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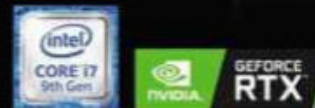


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# Do You Still Need **ANTI-VIRUS?**

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## The great anti-antivirus debate

**W**eb User has never shied away from controversy. Over the years, we've covered such thorny issues as 'Why you don't need Windows 8', 'Don't renew your TV licence' and 'Stop using Google', and I hope we've had some fun along the way. In this issue's cover feature, we tackle another contentious topic: do you still need antivirus software to protect your PC and phone?

Your response may be: "of course you do, you blithering idiots, or you'll get infected with all sorts of malware". But hear us out (and steady on, there). While online security

threats are undoubtedly getting worse, built-in protection against them has become much better, across our browsers, operating systems and app stores. But is this enough to replace traditional paid-for antivirus? We look at both sides of the argument, recommend alternative free tools and ask security experts what they think.

Please stay safe online, though, and don't have malware nightmares!

**Robert Irvine, Editor**  
[editor@webuser.co.uk](mailto:editor@webuser.co.uk)  
[#webuser](https://twitter.com/webuser)



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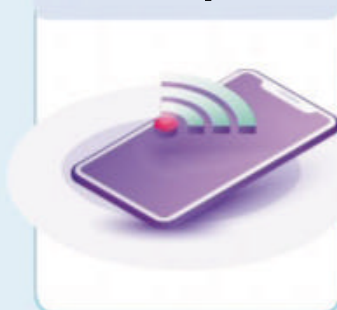
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Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

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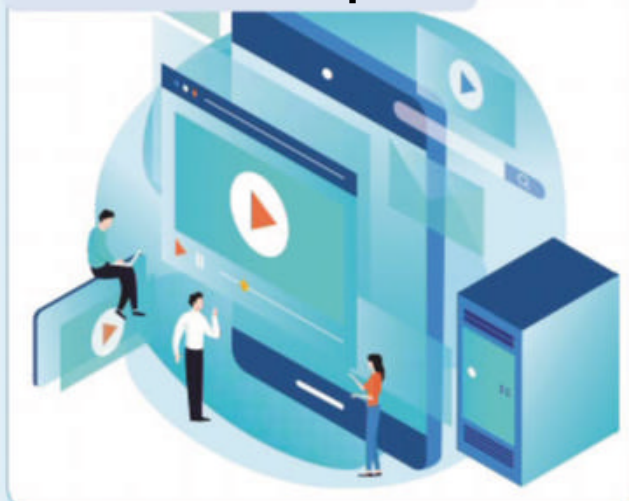
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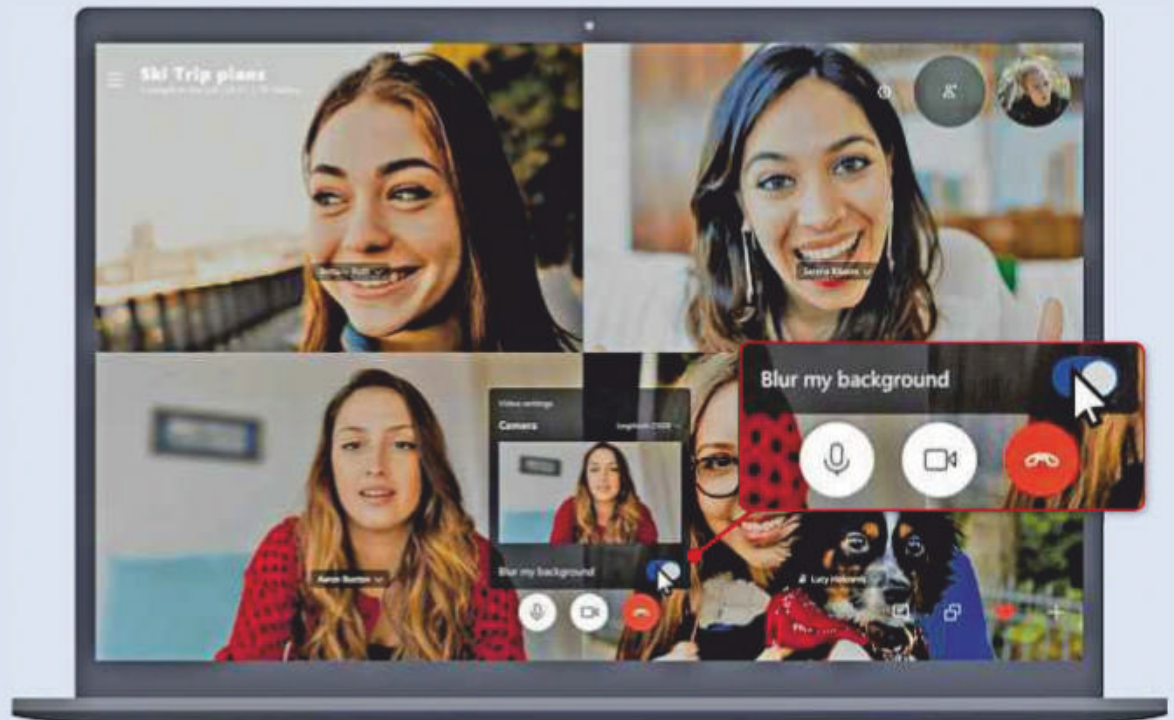
# What's New Online

## Blur your background in a Skype call

**E**ver looked over your shoulder while making a video call, worried that there might be something (or someone) embarrassing behind you? If so, you'll love Skype's new background-blur feature, which ensures the focus is entirely on the caller rather than anything else in the room.

Available in version 8 of Skype for Windows, Mac OS and Linux, and version 14 for Windows 10, it's activated by hovering your mouse over the Video icon at the bottom of the screen, then toggling the button **Blur My Background**. At that point, anything behind you is obscured, with artificial intelligence tracking your body so you don't disappear in the haze.

Another new feature in the VoIP service is real-time subtitling for audio and video calls for people who are deaf or hard of hearing (click + during a call and choose "turn



subtitles on"). Microsoft is also planning to bring Skype v8 to the web, complete with HD video calling and call recording.

Some fuzziness of your edges aside, background blurring works well for the

most part. It's not yet available for phones, and Skype says it can't promise to always keep the background indistinct, but it certainly helps you save face.

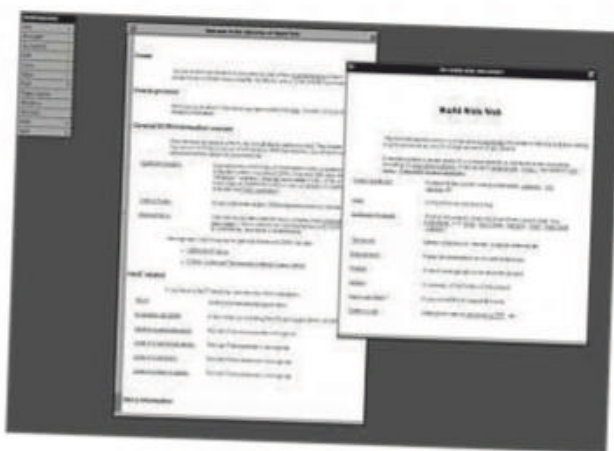
[www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)

## Try the world's first browser

[bit.ly/browser470](http://bit.ly/browser470)

It's 30 years this month since Tim Berners-Lee proposed the global hypertext system that led to the creation of the world wide web and, to celebrate, CERN has commissioned a recreation of the first ever browser. Called WorldWideWeb and later renamed Nexus, it was the go-to option for early web pioneers until 1994, created using Objective-C during the second half of 1990.

Brought back to life in JavaScript, it's completely different to modern browsers, not least because of its distinct lack of colour. Primary navigation is via a left-hand menu, which lets you launch text-only web pages, and clicking links opens them in new windows. Interestingly, there were only 26 HTML tags back then, among them the now unfamiliar HP1, HP2 and HP3, which were used to highlight phrases in the text. Going backward, forward and home requires a clumsy two clicks.



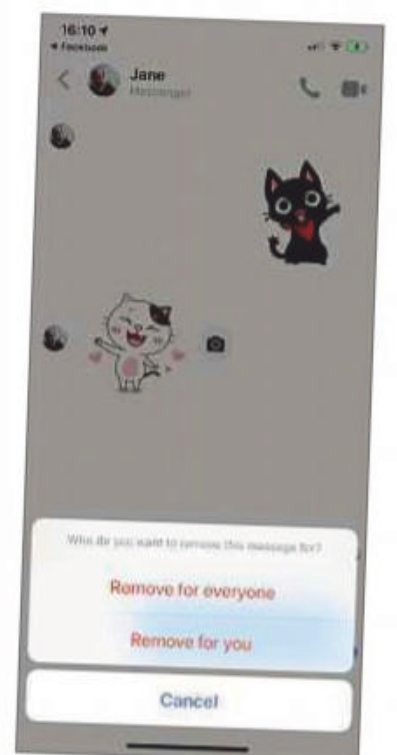
## Unsend messages in Facebook Messenger

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

Many of us have suffered that heart-stopping moment when you accidentally send a message to the wrong person, so Facebook Messenger is now giving you 10 minutes to "unsend" it, potentially avoiding a tricky situation.

To do this in Android and iOS, simply tap the message, choose **Remove** and select 'Remove for everyone'. If you're using the website, click the three-dots menu, select **Remove** and choose 'Remove for everyone'.

The unsent message will be replaced by a note indicating that you've removed it, although this of course may still arouse suspicion. It certainly can't be used to get away with abuse, since Facebook will retain unsent messages for a while in case there's a complaint. There's also a chance a recipient may still see the message if their notifications are active.



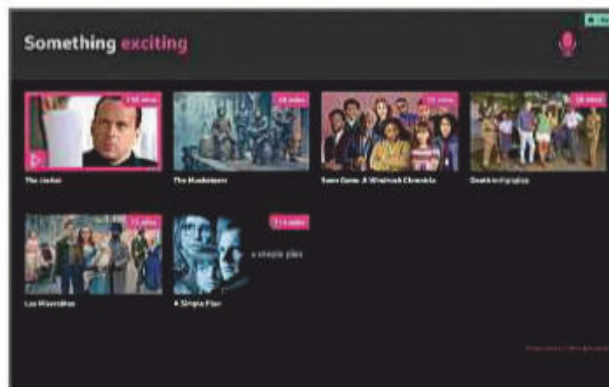


We pick the 10 best things you must do on the web this fortnight

## Find BBC shows to match your mood

[bit.ly/telly470](https://bit.ly/telly470)

Rather than browse BBC iPlayer to find something good to watch, the Beeb's experimental new tool Tellybox lets you use your voice to find a show to match your mood. Ask for something funny, educational, dramatic, beautiful, exciting or romantic, and it will list suitable programmes for you to stream on the catch-up service.



## NEW VOICE COMMANDS



### Hone your trivia knowledge

HQ Trivia now lets you practise between live games using Google Assistant. Say, "OK Google, get me ready for HQ" and you'll be asked 12 questions by HQ University.



### Clean your teeth properly

Activate the Tooth Brushing Timer in iOS Shortcuts to ensure you're cleaning your gnashers for the right amount of time. Ask Siri to trigger a countdown, then apply toothpaste.



### Sing nursery rhymes

Say, "Alexa, start Kids Karaoke" for a list of 10 nursery rhymes to sing along to. Each upbeat tune comes in two versions: one with vocals, one instrumental.

## Embark on a journey to Pluto

[bit.ly/pluto470](https://bit.ly/pluto470)

Equating one pixel to 3,474.8 kilometres (the precise diameter of the moon), this



impressive scaled model of the Solar System lets you explore and better appreciate our portion of the universe. By either scrolling

manually or clicking an icon to see how fast light travels, you'll gain a greater understanding of the vastness of space. It'll be a while before you reach Mercury and you'll be astonished at how small it is in comparison to the Sun. Use the controls at the top of the screen to speed things up and you'll eventually reach Pluto, absorbing many facts introduced along the way.

## View photos of fake people

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

Launch this website to see a photo of a randomly generated human face. Refresh the browser and you'll see another, and so on until you become bored. What you're actually seeing are fake faces, each one created by a new AI algorithm devised by Nvidia called StyleGAN. This combines details from real images, including a person's pose, hair and head shape, and their facial features. By using a 512-dimensional vector, the various

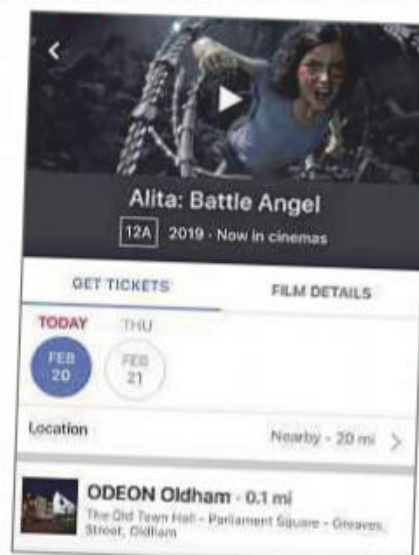


visages spring into life. You can read more about this creepy technology and see an explanatory video at [bit.ly/face470](https://bit.ly/face470).

## Buy cinema tickets on Facebook

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

You can now use Facebook to choose a movie, select a time and buy your tickets from local cinemas. Start by searching for "films" in your news feed in the Facebook app, then select the Films option at the top of the screen. Once you've picked your movie, you can then complete the transaction by buying the tickets on the cinema's own website.



## Take a Black History tour

[bit.ly/history470](https://bit.ly/history470)

To celebrate the myriad achievements of black people who challenged the status quo, Google Earth's The Journey of Us explores a series of milestones across themes such as education, dance, business and film.

## Explore a map of Middle Earth

[bit.ly/middle470](https://bit.ly/middle470)

Amazon Prime TV is set to bring *Lord of the Rings* to the small screen. As a teaser, you can pan around and zoom in and out of an interactive map of Middle Earth.

## Visually discover cheap flights

[greatestescape.co](https://greatestescape.co)

Enter a start and end destination in the Great Escape map to get the cheapest return fares from nearby airports. You can filter results by price, visa requirement, direct flights, popularity and weather.





# Need to Know

## ‘Digital gangster’ Facebook faces government regulation

### What happened?

After an 18-month investigation, a parliamentary committee has finally released its full report on Facebook and is calling for regulation of the social network. The report was meant to focus on fake news and disinformation, but ultimately covered a wider range of concerns, ranging from privacy invasion to political disruption.

The ‘Disinformation and fake news’ document – available to read online at [bit.ly/facebook470](http://bit.ly/facebook470) – lists Facebook’s major missteps, from the Cambridge Analytica scandal to accusations that the social network was “willing to override” users’ privacy settings to hand data to third parties. Political advertising and marketing was of particular concern in the wake of the EU Referendum campaign, as was the spread of foreign propaganda and influence on British political affairs.

With that in mind, the committee’s report considers tighter regulation – such as fines for failing to remove harmful content, as is done in Germany. Also, tech companies are often seen only as platforms, rather than publishers, which have more responsibilities, so the report suggests a third category with increased liabilities.

The paper also calls for more transparency regarding algorithms, to better understand how such systems impact us. It wants the Information Commissioner’s Office to carry out a detailed investigation into Facebook’s use of personal data. “Companies like



Facebook should not be allowed to behave like ‘digital gangsters’ in the online world, considering themselves beyond the law,” the report said.

Facebook told journalists that it was glad to help the committee with its investigation – four executives gave evidence and answered more than 700 questions – but despite requests, Zuckerberg never attended the hearings, a move which the paper said showed “contempt” for Parliament. It’s notable that since the report was released, he’s managed to make time to meet British newspapers and other politicians. Whether those private meetings are enough to convince MPs that more regulation isn’t needed remains to be seen, but the tone of the report suggests Zuckerberg has his work cut out fixing Facebook’s reputation in the UK.

### How will it affect you?

For years, the government has been willing to settle with social-media firms promising to do better on internet safety or pledging to follow codes of conduct on taking down potentially problematic posts. Off the back of this latest report, the government is expected to pull together a White Paper tackling the harm caused by social media, with some reports suggesting an internet regulator akin to TV watchdog Ofcom could be on the cards. In any case, the paper is likely to call for increased responsibility by social media to verify ages and take

down content such as hate speech, terrorist materials and child-abuse images within a certain time frame.

The Internet Watch Foundation ([www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)), a charity that battles online sexual abuse, warned that “badly planned legislation” could damage its own work while failing to address legal but harmful content such as bullying.

Despite the damning nature of this report, it’s not clear what changes will result from the committee’s investigation, as previous efforts to rein in Facebook and other Silicon Valley giants have clearly fallen short.

### What do we think?

Facebook has had plenty of chances to sort out these failings, and the charges are very serious indeed. It’s clear from the lack of progress to date that the industry’s own codes of conduct don’t go far enough, and tight regulations, such as those in force in Germany, haven’t put social media companies out of business. We think the changes will be small and varied with no single solution able to tackle such diverse and widespread problems.

A new regulator may or may not be the answer, but either way, perhaps it’s time for a more heavy-handed approach to Facebook and other social media companies – and if Zuckerberg doesn’t like it, perhaps it’ll be enough to encourage him to finally accept an invite from Parliament to talk about it.



House of Commons  
Digital, Culture, Media and  
Sport Committee

Disinformation and  
‘fake news’: Final Report

Eighth Report of Session 2017–19

*The report from the DCMS is available to read online*



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

## Microsoft launches free Windows 10 Office app

### What happened?

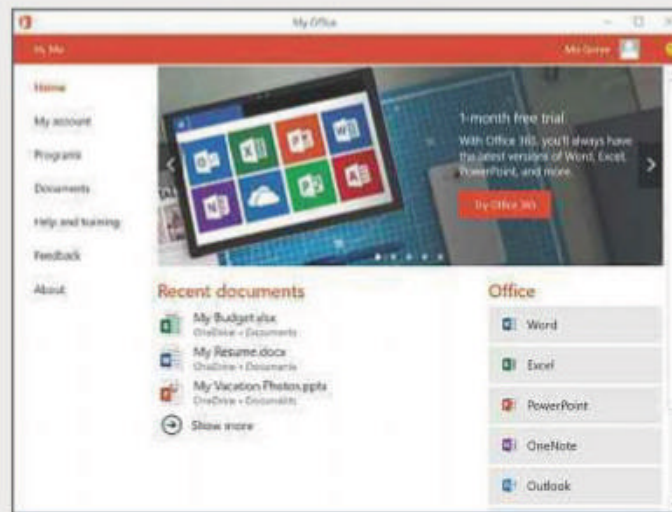
Windows 10 users now have a new – and free – way to open and edit Office documents and use tools such as Word, OneDrive, Outlook, Excel and PowerPoint. Microsoft has unveiled a new Office app for Windows 10, which will open installed Office desktop apps or point users to the free online edition of Office, as well as providing tutorials and tips.

The new Office app replaces the existing My Office, and doesn't require a subscription to Office 365 or purchase of Office 2019. It will serve as a central dashboard for accessing Word documents, spreadsheets

and so on, regardless of whether you pay for Office or not, showing your recent documents and letting you create new ones, whether you pay for the full version of Office or use the free alternative.

### How will it affect you?

The new Office app is due to roll out in the coming weeks. If you have the My Office app, it will automatically update to the new version. Alternatively, it can be



downloaded directly from the Microsoft Store.

The app is only for Windows 10 users, not those on an older version of the operating system. Those on Windows 7 or 8 can still access the free online version of the Office suite at [bit.ly/freeoffice470](http://bit.ly/freeoffice470).

### What do we think?

Office can be a confusing product. If you're sent a Word document or Excel spreadsheet, you can't necessarily open it if you're not a subscriber to Office 365 or haven't paid for the Office 2019 suite. You can already upload files to the free online version of Office, but many users won't be aware of the service or know how to find or use it.

This simple new app should make such tools easier to find and make tasks easier to achieve. That makes it a smart move from Microsoft, which is hoping to rival free, online-only services such as Google Docs.

## Next-generation phones fold out into tablets

### What happened?

Two foldable phones have been unveiled: the Samsung Galaxy Fold and the Huawei Mate X. Launched at Mobile World Congress, a massive smartphone event in Barcelona, the two handsets mark a new direction for smartphones – and a new high price.

The Samsung Galaxy Fold is a 4.6in smartphone that unfolds into a 7.3in tablet. It has dual displays that use software to pull your open apps from the smaller smartphone display to the larger tablet side when opened.

The Huawei Mate has a slightly different design: instead of dual screens, it has a single display that

folds down to 6.8in when used as a phone, opening up fully to 8in when used as a tablet.

### How will it affect you?

The Samsung Galaxy Fold will be available in Europe at the beginning of May, and will cost \$1,980. UK prices weren't revealed, but they're expected to be as high as £1,800.

The Mate X is expected this summer at a starting price of €2,299 (\$2,607); again, UK prices weren't immediately available.

If you're tempted, it may be worth buying on contract to avoid the upfront payment, or simply waiting for future generations of the phones next year to see if the price falls.



### What do we think?

The technology is as impressive as the price is painful. While a foldable device is intriguing, it's currently cheaper to buy a smartphone and a tablet separately. Indeed, with smartphone display sizes continuing to increase, plenty of us already use them to watch videos and play

games, rendering tablets increasingly obsolete. That said, the nifty-fingered will appreciate a foldable device – once the price falls to a more affordable level. Either way, it's about time something interesting happened in smartphone design, after years of launches of ever thinner glass rectangles.



# Security flaws found in password managers

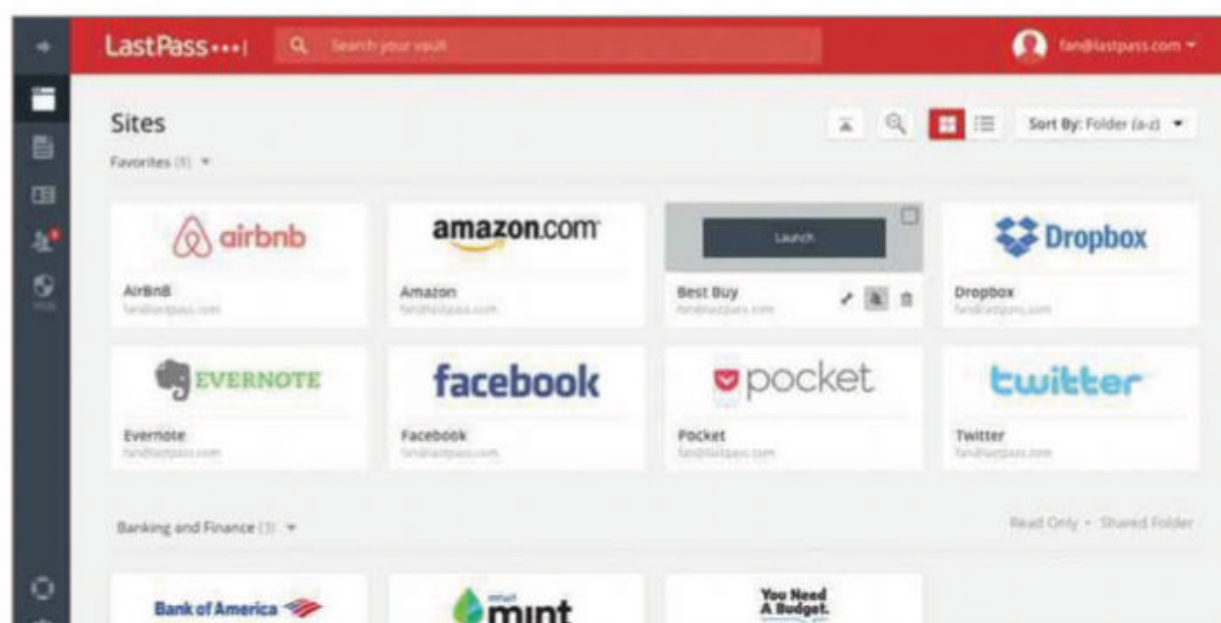
## What happened?

Password managers have long made it easy to log into our favourite sites and apps, making the process more secure. Or so we thought. But a team of researchers at the Independent Security Evaluators (ISE) has revealed that four of the most popular password managers have fundamental security flaws ([bit.ly/password470](https://bit.ly/password470)).

ISE chief executive Stephen Bono stated that “although password managers provide some utility for storing logins and passwords, and limit password reuse, these applications are a vulnerable target for the mass collection of data through malicious hacking campaigns”.

After studying the inner workings of 1Password, Dashlane, KeePass and LastPass, the consulting firm found that each featured vulnerabilities that allowed hackers to infiltrate the software and steal any information stored in text files when the password managers were running in the background. Worse, they are all vulnerable to keylogger malware.

According to Ted Harrington, the ISE’s executive partner: “Our research provides a public service to vendors of these products, who must now mitigate against attacks based on the discovered security issues, as well as alert consumers who have a false sense of security about their effectiveness.”



As yet, none of the companies developing these password managers have commented on the research, but expect them to quickly issue patches for these serious flaws.

## How will it affect you?

If you’re using any of the four password managers investigated, there’s no reason to stop. Since they can be exploited while in a background-running state, the ISE believes that any hack can be averted by shutting down the program once you’ve used it.

Thinking of switching to a different provider? While that may offer short-term peace of mind, there’s no reason to believe other password managers are more secure or don’t suffer the same

flaws. At least the vulnerabilities have been identified for these four – so the companies can get to work fixing them.

We’ve got tips for making the most of your password manager in this issue’s Web User Masterclass on page 64.

## What do we think?

It’s staggering that the top password managers have overlooked such a basic exploit – one that so easily offers hackers access to data such as our emails and banking details. The ISE calls this “low-hanging fruit”.

We’re inclined to agree, and with so many people using these tools, we urge LastPass and other services to fix this worrying problem as quickly as possible.



## FIRST LOOK

### Samsung Galaxy Watch Active

[bit.ly/galaxy470](https://bit.ly/galaxy470)

Beyond the Apple Watch, smartwatches and other wearables have failed to gain widespread popularity, but that hasn’t stopped Samsung having another crack, with its lightweight, streamlined Galaxy Watch Active. Thinner and more stylish than previous iterations, the Galaxy Watch Active looks and feels a lot more like a traditional watch and Samsung will be hoping it can win over new fans.

Compatible with both Android 5 and iPhone 5 and above, this is a fully featured fitness smartwatch, tracking your heart rate, steps, calorie intake, sleep and even your swims, thanks to a casing that’s

waterproof up to 50 metres.

The Galaxy Watch Active’s built-in GPS means you won’t even need to lug your smartphone around when going for a jog. Most intriguing, however, is the wearable’s ability to track your blood pressure and stress levels – perfect for those living life ‘on-the-go’.

Elsewhere, it’s all par for the course for a modern smartwatch: phone notifications, Spotify playback controls, Bluetooth and NFC for contactless payments all make the cut as expected. Like most Samsung smartwatches, battery life leaves a lot to be desired. Expect around two days’ use with each charge – but at least this can be performed using a wireless



charging pad. Available in Silver, Black, Rose Gold and Sea Green, Samsung is also promising personalisation with 60,000 watch faces, although that falls short of Google’s essentially unlimited collection.

Behind the 1.1in screen, with its 360 x 360-pixel resolution, the watch houses a dual-core 1.15GHz processor, 768MB of RAM and 4GB of internal memory.

Unfortunately, the Galaxy Watch Active runs on the open-source Tizen software, a frankly sub-par alternative to Google’s now-excellent WearOS.

There’s no official UK release date, but it’s set to go on sale in the US this month, so expect it over here shortly after, sporting a £230 price tag.





## WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

## Is Microsoft developing a foldable laptop?

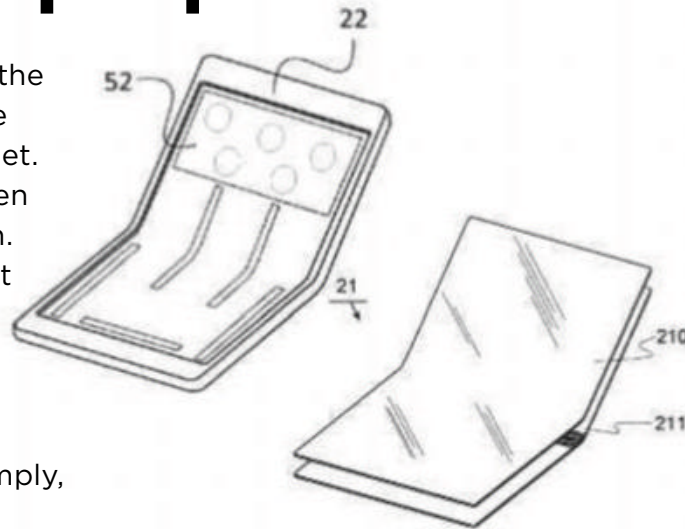
Name any top technology firm and the chances are that it's rumoured to be working on a foldable phone or tablet. It is, after all, a tech upgrade not seen since 2007's touchscreen revolution.

Fresh leaks suggest that Microsoft may be jumping on the foldable bandwagon, with a patent titled 'Bendable device with display in movable connection with body' ([bit.ly/ms470](http://bit.ly/ms470)). Or, to put it more simply, a foldable device.

In hushed tones, industry insiders have long discussed the fabled existence of a dual-screen device, codenamed Andromeda, deep within Microsoft's Redmond HQ. This, however, appears to be an entirely separate device – and one that may even run full Windows 10.

The document claims Microsoft's foldable tech will work across "handheld devices, laptops, wearable devices and other consumer electronics". It's that reference to laptops that's exciting many in the industry; while Samsung has just unveiled its Galaxy Fold phone-tablet hybrid (see page 9), few have speculated on the existence of foldable laptop screens – until now.

In the patent, Microsoft states that "technology of bendable multilayer electronic devices is becoming increasingly relevant in flexible displays and touch surfaces". Given this, the device itself could apparently feature a 'flexible display stack' with multiple fastening components, magnets and



grooves in both the body and the screen, to alleviate stress caused by long-term use – addressing a major worry many people have about foldable devices.

## LIKELIHOOD RATING



Patents are never a solid indication of a manufacturer's intentions, but with so many other companies working on foldable devices, Microsoft won't want to be left behind. However, beyond the Xbox games console and its well-received Surface laptops, Microsoft's hardware history isn't stellar – as anyone who owned a Windows Phone will attest. So a foldable laptop is likely, but not definite.

We'll be covering foldable devices in next issue's FAQ.

## WEBOMETER

## WE LIKE...

## WinRAR fixes old security flaw

The popular compression tool WinRAR has finally fixed a security flaw that's been present in the software for 19 years. The bug could allow hackers to execute code remotely, putting WinRAR's 500 million users at risk of infection.



## O2 confirms launch of 5G network

O2 has announced that its 5G network will be available in parts of the UK later this year. The 5G service will launch in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London, before rolling out to other areas, offering mobile speeds of up to 10Gbps.



## WE DON'T LIKE...

## Google hides microphone in Nest device

Google has admitted it made an error by not disclosing that a microphone was built into its home security system, Nest Secure. The "error" has raised privacy concerns, but Google says there's a legitimate reason for the mic's inclusion.



## Malware spread via LinkedIn messages

Hackers are impersonating recruitment agencies on LinkedIn in a bid to target users with backdoor malware. Researchers found that the hackers abused LinkedIn's direct-messaging service to spread malicious attachments.



## What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

## Pyxa

[bit.ly/pyxa470](http://bit.ly/pyxa470) | From £59

The Pyxa is a self-assembly games console: during initial construction, the developers promise you'll "get familiar with each component and explore their functions". After assembly, you can either start coding your own games using the bundled software or download them. Specs are modest given the dinky size – powered by an ATmega328P processor, the Pyxa features an 18-bit 128 x 160-pixels screen, microSD card support and a rechargeable four-hour battery life. A £5 donation supports the developers, while £59 gets you a Pyxa.





# Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

### Windows malware targets Mac OS security

Researchers have discovered a malicious Windows program that can bypass Apple's Mac OS security to collect a user's system information and data about the apps they have installed.

The malware, which specifically targets Macs, infects a user's machine through an EXE file that overrides the Mac operating system's built-in protection tools such as Gatekeeper, according to researchers at Trend Micro. It then gathers information including the Mac's model name, serial number and memory and processor details, and harvests data from apps including the App Store, FaceTime and Notes.

Macs were once heralded as being 'virus-free', and considerably safer



than Windows PCs. But in the last decade or so, Mac OS has become a much bigger target for cybercriminals, with Mac malware soaring 270% in 2017.

"Users should avoid or refrain from downloading files, programs and software from unverified sources and websites" said Trend Micro. Running the malicious EXE file on Windows merely displays an error notification, the researchers added.

[bit.ly/mac0s470](http://bit.ly/mac0s470)

### Cryptomining apps found in Microsoft Store

Eight potentially unwanted applications (PUAs) that use a victim's computer to mine cryptocurrency have been discovered in the Microsoft Store. The apps, which include tools for computer and battery optimisation, internet search, web browsing and watching videos,



came from three developers: DigiDream, 1clean and Findoo, according to a blog post by security researchers at Symantec ([bit.ly/symantec470](http://bit.ly/symantec470)).

The researchers said that as soon as the apps are downloaded and launched, they install a script that "begins using the majority of the computer's CPU cycles to mine Monero for the operators". The apps were put on Microsoft's app store between April and December 2018, and a significant number of users downloaded them.

The news comes at a time when app stores are under increased pressure to improve the effectiveness of their vetting procedures. Google's Play Store has long been criticised for hosting malicious apps, including those that contain so-called 'cryptojacking' code and spyware.

See our cover feature on page 40 for more about app-store security.

[bit.ly/crypto470](http://bit.ly/crypto470)

## Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

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



**Q** Why do I need antivirus on my phone if I only install apps from official stores?

Peter Freeman, Facebook

**A** Sticking to official marketplaces reduces your risk, but not to zero. We've seen malware in official app

stores, so it's important to protect your mobile device. And good mobile-protection products also protect you from phishing, which doesn't necessarily rely on criminals planting malware on the device. They also offer additional features such as the ability to remotely lock or wipe a lost or stolen device, and hide confidential data.

**Q** I do everything in the cloud, so why bother with a desktop security program?

Andrew Benson, Twitter

**A** Your desktop provides the gateway to the data you store



in the cloud, so if it's compromised, an attacker gains the same level of access that you have. Although it's the cloud provider's responsibility to secure the cloud service itself, it remains yours to secure the data you store there – and your access to it. This extends beyond the detection of known threats, to the ability to secure online transactions such as banking and shopping.

**Q** Is antivirus less essential now than it was?

Colin Bentley, Facebook

**A** No, it's still essential. While the term 'antivirus'

continues to be used, the truth is that effective security products go much further than detecting known malware. They offer proactive protection against new threats, the ability to secure online transactions, security for children in the family, spam-blocking and more."

• Read more about this topic in our cover feature on page 40.



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



 **driving  
electric**

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



# ★ Best New Websites

## Site of the Fortnight

ART

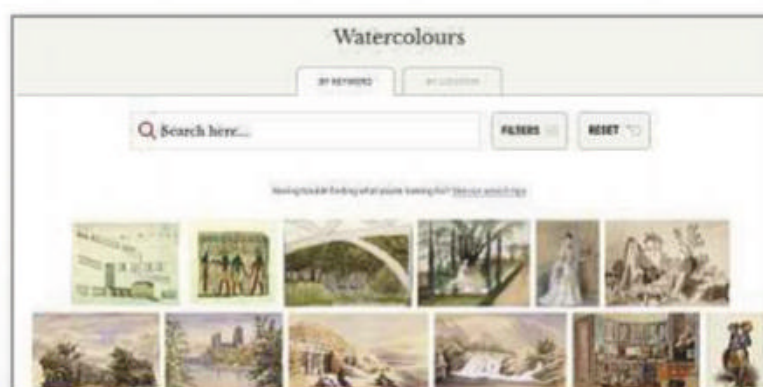
NEW

### Watercolour World

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

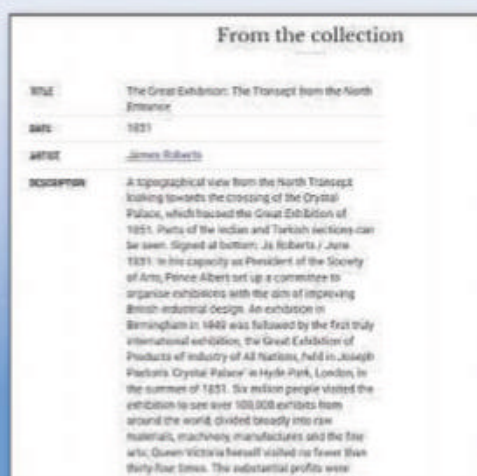
Watercolour World is a UK charity that is building a fully searchable database to showcase art from private and public collections. The interface does a great job of presenting the stunning artwork – just click a painting to get a better view and use the zoom buttons and full-screen option to let the masterpieces speak for themselves. Scroll down for information about the painting, the location it depicts and a link to other works by the artist. The site and its ever-updating collection is one of the most comprehensive online galleries we've seen.

Our rating



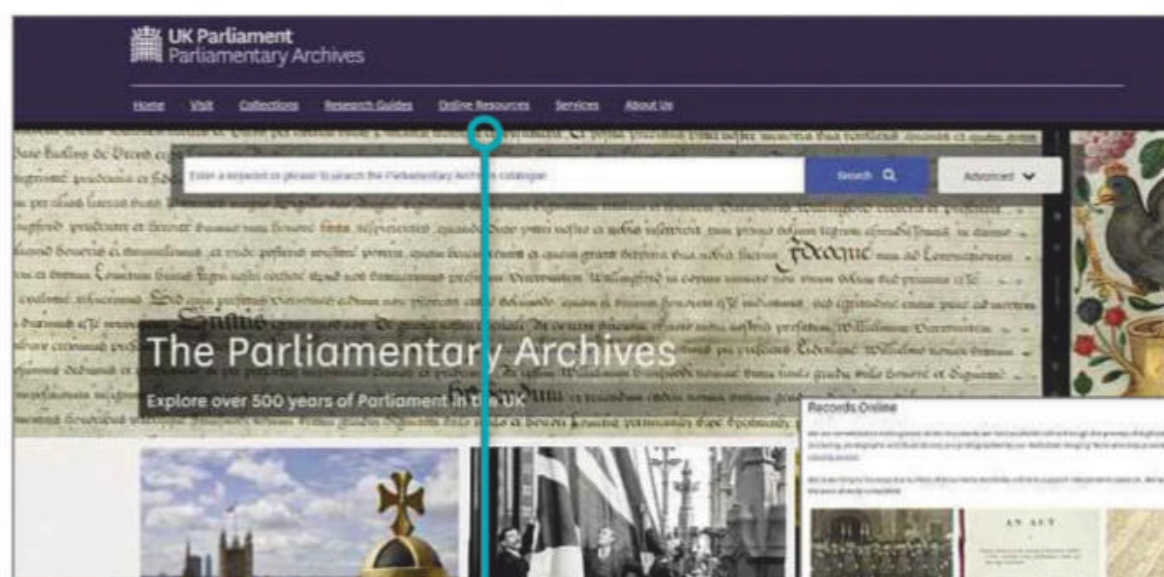
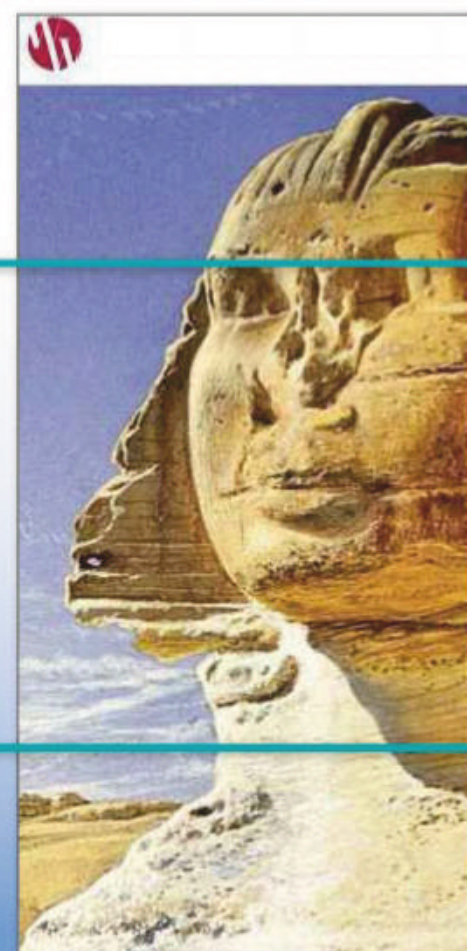
#### ON DISPLAY

Search watercolours by title, artist or location, or explore the full gallery at your leisure



#### THE ART OF THE MATTER

Every watercolour features a detailed write-up, artist information and a map showing the location of the scene



NEW

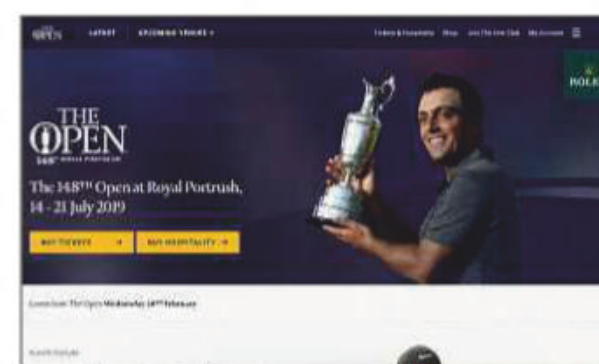
POLITICS

### Parliamentary Archives

[archives.parliament.uk](http://archives.parliament.uk)

The 'mother of parliaments' is throwing open its digital doors and inviting you to explore 500 years of rich history stored within. The new site for the Parliamentary Archives – part of an upgrade of all parliamentary websites – is an excellent resource for researchers, students and politics buffs. It's by no means an exhaustive database – the site's handlers are still digitising centuries of historical documents – but the online records are gradually growing ([bit.ly/parl470](http://bit.ly/parl470)). Of particular note are Stone's Photos, which capture the parliamentary estate at the turn of the 20th Century. If you'd rather leaf through millions of political documents rather than viewing them on your screen, click the Visit tab to plan your trip.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

SPORT

### The Open

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

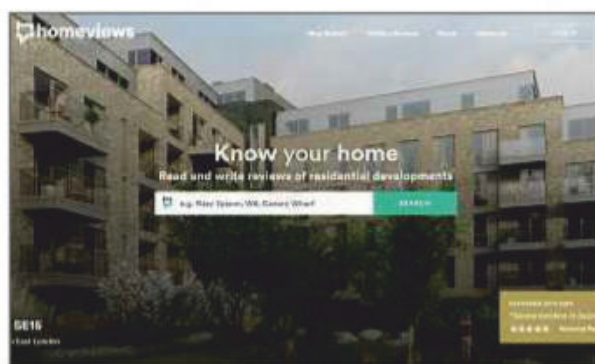
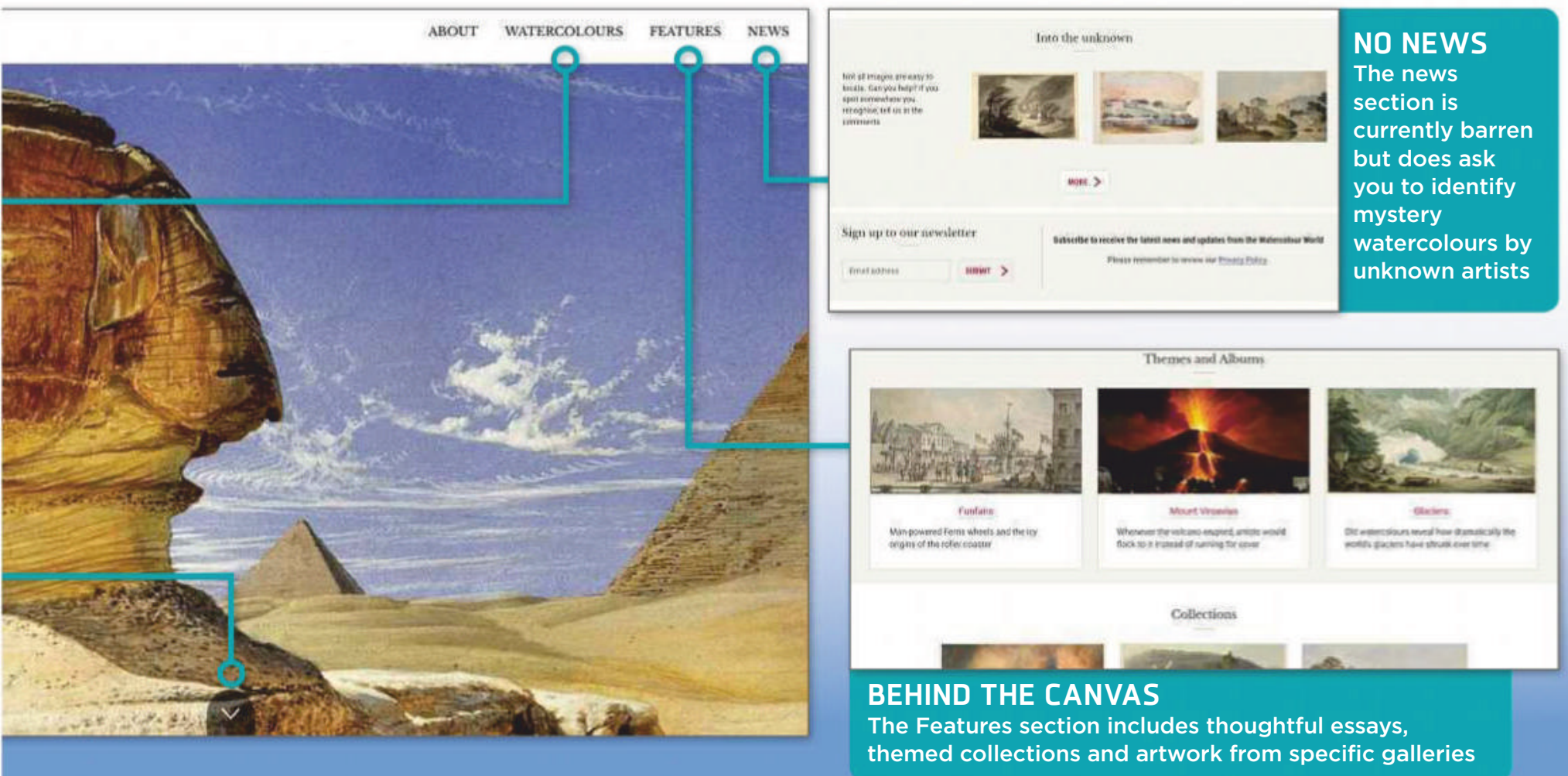
Are you ready for one of golf's top championships? The Open's new website has all the latest news, events and ticket offers for the 148th Open, held in July. As well as the current tournament, you'll find details of upcoming events (it's coming to St Andrews in 2021). There's even a shop where you can buy expensive golfing gear and merchandise. However, arguably its best feature is its Past Opens page. Here, you can look back at the championship's illustrious history, with detailed information about winners and locations alongside excellent reviews of the ups and downs of each event.

