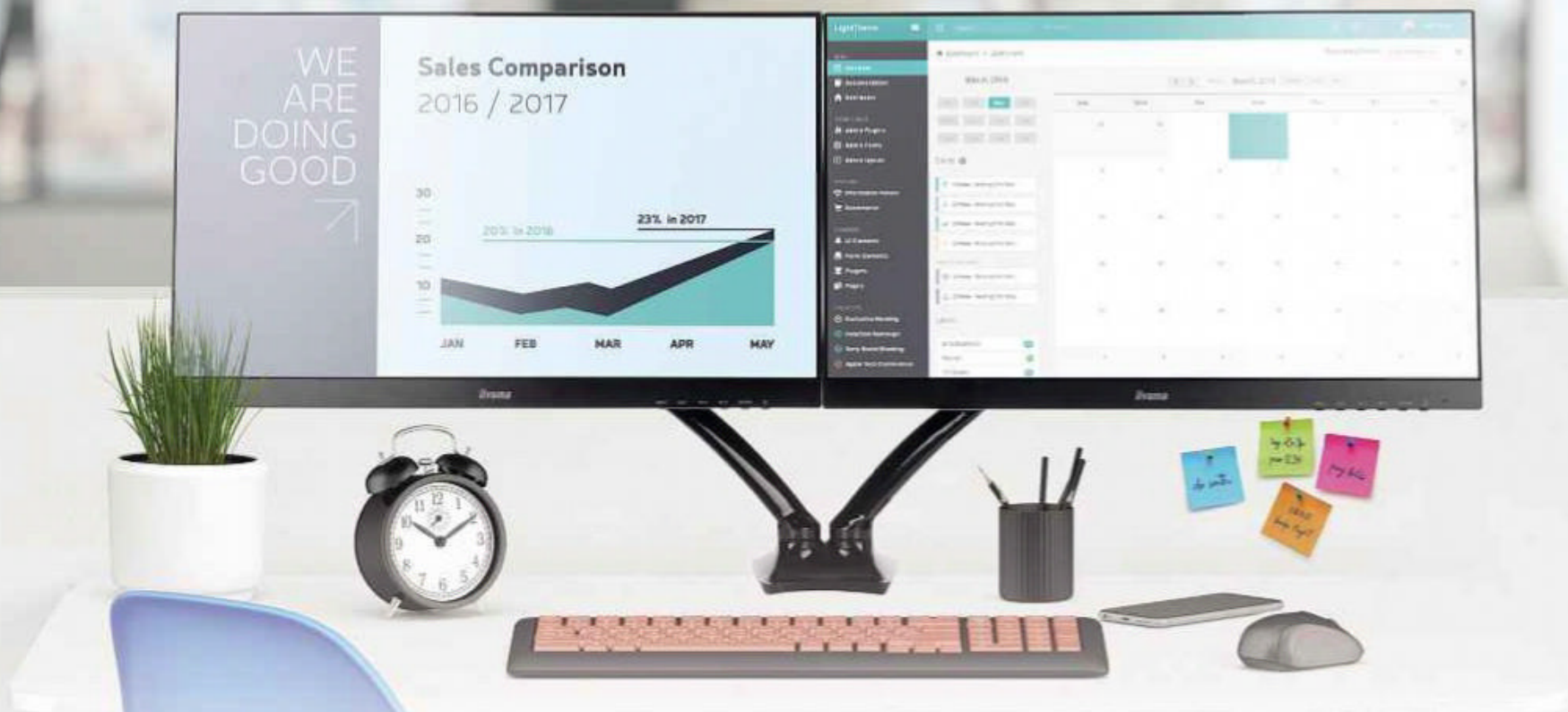


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SPEEDS UP PC SEARCHES**

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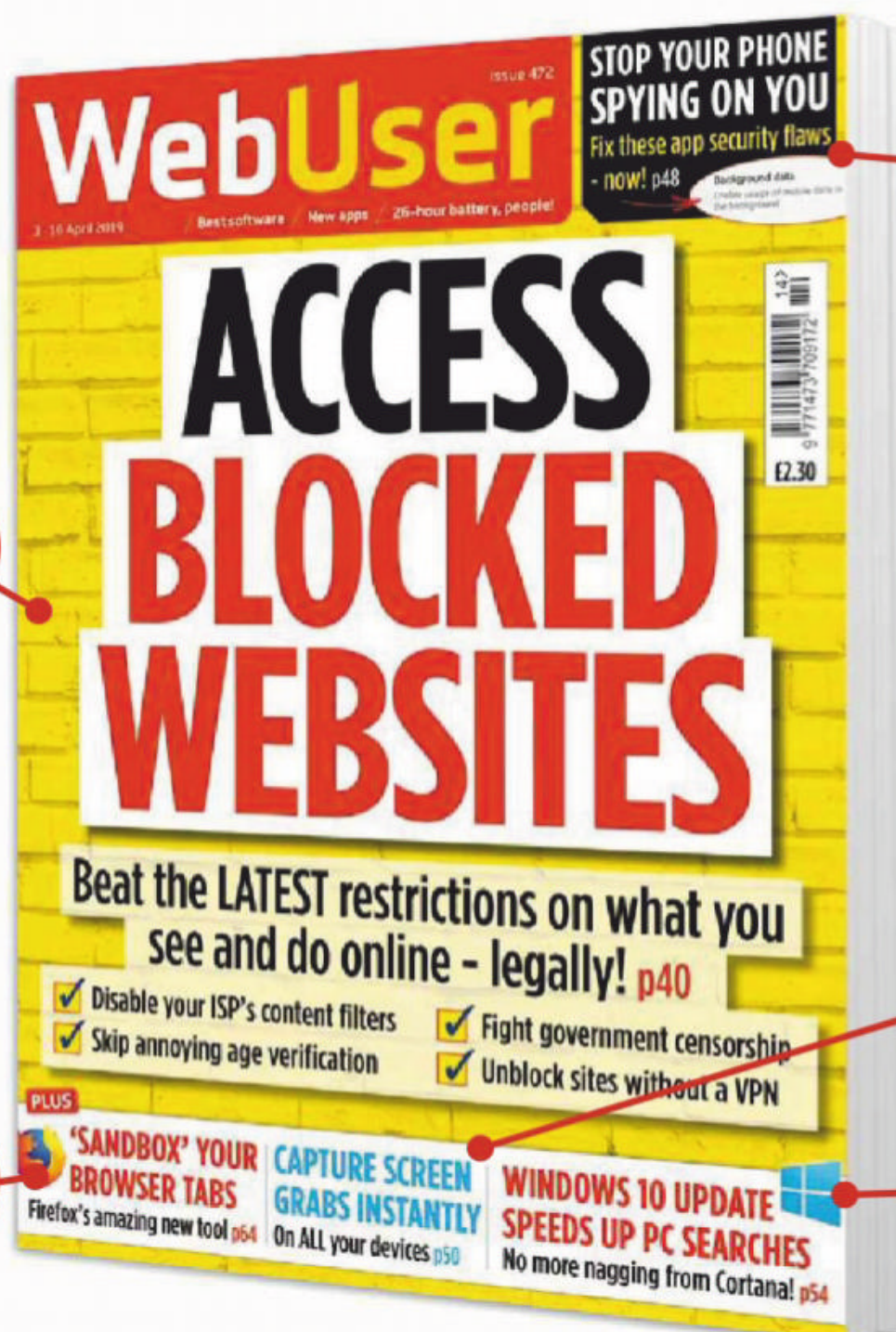
As a tall teenager with a horrible wispy moustache, I was often volunteered by my friends to buy cheap cider from the local “offie”, because back then shopkeepers rarely bothered to check your age. Nowadays, anyone who looks under 25 can be challenged to provide ID (and I don’t think shops sell White Lightning any more).

As we explain in this issue’s cover feature, this stringent approach to age verification has now been extended online, which is good news for parents concerned about their kids being exposed to inappropriate content; bad news for kids who *want* to be

exposed to inappropriate content; and annoying for those of us who don’t like being ‘nannied’ by the government.

I’m all for keeping children safe online, but forcing grown-ups to hand over personal data to visit adult websites, and blocking sites that don’t comply, is akin to state censorship. Follow our advice to stop the web mollycoddling you, unless you really want your molly to be coddled!

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



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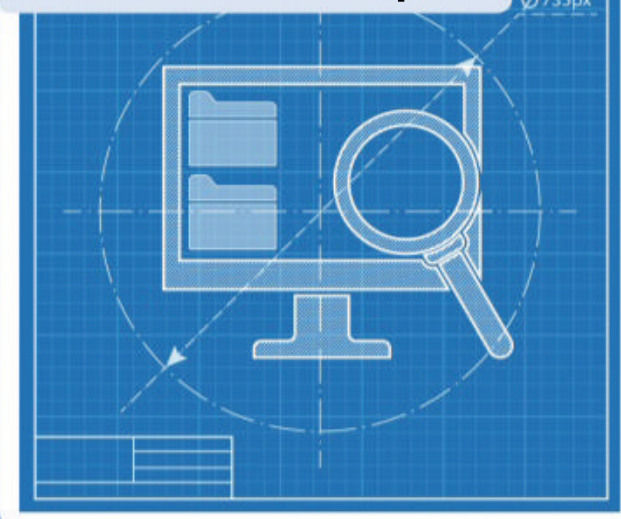
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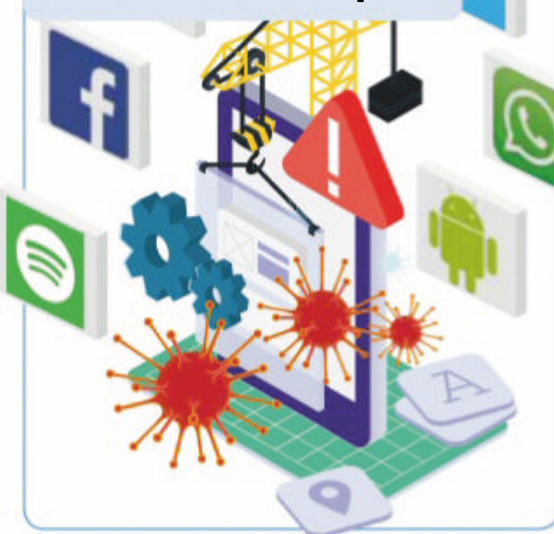
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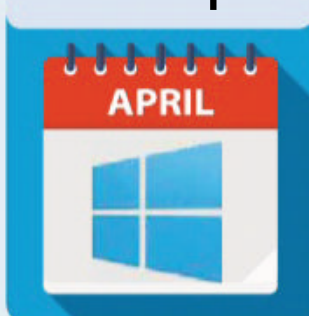
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What's New Online

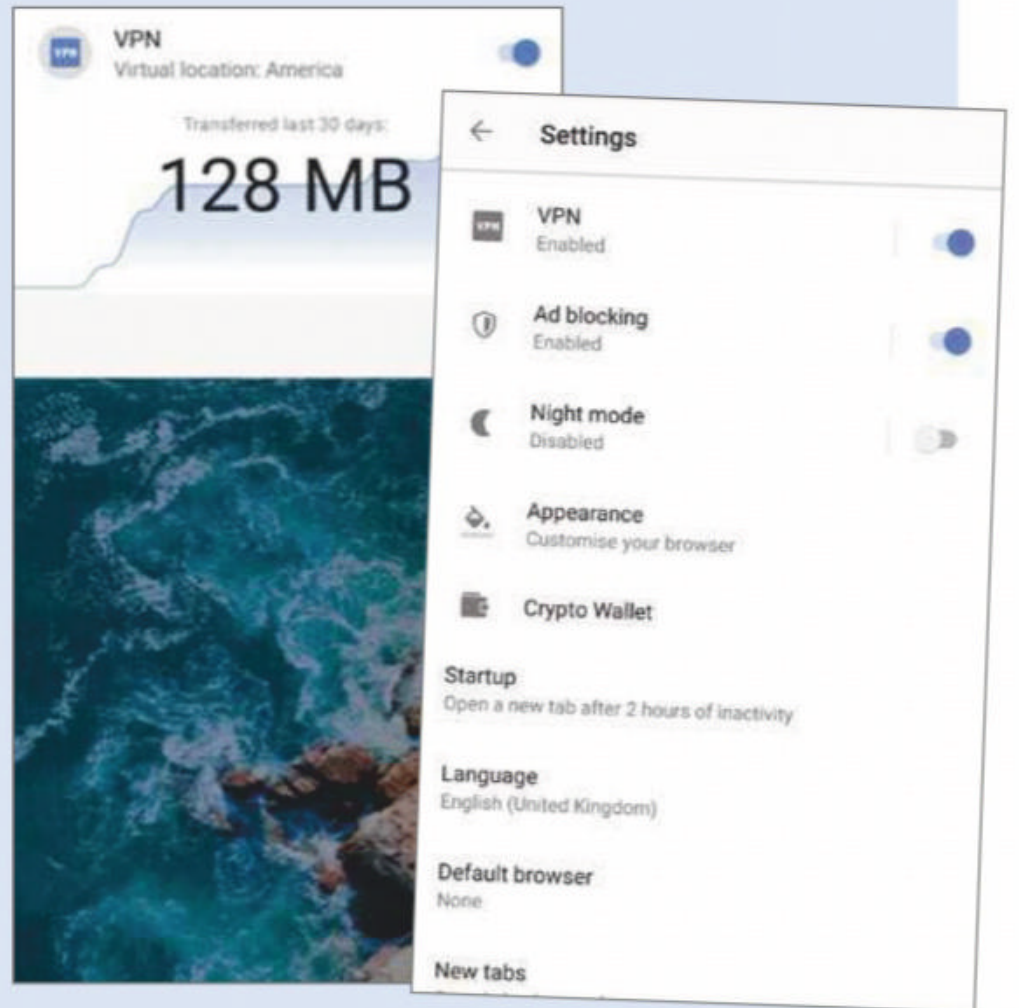
Stay anonymous using Opera's mobile VPN

Having access to a VPN on the go is a shrewd move, especially for logging into public Wi-Fi hotspots. The problem, however, is one of trust: which VPN should you use and what will it do with the data that's being sent back and forth?

Download Opera for Android and you should, in theory, have few worries. Version 51 of the mobile browser brings back its built-in VPN service, which is not only free and secured by 256-bit encryption, but promises not to log or retain any of your activity data. Its ease-of-use should help to improve your online security while allowing you to get around regional restrictions – although you can't choose a specific country, only a continent.

The VPN will never disclose your physical location when you're browsing the web on your phone or tablet, and Opera claims its system makes it difficult for any third party to track you online. There's no sign-in needed – simply tap the browser settings, go to VPN and turn on the feature, selecting the region you'd like to connect to. Remember to turn the VPN off again when you're done because it can slow down your browsing.

bit.ly/operavpn472

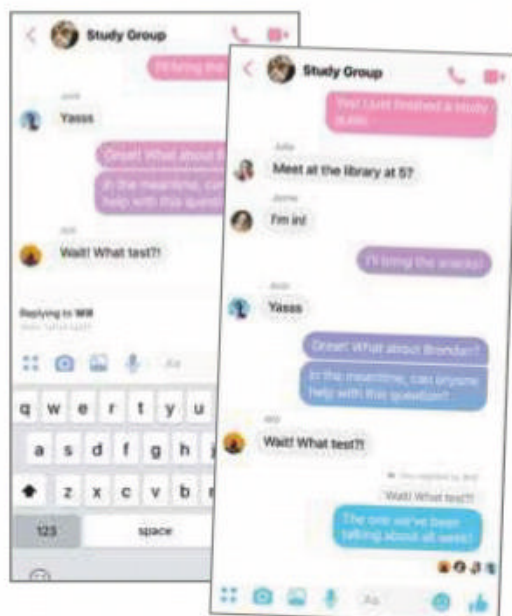


Quote messages in Messenger replies

www.messenger.com

Facebook Messenger conversations can become confusing, especially when they involve several people and replies get separated from the text they are responding to. To fix this, Facebook has introduced a new feature that lets you respond to and quote a specific message. This creates a mini-thread, making conversations easier to follow.

Simply identify the message that you want to reply to and either press down and swipe left if the message was sent by someone else, or right if you sent it yourself. You'll see a Reply icon. Tap it and you can write a response which, when you send it, will be attached to the initial message and placed at the bottom of the conversation. The original message remains in place, so you don't disturb the previous flow of the chat.

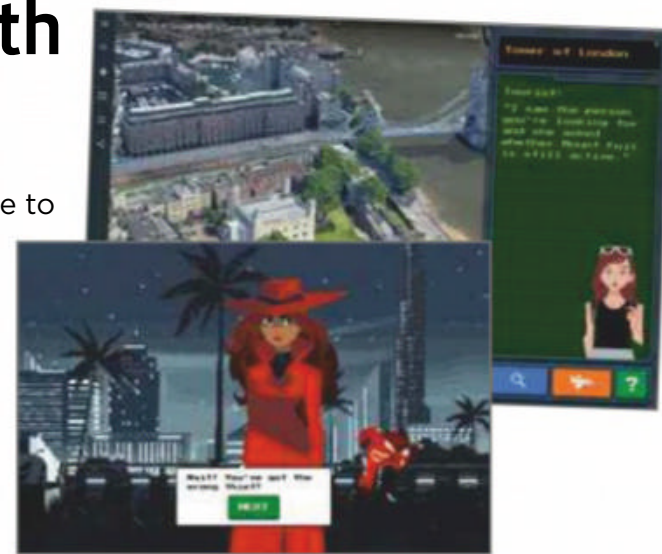


Recover stolen items in Google Earth

bit.ly/earth472

We're surprised that it's taken this long for Google to realise the potential of Where In The World is Carmen Sandiego? – the educational, globe-trotting video game from 1985 that spawned a franchise. It's a perfect fit for Google Earth, which is exactly where the character is now appearing in a new retro-inspired game called The Crown Jewels Caper which involves you tracking the accomplished thief Carmen Sandiego around the world to recover royal ceremonial objects stolen from London. Using a magnifying glass to hunt for clues and interview witnesses, you board planes from one city to the next, discovering facts as you go.

