly/wisekey468)). Just download and run this tool and it will instantly detect and display your Windows product key, and let you print or save the info. Wise Window Key works

with all versions of Windows and, as a bonus, it also recovers lost licence keys for Microsoft Office.





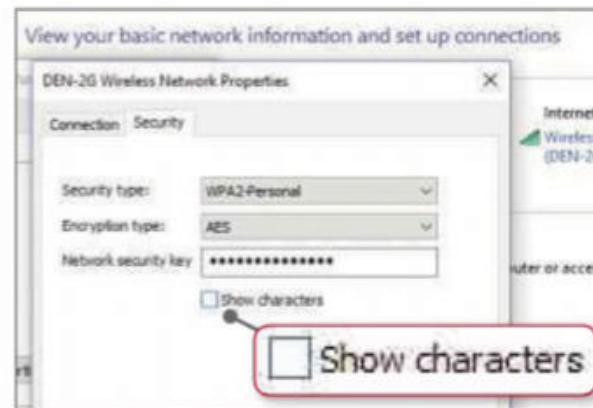
## YOUR WI-FI PASSWORD



Wi-Fi passwords are deliberately hard to guess and almost impossible to remember, which means you may have to hunt for the login card that came with your router when you need to connect a new device to your network. If you've mislaid that card, along with any other record you made of your password, don't panic – it's perfectly possible to recover your lost login without having to reset your router.

If you never changed your Wi-Fi password from the default, the solution may be as simple as checking your router to see if there's a label showing the password; also look in the manual

that came with the device. If it's not there, or if you've changed the Wi-Fi login from the default, open the Control Panel on your Wi-Fi-connected PC or



**It's easy to recover your Wi-Fi password in Windows – if you know where to look**

laptop and choose 'Network and Internet', then 'Network and Sharing Center' (you can also right-click the Wi-Fi icon on your taskbar to access this). Select your Wi-Fi network, then Wireless Properties and click the Security tab. Select the 'Show characters' option below the box for 'Network security key' to reveal your hidden password.

If you're not connected to the Wi-Fi network, choose 'Manage wireless networks' in the 'Network and Sharing Center' to view any networks you've previously used, then double-click the network name and follow the steps above.

## YOUR WEBSITE PASSWORDS

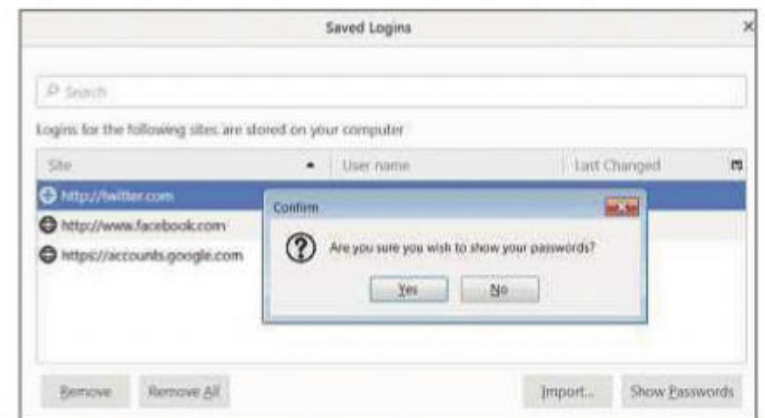


Forgetting your password for a website, webmail account or other online service isn't the end of the world – just click 'I forgot my password' (or similar), enter your email address and receive a link to reset it. This is still a bit of a hassle, though, and means having to think of a new password.

The chances are that you don't need to reset your old password because it's been saved by your browser, even if it isn't filled in automatically on login pages. To access stored passwords in Chrome, open the three-dot main menu, choose Settings and click Passwords to view a list of websites for which logins have been saved. Click the eye symbol

next to an entry to reveal the password (you may need to enter your Windows password to unlock it). In Firefox, go to Tools, Options, Privacy & Security and, in the Logins & Passwords section, click Saved Logins. Select a website in the list, choose Show Passwords, then click Yes to confirm and display your login.

To save you time, NirSoft ([www.nirsoft.net](http://www.nirsoft.net)) offers two free tools that instantly display all the usernames and passwords you have stored in Chrome and Firefox. Called ChromePass and PassFox respectively, these also tell you when each password



**Firefox and other web browsers store your passwords for websites automatically**

was created and rate its strength. You can find them in the Password Tools section of the NirSoft website, but be aware some antivirus software may falsely flag the programs as malware.

## YOUR PHONE PASSWORD



For obvious security reasons, Android phones make it very difficult to regain access to your device if you forget your password, PIN or login pattern. It used to be possible to use the online tool Android Device Manager to lock and unlock your phone with a temporary password that overrode the existing one, but since that

service became Find My Device ([www.google.com/android/find](http://www.google.com/android/find)), the option is no longer available.

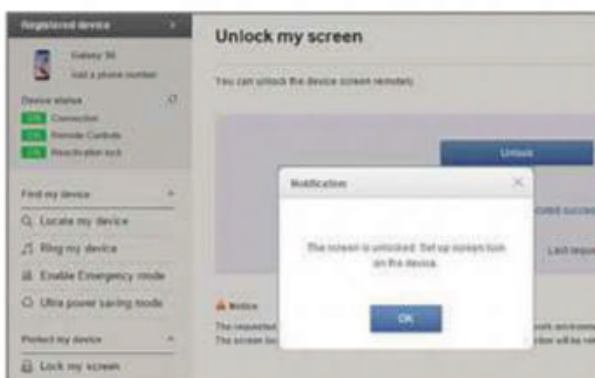
If you have an Android phone from Samsung, you can bypass your PIN or passcode through its Find My Mobile website ([findmymobile.samsung.com](http://findmymobile.samsung.com)), although this only works if you have a Samsung account and registered your handset beforehand. Simply sign into the site, select your phone and choose 'Unlock my screen'.

The official Google advice for forgotten Android logins is to erase your phone and start afresh. You can either do this by using the aforementioned Find My Device tool or by putting your handset in System Recovery Mode (hold the volume-down and power keys simultaneously for a few seconds) and choosing 'wipe data/'

factory reset'.

Before you take this drastic step, try calling your locked phone from another one. Accept the call, press the Back button and you should regain access to your device. Before it locks again, go into your phone's security settings and try to remove or change the PIN, password or pattern. To do this, you'll need to enter the current one, which obviously you don't know any more, but you can at least try a number of different combinations in the hope that you get lucky!

On an iPhone, you'll be locked out and your device disabled after entering the wrong password six times. Sadly, the only way to fix this is to erase your device and lose all your data and settings. See Apple's support page at [bit.ly/eraseiphone468](http://bit.ly/eraseiphone468) for instructions. ■



**Samsung lets you unlock your Android phone via its Find My Mobile website**



# Streamline your software

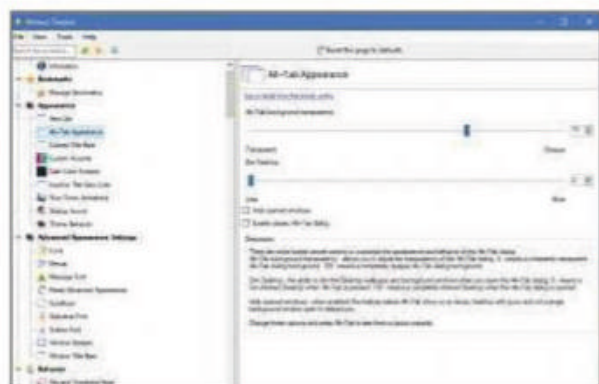
Is your PC stuffed with multiple programs that perform different tasks? **Steve Clark** picks his favourite free all-in-one software to save you downloading lots of separate tools



## ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEM UTILITIES



Winaero gives you control over how your computer looks and operates, and using it is so straightforward that it feels like you're cheating. Whether you're sprucing up its appearance or giving Cortana a personality overhaul, Winaero is stacked with worthwhile tweaks – most of which you won't realise you need until you bust open the program – to make your computer tailor-made.

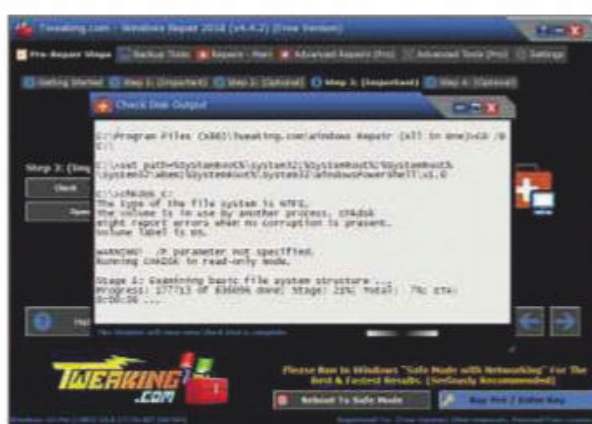


### What it replaces:

All those Registry hacks. And any other Windows-customisation tools, none of which are as powerful as Winaero Tweaker. If you tried to ape its customisation capabilities, you'd need to hack the Registry and explore mysterious Windows settings – or download multiple tools – to achieve the same results.



Facing problems with your computer? Windows Repair, from Tweakings.com, is the one-stop shop for solving issues (which, let's face it, can be numerous). This useful tool – an antidote to malware – repairs Registry errors, connection troubles, permission problems and other common faults. To get the best results, use the software in Safe Mode.

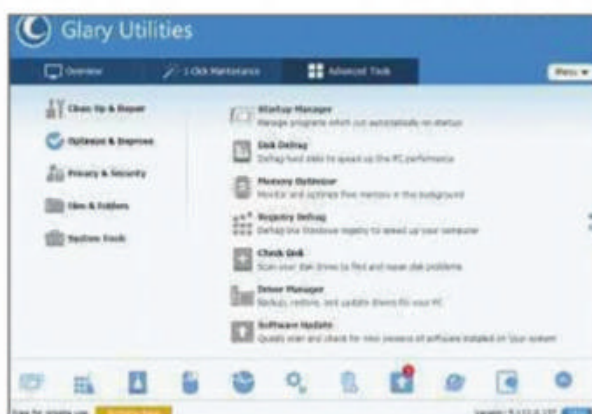


### What it replaces:

Microsoft's now defunct Fix It Center. The excellent FixWin 10 ([bit.ly/fixwin468](http://bit.ly/fixwin468)) is a solid alternative but it lacks the ability to repair problems with your Registry. CCleaner ([www.ccleaner.com](http://www.ccleaner.com)) also offers many of the same fixes, but its reputation has been marred by last year's data-gathering debacle.



Glary Utilities is the ultimate all-in-one program – a streamlining star. It's a startup manager, disk cleaner and Registry repairer; it backs up, analyses, and encrypts; and it protects your privacy and scans for all the latest software updates. It does all this quickly, in a light, attractive tool that's easy to work your way around. If you're looking to cut down on your software line-up, Glary Utilities is a must; it's free to



download, but you get even more in the Pro version for \$19.97 (£15.27).

### What it replaces:

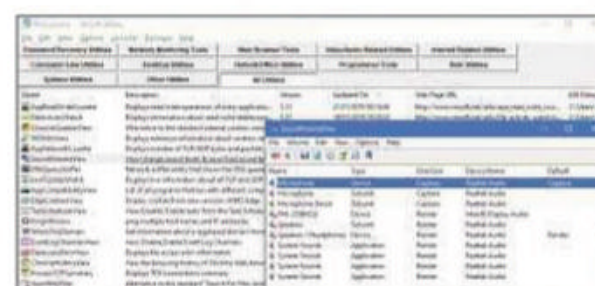
Almost everything else. Ditch startup managers such as Autoruns ([bit.ly/auto468](http://bit.ly/auto468)), wave farewell to cleanup tools and never again venture into Windows' own system management – Glary Utilities does it all.



NirLauncher is the complete package, bundled with more than 200 portable utilities from software developer Nirsoft. This collection ranges from the necessary (password recovery, drive-letter reassignment) to the useful (crash reports, connection and call logs). And that's before you reach niche tools you didn't know you needed until you do, such as viewing Exif data or seeing all Facebook photos in your browser's cache. For even more portables, install the fully loaded portableapps.com, too.

### What it replaces:

Everything – by which we mean the file-search tool of that name ([www.voidtools.com](http://www.voidtools.com)), not literally everything. You can cast aside Event Log Explorer, too, because NirLauncher features its own full event log view. Essentially, if you're using any sort of standalone tool, check whether NirLauncher includes it first.





## ALL-IN-ONE EDITING SUITES

### Apache OpenOffice

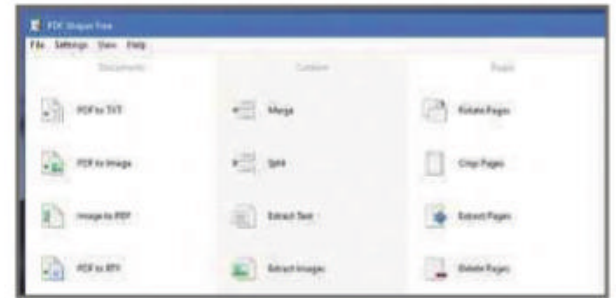
[www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org)

Apache OpenOffice, the open-source office suite, is one of several successors to the discontinued OpenOffice.org – and it contains every office program you'll need, without having to cough up for pesky Office 365 subscriptions. There's not much difference between OpenOffice and popular rival LibreOffice ([www.libreoffice.org](http://www.libreoffice.org)), except

OpenOffice lets you choose which programs to install from its suite, rather than downloading unwanted software.

#### What it replaces:

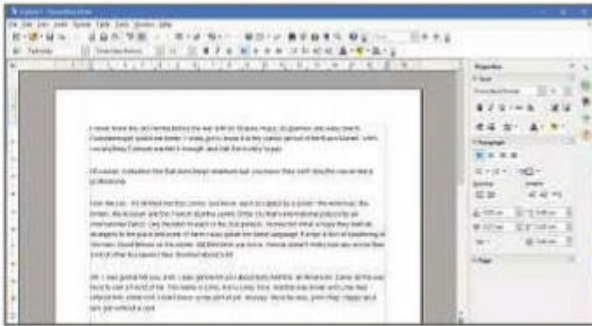
Microsoft's Office 365 suite ([www.office365.com](http://www.office365.com)), which costs from £59.99 per year and, like LibreOffice, doesn't let you choose only the programs you want. OpenOffice is also portable, so you can run it from a USB stick.



the ability to view metadata and encrypt (or decrypt) files.

#### What it replaces:

If you're running separate PDF editors and converters, such as PDFescape ([www.pdfescape.com](http://www.pdfescape.com)), it's time to get rid because PDF Shaper does all they do and more. Be sure to decline the bundled junk during installation (an unfortunate trade-off for this all-in-one tool being completely free).



### PDF Shaper

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

If you think PDFs are unwieldy files designed only to be read and printed, PDF Shaper will change that. It's a toolkit that lets you edit, convert and extract PDFs at will. And for the security-conscious, you also have

## MEDIA EDITING SUITES

### DaVinci Resolve 15

[bit.ly/davinci468](http://bit.ly/davinci468)

There are plenty of free video editors, but none measure up to DaVinci Resolve 15, which includes features that would ordinarily set you back hundreds of pounds. As well as its professional-style video editing, which has been used in countless Hollywood productions, the software boasts colour corrections, audio equalisation and special effects. It also makes it easy to share and collaborate on projects.

#### What it replaces:

All that fancy (and usually expensive) video-editing software – especially Adobe programs such as Premiere Pro, Premiere Rush and After Effects – because, in a single package, DaVinci Resolve 15 does all that for free.

### MP3 Toolkit

[www.mp3toolkit.com](http://www.mp3toolkit.com)

If you're trying and failing to get your head around pro sound editor Audacity ([www.audacityteam.org](http://www.audacityteam.org)), MP3 Toolkit is much simpler. It bundles together six seriously useful tools to control every audio aspect, from conversion and cutting to recording and ripping from CD. It doesn't look like much, but it's very straightforward to use.

#### What it replaces:

No more relying on individual apps,

such as Simple MP3 Cutter Joiner Editor, and especially no more struggling

with complex tools like WavePad ([bit.ly/wave468](http://bit.ly/wave468)), which feature far more padding than your computer needs.



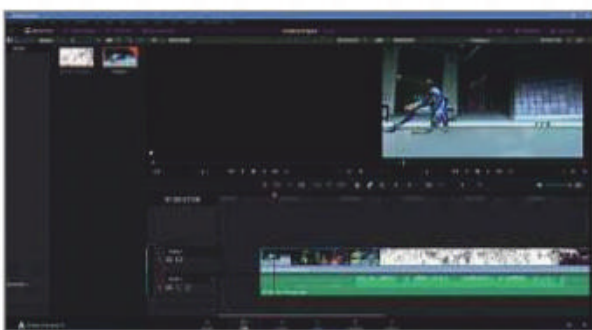
### VLC Media Player

[www.videolan.org/vlc](http://www.videolan.org/vlc)

VLC Media Player is a must-have all-in-one program, packed with effects that you'd normally need half a dozen tools to achieve. Converting video is the bread-and-butter function, but you can also stream internet radio, download online videos, add subtitles and tweak audio and visual effects – all in one place. Oh, and it plays videos, too.

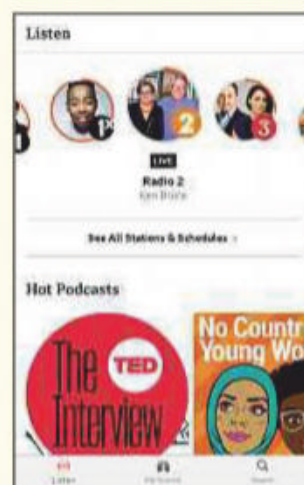
#### What it replaces:

If you've ever had to use a video-downloading tool to grab a YouTube video, or you're just fed up with the basic Windows Media Player – rejoice, because VLC Media Player replaces them all. We'll be taking a closer look at VLC in next issue's cover feature. ■



## STREAMLINE YOUR LISTENING WITH THE BBC

You can streamline your mobile apps and save yourself some valuable storage space. Start with some on-the-go entertainment: forget downloading Google Podcasts, TuneIn Radio and Spotify and just download BBC Sounds ([www.bbc.co.uk/sounds](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds)). Auntie's latest free app – available on Android, Amazon Fire devices and iOS – offers all the best music, radio and podcasts in one place, providing endless live and on-demand entertainment. After a patchy start, BBC Sounds is now one of the best audio apps in its field, filled with unmissable content that's a joy to explore. It covers all BBC national and local radio stations, and provides music mixes compiled by DJs and artists.







# Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

## Make your own dynamic wallpaper

Freshen up your desktop with a customised dynamic image that changes according to the time of day. Here's what you need to do

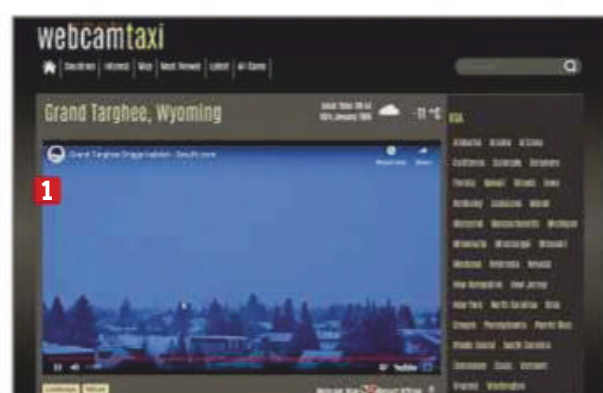
WinDynamicDesktop: [bit.ly/windyn468](https://bit.ly/windyn468) | ⌚ 20 mins | 🖥️ 7, 8, 10

**M**ac OS Mojave, the latest version of Apple's desktop operating system, comes with a Dynamic Desktop that cycles through a set of 16 images of the desert taken at different times of the day. WinDynamicDesktop (currently only available through GitHub at [bit.ly/windyn468](https://bit.ly/windyn468)) offers a similar feature for Windows with a similar set

of desert images that change throughout the day, a Solar Gradients theme and some additional downloadable content. The program even lets you create and share your own dynamic wallpaper. You can either use a sequence of photos taken throughout the day (we'll show you an easy way to get these) or a set of unrelated images – it's up to you.

### GET MORE THEMES ONLINE

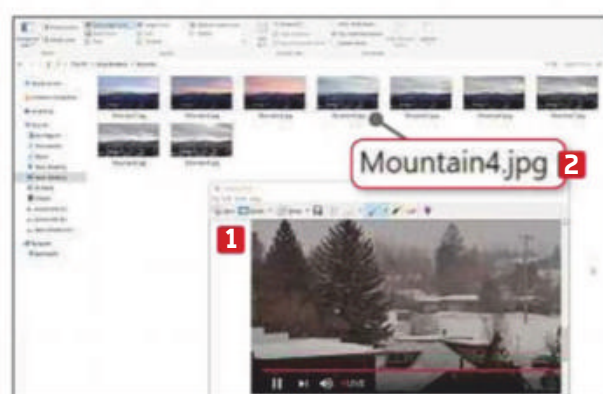
Click to download additional themes created by other people, including BitDay, Earth View and Firewatch



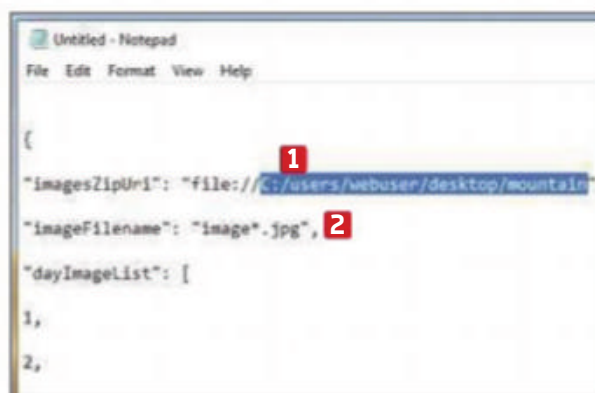
**1** To create a series of photos that change throughout the day, either position a camera on a tripod and take the shots yourself, or go to Webcamtaxi ([www.webcamtaxi.com](https://www.webcamtaxi.com)) and find an interesting live-streaming webcam that's fixed and can be paused. **1**



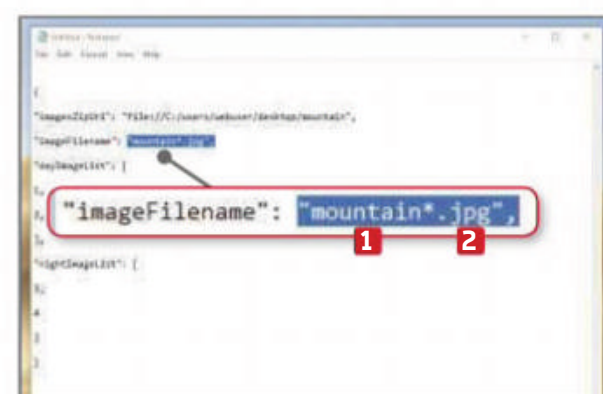
**2** If your chosen webcam is streaming on YouTube, view it there by clicking the YouTube button, then switch to full screen and click the cog button **1** to make sure you're in the highest resolution available. **2** Find a frame you like in the early part of the video by clicking a point on the red line. **3**



**3** You can use a screen-capture tool, such as Windows 10's Snipping Tool. **1** Grab the first frame you want, then move along a bit and grab the next one. Capture multiple images throughout the day and number each one (for example, mountain1, mountain2 and so on). Avoid leaving spaces in the name. **2**

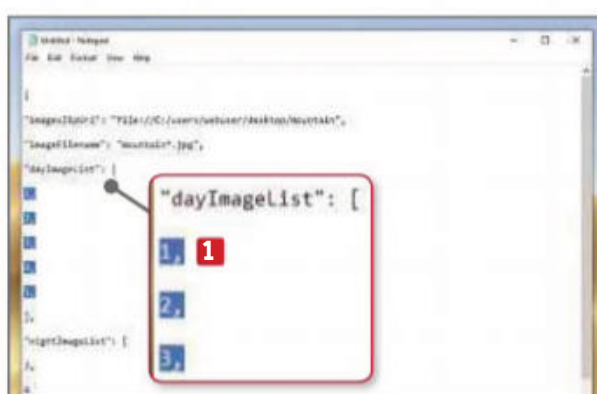
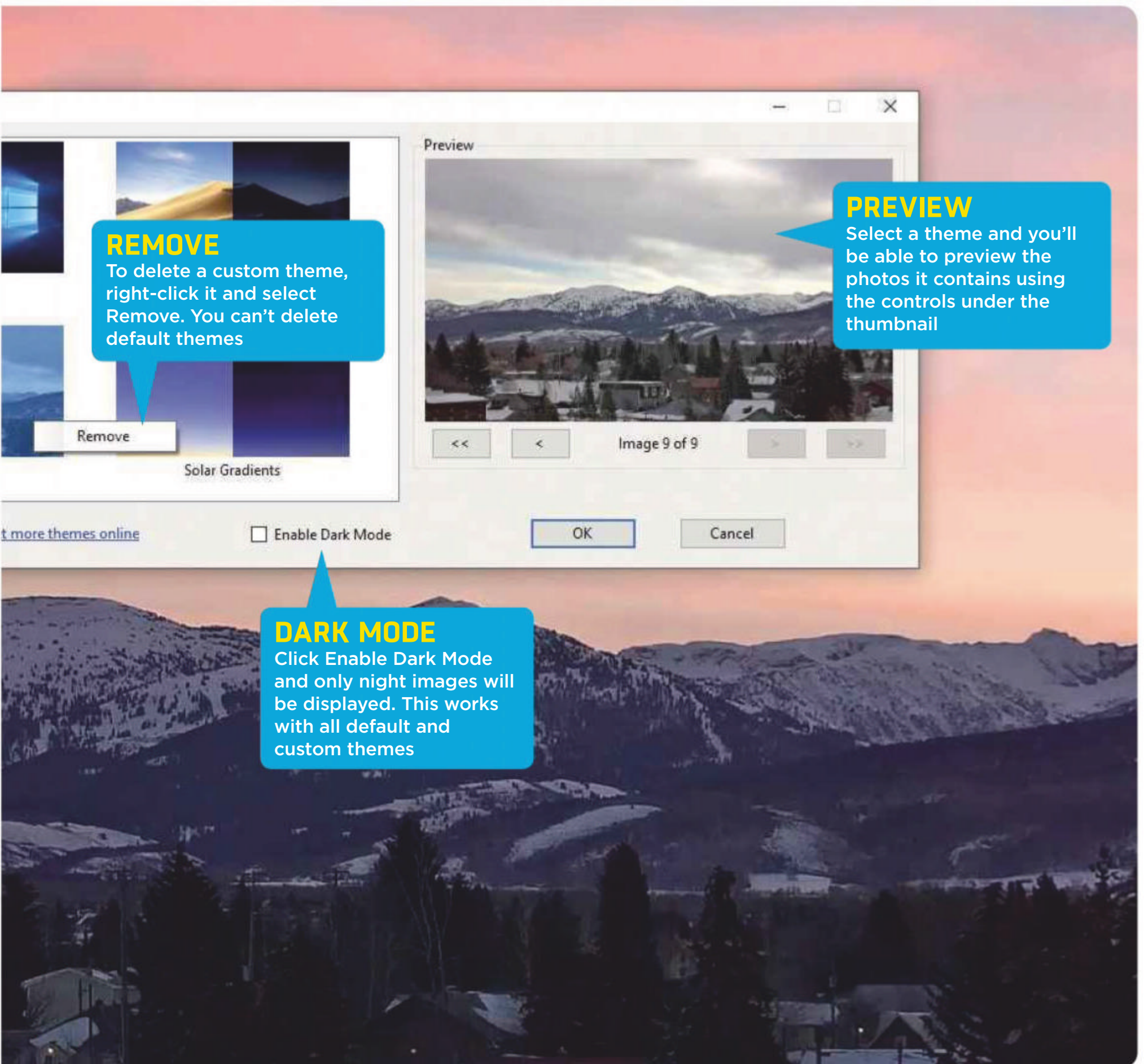


**4** Open Notepad and paste in the text at [justpaste.it/dynamic468](https://justpaste.it/dynamic468). Change the "imagesZipUri" path to the location where your photos are stored. Make sure you use the forward slash (/). We typed: "imagesZipUri": "file:///C:/users/webuser/desktop/mountain". **1** Next, we'll edit "imageFilename". **2**

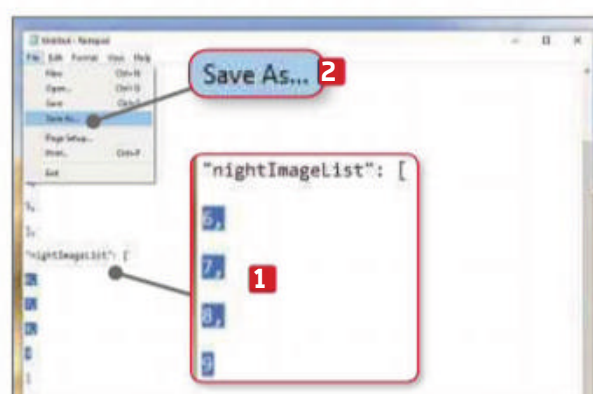


**5** Replace 'image\*' with the name of your wallpaper files: in our case, it's 'mountain\*'. **1** Leave the asterisk (\*) in place and don't enter the number part of the filename. Change the '.jpg' suffix **2** to '.png' or '.bmp', if your images are saved in one of those file formats (if they are JPEGs, leave this as it is).

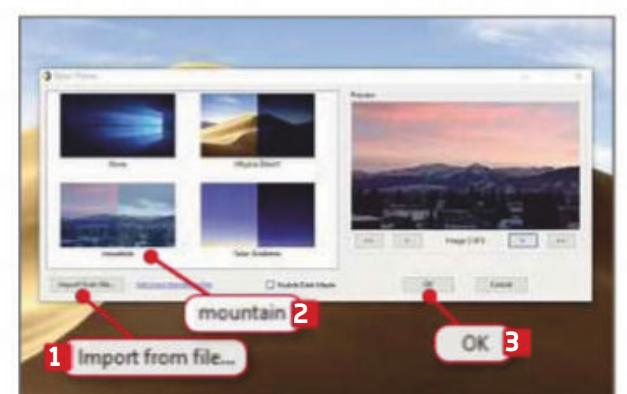




**6** Now specify which of your photos are “day” and which are “night”. If you’re using unrelated images, just split them evenly. Then all you need to do is enter the number for each one, on a separate line under its section, with a comma next to it. Numbers for day images go under “dayImageList”: [ **1**



**7** List the night images under “nightImageList”: [ **1** and save the theme from File, Save As. **2** Don’t use spaces in the name (you can use an underscore instead) and give the save file a JSON extension. So, for example, “mountain\_photos.JSON”. Now all we need to do is import our theme.



**8** Open WinDynamicDesktop and click ‘Import from file’. **1** Navigate to the JSON file you just created and let it import your photos. The process may take a while. Once it’s finished, your theme appears with the others. **2** Select it, click OK **3** and it becomes your new wallpaper, updating throughout the day.





# Stop Windows leaking your personal information

PrivateWin10: [bit.ly/priv468](https://bit.ly/priv468) | 20 mins | Windows 7, 8, 10



## EXPERT TIP

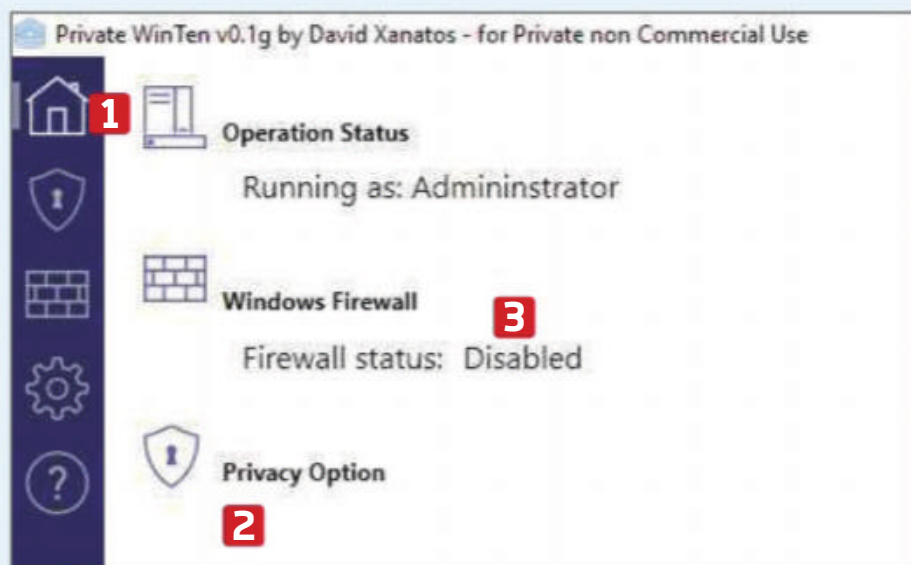
### Andy Shaw says

The first time you launch the software, choose how it will operate in the future. You can have it start when Windows launches or go a step further and install it as a service. More usefully, set it to skip the UAC prompt, which asks if it's okay to make changes to your PC. You can also choose whether to use the software to control Windows Firewall, though if you use a separate security program, you probably don't need this.



**W**indows 10's privacy settings are spread all over the place: most of them are accessed by flicking a switch in the Settings app, but some require you to make changes to the Registry. PrivateWindows10 draws these disparate settings together, so you can add essential keys to your Registry with a simple click. It can also be used to configure the Windows Firewall.

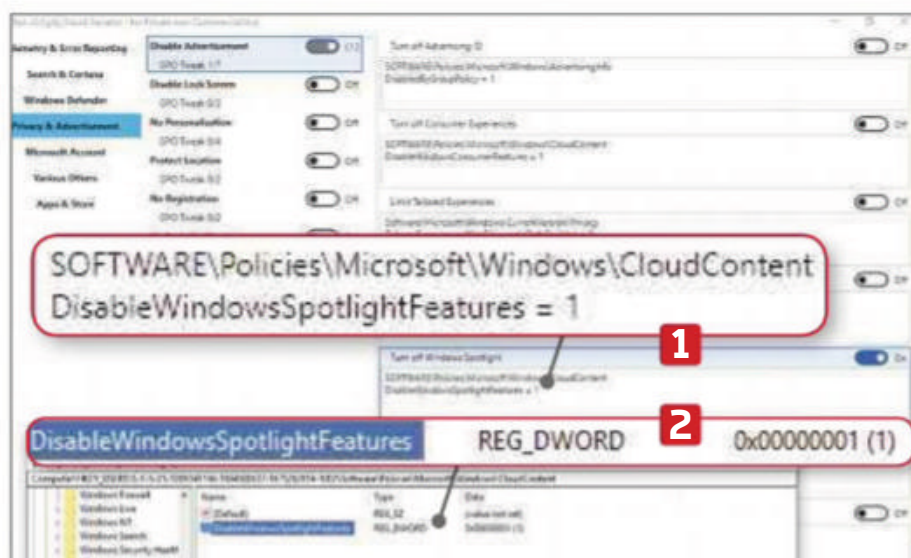
The software is in constant development, so is best downloaded from GitHub to make sure you get the latest version, though we also found it on MajorGeeks at [bit.ly/pwmg468](https://bit.ly/pwmg468). We tested the software with Norton Security and VirusTotal and it's completely safe. It's also portable – extract the files from the ZIP to a convenient folder on your hard drive and run it from there.