Our rating





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



## PROPERTY

### HomeViews

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

HomeViews is like a TripAdvisor for residential developments: a crowd-sourced, user-generated review site for pricey new-build estates. Currently limited to London, users can search for properties throughout the capital (though it's easier to use the map), then filter the results by those available to rent or those still under construction. If you find (and can afford) your dream apartment, you can see how other tenants rate the place, save the development to your favourites list or see it using Street View. It's a shame there aren't more photos, though.

Our rating



## HEALTH

### DEEP

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

The online home of DEEP – the Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project – isn't much to look at. If you want invaluable resources, you need to dig beneath the oversimplified design for info on connecting with dementia groups in your area or attending year-round events. One of your first destinations should be to the in-depth DEEP guides, which advise best practices (whether you're a dementia sufferer or a carer in an organisation). Placing accessibility front and centre, the site features large-print – ideal for those who struggle to read on-screen text.

Our rating



## MONEY

### Mid-Life MOT

[bit.ly/pension470](http://bit.ly/pension470)

The Government's new Mid-Life MOT site helps visitors prepare for pension age. It starts out simple, detailing basic facts about the state pension and finding out how much you're due (you need to sign up and sign in for this service) before getting down to brass tacks: free, independent pension advice. Helpfully tailored by age, the free resources should help you put by enough to get by. The 'MOT' part was evidently dreamed up by the marketing department, and short of offering 'a look under the bonnet' of your pension plan, the theme isn't followed through elsewhere.

Our rating





# BACK ISSUES DISC 2018

NOW  
AVAILABLE!



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)







RELAUNCH

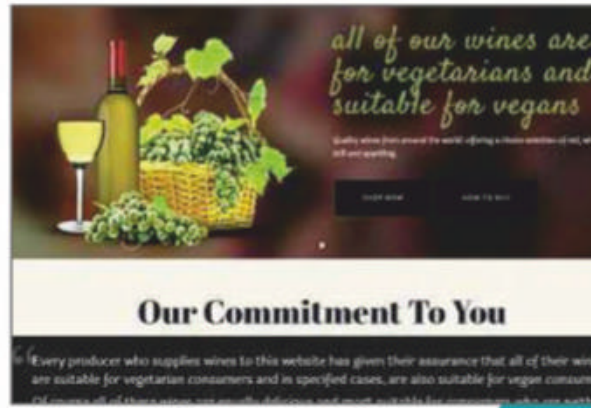
## TRAVEL

## Saint Lucia

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

This site entices you to visit the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia with images of sun-dappled beaches, lush jungles and happy families, tempting you to whip out your passport and credit card before you've even clicked a link. And when you finally do navigate away from those spectacular images, it's to uncover the country's history, culture, night-life, nature, food and festivals. The blog is a let-down, serving up obvious listicles and corporate-sponsored articles, but otherwise, the site's well put together, making it as easy to tour the island's inspiring delights as it is to plan and book a trip.

Our rating



NEW

## FOOD &amp; DRINK

## Wine for Vegetarians

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

If you're a vegetarian who's tired of having to watch what you drink, Wines for Vegetarians is for you. No more squinting at ingredients labels, every product here is suitable for your diet (and many are vegan-friendly, too). It's a dull-looking website that could do with adding a touch of class that wine connoisseurs might expect. At least the online shop is as impressively well-stocked as the shelves at your local supermarket, although they're a bit pricier than your average bottle of Jacob's Creek. Still, if you've got a nose for the grape, there are excellent filtering options to pinpoint your perfect wine.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

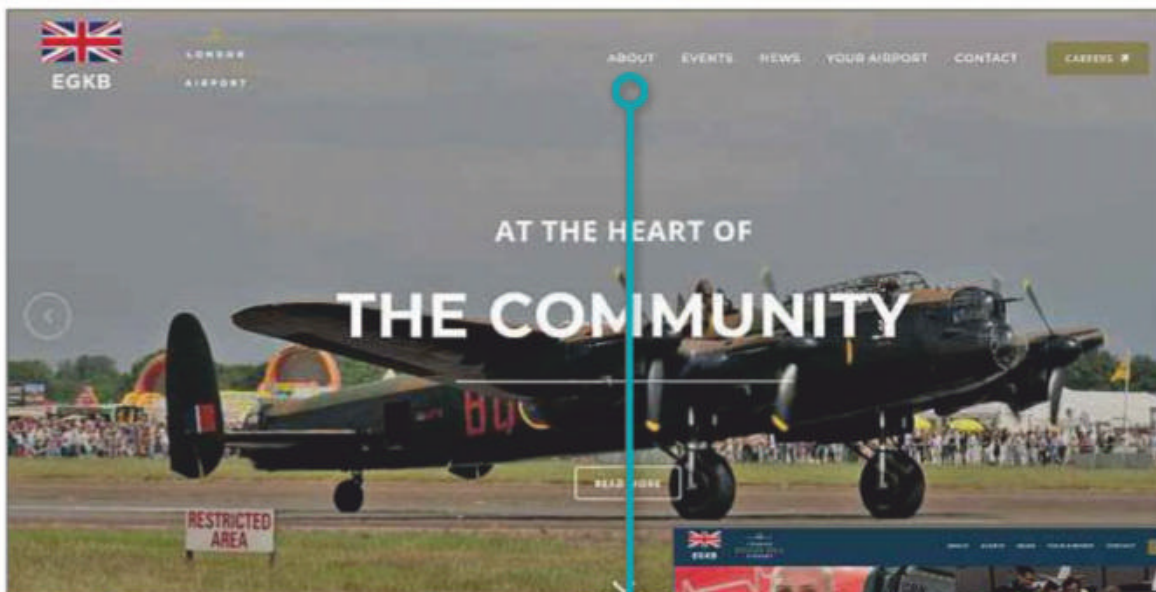
## ARTS &amp; CRAFTS

## Hama Beads

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

Hama beads – those colourful little tubes that are slotted onto pegboards and melted into position – are making a comeback, and Hama Beads is helping to promote and develop the crafting craze. Its bold and bright website sells hama-bead sets for professional beadlers and amateurs alike. It's more than just an online shop, though. Cast your eyes to the top of the screen and you'll spy downloadable design sheets, how-to guides and even a smartphone app. At the time of writing, Alan Rickman's face dominates the homepage as the site's 'Design of the Week'. A fine celebration of a craft that appeals to all ages.

Our rating



NEW

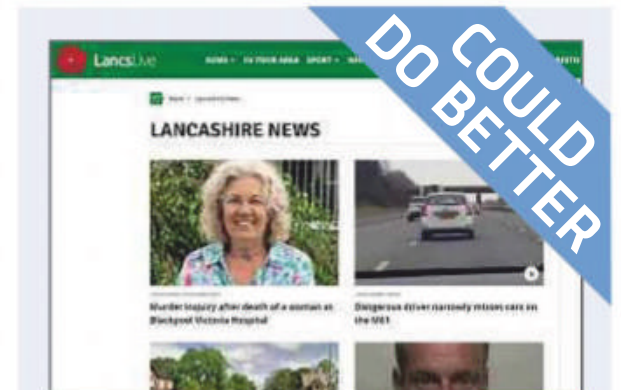
## AEROSPACE

## Biggin Hill Airport

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

Biggin Hill airport played a vital role during the Battle of Britain and its new-look website ties together modern and traditional aesthetics. You won't be booking your next holiday flight here, but you can catch the latest news and prepare for upcoming events like the annual Festival of Flight air show. The former RAF base also pushes its educational credentials – because what's more inspiring for the next generation than cruising at 30,000 feet? Even if you don't have a noise complaint, we urge you to click this option (it's hidden under the Your Airport tab): it'll whisk you away to the colour-coded aeroplane tracker, letting you watch live flights all over the UK.

Our rating



NEW

## NEWS

## Lancs Live

[www.lancs.live](http://www.lancs.live)

As traditional local papers continue to wither on the vine (see Barry's column on page 74), yet another local news site has been taken over by *Mirror* publisher Reach Plc. Lancs Live features the usual cookie-cutter design, but the content is perfect for local residents. Beyond news, use the navigation bar to see what's on – oddly, the quick link to Blackpool FC is hidden under the More tab, despite prominent displays of three other local football teams. Adverts are the biggest annoyance, often getting in the way of the story or refusing to budge as you scroll down.

Our rating





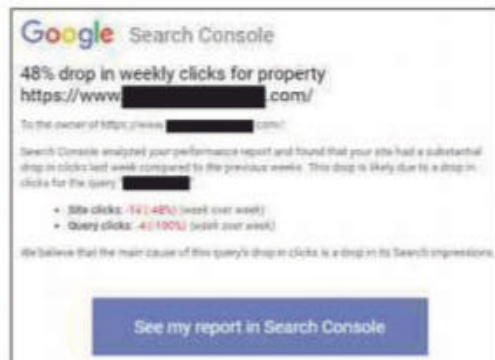
# Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

## Top Tips of the Fortnight

### Google warns of traffic drops

If you're signed up to Google's Search Console service, you'll now be notified if your traffic drops dramatically from one week to the next. This handy new warning could help you spot problems early, especially if you don't regularly check your site's stats. A significant drop in traffic might mean that your site isn't working



properly and is certainly worth further investigation. This hasn't been announced by Google but was first noticed by Twitter user Vance Moore at [bit.ly/scon470](https://bit.ly/scon470).

### One-click tools come to UKFast

UKFast has introduced a one-click app-installation tool across its range of eCloud hosting services. While this includes old favourites like WordPress and Joomla, you can also install more recent tools, such as the Ghost blogging platform and server tools like Docker, which lets you install a range of other services on top of it. Without one-click installation, most of these tools require significant setting up, with config files and other complexities. For more information on UKFast's eCloud range, visit [bit.ly/ukf470](https://bit.ly/ukf470).

### Deal of the Fortnight

If your website is about technology, Namecheap ([www.namecheap.com](https://www.namecheap.com)) is offering a huge discount on 'tech' domains, down from £41.10 to £3.56.

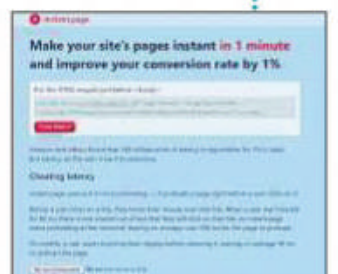
## Web-building Helpdesk

**Q** I've tried some speed tests on my website and it doesn't load very fast. I think it might be affecting my visitors. Is there anything I can do to speed it up?

Craig Downing, via email

**A** It depends on how your site is built. Hand-coded sites should be relatively fast without much tweaking, though you could still check for superfluous code. Sites hosted on WordPress or similar tend to be slower but you could try a caching plugin, such as WP Super Cache ([bit.ly/wp470](https://bit.ly/wp470)). It's also worth trying instant.page ([instant.page](https://instant.page)), which provides a line of code that triggers your site to start preloading the next page when a visitor hovers their mouse over a link, so you get a head start delivering the next page quickly.

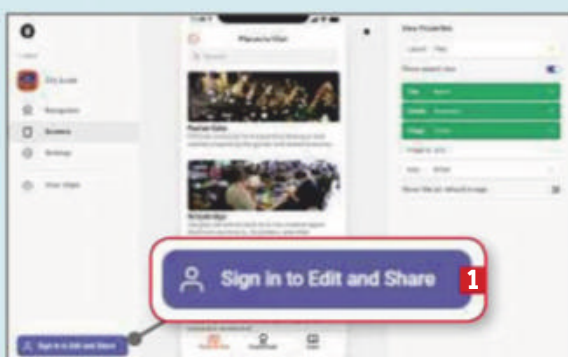
Andy Shaw, Technical & Reviews Editor, Web User



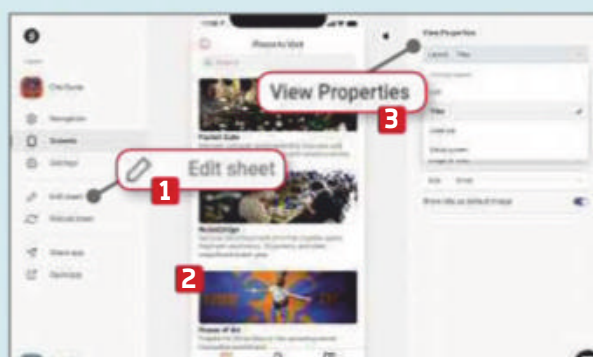
## MINI WORKSHOP | Build a mobile app from a Google spreadsheet

Glide: [www.glideapps.com](https://www.glideapps.com) |  20 mins | Any browser

Glide is a brilliant tool that lets you build a web-based mobile app from a Google spreadsheet. It's free if you include Glide branding in your finished app. Once you've created your app, you can share it with a QR code



**1** A good way to start is to borrow some data from a pre-made app, then adapt it. On the website, scroll down to 'Get started quickly with a sample' and choose Open City Guide Sample. On the next page, click 'Create your own city guide app'. Next, click 'Sign in to Edit and Share' **1** and sign in with your Google account.



**2** Click 'Edit sheet' **1** to open the spreadsheet that feeds the app. Make changes to text in the sheet that you can see on the preview, **2** and the new version appears automatically. You can also change images, links and headings. Under View Properties, **3** experiment with different layout styles.



**3** Different layouts show different pages. 'Detail screen' **1** shows everything from one row on a single page. Navigation **2** adds new pages to your site. On the spreadsheet, these are individual worksheets (the tabs along the bottom). To rearrange the content, drag and drop the headings. **3** Click them to choose the data to include. **4**





# Introducing Routers with Voice Controls



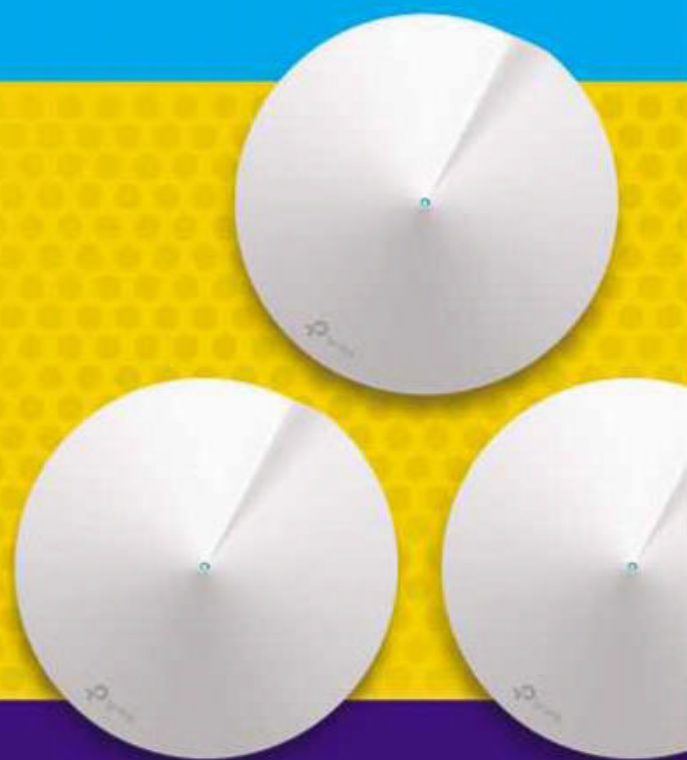
"Alexa, **tell TP-Link**  
I have friends coming."



"Alexa, **ask TP-Link** to  
prioritise video streaming."



"Alexa, **ask TP-Link** to  
do a speed test."



WORKS WITH  
amazon alexa

The **TP-Link Router Skill** for Alexa makes managing your home network simpler and more convenient than ever before.

**Compatible with**

Archer C5400 | Archer C3150 | Archer C2300 | TP-Link Deco Range



facebook.com/TPLINKUK

uk.tp-link.com

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# What To Watch Online

## Pick of the fortnight

**NETFLIX**



### Watch Ricky Gervais' new Netflix show *After Life*

From 8 March

Cringe-comedy king Ricky Gervais is back with another toe-curling sitcom creation, and this time you really won't know whether to laugh or cry. In *After Life* ([bit.ly/afterlife470](https://bit.ly/afterlife470)), Gervais plays Tony, a devastated widower who vows to punish the world for his wife's death by saying and doing whatever he wants.

"He's a good guy trying to be a psychopath because he's hurt," explains Gervais, who also writes and directs *After Life*. "It's like a superpower. But of course it doesn't go as planned" ([bit.ly/gervais470](https://bit.ly/gervais470)). Bearing the brunt are Tony's friends and relatives, played by Penelope Wilton, Ashley Jensen, Diane 'Philomena Cunk' Morgan and David Bradley.

If *After Life*'s six 30-minute episodes leave you craving more Gervais, stick around on Netflix for his 2018 stand-up special *Humanity* ([bit.ly/humanity470](https://bit.ly/humanity470)) and 2016 film *Special Correspondents* ([bit.ly/special470](https://bit.ly/special470)), plus old favourites *The Office* ([bit.ly/office470](https://bit.ly/office470)), *Extras* ([bit.ly/extras470](https://bit.ly/extras470)) and *Derek* ([bit.ly/derek470](https://bit.ly/derek470)).

### **N** See Idris Elba play it for laughs in *Turn Up Charlie*

From 15 March

Another new Netflix sitcom starring a British national treasure – and, like *After Life*, Idris Elba's *Turn Up Charlie* doesn't yet have a trailer on its Netflix page ([bit.ly/charlie470](https://bit.ly/charlie470)). But we never need much persuading to tune in for Idris, who plays a struggling DJ and eternal bachelor who reluctantly becomes a "manny" to his famous best friend's delinquent daughter in the new eight-part show.

*Turn Up Charlie* is Elba's second sitcom after the autobiographical *In the Long Run*, which you can stream via Now TV ([bit.ly/longrun470](https://bit.ly/longrun470)).



### **N** Treat yourself to new *Queer Eye*

From 15 March

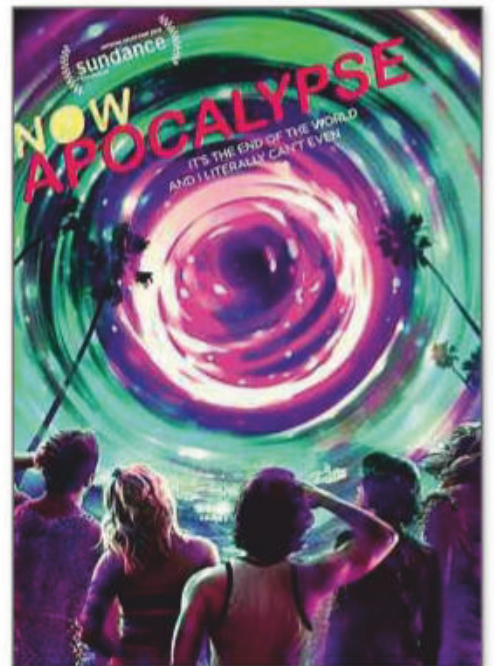
*Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* began in 2003 on cable TV, playing with the stereotype of gay men being experts at fashion and grooming. More than 100 episodes later, it's an Emmy-winning emotional rollercoaster that's changed lives. Netflix rebooted it in 2018, and now a third Netflix season with the Fab Five – Bobby, Karamo, Tan, Antoni and Jonathan – is upon us. Watch the trailer at [bit.ly/queereye470](https://bit.ly/queereye470).

### Trip out with LA millennials in *Now Apocalypse*

From 11 March

This new 10-part comedy-thriller follows

paranoid LA millennials whose trippy dreams suggest they're the victims of a government conspiracy. Or are they just smoking too much weed? To find out, you'll need a StarzPlay channel subscription (£4.99 per month), plus your £7.99 Prime subscription. Find out more about Amazon channels at [bit.ly/channels470](https://bit.ly/channels470), and watch the official *Now Apocalypse* trailer at [bit.ly/nowap470](https://bit.ly/nowap470).



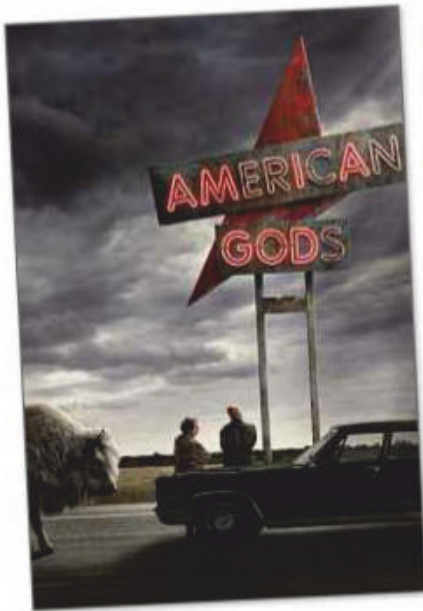
### Watch a new season of Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*

From 11 March

British writer Neil Gaiman is back as executive producer and occasional screenwriter for the TV adaptation of his



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



magical 2001 novel *American Gods*. Ricky Whittle returns as Shadow Moon, with Ian McShane (*Deadwood*) and Crispin Glover (Marty's dad in *Back to the Future*) co-starring. Season 2 culminates in what Gaiman calls "a big pivotal thing"

for McShane's character, Mr Wednesday.

Eight one-hour episodes arrive weekly on Amazon Prime after they've aired on Starz in the US. Watch the official trailer at [bit.ly/american470](http://bit.ly/american470).

## N Watch Netflix's heist movie *Triple Frontier*

From 13 March

Netflix has excelled at art house (*Roma*), Western (*Buster Scruggs*) and apocalyptic thriller (*Bird Box*). Can it pull off a heist as well?

Like all heist movies, *Triple Frontier* is about a group of buddies who plan a dangerous mission and end up arguing a lot. Ben Affleck, Pedro Pascal (*Narcos*) and Charlie Hunnam (*Sons of Anarchy*)



## BT Sport launches new TV app



BT Sport has launched a new app for "large screens" including Samsung smart TVs, Apple TV and the Xbox, freeing viewers from the need for a BT TV set-top box.

The new app kicks off with live streaming at 1080p (standard HD). On-demand content, TV listings, ultra HD 4K and high dynamic range (HDR) picture quality will follow later this year, according to BT ([bit.ly/btsport470](http://bit.ly/btsport470)).

The app is available now to existing BT Sport customers, who can already access streaming content at [btsport.com](http://btsport.com) at no extra charge. The app includes access to BT Sport 1, 2, 3 and Extra, plus ESPN and BoxNation, with BT Sport UHD coming "in a few months".

Existing BT Sport customers can get the new app via supported devices' app stores. It'll cost new customers £9 per month with BT Broadband. Find out more at [bit.ly/btapp470](http://bit.ly/btapp470).

play former Special Ops soldiers who set out to steal a drug lord's fortune, with mixed results. With the writer of *The Hurt Locker* and the director of *A Most Violent Year* (both now available on Netflix) in charge, *Triple Frontier* could be worth a shot. Watch the trailers on Netflix for free ([bit.ly/triple470](http://bit.ly/triple470)).

## Start the F1 season Down Under

17 March

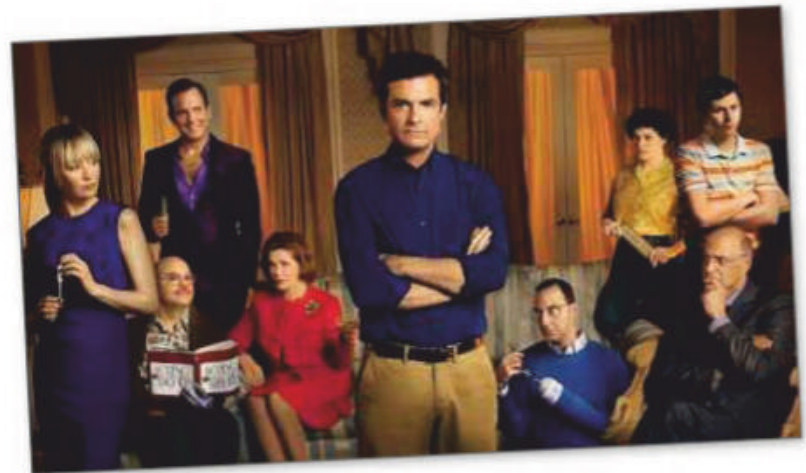
Formula 1's longest-ever season starts with the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne on 17 March and ends in Abu Dhabi on 1 December, so book your slot on the sofa and get comfy. You can stream the action live and on-demand via Now TV with a Sky Sports Pass (from £5.99 per day, [bit.ly/newsport470](http://bit.ly/newsport470)). Sky's 2019 F1 calendar has all the key dates, including the British Grand Prix on 14 July, at [bit.ly/f1sky470](http://bit.ly/f1sky470).



## N Say bye to the Bluths of *Arrested Development*

From 15 March

Gloriously bonkers US comedy *Arrested Development* returns to Netflix with its final eight episodes on 15 March. The show, which made famous faces of Michael Cera, Will Arnett, David Cross and Portia De Rossi – and relaunched the careers of Jason Bateman and the fabulous Jessica Walter – sees the Bluth family go down in a bonfire of problems including a failed 'smart' border wall and software fraud.



In case you missed it...

Auntie Beeb is good at keeping shtum about surprises. Infuriatingly

good. Alan Partridge's return date was revealed at the 11th hour, then *Fleabag* burst back onto the iPlayer even more suddenly on 4 March. New episodes of Phoebe Waller-Bridge's multi-award-winning dark comedy arrive on Mondays at 10pm (the iPlayer's 'BBC Three slot'),



before airing on BBC One at 10.35pm. You can still watch all six episodes of

2017's seedily sublime Season 1 at [bit.ly/fleabag470](http://bit.ly/fleabag470).

Other familiar faces back on the iPlayer for second series include Martin Clunes as a pedantic driving instructor in *Warren* ([bit.ly/warren470](http://bit.ly/warren470)), and Mark Benton cracking crimes in *Shakespeare & Hathaway* ([bit.ly/shake470](http://bit.ly/shake470)).





# Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

## Blink XT

A cloud-connected security camera will help you protect your home but which one should you get? We've tested two of the latest models to help you decide



Installing a security camera that's visible to anyone passing by your home may be enough to deter a casual burglar, and any footage recorded may prove useful in bringing an intruder to justice and recovering lost property. A camera can also keep an eye on pets and check that family members arrive home safely.

In this review, we compared two cameras, to see which one is most likely to suit your needs. The BT Smart Home

Cam (£59.98) is a good starting model that's affordable and simple to use, while the Blink XT (£149.99) is more expensive and sophisticated, and includes some impressive features.

### Hardware and cloud storage

The Blink XT is weatherproof, so it can be wall-mounted and positioned outside your home. It's powered by two AA batteries, which it claims should last around two years.

minutes of video, which is captured from the camera in five-second chunks when the motion detection is triggered. You can extend this to a longer period, but five seconds has been deemed the best balance between capturing the action and preserving battery life. Once your two hours of storage has filled up, any new captures will automatically overwrite the oldest ones.

The free BT cloud service is less magnanimous – in fact, it

and opened the app.

If you want to record motion, you'll need to insert a microSD card into the BT camera's slot. However, this footage is only stored locally, on the card itself, which is an obvious problem, because a thief is likely to check the camera for a card and simply nick the evidence along with whatever else is going into his swag bag. However, you can view and download this footage from the app, so you don't have to be in the same location as the device to access its footage.

### PRODUCT INFO

#### Blink XT

Price: £149.99

Buy from Amazon:  
[bit.ly/blink470](http://bit.ly/blink470)

### FOR

- ✓ Long battery life
- ✓ Crisp 1080p video
- ✓ No subscription fees

### AGAINST

- ✗ No two-way audio



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

“Blink promises a lifetime subscription to its cloud storage for free; but the free BT cloud service won't upload video at all”

Conversely, the cheaper BT model can only be used indoors and needs to be connected to the mains via its USB port. Both cameras can detect motion to trigger filming and photographing what passes in front of them.

Both cameras use cloud storage to save captured clips and images. The Blink's provision is particularly generous, promising a lifetime subscription to its cloud storage for free. You have enough room to store 120

won't upload video at all, only still images taken when the motion detection is triggered. These are stored online for 30 days, giving you sufficient time to regularly sift through and download any you want to keep, but after that they'll be deleted.

You can set the BT camera to send you an alert, so you can manually view and record what's going on in your home, but you might have missed the moment by the time you've received the message

### Sound and vision quality

Given its higher price, it's not surprising that the Blink camera is capable of capturing better quality footage – up to 1080p – than the BT model, which only manages 720p. However, to conserve battery life, the Blink is set to 720p by default, so it can't be that big a deal. Still, the higher the resolution, the better any captured footage ought to be, which might ultimately decide whether you get a good look at an intruder.

Perhaps more jarring is that the BT camera only records at 15fps (frames per second), which leaves captured video



# BT Smart Home Cam



looking very jerky, whereas the Blink records in 30fps. A high frame-rate isn't essential to catching crooks but you might miss the perfect angle on an intruder's face, for example, if they're moving around quickly. And if you're using the device to check that your pet is happy and well, you may also wish that the video was a bit smoother.

There's one way in which the BT model trumps the Blink – both have a microphone, but only the BT camera has a speaker. This lets you broadcast that you're watching and recording an intruder, which might be enough to make them scarper and leave your property empty-handed. The Blink camera's microphone lets you hear what's going on, but

there's no speaker to provide you with a voice.

### Camera apps

Each camera has an app for control and configuration, but while setup is straightforward on both, getting the motion

BT's app is a bare-bones affair and isn't particularly slick, but it gets the job done and is easy to set up. It supports up to 10 cameras, which you can label as you please, and lets you set a schedule to disable motion

at set times of the day – for example, if you only want the cameras active during office hours or at night.

You can check in with a live view at any time, whether or not the motion sensor is armed. There's also an option to set 'activity zones' – specific areas that trigger the motion sensor – so you don't waste time filming an area in the camera's field of vision that isn't relevant.

“ There's one way in which the BT model trumps the Blink – both have a microphone, but only the BT camera has a speaker ”

detection right is more tricky. In our tests, both cameras occasionally recorded footage that didn't capture any motion at all. We aren't sure whether filming started too late and missed the action or if it was just a false positive due to being over-sensitive.

detection, in case being watched all the time makes you uneasy.

The Blink system can also support 10 cameras. You can arm or disarm the camera by simply tapping a button within the app, and even set it to automatically come to life

### OUR VERDICT

The Blink XT is more than twice the price of the BT Smart Home Cam, but if you're serious about collecting security footage, it's definitely worth it. You can position it anywhere in or around your house and expect a couple of years of good service before you even need to replace the batteries. It's better than the BT model in almost every respect, from the footage it collects to its generous cloud storage.

However, if your budget is tight or you'd rather set two cameras in different positions for the price of one, then the Smart Home Cam is certainly good value for money. It doesn't make capturing footage quite as foolproof but it still does the job, and would make a great starter camera for someone who wants to see whether a home-security camera setup suits them without spending too much money.

### PRODUCT INFO

#### BT Smart Home Cam

Price: from £59.98  
Buy from Amazon: [bit.ly/btsm470](http://bit.ly/btsm470)

### FOR

- ✓ Excellent value
- ✓ Free cloud storage for static images...

### AGAINST

- ✗...but no cloud storage for video
- ✗ Low video framerate



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



# Canon Pixma G4510

This printer and scanner combo has refillable ink tanks that save money and the environment

**W**hile printers continue to get cheaper, the ink they use remains wildly expensive. Forcing us to buy minute quantities of ink supplied in disposable plastic cartridges, they not only hammer our wallets, they're also bad for the environment.

Epson bucked the trend last year with the Epson EcoTank ET-4750, which we reviewed in Issue 450 ([bit.ly/webuser450](http://bit.ly/webuser450)). The Pixma G4510 is a similar proposition, with ink tanks you can refill yourself from bottles. This cuts back significantly on both the waste and the cost. Refills come in 70ml (colour) and 135ml (black) bottles, which doesn't sound like much but is enough to print

around 7,000 black pages and, with a full complement of all three colours, 6,000 colour pages. Colour bottles cost around £9, while the larger black bottle is around £13.

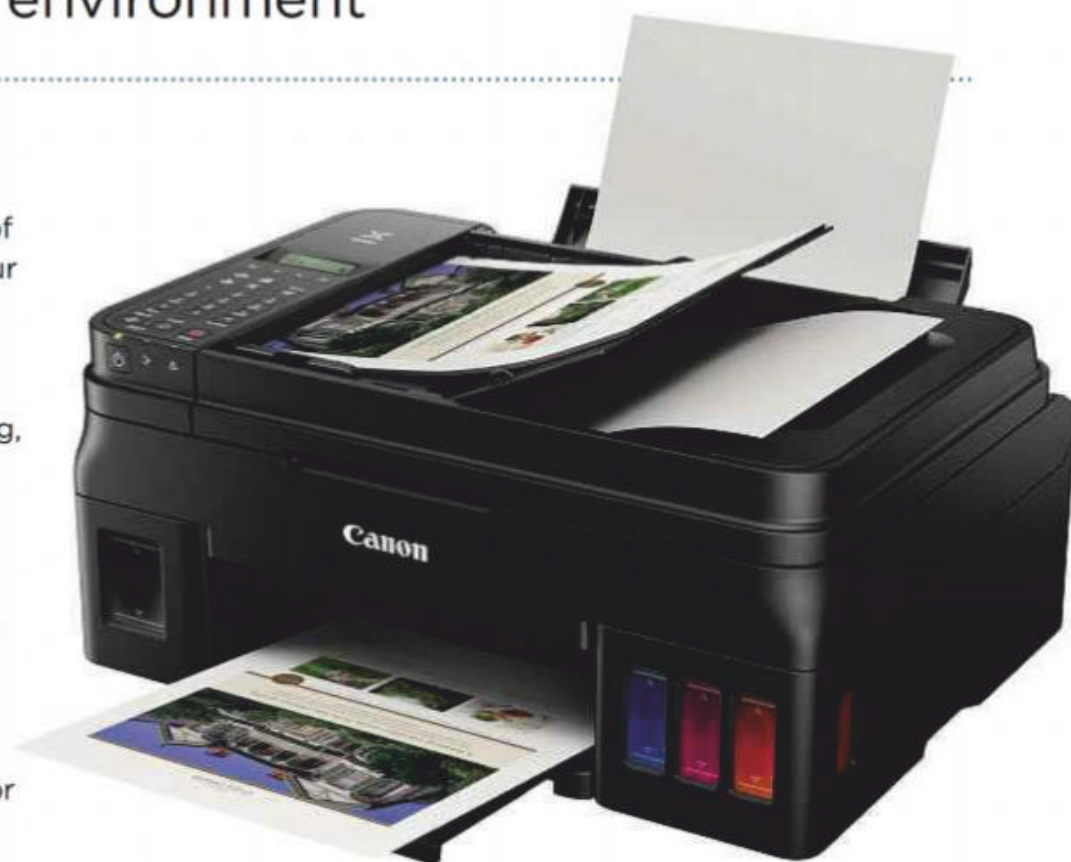
So far so fantastic sounding, but there are a number of trade-offs. For starters, the amount you pay up front for the printer is significantly more. Multi-function printers (MFPs, which combine a scanner and printer in a single unit) with similar capabilities can be bought for around £80-£100, whereas this model costs £223.58 – so you'll need to do a fair bit of printing to recoup the initial outlay.

## Print quality and extras

We were disappointed by the quality of photo prints – our test shots came out more subdued than we'd expect from a Canon printer. We were impressed with text and graphics on plain paper, though, which were bold and accurate. The printer is good at scanning, too, with sharp focus and the ability to preserve detail in very dark and very light areas.

Sadly, it's very slow, particularly when printing colour, which managed a snail's-pace 2ppm (pages per minute) in our test. Mono prints were more reasonable at 7.9ppm, but 6x4in colour prints took two excruciating minutes each. But if you aren't in a rush or don't have to print documents consisting of several pages, this might not be a problem. Scans, on the other hand, were fairly quick.

The G4510 has most office tasks covered. You can connect it to a wireless



“It's a shame Canon hasn't applied this efficient ink system to a better printer”

network and make unattended copies with its 20-page automatic document feeder. Unfortunately, it doesn't offer the option of automatic two-sided printing or scanning. There's a basic control panel and a two-line mono LCD screen, which is practical but not as user-friendly as a good

touchscreen.

Setting up the G4510 involves inserting two print heads, then filling its four tanks with the supplied ink. You need to be sure you're filling the right tank with the right colour but we managed it without any splashes, after which the printer primed itself quickly.

## PRODUCT INFO

### Canon Pixma G4510

**Price: £223.58**

**Buy from Amazon:** [bit.ly/cano470](http://bit.ly/cano470)

## SPECIFICATIONS

- 4800 x 1200 dpi print resolution
- 600 x 1200 dpi scanner resolution
- Borderless printing
- 100-sheet capacity rear tray
- 20-sheet capacity document feeder
- USB or Wi-Fi (802.11b/g/n)
- 7.3kg
- 445 x 330 x 197mm

## FOR

- ✓ Wonderfully cheap to run
- ✓ Eco-friendly
- ✓ Reasonably speedy scan times

## AGAINST

- ✗ Slow printing
- ✗ Disappointing photo prints

## OUR VERDICT



We love saving money and hate unnecessary plastic waste, but it's a shame that Canon hasn't applied this efficient ink system to a better printer (particularly with regard to speed and photo print quality), and that you need to pay so much more up front for the unit. We look forward to the day when our favourite

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

printer-scanner combo comes with this brilliant ink system, but until then, you'll have to compromise on the printer if you want to win on ink.



*An encrypted  
solution for every user.*



## 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

### SECURITY CAMERA

#### Blink XT

£149.99 from [bit.ly/blink470](https://bit.ly/blink470)

Tested: Issue 470



The Blink XT can be positioned anywhere in your home, indoors or out, and includes a lifetime subscription to its cloud-storage service. You get a couple of years' use out of the camera before you need to replace the batteries.

#### KEY SPECS

HD Video ■ Motion and temperature sensors ■ Built-in microphone ■ Camera mount included ■ Weatherproof ■ Infrared night vision ■ Wi-Fi connectivity ■ Instant alerts to your phone ■ Two years of battery life

### LAPTOP SSD

#### Samsung 970 Evo

£75.51 from [bit.ly/sevo469](https://bit.ly/sevo469)

Tested: Issue 469



The Samsung 970 Evo is a smart, affordable choice for anyone looking to get better performance from their laptop. It's very fast, with excellent file-transfer speeds, and there are higher capacity versions with up to 2TB of storage.