The game is primarily a geography lesson, with players getting wind of a location or a snippet of info to figure out which city to visit next. It's an often taxing challenge with lovely graphics and some enjoyable twists along the way. You can play the game in Chrome, iOS and Android.



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

See every person in Britain mapped

bit.ly/britain472

There are more than 63 million dots on this fascinating map, each one representing a person living in Great Britain. Drawing on the results of the 2016 Census for England, Scotland and Wales, the map lets you zoom in to see each individual dot. It also lets you add a geographical background map, clearly identifying streets and areas.



Fact-check a Radio 4 podcast

bit.ly/facts472

Do you believe everything you hear or do you prefer to check the source of the information being presented to you? With a new experimental



podcast, you can not only listen to a special episode of BBC Radio 4's *More or Less*, but

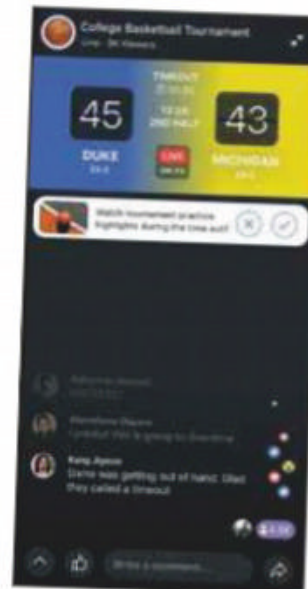
you can also read the transcript, click sources and view graphs to see where the presenters and contributors are getting their details from.

Built around the BBC's Standard Media Player used for the iPlayer and Sounds, you can also see the profiles of contributors, jump from one topic to another and share a segment on social media.

Host a live TV Watch party

www.facebook.com

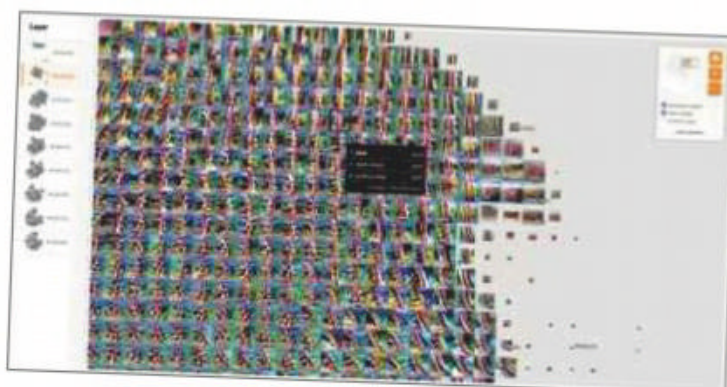
The chances are that you've not yet experienced a Facebook Watch Party but that may change thanks to a new feature that links parties to events broadcast live on television. Starting with sport, notably the UEFA Champions League, the feature gives you an "on TV" option when you start a Watch party within a group. It won't show the event itself (it's not a free way to catch live sport) but it will display a score. The idea is that Watch Party members view the action on television and use their Facebook accounts to discuss and react.



Explore neural networks

bit.ly/neural472

We know that machines use artificial intelligence but we're less sure about how exactly they come to make their decisions. This tool lets you see how individual algorithms learn features and represent various concepts, but be warned – it's complex stuff. Even the full explanation of feature visualisation is sure to boggle many minds.



NEW VOICE COMMANDS



Enjoy a continued conversation

Activate Continued Conversation in the Google Home or Google Assistant app and you don't have to say "Hey Google" every time you want to ask a question – it will pick up on follow-up queries.



View your latest photos

The Google Photos app now supports Siri Shortcuts, so you can quickly view your latest image. Go to Google Photos in your iOS Settings and select Siri & Search, Shortcuts, View Latest Photos.



Play Deal or No Deal

Choose a box and decide if you'd like to accept the banker's offers in Alexa's fun rendition of the iconic teatime game show. It even features Noel Edmonds. Just say, "Alexa, open Deal or No Deal".



See how European cities have warmed

bit.ly/warmed472

Whether or not this year's warm February was due to climate change, it appears our cities really are warming. This map compares last year's average temperatures with 1960, and none have cooled.

Get a free Google Home Mini

www.spotify.com/uk

Subscribe to Spotify Premium for Family before 14 May and you'll get a free Google Home Mini. The £14.99 monthly subscription covers up to five family members, while a Home Mini usually costs £49.99.

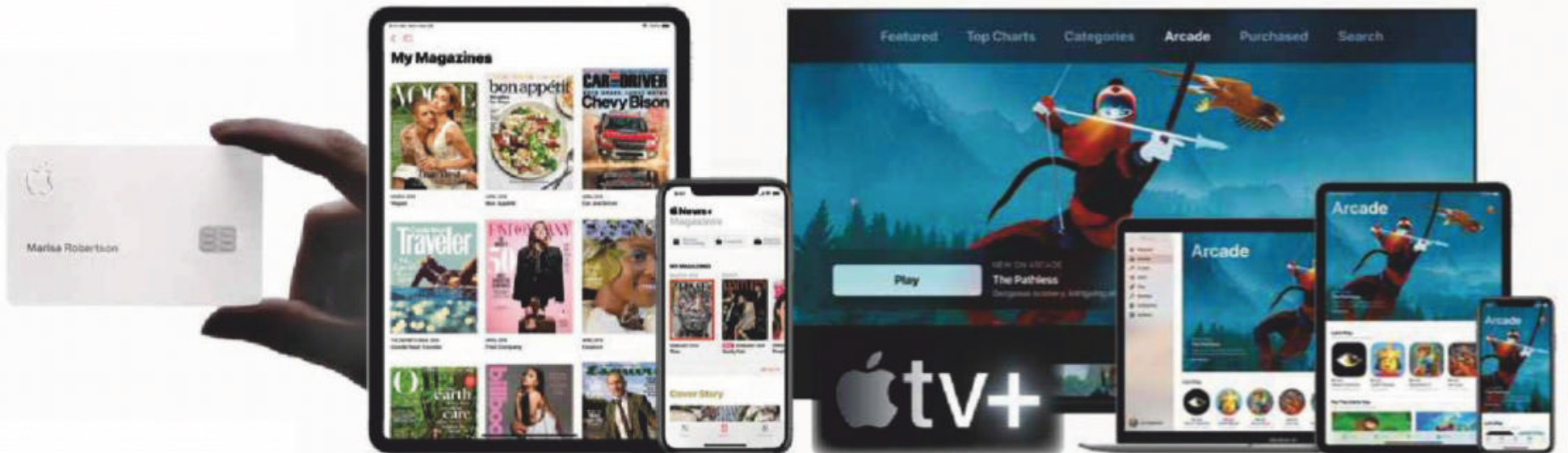
Fill your time with a TV show

bit.ly/telly472

Tell this Tellybox tool how much spare time you have and it'll show you which BBC Three programmes you can squeeze in. Click a result to go straight to the BBC iPlayer.

Need to Know

Apple unveils TV, news and games services



What happened?

On 25 March, Apple held an event unveiling its new TV-streaming, gaming and news and magazines subscription services, as well as an Apple credit card – perhaps to pay for all this new content.

Apple normally holds a hardware event in September when its new iPhones are released, and a software developers meeting in the summer when new versions of iOS are announced. The event held at the end of March instead focused on new digital services.

First up was Apple TV+, a Netflix-style streaming service dedicated exclusively to Apple's own original programmes. It's already signed up heavy hitters including Oprah Winfrey and Steven Spielberg to produce content. The new channel will be accessed via the updated Apple TV app, which will not only stream Apple TV+ shows, but also movies and episodes from other services (but not Netflix) at an as yet unrevealed cost. Subscribers will also be able to download shows to watch on the go.

Next up was Apple Arcade, the company's take on a gaming service, announced days after Google unveiled its own, Stadia (see opposite). Apple Arcade will offer more than 100 games to play on iPhones, iPads and Apple TVs. Rather than pay for each game or in-app purchases, Arcade will be subscription-based – one payment will let you play as much as you like, with no further charges or ads.

Apple then unveiled its own news and

magazine subscription service. For a set monthly fee, subscribers will get access to hundreds of magazines and newspapers, including *Vogue*, *National Geographic* and the *Wall Street Journal*, to read on their iPhone, iPad and Mac. Subscribers will be able to flip through digital pages and get a personalised feed of articles curated to their tastes.

Subscription services aside, Apple also unveiled a credit card. The titanium Apple Card has no card number across the front or signature space on the back. It offers cashback on every purchase, and will be linked to a user's iPhone, where an app will track all your spending and store your personal details.

How will it affect you?

If don't own an iOS device such as an iPhone or an Apple TV, you can still access some of these services. Apple TV+ is due in September and will be accessed via the new Apple TV app, which arrives in May. Pricing hasn't yet been revealed. The Apple TV app will work with Apple devices and Samsung smart TVs from this spring. Apple says support for Amazon Fire TV, LG, Roku, Sony and Vizio will come "in the future".

Apple Arcade arrives in the autumn in 150 countries, but you'll need an iPhone, iPad, Mac or Apple TV to play; while Apple News+ is available immediately – but only in the US and Canada, so far. It will cost \$9.99 (£7.50) a month in the US, and is due to arrive in the UK later this year, but pricing has not yet been

announced. Under the Family Sharing setting, up to six family members can share the same subscription, though everyone has to update to iOS 12.2 first.

The Apple Card will arrive this summer in the US, but there's no word on UK availability yet.

What do we think?

It's worth noting that none of these subscription services is truly new or innovative. There are already plenty of streaming TV services, and although we welcome new quality programming, it's unlikely that viewers will desert Netflix anytime soon, unless they're put off by the rumoured price rise – see page 11. Likewise, gamers have ample ways to play already, especially if Google Stadia arrives first; and Apple certainly didn't invent the digital-magazine subscription – try Readly (gb.readly.com) if the idea appeals. With regard to an app-linked payment card, British startup Monzo (monzo.com) has been offering the same type of card for years.

Having said all that, one aspect of the event stood out: a focus on privacy. Company representatives, including CEO Tim Cook, frequently pointed out that Apple doesn't collect your data for advertising purposes – a clear dig at Google. Although subscriptions further lock you into Apple, paying a set sum for games, TV and magazines means there's no need for the company to treat your private data as a source of revenue – at least, that's the theory.

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

Google launches cloud-gaming service Stadia

What happened?

Google has announced plans to launch a web-based gaming platform called Stadia (bit.ly/googlestadia472), which will let you stream games to Pixel devices, Chromecasts and the Chrome browser. Rather than buy games at a shop or download them, you'll be able to stream and play them over an internet connection, similar to watching TV shows and films on Netflix.

How will it affect you?

If your broadband connection and Wi-Fi are strong enough, Stadia will let you play games instantly. Google said 4K

games at 60fps will need 30Mbps bandwidth, but lower resolutions will require less robust connections, and work below 25Mbps.

You won't need to buy any new hardware, although Google is offering a Stadia Controller that connects to your Chromecast-controlled TV, Pixel smartphone or other Google device.

Google said Stadia will arrive this year, and is promising to disclose more details this summer, but it hasn't yet revealed which games will be available at launch and how much the service will cost.

What do we think?

This idea will appeal to gaming fanatics and casual

players alike. The former will be able to watch their favourite "pro" players on YouTube and join in their games with the click of a

button, Google said. If you're more laid back about gaming, you'll be able to play with friends without investing in a console.

Although Stadia is similar to Netflix in terms of streaming, games and videos are different beasts because films and TV shows don't require your interaction, whereas games do.

The gap between a gaming move and it being registered



is called latency, and if Google doesn't manage to get that quite right, or internet connections struggle to keep up, players will find themselves frustrated by pauses and delays between what their thumbs are instructing their character to do and what's played out in the game. We'll have to wait to see if Google gets this aspect of streaming right.

Facebook admits passwords stored insecurely

What happened?

Facebook has been hit by another data-privacy scandal. The latest – after a year that included the Cambridge Analytica debacle and a massive hack impacting millions of users – was discovered by security researcher Brian Krebs (bit.ly/krebs472). A whistleblower at Facebook told him that the social network had been storing hundreds of millions of passwords internally in plain text for years, which means that up to 2,000 Facebook employees could see your credentials. Good security practice would involve such data being encrypted, so no one can see what you choose for a password.



How will it affect you?

Facebook has admitted and addressed the flaw in its internal systems, so that passwords are no longer stored in plain text. There is no evidence that anyone outside the company accessed the plain-text passwords or that a rogue employee leaked them – in short, there doesn't appear to be any misuse of these insecurely stored credentials.

Despite that, Facebook said it would notify any user who was affected, which includes hundreds of millions of people using the Lite version of Facebook, designed for use in developing countries, as well as millions of Facebook users and thousands of Instagram users. If you're affected – or are worried you may be – then it's worth changing your password for the site.

What do we think?

Facebook is one of the biggest tech companies in existence. It made more than \$6bn profit in the last quarter of 2018 alone, and employs some of the smartest engineers and developers in the world, yet somehow it's still regularly hit by hacks and privacy scandals. If a company with such vast resources, which is responsible for the data of so many people, can't get this right, surely something has gone terribly wrong. Facebook should be ashamed that it treats user data so lightly, and must sort out its security and privacy proactively, rather than waiting for outsiders to force its hand.

Credit: PK Studio / Shutterstock.com

Microsoft urges Windows 7 users to upgrade

What happened?

Microsoft has started issuing desktop alerts to Windows 7 users, warning that security updates for the operating system will soon be coming to an end. From 14 January 2020 onwards, Windows 7 will no longer receive patches to fix security issues, and users are being urged to upgrade to a newer operating system as a result. This forms part of Microsoft's strategy of phasing out older software in order to focus resources on updating its newest tools.

Despite being a decade old, Windows 7 is still popular with PC users and, according to web-analytics company NetApplications, continues to hold just under 40% of the operating-system market share – which is, in fact, 2.5% higher than estimates released in 2018. Microsoft is keen to get as many users as possible onto its flagship Windows 10 OS, which currently accounts for 37% of the market.

Users have been aware for some time that Windows 7 would eventually be killed off, with the company announcing last June that it would no longer be answering technical questions on the Windows 7 Community forum.

How will it affect you?

If you still use Windows 7, then from 18 April onwards you'll begin to receive warnings from Microsoft about the



approaching cut-off for the operating system. Unlike the persistent nags to upgrade to Windows 10 that pestered users back in 2016, and which were difficult to remove, these reminders are gentler and can be dismissed. Furthermore, they won't trick you into upgrading until you're ready.

Microsoft has said you can continue to run Windows 7, but that "once support ends, your PC will become more vulnerable to security risks". Provided you have up-to-date antivirus software, you'll be protected against most threats, but – as we reported last issue – hackers will increasingly target flaws in the ageing operating system.

What do we think?

Windows 7 is arguably the best operating system Microsoft has ever released: it's easy to use, looks great and has none of the annoyances that troubled its predecessors and successors. However, after 10 years it's no longer as secure as it once was and when Microsoft stops releasing patches for vulnerabilities, it will be even less so. So although you shouldn't feel pressured by these new nags to upgrade to Windows 10 immediately, it's certainly worth making preparations now, even if it's just to check that your current hardware can support the latest operating system.



FIRST LOOK

Rokit IO 3D & IO Pro 3D rokitphones.com/uk

If you thought 3D screens were a thing of the past, think again. US company Rokit is bringing the technology back with two new reasonably priced phones: the Rokit IO 3D, which costs £140; and the Rokit IO Pro 3D, priced at £250.

Rokit is a new name to the smartphone scene but you may recognise it as the main sponsor for the Williams F1 team for the 2019 season. Its handsets cleverly allow you to view 3D content without needing to wear 3D glasses, and we found from our hands-on time with the phones that they both work impressively well.

You have to look directly at the screen to get the full effect – anyone sneaking a look from the side will go



cross-eyed – but the 3D is effective and the onscreen visuals are sharp, clear and colourful. It's worth noting that the 3D effect isn't enabled all the time, so you don't need to worry about having to view your emails in 3D. It only comes into effect when you launch content from the Rokflix 3D app.

The main problem with previous

glasses-free 3D phones was that the screen was low-resolution, but the Rokit phones are immeasurably superior. On the IO Pro you get a 5.99in display with a resolution of 1,080 x 2,160 pixels, and even the cheaper IO 3D has a 5.45in screen with a 720 x 1,440-pixel resolution. Both phones are powered by MediaTek processors, with the IO Pro 3D offering 64GB of storage, 4GB of RAM and a 13-megapixel camera, while the IO 3D has 16GB of storage, 2GB of RAM and an 8-megapixel camera.

The rest of the hardware doesn't match the impressive specs offered by the latest phones from Motorola (see page 22), but both Rokit handsets are well built and look good. However, their mainly plastic casing doesn't feel as luxurious as similarly priced rivals.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is Netflix hiking its subscription prices?