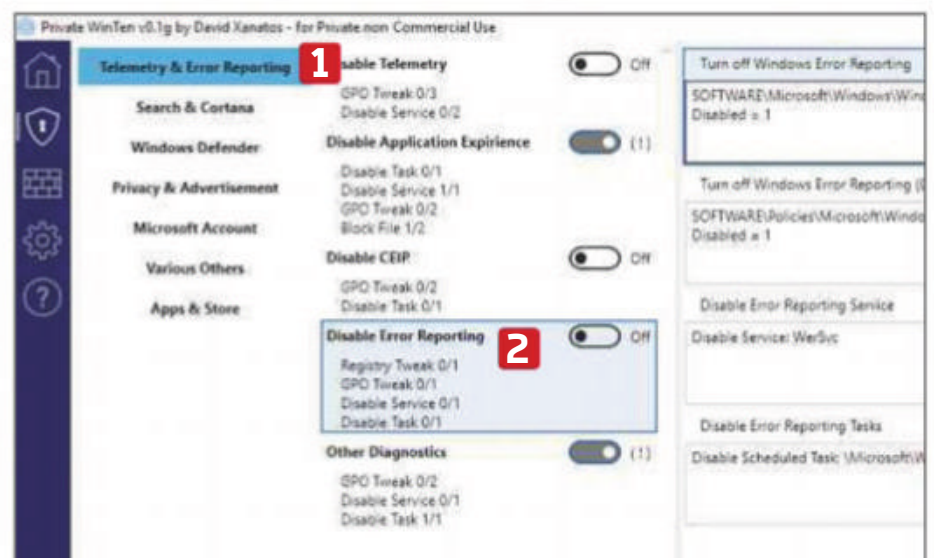
**1** Click the Home icon **1** to see a guide to how the software is operating. When you first start, there won't be any privacy options highlighted, **2** and if you have other security software installed, Windows Firewall will be marked as Disabled. **3**



**2** Click the Privacy icon **1** for a list of options. The window is split into three sections, with the headline settings on the left, **2** some catch-all options in the middle **3** and, if you click the middle option, each particular individual setting broken down in full on the right. **4**

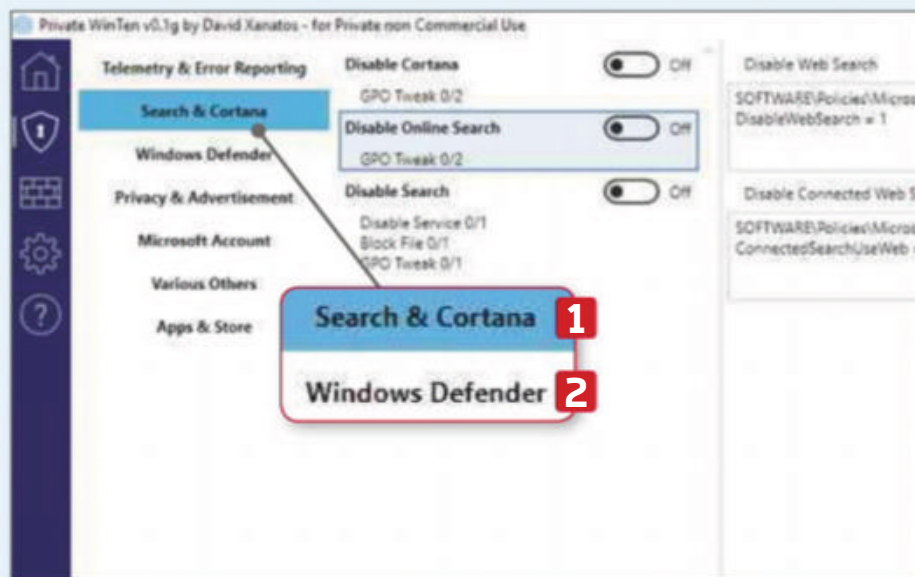


**3** Most of these settings make instant changes to the Registry. On the right, under each heading, you can see which Registry key is being changed and where to find it. **1** To see this in action, open Regedit, find the key and make the change in PrivateWin10. Refresh the Registry to see the key appear. **2** Switch it again and it disappears.

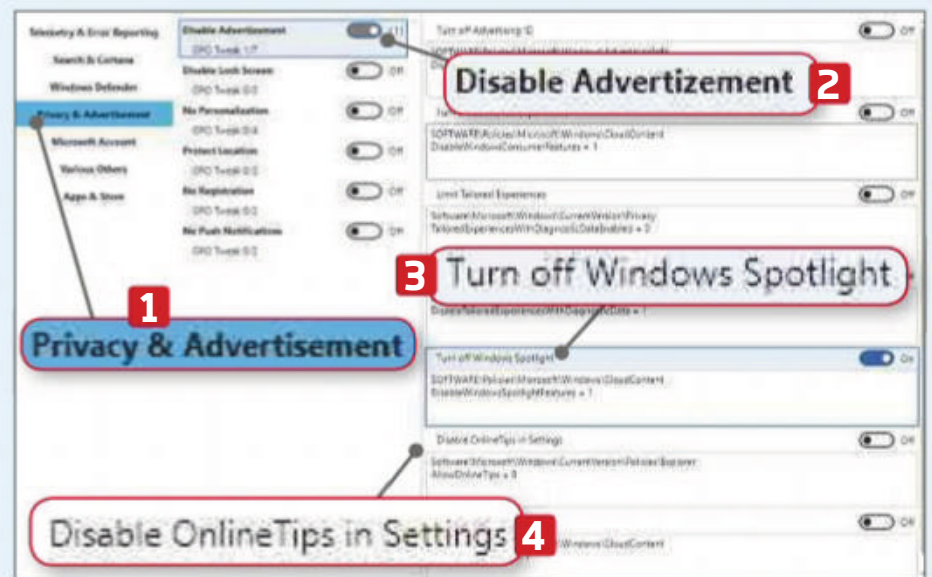


**4** Now you know what the software is doing, you can go through the privacy options and choose what to switch off. The Telemetry & Error Reporting section **1** is all about Windows reporting activities back to base, particularly if you have a problem. **2** It may help Microsoft improve Windows but it also infringes on your privacy.





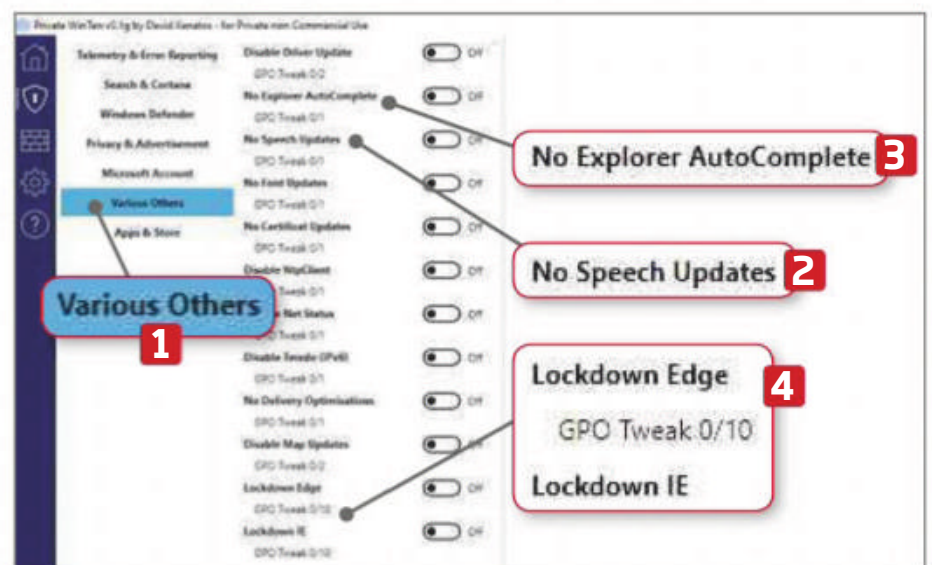
**5** Search & Cortana **1** should shut down everything to do with the voice recognition and search tools, both of which send data back to Microsoft. Windows Defender **2** may already have been shut down by your security software. If not, leave it be – you don't want Windows operating without any security.



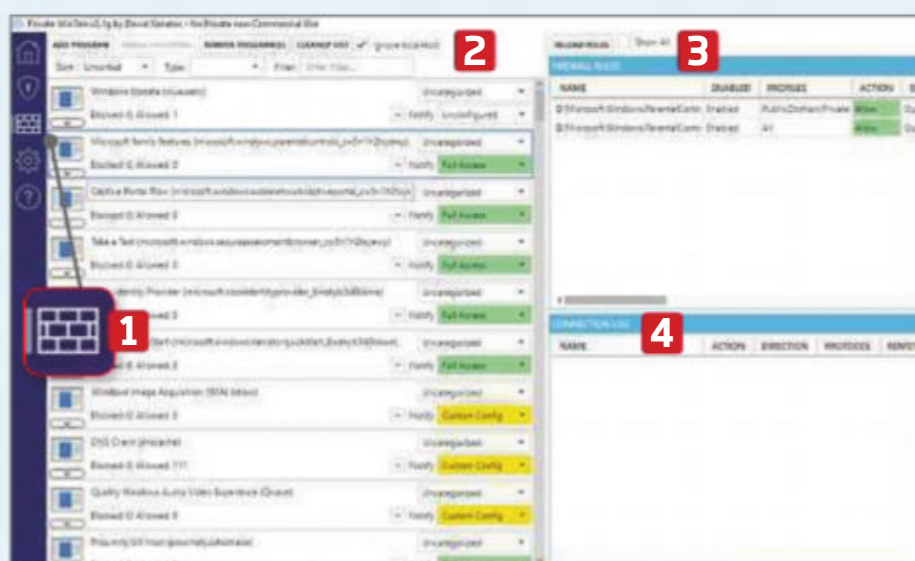
**6** The top option in the Privacy & Advertisement section, **1** Disable Advertisement, **2** has plenty of useful tweaks, particularly if you don't like the idea of having Microsoft muscling its way into login screens **3** and Settings. **4** In our opinion, you're unlikely to miss anything you decide to switch off in this section.



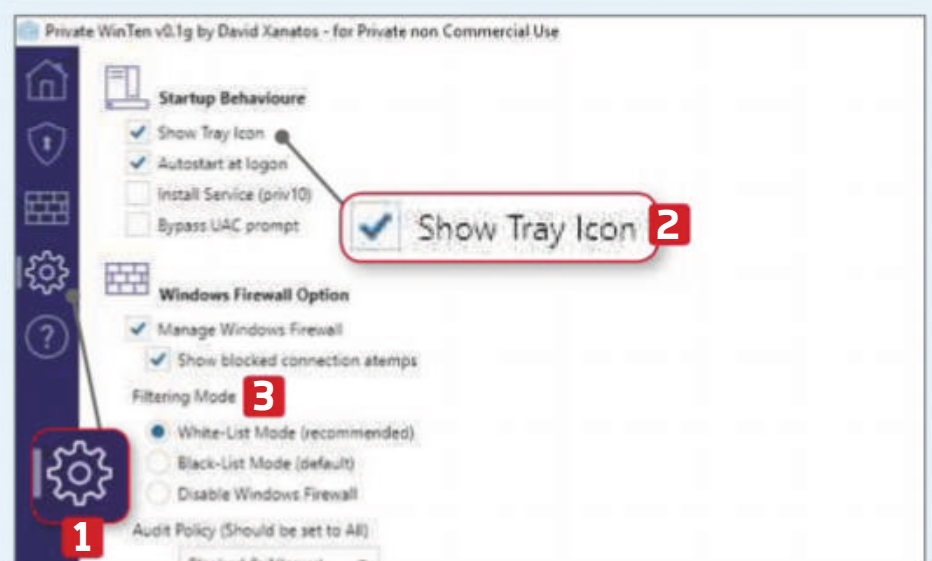
**7** Signing into Windows with a Microsoft Account enables all sorts of online actions, from connecting OneDrive **1** to syncing settings. **2** Switch these off in the Microsoft Account section. **3** Apps & Store **4** blocks apps from accessing your PC and blocks default apps you don't want to use.



**8** Various Others **1** acts as an umbrella category for a range of privacy settings that don't fit into the other sections. A significant number of these prevent specific updates that you might not want, such as speech, **2** while others block AutoComplete **3** and lock down Microsoft's browsers. **4**



**9** Only use the Firewall tab **1** if you already use the Windows Firewall to configure the incoming and outgoing connections on your PC. If you do, you'll find this more detailed than the Control Panel tool. You can block or allow programs on the left, **2** create rules **3** and view the log **4** on the right.



**10** If you clicked past the initial setup screen (see our Expert Tip at the top of page 54) or change your mind in the future, you can access the options again from the Settings icon. **1** There are a few extras here, too, such as making the icon in the notification area invisible **2** and changing the Windows Firewall mode. **3**





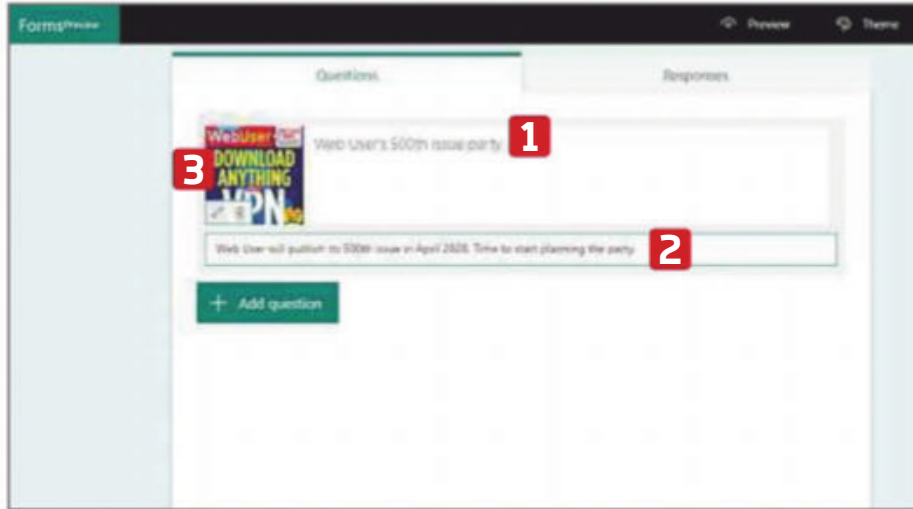
# Plan your next event with Microsoft Forms

Microsoft has introduced a new tool for creating forms in its online office suite at Office.com. It sounds like just another boring business tool but it's actually brilliant for gathering responses from lots of people – ideal for party

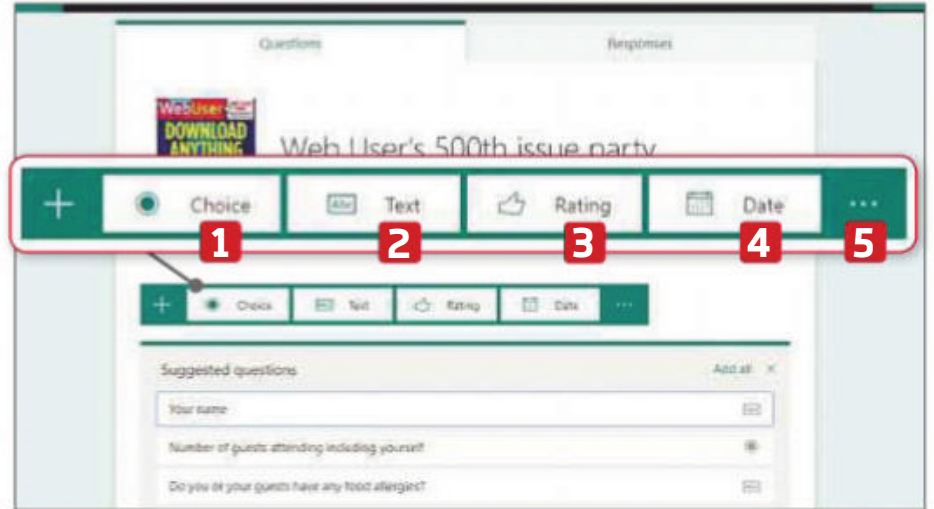
RSVPs, for example, where you need to know how many people are coming and whether they have any special requirements. Results are displayed as handy graphs, as they come in.



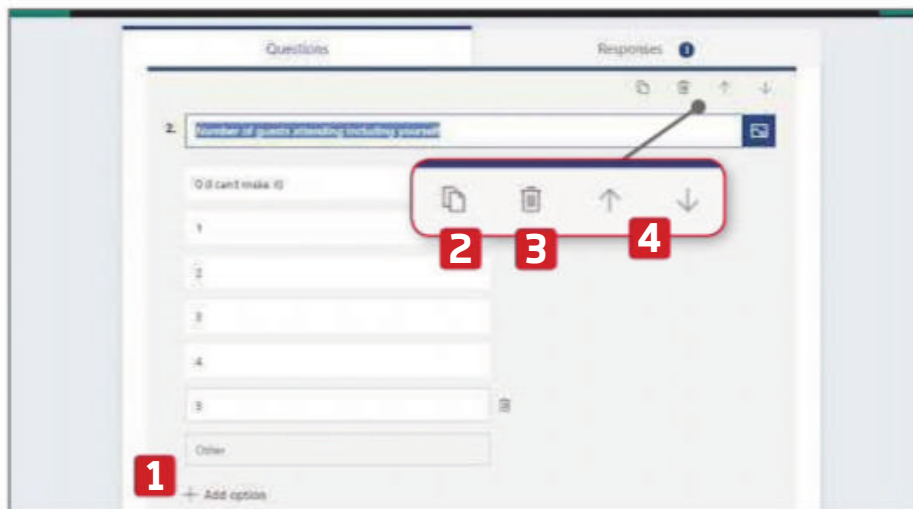
**Forms:** [forms.office.com](https://forms.office.com) | 10 mins | **Any browser**



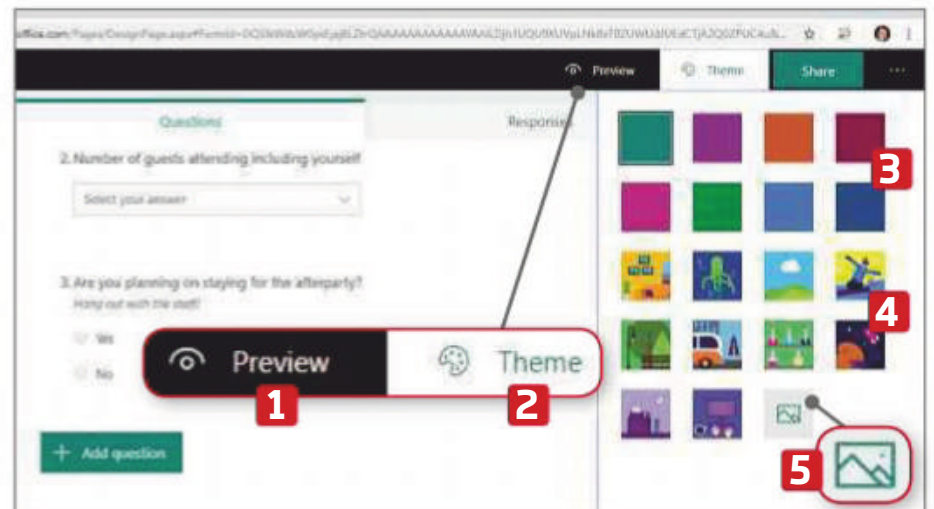
**1** If this is the first time you've used Forms, click 'Create a new form' on the welcome window. Otherwise, click the New Form button. Click 'Untitled form' to type in the name of the form (or event). **1** You can add a description in the box below. **2** Click the image icon to add an image. **3**



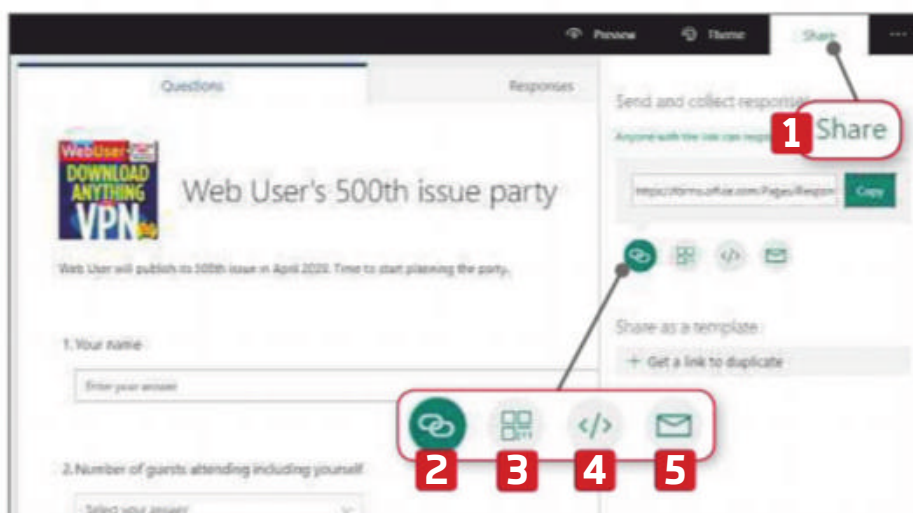
**2** Click the 'Add question' button. You can choose the format for answers from the options: multiple-choice radio buttons, **1** writing an answer, **2** giving a rating **3** or choosing a date. **4** There are more available in the menu. **5** Below is a list of preconfigured questions to match your title.