#### KEY SPECS

256GB capacity ■ 3,600MB/s maximum speed ■ M.2 PCIe Gen 3 x 4 interface ■ Samsung Phoenix 5-core processor ■ Samsung V-NAND 3-bit MLC flash memory ■ 22 x 80 x 2.38mm ■ five-year warranty

### 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

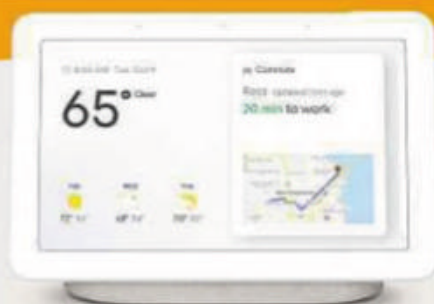
Octa-core 1.8GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 450 processor ■ 3GB RAM ■ 64GB storage ■ 5.7in, 2,160 x 1,080-pixel screen ■ 12-megapixel rear camera, 8-megapixel front camera ■ 154 x 72 x 8.3mm ■ 167g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

### 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



## SOFTWARE & SERVICES

### PHOTO-EDITING SOFTWARE

#### DxO PhotoLab

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

**Tested:** Issue 455

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

#### KEY FEATURES

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



### VIDEO-EDITING SOFTWARE

#### Adobe Premiere Elements 2018

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

**Tested:** Issue 453

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

#### KEY FEATURES

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



### Web User Gold Award winners

#### DRIVE-SPACE ANALYSER

##### WinDirStat

Free from [windirstat.net](http://windirstat.net)

**Tested:** Issue 469

WinDirStat delivers comprehensive analysis of your hard drive and makes it easy to take action against space-hogging files. It also offers a portable version.

**NEW!**



#### DUPLICATE CLEANER

##### Duplicate Cleaner Free

Free from [bit.ly/dc468](http://bit.ly/dc468)

**Tested:** Issue 468

With its streamlined design and rapid performance, this tool is the ultimate duplicate file remover. It makes clearing out your PC a breeze.



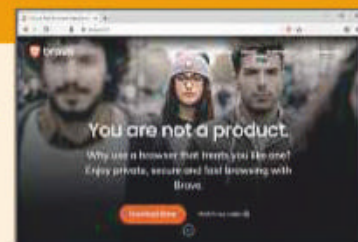
#### PRIVATE BROWSER

##### Brave

Free from [brave.com](http://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.



#### PHOTO CLEANER

##### AVG Cleaner

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

**Tested:** Issue 466

AVG Cleaner is a delight to use – packed with features that go beyond merely tidying up.



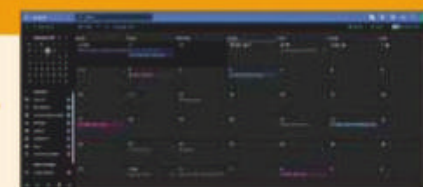
#### ONLINE CALENDAR

##### Microsoft Outlook

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

**Tested:** Issue 465

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



# WEB USER

## BACK ISSUES DISCS

Search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon

EVERY ISSUE FROM  
2014 TO 2018





# Best Free Software

## VIRTUAL OPERATING SYSTEM

### Windows 95 v2

[bit.ly/windows470](https://bit.ly/windows470)

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

**File size:** 279MB

Windows 95 was groundbreaking for its time, introducing many of the features we now take for granted on desktop operating systems, including the desktop itself, the Start button and the taskbar. Last year, developer Felix Rieseberg found a way to get Windows 95 running on all the major platforms, giving users the chance to indulge in a little nostalgia. Unfortunately, his creation – essentially a standalone virtual machine – was a little limited because it only ran in a small window, didn't support sound and you couldn't access the internet in it. After six

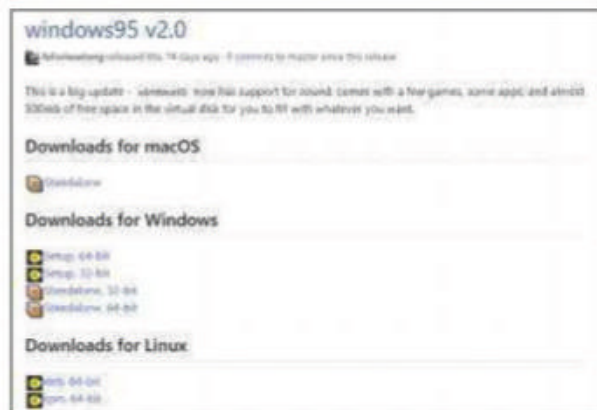
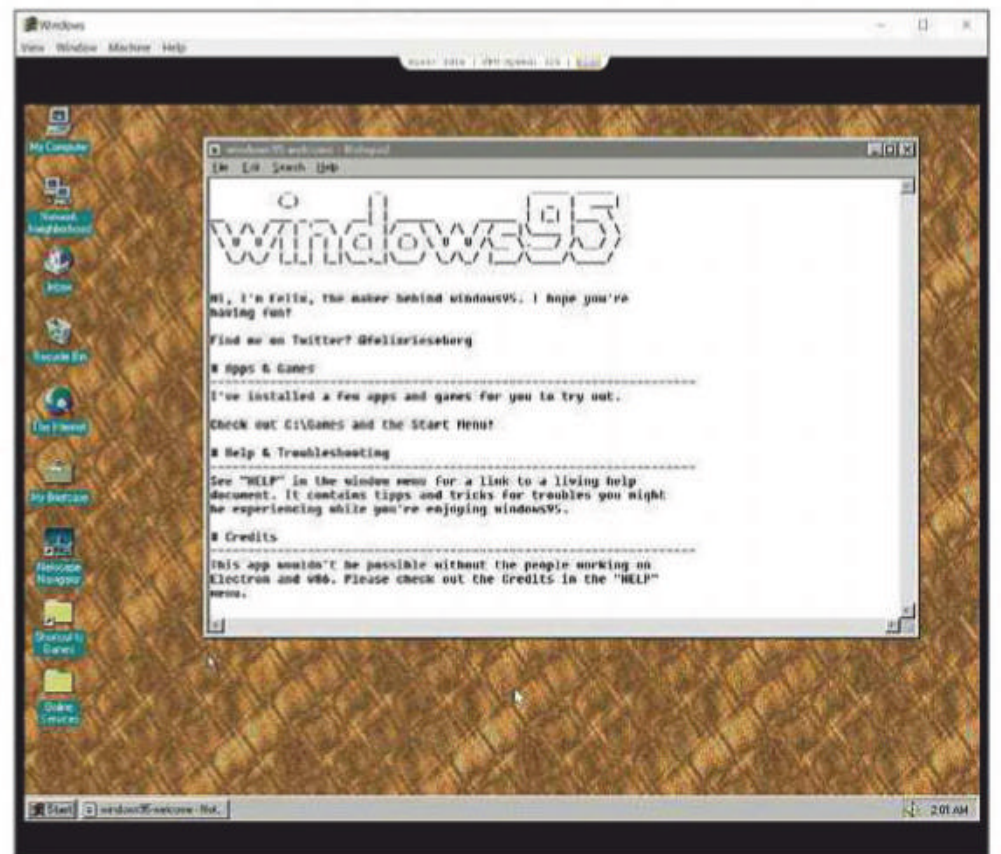
months of development, version 2.0 has arrived, and it's a significant improvement.

The big update uses a completely new Windows 95 drive image. Written in JavaScript, the app has better support for high-resolution screens and supports sound. The original release came with a non-functioning version of Internet Explorer, but this time around there's a working version of the Netscape Navigator 2.0 browser.

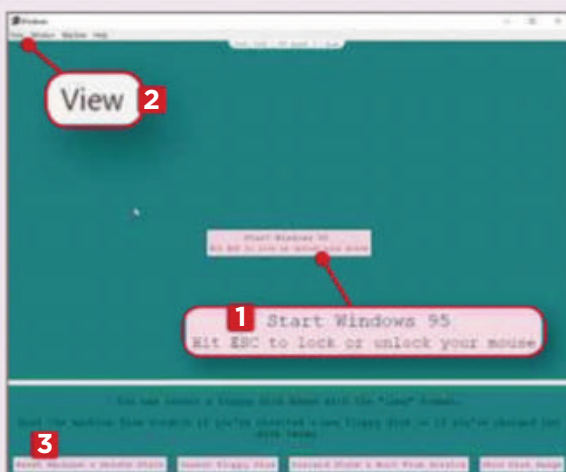
Rieseberg has also included some software to play around with. As well as WordPad, Calculator, FreeCell and Media Player, which were part of Windows 95, there are copies of Microsoft FrontPage and FrontPage Server, and – more

excitingly – Doom, Wolfenstein 3D, A10 Tank Killer and Grand Prix Circuit. There's also almost 500MB of free space in the virtual disk that you can use in whatever way you like.

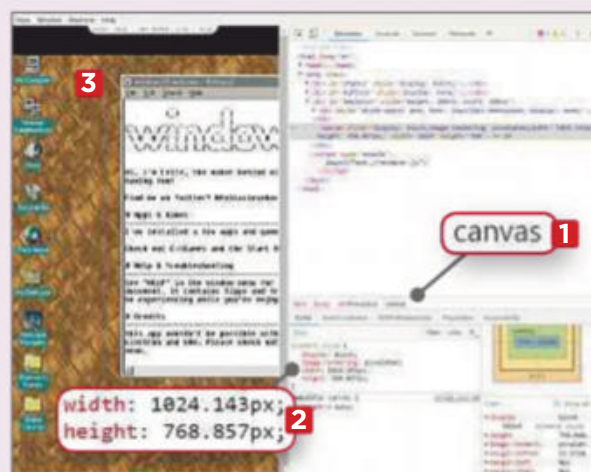
Your mouse gets trapped within the virtual operating system, but tapping Esc will free it, so you can access the Windows 95 menus. You can also 'reset' the virtual machine, which comes in handy if things go wrong or you just want to start over.



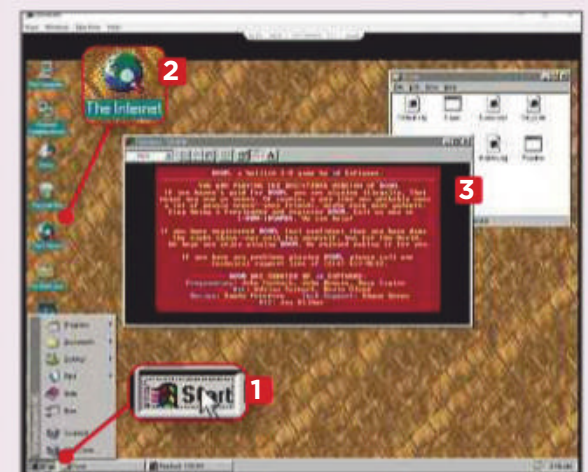
## MINI WORKSHOP | Run Windows 95 in Windows 10



**1** Windows users can download standalone or installer versions of the app, which comes in 32- and 64-bit flavours. Run the program and wait for it to load, then click the 'Start Windows 95' button **1** to begin using the operating system. You can switch to full screen from the View menu, **2** and reset the machine here. **3**



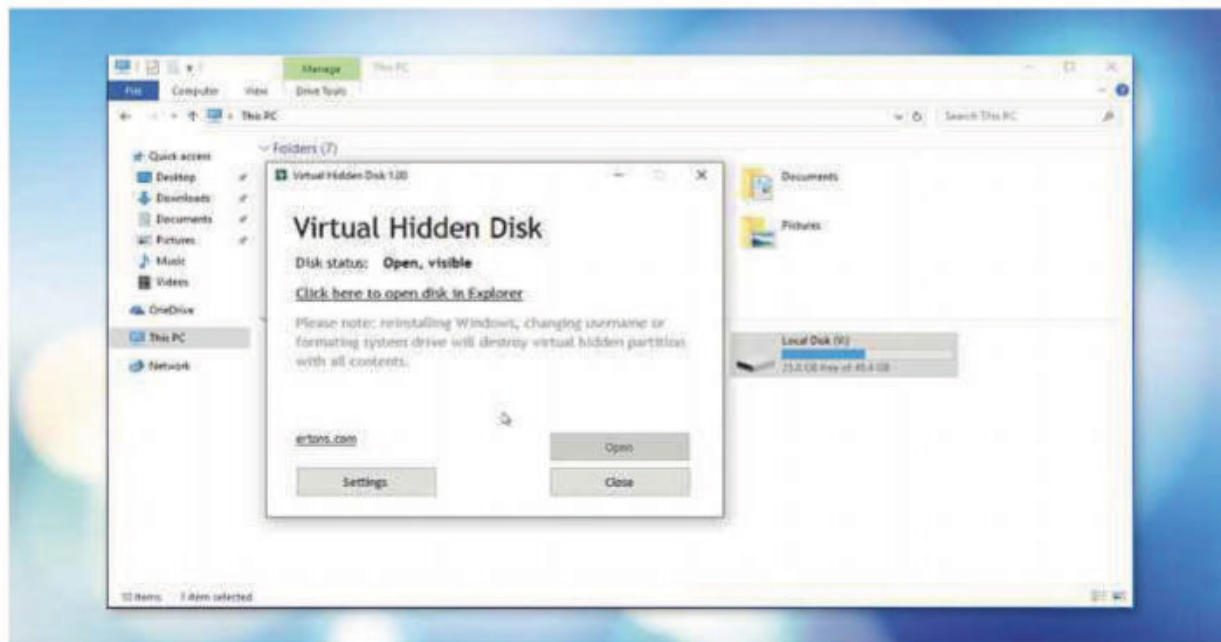
**2** Windows 95 still runs in quite a small window, but you can change this. Click View and select Toggle Developer Tools. Open the 'Canvas Style' section at top **1** and click it. Under Styles, change the width and height settings to something larger. **2** The OS window will change immediately. **3**



**3** Windows 95 works as you would expect. Click the Start button **1** to access the menu. From here, you can open tools such as Paint, Freecell and the FrontPage programs. To access the internet, launch Netscape Navigator. **2** The Games folder is where you'll find Doom **3** and Wolfenstein 3D. The games all run in a small window.



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



## SYSTEM TOOL

### Virtual Hidden Disk

[bit.ly/vhdisk470](http://bit.ly/vhdisk470)

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 1.5MB

If you have files on your computer that you'd rather keep hidden from prying eyes, Virtual Hidden Disk offers a simple solution. This program creates a separate hidden drive on your computer (using a system folder or a folder of your choosing). When visible, it can be accessed through File Explorer, and you can optionally password-protect it for an additional layer of security. The drive will automatically be hidden following shutdown or a power outage.

## New Windows 10 App

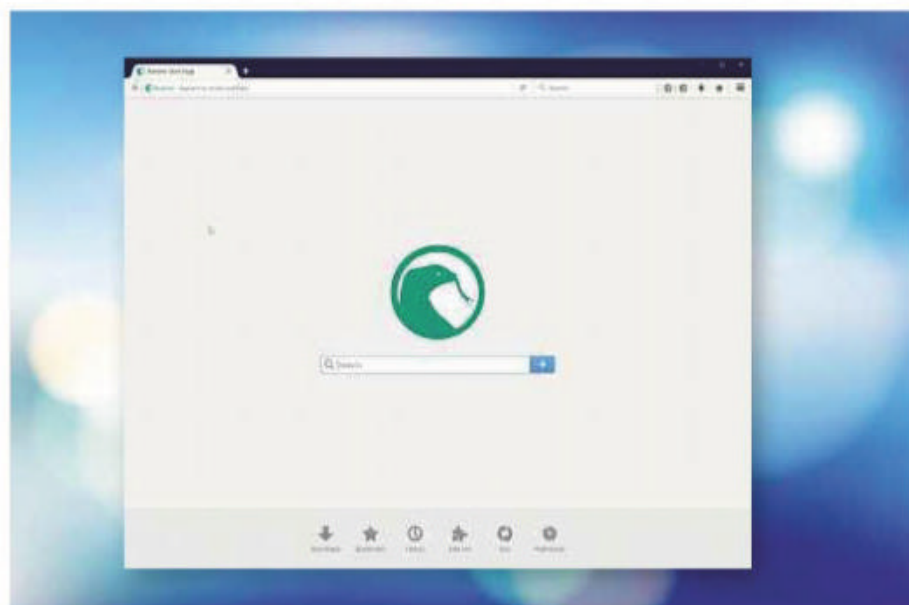
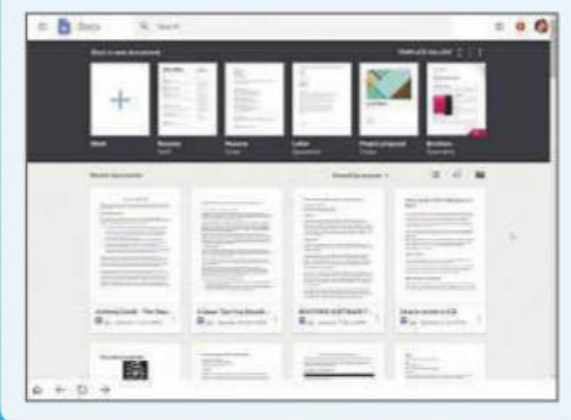
### PlayDocs for Google Docs

[bit.ly/playdocs470](http://bit.ly/playdocs470)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 24.96MB

Google Docs is accessed via your browser, but PlayDocs turns it into a Windows desktop application. This unofficial third-party app presents your documents in a stylish way, with a template gallery at the top. It needs a Google account and web access. There are PlaySheets and PlaySlides apps available, too, for Google's spreadsheet and presentation creator.



## WEB BROWSER

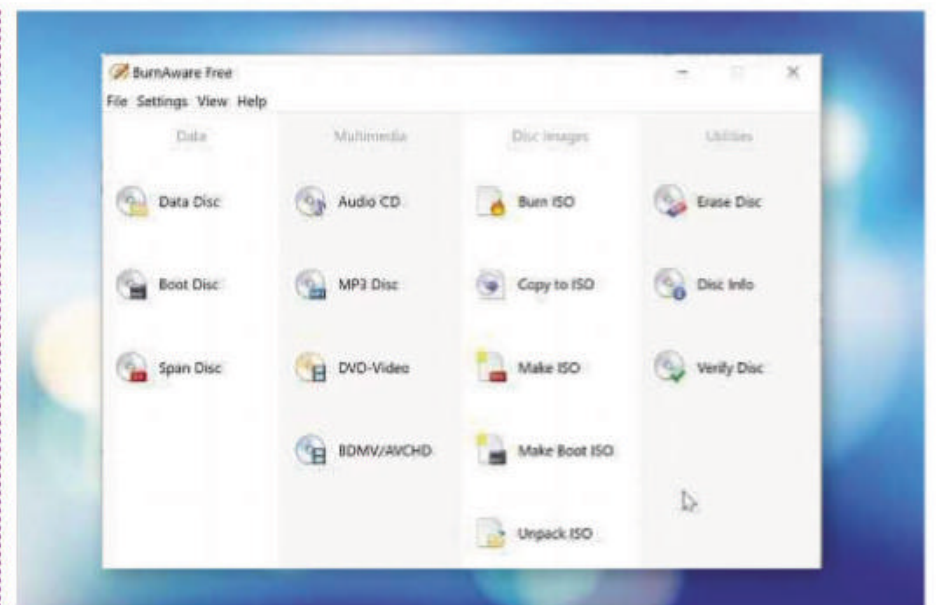
### Basilisk

[www.basilisk-browser.org](http://www.basilisk-browser.org)

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

**File size:** 45.9MB

Basilisk is a modern web browser from the team behind Pale Moon ([www.palemoon.org](http://www.palemoon.org)). Based on Firefox, it aims to keep many of the features that Mozilla removed from its browser, so it has Firefox's pre-Quantum interface and uses the Goanna layout and rendering engine from Pale Moon (a fork of Firefox's Gecko engine). The browser supports traditional extensions and Firefox plugins, but recently dropped its experimental support for Firefox WebExtensions.



## DISC-AUTHORING TOOL

### BurnAware 12 Free

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

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 9.4MB

The free version of BurnAware can write to CDs, DVDs and Blu-rays, produce audio discs and video DVDs, create and burn image files, erase rewritable media and more. This update introduces two view layout styles for the main window – horizontal and vertical. It also gains an option to generate MD5 checksum for ISO files, and a track-normalisation option for use when creating Audio CD compilations.

Make sure you check each step during installation and decline the bundled junk.



## DUPLICATE FINDER

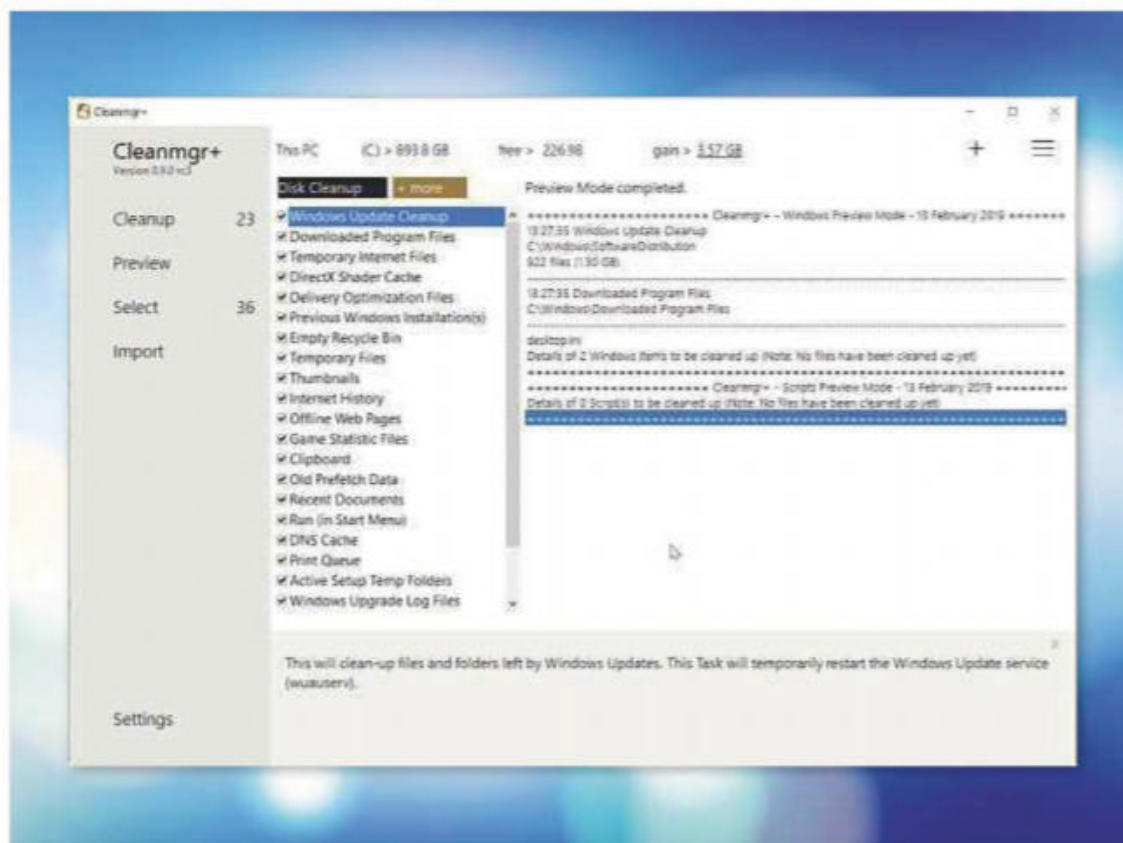
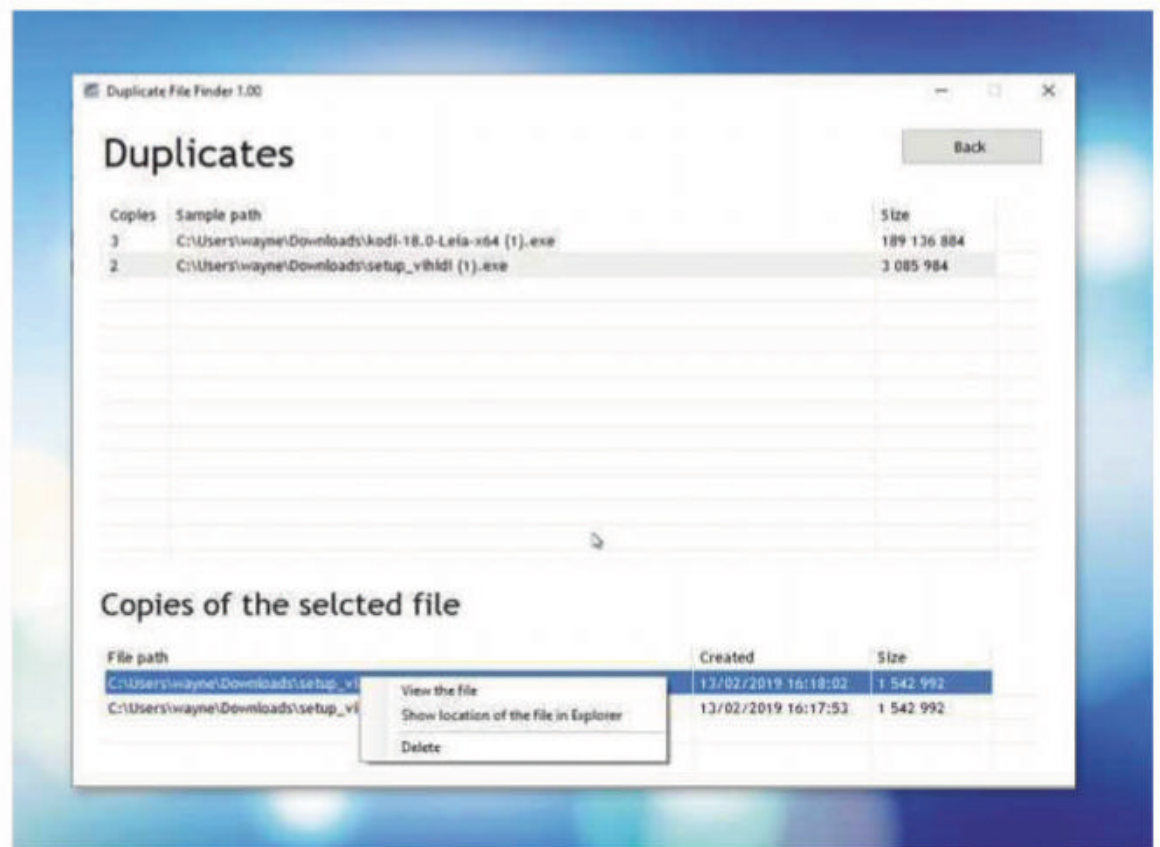
### Duplicate File Finder

[bit.ly/dffind470](http://bit.ly/dffind470)

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

**File size:** 1.5MB

It is easy to inadvertently accrue a vast number of duplicate files – copies of photos, music tracks, videos, documents and so on. Duplicate File Finder can locate multiple instances of identical items, even if they have different names. By default, it searches the main folders on your PC (Desktop, Documents, Music, Pictures and Downloads), but you can specify custom folders if you wish, and have the program skip small files (under 100KB), which are unlikely to be of interest. Once Duplicate File Finder has scanned your system, the program presents its findings. Right-clicking a duplicate file lets you view the file or its location, and delete it.



## SYSTEM CLEANER

### Cleanmgr+

[www.getclone.app](http://www.getclone.app)

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

**File size:** 136KB

Microsoft is planning to retire its Disk Cleanup tool from future versions of Windows 10, replacing it with Storage Sense. The portable tool Cleanmgr+ aims to fill the void, replicating Disk Cleanup but introducing additional features and removing more junk.

Cleanmgr+ is very easy to use – just run the software and select the areas you want it to clean (there are some additional options under the +more section). Click Preview to get an idea of what the program will remove, then click Cleanup to start the process. You can see at a glance how much free space there is on your computer and how much can be recovered.

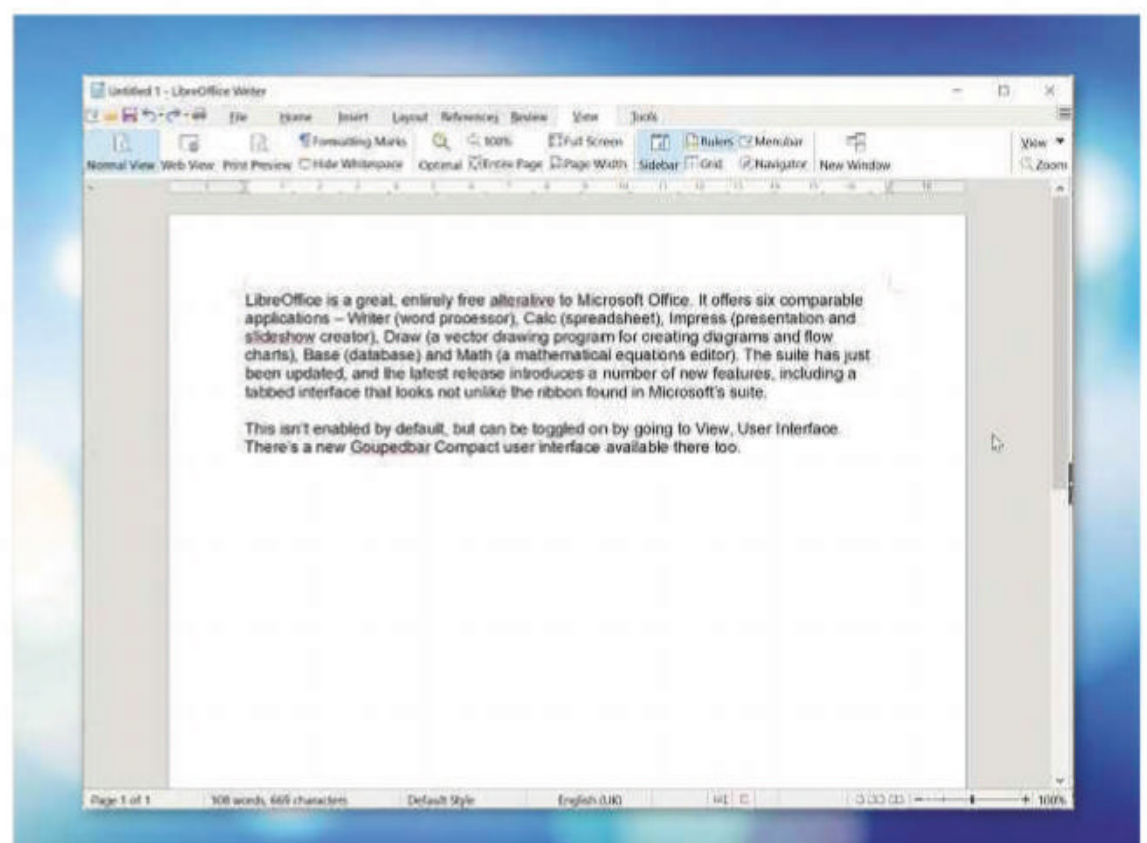
## OFFICE SUITE

### LibreOffice 6.2

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

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10, Mac OS or Linux **File size:** 285MB

LibreOffice is an excellent alternative to Microsoft Office that's completely free. It has six comparable applications – Writer (word processor), Calc (spreadsheet), Impress (presentation and slideshow creator), Draw (a vector drawing program for creating diagrams and flowcharts), Base (database) and Math (a mathematical equations editor). The suite has just been updated to include a number of new features, including a tabbed interface that looks not unlike the ribbon found in Microsoft's suite. This isn't enabled by default, but can be toggled on by going to View, User Interface. There's a new Groupedbar Compact UI available there, too.







## GAME

### What Never Was

[bit.ly/wnw470](http://bit.ly/wnw470)

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10 or Mac OS **File size:** 268MB

What Never Was is a highly atmospheric first-person adventure game. You play the role of Sarah, who is tasked with clearing out her grandfather's attic following his death. There are lots of fascinating items to explore and intriguing but solvable puzzles to tackle, and the story has enough depth to draw you in. The game itself is on the short side, so it doesn't take long to complete.

## Don't install...

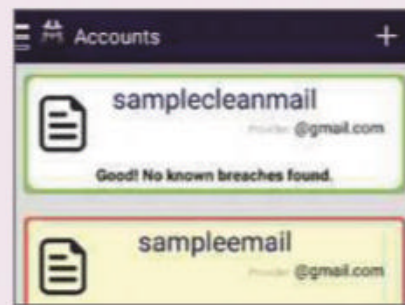
### Hacked Leaks Checker

[bit.ly/hacked470](http://bit.ly/hacked470)

**Min requirements:** Android 4.03

**File size:** 3.4MB

This free app checks if your email address is associated with known data leaks, and monitors for new breaches, so you can take action to protect your data. It works well but is only available as an Android app, and we felt uneasy about handing over our email address to an unknown name rather than a respected security company.



## ...Install this instead

### Spybot Identity Monitor

[bit.ly/spybot470](http://bit.ly/spybot470)

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

**File size:** 7.4MB

Spybot Identity Monitor lets you check to see if your personal information is in the hands of hackers following a security breach, so you can take urgent action to protect your data. This handy free tool monitors an online database of hacked sites and services, the excellent Have I Been Pwned service ([haveibeenpwned.com](http://haveibeenpwned.com)), so you can keep an eye on whether your email addresses, usernames and passwords are safe to use. Just click the My Accounts button, then add either an email address or a username – you can add as many accounts as you need.



## OTHER OPERATING SYSTEMS

What's new for Linux and Mac OS



## LINUX DISTRO

### Kodachi 6

[bit.ly/kodachi470](http://bit.ly/kodachi470)

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 2.26GB

When asked to name a secure, privacy-focused operating system, most Linux users would say Tails ([tails.boum.org](http://tails.boum.org)). It isn't the only choice available, though. Kodachi is a comparable alternative that offers a number of features not found on its rival, such as built-in VPNs from different providers and multiple DNS options. Version 6.0 is based on Xubuntu 18.04 LTS, and upgrades the Linux kernel to 4.19. It adds new features, and the latest versions of various tools. You can run Kodachi as a virtual machine using a tool such as VirtualBox, or download it to a USB drive and boot it from there.



## LINUX TOOL

### WINE 4

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

**Min requirements:** Linux **File size:** 20.6MB

You can run Windows software on Linux, but to do so you'll first need to install the WINE (Wine Is Not an Emulator) compatibility layer. This software can run most Windows programs flawlessly, and you can use it as the default installer for your Windows software. This latest release adds support for Vulkan, Direct3D 12 and game controllers, and implements a number of Direct3D 10 and 11 features.

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



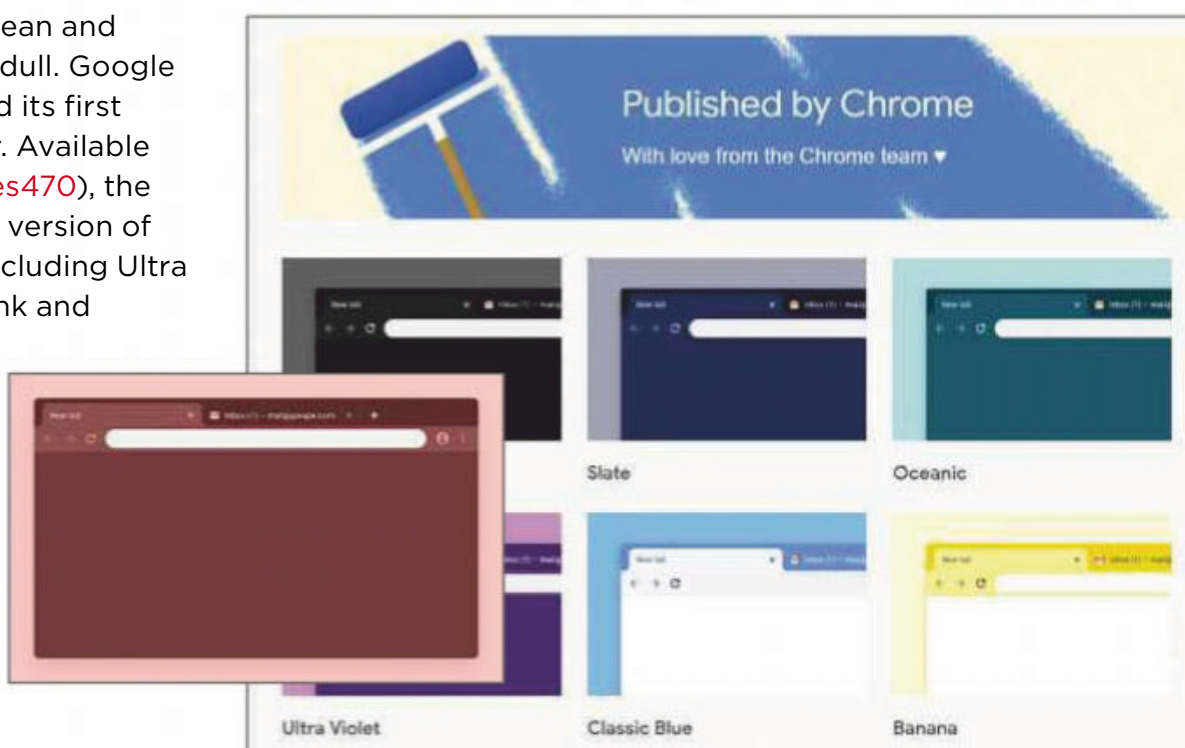
# Best New Browser Tools



## CHROME

### Customise Chrome using Google's new themes

Chrome's minimalist white design looks clean and modern but, let's be honest, it's also a bit dull. Google clearly agrees, because it has just released its first ever set of official themes for the browser. Available from the Chrome Web Store ([bit.ly/themes470](https://bit.ly/themes470)), the 14 colourful themes let you decorate your version of Chrome in a range of attractive shades, including Ultra Violet, Honeysuckle, Oceanic, Pretty in Pink and Marsala (pictured). There's also the more sombre Just Black, which will have to suffice until Chrome introduces a proper night mode in version 74 (see last issue's Webometer). The themes change the appearance of Chrome's toolbars, but not its menus or web pages. If you don't like what you see, you can simply click Undo. Other theme collections include Zodiac Animals, Space Exploration and Enchanting Places.



### Get more control over Netflix playback

Netflix is a brilliant streaming service, but it has a pretty basic set of features and navigation can be fiddly. The new Chrome extension Netflix Extended ([bit.ly/netflix470](https://bit.ly/netflix470)) addresses both problems by adding a raft of useful tools and shortcuts to the desktop version of the service. For example, it makes binge-watching TV shows less disjointed by letting you skip the credits and recaps that appear at the beginning and end of episodes. It also stops Netflix interrupting to ask if you're still watching, plays the next episode of a series automatically, mutes those annoying trailers that play loudly while you're browsing and lets you disable the play/pause function on touchscreens. Best of all, you can use keyboard shortcuts to control Netflix: press N to

skip to the next episode, B to go back to the previous one, Esc to return to the Netflix homepage and R to play a random TV show or film.

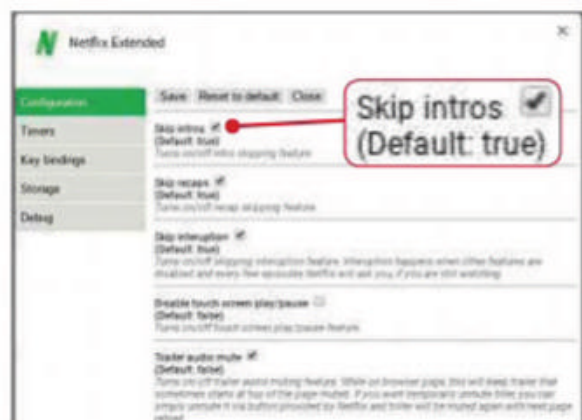
### Make your New Tab page less boring

Most add-ons for customising new browser tabs add pretty pictures to make them more interesting. Less Boring New Tab ([bit.ly/less470](https://bit.ly/less470)) takes a more flexible approach by transforming your New Tab page into an online noticeboard. You can add as many notes and images as you like and move them anywhere. The add-on saves your items when you close the tab so they're there when you open a new one. Click the eyedropper icon in the bottom-right corner to change the page's background colour, and double-click the title bar of a note or image to remove it.

Less Boring New Tab also displays the date and time, so it's useful as well as interesting. It's also available for Firefox ([bit.ly/boringfire470](https://bit.ly/boringfire470)).

### Track how long you spend on YouTube

It's all too easy to disappear down a YouTube 'rabbit hole', visiting the site to watch one video and ending up wasting hours. YouTube Time Tracker ([bit.ly/youtube470](https://bit.ly/youtube470)) can help you snap out of it by letting you know exactly how much time you've spent on the site. A timer next to the YouTube logo shows how long you've spent watching YouTube videos today, this week, this month and this year. It also tells you if that figure is higher or lower than during the previous time period.





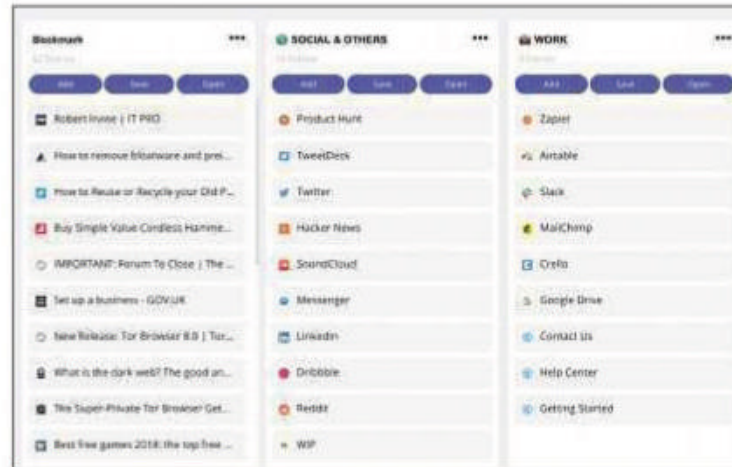
This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more



## FIREFOX

### Manage all your bookmarks more easily

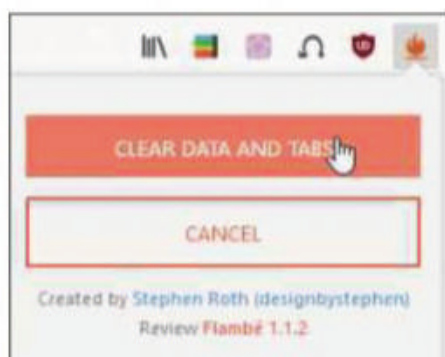
Many of us no longer bother to bookmark sites, relying instead on the address bar's autocomplete function, but a new Firefox and Chrome add-on called Qlearly ([qlearly.com](http://qlearly.com)) hopes to make bookmarks useful again. Rather than tucking your saved pages away in an unwieldy list, it presents them on your New Tab page



as attractive, easy-to-browse boards, which makes them easy to open, delete, edit and create with a single click. Qlearly's boards include a to-do list for organising your daily tasks, pre-filled categories for Work and Social & Others sites (which you can edit as required) and an option to view all your current tabs. If you register with the service, you can share your Qleary boards with others, sync them between devices and apply a night mode to the page.