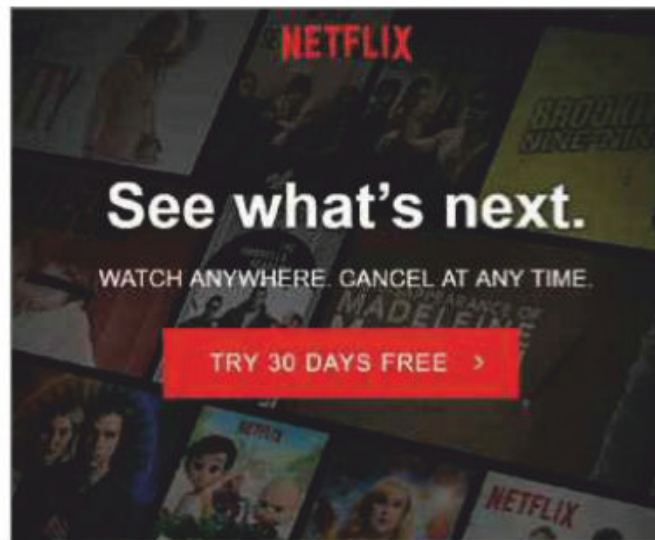
Netflix customers in the UK have reported seeing higher prices for subscription packages – but no-one can agree on how much they're being increased by.

Forum users at Digital Spy first noticed the changes, reporting that the streaming service was offering alternative subscription prices, seemingly at random. By clearing the cache and switching between Firefox and Chrome, one user claimed to discover three different pricing structures.

Netflix's Basic package was priced at £5.99 or £6.99; Standard subscription stood at £7.99, £8.99 or £9.99; and subscribing to Premium could cost £9.99, £11.99 or £12.99. Other users reported Netflix taking a mix-and-match approach to prices.

So, is it a collective delusion or is Netflix really raising its prices? It seems that the platform has been embarking on its own Bandersnatch-style 'choose your own adventure'. In a statement to Digital Spy, a Netflix spokesman admitted that "we are testing slightly different prices to better understand how members value Netflix. Not everyone will see this test and we may never roll out these specific prices beyond this test."

Which, eagle-eyed readers may note, focuses on the issue of so-called dynamic pricing, and isn't a denial that the company is planning a price hike.



LIKELIHOOD RATING



When Netflix hiked its prices for US subscribers, it offered a non-denial that "price increases are specific to each country and the US increase does not influence or indicate a UK price change".

However, we can't say we're surprised by the price test: Netflix is no stranger to testing audience reactions – such as tweaking the order of films and changing the cover art – to inform how customers interact with the service. So we fully expect the firm to try dynamic pricing. Don't be surprised to see your Netflix bill increasing soon.

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

↑ Mozilla releases Firefox app for iPad

Recognising that "iPads aren't just bigger versions of iPhones", Mozilla has released an iOS version of Firefox that's custom-made for Apple's tablet. Features include split-screen support and one-tap access to Private Browsing mode.



↑ New version of Edge praised by testers

A leaked build of Microsoft's updated Edge browser – the first to be based on Chromium – has been praised by early testers for its simplicity and speedy performance. The new Edge will let users install their favourite Chrome extensions.



WE DON'T LIKE...

↓ Android ads hijacked by autoplay scam

Advertising networks in Android apps are being hijacked by fraudsters who hide autoplaying videos behind ad banners to generate millions of dollars in revenue, developers have said. The autoplay scam also drains the batteries of Android devices.



↓ Dropbox limits free users to three devices

Dropbox users with a free Basic account are now limited to using the online storage service on a total of three devices, whereas before they could use as many as they wanted. To add further devices, you'll need to upgrade to a paid-for plan.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Sounds U Like

bit.ly/sounds472 | From £40

This innovative comfort light-cum-speaker is designed to help both babies and parents get more sleep. Sounds U Like lets you record your voice telling a bedtime story, singing a lullaby or perhaps reciting tedious legislation, then activates your recording – or any music you've chosen – when it detects your newborn's cries. You control the device using a mobile app and can easily switch between light-only mode and using it as a Bluetooth speaker, with a rechargeable battery that lasts for up to 15 hours. The creator is hoping to raise £60,000 for the project by 11 May.



Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Tourist attractions stung by cyberattacks

Kew Gardens, the National History Museum, the Tate Gallery and the Imperial



War Museum have been hammered by a total of 109 million cyber-attacks over the last few years, according to research firm Parliament Street. The company issued a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the four leading tourist attractions in London to uncover just how secure their defence systems are.

Kew Gardens had the most attacks, saying it had fallen victim a mammoth 86 million times in the last year alone – a year-on-year increase of 438%. The Imperial War Museum was attacked 10 million times, while the Natural History Museum reported 875,414 incidents, and the Tate

Modern and Tate Britain suffered 494,709 attacks collectively.

“Hackers are increasingly targeting organisations which appear to hold large amounts of personal financial data,” said Tim Dunton, managing director of Nimbus Hosting. “The high volume of attacks in this case is reflective of the threat posed by cybercriminals going to extreme lengths to obtain confidential information.”

bit.ly/tourist472

Mirai botnet returns to target businesses

Security researchers have found a new variant of the malicious botnet that grounded some of the world's biggest tech companies three years ago. The Mirai botnet first shook the world in 2016 and became known for carrying out the worst DDoS (distributed denial of service) attack in history.

Mirai has now returned, according to security experts from Palo Alto



Networks. It comes with an enhanced arsenal of features that increase the botnet's attack surface and, most worryingly, it also has a revised attack strategy. In Mirai's latest iteration, it seeks out vulnerable business devices – specifically, wireless presentation systems and the meeting-room TVs that companies use to present to clients and colleagues.

“This new Mirai is a perfect example of why every organisation needs to map their own networks from an external point of view and close off everything that is open and does not need to be,” said Jamo Niemela, principal researcher at F-Secure.

bit.ly/mirai472

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

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



Q How can I prevent my personal data from being stolen in a security breach?

Gareth King, Facebook

A You can use free cybersecurity services such as Have I Been Pwned (haveibeenpwned.com) and Privacy Audit

(privacyaudit.me) to see if your email address has been compromised through a data breach. We also suggest the following ways to help you strengthen the security of your online data:

- Think twice before handing over personal details, such as emails and phone numbers.
- Protect all your devices with a strong internet security product.
- Apply security updates to your operating system and applications as soon as they are available.
- Only use secure sites. Look for a URL beginning with 'https://' – that's 's' for 'secure'. Look also for a closed padlock in the web

“ Take care using your mobile device for online purchases. If you make a transaction, switch off Wi-Fi and use mobile data **”**

browser's address bar – clicking or double-clicking it lets you see details of the site's security.

- Use a unique, complex password for every website – a mixture of letters, numbers and special characters at least 15 characters long.
- Don't click random links in emails – it's better to type a URL yourself to avoid the risk of landing on a phishing site.
- Stick to familiar brands that you know or have heard

of. Even then, take care – criminals often deliberately misspell the name of their fake websites to make it look like a familiar top-brand company.

- Be extra careful using your mobile device for online purchases. Shortened URLs, often used because they are phone-friendly, can hide that they lead to a risky site. If you have to make a transaction, switch off Wi-Fi and use mobile data.

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★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

SPACE

NEW

NASA: Explore Moon to Mars

bit.ly/nasa472

Astronauts haven't set foot on the moon since 1972 but that's set to change over the next decade with plans for a permanent base. On this new NASA site, you can learn more about upcoming missions by scrolling down the page or clicking one of the navigation options at the top of the screen. It's a glossy affair, almost brochure-like in its design, with beautiful photos of the moon's surface, renders of a new spacecraft called Orion, promotional-style videos and the latest news. To boldly go forth, simply enter your email address for future updates.

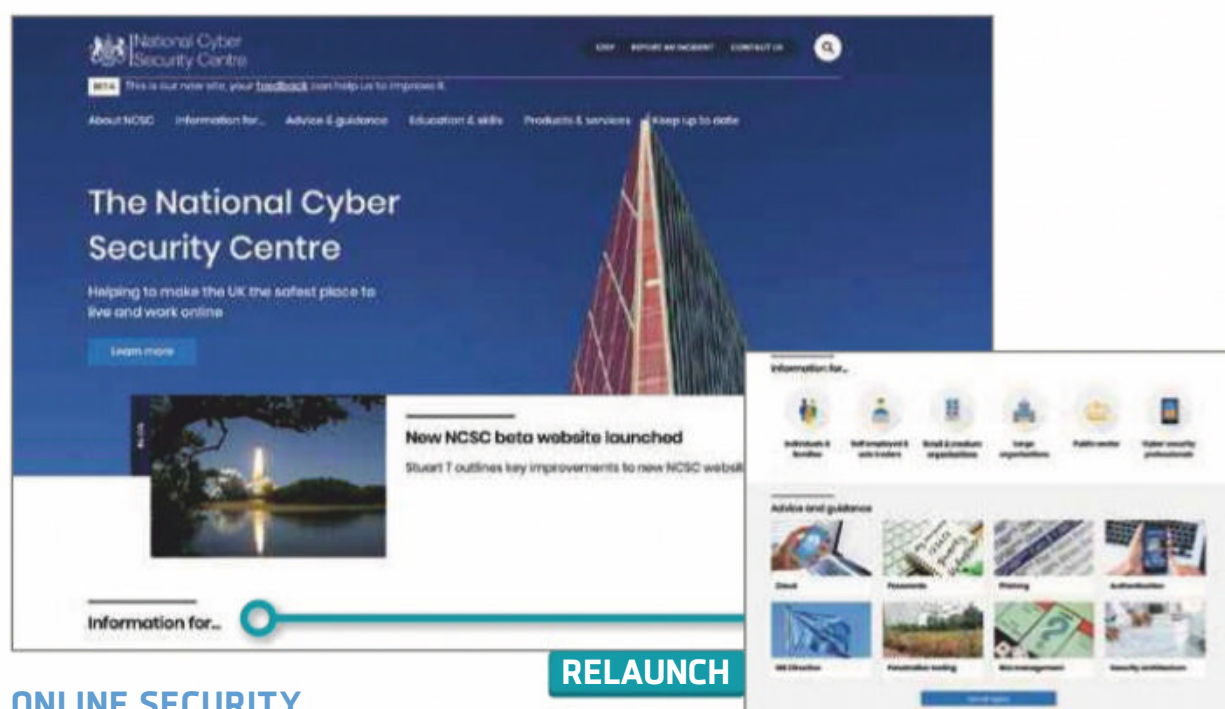
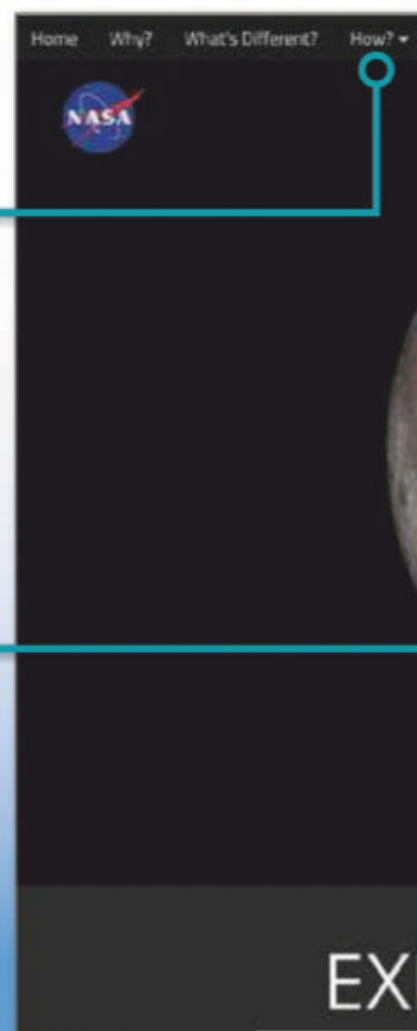
Our rating



FULL OF FACTS

The latest spacecraft are more sophisticated than the hardware used in the Apollo missions

TIMELINE
Discover the key dates for putting humans back on the Moon, and then on to Mars



RELAUNCH

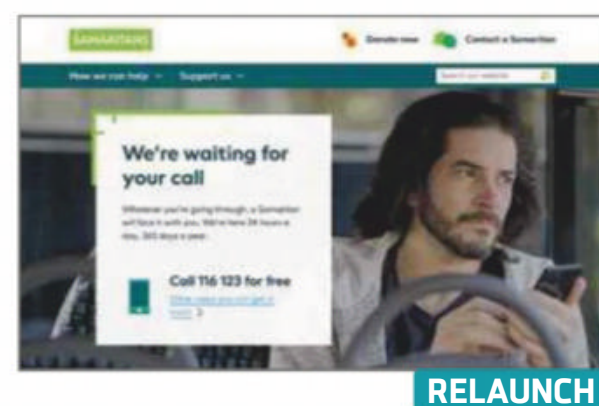
ONLINE SECURITY

National Cyber Security Centre

www.ncsc.gov.uk

Given the number of threats to our online safety, we always welcome efforts to bolster security. It's pleasing, then, to see the National Cyber Security Centre extend its advice to families, packing its beta site with info about the cloud, passwords, phishing, authentication and a host of other topics. Each section comprises clear guidance and comprehensive blog posts, accompanied by a filter to help find what you're after. There's also an alert banner on the homepage to offer advice during live incidents and a clean layout for mobile. Even so, navigation needs tidying (clicking categories sometimes routes you mid-page) and the news can feel a bit corporate and catch-all.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

CHARITY

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

Sometimes people just need to talk, especially if they're feeling depressed or contemplating suicide. So while the relaunched Samaritans site offers visitors options to send an email or write a letter, it also gives prominence to its freephone number. Delve deeper to discover lots of useful, supplementary support including a guide to assisting someone in need of help and ways to support the charity through donations and volunteering. There's also a genuine effort to help people understand suicide, with many facts and figures alongside information about loneliness and key, telltale signs.

Our rating

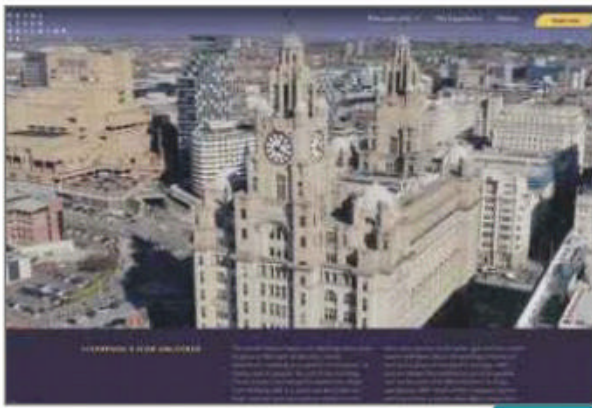




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For more information, visit **bit.ly/wudisc18**
or search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon



NEW

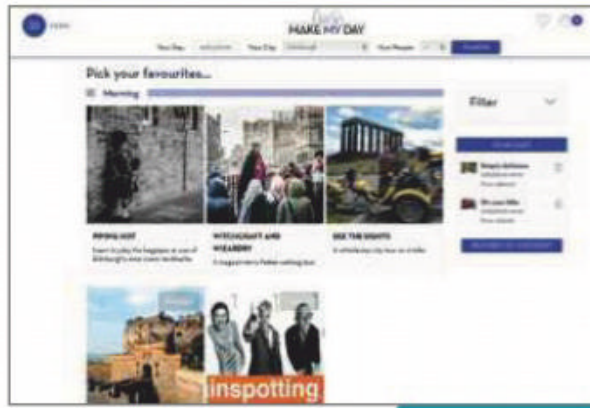
ARCHITECTURE

Royal Liver Building

rlb360.com

Completed in 1911, the splendid Grade I-listed Royal Liver Building is one of Liverpool's Three Graces, and visitors will soon be able to enjoy 360-degree views from its 10th and 15th floors. This superbly designed website, with its stunning video panning across the waterfront, provides a potted history of the building complete with vivid photography, interesting stats, a flavour of the experience and a tiny snapshot of the view that awaits (grab the outer circle and drag to see a full virtual 360). But its main purpose is to let you book tickets, which it does over a few steps – while charging a booking fee.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

TRAVEL

Make My Day

makemyday.travel

Travel journalist Nick Boulos has created a website aimed at adventurous folk who want to tour the world's major cities. So far, it has focused on London, but Edinburgh has now been added to the mix, with others certain to follow. Rather than simply list potential tours for the morning, afternoon and evening, the site tries to lend a personal touch, using a "What Nick says" section on each entry to explain why that particular suggestion has been included. In truth, it's a somewhat gimmicky way to spin a description but it's handy for building an itinerary of intriguing things to do before paying for them all in one go.