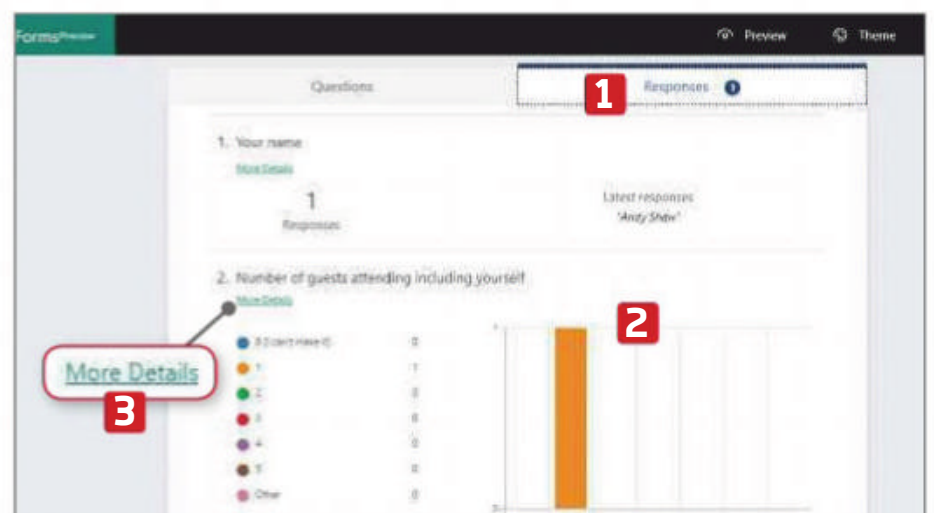
**3** Click the question and, depending on the answer format you've chosen, you'll be able to edit the options. **1** You can make a copy of a question to speed up adding a new one, **2** trash it **3** or move the question up or down the list. **4**



**4** Click Preview **1** to see what your form will look like when you send it out. You can also click Theme **2** to change the colours, **3** add an illustration **4** or upload an image of your own. **5**



**5** When your form is ready, click Share. **1** You can choose to copy a link **2** or QR code **3** to send people straight to a version of the form they can fill in; get HTML code to add the form to a web page; **4** or email it. **5** Go back to your form to see the results.



**6** Click the Responses tab **1** to see how many people responded to the survey. Scroll through the overview, which includes graphs **2** and pie charts to represent the data collected. If you want to see more information, such as the full detail of text boxes, click More Details. **3**



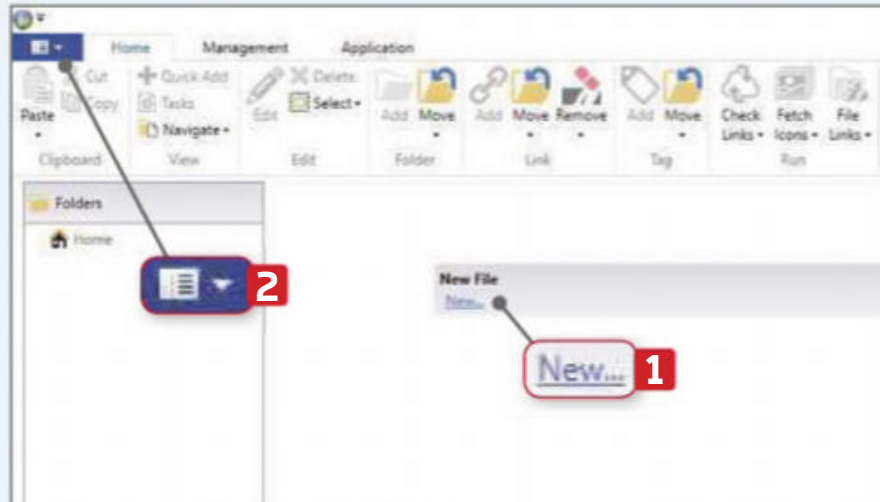


# Manage bookmarks across multiple browsers

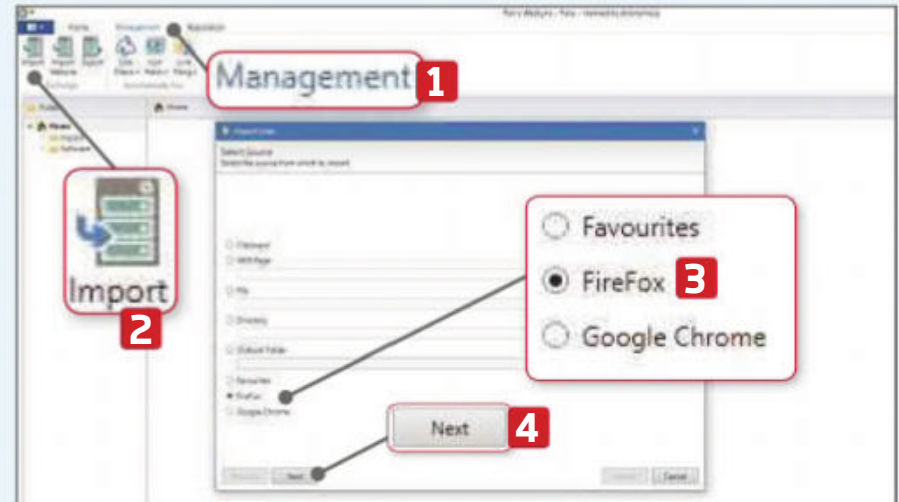
**R**on's WebLynx draws together all the bookmarks you have scattered across multiple web browsers (Chrome, Firefox and Internet Explorer) into one place. It lets you manage saved links more efficiently, with star ratings and

category tags to help you find elusive bookmarks more quickly. The integrated side panel lets you browse your bookmarks without leaving the software.

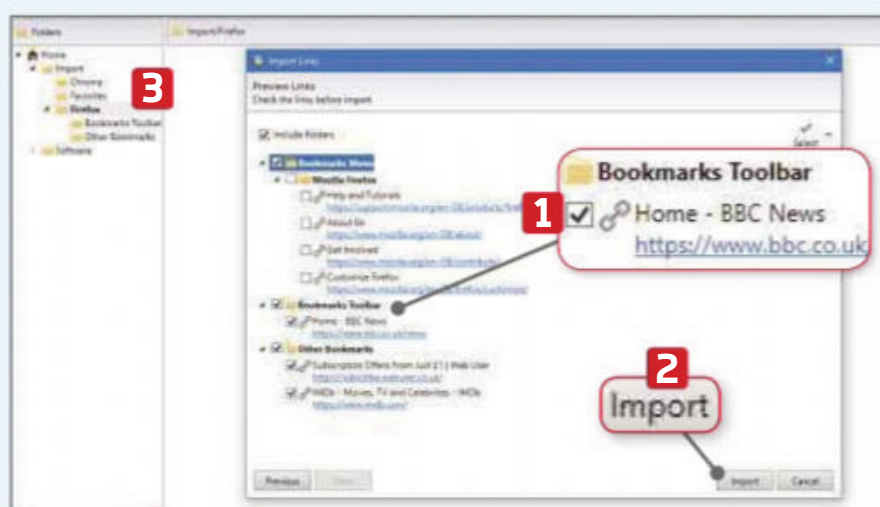
**Ron's WebLynx:** [bit.ly/ronweb468](http://bit.ly/ronweb468) | 10 mins | Windows Vista, 7, 8, 10



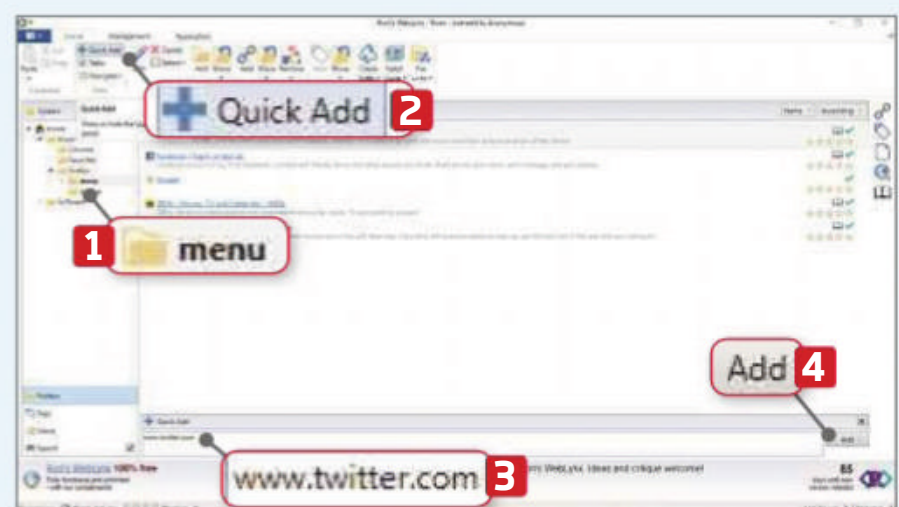
**1** Ron's WebLynx greets you with a blank welcome page. To start, create a folder by clicking the New link **1** and naming it appropriately. Click the menu button **2** and select Options, General Settings, then tick the box marked 'Automatically open last file on start'.



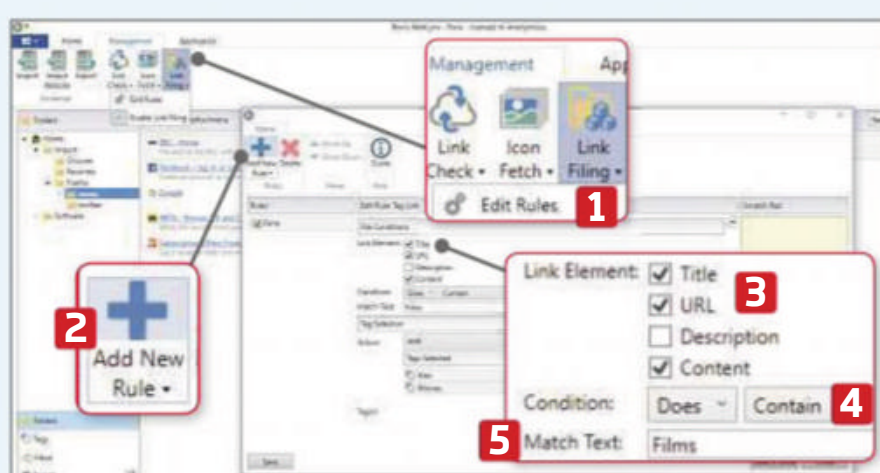
**2** To populate WebLynx with your existing bookmarks, click the Management tab, **1** followed by Import. **2** In the resulting pop-up, choose the source – for instance, your Firefox bookmarks. **3** Click Next **4** and select or create a folder for your bookmarks. Click Next to confirm.



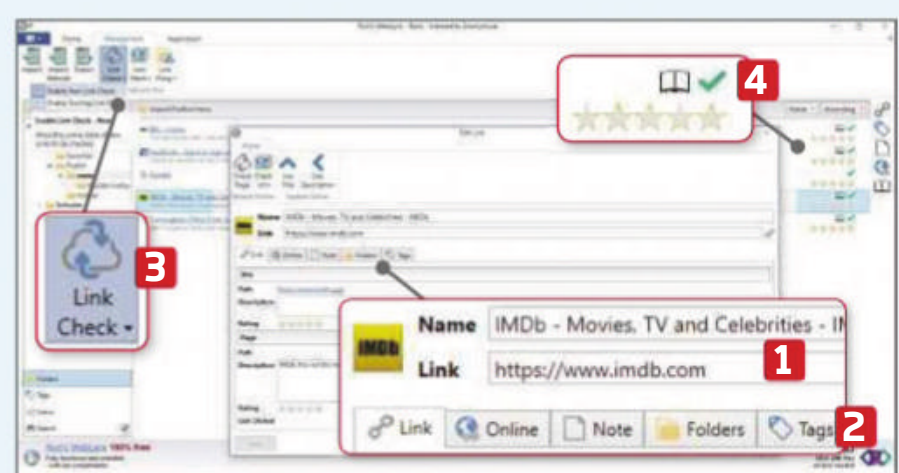
**3** Manage bookmarks by tagging them. Double-click a tag to move it between Tag Selected and Tag Available, or highlight a tag and use the arrows. Click Next, use the tick boxes to choose which bookmarks to import **1** and click Import. **2** Your bookmarks appear in the left-hand sidebar. **3**



**4** To add individual URLs to folders, select the appropriate folder in your sidebar **1** and click Quick Add. **2** A text box appears at the bottom **3** – paste or type the address and click Add. **4** Alternatively, drag and drop a bookmark from your browser's bookmark menu to WebLynx.



**5** Link Filing automatically files bookmarks. Go to Management, Link Filing, Edit Rules. **1** Click Add New Rule **2** and name it. Check which Link Elements **3** the rule applies to and set conditions. **4** Add a Match Text word **5** to scan the bookmarks and tag them appropriately.



**6** Right-click a link and select Edit. In the pop-up box, edit the title, link **1** and description. Use the tabs **2** to edit the bookmark's folder location and tags. Under Management, click Link Check **3** and ensure both options are ticked. This adds a green tick to unbroken links. **4**



# Weekend Project

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



How to...

## Back up your email quickly and efficiently

Don't lose important messages. **Wayne Williams** shows you some easy ways to back up your email – locally or in the cloud

**Y**ou probably haven't given much thought to backing up your email, especially if you use webmail services such as Gmail and Outlook.com, where your messages are stored on reliable servers and are accessible from anywhere. But what happens if the service you use goes down for an extended period of time, or a hacker gains access to your account and locks you out? Even finding yourself without a reliable internet connection at a time when you desperately need a particular email can be huge headache.

Backing up your messages means you'll always have a copy of them when needed, and the process doesn't have to be complicated or time consuming if you follow our guide.



### Before you start

Most of us have the good sense to regularly back up our PCs in case disaster strikes, but very few people bother to back up their emails. It's true that most large webmail providers are perfectly secure and undoubtedly have copies of your email stored in more than one place, but it's not a complete guarantee of safety. Would you be upset if you lost all your emails? If the answer is 'yes', then

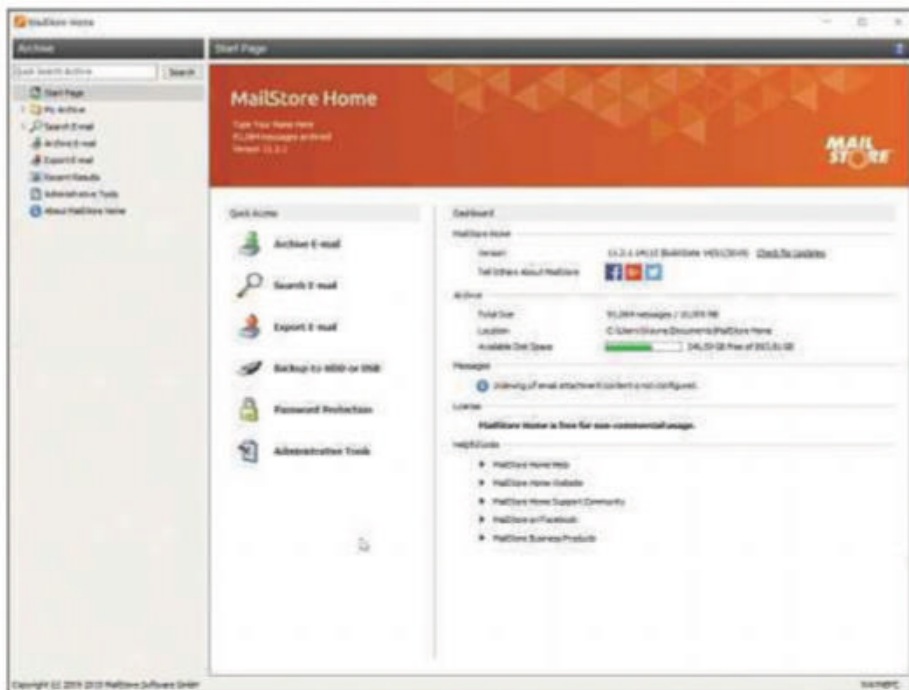
you ought to consider taking steps to secure them.

Before you create a backup, it's worth doing a spot of spring cleaning, to avoid saving copies of emails you don't want, such as newsletters from mailing lists and other marketing materials.