### Delete all your browsing data in one click

Firefox's private mode is an effective way to stop the browser storing details of the sites you visit, but only if you remember to activate it before you start browsing and close all open tabs afterwards. A much easier way to protect your privacy is to install the delightfully named Flambé ([bit.ly/flambe470](http://bit.ly/flambe470)), which lets you wipe all traces of your browsing activities in one fell swoop. As well as clearing your local



browsing history, cache, cookies and details of all the files you've downloaded, it closes all open tabs,

leaving you with just an empty one so you can start browsing afresh. To use Flambé, simply click its flame icon in the toolbar, then click 'Clear Data and Tabs' to erase everything you've done.

### Allow certain websites to play sound automatically

Our favourite new feature in Firefox 66 (released 19 March) is its ability to stop



websites automatically playing noisy audio and video when you open a page. Instead, media only plays when you click it, which makes websites much less annoying. This handy feature is enabled by default, but there may be times when you want sound to play automatically, such as when visiting a particular streaming site, so it's worth knowing how to disable the option selectively. To do this, click the crossed-out Play button in your address bar, then click the 'Autoplay sound' drop-down menu and choose Allow.

If for some strange reason you want to give all websites permission to autoplay audio, click the cog icon next to Permissions and deselect the option 'Block websites from automatically playing sound'.

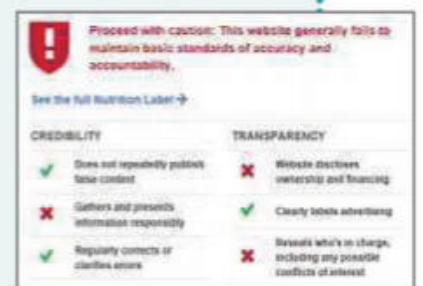
## OTHER BROWSERS



### Check for fake news in Edge

As we reported in Issue 468, the mobile version of Microsoft's Edge browser now includes a tool called NewsGuard that warns you when a site you're visiting is guilty of propagating 'fake news' – content that's inaccurate, exaggerated or misleading.

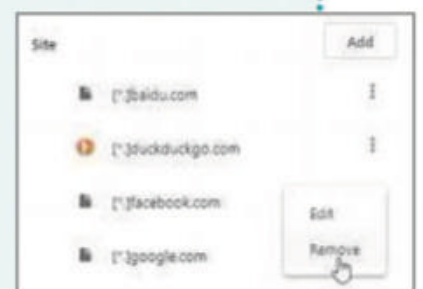
If you want to use NewsGuard in Edge on your PC, install the extension from [bit.ly/newsguard470](http://bit.ly/newsguard470). Now, when you visit a website that NewsGuard deems unreliable, it displays a red exclamation-mark icon in your toolbar. Click this to find out why NewsGuard has flagged the site – perhaps because it fails to "gather and present information responsibly", for example. If you find a site you think is guilty of spreading fake news, you can submit it to NewsGuard for evaluation.



### Block ads on Google and Facebook

Opera has a built-in ad blocker, which saves you having to install a third-party tool such as uBlock Origin. Unfortunately, this has started allowing ads on Google and Facebook – the two places you least want to see them. The good news is that this is easy to fix. Press Ctrl+Shift+E to open Opera's Extensions Manager, then click the Options button next to Opera Ad Blocker.

Choose 'Manage exceptions', then click the three-dot buttons next to 'facebook.com' and 'google.com' and click Remove.







# Best Free Apps



## App of the Fortnight

### ACCESSIBILITY

## Live Transcribe

[bit.ly/transcribe470](https://bit.ly/transcribe470)

 (varies)

NEW

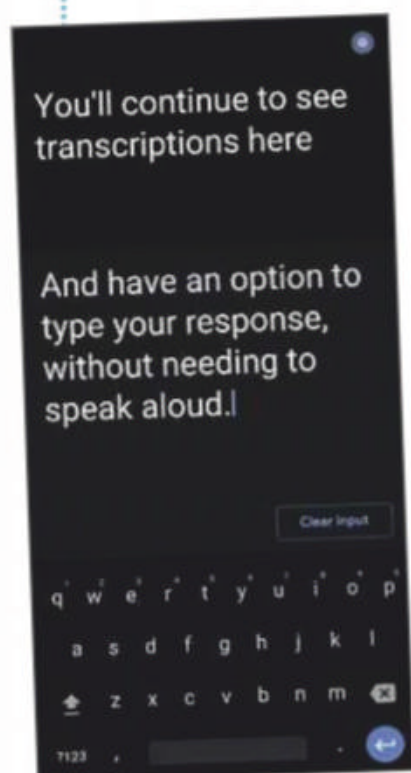
Live Transcribe is one of two new accessibility apps from Google, aimed at helping people who are deaf or hard of hearing to communicate – the other being Sound Amplifier (see opposite page).

Developed by a researcher at Google, Live Transcribe harnesses the tech giant's automatic speech-recognition technology to perform on-the-fly transcriptions of spoken language, effectively live-captioning speech in real time and acting as an intermediary so that two-way conversations can take place. It uses your device's built-in microphone to 'hear' (though external microphones and headsets are also supported) and displays the spoken words as on-screen text.

Currently, the app supports more than 70 different languages and dialects and, while it's not a translator, it can facilitate bilingual conversations by allowing you to quickly switch between languages. You can even reply without talking, if necessary, by using the in-app keyboard to type your responses instead of speaking them out loud.

Advanced features include a vibrating alert that automatically notifies you when someone has resumed speaking after a pause; and a profanity filter, which bleeps out rude words. Like other Android accessibility features, you can enable a dedicated shortcut to Live Transcribe on the navigation bar, so you can quickly launch it and start transcribing. Just as importantly, the app respects your privacy – conversations remain on your device, rather than being stored on Google's cloud servers.

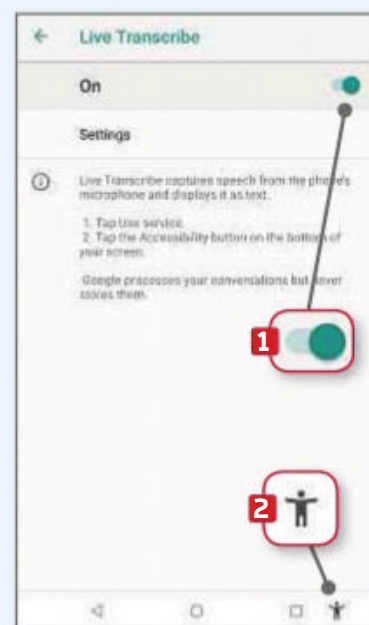
Initially, Live Transcribe was exclusive to Google's Pixel 3 handsets, but now the company has made the app available to a wider range of devices. It's currently listed as 'unreleased' on Google Play, which means it's still in beta, but we found it already works brilliantly.



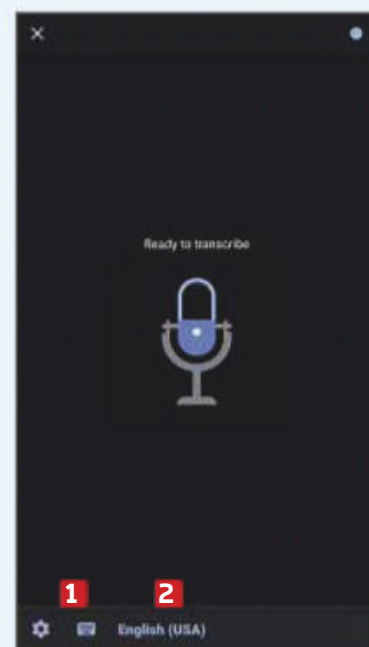
### MINI WORKSHOP

## Turn speech into text using Live Transcribe

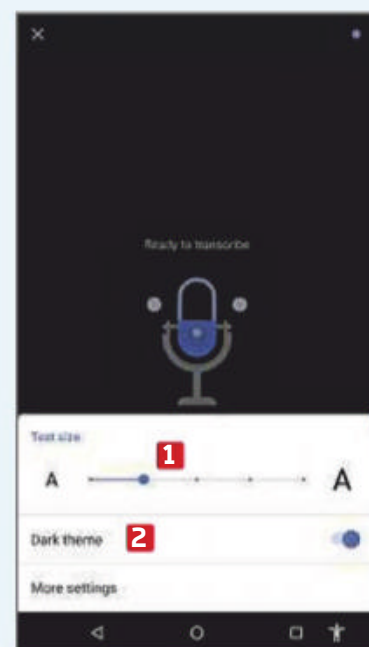
**1** Before you use Live Transcribe, you need to enable it in your device's accessibility settings. Go to Settings, Accessibility, Live Transcribe and press the switch at the top of the screen **1** to enable it. Then, in the 'Use Live Transcribe?' window that pops up, choose OK, and tap Got It. You'll notice a new Accessibility icon at the bottom of your device's screen. **2** You can press this at any time to begin transcribing.



**2** Launch Live Transcribe and allow the app permission to record audio when prompted. To select the correct language, press anywhere on the black background to reveal a toolbar at the bottom of the screen. **1** Tap the language displayed – English (USA) is the default **2** – then scroll through the list of languages that opens and make your selection – for example, English (Great Britain).



**3** Press the background, then tap the cog icon in the lower bar for some quick settings. Here, you can increase the app's text size **1** or switch between dark and light themes. **2** Choose 'More settings' here for advanced options, such as a vibration alert for when speech resumes after a pause and a profanity-masking tool. To start transcribing, just press the Accessibility icon at the bottom of the screen and start talking.



Our rating





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

### ACCESSIBILITY

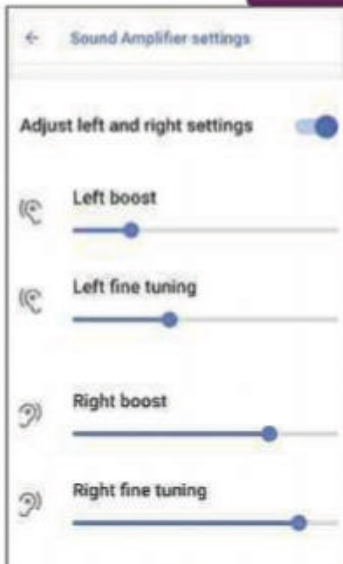
#### Sound Amplifier

[bit.ly/soundamp470](http://bit.ly/soundamp470)

 9

Demoed at Google's I/O event in 2018, Sound Amplifier is a new accessibility tool that demonstrates

Android's new dynamic-processing audio effects. The app is designed to work a little like a hearing aid, helping you focus on the sounds you want to listen to, rather than background noise and other distractions. Annoyingly, Sound Amplifier is currently only available for devices running the latest Android version (9, better known as Pie) and you need a set of wired headphones.



Our rating



### GAME

#### Tony Hawk's Skate Jam

[bit.ly/skatedroid470](http://bit.ly/skatedroid470)

[bit.ly/skateios470](http://bit.ly/skateios470)

 4.1  8



Fans of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater game on the original PlayStation will be pleased to discover they can once again take to their boards and grind, flip or combo their way through virtual skate parks - this time on the mobile platform of their choice. Skate Jam is free to play (with the usual in-app purchases) and features a number of challenges, including classic career mode, online tournaments and a special Hawk Mode where you play as the skateboarding legend.



Our rating



### PHOTOS

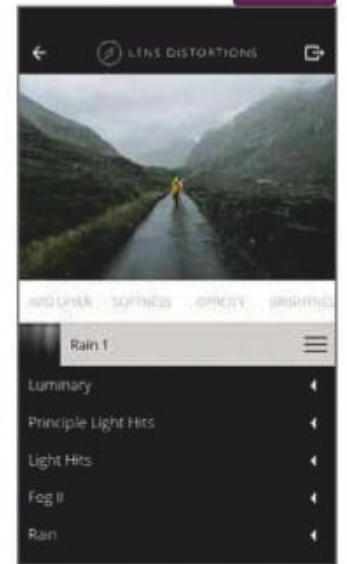
#### Lens Distortions

[bit.ly/distort470](http://bit.ly/distort470)

 (Varies)

There's certainly no shortage of apps offering photo filters and effects in the Google Play store, but this new tool (currently still in beta) offers

filters specifically designed to recreate certain distortion effects, including light that causes lens flares and weather conditions, such as fog and rain. Lens Distortions is a nicely designed app and some of the filters look great when applied to the right shots. However, the free selection is limited, and the app requires a £1 per month subscription to unlock the rest.



Our rating



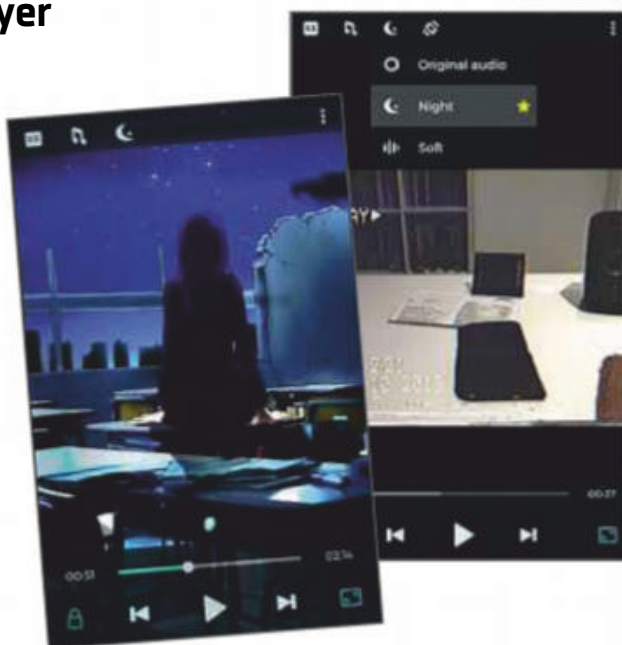
### VIDEO

#### Night Video Player

[bit.ly/nightvid470](http://bit.ly/nightvid470)

 4.1  10

If you sometimes struggle to make out what people are saying in films and TV shows, then you're not alone. It's currently very fashionable for filmmakers to bury the actors' dialogue deep down in the audio mix, making it hard for our ears to pick out speech from all the other sounds and music, particularly at low volumes. That's where this ingenious video player comes in. Night Video Player offers three audio modes: Original; 'Smart night mode', which boosts the volume of any human speech; and 'Soft sound mode', which uses additional audio effects to increase the loudness of very quiet dialogue.



Our rating



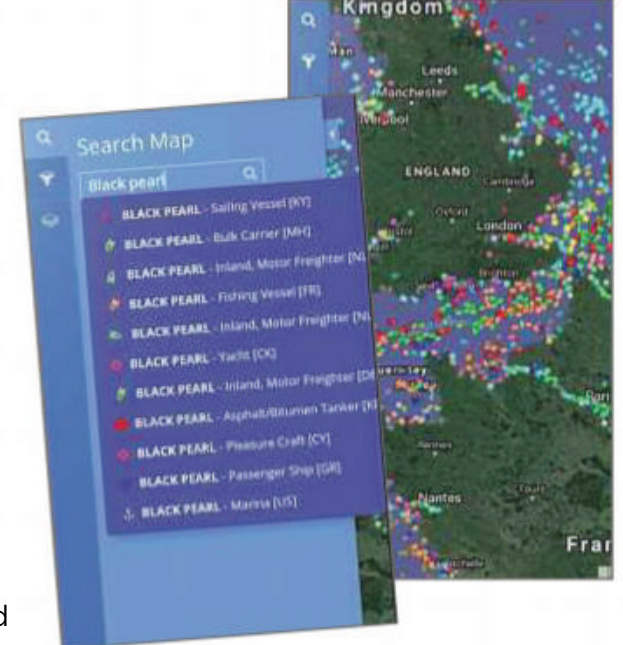
### NAVIGATION

#### Ship Tracker

[bit.ly/ship470](http://bit.ly/ship470)

 4.0.3

Perhaps you have a professional interest in marine traffic, or maybe you're just a shipping enthusiast. Either way, this brilliant app is a must-have. Ship Tracker works just like a flight tracker, but for boats instead of planes, providing real-time data for ship positions, port arrival and departure times, live wind and weather forecasts and more. Almost 80,000 vessels are covered, with detailed tracking information provided for each one, including the type of ship, its number, speed, shipping line and more. You can browse the map, search by ship or port, create your own virtual fleet and share ship positions with others.



Our rating





# 5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

## TOOLS

### MyScript Calculator 2

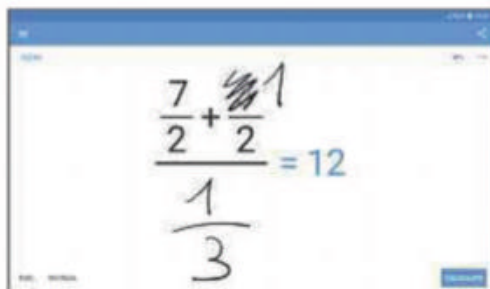
[bit.ly/calcdroid470](http://bit.ly/calcdroid470)

[bit.ly/calcios470](http://bit.ly/calcios470)

**Price:** £2.69 (Android), £2.99 (iOS)

 5  11

It's handy to have a calculator app in your pocket wherever you go. This one lets you scribble calculations as if you were writing on a piece of paper and frankly it's awesome.



## MUSIC

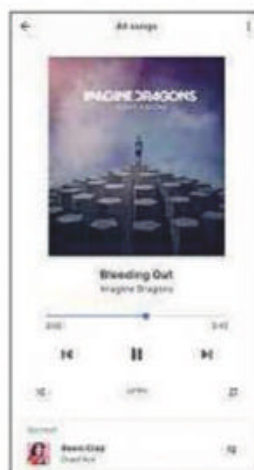
### TimberX Music Player

[bit.ly/timberx470](http://bit.ly/timberx470)

**Price:** 89p

 5

This open-source alternative to Google Play Music works across Android phones, wearables and Chromecast devices. It's a smart-looking music player with a Material theme design.



## GAME

### The Escapists 2: Pocket Breakout

[bit.ly/escapistdroid470](http://bit.ly/escapistdroid470)

[bit.ly/escapistios470](http://bit.ly/escapistios470)

**Price:** £6.99

 5  12.1



With bigger environments than the original game and a four-way multiplayer mode, this is quite literally the only mobile prison-break strategy game sequel you'll ever need.

## WALLPAPER

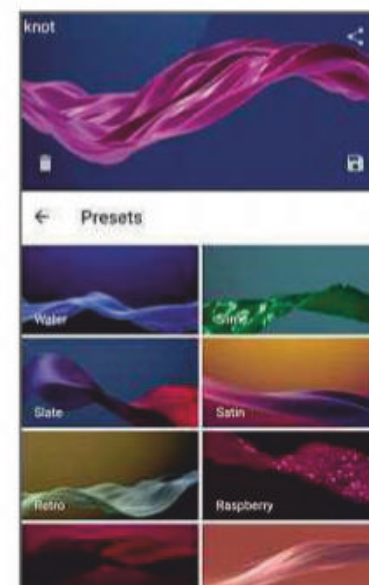
### Wave 3D

[bit.ly/wave2470](http://bit.ly/wave2470)

**Price:** 79p

 6

This follow-up to the hugely popular Android live wallpaper app Wave offers animated backgrounds with ultra-realistic lighting effects and reflections and lets you create your own custom presets.



## KIDS

### Poldo's Puzzle

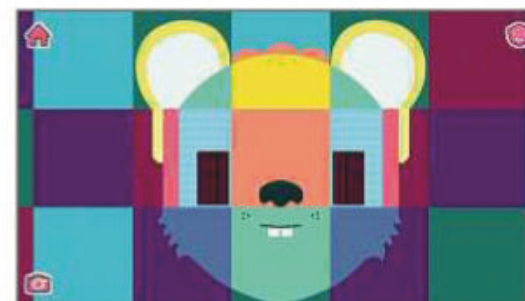
[bit.ly/poldodroid470](http://bit.ly/poldodroid470)

[bit.ly/poldoios470](http://bit.ly/poldoios470)

**Price:** 99p

 4.1  8

This simple, colourful puzzle game for younger users tasks toddlers with spinning blocks to uncover Poldo the robot and chums. You can also create your own animals and save them.



MyScript Calculator 2



TimberX Music Player



The Escapists 2: Pocket Breakout



Wave 3D



Poldo's Puzzle



## Don't install...

### Noise Killer

[bit.ly/noise470](http://bit.ly/noise470)

If you're concerned about noise levels, what's the last thing you need? More annoying noises, perhaps? This rather basic app is designed to sound an alert when ambient noise reaches a certain decibel level. You can choose between an irritating beep or an even more irritating voice, which says "Quiet Please" or "Shhhh!". It's perfect if you're someone who happens to run their own library, but pretty useless if you're anyone else.



## ...Install this instead

### Sound Meter

[bit.ly/sound470](http://bit.ly/sound470)

 4

Noisy neighbours? Concerned about noise pollution? Looking to create an oasis of peace and quiet? Whatever your reason for monitoring sound levels, this app should provide everything you need. It displays real-time information about current decibel levels via an on-screen gauge, numerical value and a scrolling graph. You get a short description of the sort of environments you'd expect to find equivalent noise levels - 'quiet office' or 'busy traffic', for example. Knowing that audio-capture capabilities vary from device to device, the app's developers have provided tools for calibrating your microphone. And there's even a dark mode, if you're concerned about light pollution, too.







# Take a Screen Break

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

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

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



## CAN YOU GUESS THE ACTORS 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** Two Stanford University students, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, launch the Google search engine, based on a research project called BackRub.

**2** The first Apple iMac, the G3, goes on sale. It's made of translucent 'Bondi Blue'-coloured plastic and features a 15in CRT display.



**3** The online bookstore Amazon expands into selling CDs, DVDs and videos, and buys the popular website the Internet Movie Database (IMDb).

**4** A new compression format called MPEG-4 is introduced. It soon becomes the standard means of delivering digital audio and video online.



**5** Microsoft releases a major new version of its Windows operating system. It comes with Internet Explorer, Outlook Express and NetMeeting.



## COMPETITIONS

### WIN 1 OF 4 KitSound Slammers Bluetooth Headphones

KitSound's Slammers Headphones let you listen to your music wirelessly with a range of up to 10 metres. The oval-shaped earcups surround your ears with soft padding, while the swivel earcups allow you to keep an ear on the rest of the world. To enter, email your address to [webusercomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webusercomp@dennis.co.uk) with 'slammers' in the subject line. For more details, visit [www.kitsound.co.uk](http://www.kitsound.co.uk) and follow @kitsounduk on Instagram.



**WORTH  
£29.99  
EACH**

### WIN 1 OF 4 Nero Platinum 2019

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



**WORTH  
£79.99  
EACH**

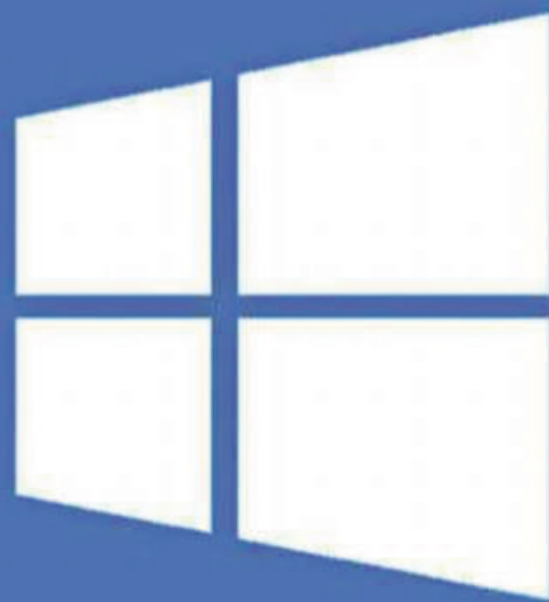




# FAQ

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

## Our guide to Windows Lite



Microsoft plans to challenge Chrome OS with a slimmed-down, cloud-based version of Windows. **David Crookes** reveals what we know so far about the new operating system

### What is it?

According to the rumours, Windows Lite is a slimmed-down version of Microsoft's operating system, although most of this information has been pieced together



**Windows Lite is said to be more like Chrome OS than a standard OS**

from unofficial sources, with a dollop of speculation thrown in. That said, many details certainly ring true, and the smart

money is on Microsoft producing an OS that can compete more

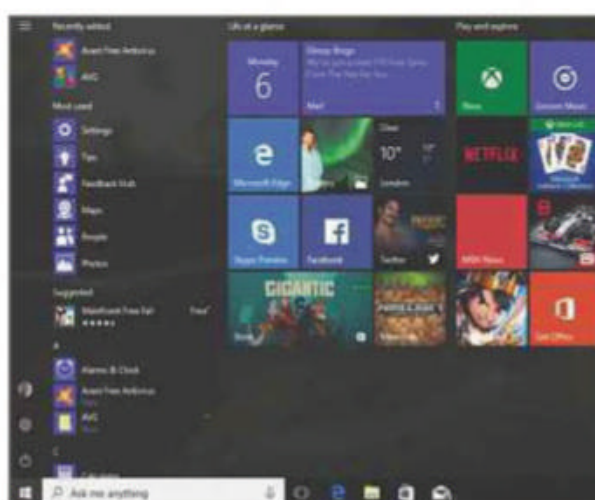
effectively with Chrome OS and iOS.

### So what do we know?

First of all, Windows Lite may not only be leaner but also much faster than Microsoft's previous operating systems. Always-on and always-connected, the software is believed to be based on the equally secretive Windows Core OS project ([bit.ly/core470](http://bit.ly/core470)), which Microsoft hopes will lay the groundwork for a single operating system that works on all its devices. However, there's a good chance that Lite won't look much like traditional Windows products, so it could be a bold move from Microsoft.

### So what will it look like?

Insiders suggest that Microsoft is working on a new user interface for Windows Lite, with the emphasis on creating something fresh. To that end, we're likely to see an OS that promotes functionality above all else, so it will be a lot simpler. Features such as Live Tiles are out and the Start menu will probably be redesigned – assuming it survives. If the rumours are true, Microsoft surely hopes that a new interface will encourage users to gravitate towards Lite rather than alienate people who are used to current versions of Windows.



**Windows Lite may drop the pointless Live Tiles feature from the Start menu**

### Why, what is Microsoft thinking?

According to reports, Microsoft doesn't want users to approach Windows Lite

with any preconceptions. The company would rather people look at what Lite *can* do rather than focusing on what it lacks. That way, users will be less inclined to complain when they find that the operating system doesn't run a particular Windows application or realise they can't install anything that isn't available from the Microsoft Store.

### But will it still be Windows?

That's something Microsoft is said to be considering very seriously. There's a good chance that the new operating system won't actually be called Windows Lite when it's released. In fact, indications are that Microsoft will drop the name Windows entirely to remove any associations with its larger, more capable operating system. Although it may seem counter-intuitive, this could be a good move for Microsoft. After all, Google has succeeded in finding a large user base for its pared-down Chrome OS, so with heavy promotion there's no reason why Microsoft's cloud OS couldn't do the same.

### What software will Lite run?

Reports suggest that it will run Universal Windows Platform (UWP) apps, which Microsoft developed to run seamlessly between Windows 10, Xbox One,





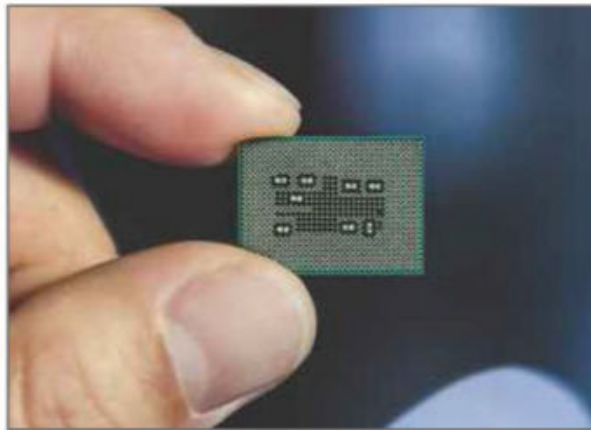
**Windows Lite may finally find a use for Universal Windows Platform apps**

HoloLens and Windows 10 Mobile (which will be declared officially dead at the end of this year). Lite will also run Progressive Web Apps (PWAs), which we looked at in Issue 452's FAQ ([bit.ly/webuser452](http://bit.ly/webuser452)). These work from within your web browser but they behave in much the same way as native software, so that in use they feel just like the apps installed on your device. Microsoft has been heavily promoting PWAs in Edge and, although the company is abandoning that browser in favour of a new one based on Chromium, it may well have alerted users to their potential.

## Will there be a minimum spec for Lite computers?

Probably, although Microsoft's intention isn't to produce an operating system that pushes technology to the max. According to tech-news site Petri's Brad Sams ([bit.ly/petri470](http://bit.ly/petri470)), who seems to know a lot about the various developments with Lite, Qualcomm's next generation of Snapdragon processors are expected to power the fledgling Lite devices – specifically the ARM-based Snapdragon 8cx 'system on a chip'. The beauty of this

particular processor is that it doesn't need a fan and allows Microsoft to produce the type of instant-on, always-connected devices it has always aspired to make.



**The Snapdragon 8cx processor is expected to power Windows Lite devices**

## When will I be able to buy it?

Insiders expect Microsoft to announce Windows Lite (or whatever it decides to call the OS) at its annual developer conference, Build, which runs from 6 to 8 May ([www.microsoft.com/build](http://www.microsoft.com/build)). When the software will actually see the light of day is anyone's guess, although rumours suggest that Microsoft already has the necessary hardware in place (thanks to another secret project called



**The simplicity of the Windows Lite OS should make it ideal for use in schools**

Centaurus). One thing we're *almost* sure of is that you won't be able to buy the operating system on its own. Instead, it will be preinstalled on new devices, and there are suggestions that these could have as little as 32GB of storage and 2GB of RAM.

## So who is Lite aimed at?

Since Lite is unlikely to offer the flexibility of a full-blown operating system, it will probably be aimed at people who don't need the full computing experience. PC processing power has come on in leaps and bounds over the years, but it's fair to assume that large numbers of people don't use their computers to anywhere near their full potential. The ability to work with office software, browse the web, check emails and social media, listen to music and enjoy images and videos is often more than enough.

## Will schools and businesses be interested?

Google's simple Chrome OS software has proved very popular in schools, and Microsoft is sure to want a large slice of that education market. Businesses may look elsewhere, however. As Sams says: "this is not a version of the OS that will run in the enterprise or even small business environments", because Windows Lite is likely to be *too* light for effective business use.

## So is it worth giving a try?

It's hard to say without more details, but you should bear in mind that Windows Lite won't give you the option to switch to the full Windows 10 if you find it doesn't suit you. This is because, as we've said, it won't be based on Windows 10 but on Windows Core OS, so once you've made your choice, you're stuck with it. In many ways, the new OS will live or die by the number and quality of the PWAs available. One thing's for sure, though: Microsoft won't want any repeat of its previous attempts to make a pared-back OS, such as Windows RT and Windows S, both of which failed.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO WINDOWS 10 S?

Microsoft released Windows 10 S in May 2017 with the intention of reducing the cost of computing. Aimed at the educational market, the OS only ran software from the Windows Store, making it more restrictive than standard Windows. Microsoft said it was "streamlined for security and superior performance", with boot times 15 seconds faster than Windows 10 Pro and a reduced risk of viruses. Ironically, though, it came on expensive laptops such as Surface.

Since April 2018, Windows 10 S has been called 'Windows 10 in S Mode', indicating that it's no more than a 'mode' of the full OS. What's

more, you can now switch out of S mode if you need to install apps that aren't available from the Microsoft Store. If that wasn't indication enough that Microsoft is about to drop S, then Lite surely is.





# Do You Still Need



Traditional security software can be slow, overzealous and expensive, but without it your PC is at constant risk – or is it? **Robert Irvine** examines the arguments for and against abandoning your current protection



## WINDOWS DEFENDER NOW OFFERS ENOUGH PROTECTION

**FOR** Microsoft was once roundly – and rightly – mocked for its efforts to compete with antivirus software from security specialists such as McAfee, Norton and Kaspersky. The original Windows Defender (initially called Microsoft AntiSpyware) did little more than scan for spyware, so you still needed a separate antivirus program; the Windows Firewall in XP only blocked incoming traffic, so malware on your PC was able to connect to the internet; and Microsoft Security Essentials, while more powerful than Defender, regularly came bottom in antivirus tests, beaten by rival free tools from Avast and AVG.

Come Windows 10 and Microsoft has finally got it right. The built-in Windows Defender Security Centre is a vast improvement on its predecessors, offering powerful real-time protection against malware; advanced scanning for detecting and removing hidden threats; exploit protection that safeguards your



Defender scans your system automatically and works quietly in the background

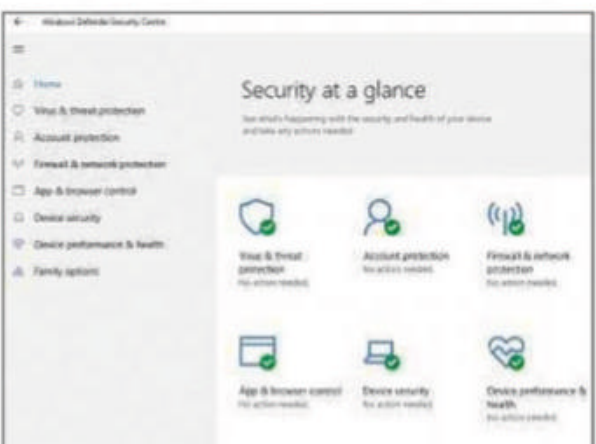
system against attacks; a secure-boot function that stops malicious software running on startup; and optional OneDrive backup so you don't lose your files to a ransomware infection.

Defender works automatically in Windows 10 until you replace it with third-party security software. This ensures that Windows users who aren't security-savvy are always reliably protected, while those who do know their Avira from their ZoneAlarm are at least covered until they install their preferred anti-malware program.

Whereas some security software requires a lot of memory and processing power, especially while scanning and updating, Windows Defender runs quietly in the background without slowing your PC. And unlike other free security tools, it doesn't tempt you with useful features that are only available in its paid-for version (there isn't one) or keep nagging you to upgrade. Defender scans your system every day, and updates its virus definitions

automatically to protect you against the latest threats, with options to perform these tasks manually as required.

However, as with all security software, the proof is in the protection and it's in this area that Windows Defender has made the most significant improvement. The independent anti-malware-testing company SE Labs ([selabs.uk](http://selabs.uk)) has just released its latest results, from tests conducted on consumer security software between October and December, and Defender emerged almost top of the table. Microsoft's once-beleaguered program scored a 100% total accuracy rating for its detection of and protection against threats, and its "handling of non-malicious objects such as web addresses and applications" (it generated no false positives). Windows Defender blocked every threat the testers threw at it, and its overall protection score of 398 was second only to Kaspersky (400), while other



Windows Defender Security Centre offers everything you need to protect your PC

Microsoft Windows Defender 100%			
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY			
Products Tested	Protection Accuracy Rating (%)	Legitimate Accuracy Rating (%)	Total Accuracy Rating (%)
Kaspersky Internet Security	100%	100%	100%
Microsoft Windows Defender	100%	100%	100%
Norton Security	99%	100%	99%
ESET Internet Security	97%	100%	99%
Trend Micro Internet Security	97%	99%	98%
BitDefender Internet Security	100%	100%	97%
Avira Free Security Suite	97%	97%	97%
F-Secure Safe	98%	92%	95%
Avast Free Antivirus	90%	100%	95%
AVG Antivirus Free Edition	78%	100%	91%
Dr.Web Internet Security	90%	96%	93%
Quick Heal Internet Security	68%	100%	84%
AVG Antivirus Premium	77%	96%	86%
Avast Antivirus	100%	94%	84%

Windows Defender finished a very close second to Kaspersky in SE Labs tests



# ANTI-VIRUS?

**T**he first thing any savvy web user does when setting up a new computer is install antivirus software, be it a paid-for program from a trusted company such as Kaspersky, Norton or Bitdefender, or one of the popular free options from Avast, AVG or Avira. But what if you didn't bother? Your PC would be infected with malware within minutes of going online, right? Well, not necessarily.

Reliable malware protection is no longer the preserve of traditional security software but now comes built into the tools we use every day, from our browsers and operating

systems to our webmail services and app stores. Provided you're vigilant about the links you click, the files you download and the programs you use, do you really need a resource-hungry and occasionally overzealous antivirus program constantly watching your back online?

As we explain in this feature, that's not as ridiculous and reckless a question as you might think. We look at the arguments for and against using alternative protection methods to third-party antivirus, starting with the significantly improved Windows Defender.

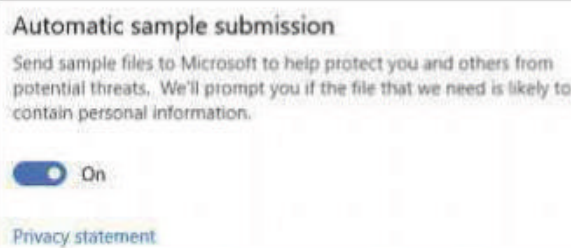
free tools such as Avast and AVG finished far below (318 and 302, respectively). You can download the full set of SE Labs results from [bit.ly/selabs470](https://bit.ly/selabs470).

For balance, we also looked at the latest tests of home-user antivirus products by the independent security institute AV-Test ([www.av-test.org](https://www.av-test.org)). Here, Windows Defender also achieved a 100% protection score against malware attacks, with no false positives, although it did lose half a point for slowing the installation of frequently used programs.

## AGAINST

Windows Defender Security Centre is, of course, an antivirus program, which means it's not an alternative to traditional security software and shouldn't be included in this feature. In Defender's defence (and ours), it *is* an alternative to installing – and paying for – a third-party product to protect your PC, and the recent improvements to its capabilities make it a more viable option than ever. Previously, the first thing you needed to do when setting up a new (or reformatted) computer was to install antivirus software, but Windows Defender is now so effective and reliable that you're protected from the off.

However, before you rush to cancel your Kaspersky, Norton or Bitdefender subscription, bear in mind that paid-for security suites offer much more than just anti-malware protection. Kaspersky



**You can stop Defender automatically sending sample files to Microsoft**

Internet Security, for example, protects your mobile device(s) as well as as your PC, keeps you safe when banking and shopping online, identifies out-of-date software, removes dodgy browser extensions, offers a secure-connection VPN and much more. Although you can install separate tools to perform these

tasks on top of Windows Defender, it's much easier – and uses fewer system resources – to have them all in one place, and from a respected security company.

Windows sceptics may also recommend shunning Defender on privacy grounds, but it's easy to stop the program sharing 'samples' of files with Microsoft by clicking 'Virus & threat protection settings' and deselecting the option 'Automatic sample submission'. A stronger objection is that the Windows Defender Security Centre is only available in Windows 10, so Windows 7 users can't enjoy its enhanced built-in protection.

## WHAT SECURITY EXPERTS SAY

**We asked Simon Edwards, Director of security-testing organisation SE Labs ([selabs.uk](https://selabs.uk)), how Windows Defender compares to third-party security software**



“Microsoft's marked improvement in anti-malware effectiveness is very impressive. In our latest tests, from the end of 2018 ([bit.ly/selabs470](https://bit.ly/selabs470)), Windows Defender came second only to Kaspersky in its ability to block malicious URLs, handle exploits and correctly classify legitimate applications and websites.

With some careful configuration, Defender can clearly stand up to third-party security alternatives, although these often offer additional security features above and beyond malware protection, to provide added value.

However, one thing to consider is what would happen if everyone moved to Microsoft's free software and the third-party security market died. Currently, hackers have dozens of products to try and get past. If there's only one type of security software installed on all their targets' computers, their challenge decreases significantly. As such, we're all safer if there is a variety of defences installed on lots of home and business computers.

”





## WEB BROWSERS OFFER RELIABLE PROTECTION

**FOR** Your browser is your gateway to the web and therefore how most – but not all – online threats reach your computer. From infected downloads and malicious scripts to privacy trackers and phishing scams, the web is a security minefield, and your browser – not your antivirus software – is your first line of defence. Happily, the days of flaw-ridden browsers such as Internet Explorer are long gone, and security is now a top priority for the developers of browsers and associated add-ons.

Chrome, for example, has a built-in Safe Browsing feature that protects you from dangerous sites and downloads that might steal your data or infect your computer. If you try to visit a suspicious site, the browser will block you and explain why it's doing so – for example, because the site has an invalid security certificate, hosts malware or potentially unwanted programs (PUPs), or tricks you into sharing personal information.

For extra security, Chrome uses sandboxing and site isolation to prevent issues in one tab from affecting other tabs. This means that if you access an infected page, the malware can't steal your data from any other pages you have open. The browser also detects – and lets you undo – changes that are made to your New Tab page and default search engine, in case the culprit is a hijacker rather than a legitimate extension.

Firefox and Vivaldi offer similar security features to Chrome, while Brave ([www.brave.com](http://www.brave.com)), which won our comparison of private browsers in Issue 467 ([bit.ly/webuser467](http://bit.ly/webuser467)), uses a powerful set of 'shields' to block



**Chrome protects you from suspicious websites by blocking your access**

potentially harmful ads, cookies and scripts, and automatically redirects you to the secure versions of websites.

But however secure a browser might be, it will still fall short of the protection offered by dedicated anti-malware tools, which is why many security software companies now provide free add-ons to combat online threats. Our favourites include the Malwarebytes Browser Extension for Chrome ([bit.ly/mwbchrome470](http://bit.ly/mwbchrome470)) and Firefox ([bit.ly/mwbfirefox470](http://bit.ly/mwbfirefox470)), which blocks malicious programs and code, phishing scams, trackers and the downloading of PUPs; Avast Online Security ([bit.ly/avast470](http://bit.ly/avast470)), which helpfully marks your search results as safe or risky, based on feedback from its users; and Bitdefender Traffic Light ([trafficlight.bitdefender.com](http://trafficlight.bitdefender.com)), which uses colour coding to warn you about suspicious pages, but only blocks the harmful elements, so you can browse the rest of the content safely.

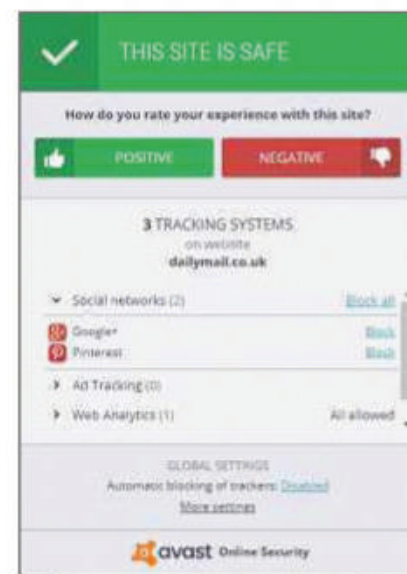
All these add-ons are very basic compared to their desktop counterparts, but they're also lightweight and work automatically. If you only ever use your computer for

browsing, these tools theoretically save you having to pay for a full-featured security suite.