Our rating



NEW

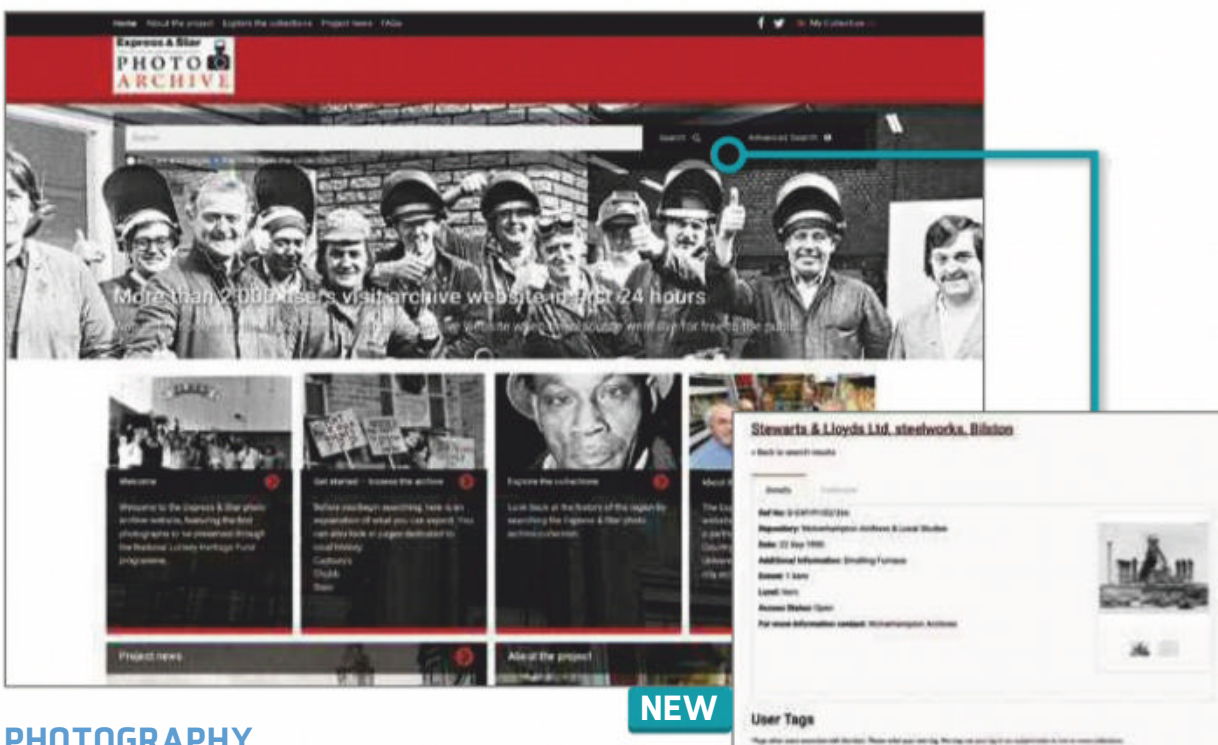
FOOTBALL

Celtic FC Women

celticfcwomen.celticfc.net

As women's football continues to grow in popularity, it's good to see some of Britain's top clubs jumping on board. Celtic Football Club is the latest to create a dedicated online home for its women's team and the result is a strong display of news, fixtures and tables for both the first team and the academy. It's not in the same league as the men's equivalent site, but there's plenty of team info with profiles of each player, their stats and a photo. You can download home-match programmes from the site, but we're surprised that the results don't show such important information as the goalscorers and any bookings.

Our rating



NEW

PHOTOGRAPHY

Express & Star Photo Archive

photo-archive.expressandstar.co.uk

Local newspapers have such rich photographic archives, often going back decades, you wonder why they don't make more use of them online. Thankfully, the *Express & Star* in Wolverhampton is leading the way with a fantastic collection of 3,000 images taken before 1995. Funded by the National Lottery and put together by volunteers, the collection can be explored by keyword or suggested topic (there's a strong slant towards industry and construction), and you can read a guide to viewing the photos – not only is there supplementary material, the back of each physical image has also been archived showing scribbled librarian notes, date stamps and often the story itself.

Our rating



NEW

TRANSPORT

Campervanhire

www.campervanhire.com

Campervans aren't cheap: you're talking thousands of pounds even for a second-hand model and, most likely, it'll sit unused outside your house for most of the year. This site puts you in touch with campervan and motorhome owners willing to hire out their vehicles. What's off-putting is the pop-up message you get when you click an entry, telling you that Campervanhire has an advertising relationship and makes use of AvantLink, which collects data and hands over commission – and then takes you to the US-version of outdoorsy.com.

Our rating



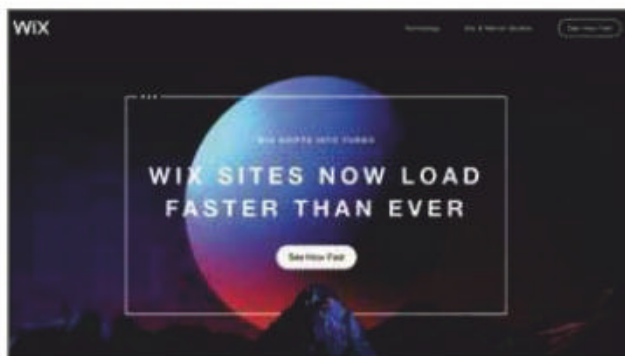
Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Wix sites get a Turbo boost

Wix has boosted the speed of its service, offering a new Wix Turbo mode to any existing Wix site that's compatible. To find out if yours is, go to bit.ly/wixt472 and enter your site's address in the box. Your existing site speed will be measured and rated. If there are elements of your page that aren't compatible with the new Turbo mode, you can click a link to find out what they are and, if you wish, upgrade them to make them compatible. Most incompatible elements are legacy options that can easily be upgraded for free.



here to help. This Chrome extension sneaks behind the scenes of websites and finds out information about the fonts they use by scouring their CSS files. This means that it's not only able to identify a font, but can also provide information on size, weight and more.

Deal of the Fortnight

Easyspace (www.easyspace.com) is offering 40% off '.uk', '.co.uk' and '.org.uk' domain suffixes, charging just £14.39 for two years of hosting.

Identify unknown typefaces

If you've ever coveted another website's typeface and wondered how to find out what it is, Fontface Ninja (bit.ly/ffnj472) is

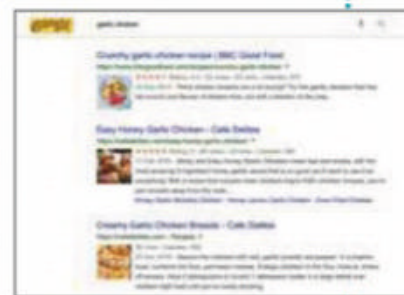
Web-building Helpdesk

Q When my web pages appear in Google, it shows a date in its listings. However, this makes my pages look old, especially if I've since updated them. Can I change the date Google displays?

Clive, via email

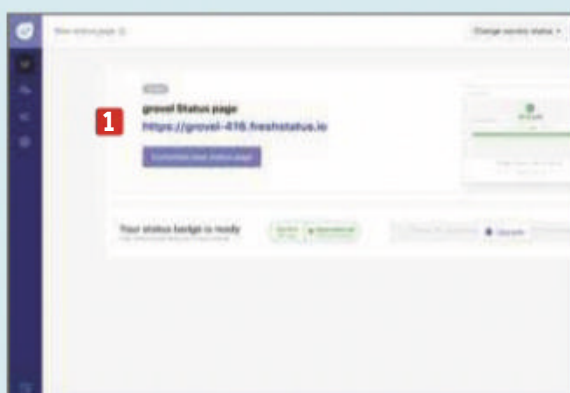
A In short, yes. Your page may show when you published it, which is where Google is pulling the date from. If you perform a significant update to the page, Google doesn't mind if you change the date to reflect this. You may also be able to set a 'last updated' date for Google to draw from, which could give your page gravitas from its age and freshness from its updates. Check out this Google blog post for more information (bit.ly/date472).

Andy Shaw, Technical and Reviews Editor, Web User

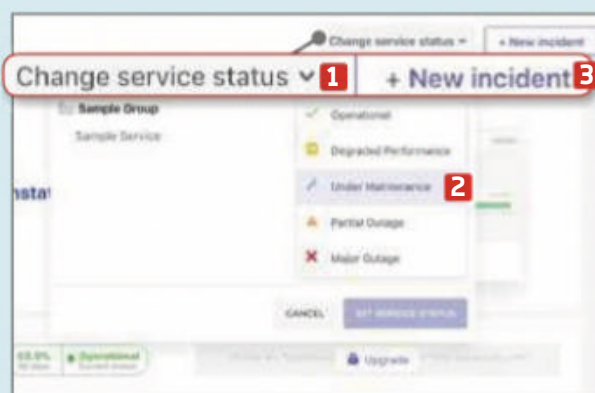


MINI WORKSHOP | Show how reliable your website is
Freshstatus: bit.ly/fresh472 |  10 mins | Any browser

If you want to encourage people to come back to your website, why not let them know how reliable it is? Freshstatus is a free service that creates a page that shows off your site's reliability



1 Go to bit.ly/fresh472, fill in your web domain and email address and click Get Status Pages For Free. Once you've verified your identity, your dashboard opens. Here you can find the address of your status page. **1** If you want people to be able to view your uptime, link to this from your own site.

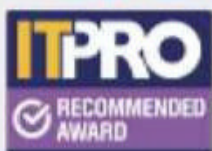


2 If you're anticipating any downtime, perhaps because you're planning to update your site, click 'Change service status' **1** and choose an option from the list, such as Under Maintenance. **2** You can also schedule these changes to occur automatically using the 'New incident' button. **3**



3 Click the 'Customize your status page' button and click Branding. **1** Here you can make your page look more like a part of your site by changing your site's name **2** or adding your own logo. **3** Click Publish **4** when you've finished.

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What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight

NOWTV

Find out who wins *Game of Thrones* in the final season

From 15 April

Who will take the Iron Throne in the final season of *Game of Thrones*? Programme maker HBO has teased fans with 20 posters of different lead characters sitting on the coveted throne (bit.ly/gotposters472). Will it be Tyrion, Jon, Cersei, Daenerys or the Night King? Our money's on Arya, with the Hound as a wild card.

If you're new to the show, based on George RR Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* books (bit.ly/fire472), this may not be the best time to start watching, unless you have nearly 70 hours to spare in the next few weeks. All seven previous seasons recently returned to Now TV (bit.ly/got472), but Seasons 1-6 disappear again at the end of May, and Season 7 on 14 May. To stream the show legally after that, you'll need to use Amazon's rental service (bit.ly/amazongot472). Season 8 is likely to remain online much longer, but Now TV hasn't confirmed dates yet.

Six new episodes, four of them feature-length, arrive weekly at 2am on Mondays. This hilariously inconvenient scheduling is, of course, America's fault, because Sky Atlantic simulcasts episodes with HBO. Stream it live or on-demand via Now TV, depending on how late you want to stay up, with an Entertainment Pass (£7.99 per month after a 14-day free trial, bit.ly/nowent472). Now TV also streams Sky's discussion show, *Thronecast*, from 10pm on 15 April (bit.ly/thronecast472). Watch the latest official trailer at bit.ly/gottrail472.

N Watch David Attenborough's first Netflix show in 4K

From 5 April

Few things are as inspiring and authoritative as the voice of David Attenborough. "This is the story of our changing planet, and what we can do to help it survive," intones the great man in the latest trailer for *Our Planet*, the global wildlife epic which he narrates



but doesn't appear in. You can watch the eight hour-long episodes in 4K if your TV supports Ultra HD. Watch a trailer and teaser for free on Netflix at bit.ly/planet472.

If you're worried that Attenborough might lose his magic away from the BBC, be assured that *Our Planet* – which took four years to make – is in the safe hands of director Alastair Fothergill, who made the Beeb's magnificent *Planet Earth* and *The Blue Planet*. Both those shows, and their sequels, are available on the iPlayer at bit.ly/planetearth472 and bit.ly/blueplanet472.

N Flee zombies in Netflix's *Black Summer*

From 11 April

It's zombie apocalypse o'clock on Netflix. This eight-episode prequel to



now-defunct Syfy show *Z Nation* offers a darker depiction of the undead armageddon, more *Bird Box* than *Z Nation* (which is now also on Netflix at bit.ly/znation472). *Black Summer*'s heroine is Rose (Jaime King), a woman separated from her young daughter and determined to find her amid the chaos. Meet Rose in the official trailer at bit.ly/summer472.



Defeat evildoers in Season 2 of *The Tick*

Peter Serafinowicz is back in his bright

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



blue suit for 10 new episodes as The Tick, indestructible vanquisher of supervillains and best friends with an accountant called Arthur.

Amazon's loveable superhero show was adapted by *Gotham* writer-producer Ben Edlund from his own comics.

Edlund's done a superb job of balancing extreme silliness with beautifully written characters, earning Season 1 great reviews and devoted fans. Check out Amazon's trailer at bit.ly/ticktrail, and catch up with Season 1 at bit.ly/thetick472.

N Get spooked by more *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*

From 5 April

Netflix's sassy reboot of the saccharine 1990s show *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* has been such a hit that it's already spawned a Christmas special and four seasons, the third and fourth of which are still in pre-production. Meanwhile



Season 2 (sorry, 'Part 2') is upon us, and we're delighted to see a couple of our favourite acting Brits still in the cast – Lucy Davis (*The Office*) as aunt Hilda Spellman and Richard Coyle (*Coupling*) as Satanic Father Faustus Blackwood.

But this is Kiernan Shipka's show, and the former *Mad Men* kid has fantastic screen presence as half-witch Sabrina. Season 2's 10 episodes arrive on 5 April, and you can watch the trailer at bit.ly/sabrina472.

NEW Watch the final season of White House comedy *Veep*

From 3 April

Seinfeld's Julia Louis-Dreyfus stars as former Vice President Selina Meyer in this multi-award-winning US cousin of *The Thick of It* and *The Day Today* – all created by political satire king, Armando Iannucci.



Like its HBO stablemate *Game of Thrones*, *Veep* is now on its final season. Also, like *GoT*, *Veep*'s previous seasons recently returned to Now TV so you can catch up in preparation, but you've only got until 11 June (bit.ly/veep472).

Season 7 airs week by week on Sky Atlantic, which you can stream live and on-demand via Now TV. Watch HBO's Final Season trailer at bit.ly/veeptrail472.

In case you missed it...

Line of Duty's fifth series is now streaming weekly on BBC iPlayer, where



you can also watch five previous series (23 hours' worth) at bit.ly/

[duty472](http://bit.ly/duty472) – not forgetting the trailers, teasers, behind-the-scenes clips, scripts and *Behind the Writers' Room* podcast with creator Jed Mercurio at bit.ly/bbcduty472.

US cop-comedy (sitcop?) *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* is now on its sixth season on E4. Watch new episodes and previous seasons via All4

at bit.ly/4brooklyn472.

A couple of newcomers worth catching are All4's part-animated part-live action Britcom *Dead Pixels* (bit.ly/pixels472); and *Osmosis*, Netflix's new French sci-fi series about a dating service that mines people's brain data to match soulmates (bit.ly/osmosis472).

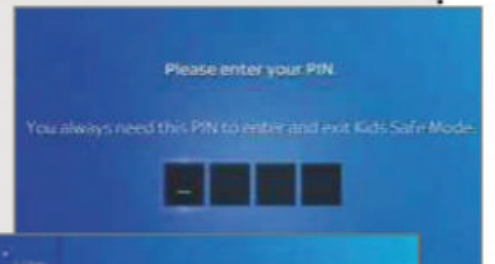
Sky Q launches Kids Safe Mode

Sky has launched a new Kids Safe Mode that lets you lock out adult content and give youngsters a safer, easier interface on the Sky Q box.

The new feature, now available on all boxes including Sky Q Mini, can be activated on any Sky Q in the household. That means adults can watch whatever they want in one room while children get their own restricted content in another.

Kids Safe Mode has a special interface that makes it easier for children to find and watch shows and films they'll enjoy. It's effectively a new, improved version of the existing Kids section, but with a PIN lock. The box automatically reboots into Kids Safe Mode once activated, so it's safe to let children continue using it.

See our cover feature on page 40 for more about parental controls.



Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

Moto G7

Motorola's Moto G7 is the latest in a series of brilliant budget smartphones, but it has some serious competition from its battery-boosted sibling



Since the first Moto G phone launched in 2013, Motorola has released a new model every year. Most of these have won our admiration with their combination of great performance and superb value for money, and despite diversification into bigger (Plus) and cheaper (Play) models, the core Moto G has maintained its place at the top. This year, however, the new Moto G7, G7 Play and G7 Plus are joined by a

fourth addition to the range: the Moto G7 Power.

The G7 and the G7 Power's specifications are surprisingly similar: both use the same Qualcomm Snapdragon 632 processor and come with 4GB of RAM and 64GB of storage. As for the other two models, the budget Play also has the 632 processor but only half the RAM, while the large-screen Plus has a slightly upgraded processor.

shave an extra £60 off the price of the G7 Power, bringing it down to a very enticing £179.

The G7 Power's battery may sound like a boring internal upgrade but it makes a noticeable difference to the phone. At 5,000mAh (milliamp-hours), it's a significant increase over the

The standard G7 doesn't fare as well, as you'd expect from a similar device with a less powerful battery. However, it was more disappointing than the mAh ratings alone might account for, lasting just 11 hours and 26 minutes. It seems likely that some of the difference comes from the G7 Power's reduced screen resolution, which needs fewer resources to fill the smaller number of pixels. Even so – the G7's battery life still beats that of its predecessor, the G6, by 40 minutes.

“If you want a higher-resolution screen and 4K video capture, you'll have to live with the G7's shorter battery life”

PRODUCT INFO

Moto G7

Price: £239.99

Buy from Amazon:
bit.ly/motog472

FOR

- ✓ Great camera
- ✓ Slick design
- ✓ Big screen

AGAINST

- ✗ The notch is ugly
- ✗ Disappointing battery life



FEATURES

PERFORMANCE

EASE OF USE

VALUE FOR MONEY



Battery boost

As its name suggests, the G7 Power's unique selling point is a significantly more powerful battery that lets the phone run longer on each charge. To keep the price down, it misses out on the standard G7's latest upgrade: a depth-sensing second camera lens. It also has a lower-resolution screen, at 1,570 x 720 pixels, rather than the G7's 2,270 x 1,080 pixels. However, by skipping the extra lens and reducing the screen resolution, Motorola has managed to

G7's 3,000mAh. To put this in context, even the iPhone XS only has a 2,658mAh battery, and few phones go beyond 3,500mAh.

We put it through our standard battery test, where a low-resolution video is played on a loop at 170cd/m² (candles per square metre) brightness in airplane mode. The G7 Power lasted an incredible 26 hours and 22 minutes. Only one phone we've tested has ever bettered that result: the Lenovo P2, which managed 28 hours and 50 minutes.