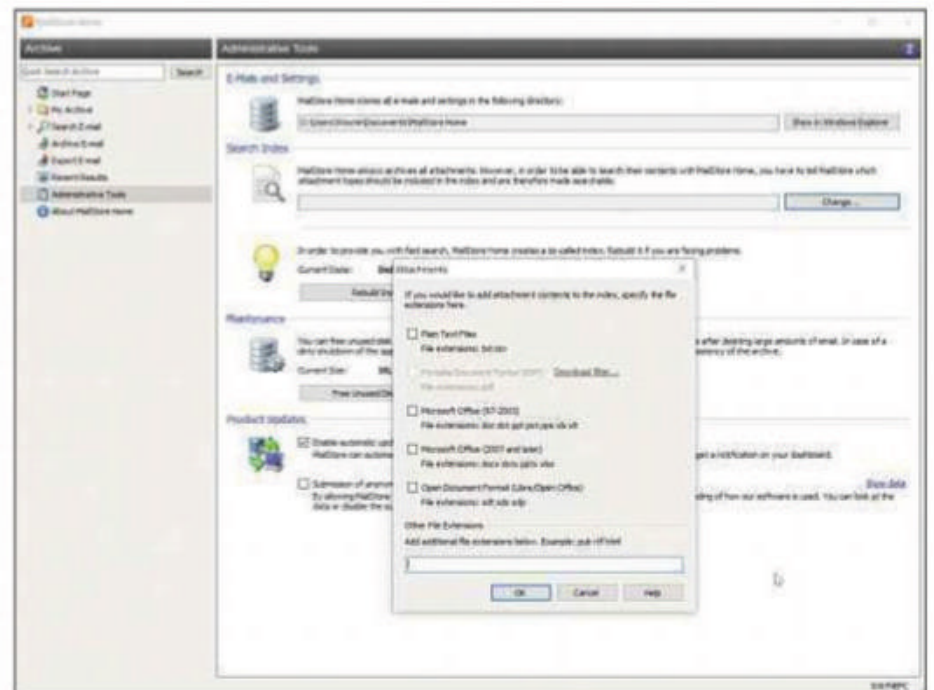
Gmail makes it easy to find and remove unwanted messages. To delete content from a specific sender or organisation, type their email address in the search

box and press Enter. Click the tick box under the search bar to select all the messages, then delete them by clicking the bin icon. If you want to remove all older messages, type `in:inbox before:YYYY/MM/DD` and specify a cut-off date. For example, typing `in:inbox before:2018/01/01` displays all messages received before that date, so you can select and delete them all.





**MailStore Home saves a copy of all your emails and lets you protect the backup with a password**



**To filter out any attachments you don't need, tell MailStore Home the types of attachments you want to include in its index**

The biggest space hogs are messages with attachments, and you can get Gmail to display them all. Just type `has:attachment` in the search bar and press Enter. You can also display just the largest emails, by specifying a size (in bytes): for example `size:1000000`.

## Back up your email with free software

There are a number of methods you can use to back up your messages. One option is to use email software such as Thunderbird ([bit.ly/tbird468](http://bit.ly/tbird468)). This works with all types of email, including webmail services such as Gmail and Outlook.com. Simply enter your name, email address and password, and it will fetch copies of your emails for offline viewing.

When setting it up, you can choose between POP (Post Office Protocol) – where messages are downloaded to your

computer and then, depending on your settings, either deleted from the source, archived or left alone; and IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol) – where messages are synched, so if you delete an email in Thunderbird, it will vanish from the web and vice versa.

Messages can be exported in EML format, for opening in a different mail client. To do this, select the messages you want to save (press Ctrl+A to select them all), then right-click a message and choose Save As. Select a format to save the emails in, then click Select Folder.

Alternatively, you can use the excellent MailStore Home (free from [bit.ly/mshome468](http://bit.ly/mshome468)), which works with any mail provider including Gmail and Outlook.com, securely saving your messages in a central location on your hard drive. You can search for, read, and restore emails back to your email account, directly from

the software. The latest version includes a faster search tool and the ability to hunt for messages by archive date.

We show you how to get started with MailStore Home in our Mini Workshop, below.

## Save email attachments to Google Drive

If you're not particularly worried about backing up individual emails, but you want to save the attachments you've been sent, you can use a Gmail add-on called 'Save Emails and Attachments' ([bit.ly/seaa468](http://bit.ly/seaa468)). Click the Free button and a Google Sheet will open.

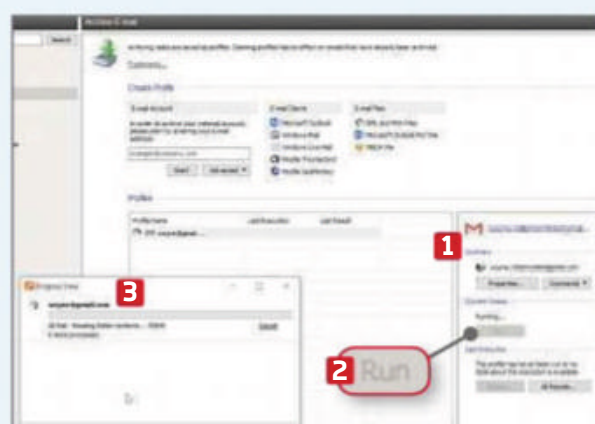
The add-on needs a variety of permissions to run, including the ability to 'Read, compose, send and permanently delete all your email from Gmail,' and 'See, edit, create and delete all of your Google Drive files'. That may feel like too



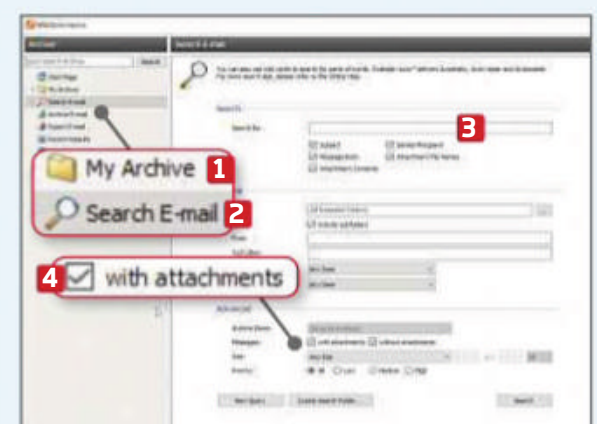
## MINI WORKSHOP | Back up your email with MailStore Home



**1** To begin backing up your email, click the Archive E-mail link under Quick Access. Enter your email address **1** (it works with any service) and click Start. **2** Alternatively, you can archive messages from a number of email clients **3** or load email files stored on your hard drive. **4**



**2** If you've chosen to back up Gmail, a new browser window opens, in which you'll need to grant MailStore Home permission to manage your email. Click Allow and return to the software. A profile will be created for you. **1** Click Run **2** to begin the backup process. **3**







**3** The software imports your emails (this is likely to take a long time). Afterwards, you can view your downloaded messages in My Archive. **1** Click Search E-mail **2** to find a specific message, then tick the boxes and enter your search terms. **3** The Advanced section lets you search for files with attachments. **4**



# Broadband Deals

Call **FREE** on **0800 083 2357** to switch your broadband

	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1		Sky: Broadband Unlimited	<b>£18.00</b> (£30 after 18 months)	<b>18</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited*	<b>CHEAPEST</b> <b>£216.00</b>
2		TalkTalk: Fast Broadband	<b>£18.95</b> (£27 after 18 months)	<b>18</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>£227.40</b>
3		First Utility: First Broadband	<b>£18.99</b>	<b>18</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>£227.88</b>
4		Virgin Media: Player Bundle + Fibre Broadband + Weekend Calls	<b>£32.00</b> (£56 after 12 months)	<b>12</b> months	<b>108Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>£384.00</b>

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

\* Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by [www.broadbandgenie.co.uk](http://www.broadbandgenie.co.uk). Correct as of 23 January 2019.



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

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

**SNEAK  
PREVIEW!**

# Computer active

**DOWNLOAD THE WEB'S BEST-KEPT SECRETS** Amazing FREE stuff that's too good to leave to experts

- Save £££s buying second-hand laptops (don't buy brand new!)

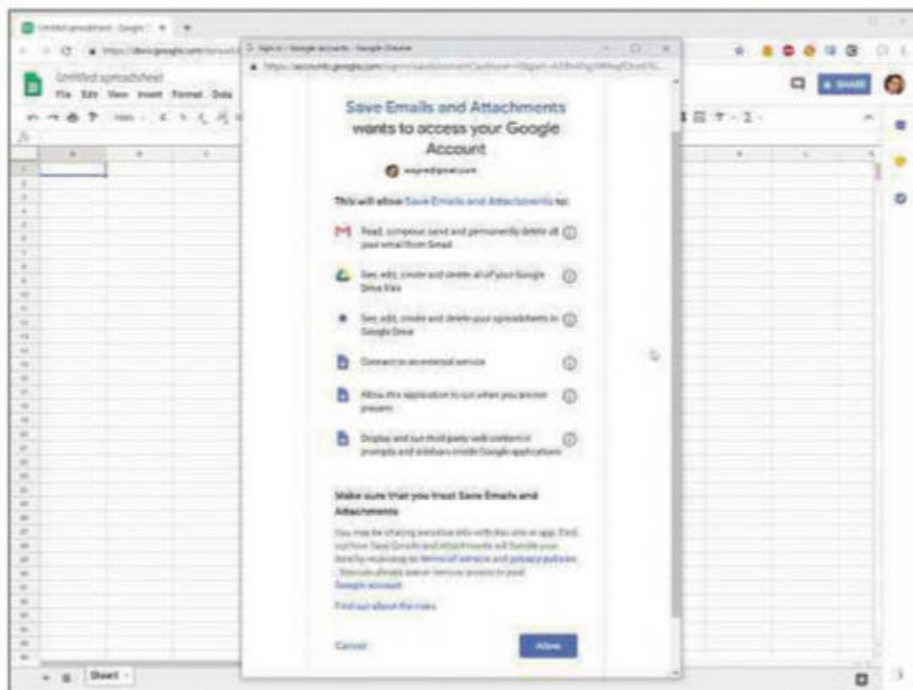
Subscribe at [www.getcomputeractive.co.uk](http://www.getcomputeractive.co.uk)

- Sync your PC's folders without exposing your private data

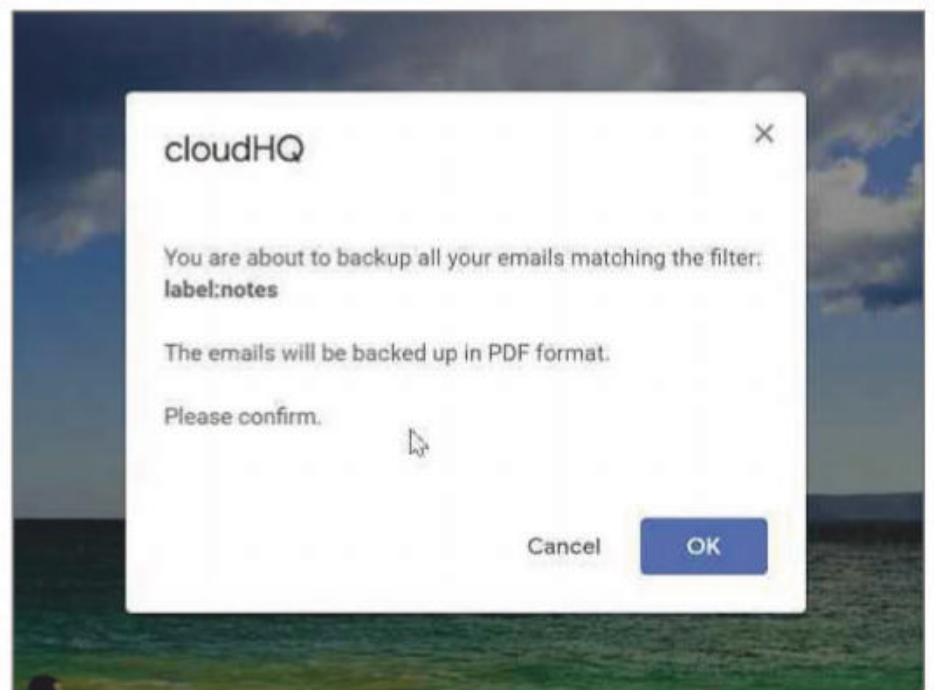
**PLUS:** Turn an SSD into a fast external hard drive

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'Save Emails and Attachments' requires a lot of permissions to run



CloudHQ's tool can back up selected Gmail labels

much of an imposition, but it's standard for this kind of backup tool. Click Allow and go to Add-ons, 'Save Emails and Attachments', then Create New Rule.

In the window that opens, choose whether you want to download emails, attachments or both. You can also narrow the results by choosing a particular Gmail label and specifying who the messages are from or to, what the subject is and when they were received.

Specify the Drive folder to save the attachments to and click Save. Select Run Manually, then Run, and the software will go to work. The Google Sheet updates to show what's being saved to your Drive. If you require local copies of your attachments, you can download them from your Drive folder.

### Back up your messages to a CD or DVD

If you want to save copies of your emails to an optical disc, you need to have them backed up in EML format. You can then save the files using any disc-authoring tool, such as Ashampoo Burning Studio 2019 ([bit.ly/asha468](http://bit.ly/asha468)). MailStore Home used to offer the ability to save emails directly to CD and DVD, but since interest in disc-authoring has dropped off in recent years (a dwindling number of PCs come with optical drives as standard) the software now only allows writing directly to HDD and USB.

### Back up your important messages

Just because you can back up your entire

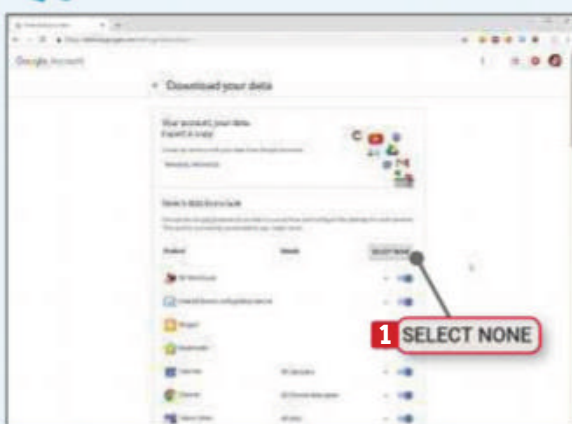
inbox, it doesn't mean you have to. You may prefer to only save copies of your most important emails – the ones you can't afford to lose.

One of the easiest ways to do this is to create a label for those messages and have them forwarded to another email account. To create a label, select an email and click the Labels button above. In the window that opens, click 'Create new' and give it a name. Use this label on all future important messages. You can then use CloudHQ's 'Save and Backup My Emails' extension for Chrome ([bit.ly/sbme468](http://bit.ly/sbme468)) to back up that label.

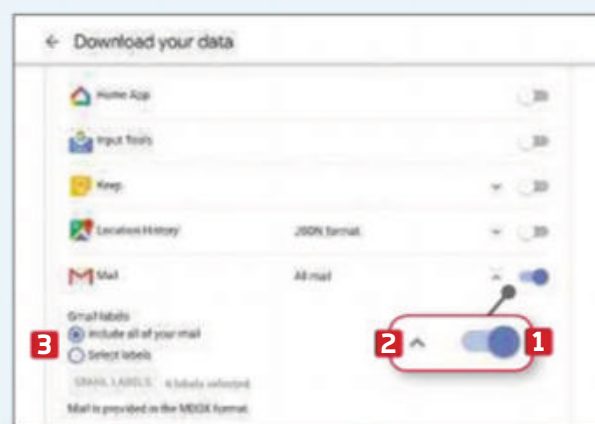
The free version lets you save 100 emails a month. Or you can use Google's Takeout service, which we show you how to use in our Mini Workshop, below. ■



## MINI WORKSHOP | Download Gmail messages straight from Google using Takeout



**1** You may not be aware that Google lets you download a copy of all your data from its many services, including Gmail. Make sure you're logged into your Google account, then go to the Takeout page ([takeout.google.com](http://takeout.google.com)). Click the Select None button **1** under 'Select data to include'.



**2** This deselects all the currently selected services. Scroll down the list and switch on the toggle next to Mail. **1** If you click the arrow next to the toggle, **2** you can choose to include all your mail or only selected labels. **3** Scroll to the bottom and click the blue Next button.



**3** Select the archive format you want to save the data to (this is ZIP by default). **1** Backed-up data can be sent as a download link via email, or added to Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive or Box. **2** Click Create Archive. **3** Downloaded data can be browsed but it can't be restored or imported to a new account.

## NEXT ISSUE

How To... Upgrade your router

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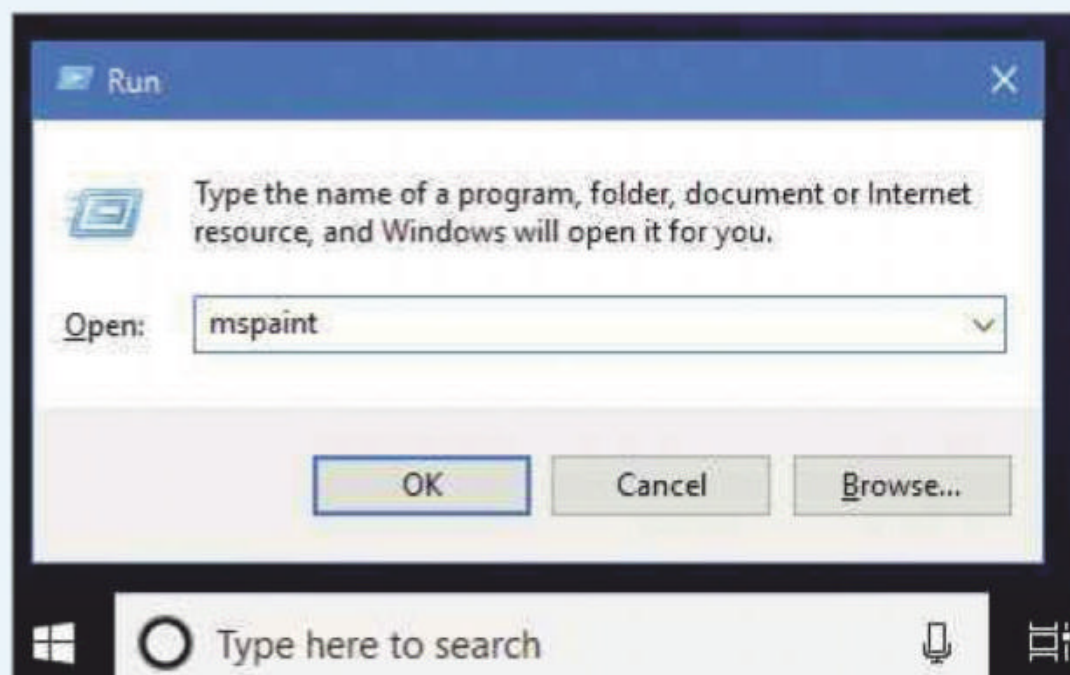
# Web User Masterclass

## Access Windows tools faster using the Run command

### Run Windows programs without the Start menu

If you type the filename of a program into the Run box (Windows+R), Windows will try to find and launch it. This can be quicker than looking through all the programs on your Start menu to find the one you want. However, a program's name isn't always obvious, so you may have to learn your favourites.