**AGAINST** Any software (or hardware) that connects to the internet is at risk of malware infection, not just your browser. You can beef up Chrome with as many security tools as you want, but threats can still reach your system via other means, such as an exploit in a PDF reader, a virus on a USB stick or an attack on your router (see our cover feature in Issue 468).

We welcome the built-in protection in Chrome, Firefox and other browsers, but it can't compete with the rigorous standards of dedicated security tools. Our tests found many dodgy sites slipping through without warning and safe ones flagged as risky. Installing an anti-malware add-on boosts this detection, but it also increases your browser's drain on system resources.

We should also point out that several Chrome extensions have been found to contain malware, including cryptominers and keyloggers, and though these are long-removed from the Web Store, surely Chrome's own Safe Browsing feature should have blocked them to begin with?



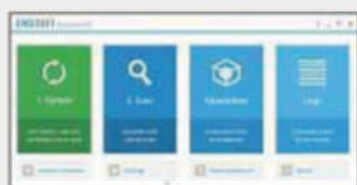
**Install Avast Online Security to avoid malicious websites and online scams**

## BEST FREE ANTIVIRUS ALTERNATIVES Use these five free tools to boost your PC's

### EMSIISOFT EMERGENCY KIT

[bit.ly/EEK470](http://bit.ly/EEK470)

Emsisoft Emergency Kit is a free, portable malware

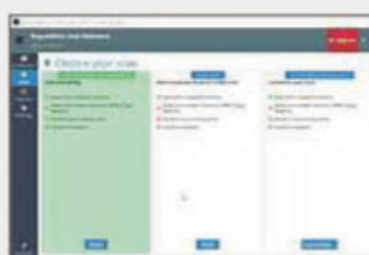


scanner that detects and deletes viruses, Trojans, spyware, adware, keyloggers and other malicious programs. It doesn't require installation, automatically quarantines any suspicious files it finds and is designed to be used alongside other security software.

### ROGUE KILLER ANTI-MALWARE

[bit.ly/rogue470](http://bit.ly/rogue470)

This free tool protects your system from all manner of malware including

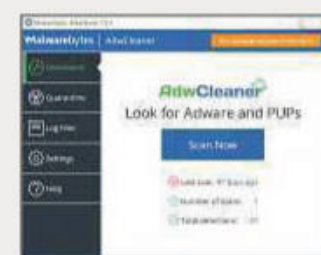


advanced threats such as rootkits and worms. It checks running processes and the Registry, can identify suspicious entries in the Windows Hosts file, fixes hijacks and lets you check suspicious items using the VirusTotal service.

### MALWAREBYTES ADWCLEANER

[bit.ly/adwcleaner470](http://bit.ly/adwcleaner470)

AdwCleaner finds and blitzes adware, PUPs, browser toolbars, hijackers and other unwanted



elements from your PC. It's very easy to use – just click the Scan button to locate threats, then click Clean to remove the selected items. The software also deletes leftover traces and restores altered settings.



## SOFTWARE IS UPDATED REGULARLY AND AUTOMATICALLY

**FOR** Outdated software is one of the leading causes of malware infection, as hackers target known vulnerabilities and bugs in programs that have been around for years, and use them to infiltrate your system. That's why Windows XP, which hasn't received an update since April 2014 (except a patch for the WannaCry ransomware in 2017), is no longer safe to use, and security experts always stress the importance of keeping your software up to date.

Fortunately, lots of web-connected programs now update automatically, whether it's to the latest version or to patch a newly discovered vulnerability.



**Firefox updates automatically to fix flaws that compromise your security**

This includes Chrome, Firefox and Windows, and even if the update doesn't install automatically, you'll be told that it's available. So provided you stick to familiar software and keep

it up to date, why bother with mollycoddling antivirus?

**AGAINST** Sadly, many web-connected programs *don't* update automatically, which leaves both them and your system vulnerable to exploits. There are also examples of updates doing more harm than good, and we don't just mean Windows 10's traditional problems. Last year, an update to CCleaner, v5.33, infected millions of PCs with backdoor malware that leaked data about users. It's certainly not enough to rely on non-security software to protect you from online threats.

## CHROMEBOOKS CAN'T BE INFECTED WITH MALWARE

**FOR** We've recently received lots of emails from readers about the benefits of Chrome OS and Chromebooks, particularly with regard to security. Because Chrome OS is completely cloud-based, its impervious to the viruses that infect Windows (and Mac) computers, and although you can download files on a Chromebook, you can't run the EXE executable files that allow malware to install and spread.

As with the Chrome browser, Chrome OS sandboxes individual processes – so if you load an infected page, it's isolated from the rest of the system and when you close that page, the threat disappears.

Chromebooks are also protected by a feature called Verified Boot, which runs a check on startup to ensure that your system hasn't been tampered with or

corrupted in any way. If it has, Chrome OS repairs itself.

All your data is encrypted and stored safely in the cloud, so ransomware – which locks files stored locally – isn't a threat either. No antivirus, no problem!

**AGAINST** Not everyone agrees that Chrome OS can't be infected with malware. Last November, the security-software company Malwarebytes announced an app for Chromebooks ([bit.ly/malware470](http://bit.ly/malware470)) because “your Chromebook isn't safe”. Its reasoning was that because Chromebooks run Android apps, they're vulnerable to the same threats you face on your phone, including malicious apps, adware and PUPs.

What Malwarebytes failed to acknowledge is that not all



**Do you really need the Malwarebytes app to protect your Chromebook?**

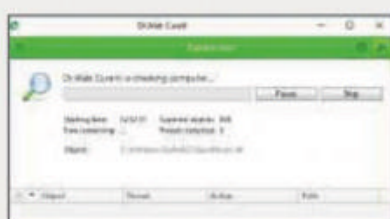
Chromebooks run Android apps, that Android apps in the Google Play store are already scanned for malware and that its so-called ‘Malwarebytes for Chromebook’ tool is actually just its standard Android app.

As Chrome OS is essentially the Chrome browser on a laptop, the real security threats are not in apps or downloads but malicious code in web pages, phishing scams and browser hijackers. Chrome's built-in protection and security add-ons (see opposite page) alleviate these risks, but it still pays to be vigilant.

## security without clashing with your antivirus software

**DR WEB CUREIT**  
[bit.ly/drweb470](http://bit.ly/drweb470)

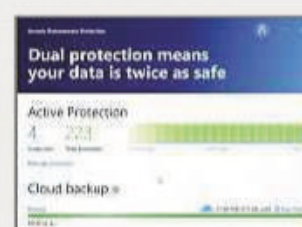
This free program can identify and remove



most types of threat, including viruses, Trojans, rootkits, keyloggers and worms. It's able to run even if malware is preventing access to your system, and can be set to automatically ‘cure’ infected files, move incurable items to quarantine or just delete them.

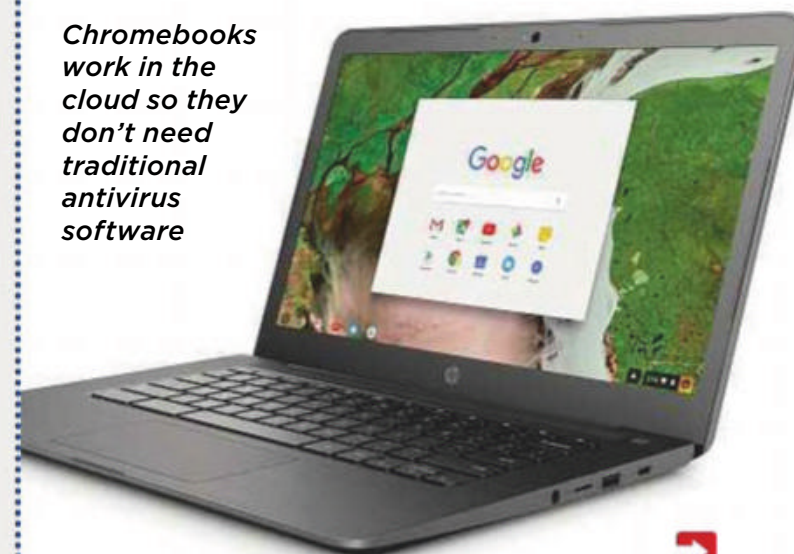
**ACRONIS RANSOMWARE PROTECTION**  
[bit.ly/acronis470](http://bit.ly/acronis470)

Acronis' free tool protects you from well-known ransomware threats such as



Petya, WannaCry, Bad Rabbit and Osiris. Real-time monitoring means the program can spot and stop bad behaviour before any damage is done. It also restores any files that have been infected or altered.

**Chromebooks work in the cloud so they don't need traditional antivirus software**

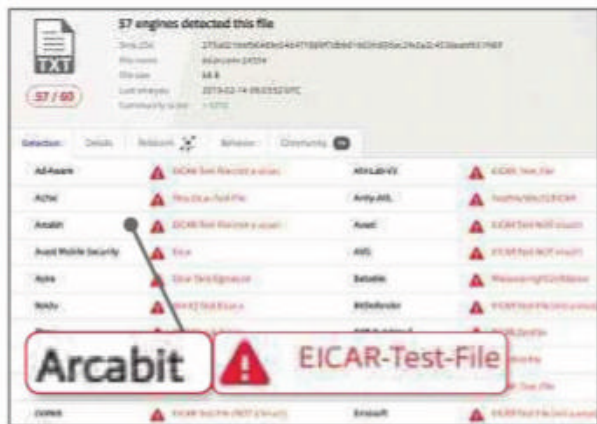




# VIRUSTOTAL SCANS FILES AND LINKS FOR MALWARE

**FOR** Antivirus software springs into action when you try to open a suspicious file, preventing you from infecting your system with malware, but sometimes it can be overzealous, flagging and blocking an innocuous item, and making you panic unnecessarily at the scary red warning. Wouldn't it be useful to get a second opinion or, even better, 68 of them?

This is the idea behind VirusTotal ([www.virustotal.com](http://www.virustotal.com)), which lets you upload and scan files for threats before



***Our malware 'test file' was detected by 57 anti-malware engines on VirusTotal***

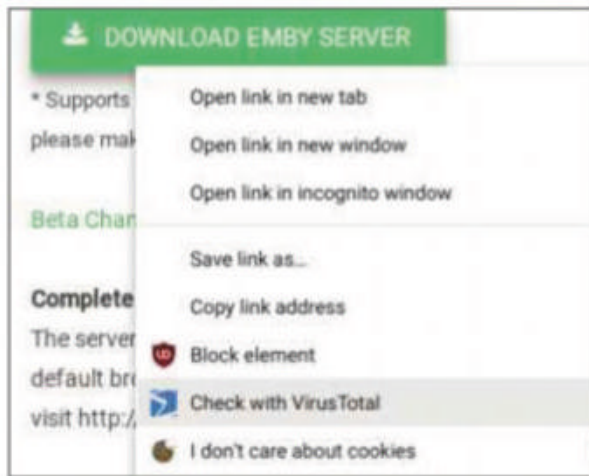
you open them, running them through dozens of antivirus engines from all the big names in security. You can also check the safety of a web page by pasting its URL into VirusTotal's search box, and even send files for analysis via email – see our tip on page 68.

Scans are very fast, instantly displaying results from all the engines in an easy to understand manner, so you can see at a glance whether the file or page is clean or malicious. We uploaded the EICAR test file ([bit.ly/eicar470](https://bit.ly/eicar470)) – which is designed to be detected as malware – to VirusTotal, and 57 scanners identified the ‘threat’.

Everything is done in the cloud, with no software to download, although it's worth installing VirusTotal's browser extension ([bit.ly/vtbrowser470](https://bit.ly/vtbrowser470)) to scan links from wherever you are on the web.

# AGAINST

VirusTotal is undoubtedly a useful security tool, but only as a second line of defence – not as a replacement for your antivirus



### *Install VirusTotal's browser extension to scan download links on the fly*

software. This is because the site only tells you *if* a file is infected – it doesn't quarantine, delete or clean suspicious items, or prevent you from opening them. Also, although scanning a file using nearly 70 antimalware engines is undoubtedly comprehensive, it can also cause confusion when false positives occur. If 58 security tools deem an item clean, but 10 detect a threat, can you afford to take the risk that the minority is wrong?

# EMAIL PROVIDERS SCAN FOR THREATS AUTOMATICALLY

# FOR

There used to be a time when every email that arrived in your inbox was a potential threat, with virus attachments, phishing scams and links to download malware all attempting to infect your computer and steal your data. Nowadays, it's relatively rare to encounter these malicious messages – unless you go rooting around in your

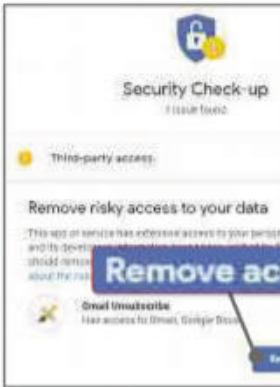
Spam folder – because most email providers are very effective at detecting and filtering security threats. Gmail is particularly vigilant, automatically scanning attachments in messages and preventing you from downloading suspicious files. Outlook.com, meanwhile, automatically blocks unsafe content and uses colour coding to indicate whether an email is trusted,

unsafe or spam.

If a dodgy message should reach your inbox in a webmail service, you can mark it as junk to block that sender in future.

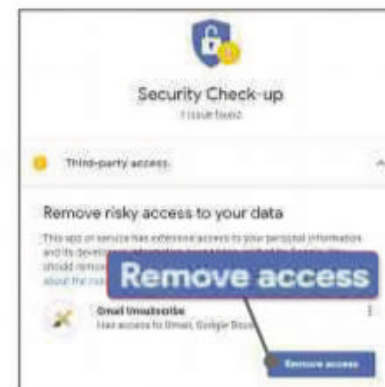
# AGAINST

Although it's true that lots of malware – including viruses, Trojans, worms, ransomware and phishing – still spreads via email, many threats use other means to infect your devices, including malicious code and pop-ups in web pages, dodgy downloads and social-media scams. So relying solely on your email provider's antivirus scanner is far from sufficient to protect your computer.



**Google's Security Checkup tool detects**

Even Gmail's security isn't perfect and malicious messages occasionally slip through. It's worth running Google's Security Checkup tool ([bit.ly/checkup470](https://bit.ly/checkup470)) to ensure that unauthorised third-party apps don't have access to your Gmail account.



## Google's Security Checkup tool detects apps with access to your Gmail account

## WHAT SECURITY EXPERTS SAY

**We asked David Emm, Principal Security Researcher at Kaspersky Lab ([www.kaspersky.co.uk](http://www.kaspersky.co.uk)), why we need to install third-party antivirus when Windows Defender works perfectly well?**

**“ Quite simply, because built-in solutions aren’t the best available. If a new car came fitted with a child safety seat that was not as effective as those sold in the shops, would you be happy to rely on it to secure your child?**

This is something that is best tracked over time in independent tests, rather than in single tests. It applies not just to detection, but also to the rate of false positives and false negatives, and a product's impact on your system. Also, it's now common for people to have multiple devices using a variety of operating systems. If you rely on built-in or free products, this leaves some devices unprotected. By contrast, many paid-for solutions now include protection for multiple operating systems in a single product – including the ability to mix and match across devices.

**If a product is free, I think it's important to ask whether a provider offers effective technical support for when you need help and advice.**





## ANDROID AND iOS OFFER BUILT-IN SECURITY

**FOR** Do you have an antivirus app installed on your phone or tablet? Has your device ever been hacked? If you answered 'no' to both these questions, you're far from alone, because despite the regular scare stories about Android malware and iOS vulnerabilities, the two main mobile operating systems are actually very secure.

Smartphones and tablets are locked down much more tightly than desktop PCs and laptops, and receive frequent updates from Google and Apple, as well as device manufacturers, to fix reported security flaws and prevent future problems. Most mobile malware infections are a result of apps being installed from 'unknown sources' outside the official Google Play store (iOS doesn't allow 'sideloading' unless you jailbreak your device). Google uses a system called Play Protect to check apps for threats before you install them, and to disable harmful apps on your device. Last month it announced plans to improve its detection and blocking of bad apps using both machine learning and human review ([bit.ly/badapps470](http://bit.ly/badapps470)).

Although there are lots of security apps for Android, from respected names such as Kaspersky, Bitdefender and Avast, these place more emphasis on protecting your data, removing junk and safeguarding your phone against loss and theft, than on

detecting malware. And for tightly controlled iOS, security apps are rare.

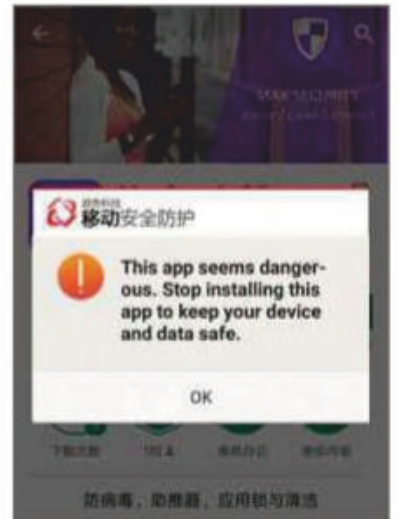
Even if your device does get infected with malware, a factory reset is all that's required to get it back to normal, although this will mean losing all your data, so make sure you back up first.

**AGAINST** We say that "most" Android malware is from outside the Play store, but there are exceptions. For example, last November, Google removed 13 malicious apps from the store, including car- and truck-driving simulators, which had been downloaded more than 500,000 times, suggesting that the Play Protect system isn't watertight. And flaws have even been discovered in locked-down iOS, such as the recently reported bug in the FaceTime video-calling app, although Apple is usually quick to patch these vulnerabilities.

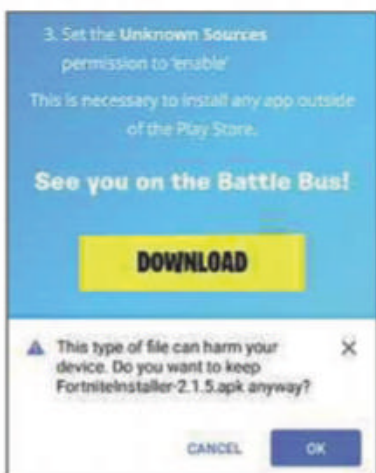
Some security threats spread via existing apps on your device, such as malicious links in WhatsApp and Messenger messages, infected email attachments and dodgy files you download in your mobile browser.

A good antivirus app will protect you against all these risks, but make sure you choose one from a well-known name in security. Last year, researchers at Trend Micro found 36 supposed security apps in the Play store, which had names such as Security Defender, Security Keeper and Smart Security and "secretly harvested user data, tracked user location and aggressively pushed advertisements" ([bit.ly/trend470](http://bit.ly/trend470)). This just goes to show that you can't be too careful about what you install on your device.

If you don't want to burden your phone with a resource-hogging antivirus app, you can check the security of your device using SAFE ([bit.ly/safe467](http://bit.ly/safe467)) and carry out its recommended security tweaks. We ran a workshop on SAFE in Issue 467 ([bit.ly/webuser467](http://bit.ly/webuser467)).



*Trend Micro found dozens of dubious security apps in the Play store*



*Most Android malware comes from apps installed from unknown sources*

### OUR VERDICT

We'd love to claim that antivirus software is no longer essential, but sadly this isn't true – at least, not yet. Despite improvements to browser security, the rise of locked-down operating systems such as Chrome OS and iOS, and built-in tools for detecting malware, we're still some way off being able to ditch antivirus for good – the web is simply too dangerous without that safety net.

We're pleased that Microsoft has

finally got security right with the Windows 10 version of Defender. This at least protects your PC until you install your preferred anti-malware program, and its impressive results in recent labs tests provide a strong reason to stick with it.

But our ultimate recommendation remains Kaspersky Internet Security, which regularly tops all antivirus tests. Buy it for half-price from [bit.ly/kaspersky1pc](http://bit.ly/kaspersky1pc). ■

## NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 20 March 2019

## BANISH BUILT-IN BLOATWARE

Remove all the annoying junk that came preinstalled on your PC and phone



### PLUS...

- **SHARE MASSIVE FILES**  
Free tools for sending gigabytes in milliseconds
- **UPDATE YOUR DRIVERS**  
Fix hardware problems before they happen
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# Best free apps for private messaging

Does the thought of WhatsApp being integrated with the privacy-invading Instagram and Facebook Messenger give you the willies? **Steve Clark** explores the best alternative cross-platform private messaging apps



**Signal** | [signal.org](https://signal.org) | ★★★★★  
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser  
GOLD  
AWARD

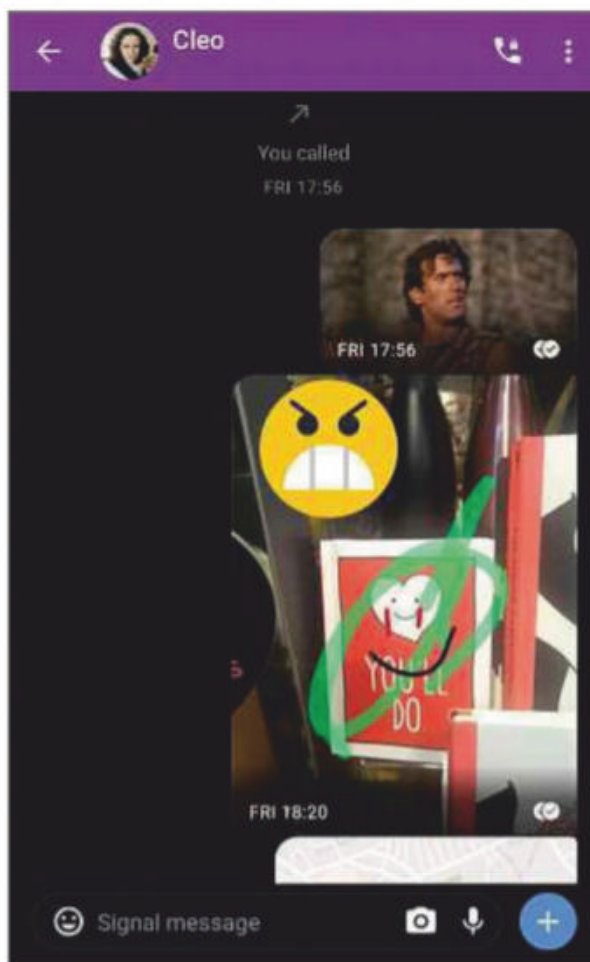
## What we liked:

Signal is a free, open-source messaging tool that provides end-to-end encryption on all your messages, and offers almost full cross-platform support, with apps for Android and iPhone, Windows, Linux and Mac.

It's also about as close an experience to WhatsApp that a messenger app can provide without being accused of outright copying. If you've been using the Facebook-owned app and want a genuine gimmick-free, and truly private, alternative – this is it.

Once you've given Signal all the permissions it needs – such as accessing contacts and making calls – the app is simplicity itself. Anyone already using Signal will show up in your address book, and you can invite friends by sending a text message with a link.

Crack open a new message and press the plus button, and you're able to send any recent photo in just two taps – although Signal lets you attach more. There's even basic photo editing, letting you add multi-coloured text, drawings and emoji to the image. Meanwhile, files, media, locations and GIFs are also easily shared.



There's a pleasing number of message options too, including setting Signal as your default SMS text-message app and the always welcome dark mode. Taking cues from the likes of Snapchat, there's even a self-destruct option, which lets you choose how long a 'disappearing

message' lasts – ranging from five seconds to a week.

Signal is keen to put security in the hands of the user, so you'll find the option to 'Restore security session' – if the app is struggling with encryption or decryption, tapping this should solve the problem. Granted, it may be something you never need, but we appreciate that the option is there.

## How it can be improved:

Signal is almost perfect. It does everything WhatsApp can do, along with a few extra tricks of its own. Still, it would be nice to see the app step out from WhatsApp's shadow and create its own identity – a necessity if it's ever to become truly mainstream.

## OUR VERDICT

No other messaging app so accurately apes the WhatsApp experience without compromising on security. Messages and attachments are sent instantly, while calls are crystal-clear. And the app's open-source nature means you'll never have to pay for the privilege.



**Telegram** | [telegram.org](https://telegram.org) | ★★★★★☆  
 FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★☆

WebUser  
SILVER  
AWARD

## What we liked:

If you're desperate to read your messages no matter where you are,

Telegram offers free apps for iPhone, iPad, Android and – for those who still have it – Windows Phone. On computers, you'll find standard and portable Windows versions, Linux and Mac OS, while a browser-based version and Chrome extensions round off the multi-platform experience. The website even points you in the direction of unofficial client apps, including one for the Xbox.

In use, Telegram doesn't even try to hide its WhatsApp influence – one peek at a message's background design makes it obvious. As such, it has everything you'd expect from a WhatsApp clone: end-to-end encryption, cloud-based synchronisation and the freedom to send just about any file type. Telegram also claims to be the



fastest of all messenger apps, and while we're talking a matter of milliseconds, our tests show that claim appears valid.

## How it can be improved:

The app supports the use and independent development of chatbots, but it's not clear how to activate them. 'Self-destructing' Secret Chats are also available, but unlike Signal's in-message

version, these are given their own slot marked with a padlock icon, which risks cluttering an otherwise sleek inbox.

## OUR VERDICT

**Telegram is one the most popular alternatives to WhatsApp. It's secure, fast and a joy to navigate. Although it's not yet fully open-source, its developers say the app is a work in progress.**

**Skype** | [www.skype.com](https://www.skype.com) | ★★★★★☆  
 FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★☆

WebUser  
BRONZE  
AWARD

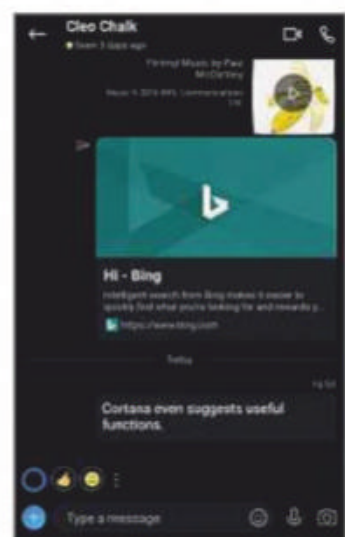
## What we liked:

Skype, owned by Microsoft, has been around longer than just about every other

messaging app, but for a long time it lagged behind its rivals. Now, finally, it feels fit for 21st-century communication, with its newly acquired end-to-end encryption and recently introduced call recording.

Other features include screen sharing, song-sharing via Spotify and a built-in translator. As you'd expect, there's strong integration with other Microsoft products, such as Bing, OneDrive, Cortana and To-Do.

You've likely already got Skype, whether you want it or not, since Microsoft has a habit of bundling it with Windows 10 – but it's also available on just about every device going, including Xbox and Alexa smart speakers. Browser extensions on Chrome and



Firefox, meanwhile, make it easy to share links and other media files. But it's the free Skype-to-Skype voice and video calls that really elevate this app above the competition.

## How it can be improved:

You're out of luck if you want to use this as your main phone app – Skype charges a fee for making traditional phone calls to non-Skype

numbers. The app's 'Content and tools' feature, where you share everything, from locations to money, feels untidy.

## OUR VERDICT

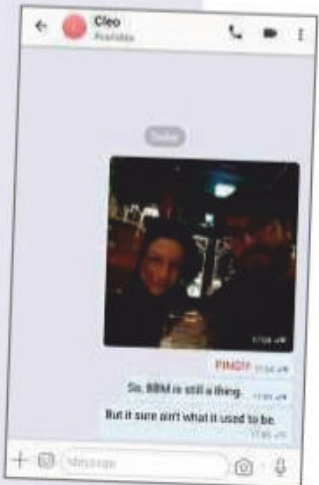
**Skype is a solid app for text, voice and video calls. It's fast and simple, with unrivalled extras, and unlike some Microsoft products, shows no sign of being abandoned. Still, if you're not willing to trust Facebook, is Microsoft your best bet?**

## BEST OF THE REST

### BBM

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

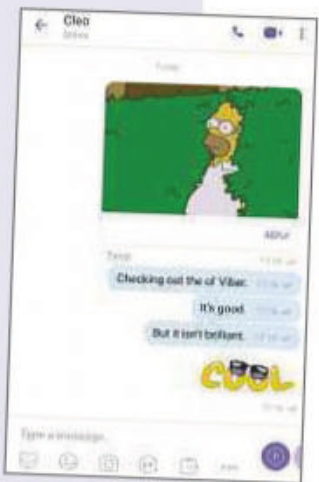
Remember when BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) ruled the messaging world? Well, despite reports of its demise, the app is very much active, though it feels a little dated. Free voice and video calls over Wi-Fi come as standard and, if you're a fan of emoji, BBM lets you create your own 'BBMojis' to send to your contacts. Watch out for the user-generated BBM Channels, too, which gives the app a social-media slant.



### Viber

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

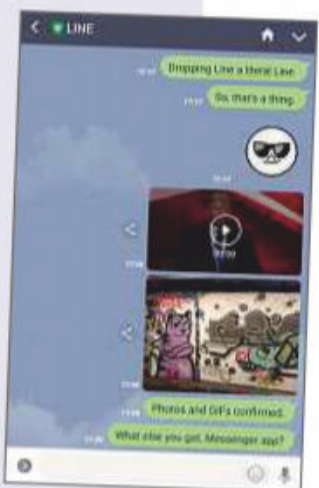
Viber sometimes feels like a poor man's Skype. Priding itself on being ultra-secure, the app has both end-to-end and 'in-transit' encryption. Encouragingly, with none of your data stored on servers, your messages stay secret and your data can't be used for targeted ads. Community chats are great, feeling like a cross between WhatsApp group chats and Facebook Groups. The downside is it's owned by Rakuten – another big company that you may or may not be happy to trust.



### Line

[line.me](https://line.me)

Line is one of Asia's biggest private chat apps but it's linked to censorious governments that can control what their citizens can say in-app. Not that it *should* affect Western users. Voice calls are handled through the app's paid-for Line Out service, so watch out for nasty charges. On the other hand, there's decent cross-platform support – including a Google Lite app – and excellent personalisation options.





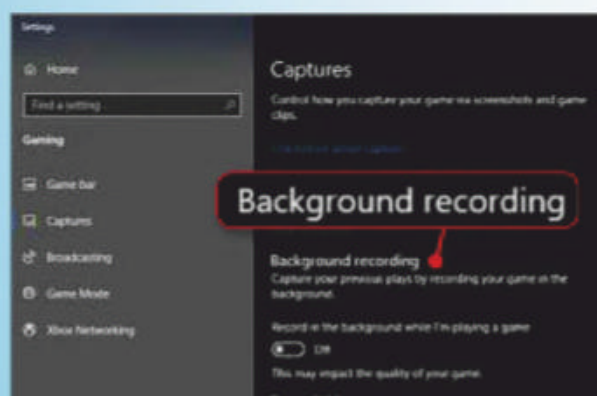
# Optimise Windows 10 for gaming



Want to play the latest games on your PC, without buying an expensive graphics card or extra memory? **Steve Clark** explains how to tweak Windows settings for ultimate gaming performance

## Adjust Windows game mode

To start your Windows 10 gaming boost, head to Settings, Game Mode – or just search for ‘game mode’ in the Start bar. The ‘Background recording’ setting on the Game DVR tab uses part of your computer’s processing power to record every second of action in your game. Unless you’re running an ultra-fast rig, it’s best to turn this setting off to improve performance and avoid lag. The other settings here shouldn’t affect performance.



*Microsoft calls Windows 10 ‘the best platform for PC gaming’*

## Update your graphics drivers

Keeping your graphics processor (GPU) drivers up to date is critical to ensure



*Have you checked whether your drivers are up to date?*

Windows makes full use of your graphics card (because nothing’s worse than FPS drops). These drivers often receive regular updates, with each new iteration improving video performance. To check which graphics card you have, right-click the Windows icon, open Device Manager, then press Display Adapters. Next, go to the manufacturer’s support site and install the drivers you need – the most popular being Nvidia ([bit.ly/nvidia470](http://bit.ly/nvidia470)) and AMD ([bit.ly/amddriver470](http://bit.ly/amddriver470)).

## Overclock your GPU

If you want to squeeze every last bit of juice from your PC, try overclocking your GPU. However, be aware that although it’s not super-dangerous, overclocking can invalidate your warranty or even ‘brick’ your machine, because you’re pushing hardware beyond its recommended rating. Since the graphics card is working overtime, overclocking makes your computer hot – so thoroughly clean out the inside and ensure the heat is being properly dispersed, otherwise it may shut down or burn out. Now install the free tool MSI

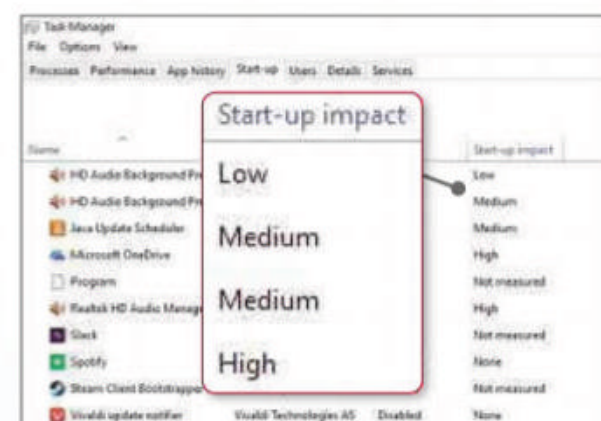


*Overclock your graphics card to give your PC a boost but be careful to keep it cool*

AfterBurner ([bit.ly/msiab470](http://bit.ly/msiab470)), which also lets you use your Android phone to overclock your PC. Alternatively, check your GPU manufacturer’s site to see if it offers its own overclocking software.

## Sort out your startup programs

The art of optimising your PC for gaming is to kill any unnecessary processes, so your computer can focus on performance. To this end, it’s essential to control which programs start when Windows boots up. Open Task Manager – either by searching the Start menu, right-clicking the taskbar or pressing Ctrl+Alt+Del – and click the Start-up tab. Highlight all but the most important tasks (even those listed as having a low impact), then click Disable on each one.



*Limit which programs run when you boot up your PC*

## Turn off visual effects

Visual effects can be a major drag on your PC – they may look nice but they’re mostly useless when gaming, so turn them off. Press Windows+i and search for performance. Select ‘Adjust the appearance and performance of Windows’. By default, Windows



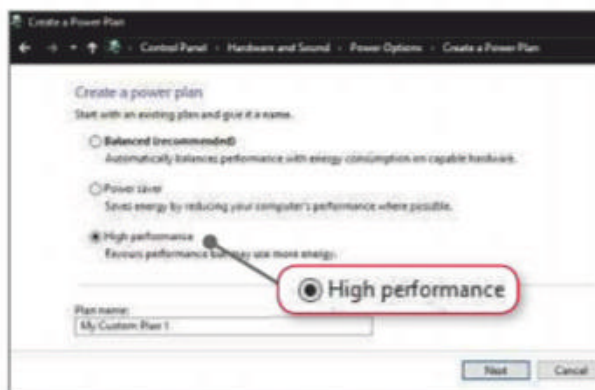


*Keep your visual effects to an absolute minimum*

manages the optimal settings for basic use, so tick the box 'Adjust for best performance', which switches off all visual effects. Apply the setting and click OK.

## Tweak your power plan

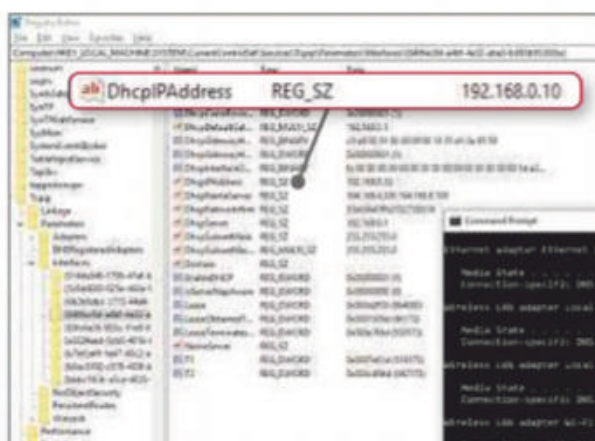
Some gamers swear that a computer's power plan affects your gaming experience while others reckon it doesn't make a jot of difference, but if you want to err on the side of caution, search the Start menu for power and look for 'Additional power settings'. You can tweak existing settings, but it's better to 'Create a power plan' – the option is on the left-hand side – and select 'High performance'. If you're playing on a laptop, keep it plugged in, because running on battery won't yield the best results for intensive gaming.



*Squeeze maximum performance from your machine by tweaking power settings*

## Disable Nagle's algorithm

Nagle's algorithm is a clever way of reducing network congestion, but its effect can be keenly felt when it causes games to lag. To stop this, find out your IP address by opening Command Prompt and typing `ipconfig`, making a note of your IPv4 address. Next, open

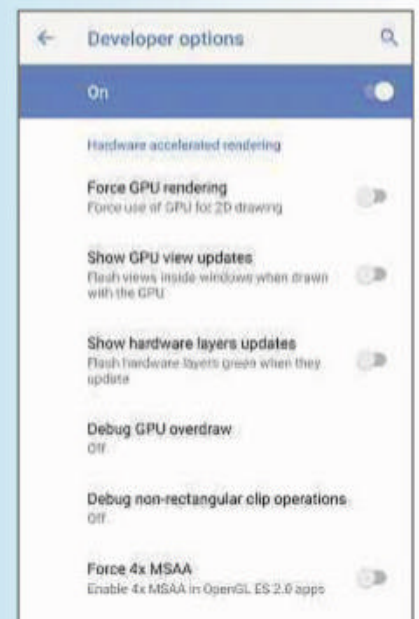


*Changing the Nagle's algorithm setting in the Registry can prevent lag*

## OPTIMISE YOUR PHONE FOR GAMING

There's a secret way to force certain Android games – those based on OpenGL 2.0 – to run at optimum quality on your phone or tablet. Go to **Settings, System, About** and locate your 'Build number'. Tap it multiple times until you see a notification: 'You are now a developer'. Go back to **System** and tap into a new section: 'Developer options'. Scroll down to 'Hardware accelerated rendering' and enable the option **Force 4x MSAA**. This turns on multi-sample anti-aliasing, which optimises the way games and apps are rendered. It can be a battery drain, though, so charge your phone or plug it in to play.

*Use the secret developer options to boost your smartphone gaming sessions*



the Registry Editor, then navigate to: `HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\Tcpip\Parameters\Interfaces`

Click through the folders until you find the one that contains a 'DhcpIPAddress' that matches your IP address. Right-click this folder and select **New, 'DWORD (32-bit value)'**. Name your first `TcpAckFrequency`, then create a second called `TCPNoDelay`. Set both values to 1. This should disable Nagle's algorithm.

To switch it back on, change each value to 0.

## Stop automatic updates

Automatic updates may be useful, but they have a habit of slowing down gaming sessions or stopping them altogether. You can temporarily switch off Windows auto-updates by typing `update` options in the Start bar and clicking 'Advanced options'. Under 'Update options', toggle off 'Automatically download updates'. Beneath this is the option to 'Show a notification when your PC requires a restart to finish updating'. Turn this on to avoid any nasty, unscheduled mid-game restarts.

Now head over to Steam, if you use

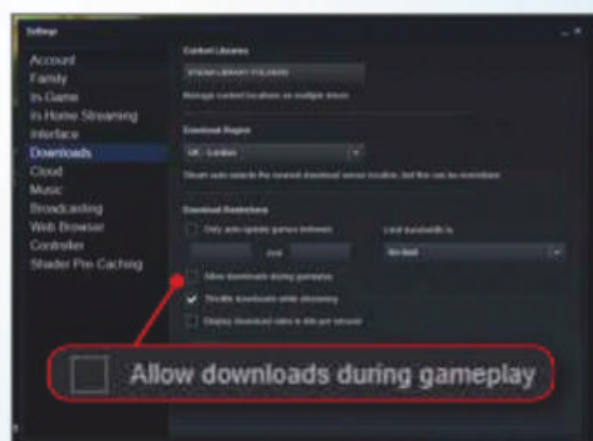
that platform, and click the Steam button in the top-left corner. Select **Settings, Downloads**, then tick the box marked 'Only update games between' and choose the best times (ideally, when the computer's on, but you're not playing). Also, untick 'Allow downloads during gameplay'.

Should a game update cause a problem, right-click the offending game in Steam, select **Properties** and go to the **Betas** tab. If the developers support betas, use the drop-down menu 'Choose which betas you'd like to opt into' to roll back the game to a previous version.

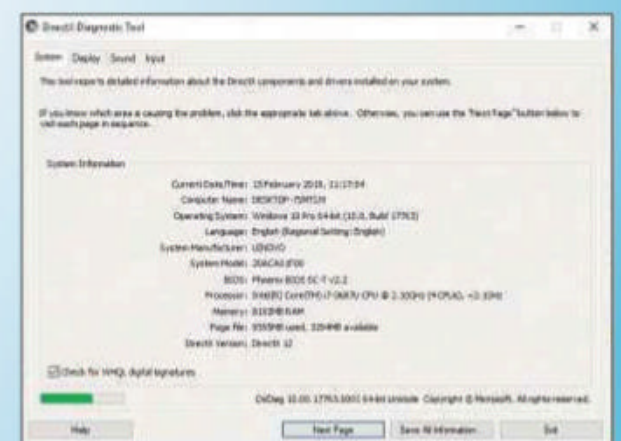
Other platforms, such as EA Origins, have similar options in the Application Settings menu.

## Check you're running DirectX 12

DirectX 12 is a Microsoft technology that makes games run faster and more smoothly. Your computer may already have it – check by pressing **Windows+r** and typing `dxdiag` in the Run box. This brings up the DirectX Diagnostic Tool, which displays your current version of DirectX. If you haven't got the latest version, you can get it by installing Microsoft's DirectX End-User Runtime Web Installer ([bit.ly/directx470](http://bit.ly/directx470)). ■



*If unexpected updates have ever caught you by surprise, tweak these settings*



*Most modern games use DirectX 12 to run faster and smoother*



# Hack your favourite websites

Enhance the sites you visit most by adding useful features, removing annoying elements and speeding up navigation. **Wayne Williams** reveals the best tools for the job



## Clean up and customise Facebook

Facebook is great for finding out what your friends are up to, but it can also be incredibly irritating, with daft quizzes, pointless memes and autoplaying videos that get in your way. Fluff Busting (FB) Purity ([www.fbpurity.com](http://www.fbpurity.com)) is an add-on for Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Safari, Opera and Maxthon that removes most of these annoyances and keeps your newsfeed on Most Recent. You can set text- and image-content filters to ensure you don't see unwanted posts, expand the width of the news column and remove coloured backgrounds and big fonts from people's statuses.