Screen and performance

The G7 Power's screen resolution sounds disappointing compared to the high-resolution screens found on pricier phones but the 6.2in display isn't a bad performer. The colours are bright and punchy and everything looks exceedingly crisp, despite the drop below Full HD. It's not flagship standard but that's the payoff for the low price.

Because it uses IPS technology rather than AMOLED, contrast isn't perfect, coming in at a decent

S Moto G7 Power

“ The G7 Power lasted an incredible 26 hours and 22 minutes. Only one phone we’ve tested has ever bettered that result ”

but uninspiring 914:1. It reaches a peak brightness of 506.9cd/m² and can recreate 90% of the sRGB colour standard.

The Moto G7’s 6.2in IPS screen is higher resolution but not as bright, reaching a peak luminance of 481cd/m² and a lower contrast of 823:1 in our tests.

Given the similar internal specifications, there’s barely any difference between the overall performance of the G7 and the G7 Power, and both models coped similarly well in tests that push the processor. We saw smoother gaming performance on the

G7 Power, though, which is again down to the lower-resolution screen. If you don’t mind losing some screen quality, it’s a slicker gaming experience.

You can match this on the G7 but you may have to turn down the settings on more demanding games, which rather defeats the benefit of a more detailed screen.

Camera and price

The camera is a key point of difference between the G7 and G7 Power. The G7 Power has a single 12-megapixel camera while the G7 has an additional five-megapixel

depth-sensor, for taking arty shots with blurred backgrounds.

For standard snaps, the pictures taken on the two devices are barely distinguishable because both cameras provide excellent results for their respective prices. For video, however, the G7 has the advantage. While the G7 Power is limited to recording 1080p footage at 30fps (frames per second), the Moto G7 is capable of capturing 4K video at the same frame rate. So if you want to shoot 4K video, you’ll have to opt for the G7.

That leaves us with some discussion about the price. The Moto G7 costs £239 while the G7 Power costs

£179, making the latter a very attractive proposition – a better battery life and £60 left in your pocket, compared to buying the standard G7. However, if you think you’ll miss not having the higher resolution screen and 4K video capture, then you’ll have to take the hit and live with its shorter battery life.



OUR VERDICT

While the Moto G Play and Plus models never quite succeeded in tempting us away from the standard Moto G range, Motorola has come up with a genuine contender in the G7 Power. Battery power is at the heart of what people love and hate about their phones, so introducing a super-long battery life shows that Motorola is listening to the opinions of consumers and making a serious

effort to give them what they want. That it’s also £60 cheaper is the icing on the cake.

If nothing is more important to you than screen detail and camera quality, then the standard G7 may still be the one for you. However, the differences between the two phones in this regard are much less significant in actual use than that epic battery life.

PRODUCT INFO

Moto G7 Power

Price: from £179.99

Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/pow472

FOR

- ✓ 90% of the Moto G7 for £60 cheaper
- ✓ Incredible battery life
- ✓ Bargain price

AGAINST

- ✗ 720p screen
- ✗ Should support 4K recording

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

Synology MR2200ac

An easy-to-use router that can grow into a mesh network

We've seen plenty of mesh Wi-Fi systems that come with two or three nodes, but the MR2200ac is different: it's a standalone tri-band 802.11ac router, which you can turn into the hub of a mesh system by simply buying additional units.

The MR2200ac costs £130, which is reasonable for such a feature-packed router, but you'll need to buy two if you want to take advantage of its mesh capabilities. This pushes the price up to £260, which is a lot more than BT's Whole Home Wi-Fi system, priced at just £200 for a three-node pack. However, the Synology

router has loads more features, which you access through its brilliant browser-based configuration tool.

Features

The MR2200ac's many options and features include a guest network, an impressive range of dynamic DNS providers and a built-in VPN, so you can easily and safely access your home network from anywhere in the world. There's also a USB 3 port that you can use to connect a 4G dongle or storage to share across the network.

On the downside, there's no built-in modem, so you either need a separate box to handle your incoming connection or keep your existing router and



there, performance was solid and consistent overall.

While our laptop received a good signal from the router, the reverse wasn't always true, and as we moved away from the MR2200ac, upload speeds plummeted. This may not be a

With a second unit creating a mesh, one of the router's 5GHz radios is used exclusively for traffic between the two devices. Setting it up is incredibly easy and made a significant difference, improving areas that suffered from patchy coverage, although upload speeds still weren't lightning fast.

However, download speeds actually fell in most locations. Synology warns you not to put your second node too far away from the first but we found this to be a tricky balancing act.

“Shelling out for a second unit pushes the price beyond better-performing mesh kits”

use the MR2200ac as an access point, although this unfortunately disables some of the advanced features, including parental control. And there's another drawback – only one Gigabit Ethernet port, where most routers have four or more.

Performance

To test its speed, we positioned the router in an awkward corner of our test house where the fibre cable comes in, then tested file-transfer speeds to an 802.11ac-equipped Surface Laptop in various locations. Download rates were good in every room and although there are faster routers out

there, performance was solid and consistent overall. While our laptop received a good signal from the router, the reverse wasn't always true, and as we moved away from the MR2200ac, upload speeds plummeted. This may not be a

PRODUCT INFO

Synology MR2200ac

Price: £130.35
Buy from Amazon:
bit.ly/syn472

SPECIFICATIONS

- Quad-core 717MHz CPU
- 256MB DDR3 memory
- 2x2 MIMO high-performance internal antenna
- 802.11a/b/g/n/ac tri-band Wi-Fi
- WPA3 security
- 1 x Gigabit Ethernet port
- 1 x USB 3.0 port
- 199 x 154 x 65mm
- 0.45kg

FOR

- ✓ Superb web interface
- ✓ Loaded with advanced router tools

AGAINST

- ✗ Mediocre performance, even in mesh mode
- ✗ Expensive if you want multiple units

OUR VERDICT



The MR2200ac makes a superb first impression – slick browser-based configuration that ticks almost every technical box, with reassuring security and parental control features.

Unfortunately, we found performance was mediocre and unbalanced in standalone mode, and shelling out for a second unit pushed the price beyond better-performing

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

mesh kits. Even though the MR2200ac is one of the friendliest and most versatile routers we've tried, most people will be better off with either a regular router or a dedicated mesh system.

PHILIPS

Monitors

Vivid, true-to-life colours
in an elegant design

276E7QDSW

innovation ✨ you



amazon



ebuyer.com



Web User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE

SMARTPHONE

Moto G7 Power

£179.99 from bit.ly/pow472

Tested: Issue 472

Battery life is at the heart of what we love and hate about our phones, and the Moto G7 Power lasted an incredible 26 hours and 22 minutes in our tests. Its specs and price are also great.

KEY SPECS

Octa-core 1.8GHz processor ■ 64GB storage ■ 4GB RAM ■ 6.2in, 720 x 1570-pixel screen ■ 12-megapixel rear camera, 8-megapixel front camera ■ 5,000mAh battery ■ 159.4 x 76 x 9.3mm ■ 193g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

NEW!



WI-FI EXTENDER

Netgear Nighthawk X6S

£145.99 from bit.ly/ngx6s471

Tested: Issue 471

The Nighthawk X6S's unbeatable combination of high speed and top-end features makes it the best Wi-Fi extender available. It's big and boxy, but its performance gives mesh-router systems a run for their money.

KEY SPECS

Works with 2.4GHz and 5GHz networks ■ 4 x Gigabit Ethernet ports ■ Access control ■ Wi-Fi schedule ■ WPS button ■ 277 x 170 x 93mm ■ Two-year warranty



SECURITY CAMERA

Blink XT

£149.99 from 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

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

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



SMART SPEAKER

Google Home Hub

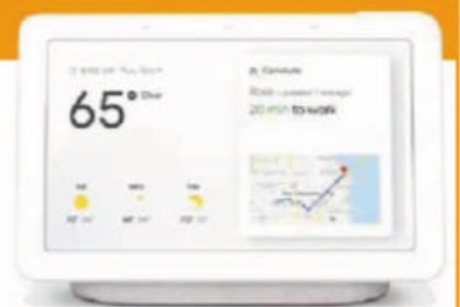
£139 from bit.ly/homehub463

Tested: Issue 463

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

KEY SPECS

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



SOFTWARE & SERVICES

PHOTO-EDITING SOFTWARE

DxO PhotoLab

£99 from
bit.ly/dxo455

Tested: Issue 455

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

KEY FEATURES

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



VIDEO-EDITING SOFTWARE

Adobe Premiere Elements 2018

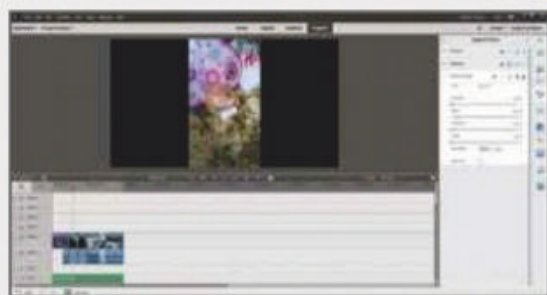
£86.56 from
www.adobe.com/uk

Tested: Issue 453

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

KEY FEATURES

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



Web User Gold Award winners

FILE-TRANSFER SERVICE

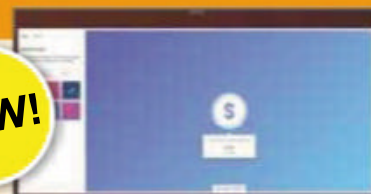
Smash

Free from fromsmash.com

Tested: Issue 471

Unlike other services for sharing large files, Smash places no limit on the size of files you can send. Its free version has a few restrictions, but we love its speedy simplicity.

NEW!



PRIVATE-MESSAGING APP

Signal

Free from signal.org

Tested: Issue 470

Signal is a near-perfect private-messaging tool. It does everything WhatsApp can do, along with some useful and unique extras.



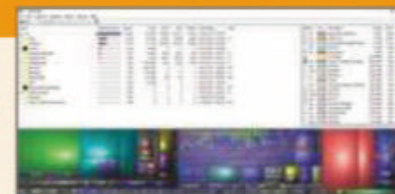
DRIVE-SPACE ANALYSER

WinDirStat

Free from 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.



DUPLICATE CLEANER

Duplicate Cleaner Free

Free from bit.ly/dc468

Tested: Issue 468

This tool's streamlined design and rapid performance make clearing out the duplicate files from your PC a breeze.



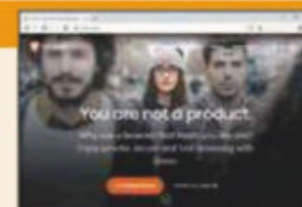
PRIVATE BROWSER

Brave

Free from brave.com

Tested: Issue 467

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



WEB USER

BACK ISSUES DISCS

Search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon

EVERY ISSUE FROM
2014 TO 2018



Best Free Software

BACKUP TOOL

Iperius Backup Free 6

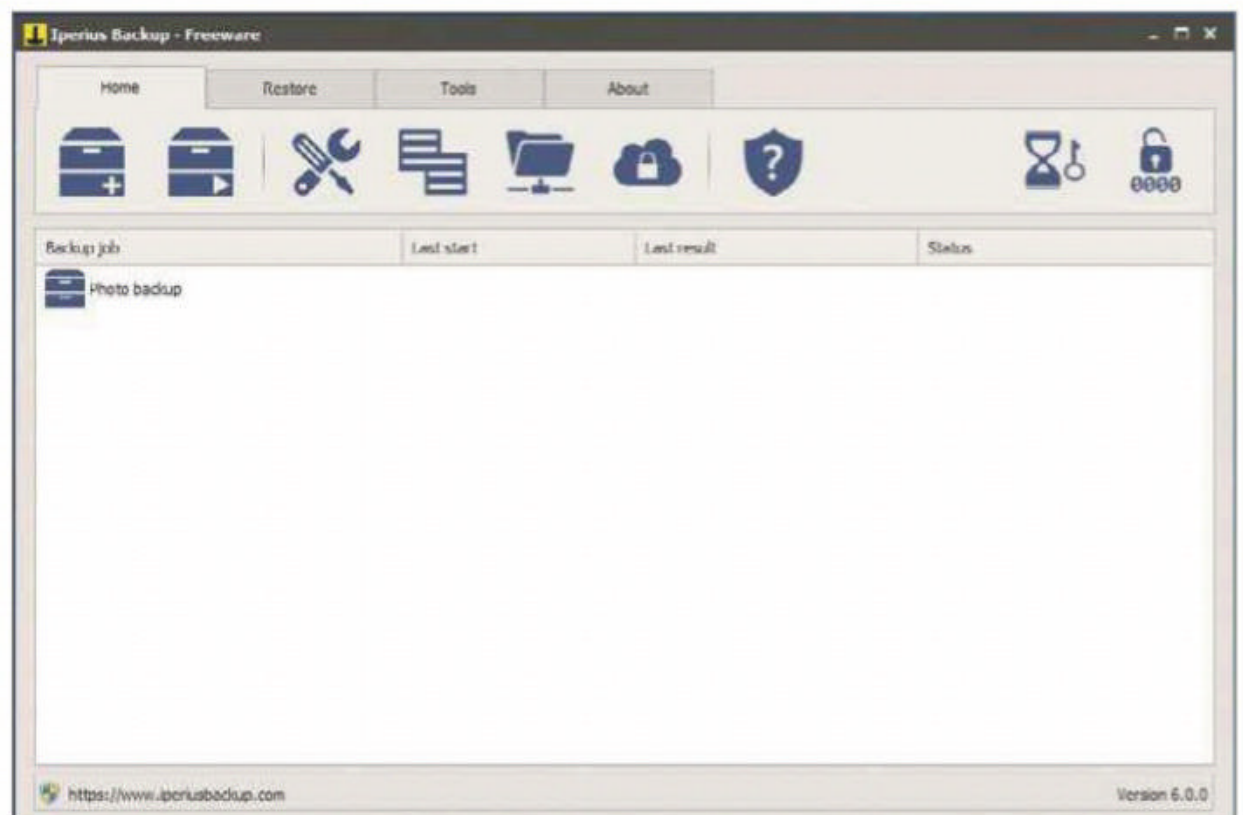
bit.ly/iperius472

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 49MB

We all know it's important to back up our personal files on a regular basis, because disaster could strike at any time: you could get hit with ransomware, have your laptop stolen or your PC could suffer some form of catastrophic hardware failure.

If you haven't backed up your files beforehand then there's a real chance they'll be gone for good, so if you don't currently have a backup plan in place, it's time to change that. Iperius Backup Free offers everything you need to back up and restore your PC. It can back up to various locations, including local and

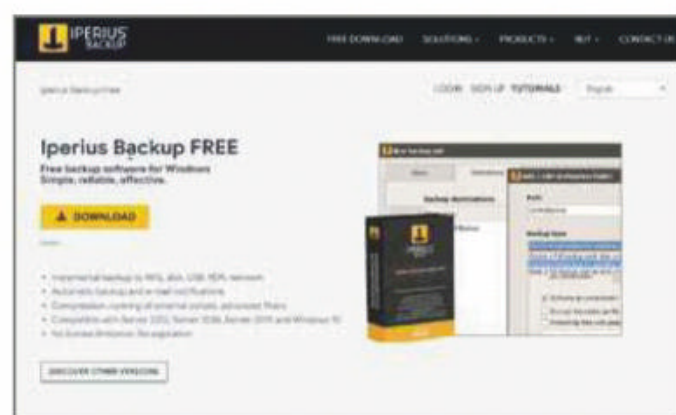


networked drives, USB flash drives and NAS devices (but not the cloud – that's a paid-for feature), and run full, incremental, differential or scheduled backups.

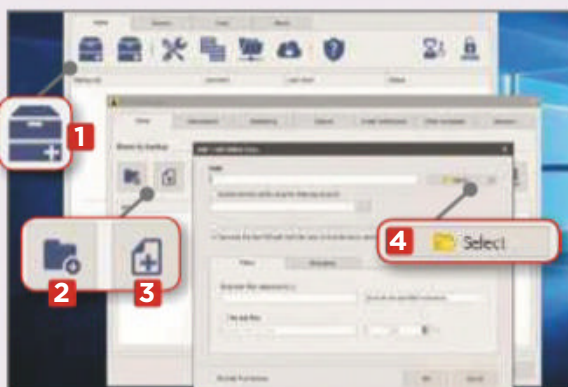
Iperius Backup Free lets you compress files to ZIP format – with no size limit – and execute external scripts and programs before or after a backup. It can also send you an email notification when a backup completes. You can customise this last option so it emails you every time or only in

certain cases – such as when a backup completes successfully, has errors, has run as a result of scheduling or if the backup is smaller or greater than a specified size. The software can even shut down your computer at the end of a backup.

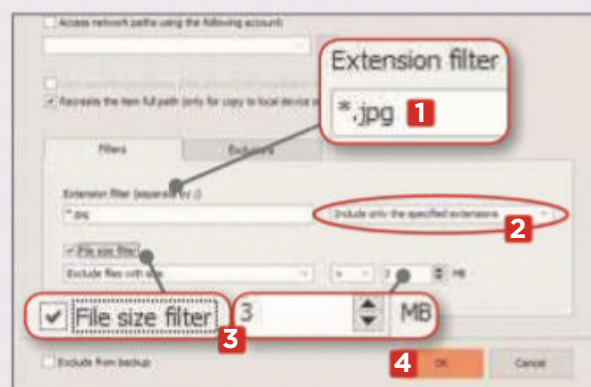
The latest version of Iperius Backup Free improves and adds new features to the Iperius Console, and fixes a number of problems. Most of the new features in this release are reserved for the paid-for Home/Business version which costs from €29 (about £25).