Press Windows+R, type `notepad` and press Enter to open Notepad. Enter `calc` to open the calculator app, `mspaint` to open the old Paint program, and `wordpad` or `write` to open the word processor. Typing `wmplayer` opens Windows Media Player, `snippingtool` opens the screen-capture utility, `Taskmgr` opens Task Manager, `cmd` opens the Command Prompt window and `magnify` opens the screen magnifier.



Press Windows+R and type a program's filename to run it

### Website shortcuts

When you start your PC and want to open a website, the normal procedure is to click the browser icon, click inside the address box and type the URL. However, it's quicker to use the Run box instead – just remember that this only works if your browser isn't yet open.

Press Windows+R and type the URL – for example, `en.wikipedia.org` – then press Enter. The default web browser will open the site. If Edge opens instead of Chrome, go to the Chrome menu and click Settings, then under 'Default browser', click 'Make default'.

### Search faster

If you use Chrome to browse the web and it's not currently running, press Windows+R, type `chrome` "? search-term" and press Enter to open

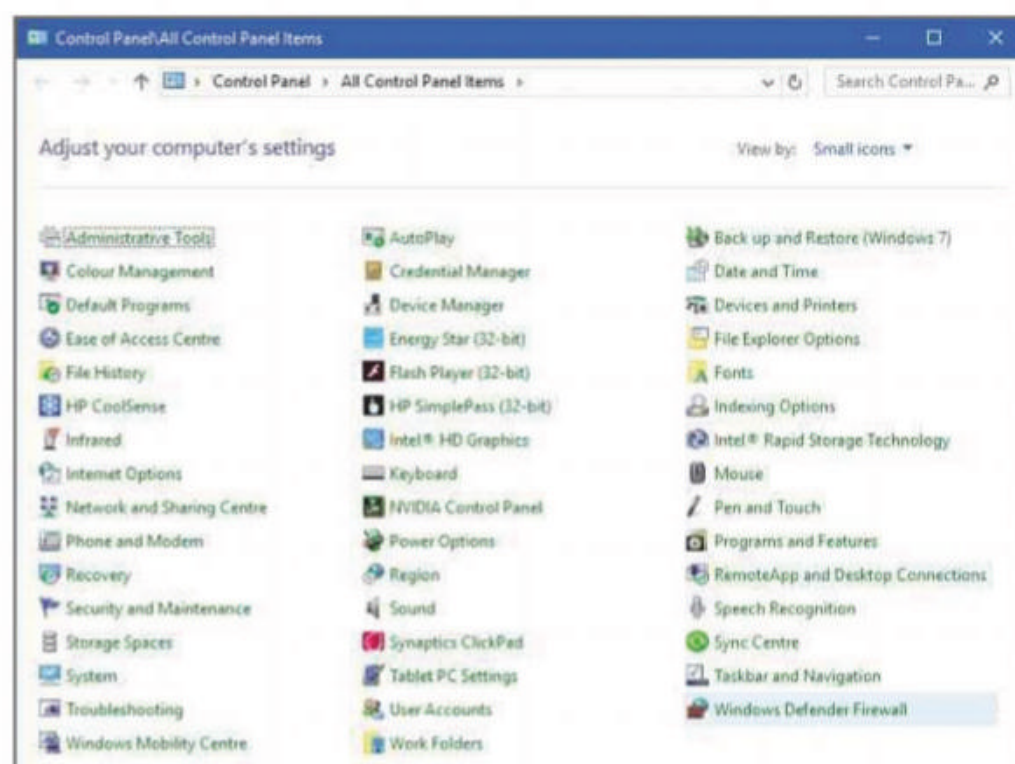
a browser and search for an item. You may find it quicker than opening the browser, going to Google and typing in the search phrase.

### Open the Control Panel

Microsoft has moved some of its configuration tools into Windows 10 Settings (which you can open with Windows+i), but Control Panel still contains a large number of useful

options. However, Microsoft is making it increasingly hard to find.

The easiest way to open the Control Panel is by pressing Windows+R, typing `control` and pressing Enter. Some items can be opened by appending their name after `control`. For example, type `control printers`, `control folders`, `control keyboard`, `control mouse` and `control admintools`.



If you can't find the Control Panel, press Windows+R and type `control`

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.



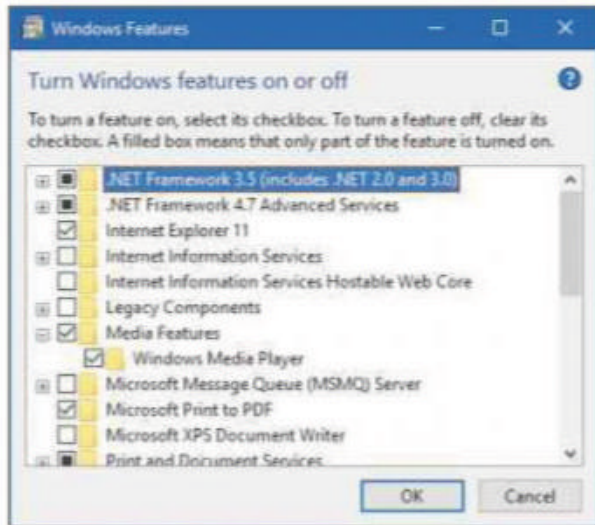


## Open system folders

Some system folders can be opened by typing their names in the Run box. For example, press Windows+R and type Documents, Music, Pictures, Videos, system32 and temp. Press Enter after each one. Press Windows+R and enter two full stops ( . . ) then Enter to open the C:\Users folder, or just press \ and Enter to open the C:\ drive.

## Enable or disable key Windows features

Buried in the Control Panel is a list of Windows features that you can enable or disable using tick boxes. Add any features you feel you're missing out on, and untick the ones you don't use. Press Windows+R, type optionalfeatures and press Enter to go straight to the Windows Features list.



Choose which optional Windows features to enable or disable

## Reuse old commands

We've covered lots of Run commands in this Masterclass, and if your fingers are getting tired of typing, you can easily access commands you've typed previously. Press Windows+R and press the up and down arrow keys to move through your history. Press Enter when the one you want appears.

## Turn Run commands into shortcuts

There are so many Run commands that it's hard to remember them all. We have only listed a few of our favourites and there are plenty more you can discover. To save you having to remember and type the commands, you can turn them into desktop shortcuts with their own icon, so you can just double-click them with your mouse to run them.

Right-click the desktop and select New, then Shortcut. When you're asked for the location of the item, just type the command you'd enter into the Run box, such as regedit, %temp% or services.msc. Click Next and enter a name for the shortcut. Click Finish. Now double-click the icon to run the command.

## TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

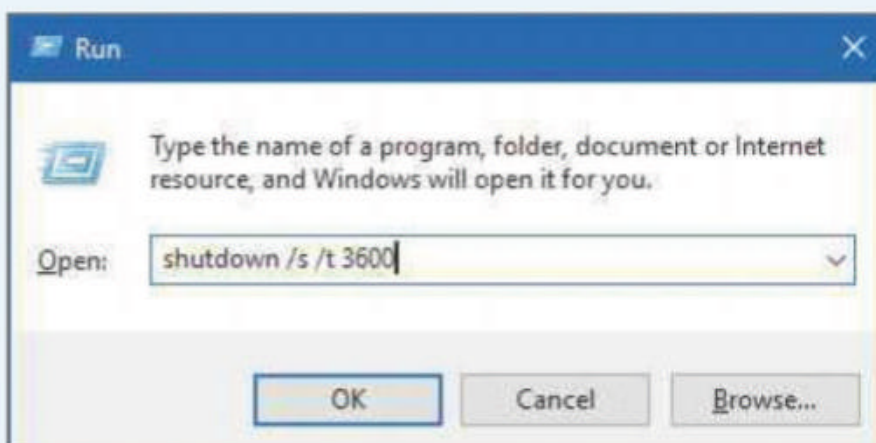
More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

### Scheduled shutdown

There is a useful Windows command to shut down your computer, which has lots of options, including creating a scheduled shutdown. Press Windows+R, type cmd and press Enter to open a Command Prompt window. Type shutdown /? and press Enter to see all the options. There are so many that you'll need to scroll back up the command-prompt window to see them all. Any of these can be used in the Run box.

The /s and /t parameters are the most useful: /s means shut down and /t is the countdown timer in seconds. To shut down now, press Windows+R, type shutdown /s /t 0 and press Enter. The zero gives the instruction to wait zero seconds. Use shutdown /s /t 3600 to shut down in 3,600 seconds (one hour). This could be useful if you plan to leave something running and want your PC to turn itself off afterwards.

Replace the /s with /r to restart your computer instead of shutting it down. Replace /s with /h to hibernate, which is when your PC resumes what it was doing the next time you switch it on. Not all PCs are capable of hibernating but you can find out if yours does by looking for it in the list of options on the Start menu, in the Power section.



This command shuts down Windows in an hour. If you change your mind, open Run and type shutdown /a to abort

### Use system variables

For convenience, the path of certain system folders is stored in system variables. They take the form %name% and can be typed into the Run box to open the system folder in Explorer. For example, press Windows+R and type %temp% to open an Explorer window showing the temporary files folder. Here are some more system variables to type into a Run box:

%appdata% opens C:\Users\YourName\AppData\Roaming where Windows and applications store data  
%homepath% or %userprofile% opens C:\Users\YourName, your personal folder

%ProgramData% opens the hidden folder C:\ProgramData, where applications store data

%ProgramFiles% and %ProgramFiles(x86)% opens C:\Program files and C:\Program files (x86), where software is installed  
%windir% or %systemroot% opens the Windows folder

System variables can be combined with normal folder paths, so you could enter something like %userprofile%\Documents to open your Documents folder or %userprofile%\Downloads to open the Downloads folder.

### Run hidden programs

Many system tools are either hard to find or don't appear on any menu. The Registry Editor is a good example - you run it by pressing Windows+R, typing regedit and pressing Enter. Here are some other useful ones:

dxdiag DirectX diagnostic tool (useful if games run incorrectly)  
cleanmgr Disk Cleanup tool (clear junk and recover drive space)  
diskmgmt.msc Disk Management utility

appwiz.cpl Control Panel's 'Programs and Features' (for uninstalling)  
resmon Resource Monitor (a more detailed Task Manager)  
cttune ClearType Text Tuner  
dfrgui Disk Defragmenter

perfmon.msc Performance Monitor  
systempropertiesperformance Optimise Windows

services.msc Windows Services  
msinfo32 Detailed info about the PC

mrt Microsoft Windows Malicious Software Removal Tool

msconfig System Configuration (this is more useful in Windows 7 than 10).



# Ask the Expert

**Roland Waddilove**, computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk)



## SECURITY

### Set up a VPN on an older iPhone or iPad

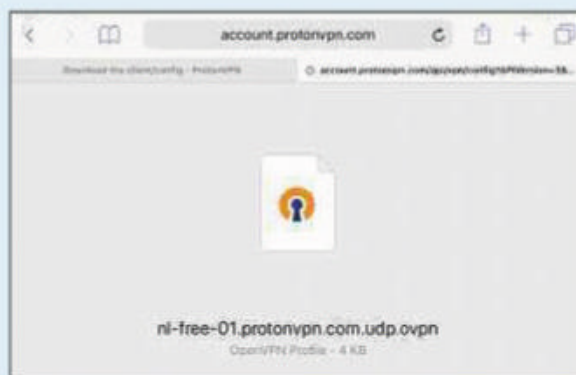
**Q** I enjoyed your workshop on ProtonVPN for iOS in Issue 465, but unfortunately the app requires iOS 10 or higher. Can you recommend a free VPN for older iPads like mine, which uses iOS version 9.3.5.

**Paul Adams, via email**

**A** The ProtonVPN app for iPhone and iPad requires iOS 10, but you can use the ProtonVPN service with other VPN apps. OpenVPN Connect, for example, works with iOS 9, so it should work fine with your iPad.

Visit [account.protonvpn.com](http://account.protonvpn.com) in your web browser and create a free ProtonVPN account. Then log in and select Account from the menu – if you can't see it, click the button in the top-left corner. The OpenVPN/IKEv2 Username section has two buttons: Change OpenVPN Username and Change OpenVPN Password. Click each to set a username and password for OpenVPN. These can be the same as your ProtonVPN account details.

Next, go to the App Store and



*ProtonVPN configuration files work with OpenVPN on iOS devices*

install OpenVPN Connect ([bit.ly/ovpn468](http://bit.ly/ovpn468)). Open it, then switch back to the home screen and open Safari. Go to [account.protonvpn.com](http://account.protonvpn.com), log into your ProtonVPN account and select Downloads from the menu.

Select iOS, then Server Configs. Expand the entry for each country to find free servers. There should be a couple in the US and Netherlands. Tap the download button and, on the next screen, press the link to open it in the OpenVPN Connect app.

Finally, tap the pencil icon to enter your OpenVPN username and password, then tap through the permission messages. Now that your VPN is set up, you can simply flick the switch to connect to a VPN server and enjoy a secure internet connection.

Now you have two devices with the same letter, which confuses Windows when you plug the first one back in. To fix the problem, you need to ensure each device has a different drive letter.

Plug in the hard drive and, if it doesn't appear in Explorer, right-click This PC in the sidebar and select Manage. In the Storage section on the left, select Disk Management. All the drives should be listed in the central panel, including those that don't show up in Explorer.

Right-click the problem drive and select 'Change Drive Letter and Paths'. Select a letter that isn't being used by any other storage device. For example, the hard drive could be 'E:' and the SD card could be 'F:'.

## MOBILE

### Stop iPads cloning each other

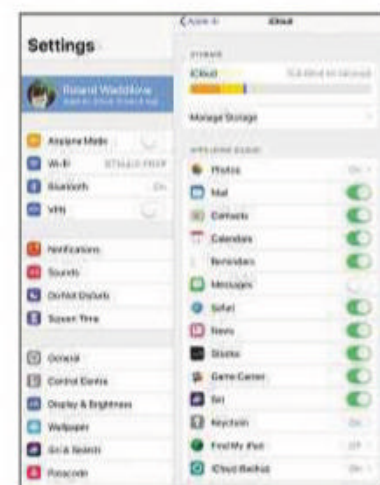
**Q** My wife recently bought a new iPad Mini. We transferred everything from her old iPad via iCloud, but now it's like a clone, and I can't do anything on the old one without affecting the new one.

**Gordon McGovern, via email**

**A** This is a feature that lets you keep multiple devices in sync through iCloud, iTunes and the App Store. Create a Calendar appointment or download an app on one device, for example, and it appears on the other.

There are several things you can do: stop syncing everything; sync only what you want; or set up your own Apple ID and iCloud account.

Go to Settings, tap the account name at the top, then iCloud. Here you'll see a list of all the apps that sync with other iOS devices. Each has a switch that lets you enable or disable syncing. If you disable Calendar, for example, your two iPads

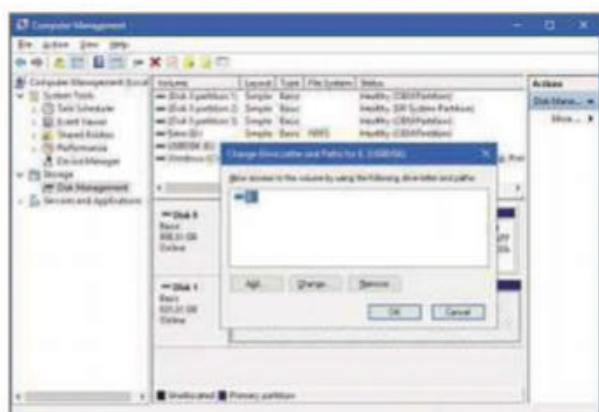


*To stop iCloud syncing iOS devices, sign out or turn off the switches in Settings*

## HARDWARE

### Find drives that don't appear in Explorer

**Q** When I plug my USB hard drive into my Windows 8.1 Lenovo laptop, it doesn't always show up in Explorer or



*Use Disk Management to assign unique drive letters to storage devices*

This PC. Windows makes the appropriate connection sound, but I can't access the drive unless I restart my PC. This happens almost every time.

I've tried deleting the host controller in Device Manager and I've run System File Checker on my PC. When I inserted an SD card just now, it worked perfectly.

**Dave Rhodes, via email**

**A** Problems can occur when Windows gives two different storage devices the same letter. When you plug in a USB drive, for example, Windows assigns it the first available drive letter, such as 'E:'. The next day you might plug in a different drive, such as a USB memory stick or SD card, and Windows could assign it the same drive letter, E:.





will have separate calendar events. You could disable some or all of the apps.

Next, go back to Settings and choose 'iTunes & App Store', where you can enable or disable syncing for music, apps, books, audiobooks and updates. When they are switched on, these items are copied to the other iPad.

If you'd rather set up the iPad from scratch, go to Settings and choose General, Reset, 'Erase All Content and Settings'. When the iPad restarts, you can create your own Apple ID, iTunes and App Store accounts. Both devices will then be completely independent.

There are advantages to using one account for both iPads, because it's easy to share music, books and apps you buy. If your iPads have separate accounts, your purchases are only available on your iPad. However, you can still share items such as apps by using Family Sharing ([bit.ly/fams468](http://bit.ly/fams468)).

## HARDWARE

### Fix power-supply problems

**Q** When I switch on my Windows 10 Dell Inspiron 2320 PC, I get the following message: "The AC power adapter type and wattage cannot be determined. The system performance is unpredictable. Please connect a Dell 180W AC adapter and restart. Press the F1 key to continue or press power button to shut down."

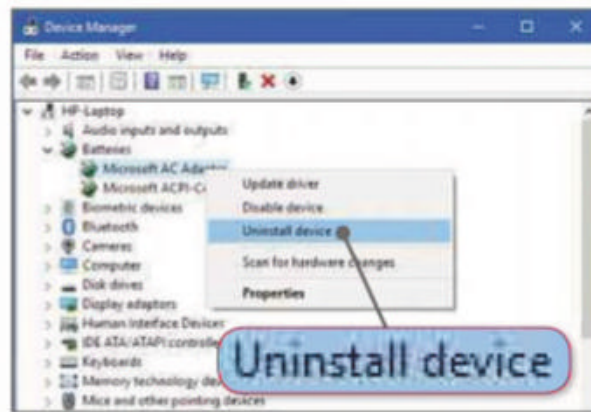
The AC adapter is the 180W model supplied by Dell, and I've checked that it supplies the correct voltage. I've also checked every connection and performed the checks Dell suggests on its website. I can't find any problems and the latest BIOS is installed.