FB Purity has been around for a decade and is updated regularly. When you first launch Facebook with FB Purity installed, it encourages you to like the add-on's page so that you receive notifications of any changes to Facebook that break the add-on, as well as any updates about forthcoming features. This is completely optional though.



**FB Purity filters out Facebook's most annoying elements**

## Remove distractions from Amazon

There's a reason why Amazon is the most successful retailer on the web: it sells pretty much any item you could want, and often for the best price. However, the site's layout has long been cluttered and bombards you with all manner of adverts and sponsored and 'recommended' product listings. If you yearn for a clean, distraction-free shopping experience, try Amazon Lite for Chrome ([bit.ly/amlite470](http://bit.ly/amlite470)). Once you've installed this tool, head to Amazon (the add-on supports '.com', '.co.uk', '.de', '.fr', and '.in') and you'll see a plain white screen with the smile logo, a search box and nothing else. When you search for an item, your results focus solely on matching products, with none of the usual clutter.



**Get a cleaner Amazon experience for distraction-free shopping**

Amazon Lite also works on [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) (the version of the site that makes a charitable donation when you buy something), but doesn't yet support [smile.amazon.co.uk](http://smile.amazon.co.uk).

## Get extra options in Wikipedia

Wikipedia has stuck doggedly with its rather dated look. If you've ever wished the online encyclopaedia had a more

modern design, Wikiwand ([www.wikiwand.com](http://www.wikiwand.com)) is the tool for you. Available for Chrome and iPhone, this extension overhauls Wikipedia's interface, giving it a more stylish layout with attractive cover photos, a table of contents that's always within reach, quick preview (just hover over a link to find out where it goes) and a more powerful search feature. There's also an immersive media gallery and interactive map for browsing articles.

As if that wasn't enough, Wikiwand also lets you change the colour theme, typeface and layout, so you can make Wikipedia look exactly the way you want it to.

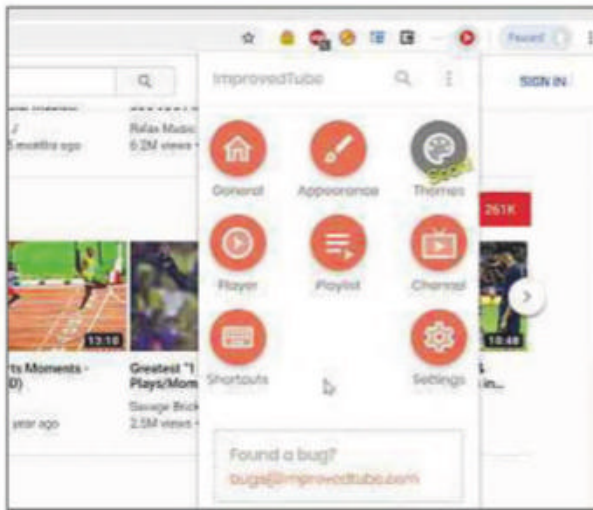


**Give Wikipedia a more modern look by customising it with Wikiwand**

## Expand and enhance YouTube

If there's one website that could definitely do with improvement, it's YouTube. That's why ImprovedTube ([bit.ly/improveyt470](http://bit.ly/improveyt470)) is an essential tool for regular viewers. This Chrome extension gives you greater control over the site, allowing you to hide comments, banish annotations by default, stop playlists autoplaying,





**ImprovedYouTube gives you greater control over the video site**

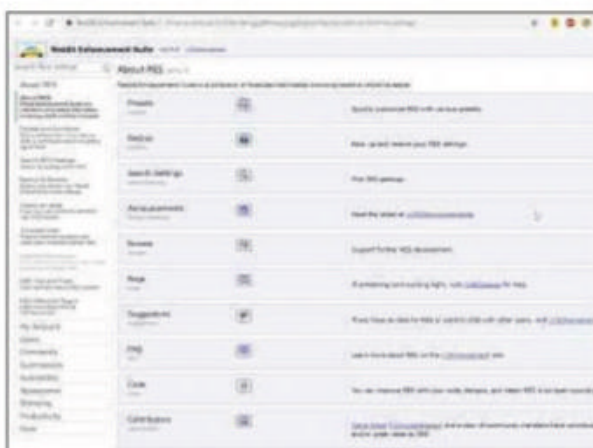
specify the video quality to use, set the volume, and contract or expand the video description.

To use ImprovedTube, go to YouTube, click the add-on's toolbar button and choose a category. Options include General, Appearance, Player, Playlist, Channel and Shortcuts.



## Speed up and spruce up Reddit

Reddit is an excellent source of news and discussion, but its design is rather basic and navigation could be better. This is where the Reddit Enhancement Suite ([redditenhancementsuite.com](http://redditenhancementsuite.com)) comes in handy. Available for all major browsers, this extension adds a number of welcome navigation features, including Never Ending Reddit (which removes the need to click 'next page'), keyboard navigation, an inline image viewer and 'uppers and downers' - which shows the "hidden vote totals that Reddit provides behind the scenes". The User Tag helps you keep track of people you regularly encounter across the site.



**Make Reddit easier to navigate by adding a selection of useful tools**

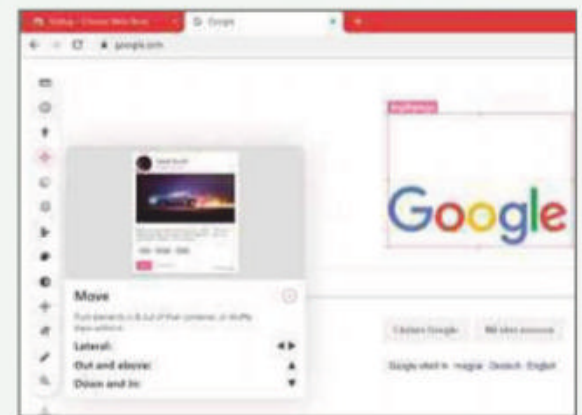


## Optimise Instagram on your desktop

Using Instagram on the desktop is far from ideal. You can't post anything and the layout isn't optimised for the shape and size of your screen. Improved Layout for Instagram.com ([bit.ly/insta470](http://bit.ly/insta470)) is a Chrome add-on that does

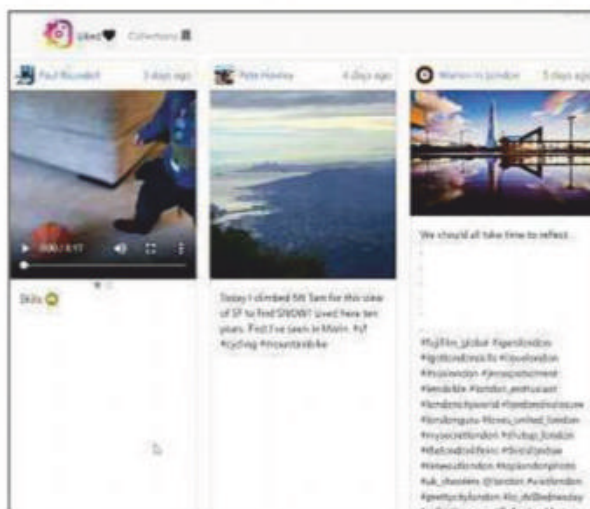
## REDESIGN ANY WEB PAGE USING VISBUG

VisBug ([bit.ly/visbug470](http://bit.ly/visbug470)) is a powerful new Chrome extension from Google that lets you customise the appearance of any website. You can replace text and images with your own and change a site's design in any way you like, such as picking a new background colour, for example. The add-on is very easy to use - just load a website, then click the VisBug browser button and a toolbar appears on the left. Use the different tools to inspect and change elements on the site. To replace text, simply double-click it and type something new. To swap photos, select an



image, then drag your replacement picture to its spot.

The changes you make are only temporary (until you refresh the page) but VisBug is still a fun, free way to get a feel for web design.



**Use Instagram on your desktop with the help of Improved Layout**

exactly what the name suggests. It displays Instagram in full-screen width, provides controls for videos, lets you view 'likes' and saved stories, and introduces a dark mode. It also lets you save images in the highest resolution using the right-click context menu. This handy tool works by adding a three-dot menu to the top-right corner of the Instagram website. Click this to see the new layout, as well as the Liked and Collections sections. The Options area lets you watch posts and stories from

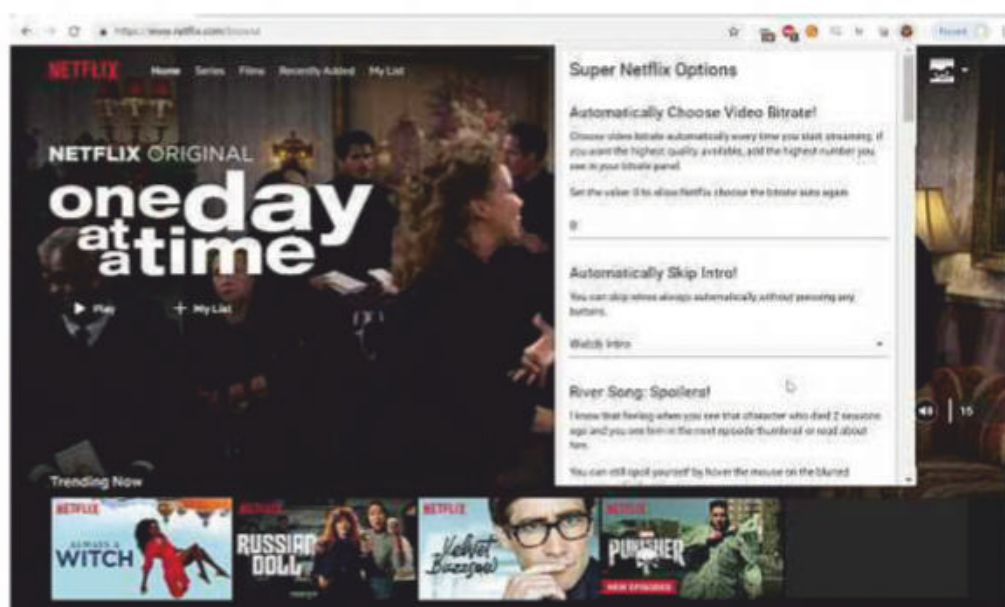
your favourite Instagrammers, enable the Night theme, opt to see only pictures and more.



## Add useful new features to Netflix

If you enjoy watching Netflix on your computer, Super Netflix for Chrome ([bit.ly/snetflix470](http://bit.ly/snetflix470)) can make the experience even better because it provides some additional features. For binge watchers, the add-on can blur images and descriptions of future episodes to avoid spoilers, and it automatically skips intros. Different modes allow you to change the brightness, saturation and contrast (Normal, Bright, Brighter, Night, Late Night, and Black and White), and you can control the volume using your mouse wheel.

Super Netflix also lets you upload subtitles, hide forced subtitles and change the streaming server - which is handy if your videos keep buffering. You can even adjust the speed videos play at (from 0.5x to 4x), which is great if you're watching a show or movie that's a little on the slow side.



**Boost your streaming speed and quality using Super Netflix**





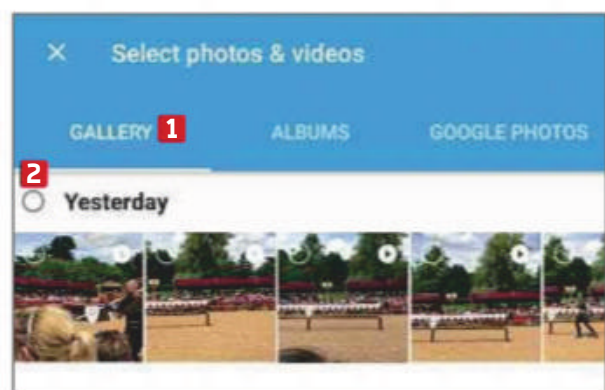
## Edit your mobile videos using GoPro's brilliant free software

Quik is an excellent free video-editing app for Android and iOS. Here's what you need to know

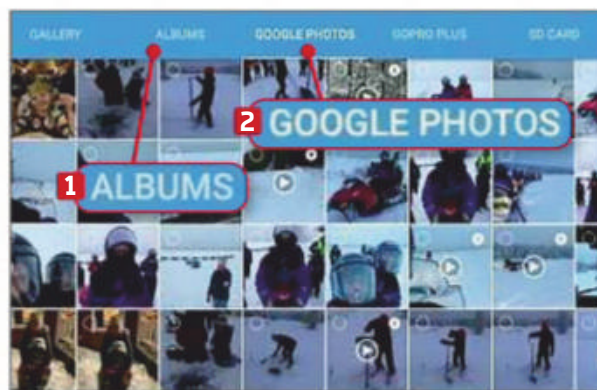
Quik: [quik.gopro.com](http://quik.gopro.com) | ⌚ 20 mins | 🤖 Android 5 🍏 iOS 10

**S**martphones and tablets can produce fantastic quality videos – but they can always be improved. Spending some time trimming clips and applying transitions and effects can enhance them greatly, but this usually requires time and a degree of expertise. Quik, from action camera maker GoPro, does most of the hard work for you, and

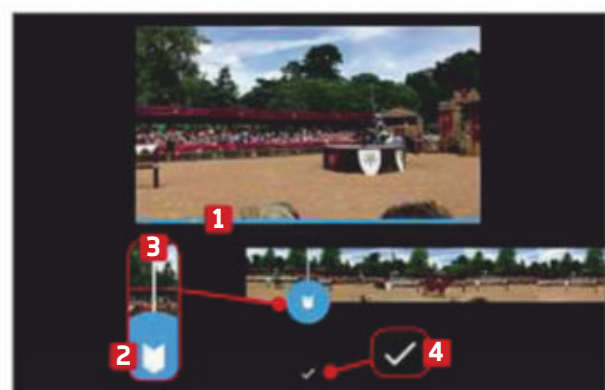
lives up to its name by quickly turning videos and photos into high-quality movies with an optional soundtrack. It has lots of advanced editing features, including the ability to speed or slow the action, and the videos you create can be saved or shared – just forward a link via various methods, including email and Google Drive, or send the file itself.



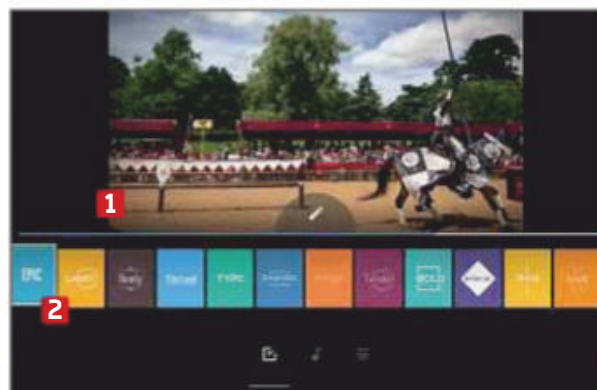
**1** The first time you launch Quik, grant it permission to access media on your device. Thumbnails of all of your photos and videos appear under Gallery. **1** Tap the items you want to use or tap the circle next to a date **2** to select everything from that day. You can then deselect any unwanted items.



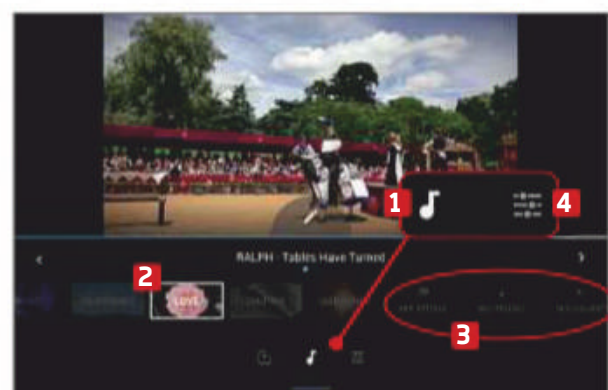
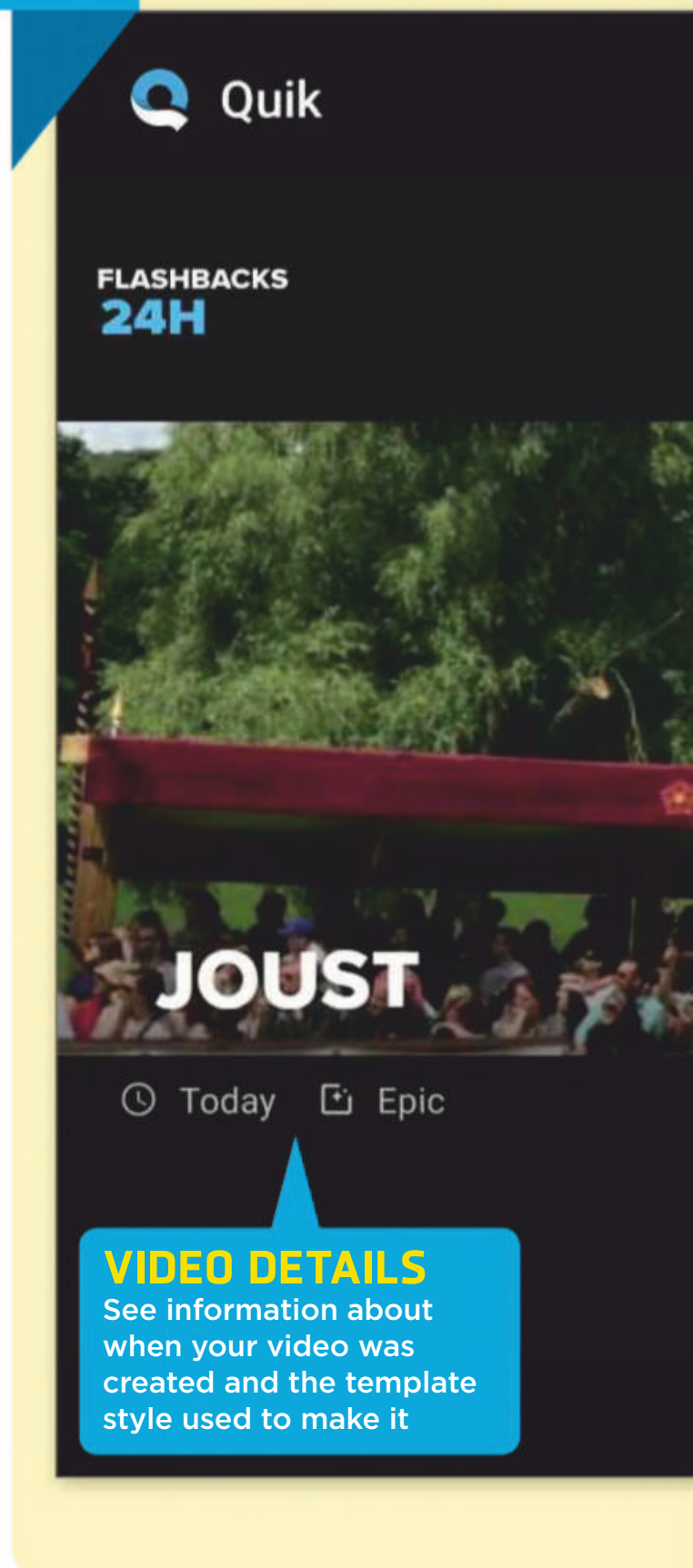
**2** Alternatively, browse the available media by Albums. **1** Quik also lets you view and add images and videos stored on Google Photos. **2** Choose the Google account to use (if you have more than one) and grant Quik permission to manage the photos and videos.



**3** Select a video and a blue Edit Highlight label appears underneath. Tap this and the video will begin to play. **1** Tap the blue button **2** to mark the start and end points of the video with a white line as it goes along. **3** You can mark numerous points in a clip. When you're done, tap the tick. **4**



**4** When you've selected all your files, tap the blue tick button. Give your new movie a name (you can skip this if it's not required) and tap Continue. The video (made up of the clips and photos you selected) will begin to loop. **1** A range of preset styles is displayed below. **2** Tap one to apply it.



**5** Tap the musical note **1** and you're presented with a number of royalty-free tracks you can add. **2** If you prefer, you can choose your own music, have no music or mute the sound completely. **3** Tap the customisation button **4** to access some handy editing options.





## PROJECTS

Saved creations are accessible from the home screen. You can share a video from here, rename it, delete it, or duplicate and edit it



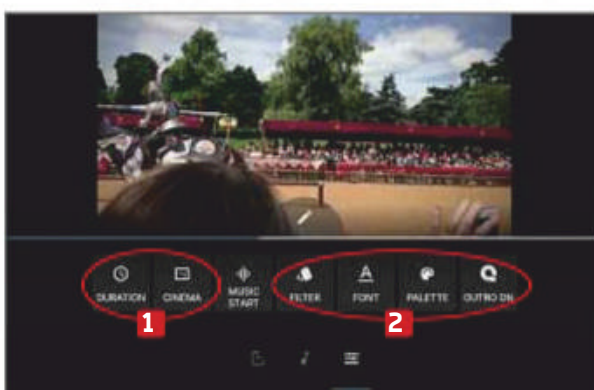
## SETTINGS

Change the video quality (up to 1080p and 60 frames per second) and clear any imported media, such as video or music



## NEW VIDEO

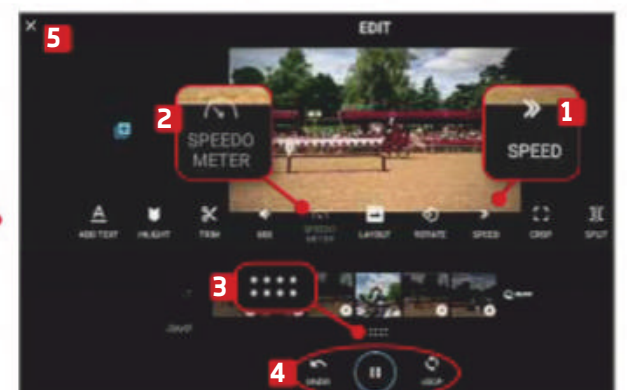
Tap to start a new project. The selection screen opens so you can choose footage or photos



**6** From here, you can change the duration of your video, switch between Square, Portrait and Cinema ratios, **1** apply any of a number of filters, change the font for captions or titles, pick a palette and turn the outro (which says the video is made by Quik) on or off. **2**



**7** Quik has some advanced editing tools you can access by tapping on a clip or the Edit button. It lets you add some videos before **1** or after **2** the current clip. The toolbar below **3** lets you add text, choose highlights, trim the clip and pick a layout (fit or auto). You can rotate, crop or split a clip.



**8** You can also adjust a clip's speed, **1** choosing between regular, fast or slow. **2** Tap the dotted button to reorder clips. **3** You can undo any changes, start or pause a video and set it to loop. **4** When you've finished, tap the X **5** to go back to the main screen and save your video.





# Analyse and improve your Wi-Fi with an Android device

Wifi Analyzer: [bit.ly/wian470](https://bit.ly/wian470) | 20 mins | Android



## EXPERT TIP

### Wayne Williams says

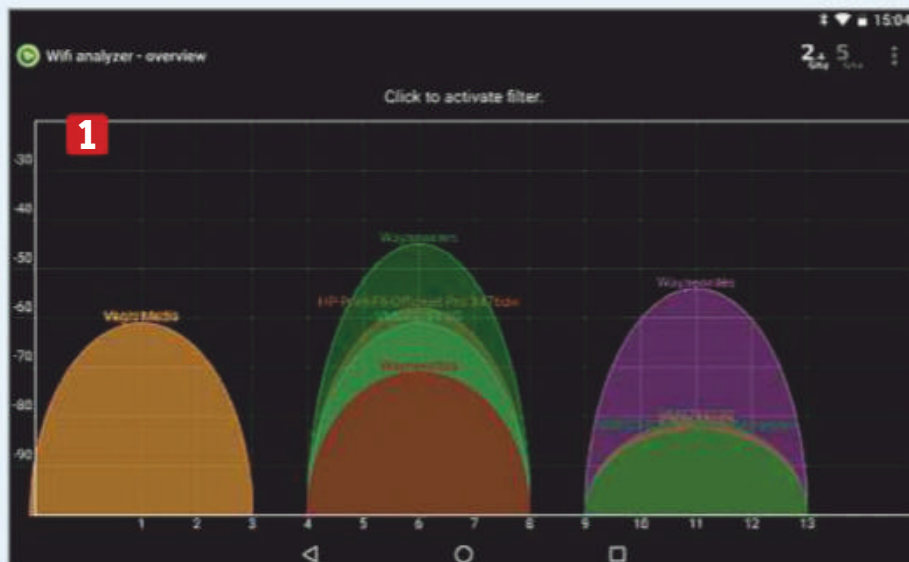
By default, the app checks a network's uniqueness based on SSID, frequency and MAC (Media Access Control) address. However, swipe as far left as you can, open Settings, then 'Wifi settings', and you can opt to use only SSID or only MAC. The app automatically shows wireless channels with no signal (ones which used to exist but aren't there any more), but you can disable this option here, too.



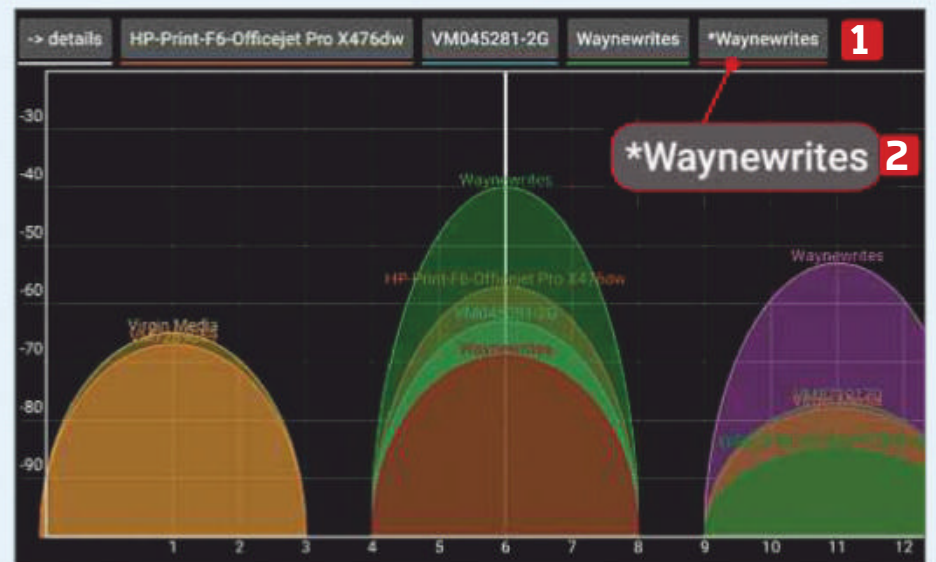
There's no reason to put up with patchy or unreliable Wi-Fi in your home, and there are plenty of actions you can take to improve the situation, from quick tweaks (move the router or change the broadcast channel) to upgrading to a mesh router system or adding range extenders.

Before you can take action, however, you need to identify the problem. Wifi Analyzer turns your Android phone or tablet into a troubleshooting toolkit for your wireless network. This free, ad-supported app helps you locate the best place for your router, choose the Wi-Fi channels you should be using, discover dead zones in your home, see the signal strength over time, and more.

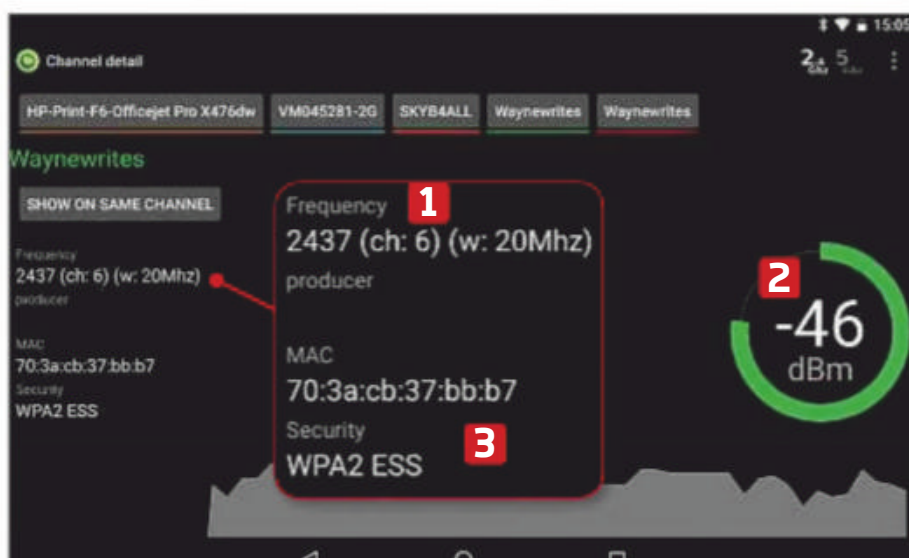
You will need to go into your router settings to change channels.



1 When you first run Wifi Analyzer, you need to grant the app permission to access your Android device's location. It then begins scanning for wireless networks in range on the 2.4GHz band, and presents an overview showing how they're being used. 1 The findings update in real time.



2 Tap anywhere on the graph and a row of networks on that frequency will appear along the top. 1 The tabs are colour coded and match the graphs below. Names that start with an asterisk (\*) 2 aren't using that frequency, but are interfering with it. Tap any of the names to find out more.

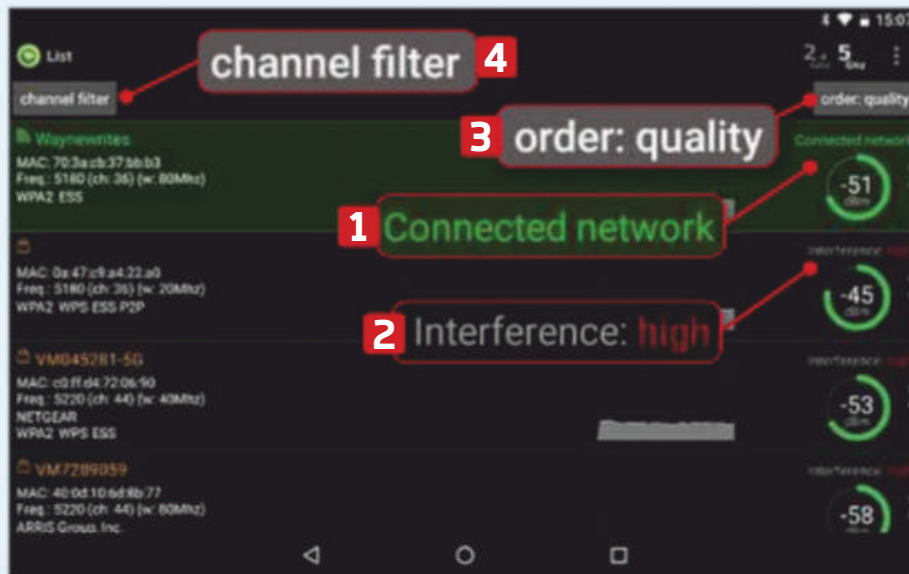


3 The 'Channel detail' page displays the frequency 1 and dBm (decibels relative to a milliwatt), 2 which shows signal strength. The dBm is a negative figure, so -30 is a stronger signal than -80, which is poor. You can also see the Producer, MAC Address and Security type being used. 3 Tap a different tab to view that network.



4 Tapping 'Show on Same Channel' takes you back to the overview screen. Tapping the 5GHz button 1 switches to showing activity on that band. 2 As before, tapping one of the tabs at the top of the page will take you to the channel-detail screen for it.

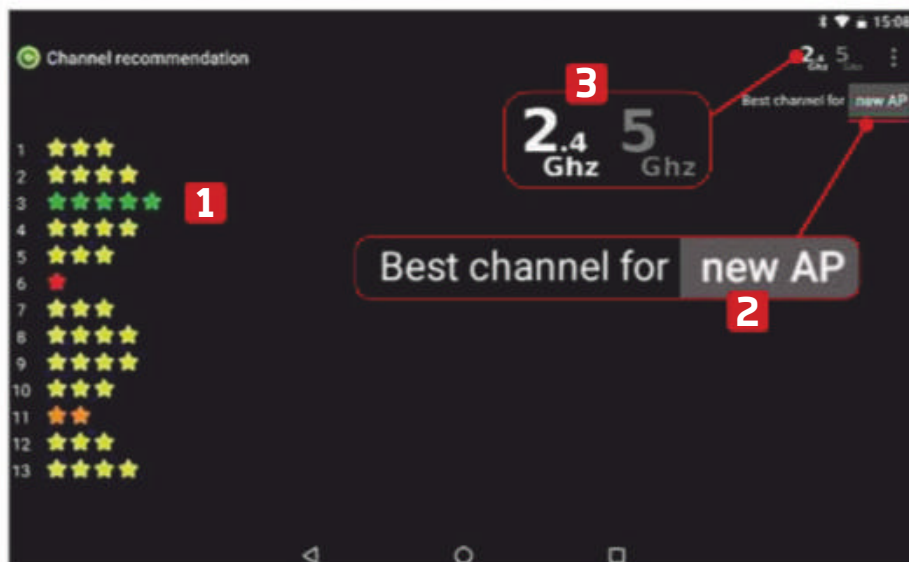




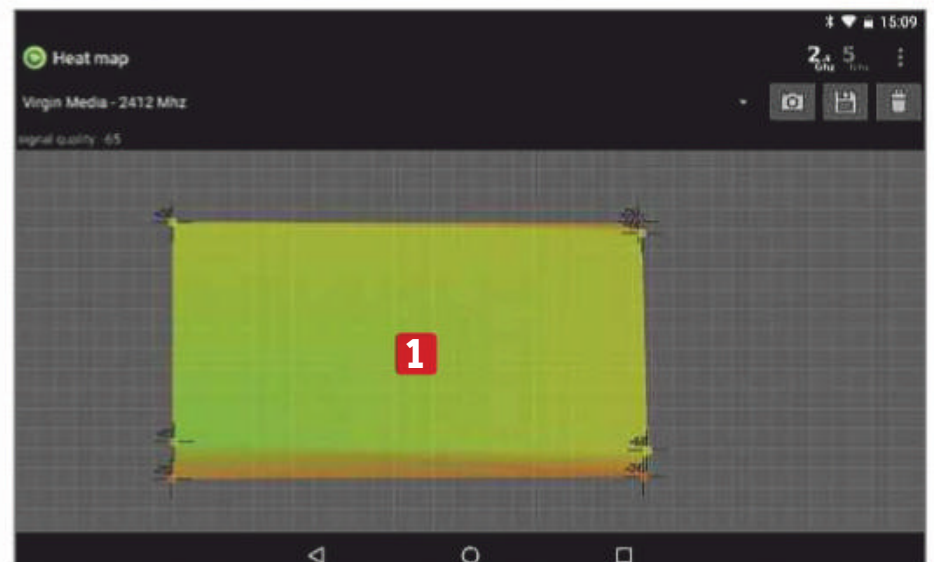
**5** Swiping left from the overview screen takes you to the list view. The connected network is shown at the top (on the 5GHz band), **1** with other networks below. The interference level is displayed. **2** You can change the order by quality, time of first occurrence, SSID name and interference level. **3** You can also filter by channel. **4**



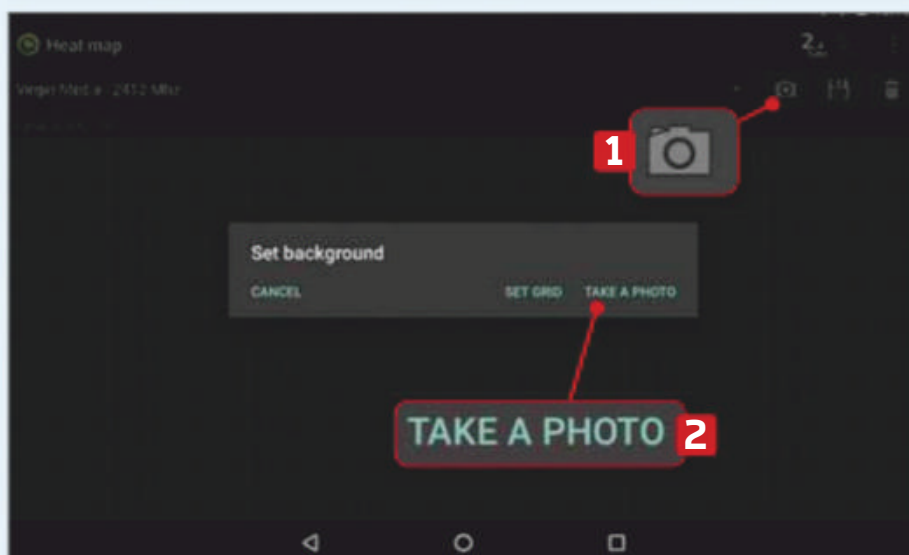
**6** Swipe left again from the List view to go to the Signal History screen. This shows how the quality of each network's signal has performed over time. Tapping a line identifies the network in a tab above **1** so you can see which one it is. Remember, networks with a higher dBm (nearer the top) are stronger.



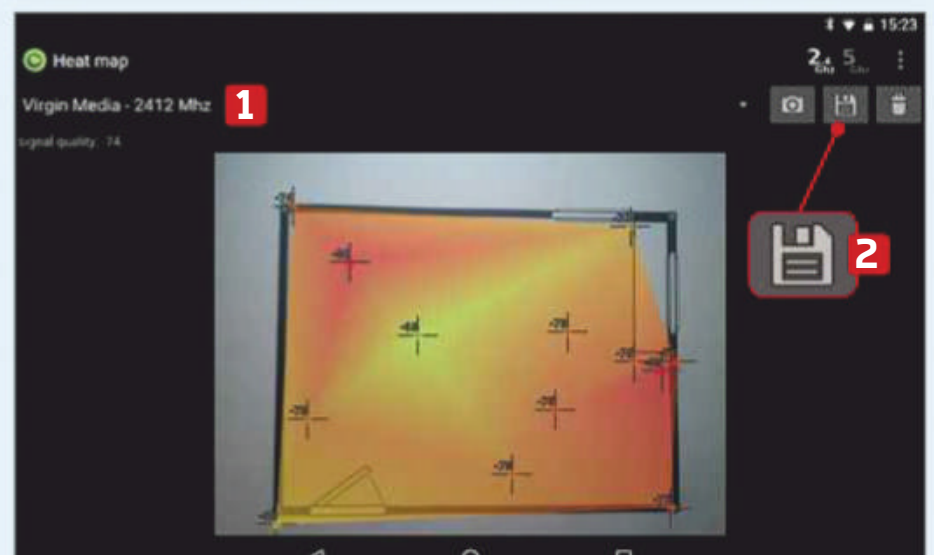
**7** From the overview screen, swipe right to see the Channel Recommendation page. This lists the main channels and shows you, via stars and colour coding, which ones are best (least congested). **1** It shows you which you should use for a new or connected AP (access point). **2** Remember to switch between the 2.4GHz and 5GHz bands. **3**



**8** Wifi Analyzer's Heat Map feature shows you where Wi-Fi is strongest in your home, and also points out weak areas and dead zones. Swipe right from the Channel Recommendation page. By moving around the room and tapping the grid, you can build up a floor plan of the room you are in. **1**



**9** If you have an actual floorplan, you can use that instead. Tap the camera button **1** and select Take a Photo. **2** Use your device's camera to take a picture of the floorplan, then tap the tick button. It will load ready for you to use to test your Wi-Fi strength.



**10** Select your network **1** and take your Android device around the room, stopping every so often and tapping your location on the map. This will show you the signal strength in each area, highlighting the strongest and weakest spots. Repeat the process for different rooms. You can save and share the results. **2**



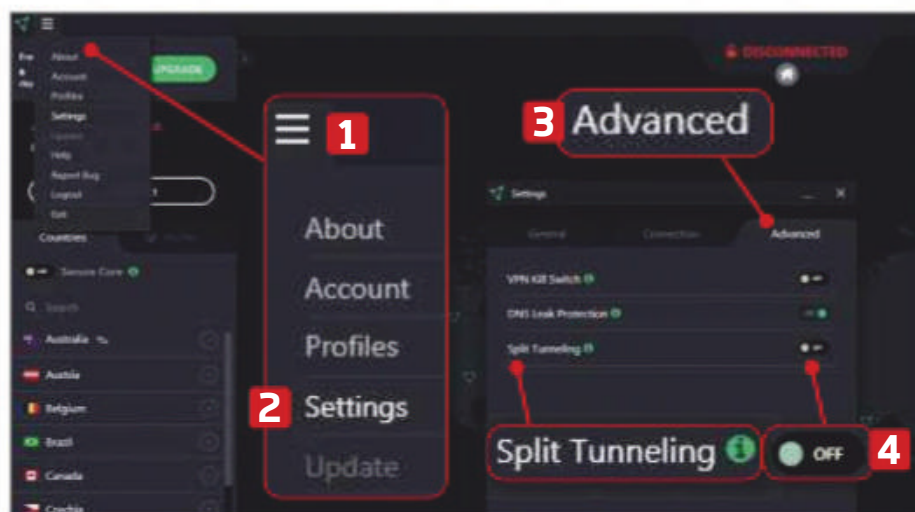
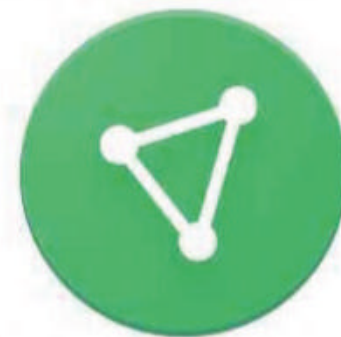


# Choose which apps can use your VPN

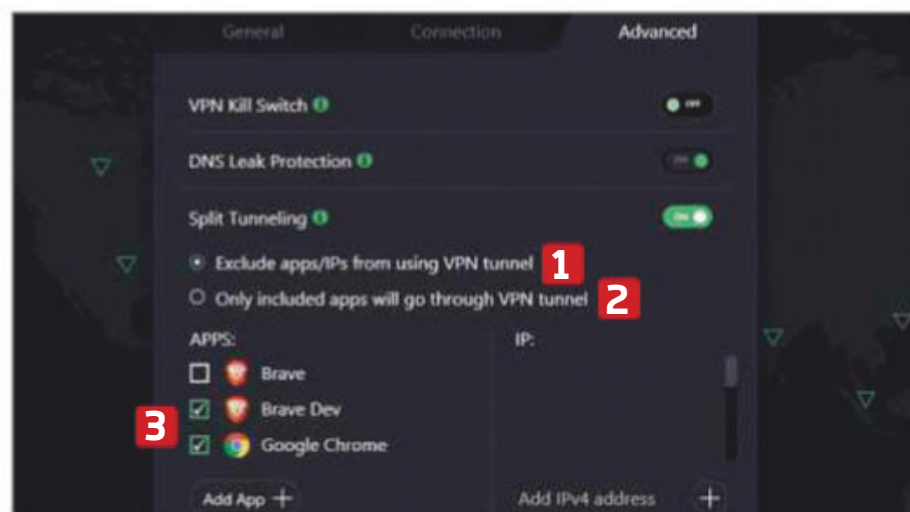
ProtonVPN's Split Tunneling is a handy feature that lets you manage the apps and IP addresses that use your VPN server, and keep them separate from those that use your standard internet connection. This recently added option

is easy to set up and offers you more control over your data. To get started, disconnect the VPN and make sure you have the latest version installed.