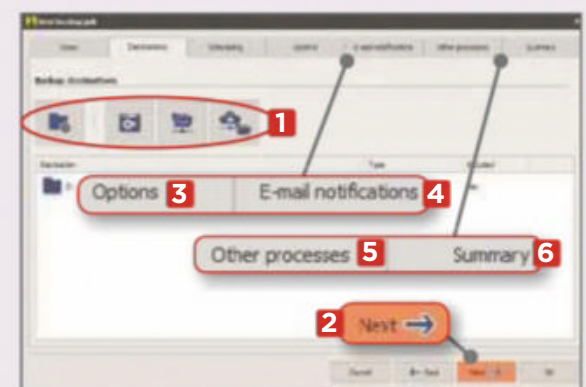
MINI WORKSHOP | Create a backup using Iperius Backup Free 6



1 Get started with Iperius Backup Free by clicking the 'Create new backup' link or the New Backup button in the top bar. **1** A wizard will open. From here, you can add a new folder **2** or file. **3** If you're adding a folder, navigate to it by clicking the Select button. **4**

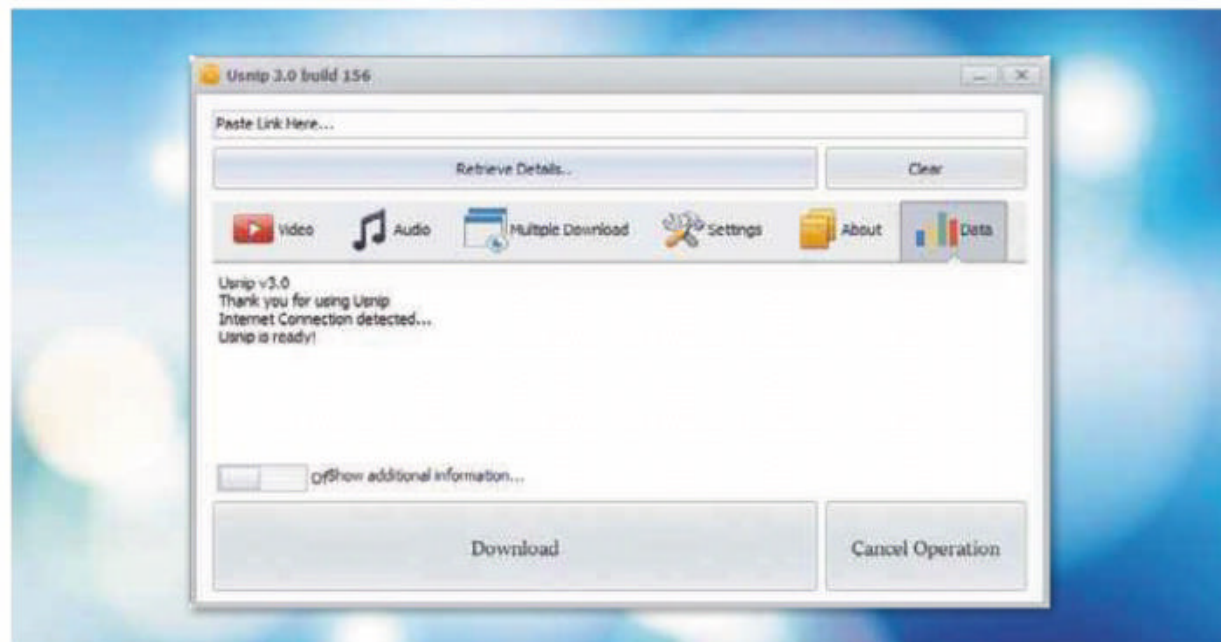


2 If you only want to back up a specific file type – JPEG images, for example – you can specify the extension. **1** Use the drop-down menu to select 'Include only the specified extensions'. **2** You can also ask the software to ignore files under a certain size. **3** Click OK, **4** then click Next.



3 Choose a backup destination (tape, FTP and cloud are all paid-for options) **1** and click Next to create a schedule. **2** Configure your backup choices under Options **3** and enable email notifications if required, **4** as well as other processes. **5** Select Summary **6** and give your plan a name. You can then run a manual backup.

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



VIDEO DOWNLOADER

Usnip 3

bit.ly/usnip472

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 114MB

You can only officially download videos from YouTube that you've uploaded yourself, although there are plenty of third-party tools that can get around this restriction. Usnip is one such program and it lets you download online videos from YouTube or Facebook (support for other sites is coming soon), and convert them to different formats for viewing on various devices. This version has been optimised for Windows 10 and improvements have been made to the way it works.

New Windows 10 App

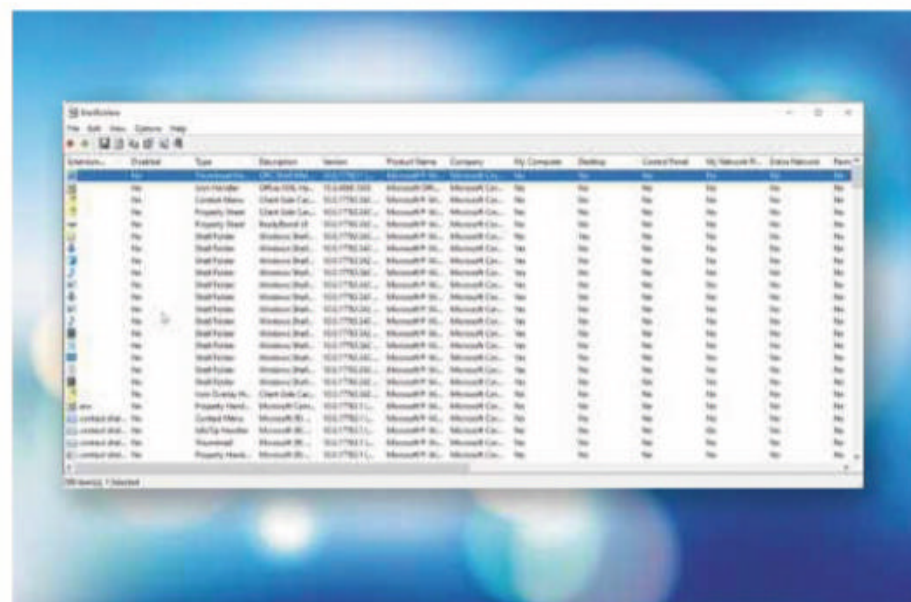
VPN Unlimited

bit.ly/vpnu472

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 26MB

If you want to keep your browsing private and circumvent geographic restrictions, you'll need a VPN. This app unblocks content, protects your wireless connection, secures online activity and bypasses some ISP restrictions. However, after 10 days free use you need to pay for a subscription – from \$5 (£3.77) a month – to continue using the app.



SYSTEM TOOL

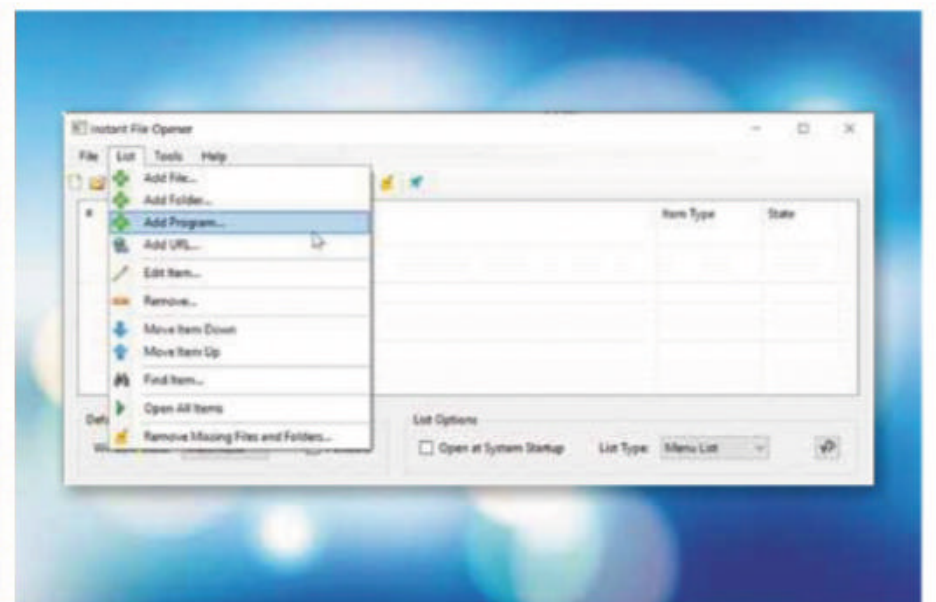
ShellExView 2

www.nirsoft.net

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 68.6KB

Shell Extensions add different options to Windows. In some cases, these are installed by the operating system, but several applications also add their own, including to the right-click context menu. ShellExView shows all the shell extensions installed on your PC, and lets you disable or enable any of them. This is the first major update to the program in over three years and fixes a problem relating to the filenames of '.net' extensions.



SYSTEM TOOL

Instant File Opener

www.magnonic.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 476KB

Most people tend to use the same software and visit the same websites when they start up their PCs. This is the thinking behind Instant File Opener, which lets you manage and quickly open all your favourite files, folders, programs and websites. You can create multiple lists, then populate them with items you want opening – either when you first log into Windows or at the click of a button. The program can also show you a menu of files at startup or on demand.

SYSTEM TOOL

BootSafe 5

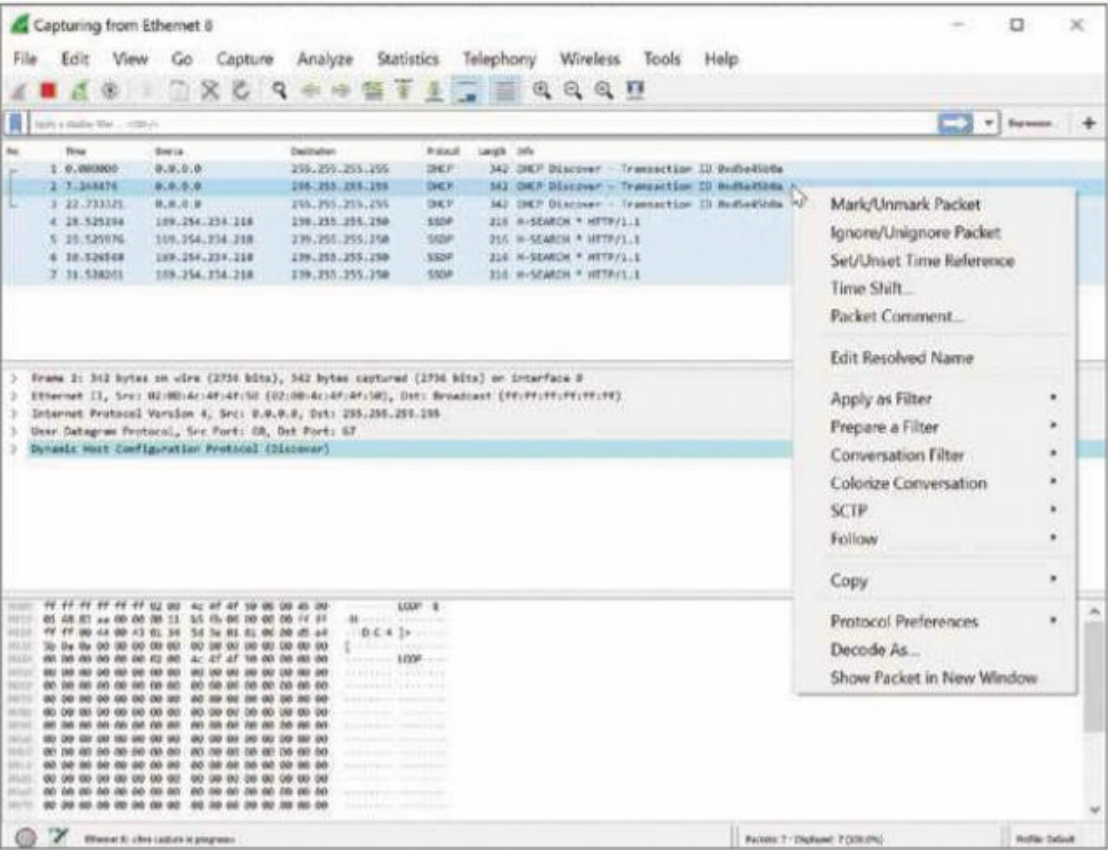
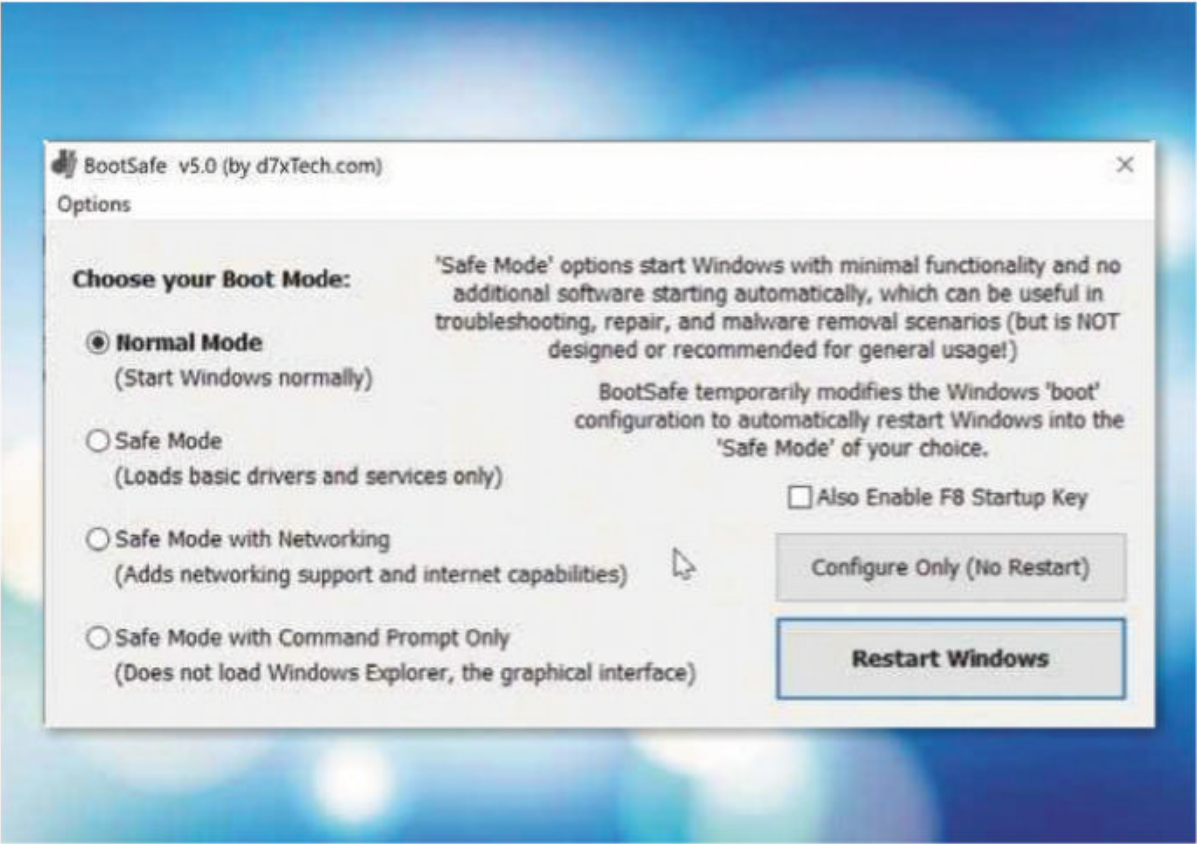
bit.ly/boot472

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 287KB

If you're having problems with your PC, booting into Safe Mode – a lightweight version of Windows with basic functionality and no unnecessary software – can help you get to the bottom of things. How you get into Safe Mode varies depending on which version of Windows you're running, and whether you can get into Windows in the first place.

BootSafe is a tiny free program that simplifies the process. Choose the boot mode you require from the menu, then click the Restart Windows button. You can also enable the F8 startup key from the menu for easy access to Safe Mode.



NETWORK TOOL

Wireshark 3

www.wireshark.org

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 or macOS

File size: 56.7MB

Wireshark is a well-known tool for analysing and troubleshooting networks. It lets you see everything that's happening on your computer at a microscopic level, watching and logging incoming and outgoing traffic in real time, and letting you compare past activity. It does require a degree of technical knowledge to master the software (it's certainly not for everyone), but there's plenty of help and documentation available on the website.

This new version uses Npcap instead of WinPcap for packet capture, and there's a long list of other changes under the bonnet. To use it, simply browse the list of network adapters and double-click the one you want to monitor.