**Peter Jenkins, via email**

**A** Dell's Inspiron 2320 is an all-in-one PC and has a separate power brick – similar to a laptop's but more powerful. Pull out the mains plug and disconnect the lead from the computer, then reconnect them, ensuring the plug is firmly inserted into the computer.

Type **device manager** into the taskbar's search box, and click to open it. Look for an AC Adapter entry. Right-click it and select 'Uninstall device', then restart Windows.

If that doesn't work, you need to check whether the problem is with the power supply or the PC. The only way to do this is to try a different power supply. You probably don't have a spare lying around, so you'll have to buy one. We found several for sale on eBay for around £35.



**Sometimes uninstalling a driver can solve a problem with a power supply or battery**

If the new power supply doesn't fix the problem, you should be able to sell it again, and it will confirm that the problem is with the PC. There could be a fault with the power connector inside the computer. If you know how to use a soldering iron, you can follow a YouTube video showing how to fix it at [bit.ly/dell468](http://bit.ly/dell468). However, we wouldn't attempt this unless you have lots of experience of taking computers apart.

## EMAIL

### Regain access to email

**Q** Windows Live Essentials appears to be hijacking my incoming Outlook emails so they don't reach my iPad, iPhone, Windows 10 PC and laptop. I can only open them on my Windows 8.1 laptop, which has Essentials installed. However, I can send Outlook emails on all my devices.

Can I correct the problem by uninstalling Windows Essentials from the 8.1 laptop? There is no option to remove

Live Mail. Would upgrading the 8.1 laptop to Windows 10 be a better option?

**Mick Smart, via email**

**A** Years ago, most of us used one email program on a single computer to fetch our mail from the mail server. This would download all the messages to the hard drive, then delete them from the mail server, which usually only offered limited space for storing mail.

That was fine back then, but today we expect to be able to read our email on a PC, phone, tablet and even a smartwatch. However, Live Mail on your Windows 8.1 PC is downloading and deleting the messages as if it were still 2005, rather than leaving them on the server for other devices to access.

Uninstalling Windows Essentials would solve the problem, but you'd lose access to your old emails, because they have been downloaded and are stored on your PC. There is a workaround that isn't perfect but offers some help. Open Live Mail and go to Options, then 'Email accounts'. Select the email account and click Properties.

Click Advanced, then select the option to 'Leave a copy of messages on server'. Below that is an option to remove them from the server after a certain number of days. Set this to at least a week, if not two or three, so your other devices have a chance to read the messages.

Turn to page 58 to see our Weekend Project on backing up your email.

## SOFTWARE

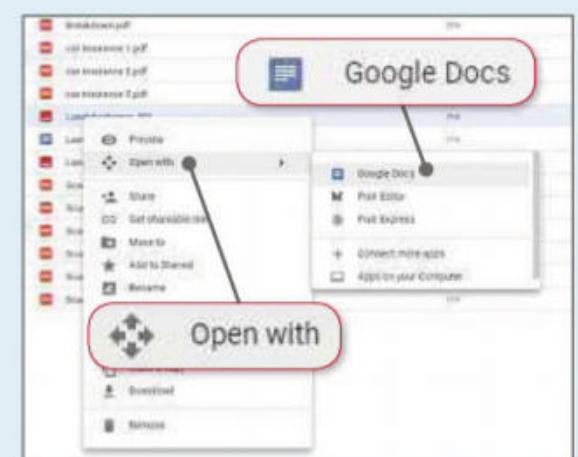
### Save handwritten pages as text files

**Q** I have a handwritten life story that I want to digitise so that I can upload it to my online family tree. It's far too long for me to type. I can make images of the pages using my scanner or phone, but I haven't found any optical character recognition (OCR) software that can convert the handwriting into a text document. What would you recommend?

**Richard Underwood, via email**

**A** Handwriting can be hard enough for people to read, let alone a computer, but given the alternatives it's worth a try.

Open a browser, go to Google Drive ([drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com)) and upload the



**Google Docs can convert some images and PDFs into editable text documents**

images of your pages. Right-click an image and select 'Open with', then Google Docs. This is a word processor but it can use its own OCR to extract the text and insert it into a new document. It will create a new document for each image, but you can copy the text and paste it into a combined document.



**This fortnight Roland has gone all-in with Microsoft To-do and installed it on all his devices**



# Your Top Tips

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



## TOP TIP

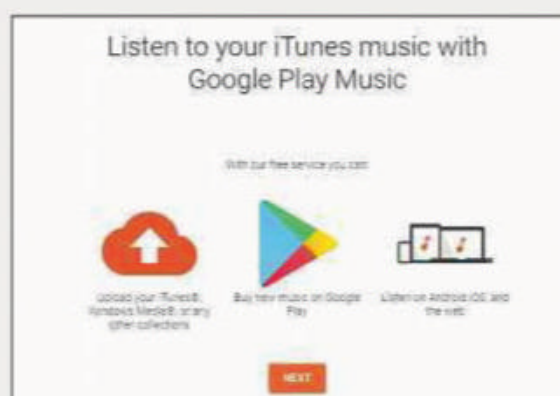
### SOFTWARE

## Create your own music streaming

While reading Issue 464's Weekend Project, 'Create your own personal Spotify streaming service' ([bit.ly/webuser464](http://bit.ly/webuser464)), I couldn't help but think that there's a far simpler – and completely free – solution that doesn't involve changing any router settings or mapping network drives.

Most music fans will already have their CD collection ripped to their PC in some format or another. If you install Google's Music Manager ([bit.ly/gmusic468](http://bit.ly/gmusic468)) and point it at your music folder, it will upload up to 50,000 tracks to its servers for free. These are then available for playback or download from Google Music on your PC, or through the smartphone app. Music is converted to 320kbps MP3, suitable for most people who stream over Bluetooth or listen on their smartphone. As a plus, Google only uploads songs not already available on its servers, cutting the upload time.

50,000 songs is equivalent to around 2,500 albums or more, which



*An easy way to create your own Spotify*

probably exceeds most people's entire music collection. If you don't fancy Google, you can do something similar if you subscribe to Spotify Premium by adding 'local files' from your PC to Spotify playlists (for any tracks Spotify doesn't have), although this is, in my experience, slightly more complicated.

I accept this system isn't suitable for streaming hi-res, FLAC or very large audiophile formats over Wi-Fi, but anyone looking for a quick and simple streaming solution is likely to be happy.

**Simon McEwen, via email**

make the most of my limited ports.

Download and run USB Device Tree Viewer ([bit.ly/usb468](http://bit.ly/usb468)). Plug in your USB device, then click the corresponding port on the USB Device Tree Viewer. Scroll down to Connection Information V2 – you're looking for Supported USB Protocols. If the value for USB300 is listed as '0 (no)', then it's only going to reach USB 2.0 speeds, so you might as well move it to a USB 2.0 port.

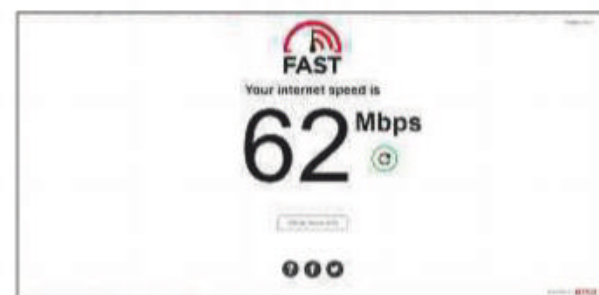
**Carl Shaw, via email**

### GENERAL PC

## Find your internet speed

Speedtest ([www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net)) is the obvious choice when you want to carry out a broadband speed test. It's been my go-to for a long time and also has handy mobile apps. However, I recently discovered [www.fast.com](http://www.fast.com) – a speed test powered by Netflix. It starts instantly and gives a good, reliable figure in Mbps (megabits per second). This site works on desktop and mobile browsers, and unlike Speedtest, you don't have to wait until a suitable server is found. If you ever need a quick test of your broadband speed, it's a great tool.

**Simon Mellor, via email**



*Fast.com is the quickest way to check your internet speeds*

### SECURITY

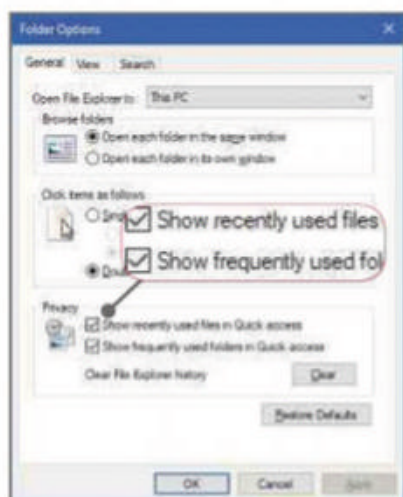
## Secure password entry

I've heard that some malware can monitor your keyboard and record everything you type. The aim is to catch you typing a password online, perhaps when banking or shopping. I have also heard that an on-screen keyboard can

### GENERAL PC

## Show or hide recent items

Open an Explorer window and you'll see 'Frequent folders' at the top and 'Recent files' below. If you rarely use the recent items list, it may be hidden. Click View, then Options and clear the ticks in the Privacy section to hide recently used items. Click Clear to erase your history.



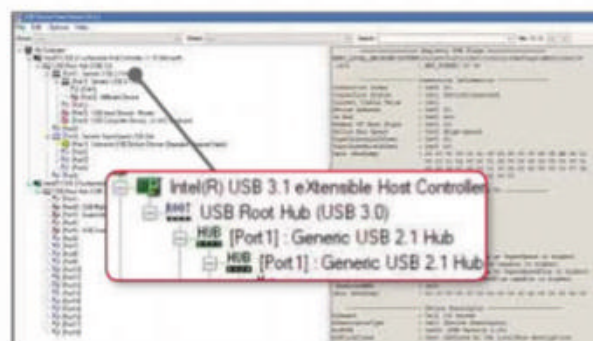
*Explorer's privacy options will show or hide recently used files*

**Ross Burns, via email**

### HARDWARE

## Don't waste USB 3

Are you worried that you're wasting a speedy USB 3 port on a USB 2 device that's crawling at a snail's pace and isn't making the most of the connection? I've just found a tool that lets me know exactly what type of USB device I'm inserting into my computer, so I can



*This program shows you which USB ports offer top speeds*





foil such keyloggers, so it's something that's worth using if you worry about privacy. Right-click an empty part of the taskbar and click 'Show touch keyboard button'. The next time you have to enter a password, click the keyboard button in the notification area to display the keyboard, then click the keys to enter your password.

Henry Cook, via email



Use the onscreen keyboard to type passwords more securely

## SOFTWARE

### Don't copy text formatting

I use the Word web app ([office.live.com](http://office.live.com)) for writing documents, but it's annoying that when you copy text from a website, it copies all the formatting, too. This rarely matches the formatting I want and turns the page into a bit of a mess.

I've found a couple of ways around this. Keep a small Notepad window open alongside Word. When you copy text off a web page, click Notepad and press Ctrl+V (paste), Ctrl+A (select all), then Ctrl+X (cut). Then click in the Word document and press Ctrl+V to paste in the text. Passing the text through Notepad in this way strips out all the formatting, such as fonts and sizes, and just pastes in the text.

Another option is to paste the text into Word, then select it and click the Clear Formatting button – it's in the toolbar and looks like an 'A' with an eraser.

Paul Butler, via email

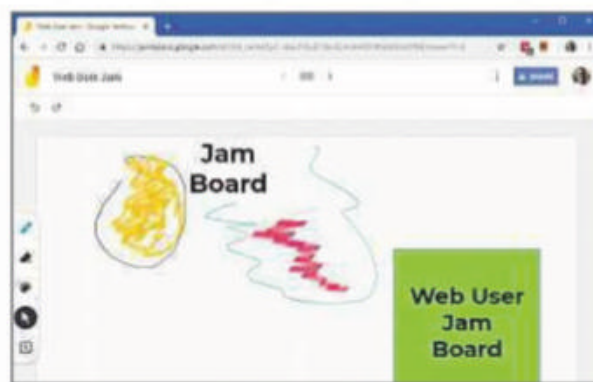
**Web User says:** Also, try Ctrl+Shift+V to paste text only, automatically stripping out all formatting.

## WEBSITE

### Create a doodle online

If you go to the Google homepage, then click the icon showing a grid of nine tiny squares in the top-right corner, then click the More link (if there is one) or keep scrolling down, you'll eventually come across something called Jamboard (you can also go straight to [jamboard.google.com](http://jamboard.google.com)). It's either new to this menu or I've never noticed it before.

It appears to be a very simple online sketchpad. Most of the window is blank – a canvas on which you can draw. On the left are some tools. Click the tiny arrow in the bottom-left corner of the first three



This Jamboard online app lets you create sketches in your browser

tools to show more tools and colours. Then, just click and draw. The text tool lets you add stickers with notes, and the pointer tool lets you click items and move them around.

When you've finished, you can share your creation using the Share button or click the three-dot menu for the options to download it as a PDF or image. It's probably a Google's experiment and I'm not sure how useful it is, but it's good fun for half an hour or so!

Grace Ashton, via email

## ANDROID

### Speed up your Android device

One of the most effective ways to return an increasingly sluggish Android phone or tablet to full performance is to clear the cache. In Android 7, go to Settings, Storage and wait until 'calculating' finishes before selecting 'clear cache data', then tap OK. In Android 8, you can't easily clear the whole cache in one go but visiting Settings then 'Apps & notifications' lets you individually choose the apps you use most. Then, select Storage and clear the cache.

Trevor Wright, via email

## GENERAL PC

### Fix your USB port problems

Regarding your recent 'Ask the Expert' letter from Aura Todd (Issue 465, [bit.ly/webuser465](http://bit.ly/webuser465)): the problem could be caused by another USB device, such as a USB 3 hard drive or memory stick connected to the same USB interface. I blogged about my own experience solving the issue at [bit.ly/usbport468](http://bit.ly/usbport468). I used a short USB cable to bring the wireless dongle to the front, so it was near the keyboard.

Steve, via email

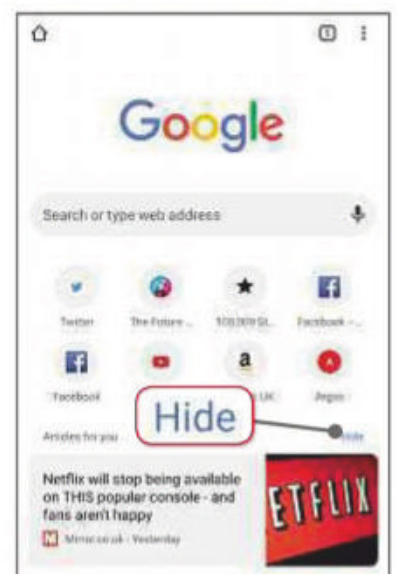
## CHROME

### Remove 'suggested articles' from Chrome on Android

It irritates me when I open Chrome on my Android phone and find so-called 'suggested articles'. I'm fairly security conscious, so I don't know why Google thinks it knows me well enough to think it can tell me what to read online.

There's an easy way to remove them, though. Open the browser on your phone and look for the little up arrow (or Hide link, on newer versions) just above the articles on the right. Tap it to banish all the fake news.

Samuel Milner, via email



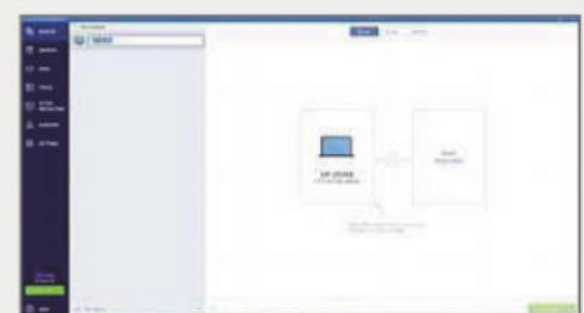
Stop Chrome from suggesting what new articles to read

## BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

## GENERAL PC

### Schedule your Windows backups

I have accidentally messed up my PC's operating system on several occasions – by trying to clean the Registry, deleting Windows files I thought were junk and uninstalling software. In every instance, I managed to recover completely using Acronis True Image backup software ([www.acronis.com](http://www.acronis.com)) to roll back to the last copy of my boot drive. After a really difficult experience I had trying to reinstall Windows prior to using the software, I promised myself to routinely make backups of my boot drive every week.



How close have you come to losing everything on your PC?

This strategy has paid off very well and I'm fortunate to have finally discovered the importance of backing up.

PK, via email

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster? If so, please send your story to [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk)





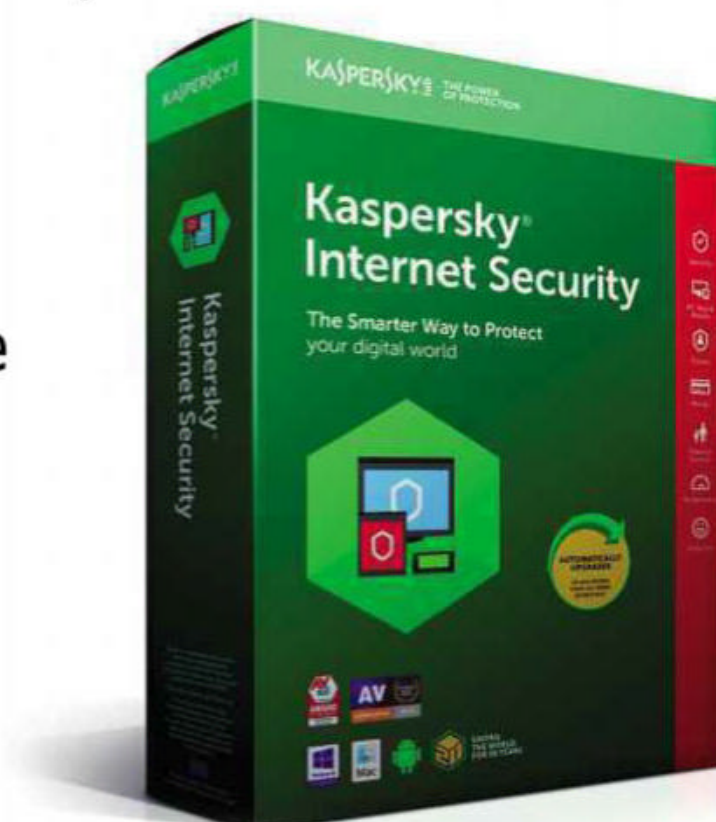
### OFFER OF THE FORTNIGHT

## Kaspersky Internet Security 2019 - on sale now

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

## BROWSERS

### Disable Firefox's 'new tab' notices

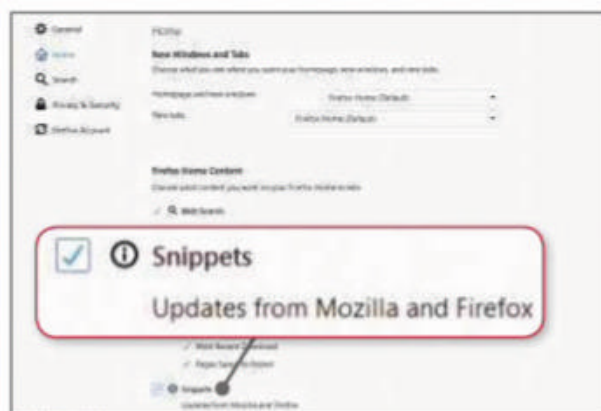
**Q** I love Firefox and can't imagine ever using another browser – not even a Chromium-powered Microsoft Edge! There's one thing that's bugging me, though, and that's the notices at the bottom of the screen every time I open a new tab. Do you or any of your readers know how to stop this, so I can save myself a click?