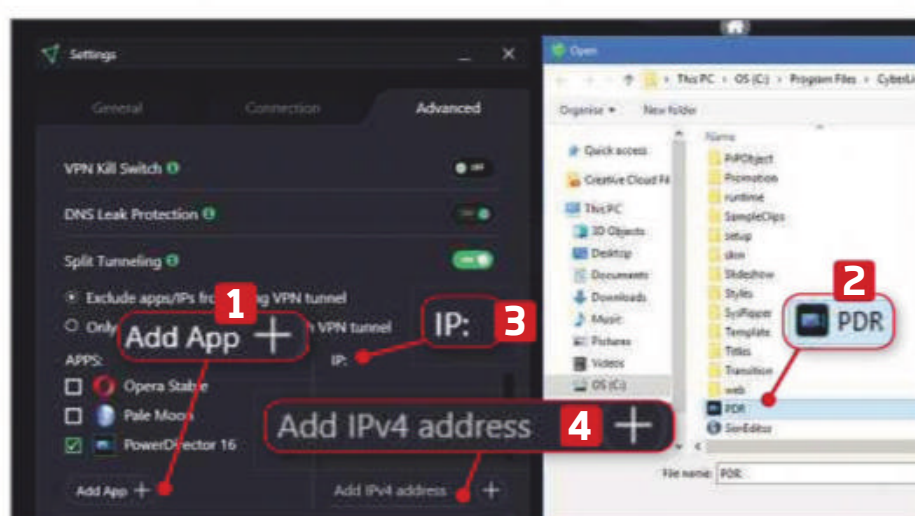
ProtonVPN: [protonvpn.com](https://protonvpn.com) | 10 mins | Windows, Android



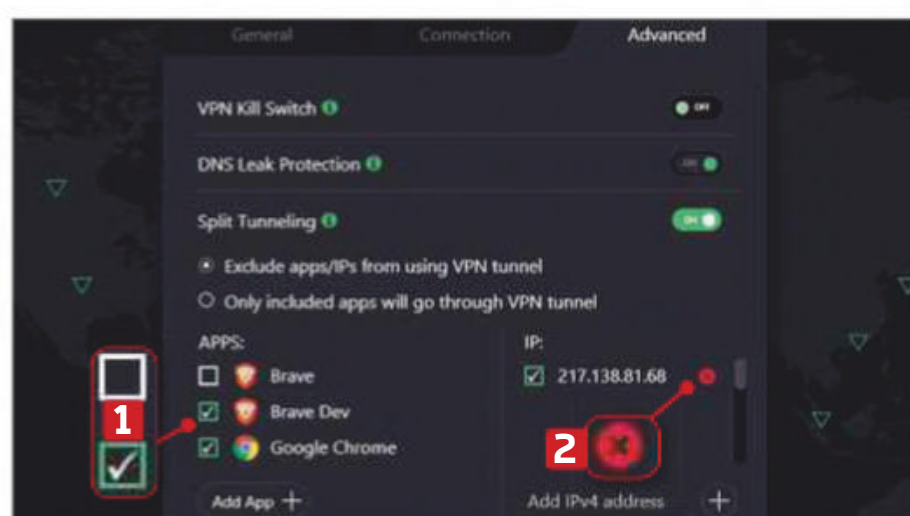
**1** In Windows, check that ProtonVPN is fully up to date. Click the three-line menu button **1** and click Update. You need version 1.7.0+ to enable split tunnelling – if Update is greyed out, you're all set. Next, open Settings. **2** Click the Advanced tab **3** and toggle Split Tunneling to On. **4**



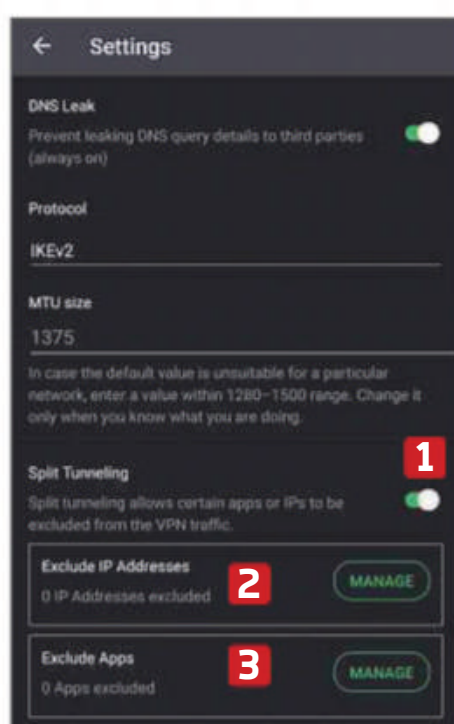
**2** Once activated, you're given the choice to Exclude **1** or Include **2** which apps and IP addresses use ProtonVPN. Select the Exclude option, which also lets you place IP addresses on the exclusion list. Tick the box by any preinstalled browsers, **3** so it won't be routed through the VPN tunnel.



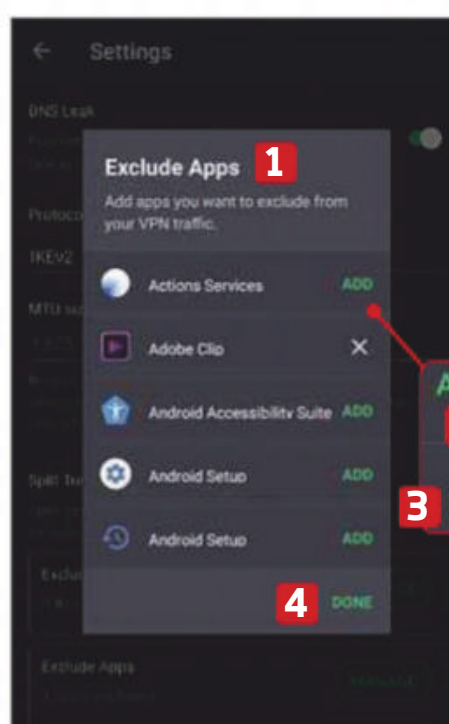
**3** Click Add App, **1** then use File Explorer to find and select the programs you want to exclude from using your VPN. **2** The app is then added beneath your browser list. To add an IP address, **3** enter the required details and click '+'. **4**



**4** If you wish to remove a browser from your exclusion list, untick the box beside it. **1** You can unlock apps and IP addresses using the same method. If you want to completely remove an app or IP address, press the 'X' on the right. **2**



**5** ProtonVPN's streamlined Android app ([bit.ly/proton470](https://bit.ly/proton470)) also enables split tunnelling. In the app, tap the menu button, open Settings and scroll to the bottom. Press the toggle button to switch on Split Tunneling. **1** You now have two Manage options: Exclude IP Addresses **2** and Exclude Apps. **3**



**6** Tap Manage next to Exclude IP Addresses, then type the details. Press Done to confirm. Next, choose to manage excluded apps. Locate the apps in the pop-up **1** and tap Add. **2** A cross appears, which you can tap to remove the app. **3** Finally, tap Done **4** to add your chosen apps to the list.



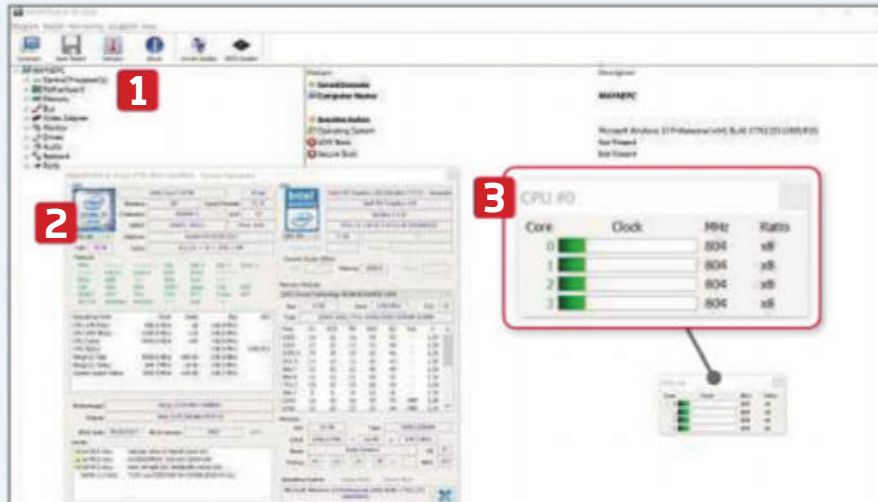


# Check the health of your PC

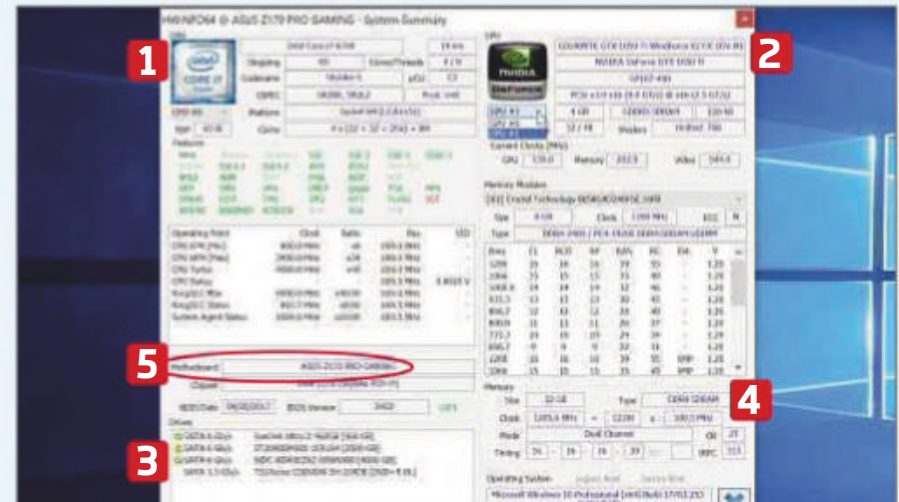
Your PC can go wrong in lots of different ways. If the problem is software related, it's usually easy enough to fix – just reinstall the program that's causing you trouble. Hardware issues are trickier to overcome and you

**HWiNFO:** [www.hwinfo.com](http://www.hwinfo.com) | 10 mins | Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10

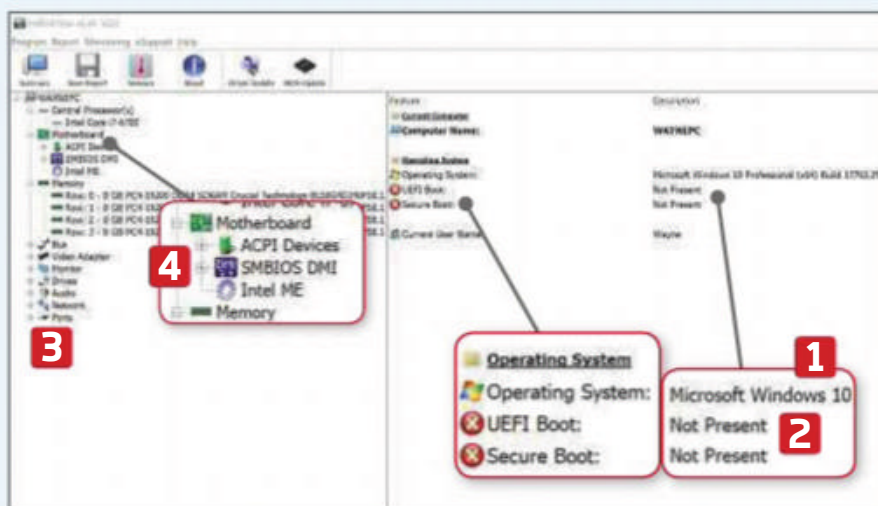
may not even know you have a problem until it's too late. HWiNFO provides all the sensors and monitoring tools you need to keep an eye on your PC's health.



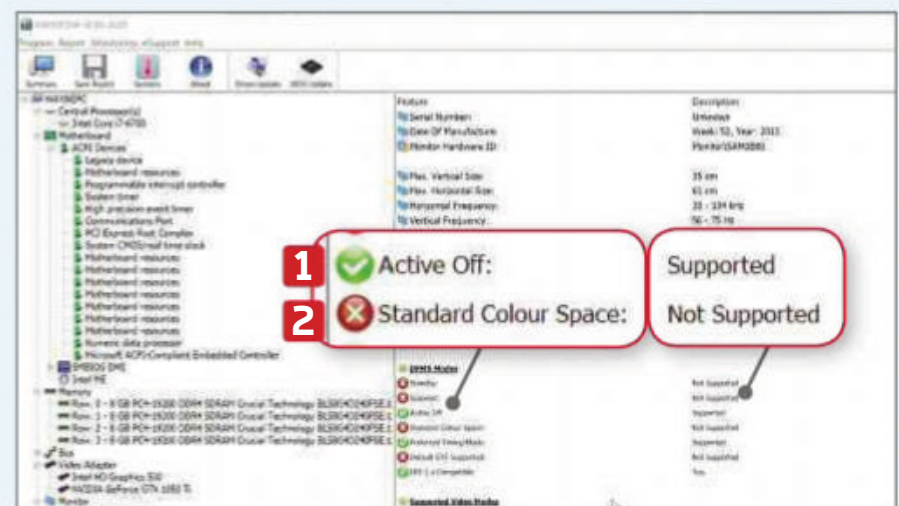
**1** The software is made up of three windows: the main program, **1** which you can use to explore your PC's hardware; a System Summary screen; **2** and a CPU monitor, **3** which shows your processor load in real time. You can move or close the summary screen and monitor.



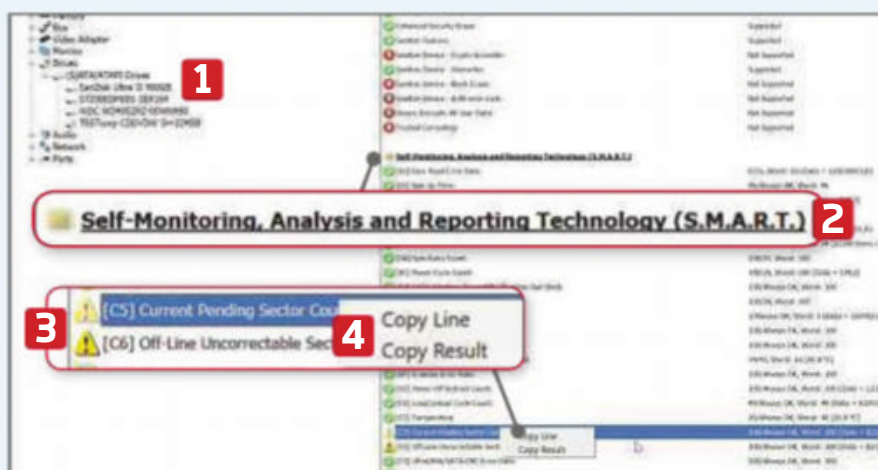
**2** System Summary provides detailed information about your PC, including the CPU, **1** GPU, **2** hard drives, **3** memory **4** and motherboard. **5** The CPU, GPU and memory modules have drop-down menus so you can choose a specific component if you have more than one.



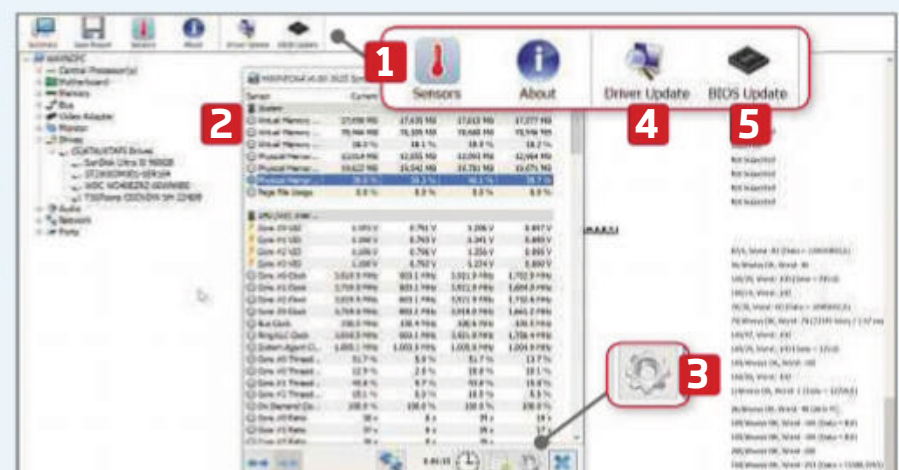
**3** Get an in-depth summary of your PC's health from the main screen. You can see your operating system version **1** and whether UEFI and Secure Boot are enabled. **2** The different hardware sections are shown on the left. **3** Click the plus symbol next to one to expand it. **4**



**4** Unless you're a technical expert, some of the details that HWiNFO reports probably won't mean much to you. Slightly confusingly, green ticks **1** and red crosses **2** don't mean problems, they usually just indicate whether a feature is supported by the hardware or not.



**5** HWiNFO is good at spotting potential hard-drive issues. Select a drive **1** and scroll down to Self-Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Technology (S.M.A.R.T.). **2** Look for errors. **3** Right-click a warning to copy the details, **4** and paste it into Google to find out what it means.



**6** Click the Sensors button **1** to access a report generated by your computer's hardware, such as memory load. **2** Click the cog **3** to configure the sensors. The Driver Update **4** and BIOS Update **5** buttons let you download optional updating tools.



# Weekend Project

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



How to...

## Record TV programmes and watch them anywhere

**Andy Shaw** sets up a USB TV tuner and demonstrates the easiest way to record programmes and watch them on any device

**W**e've had the technology to record TV for decades now, but from VHS recorders to set-top boxes containing hard drives, these devices remain stubbornly cabled to our TVs. Streaming services such as the iPlayer are less physically tied down, but they don't let you keep things forever, so if you don't want to risk losing access to your most treasured TV series or have to buy a DVD box set, the best option is to record it yourself.

In this Weekend Project, we show you how to untether your TV recordings using an affordable TV tuner and some free software and services.



### What you need

The key piece of hardware that you need to record live TV is a TV tuner. These can be bought for around £50 and look a little like USB flash memory drives. You plug it into a USB port on your PC and, at the other end, there's an aerial socket like the one on the back of your TV. By connecting an aerial lead to the socket, your PC can then receive over-the-air broadcasts, such as Freeview. The tuner

we used was a TVButler, available from [bit.ly/tvbu470](http://bit.ly/tvbu470) for €55 (around £47).

To record the programmes, we used TV Mosaic ([www.tv-mosaic.com](http://www.tv-mosaic.com)). This comes in two versions, including a paid-for option that lets you set up the software as a server that can stream your recordings to other devices. However, this costs €40 (around £35), so we worked out a way that you can view your recordings on other devices using the

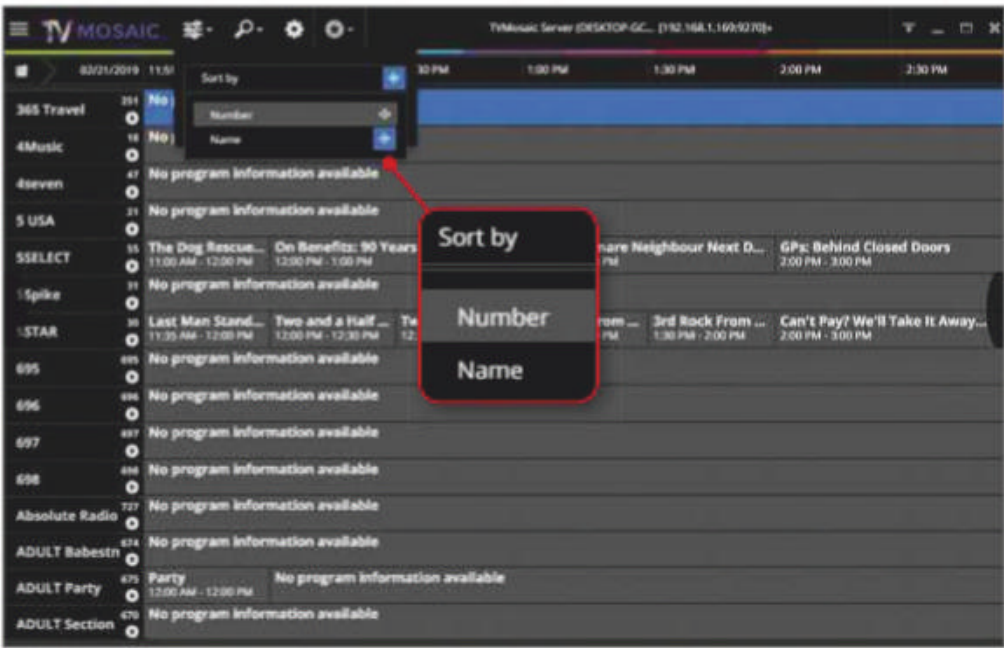
free version. It's not as streamlined but if you find it's too much hassle, you can always pay the money.

The last requirement is some online storage with enough space to hold your recordings. Raw TV files can be big, so this may need to be upgraded beyond the free space you get with most services, but if you manage your recordings carefully, you should be able to maintain a modest library of programmes.





To get broadcast TV on your PC, you need a TV tuner device, such as the TVButler



When you first load the programme guide, the channels are listed in alphabetical order. Click the Settings button, 'Sort by' and then Number to get a more familiar listing

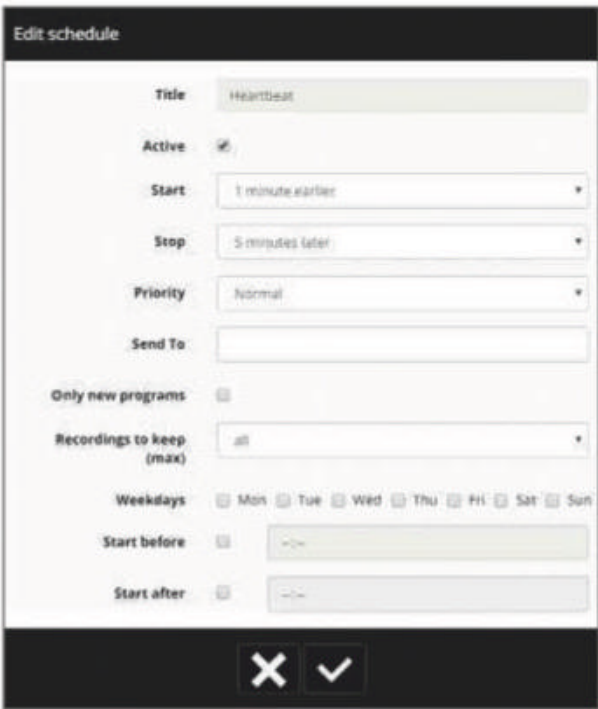
Setting up

First, install all the hardware and software. Your TV tuner should come with the instructions you need to get it going. In the case of the TVButler, we had to download the latest software from [bit.ly/tvmdl470](http://bit.ly/tvmdl470) and install it. You can then download TV Mosaic (also from [bit.ly/tvmdl470](http://bit.ly/tvmdl470)) and set it up. We go through the steps in our Mini Workshop, below. TV Mosaic works with other tuners – there’s a list of supported alternatives at [bit.ly/compat470](http://bit.ly/compat470).

Schedule recordings

The easiest way to set up a scheduled recording is to find it in the TV Guide. Click the menu button in the top-left corner and choose TV Guide. You can scroll ahead through the schedule using the translucent buttons on the left and right of the screen. Scroll down through the channels using your mouse wheel. When you find a programme you want to record, left-click it. If it’s on now, there’s an option to watch it. There should

also be two Rec buttons. The one on the left is for creating a single recording; the one on the right, which looks like a stack of buttons, is used to set up series recording. Click the one you want. To check that your recording has been set up, click the main menu button and choose Schedules. Your programme will be listed. Click the pencil icon to adjust the start and end times. You can also set up a manual recording from here, should you want to record a segment of a programme or perhaps more than one programme joined as a longer recording. From the Schedule window, click the plus button at the top and enter the details.



Check your recordings and add new manual recordings from TV Mosaic’s Schedules

Watching programmes

Once you’ve recorded your programmes, you can use TV Mosaic to watch them, as long as you’re at the same PC you recorded them on. Simply click the menu button and choose TV Recordings to see your programmes listed. If you want to watch on another device,

there are a number of ways to stream or transfer the files, but we found the easiest was to upload the files to cloud storage. You can then access them with VLC ([www.videolan.org](http://www.videolan.org)) on any mobile

MINI WORKSHOP | Set up TV Mosaic

1 When you launch TV Mosaic, a box appears with server information. We won’t need this, so tick the Understood box and click the main screen below to clear it. Your tuner is listed and needs setting up. For Freeview, you need the DVB-T option (in this case, it was the one that wasn’t labelled DVBC). 1





2 Go through the following Windows, clicking on the option you want in order to highlight it (you have to do this even if there’s only one option) and then clicking Next. 1 Choose the broadcast standard, whether to include paid-for channels, the country (United Kingdom) and the television mast your aerial is pointed at. 2

3 Click Next and the program starts scanning for channels, 1 just like your TV does when you first set it up or need to perform a channel update. When it’s finished, click Apply. To get the TV listings, click EPG and the Sources tab. Click Refresh. This might take a few minutes to download, so be patient.



# Broadband Deals

Call FREE on 0800 083 2357 to switch your broadband

	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1		TalkTalk: Fast Broadband	<b>£17.00</b> (£27 after 18 months)	<b>18</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>CHEAPEST</b> <b>£204.00</b>
2		Sky: Broadband Unlimited	<b>£18.00</b> (£30 after 18 months)	<b>18</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited*	<b>£216.00</b>
3		First Utility: First Broadband	<b>£18.99</b>	<b>18</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>£227.88</b>
4		Virgin Media: Player Bundle + Fibre Broadband + Weekend Calls	<b>£33.00</b> (£51 after 12 months)	<b>12</b> months	<b>54Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>£396.00</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 19 February 2019.

**Ofcom**

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

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

**SNEAK  
PREVIEW!**

Computer  
**active**

**WHAT THE WEB NEVER FORGETS ABOUT YOU** - Erase all the private data that you've left behind online

- Record problems on your screen using your webcam

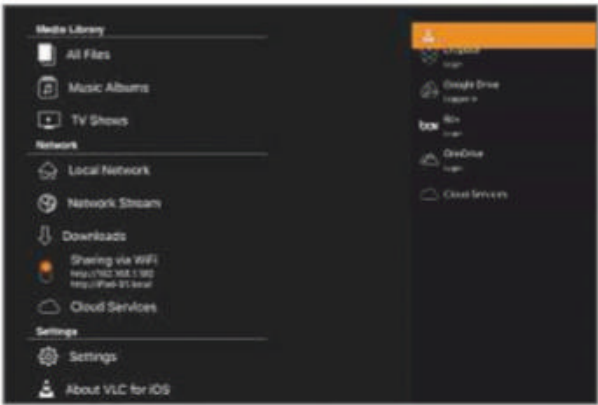
Subscribe at [www.getcomputeractive.co.uk](http://www.getcomputeractive.co.uk)

- Master your printer's hidden settings
- Convert any file from your right-click menu

**PLUS:** Computing myths that you need to stop believing

**On sale  
Weds  
13 March**





From VLC's menu, choose Cloud Services to connect to your preferred service

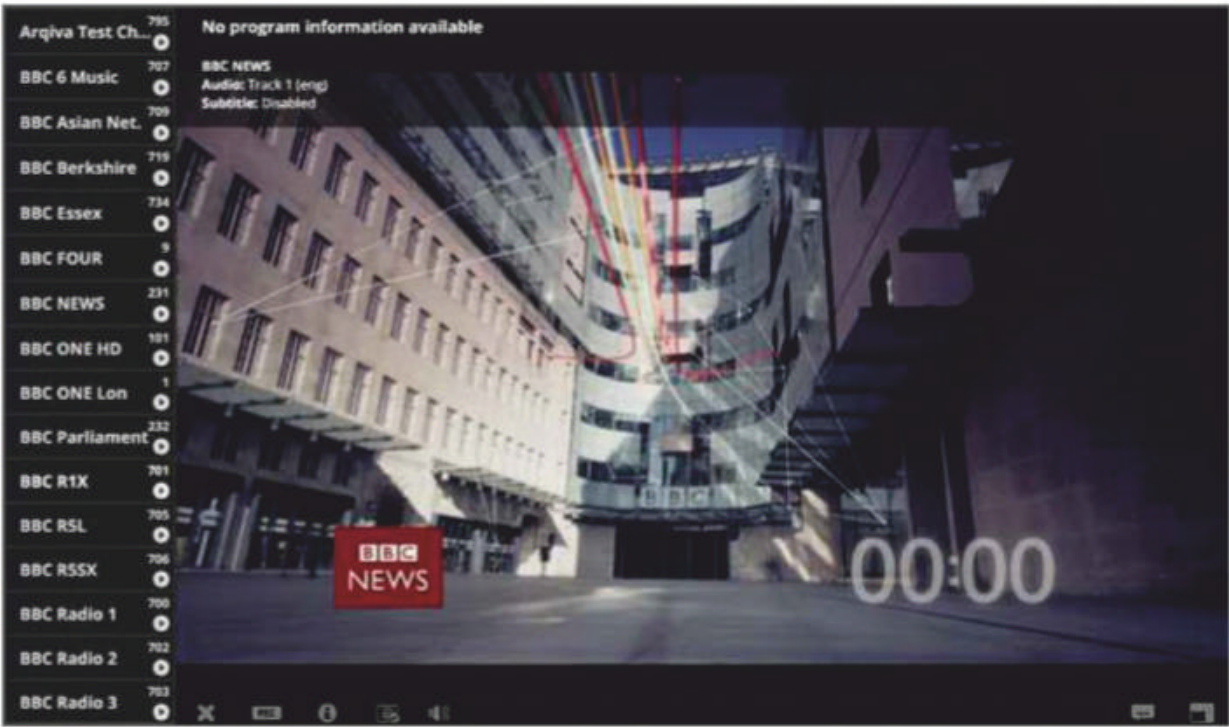
device without having to convert them first, and it doesn't matter where you are as long as you have an internet connection. We show you how in our Mini Workshop, below.

Note that the files are large, so you may want to download them direct to a device if you're thinking of watching them while you're on the move.

To use the mobile version of VLC to watch a recording stored on a cloud service, open the menu and choose Cloud Services. Select the service from the list and log in, if you haven't already.

Find the file and tap it to load it. Once it starts playing, tap the thumbnail to make it full screen.

We found this was also a good way to then cast the video to another device, such as a TV with a Chromecast connected. Once the video is playing, you'll see the casting icon in the top-right corner. Tap this, then choose the device you want to cast to from the list of available options.



If you're still on the PC you recorded on, you can watch live and recorded TV in TV Mosaic



The video streams from the cloud service to VLC without needing to be converted. To cast to other devices, tap the cast icon

**MINI WORKSHOP** | Watch your recorded programmes on other devices

**1** The easiest way to get the files to other devices is to sync TV Mosaic's folder to your cloud storage. We tried switching the storage location but ran into problems, so we think this method is simpler. In Google Drive, for example, click its icon in the notification area, **1** click the menu button **2** and choose Preferences. **3**

**2** In the My Computer section, **1** click Choose Folder and browse to the location where TV Mosaic stores your recordings. On our PC, this was C:\ProgramData\DVBLogic\TVMosaic\data\RecordedTV. **2** Because the files are large, they may rapidly fill your available storage, so keep an eye on what you have recorded.

**3** If you don't want this to happen automatically, you can simply go to the folder and drag and drop the required files manually to your online storage. **1** This is a better option if you only need to access programmes occasionally or you have limited space, because it's easier to keep a handle on what you've uploaded.



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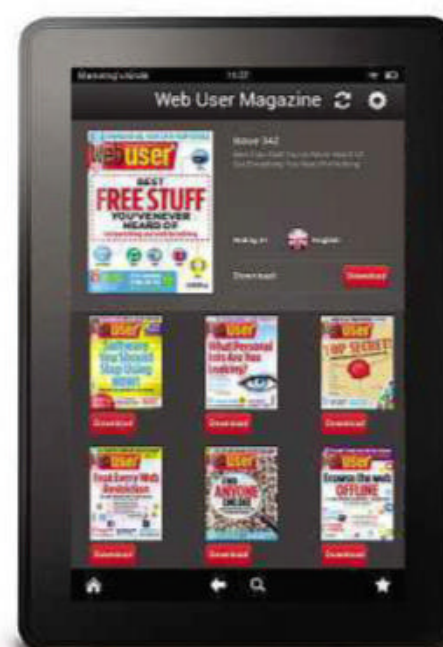
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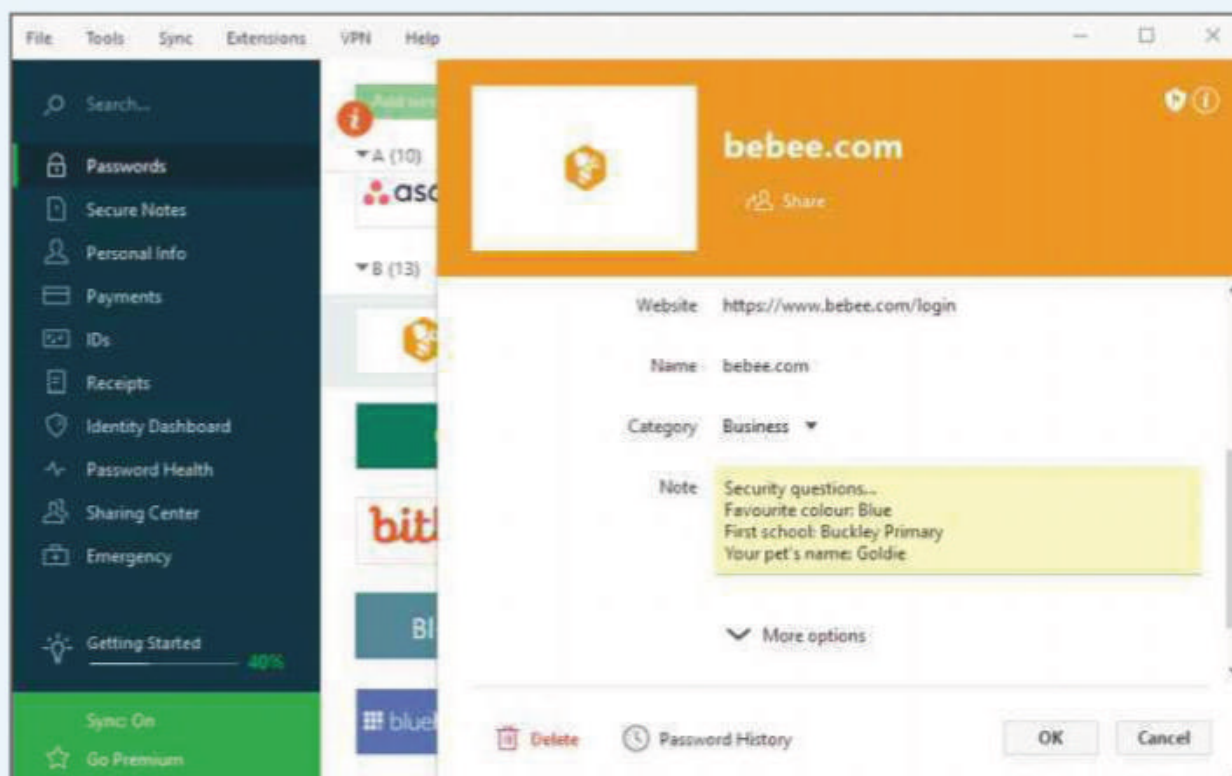
# Web User Masterclass

## Unlock your password manager's full potential

### Add notes to login info

**P**assword managers are mostly used for storing passwords – Chrome's built-in password manager does nothing else. But there are other password manager tools that do much more.

Some sites ask for additional password requirements when you log in, such as the name of your first pet or school. This information is used to help prove your identity. If you're prone to forgetting the answers to some of these questions, perhaps because you typed the first thing that popped into your head, it's worth attaching the information as a note for that site in your password manager. For example, if you use LastPass ([www.lastpass.com](http://www.lastpass.com)), click the LastPass icon in the browser toolbar, then click 'My vault'. Select Sites on the left, hover your mouse over a website login and click the spanner icon



*Store additional information, such as security questions, alongside other logins*

on the right. You can enter your security questions along with other relevant information in the Note box. In the Dashlane app ([www.dashlane.com](http://www.dashlane.com)), double-click a login and scroll down to the Notes section.

### Store important files

Did you know that LastPass includes 50MB of cloud-storage space in which to securely store files? Sign up to a Premium account and that rises to 1GB. Some other password managers also store files, but you need to check to find out how much space they provide.

Click the LastPass icon in the browser toolbar and open your vault. Select Secure Notes on the left and click the plus button to create a note. Give it a name, then click the Add Attachment button to add a file.

The menus are different in Dashlane and Bitwarden ([bitwarden.com](http://bitwarden.com)), but it's

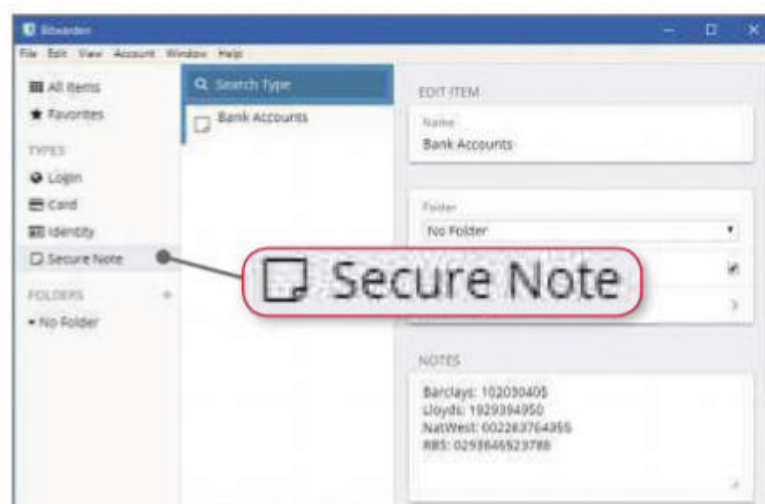
the same process. In Dashlane, select Secure Notes in the sidebar, click 'Add new' and select 'Blank note'. Give the note a name and click 'Attach a file'. In Bitwarden notes, click Attachments when creating or editing a note.

### Store notes securely

Password managers securely store private and personal data: mostly website login details, but other information can be stored, too – not just passwords. For example, you might want to store bank account sort codes and account numbers, credit card details, your tax reference or your National Insurance number.

Every service is different. If you use LastPass, click it in the browser toolbar, then click Open My Vault. Select Secure Notes on the left, then click the plus button at the bottom to add a new note.

In Bitwarden, select Secure Note



*Store details such as bank details in the Note section of your password manager*

on the left, then click the plus at the bottom of the middle column. On the right, choose the type from Secure Note, Login, Card or Identity. In the Dashlane app, select Secure Notes in the sidebar and you'll see nine different types of note including plain notes, software licenses, memberships, Wi-Fi passwords and so on.

**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.**





## Run a password checkup

Some password managers can analyse the passwords used for your various logins and assess how secure they are. For example, in Dashlane select Password Health in the sidebar to display an overall score. It shows how many of your passwords have been compromised by hacks and leaks, how many have been reused, and the number of weak passwords. Select any of these categories to see your logins, then go to the sites and services and change your passwords to increase your health score.

In LastPass, open your vault and click Security Challenge in the sidebar. It takes you step by step through a security checkup and one of the first actions it performs is to see if any of your logins have been included in known security breaches. Then it shows your security score as a percentage and provides a series of steps that can be taken to improve your score.



*The LastPass Security Challenge helps you improve your password security*

## Browse the web on your phone

Some mobile password managers have their own web browser. LastPass is a good example. Open the menu and select Browser. This offers a number of benefits including increased privacy and security settings.

A password manager's browser offers extra features, such as auto-filling login details and forms. This is a boon on phones because mobile browsers don't support extensions. It's a good idea to carry out banking, shopping and similar activities in your password manager's browser rather than Chrome or Safari, for the extra security they offer.

## Share your passwords

Families and couples might find it useful to share passwords, at least to some accounts if not all of them. It often costs extra, but Bitwarden's family account for five members is only \$1 (around 78p) a month. A LastPass Premium account (£2.33 per month) lets you share each item with one other person and Family accounts (£3.10 per month) cater for up to six members.

## TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

### Back up your passwords

If you're making sure that you always use unique usernames and passwords, it's impossible to remember them all. What would happen if you lost access to your passwords? You'd lose the ability to bank, shop, receive email, use social media and more.

Everything relies on passwords, so it's a good idea to back them up. If they are stored in two places, there is much less chance of losing them.

Most password managers have an export function that saves everything either to a file that can be saved to hard drive or on your PC. Do not leave the password data in a file on the disk or on the clipboard – put it somewhere secure as a backup.

For example, if you use the LastPass browser extension, click the icon and open the vault. Click the three-dots button at the bottom of the sidebar and click Advanced, then Export. Everything in your account is listed in the browser. Press Ctrl+A to select all, then Ctrl+C to copy it.

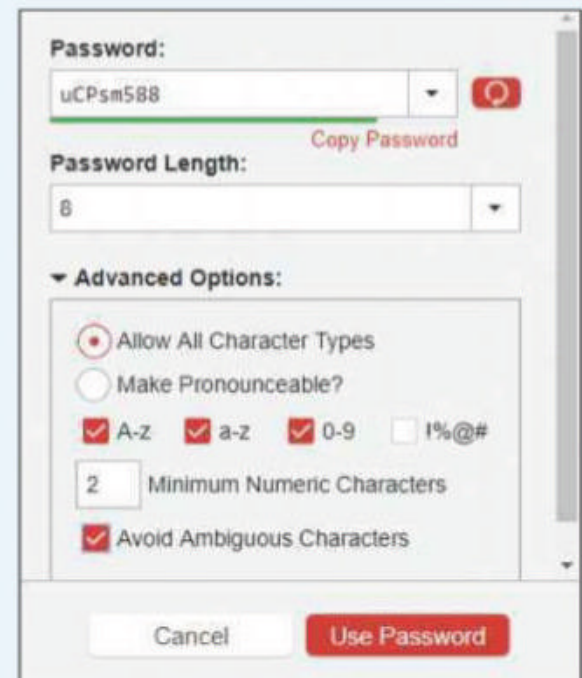
It's not a good idea to use two password-manager extensions in a browser, but you could paste the information into a secure note in the Dashlane, Bitwarden or KeePass ([keepass.info](http://keepass.info)) desktop application for safe-keeping. Some password apps, such as Dashlane, have an Import feature that imports everything directly from LastPass, which is even easier.