SYSTEM TOOL

WSCC 4

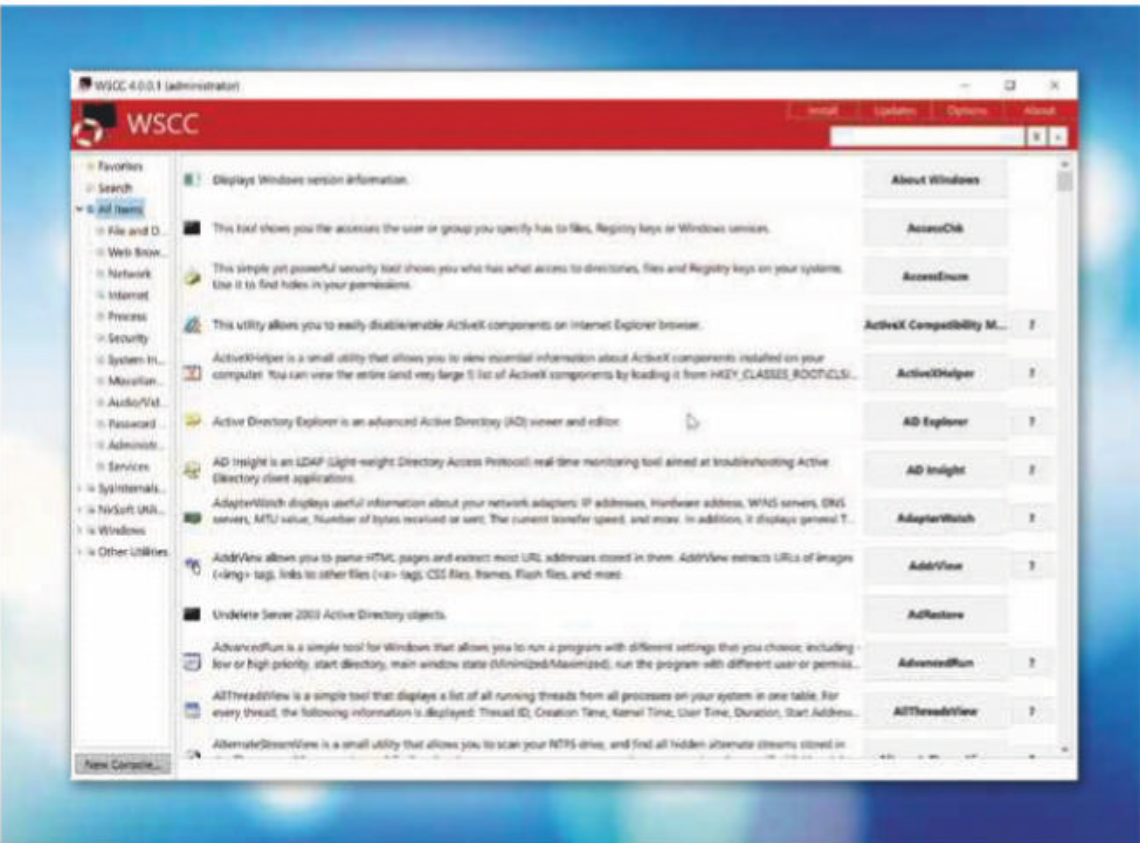
bit.ly/wsc472

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 2.22MB

WSCC, or Windows System Control Centre to give the program its full name, provides a front end that lets you install, update, run and organise tools from suites such as Microsoft Sysinternals and Nirsoft Utilities. When you first run the software, it lets you choose which of the supported suites to install, and then fetches them for you direct from the authors' websites (the process takes a while to complete). You can browse the list of tools in various ways or search for a particular one.

This new release of WSCC makes improvements to the update manager and also fixes a problem that prevented 64-bit custom apps from being shown.





GAME

Avalanche

bit.ly/aval472

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 397MB

The aim of this tricky but addictive game is to run your man to the top of a ramp – a task made nearly impossible by the avalanche of bouncing balls and cubes hurtling their way down towards you. Use the W, A, S and D keys to move, and hit the spacebar to jump. There's no getting up again once you've been hit – instead, you'll need to press Enter and start all over again.

Don't install...

User State Migration Tool

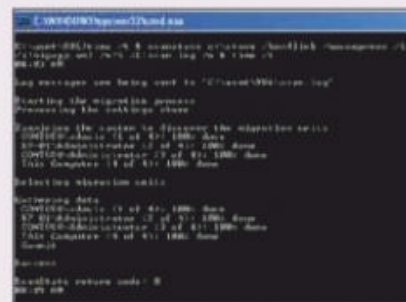
bit.ly/userstate472

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1/10

File size: N/A

This tool for transferring files and settings from one Windows PC to another sounds useful but it's not for the faint hearted. Designed for IT administrators migrating multiple users to new systems (hence the name), it involves using the command line and complicated scripting languages. Best steer clear.



...Install this instead

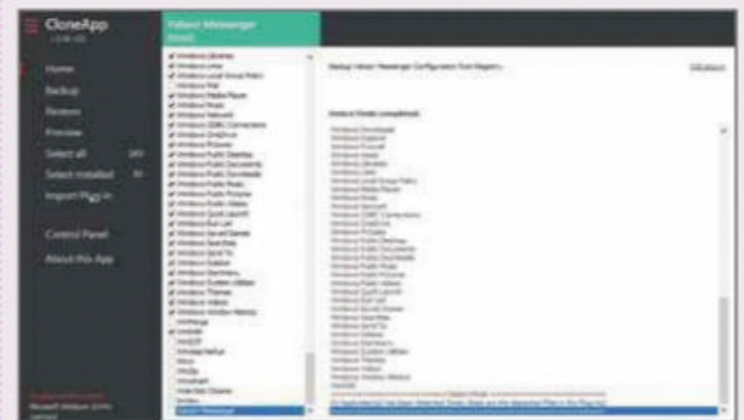
CloneApp

bit.ly/clone472

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10

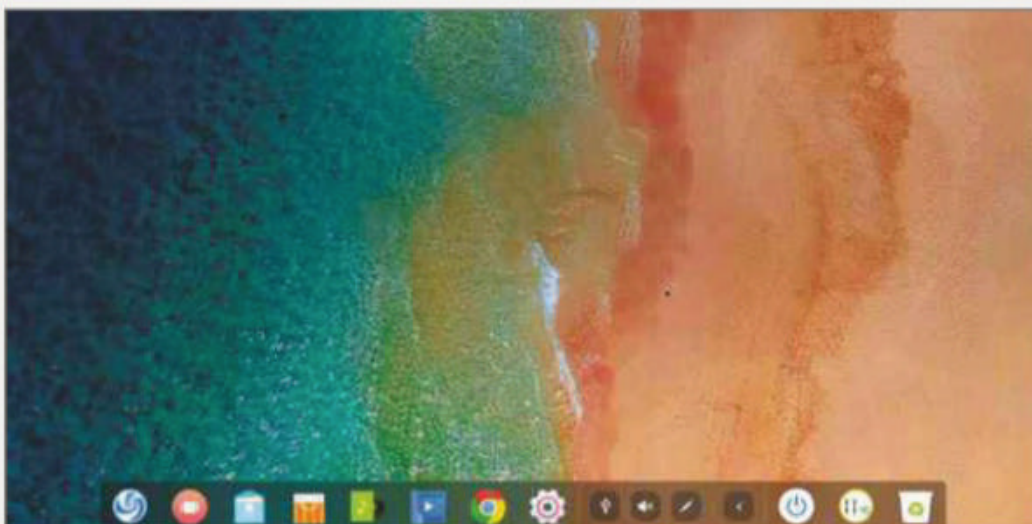
File size: 225KB

CloneApp is a portable free tool that lets you back up tweaks and settings for your favourite software, so it's easy to restore them on a new PC or a reformatted hard drive. This means you can perform a clean install without losing your preferences and saved data. It supports around 250 Windows programs, automatically detecting which ones you have installed. CloneApp also has a section for manual backups so you can include any programs it doesn't support. The latest version has a new interface with support for themes and improved performance.



OTHER OPERATING SYSTEMS

What's new for Linux and Mac OS



LINUX DISTRO

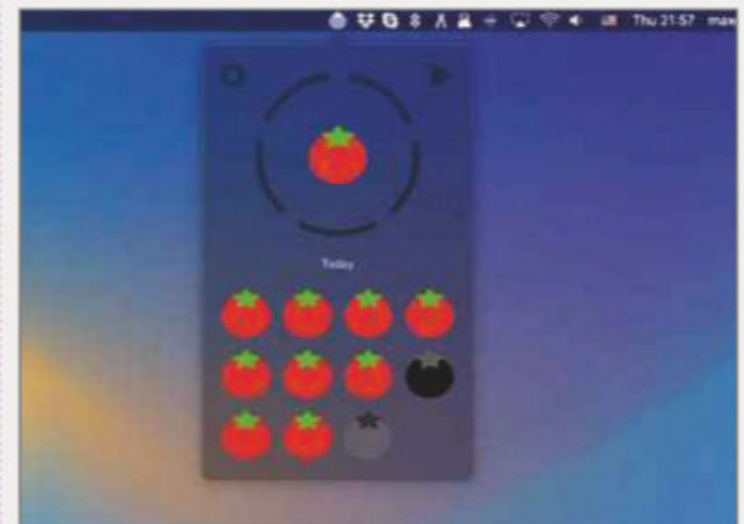
Deepin 15.9.2 beta

www.deepin.org

Min requirements: 2GB+ RAM, 10GB disk space

File size: 2.4GB

There are plenty of attractive-looking Linux distros around, but Deepin is one of the best we've seen. With this latest version, the open-source GNU/Linux operating system has switched to Debian stable as its base, which makes it more reliable. Numerous improvements have been made, including more timely responses to software security vulnerabilities, improved stability on system upgrades and better support for third-party applications.



PRODUCTIVITY APP

Pomo Timer

bit.ly/pomo472

Min requirements: macOS 10.13

File size: 12.7MB

The Pomodoro technique, first developed in the late 1980s, involves breaking down large tasks into smaller, timed parts. This Mac app adds a tomato timer ('pomodoro' is Italian for tomato) to the top of the toolbar, making it easy to keep on top of the task at hand and take regular sprints or breaks as required.

GET FREE SOFTWARE FIRST subscribe to Web User at subscribe.webuser.co.uk



Best New Browser Tools



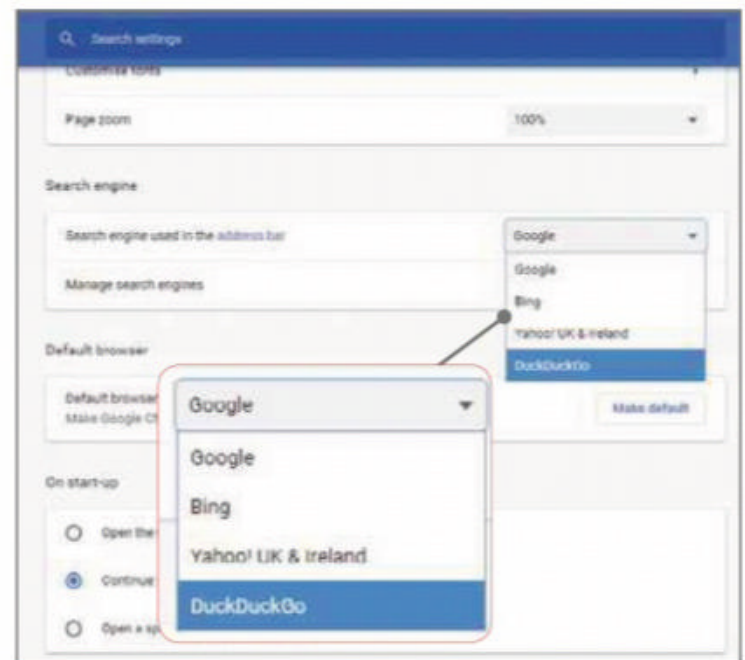
CHROME

Set DuckDuckGo as your default search engine

Google has finally added DuckDuckGo as a default search-engine option in the Chrome 73 update – not that you’d know it from the company’s communications, which have remained curiously low key about the move.

Secreted over on the Chromium GitHub page (bit.ly/chrome472), a note coyly suggests that “the default search engine list is being refreshed from recently collected data”. Or, to put it another way, people don’t like what data-guzzling Google is doing with their information, so they are choosing instead to search through sites such as DuckDuckGo, which won’t collect and sell their data to advertisers, making it a genuine private alternative to the web behemoth.

To make the switch, open the browser’s settings, scroll to ‘Search engine’ and use the drop-down menu to change the address-bar search engine, then click ‘Manage search engines’ to select DuckDuckGo as your default. Look out for a DuckDuckGo special in our next issue.

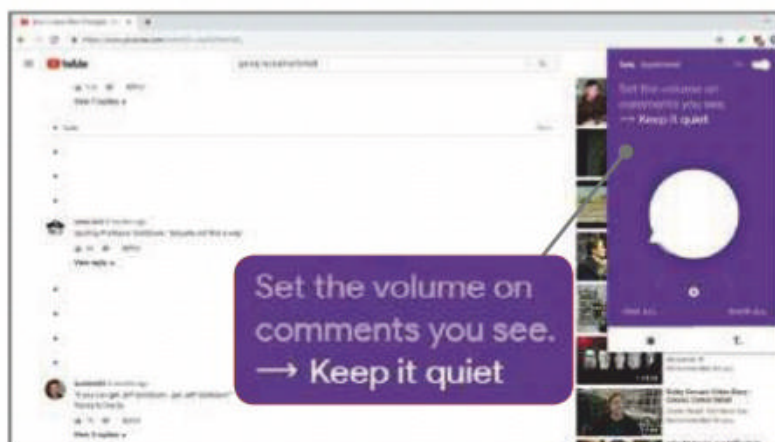


Mute toxic online comments for good

Dipping ‘below the line’ into the comment section under an article or video can make you feel like the internet has descended into one big slanging match (where no one wins).

Using machine learning, the experimental new extension Tune (bit.ly/tune472) “lets users customize how much toxicity they want to see in comments across the internet” by literally turning down the volume on sites such as YouTube, Reddit and Facebook, so you can control what you see online.

Log in with your Gmail account, then head over to any of the supported websites. A click of the icon lets you adjust the volume control, choosing between six settings from ‘keep it quiet’ to ‘keep it blaring’. Try twisting the knob while on a site to see ‘noisy’ obnoxious comments filter in and out of view.



Open and isolate untrusted websites

Microsoft’s new Application Guard Extension – available for Chrome and Firefox – offers a safe path to visiting untrusted websites by using an isolated, sandboxed Edge. Visit a potentially malicious site and the tool, running in the background, automatically switches from Chrome to a self-contained Edge browser, which lets you browse the site without risking your security.

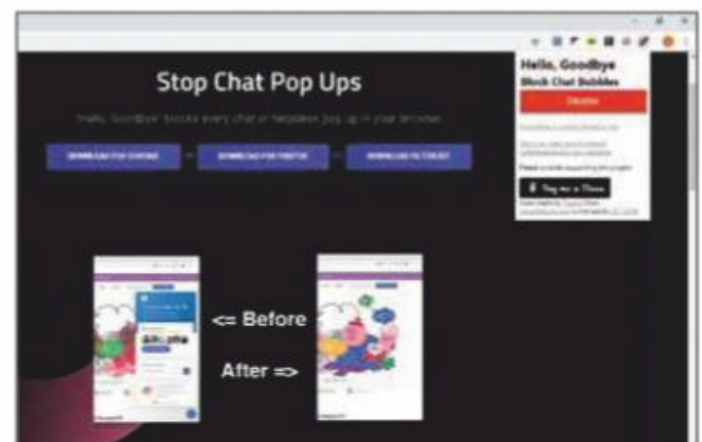
Once you’ve installed the extension from bit.ly/appguard472, you’ll also need to install Microsoft

Edge (if you haven’t already got it) and the accompanying tool, the Windows Defender Application Companion – without this, the extension blocks all web browsing in Chrome.

Shut down pesky online chat boxes

Which modern web-design trend do you hate most: sites asking to allow notifications, pop-ups begging for your email address or cheerless automated helpdesk chat-boxes? If you find the offer of a helpful chat pushy and disingenuous, it’s time to reach for Hello Goodbye (hellogoodbye.app) which is available for Chrome, Firefox, and as a filter list for content blockers.

This new extension automatically blocks chat pop-ups on most websites, although we found a few that slipped through to bother us with an empty “Hi there!”. If you do find the need to chat to a business, click the browser tool and press the red Disable button. Just remember to click again to enable Hello Goodbye or face a bombardment of “How can I help?” nags.



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



FIREFOX

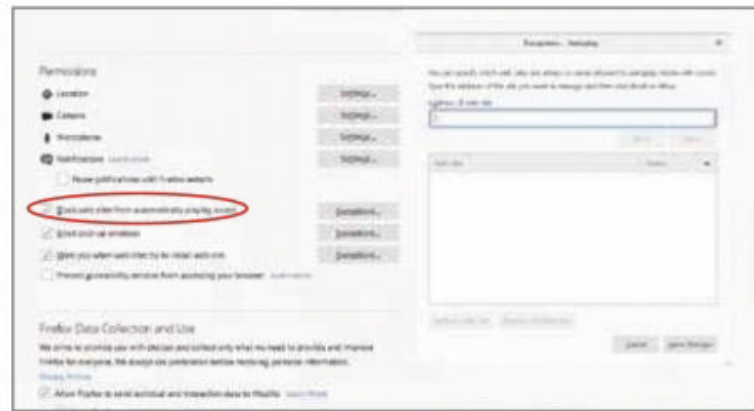
Firefox 66 makes the web less annoying

Mozilla has been busy busting bugbears to bring us better browsing with the new Firefox 66 update.

Autoplay on websites can finally be disabled or enabled by default: when you're on a site such as YouTube, click 'i' on the address bar, select Permissions, then check the

box 'Block websites from automatically playing sound'. Next to this is the Exceptions button, which allows specific sites to continue to autoplay.

Typing the percentage symbol % in the address bar, followed by your search term, now lets you search multiple open tabs at once, which means you can quickly jump to the correct web page. And the new scroll anchoring, which remembers your position on a page, helps combat that niggling moment when an advert or video loads and causes the page to jump so you lose your place.