**Jasper K Gorman, via email**

**A** It may not sound like much, but all those additional, unnecessary clicks soon add up to serious time wasted – so, here's how to stop Mozilla's notices and ads, which appear on every new tab you open. Click the top-right menu button and choose Options. On the following page, in the menu of options on the left, click Home. At the bottom of the Home options, you'll see something called Snippets. Untick this box and you'll disable Mozilla and Firefox's notices.

The changes are instantly applied, but try it yourself: open a new tab and your browser should be notice-free.

**Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User**



*Stop Firefox bombarding you with notices and ads*

## GENERAL PC

### Change your wallpaper to signal low laptop battery

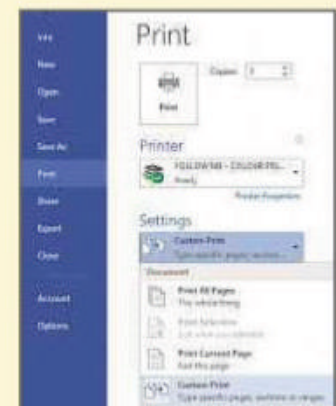
**Q** This is such a niche request that I'm not sure whether the *Web User* team will be able to help me – but here goes. Is there any way of running a program

## READERS RESPOND

### Print different page ranges in Microsoft Word

**A** Regarding Janet Lumberman's question about printing different page ranges at once: when you select Print and the control window opens, untick All and tick Pages. In other versions, use the drop-down menu to switch from Print All Pages to Custom Print. You then have three options: enter the page number of a single page to print that page alone; enter page numbers at either end of a

sequence, separated by a dash – so typing 3–5 will print pages 3, 4, and 5; or type multiple individual pages, separated by a comma.



*Print only the pages you need*

**John AC Beattie, via email**

## CAN YOU HELP?

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

You can seek help or suggest solutions to other readers' problems by emailing [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk) or via [www.facebook.com/webusermagazine](https://www.facebook.com/webusermagazine) or [twitter.com/webusermagazine](https://twitter.com/webusermagazine).

## BROWSERS

**Q** We're well into the new year and I'm no closer to keeping my resolution of avoiding distractions such as Facebook, YouTube and Reddit when I should be working. Is there any software to help me focus a little more when I'm using my computer?

**Vilayte Hussein, via email**

## GENERAL PC

**Q** I've been told there's a way to run a secret built-in Administrator account, which doesn't use those annoying User Account Control prompts. For the life of me, I can't figure out how to activate this. Can anyone help?

**Adam 'Admin' Wright, via email**

that will alert me when my laptop battery is on the wane? I know I can make the screen dim, but I'd like something a bit more visual because my eyes aren't what they used to be.

**Robert Tozer, via email**

**A** Challenge accepted, Robert. We've got a more elegant and distraction-free solution to having a big old pop-up slap you in the face to say your battery's running low. Download and run Chameleon (from GitHub at [bit.ly/cham468](https://bit.ly/cham468)). By default, the option to change your wallpaper is set to None. More usefully, you can opt to change it depending on the level of the Battery. Tick this box, then select the images you wish to use for each percentage range.

Once you're all set, click Run. Now, when your battery's low, just check which wallpaper your laptop displays.

You can also use the program to force a wallpaper change based on time, temperature and even wind speed – if that's your thing. Hope that helps!

**Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User**



*Chameleon can change your computer's wallpaper based on battery life*



## Star Email

### Cloud-PC streaming is lined with problems

In response to Barry's column in Issue 466 ([bit.ly/webuser466](http://bit.ly/webuser466)) about the cloud PC-streaming service Shadow ([shadow.tech](http://shadow.tech)): ignoring the fact that over half the UK's internet infrastructure is as much use as two tin cans held together by a piece of string, PC streaming from Shadow may have other problems.

Last year, Blizzard Entertainment ([blizzard.com](http://blizzard.com)) introduced a change to its EULA (end-user licence agreement) that prohibits gamers from playing Blizzard games on cloud-gaming PCs. Blizzard uses IP and client information to determine unauthorised access, and because using a cloud service changes your IP and hardware information, Blizzard can no longer tell the difference between you legitimately



logging into your account and someone else doing so.

To prevent cheating and account selling, it's likely that other big gaming companies will follow suit or may even create their own virtual-PC streaming platforms, a lot like GeForce Now ([www.geforce.com](http://www.geforce.com)) is currently doing. The problem is that whichever PC-

streaming platform you choose will limit your gaming choice – a restriction you won't have to worry about on a standard PC.

Another issue is that it seems the data between the Shadow client (running on my PC) and the Shadow data centre is unencrypted. So if I type a password on my PC, the keystrokes are sent 'in the clear' across the internet, which means transactions may not be secure. Also, while services such as Netflix can cheat by lowering the quality of streamed video, that won't work with gaming, where the biggest cloud-gaming killer is latency.

Just as tablets haven't killed off laptops, cloud-PC streaming won't kill the desktop PC any time soon.

**Vincent Loates, via email**

**Back Issues disc winner**

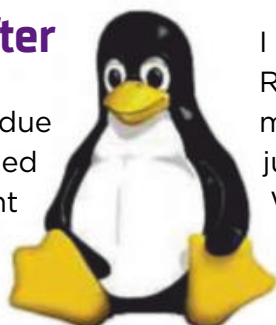


### The tools I miss after moving to Linux

Support for Windows 7 is due to end soon, so I've switched to Linux. I've run Linux Mint and am trying Ubuntu at the moment, and have come to the conclusion that I'll only miss two things: Foobar the music player and Rainmeter the versatile desktop display.

I have retired and do not need Microsoft Office as a work tool, so OpenOffice works well enough for the occasional document, and most other applications have an equivalent app for Linux. However, I was surprised by the lack of a folder-based, customisable music player like Foobar. Amarok and Clementine are the best I've found so far, but they don't allow skins or full control over their appearance.

Rainmeter will be missed because it let me, a non-programmer, create a great panel set that incorporated system info and weather data. There are several weather apps for Linux, but it's clear that the programmers either live in warm climates or never venture outdoors because *none* of them gives a main display incorporating wind speed and wind chill. So far, the closest forecast



I can get is for England, whereas my Rainmeter display gave a forecast for my town. Is anyone else thinking of jumping ship at the end of Windows 7? What would you miss?

**PhilW, via email**

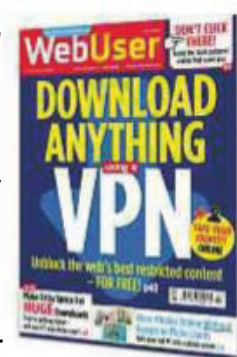
### We already have enough to watch

Regarding your cover feature in Issue 466, 'Download anything using a VPN'. If you need a VPN to watch content from















other countries, then I am sorry but you really need to get out more.

In the UK, we already have Netflix, Amazon, Now TV, BBC iPlayer, ITV Hub, All 4, My 5, UK TV Play and a few others, not to mention all the Freeview and Freesat channels. Do we really need more TV, folks? As one famous man once said: "You cannot be serious".

**Stan Elliott, Belfast**



## Quiz Answers: Issue 467

- |   |                    |                                                                                       |                                                                                       |                                                                                       |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | White Teeth        |  |  |  |
| 2 | Animal Farm        |  |  |  |
| 3 | Middlemarch        |  |  |                                                                                       |
| 4 | The Waves          |  |  |                                                                                       |
| 5 | Heart of Darkness  |  |  |  |
| 6 | A Clockwork Orange |  |  |  |

### WINNER!

Well done to **Philip Coulson** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



TECH YEAR

**2006**





## Get online quickly with Google Sites

In Issue 463 ([bit.ly/webuser463](http://bit.ly/webuser463)), you had an interesting article about free online website-building tools, but you didn't mention one of the easiest – Google Sites ([sites.google.com](http://sites.google.com)). This is 100% free with no strings, and is very simple to use. It's basic, but it is a good starting point to get a website online quickly!

I've created my own website using Google Sites, which you can visit at [sites.google.com/view/lainchburys](http://sites.google.com/view/lainchburys).

*John Hewett, Facebook*



## Correction to Ring news story

In Issue 467, our lead news story reported that the makers of the Ring smart doorbell had been accused of breaching users' privacy by leaking streams of footage collected from the devices. Ring has contacted us to say that Ring does not provide and never has provided employees with access to live streams of Ring devices.

The Ring spokesperson said: "We take the privacy and security of our customers' personal information extremely seriously. In order to improve our service, we view and annotate certain Ring video recordings. These recordings are sourced exclusively from publicly shared Ring videos from the Neighbors app (in accordance with our terms of service), and from a small fraction of Ring users who have provided their explicit written consent to allow us to access and utilise their videos for such purposes. Ring employees do not have access to livestreams from Ring products."

"We have strict policies in place for all our team members and anyone in violation of our policies faces discipline, including termination and potential legal and criminal penalties. In addition, we have zero tolerance for abuse of our systems and if we find bad actors who have engaged in this behavior, we will take swift action against them."

## What you say...

### APPLE HAS CUT iPHONE PRODUCTION BY 10%. ARE YOU BUYING FEWER APPLE PRODUCTS?

Yes, there aren't enough changes to justify buying new products as often as I once did.

*Mark Salvin*

I am an Apple geek. My phone is Apple. My tablet is Apple. My watch is Apple. I may have a problem!

*Joanne Evans*

I have iPhone X, iPad Pro and Apple Watch. Love the interface, reliability, ease of use. Won't buy anything else.

*Chris Parkin*

Nope, actually buying more: iPhone XS, Apple Watch, iPad Pro. Why change from what you love?

*Jo Knibbs*

I buy loads, me. Usually Braeburns.

*Lee Dodgson*

### GCHQ IS RUNNING ALL-FEMALE CLASSES FOR CYBER SKILLS ([bit.ly/gchq468](http://bit.ly/gchq468)). IS THIS A GOOD IDEA?

No. People should be employed for their ability rather than their sex, race or religion. Tokenism helps no one.

*Billy Green*

Maybe women don't actually want to do the job. Will we see a big drive to just employ males in what are now prominent female roles? I think not.

*John Young*

I don't care if *Web User* only employed 89-year-old men from Brazil. If they are the best people for the job then so be it. I don't agree with quota levels of particular races,

sexes or minorities for any job.

*Gavin Green*

### VLC MEDIA PLAYER HAS NOW BEEN DOWNLOADED 3 BILLION TIMES. WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT IT?

It's the only player I know that plays Shoutcast/MP3 streams on my iPhone. On my PC, I still use WinAmp.

*Sean Cooper*

Plays anything you throw at it, plus it can convert and record, and works on all platforms.

*Si Mellor*

It just works, not full of bloat, it's free with regular updates, and is open source and cross platform. What's not to like?

*Harvey Skipsey*

It also does lots of extra hidden things such as converting file formats and extracting MP3s from videos.

*John Hewett*

### NEW RESEARCH ([bit.ly/fake468](http://bit.ly/fake468)) SAYS OLD PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO SHARE FAKE NEWS THAN YOUNG. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We over-65s are the last section of community that the chattering classes are comfortable blaming for all social ills. Imagine the above being aimed at women or the gay community?

*Richard Morgan*

The pensioners I know take everything they read online at face value. But they use social media a lot less than teenagers so they share by talking rather than tweeting.

*Caroline Chapman @cornfedmind*

Old people like myself are interested in anything newsworthy but youngsters aren't interested. Proof of this can be borne out by watching any quiz programme on TV. Youngsters don't know anything.

*Geoffrey Boow*



# ! Page 404

Barry Collins gets to play with a futuristic bendable smartphone at CES in Las Vegas



## Bendy screens are about to take flight

About 20 years ago, I hit the nadir of my career in tech journalism. Egged on by my editor at the *Sunday Times*, I wrote a column lobbing bricks at these so-called smartphones that had just arrived on the market.

There's nothing smart about these hulking great lumps of glass and plastic, I wrote. They're terrible phones, terrible cameras, terrible at everything. They are – I confidently predicted – as dead as a dodo. We even illustrated it with a drawing of a dodo carrying a smartphone, lest anyone not grasp the subtle point I was making.

Twentysomething me, of course, made a rookie error. I wrote off an entire genre of technology based on the first devices available on the market. What I didn't appreciate at the time is that the first few samples of any new type of product are, almost without exception, woeful. The first laptop came in a suitcase, the first digital cameras took photos that were so low-res you

couldn't print them at stamp size and the first tablet weighed a ton and ran out of battery in 25 minutes. But most things get better, given time.

It's in this acquired spirit of patience that I urge you to keep an eye on Royole's bendable screens. They turned up at CES in Las Vegas last month in the form of a folding (you guessed it) smartphone.

Royole was pretty protective of its FlexPai phone, only letting you play with it with one of the company's PR handlers looming over your shoulder.

And you can see why they might be concerned – the device is clunky, the Android software reacts erratically when shifting from phone to folded-flat tablet mode and there were worrying signs of wear and tear on those presumably days-old devices.

But consider the bigger picture.

“The first few samples of any new type of product are, almost without exception, woeful”

The screens are stupidly thin, about as thick as those screen protectors you get for current phones. If you blow on them, they wobble. That means they are an order of magnitude lighter than current glass screens.

That's why Airbus is one of the companies working in partnership with Royole, looking to see if it can introduce these screens across its aircraft. Imagine

being able to replace all those heavy 9in screens Airbus fits in the back of aircraft seats with a featherweight 20in display that the

passenger can roll out when they want to watch a movie and stow away again when it's time to get some shut-eye. Not only is the passenger experience massively improved, but it means Airbus slashes the weight of its aircraft. And every ounce you shift from the weight of a plane reduces the airline's biggest expense: fuel.

It's not only aircraft that might benefit from bendy screens. The CES showfloor was virtually a self-driving car parking lot, with every major manufacturer showing off their concept cars, all of which had massive dashboard displays and various other screens to keep passengers entertained. Because, let's face it, if you're not required to drive the damned things anymore, you're going to need something to keep you amused on the way to work.

The bendy smartphone is a red herring – a £1,000 concept device that you'd be mad to use as your day-to-day smartphone. But don't make my mistake and write off the entire genre, because bendy screens are going to be very big indeed.

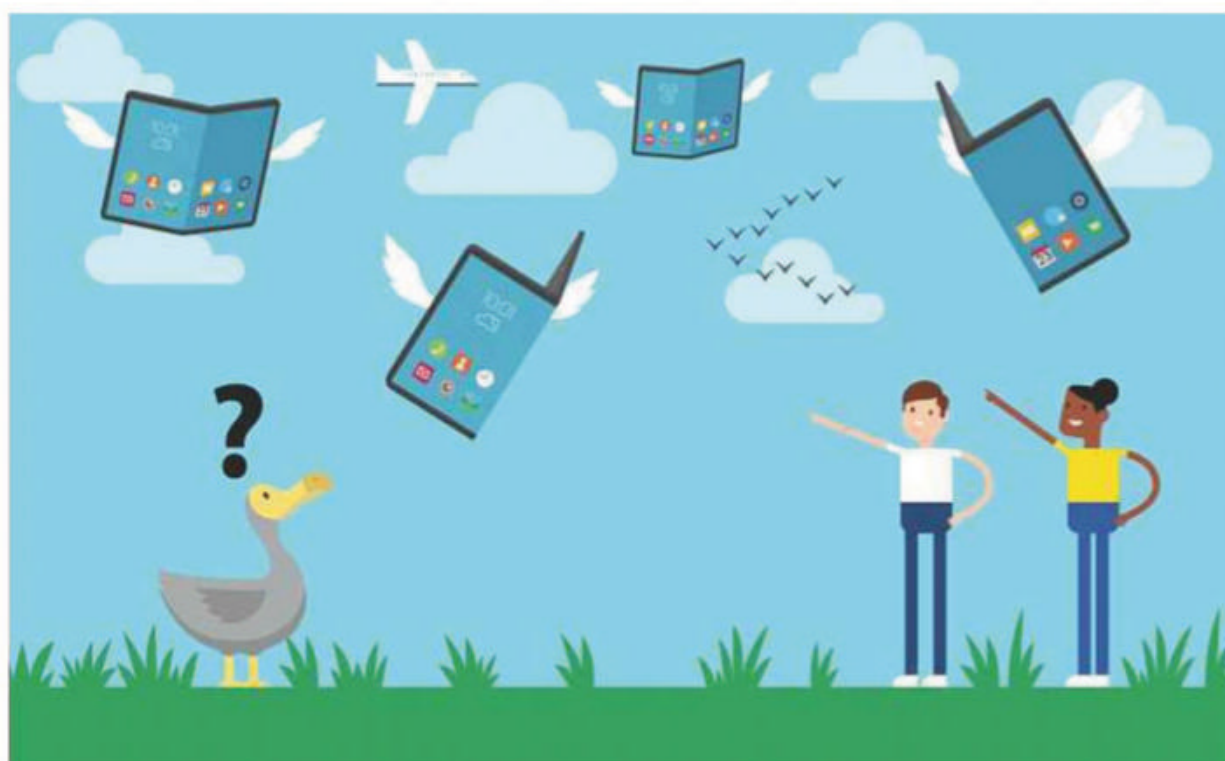


Illustration: Andrew Torrens



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**T**hank you for reading this issue of *Web User* – we hope you found the tips and advice useful. The good news is that you don't have to wait too long for the next issue. If you subscribe to *Web User* by **Monday 11 February (8pm)\***, you'll receive it through your letterbox before it's available in the shops!

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