Chrome can save passwords and we have had no problems running it with LastPass. Passwords are saved to both as a backup.

### Enable emergency contacts

You might want to think about how difficult it would be for your family to access important accounts if you were seriously ill in hospital or worse. For this reason, it's a good idea to set up emergency access or emergency contacts.

Dashlane, LastPass and some other password managers support this feature, which involves adding another user to your account. You are notified if they try to access it and if you don't decline within, say 30 days, they are allowed in. In LastPass for example, go to your vault and click Emergency Access in the sidebar. Add a partner or someone else you trust.



*Use the password generator in your password manager*

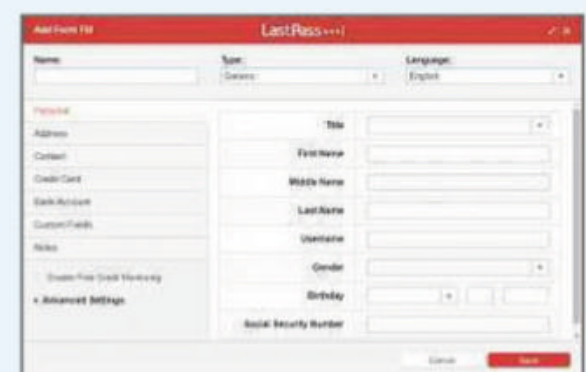
### Generate passwords

Password managers have two core functions: to generate passwords and to store them. A browser extension may show a button next to the password box when on a website's signup page. Clicking it generates a secure password that's likely to be better than any you can think up.

Failing that, password managers have built-in password generators. Sites often have rules for passwords such as requiring uppercase and lowercase letters, a number, a minimum number of characters and so on. Set the options required in the password generator.

### Auto-fill web forms

Browsers are usually pretty good at filling in forms on web pages but you may find your password manager is even better. For example, click the LastPass icon in the browser, then click 'Form fills', 'Add form'. Fill in all the information on all the tabs. The next time a form is displayed on a web page, LastPass should auto-fill the details in the correct boxes.



*Add Form Fill in LastPass lets you enter details for any web forms you encounter*



# 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)



## GENERAL PC

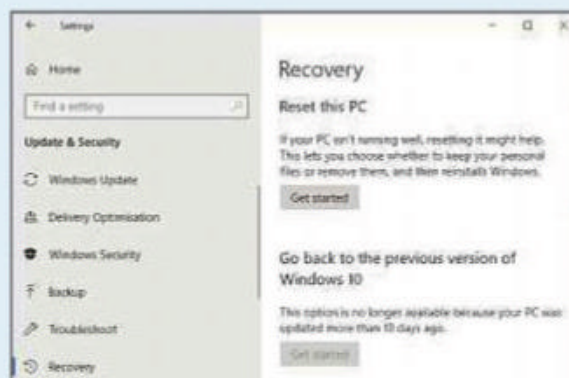
### Fix programs broken by updates

**Q** My PC hasn't worked properly since a Windows 10 update in January. When I try to launch Edge and other apps, nothing happens. If I wait long enough, the apps eventually appear, but the problem returns when I restart my PC. Going to Settings, Apps, Default apps, Reset, Edge seemed to fix the problem, but only until the next restart.

**Robert Cull, via email**

**A** If a Windows 10 app isn't working properly, open Settings and click Apps, then 'Apps & features'. Select the faulty app, then click 'Advanced options'. Try the Repair button first. If that doesn't fix it, click Reset.

If you can get Edge working long enough to download Chrome ([www.google.co.uk/chrome](http://www.google.co.uk/chrome)), you could use



**If all else fails, you can reset your PC to fix problems with apps**

that browser instead. If Edge won't work at all, type **internet explorer** into the search box on the taskbar and use that to download Chrome.

If the problem is affecting lots of apps, you may have to reset Windows. Go to Settings, Update & Security, Recovery. Under 'Reset this PC', click 'Get started' and opt to 'Keep my files'.

For a period after a Windows biannual update, you can restore your PC to the previous version. If all else fails, try this.

such as the processor and hard drive, and adjusting the fan's speed accordingly. If the temperature gets too high, it sets the fan speed to maximum. Ignore the ads containing Download buttons – the download link is in the text on the Download page.

CAM ([bit.ly/ncam470](http://bit.ly/ncam470)) is a system monitor that can display a screen overlay while you're playing games. It shows the CPU and GPU temperature, clock speed and fan speed, and warns you if temperatures get too high.

An off-the-shelf PC shouldn't get so hot that its components fail, even if you play demanding games. However, you must keep your PC clean inside, because dust accumulates in air vents and on fans and components. Most desktop PCs are easy to take apart, so it's worth checking the amount of dust inside once a year. Use a can of compressed air to blow dust off components if you think it might interfere with cooling.

Laptop owners are limited to blowing air through the vents from outside, which is far from perfect but better than nothing.

Upgrades, such as powerful graphics cards, can generate more heat than the PC was designed to cope with, so you'll need to take steps to keep it cool. You may need to install a more powerful fan or additional fans inside the case. If you built the PC yourself, you may be able to boost the cooling you already have.

## SECURITY

### Update Windows 7's encryption certificates

**Q** In your feature '20 Things You Must Do Online in 2019' (Issue 465, [bit.ly/webuser465](http://bit.ly/webuser465)) you mention certification numbers. I'm a PC novice, but I want to run Windows 7 for as long as I can, so how do I change from SHA-1 to SHA-2?

**Brian Cooper, via email**

**A** Secure Hash Algorithm 1 (SHA-1) and 2 (SHA-2) are important components of cryptography, and Windows, web browsers and other applications use them to perform secure operations. It's like a sophisticated

## HARDWARE

### Take your PC's temperature

**Q** My PC became disastrously hot recently, burning out my GTX 980 Ti graphics card and 1TB hard drive, and breaking one of my surge-protected sockets. I've since recovered my PC but have downgraded the components to stop it overheating again.



**CAM monitors system information from the CPU, GPU and hard drive**

I'd now like to bring the PC back up to speed, so I need some temperature-monitoring software. I've found lots of free tools but I need one that's reliable. Can you recommend any? If possible, I'd like to be able to see the temperature using some kind of overlay while gaming.

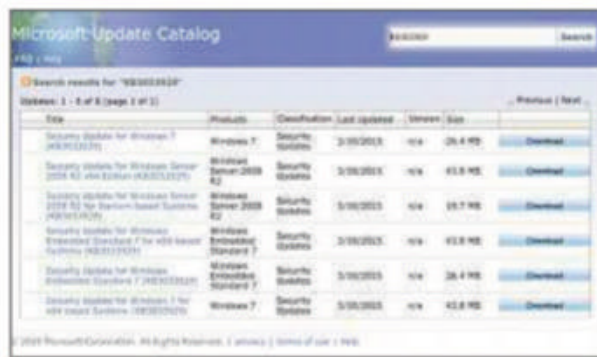
**Ray Swinner, via email**

**A** Most temperature monitors can't display data over the top of a game. CoreTemp ([bit.ly/cote470](http://bit.ly/cote470)) is a typical tool that monitors processor temperatures. Click 'More downloads' on the website and select the 'standalone version', which you can run without installing it.

Go to Options, 'Overheat protection' and enable it. This monitors the PC's temperature and, if it reaches the processor's limit, puts the PC into sleep mode or switches it off.

SpeedFan ([bit.ly/spfa470](http://bit.ly/spfa470)) also helps prevent overheating by monitoring the temperature sensors on components





**To update Windows 7 to SHA-2, check for updates or download it from Microsoft**

checksum that can be used to confirm that data hasn't been tampered with.

Several years ago, researchers discovered problems with SHA-1, and everything moved to SHA-2. Some software won't work if it detects SHA-1 and if a web browser finds a website using SHA-1, it will refuse a connection.

The easiest way to get SHA-2 is to set Windows 7 to update automatically. If you've updated Windows recently, you should already be using SHA-2. If you update your PC manually, check for recent updates and install them.

If for some reason you can't use Windows Update, download the SHA-2 security updates from [bit.ly/wsha470](http://bit.ly/wsha470).

## NETWORKING

### Remove Npcap message

**Q** After suffering some internet connection problems, which have now been resolved, I checked my available networks and spotted a new notice above my network that states "npcap loopback adapter no internet." What is this and how do I remove it?

**Archibald Brown, via email**

**A** Npcap is a programmer's tool that's incorporated into various programs, including network analysers, network monitors, traffic loggers, security tools and similar software. You say you were having internet problems, which have been resolved. It's possible that whoever fixed the problems installed Npcap during the process.

Open the Control Panel, then 'Programs and Features' to see if any internet or network utilities have been installed recently. If they have and you no longer need them, uninstall them. This should also remove Npcap.

If that doesn't work, go to the Control Panel and click Device Manager. Expand 'Network adapters' and look for an entry for Npcap. If it's there, uninstall it.

## MOBILE

### Get dark themes on mobile

**Q** I'm partially sighted and ever since my first desktop PC, which ran

Windows 95, I've been able to reduce eye strain by reversing the on-screen colours to a High Contrast Black option in Settings. This means I get white text on a black screen in Microsoft Office, my browser and most other programs. There are a few hiccups here and there, but it works well overall.

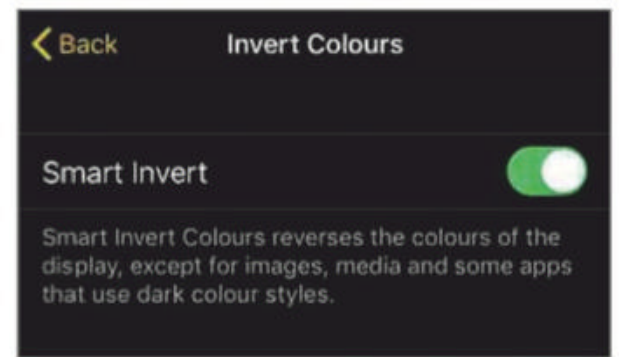
If this feature has been available in Windows 95 and every version since, why isn't it possible on today's smartphones and tablets? I have real trouble with white backgrounds and I can't dim the screen because I won't be able to see the text, but when I switch on colour inversion, it inverts everything! Photos look like negatives, and colours are inverted in videos, too.

This has never happened in Windows, which only inverts the colour of text, not images or video, so why is it beyond the capability of Android devices?

**Phil McKeown, via email**

**A** The Android operating system doesn't have a built-in colour inversion setting, but an increasing number of apps offer an optional dark mode. You have to configure each app separately, though.

The next version of Android will have its own dark mode, but you may need to buy a new phone to get it, because



**The Smart Invert feature in iOS applies a dark theme without spoiling your photos**

upgrades to the latest version of Android are often slow to arrive on older phones, if they ever make it.

There are a few tweaks you might be able to make, depending on the phone model and version of Android. Go to Settings, Accessibility, Vision and enable 'High contrast fonts', 'High contrast keyboard' and 'Show button shapes'. Go to Settings, Display and enable 'Blue light filter' to make the screen easier on the eyes.

If that doesn't help, you may be better off with an iPhone. You can go to Settings, General, Accessibility, Display Accommodations, then Invert Colours. In addition to the Classic Invert option, which switches everything, there is a Smart Invert option, which reverses everything except images and media. Photos and videos will appear normal, as they do in Windows' inverted mode.

## SECURITY

### Spot false positives in VirusTotal

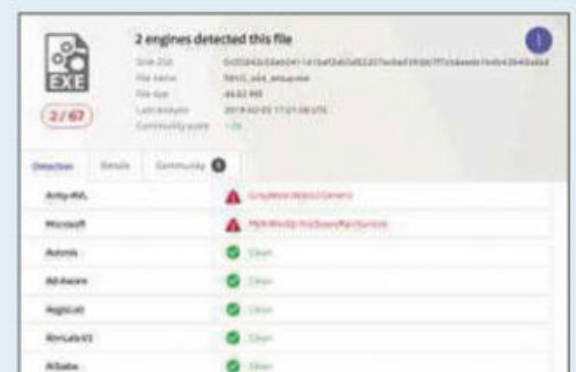
**Q** In past issues of *Web User*, you've mentioned a program called Free Download Manager ([www.freedownloadmanager.org](http://www.freedownloadmanager.org)). When I downloaded this and scanned it for malware, VirusTotal ([www.virustotal.com](http://www.virustotal.com)) informed me that three of its 66 engines had found suspicious content.

I tried again, and this time two of its scanning engines reported problems. These were Microsoft PUA:Win32/FileDownMan!torrent and Rising PUA:FileDownMan!8.107B6 (CLOUD).

Warnings like this give me cause for concern – false positives or not. Is this software safe to use?

**Rex Graham, via email**

**A** Virus scanners can sometimes mistake safe programs for malware. The reason VirusTotal uses so many scanning engines is to help you identify these false positives.



**If only a few of VirusTotal's results are positive, the program is probably safe**

We tested Free Download Manager using VirusTotal, and two of the 67 scanners flagged it as malware. If there had been 10 or 15 warnings, we'd be worried, but when there are just one or two, the program is probably (but not definitely) safe. It's hard to imagine 65 up-to-date virus scanners failing to recognise malware.

Some false positives occur because the definition of malware is flexible. A program may show ads, for example, but how many is too many? Deciding whether something is adware or not is a matter of opinion, and some programs are more strict than others.



This fortnight Roland has been fixing his PC. He used to replace it every year but now keeps it running as long as he can



# 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)



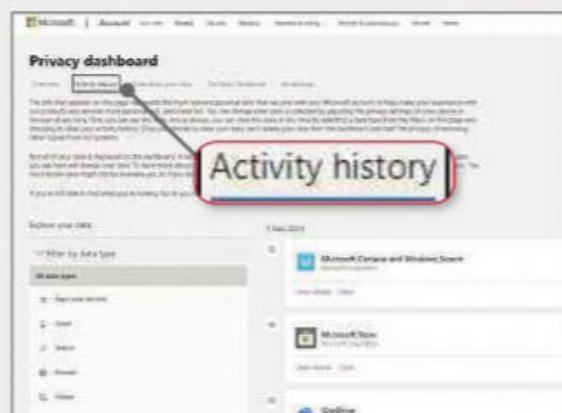
## TOP TIP

### GENERAL PC

## Check if Microsoft is still tracking you

If you're anything like me, you've already switched off 'Activity history' in Windows 10. You can do this by visiting Settings, Privacy, 'Activity history' and unticking the two tick-boxes. That should be it, right?

However, there's a flaw in Microsoft's service. Last time I checked, Windows was still tracking what I do online. To find out if you're in the same boat, visit [account.microsoft.com](https://account.microsoft.com) and click the Privacy tab. Under 'Privacy dashboard', click 'Activity history'. You may notice that, even with the option turned off, Microsoft is still watching what you do. If this is happening to you, you have to



*Is Microsoft still watching your every move online?*

manually clear your activities and wait for the inevitable patch.

**Henry Keyser, via email**

accessing your PC. If you're having sharing problems or you see this message at the wrong time, open the Settings app in Windows 10 and click Network & Internet. In the WiFi section, click your Wi-Fi connection on the right. There are options for Public and Private. If you're at home and you trust everyone on your network, select the latter. Windows remembers this setting, so you should only have to do it once.

**Bob Coen, via email**

### HARDWARE

## Calm a noisy fan by restarting

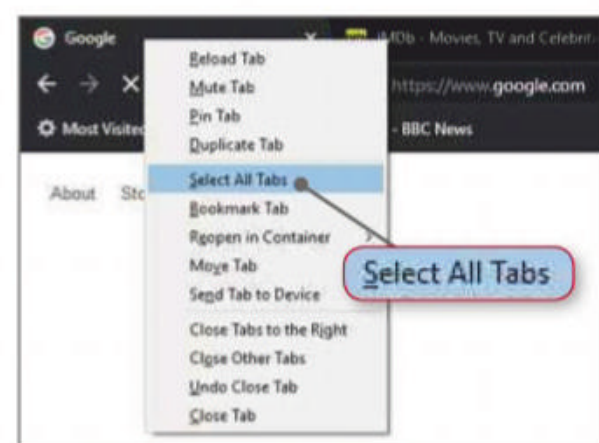
Your PC's fan can get very noisy while you're playing a game or using other demanding software. However, sometimes it continues to spin at top speed even when you've closed the offending program. If so, try restarting your PC. As long as it's cool enough, the fan should return to normal. My laptop does this, and I wonder if some software tool is failing to switch off the fan once the PC has cooled down sufficiently.

**Gareth Ryan, via email**

### BROWSERS

## Bookmark all Firefox tabs

I often line up tabs on my browser that I think might be useful for my studies, then bookmark each one individually. However, it's a bit laborious. Mozilla seems to have acknowledged this and now Firefox lets me bookmark multiple



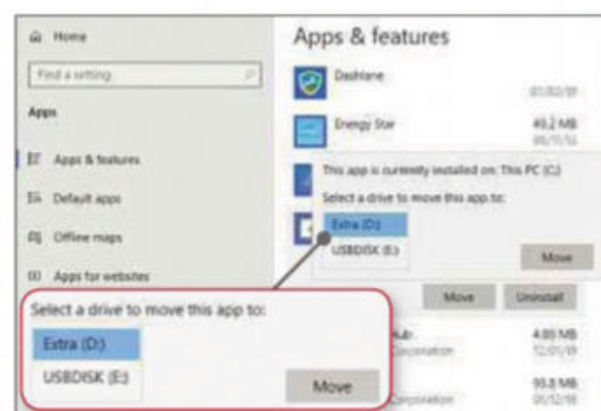
*Bookmark multiple tabs in one go*

### GENERAL PC

## Free up space on your SSD

Solid state drives (SSDs) tend to have less capacity than regular hard drives, so if you're running out of space for your programs, try moving some to another drive. For apps you installed from the Windows 10 Store, open the Settings app (Windows+i) and click Apps. Wait a minute for the apps list to fill up, then choose Size in the 'Sort by' drop-down menu to see which apps are taking up the most space. Click an app and see if it displays a Move button. If it does, click this to see alternative drives – such as secondary internal drives and external drives – that you can move the app to.

**Chris Colgen, via email**



*Some apps can be moved to a different drive to free up space*

### SECURITY

## Email files to VirusTotal

I know *Web User* frequently recommends using VirusTotal ([www.virustotal.com](https://www.virustotal.com)) to scan suspect files but I'd like to point out that you don't need to upload the files through your browser – you can also use email. This is especially useful if you're using a phone, although you're limited by file size, and certain email providers won't let you send EXE files.

To try it, attach a file to an email with the subject line Scan. Don't write anything else anywhere. Send your file to [scan@virustotal.com](mailto:scan@virustotal.com), then wait for your results to be emailed back.

**Scott Dean, via email**

### NETWORKING

## Clear Wi-Fi folder-sharing blocks

I can't remember what I was doing (possibly trying to share a folder on my hard drive) but I recently got a message saying that sharing was disabled because I was on a public network. I was at home, but for some reason my home Wi-Fi was set to public, not private.

When you use a laptop in a public place, features such as sharing are locked down to stop the wrong people





tabs at once. Right-click a tab, then Select All Tabs. Right-click again and select Bookmark Tabs. You're prompted to create and name a folder to house these tabs. Click Add Bookmarks to finish. It saves so much time.

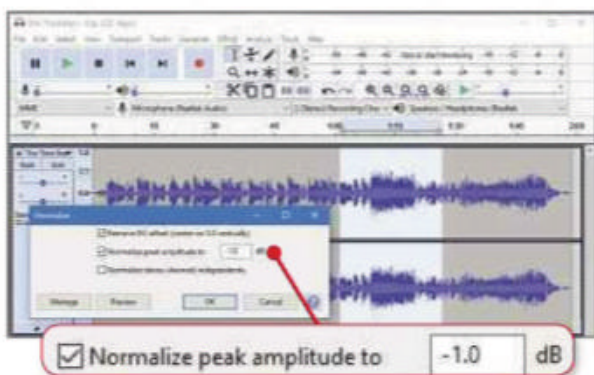
**Helen Rogers, via email**

## SOFTWARE

### Normalise audio volume

When you're listening to a sound file, major fluctuations in the volume level can ruin the experience. Audacity ([www.audacityteam.org](http://www.audacityteam.org)) lets you normalise the sound across a file. Open the program, go to Effect and choose Normalize. Select the decibel level you want, then preview it to make sure it's suitable. If you're happy, press OK. It's not always perfect but it's certainly an improvement.

**Nick Ellis, via email**



*Audacity's Normalize tool keeps your audio on the level*

## GENERAL PC

### Replace Windows' default notepad with Notepad++

If you'd rather use the excellent Notepad++ over Windows' default option, I strongly recommend following these steps. First, download Notepad++ from [bit.ly/notepius470](http://bit.ly/notepius470), if you don't already have it, then run Command Prompt as an administrator by typing `command prompt` in the search bar, right-clicking it when it appears and choosing 'Run as administrator' from the menu. Type the following on one line and press Enter:

```
reg add "HKLM\Software\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Image File Execution Options\notepad.exe" /v "Debugger" /t REG_SZ /d "%ProgramFiles(x86)%\Notepad++\notepad++.exe" -notepadStyleCmdline -z" /f
```

If you have the 64-bit version, use the same command but remove (x86). This command forces your PC to use Notepad++ by default. To switch back, type this into an admin-enabled Command Prompt and press Enter:

```
reg delete "HKLM\Software\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Image File
```

```
Execution Options\notepad.exe" /v "Debugger" /f
```

**Mustafa Khan, via email**

## OFFICE

### Stop unwanted auto-corrections

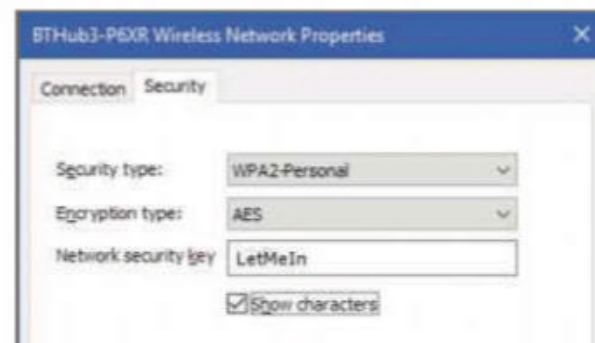
When typing in the Word web app ([office.live.com](http://office.live.com)), some text changes occur automatically, such as when Word changes the straight-quotes symbol for open and close quotes as it attempts to guess what you really want to type. It also capitalises the start of sentences. Sometimes this can be annoying. To choose what Word changes and what it leaves alone, select the Review tab, click the arrow next to Spelling & Grammar, then select AutoCorrect Options.

**John Baker, via email**

## NETWORKING

### Find a lost Wi-Fi password

I was working on my laptop in a café, when a guy at the next table asked me if I knew the Wi-Fi password. I'd entered it ages ago and had since forgotten it, but finding it wasn't difficult. Open the Control Panel, then 'Network and Sharing Centre'. Next to Connections, click the



*Forgotten the Wi-Fi password? Find it in the Control Panel*

link for the current Wi-Fi connection. In the Window that appears, click the Wireless Properties button. Select the security tab, then tick 'Show characters' below 'Network security key' to reveal the password.

**Rachel Cleary, via email**

## GENERAL PC

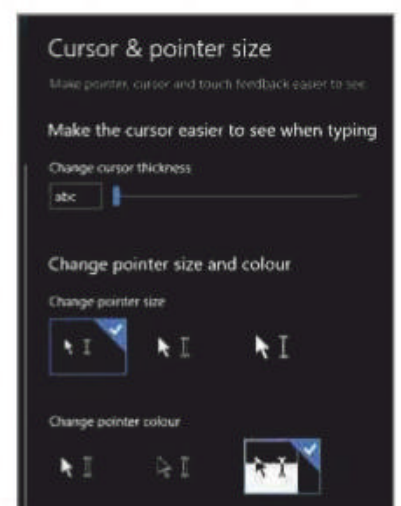
### Change the colour of your mouse pointer

In the old days, if you wanted to tweak the colour of your mouse pointer, you needed to download a separate program. But if you've signed up to use the preview versions of Windows (you need at least version 18298), you can now do this straight from the operating system.

Open Settings (Windows+i) and go to 'Ease of Access', then 'Cursor & pointer'. You should see the option to 'Change pointer colour'. Click the colour wheel to choose your own unique colour or use one of Microsoft's suggestions.

If you don't have a preview version, you can switch between black and white, but for more colours, you'll have to wait for the feature to be included in an update – perhaps April's Spring update.

**Gary McHale, via email**



*Tweak your cursor's colour in Microsoft's Ease of Access settings*

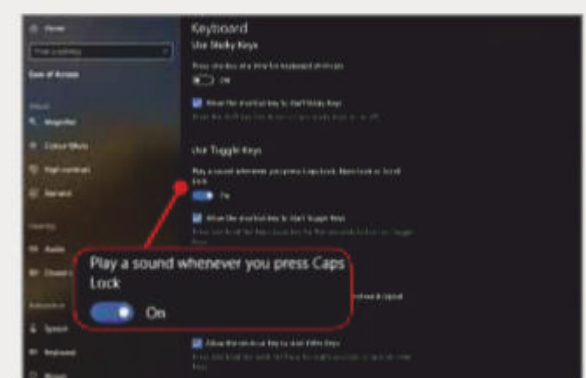
## BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

## GENERAL PC

### Set a Caps Lock alert

Ever got into such a flow when you're writing that you don't notice that, for the last fifty words or so, you've accidentally been WRITING IN CAPS LOCK? It's happened to me far too often and I've yet to find a way to switch capital letters to lowercase (although my friend swears you can), so I've implemented a back-up plan: every time I knock Caps Lock on, I get a warning sound to alert me.

Open your computer's Settings (Windows+i) and go to 'Ease of Access', then Keyboard. Under Use Toggle Keys, switch the button to On.



*Don't make the mistake of accidentally typing with Caps Lock on*

Now, pressing Caps Lock, Num Lock or Scroll Lock sounds an alert.

**Keenan Brandon, via email**

**Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?**

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





## OFFER OF THE FORTNIGHT

### Kaspersky Internet Security 2019 - on sale now

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

#### WHAT'S NEW IN KASPERSKY 2019:

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



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# Readers' Helpdesk

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)

## READERS RESPOND

### GENERAL PC

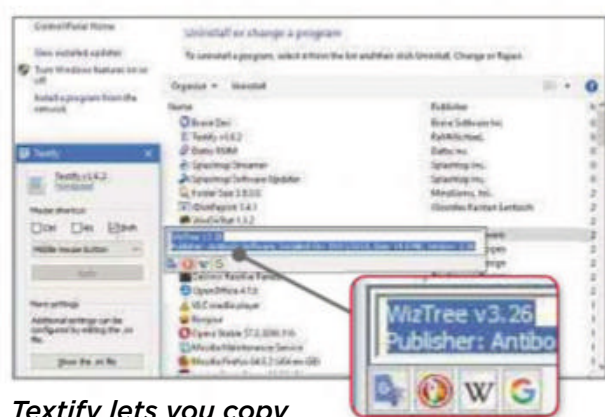
#### Copy text from error messages and dialogue boxes

**Q** I upgraded my old laptop to Windows 10 but it's so ancient that it's constantly displaying error messages. Is there a way to copy the text from these messages, so I don't have to keep writing them down before Googling them to find out what the problem is?

**Connor Bridges, via email**

**A** Textify should help you out – visit [bit.ly/textify470](http://bit.ly/textify470) to download it. When you encounter a dialogue box you want to copy, pop your mouse over it and click Shift and the middle mouse button (you can change this to a different combo if you prefer). You should now be able to copy the text and, optionally, use the buttons below to search the web or translate it. It even works with Google Chrome – go to <chrome://accessibility> and tick every box under the heading 'Global accessibility mode'.

**Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User**



*Textify lets you copy text that usually can't be copied*

### INTERNET

#### Log out of everything with one click

**Q** One of the reasons I subscribe to your magazine is the focus on security and staying safe online. I'm constantly logging in and out of everything – emails, social media, news sites I subscribe to and so on – to prevent some scurrilous cur from stealing my data. However, this takes a lot of time and effort.

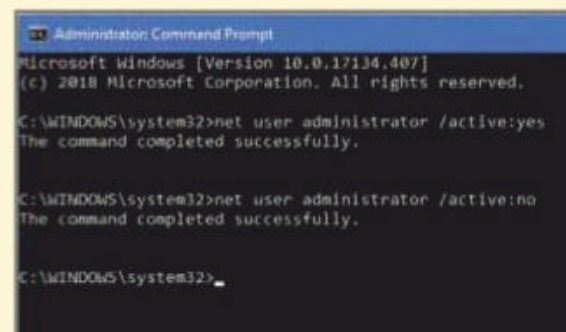
Do you happen to know of any

#### Enable your PC's Admin account

**A** In issue 468, Adam 'Admin' Wright asked how to enable the built-in Administrator account. First, run Command Prompt as an administrator by searching for it from the taskbar, then right-click it and choose the appropriate option. Now, type the following line and press Enter:

```
net user administrator /active:yes
```

A pop-up confirms the command completed successfully. Log out, and you'll see the Administrator account as an option. There's no password for this account, so if you want to leave it enabled you should set one.



*Here's how to unlock Windows' secret Administrator account*

To disable the account, open Command Prompt and type: `net user administrator /active:no` pressing Enter at the end. The Administrator account will now be disabled. Incidentally, I was told that this should be used for troubleshooting purposes only!

**Madeline S, 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** Which browser should I use if I want to disable Cortana and prevent Microsoft from tracking my actions? I worry about these features being in breach of GDPR and want to stay protected.

**Liz F Lambeth, via Facebook**

### HARDWARE

**Q** Are there any owners of an HP Spectre 360 laptop who, like me, can't get update 1809 for Windows 10 and get no support from HP? I'm very annoyed after spending £1,600 on what is meant to be top-notch kit.

**Stuart Pegg, via Facebook**

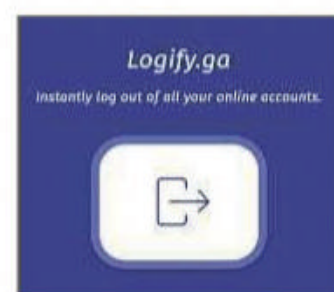
software I can download that will quickly log out of everything without me having to visit all my favourite websites? Please tell me there's an easier way.

**Amir Yusuf, via email**

**A** There's an easier way, Amir, and we're not just saying that because you asked so nicely. Logify ([logify.ga](http://logify.ga)) is a simple website that displays one big 'log out' button. Click this and the site immediately instigates the log-off procedure across multiple websites. Don't worry if you press it by mistake, because it asks you to confirm your

choice with a pop-up warning that 'you won't be able to revert this'. You can check it's worked by going to Gmail or Outlook and seeing if you're signed in. Logify is limited to certain sites at the moment, including Google, Microsoft, Amazon and Netflix. See all the supported sites at [bit.ly/logsp470](http://bit.ly/logsp470).

**Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User**



*Logify makes logging out of websites easier than ever*

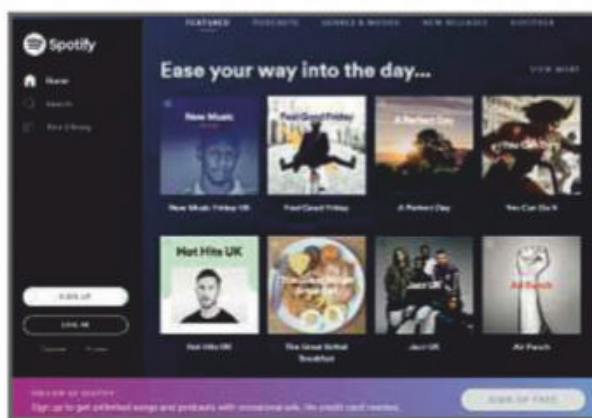


## Star Email

### Spotify is right to ban ad blockers

I'm not a musician but I completely agree with Spotify's decision to ban users who skip adverts using an ad blocker (Need to Know, Issue 469). Streaming music in this manner is akin to stealing songs because it deprives Spotify of ad revenue, which in turn deprives artists of the money they need to survive and keep making music.

I used to listen to all my music through the free version of Spotify and I admit that the adverts can be very repetitive and annoying, especially the ones that pretend to be songs in your playlist and the video ads in the Web Player. So, do you know what I did to fix this problem? Yes, I started paying £9.99 a month for Spotify Premium, and I've never looked



– or listened – back.

For the price of a CD (remember those?), you have unlimited access to virtually every song and album you can think of – not only on your PC but on your phone, tablet and other devices, too. It's probably the best value music deal there's ever been, and yet some people still won't pay and want

everything for free. It's like walking into HMV and shoplifting armfuls of CDs.

Do these thieves not stop to consider that producing music costs money? And now that nobody buys physical formats and few people even bother with digital downloads any more, musicians are increasingly reliant on what they can earn from streaming services. As this is already very little – less than £0.005 per stream – they need every penny they can get, especially bands who aren't able to tour.

So come on Spotify freeloaders – either cough up a tenner a month or have the decency to switch off your ad blockers.

*Ian Foulds, via email*

**Back Issues disc winner**



### Tell us more about software T&Cs

Terms and conditions (T&Cs) seem to be the bugbear of modern online life and the potential refuge of scoundrels. Given that you frequently recommend software that many of us will no doubt try, it occurs to me that part of your review of any application should include a comment on its T&Cs. After all, one assumes that you check T&Cs before installing programs on your own devices for appraisal and that you would not recommend software that has unduly onerous or privacy-threatening elements.

How about sharing such information alongside your reviews? I'm sure that readers would appreciate your assessment of the most important elements of a program's T&Cs, which can often seem endless.

*Tim T, via email*

### BBC repeats are dead disappointing

In response to Steve Squires' email in Issue 467, 'BBC quality is worth paying for': over Christmas, the BBC once again regaled us with the festival of the dead. The Two Ronnies are dead, Morecambe and Wise are dead, Ken Dodd is dead, the whole cast of *Dad's Army* is all dead

but one. How many more times do we have to pay for the endless repeats of long-gone comedy? How many people under the age of 55 remember any of these performers or know what *Dad's Army* was for?

The BBC is supposed to be free of advertising, but between every programme and the next is an oft-




















repeated advert for either an upcoming series or a reminder to pay your licence fee.

Saturday and Sunday on BBC 2 is repeats all day, with the possible exception of a 30-year old film that you've had 30 years to see. If not that, then even further back to the black-and-white era.

It's about the time the BBC fat cats earned our money instead of constantly

## Quiz Answers: Issue 469

- |   |                                 |   |   |
|---|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | <i>Like a Prayer</i>            |  |    |
| 2 | <i>Private Dancer</i>           |  |    |
| 3 | <i>Appetite for Destruction</i> |  | 4    |
| 4 | <i>Born in the USA</i>          |  |     |
| 5 | <i>Hounds of Love</i>           |  |    |
| 6 | <i>Brothers in Arms</i>         |  |    |

**WINNER!**

Well done to **Stephen Hartley** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



TECH YEAR

**2017**





robbing us with programmes we've already paid for many times over.

*Alan Hill, Yorkshire*

## Multcloud's website is highly illogical

Perusing Issue 467 of *Web User*, I came to the 'Microogle & Goosoft' article. I thought I would have a go at syncing my OneDrive and Google Drive accounts using the MultCloud ([www.multcloud.com](http://www.multcloud.com)) service that you recommended.

Note the use of "multcloud" not "multicloud", as I mistakenly entered, which takes you to a page that states the domain is for sale. After realising my mistake and accessing the actual site you recommended,

I signed up for a free account, then proceeded to log in. This seemed to take an age to connect, then went through the cycle of the login page launching again.

I soon lost the will to bother with it.

The question arises in my mind, why did they not buy the domain name 'www.multicloud.com' and then use that? It seems completely illogical, as Spock would say.

*Pete A Cox, Facebook*

## Screen addiction can hurt kids' eyes

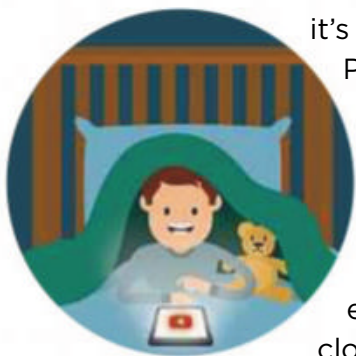
Barry Collins may think that children being addicted to their phones is no cause for concern ('Don't panic, it's just another screen',

Page 404, Issue 469),

but he fails to consider the damage this has on their eyesight. Being glued to a bright screen for several hours every day, especially at close proximity, is bound to

have a damaging effect on developing eyes, so this is not a problem that parents and grandparents should simply ignore. And although Barry is right that nobody ever really got square eyes from watching television, at least there was a healthy distance between viewers and their TV sets, and children didn't take their tellies to bed with them to keep watching after dark.

*Miriam Cousins, via email*



## What you say...

### APPLE HAS HINTED THAT IT MAY CUT IPHONE PRICES ([bit.ly/iphone470](http://bit.ly/iphone470)). WOULD YOU BUY ONE IF IT WAS CHEAPER?

Only if they brought back 3.5in headphone jacks and made it possible to beam to a television without an Apple TV box.

*Chris Armstrong*

There are some amazingly good Android phones for around £400 – and they have a better selection of apps that actually work well for free.

*Geoffrey Boow*

Not unless prices were reduced by 50%, which I think is unlikely.

*Paul Grim*

Maybe if they got rid of their built-in obsolescence. For example, I have two iPads (a mini and iPad 2) that are stuck on iOS 9.3.5.

*Phil Graham*

### WITH FLICKR ENDING FREE UNLIMITED PHOTO STORAGE, WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO?

I have already downloaded all my photos. I may close the account or just use it for favourite camera photos. I use Google Photos for phone backups.

*Pamela J Anderson*

Absolutely nothing. Mine are all backed up on Google Photos and Amazon Prime.

*Harvey Skipsey*

I dumped Flickr the day they announced this. Simple enough to download the photos and put them all on OneDrive.

*Rich Grove*

Only my best photos go on Flickr. It will be a while before I get to 1,000. A long, long, long while!

*Bruce Lauderdale*

### SPOTIFY HAS SAID IT MIGHT BAN PEOPLE WHO USE AD BLOCKERS. WILL YOU STOP USING IT?

I use ad blockers for a reason – system security being one. If any site tries to hold me to ransom to turn it off, I'll close the tab and find another site.

*Ian Maddock*

Does anyone really use a browser to stream Spotify these days? I use Alexa, the Android app or the Windows 10 app on my PC.

*Martin Phillip*

I don't use Spotify, however I do hate websites that try to bully me into turning off my ad blocker. How would they like it if we bombarded them with a lot of junk adverts?

*John Hewett*

I have to laugh about people complaining about ads that essentially allow you to use a multi-million dollar service for free. Don't like ads? Pay for premium. It's really very simple, folks.

*Darren Branagh*

### WOULD YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE HAVING A VIDEO CONSULTATION WITH YOUR GP?

No problem at all. It takes four weeks to see one face to face just now.

*Cunningham Hutchison @MrChutchy*

How can a doctor take your pulse, blood pressure or heartbeat online, which quite often is a major requirement to diagnose an illness?

*Anthony Higham*

Sure thing. I'm sure that if something comes up that he or she feels the need to stick a finger in, they will summon me to the surgery.

*Richard Morgan*



# ! Page 404



Local news sites are nothing but celebrity gossip and intrusive ads, says **Barry Collins**

## Local press sites suffer death by pop-up

**L**ocal newspapers seem to have a death wish. Not only are they closing at the rate of one a week, but the websites they publish to accompany or replace them are so overloaded with junk that nobody with a working pair of eyes or ears would ever knowingly visit them twice. How did regional press end up in this monstrous mess? It's a classic case of trying to chase a fiver that blew out of your hand in a hurricane.

About 20 years ago, along with almost all other forms of physical media, websites started nibbling away at print readerships. Most local newspapers were horribly slow to wake up to this looming threat, assuming that the local estate agents, car dealers and people with a second-hand bedspread to sell for £10-or-nearest-offer would always need a local paper to flog their wares. They could not have been more wrong.

Most – and there are notable exceptions – local newspapers ignored the web until it could be ignored no

more. In the meantime, the estate agents had gone to Zoopla and friends, the car dealers were listing on Auto Trader and co, and people were flogging their worn bedspreads on eBay. Now they were running a newspaper *and* a website, and struggling to make money from either.

At this point, desperation kicked in and local media owners started listening to twentysomething morons called Dale or Blake or Abbie, who came with the job title 'SEO expert'. There's no point in writing worthy local news stories about council meetings or plans to reroute the A456, because only a few hundred people will ever click on them, Dale advised. Instead, you need to be writing the same kind of celebrity pap that the nationals are writing, and then stuffing your pages with as many ads as possible

to maximise revenue.

And so, to pick on one site entirely at random that I stumbled across on Google News, the Leicester Mercury website ends up writing irrelevant clickbait such as "EastEnders will NOT be on BBC this Friday – here's why" just to pay the rent. The page is ponderously slow to load because it's stuffed with an autoplaying video, a pop-up that takes

over half the screen when you start scrolling down, five different animated ads, plus the now obligatory gallery of never-ending, sensationalist "recommended"

stories at the bottom of the page, that automatically adjust their headlines to target you with guff such as "you'll NEVER believe what this EAST SUSSEX WOMAN did next".

The page containing that so-called news story takes 33 seconds to fully load, makes 981 requests to different sites, uses 750 different cookies and scores about as poorly as possible on website performance tester GTmetrix. It's a horrible user experience and one that's common across local news sites because many use the exact same template. The Leicester Mercury looks identical to the Stoke Sentinel and the Plymouth Herald and many others. They often use the same pool of 'celebrity' stories, too, alongside their token efforts at local news.

It's a desperate state of affairs that pleases nobody: not the reader, not the poor 'journalists' who work for these sites and not the local press owners who are regularly going to the wall. Someone put us out of this misery.

“How did the regional press end up in this mess?

It's a classic case of trying to chase a fiver that blew out of your hand in a hurricane”





**WebUser**

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FOR MORE INFO SEE PAGE 62

# ENJOYED THIS ISSUE?

## GET THE NEXT ONE EARLY!

**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 March (8pm)\***, you'll receive it through your letterbox before it's available in the shops!

### What's inside the next issue:

### COVER FEATURE: BANISH BUILT-IN BLOATWARE

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