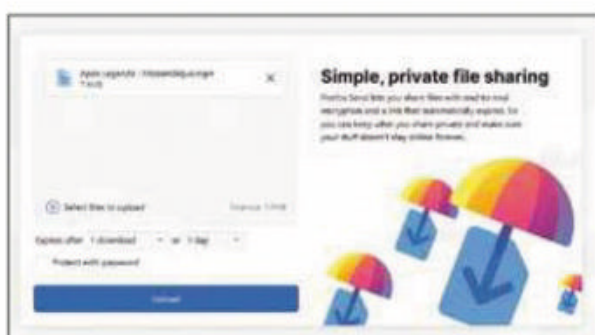


Transfer private files for free

Mozilla's former Test Pilot tool Firefox Send has exited the experimental beta phase. The company has always offered strong privacy and security protocols, and Firefox Send is no different, featuring end-to-end encryption and an 'expiration date', so linked content won't be floating around online forever.

At send.firefox.com, you can send multiple files of up to 1GB for free (or sign in to boost that to 2.5GB) just by dragging and dropping, or manually uploading files. Choose how long the items should be available – determined either by the number of downloads or days – and whether to protect files with a password to generate a link that can be emailed to your recipients.

We found the entire process to be fast and simple, making it the perfect way to send large files to anyone who doesn't have a cloud-storage account.

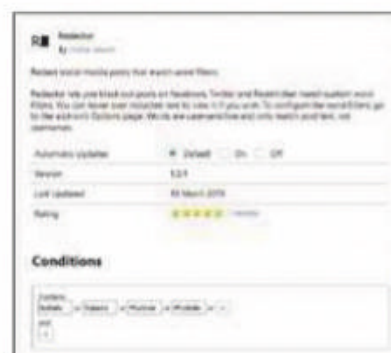


Black out the internet with Redactor

Sick of reading about Brexit? Or Fortnite? Or Facebook's latest scandal? Redactor (bit.ly/redact472) is a word-blocker for Facebook, Twitter and Reddit that covers offending words with a thick black line, like it's a matter of national security.

Go to Firefox's add-on settings and open Redactor's options, where you can create a list of conditions by typing variations of all the words you want to banish – remember when adding related words, that the tool is case sensitive. To check it's working, head over to one of the three supported social networks and see whether any of your blocked words appear.

Redactor also works on tweets that feature videos tagged with your conditions, although it doesn't block out the video itself – so you won't necessarily be able to avoid the results for the big game!

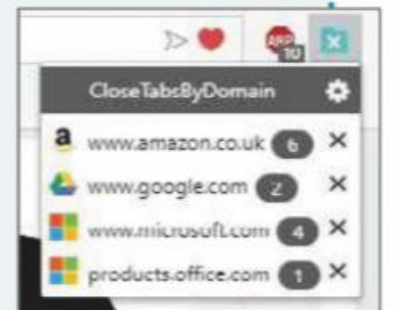


OTHER BROWSERS



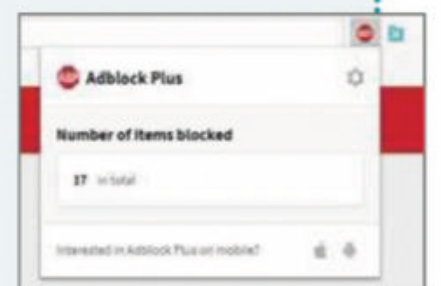
Close associated tabs at once

CloseTabsByDomain (bit.ly/close472) is a useful new tool for rapidly shutting multiple tabs that all contain pages from the same domain. We found it useful for closing tabs when comparing lots of products on Amazon or checking in with all our Google services. Press the icon to view a list of domain names and the number of associated tabs. Simply click the cross to immediately shut all tabs linked by a common domain – just be careful not to press it by accident because you get no warning or confirmation check before the tabs disappear.



Speed up your ad blocker five fold

The popular tool Adblock Plus (bit.ly/adopera472) has placed itself in pole position by announcing that its latest update makes it five times faster at recognising and blocking adverts than before. The company says that "every request to show ads will be analysed with that increased speed, which means that page loading will be even quicker and easier". Adblock Plus is also now optimised to use 60% less CPU, so, your computer won't waste processing power on blocking adverts while slowing everything else down. This update is available for Chrome (bit.ly/adchrome472), Firefox (bit.ly/ad472) and Edge (bit.ly/aded472).





Best Free Apps



App of the Fortnight

TOOLS

Calendar Notify

bit.ly/calendar472

4.1

UPDATED

Having all your upcoming appointments just a tap or two away via the calendar app in your pocket can be very useful indeed. But if you still find yourself missing appointments or forgetting important dates, then you need Calendar Notify installed as well.

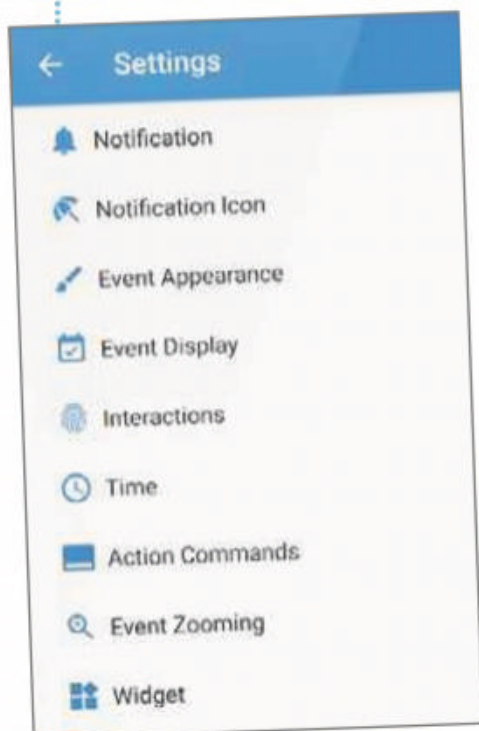
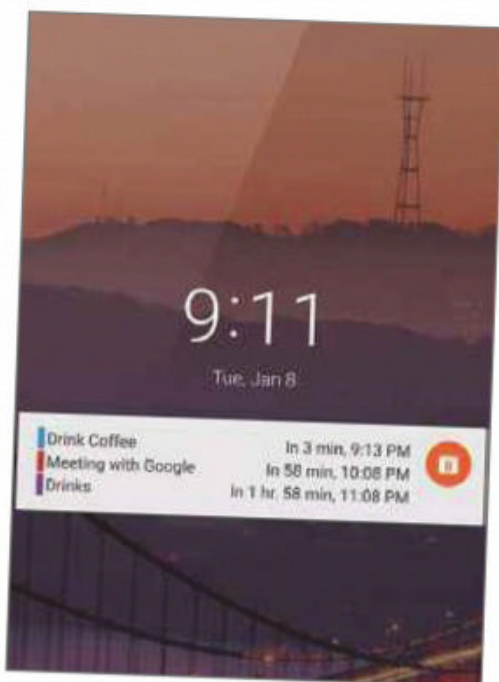
Calendar Notify isn't a replacement for your existing calendar – it's more of a companion app that works alongside Google Calendar (or any other calendar app that supports the Android system calendar) to remind you of imminent events. Basically, it creates notifications that display calendar items as an agenda on your lock screen and status bar. Better still, you can set it to display notifications in a customisable widget, so that all your impending events and appointments are clearly displayed whenever you look at your home screen. It's a simple idea, but one that soon becomes indispensable once you start using it.

Calendar Notify is very easy to configure and, once you've got the app set up the way you want it, you can more or less forget about it – just use your calendar app normally and your new notifications will show up automatically.

The latest version of Calendar Notify adds a range of new features and improvements, including a revamped backup and restore tool, new design customisation options and additional widget-sizing modes.

You can use the tool completely free of charge, but a one-off in-app payment of £3.39 unlocks a variety of useful premium features, including

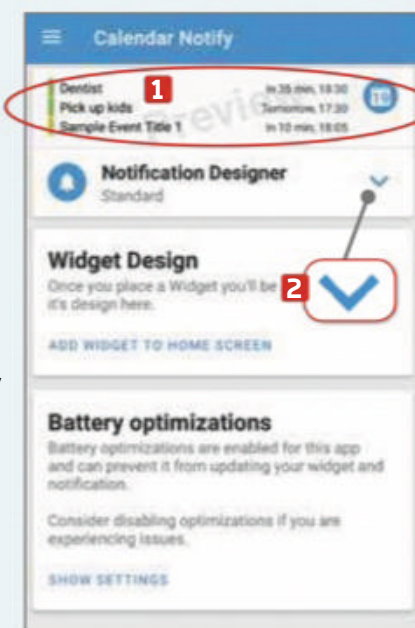
granular control over the design and layout of your notifications and widgets, as well as the ability to display an unlimited number of events.



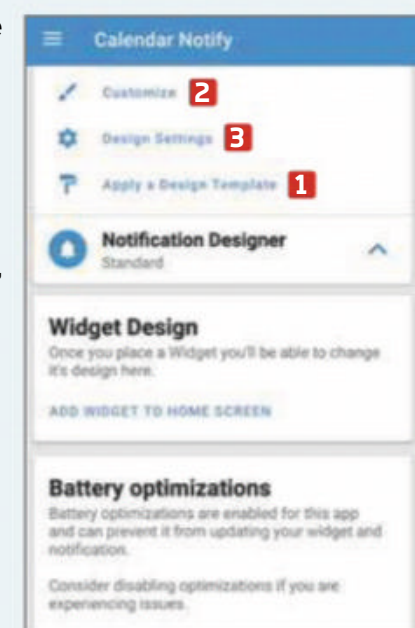
MINI WORKSHOP

Set up and customise Calendar Notify

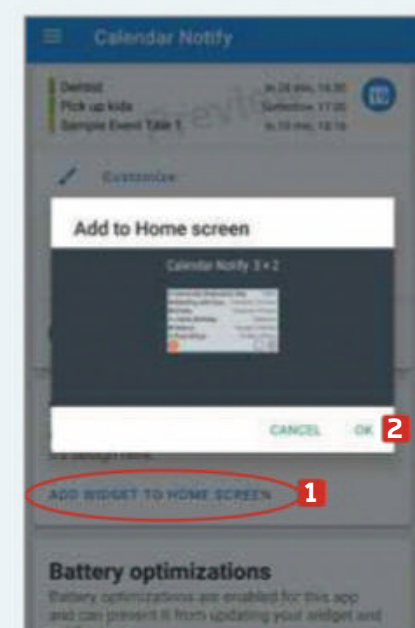
1 Launch Calendar Notify and work your way through the initial welcome screens, allowing it permission to access your calendar when prompted (otherwise the app won't work). You should see your upcoming calendar events already listed in the preview area at the top of the screen. **1** The standard notification design is used by default – to customise this, tap the down arrow underneath the preview. **2**



2 To make a quick change to the look of your notifications, tap 'Apply a Design Template' **1** for a list of preset options: Compact, Standard and Large Custom. Alternatively, tap Customize **2** to choose display options (such as whether or not you wish to view the event location) and general layout settings, such as background colour. Tap Design Settings **3** for further customisation options.



3 To display calendar events as a widget, tap Add Widget To Home Screen, **1** then OK. **2** You'll see a new Widget Designer option – press the down arrow next to this, then tap 'Apply a Design Theme' to choose from a selection of pre-built widget designs, or tap Customize to manually configure the widget's display and design settings. Long-pressing the widget itself will let you drag it to a new position.





Our rating



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

EDUCATION

Novel Effect

bit.ly/noveldroid472
bit.ly/novelios472
 5  10

Bring children's books to life with this very clever app, which adds a whole new dimension to storytime. Essentially, as you read a book aloud, the app listens along, playing music and sound effects at just the right moment, for added and amusing effect. You'll need to own a physical copy of the book (or an ebook), and can then match it with a story in the Novel Effect library for it to work. The app currently offers a library of more than 200 compatible books, with new titles added weekly.





Our rating



NEW

GAME

Snow Drift

bit.ly/snowdroid472
bit.ly/snowios472
 4.1  9

Who hasn't wanted to drift and donut their way around race tracks and other roads, clearing snow by driving through it? The drifting mechanic in this new game takes a little getting used to, but once you've got the hang of it, banishing all the snow from the tracks quickly becomes a compulsion. If we have one criticism of Snow Drift, it's that there are too many adverts (particularly full screen ones) in the free version of Snow Drift – but paying a one-off fee of £2 gets rid of them.



Our rating



NEW

SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter

bit.ly/twitterdroid472
bit.ly/twitterios472
 (varies)  10

This significant update to the official Twitter app for Android and iOS vastly improves camera and photo integration. Now, your camera is only ever a quick swipe or tap away. You can either swipe left from your timeline to get straight to the camera or, alternatively, tap the camera icon that now appears in the compose screen to share photos and videos (tap Capture) or live stream directly to your followers (tap Live). Once you've taken a shot, you can add your location, text and other details.





Our rating



UPDATED

CAREERS

Impleyable

bit.ly/impleydroid472
bit.ly/impleyios472
 4.4  10

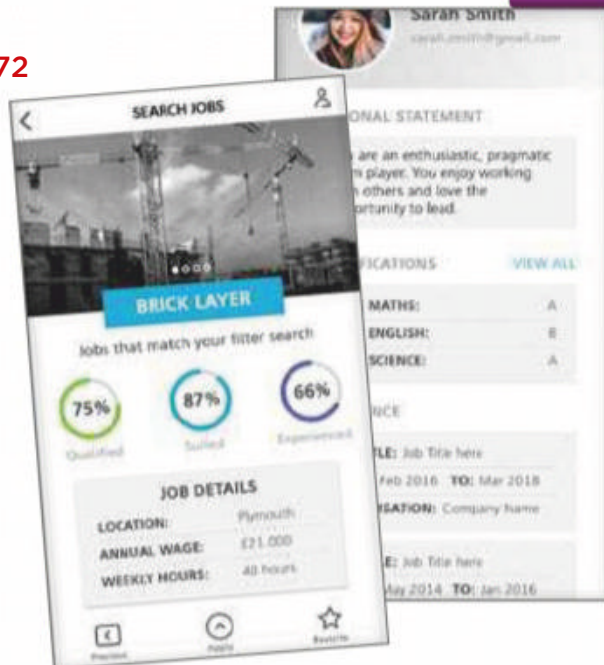
If you find LinkedIn a bit serious and unwieldy, then you might be interested in this new employment app. Created by two former Royal Marines, Impleyable aims to simplify the process of connecting the right people to the right jobs. Anyone can register and create a digital CV, then search, track and apply for suitable positions. The app will quickly tell you whether you're qualified for the job or if you're missing some vital experience. It's a great idea, but its success will ultimately rely on how many employers use it to post vacancies, and the number of job seekers that sign up.



Our rating




?



BROWSER

OH Web Browser

bit.ly/ohbrowser472
 5

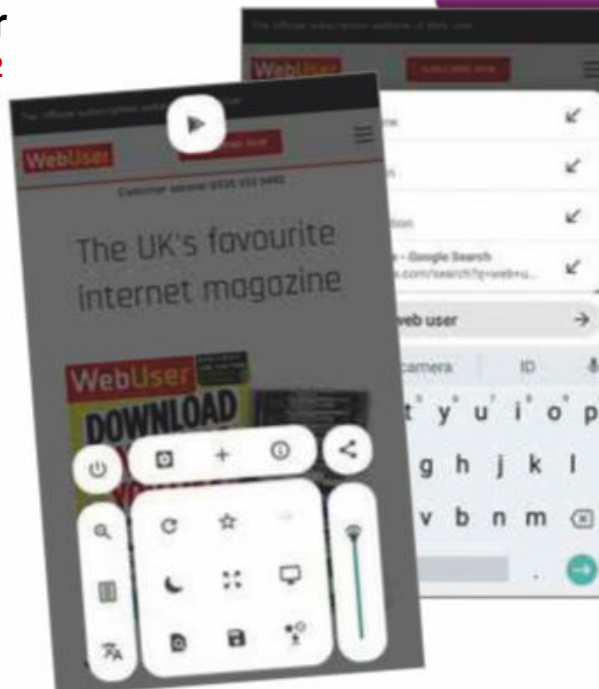
If you like to use your device one-handed, then this web browser is designed for you. The entire UI is geared around single-handed use, with thumb-friendly controls at the bottom and intuitive gestures. OH Web Browser doesn't ask for unnecessary permissions and comes with a lot of features – including a built-in ad blocker – though it's worth noting that some are reserved for paying customers. You get the whole package free for the first seven days, after which you can continue using the browser without its premium features or pay a one-off charge of £1.29 to unlock them again.



Our rating



UPDATED



5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

MUSIC

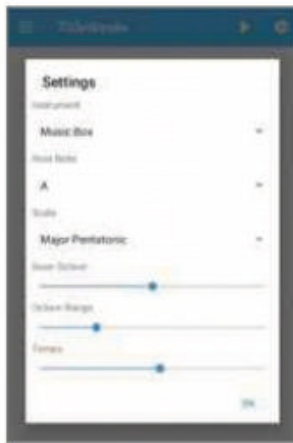
Title Waves

bit.ly/titlewaves472

Price: £2.79



This ingenious app lets you convert words into music. You can even set your own name as a ringtone, and there's a free demo available if you want to try before you buy.



WEATHER

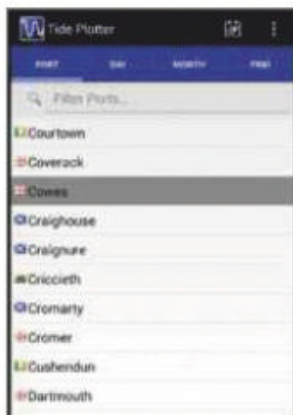
Tide Plotter 2019

bit.ly/tide472

Price: £7.99



This app doesn't require an internet connection, so you can carry all the tidal information you'll ever need in your pocket and refer to it wherever you might be – even on the high seas!



GAME

Stardew Valley

bit.ly/stardewdroid472

bit.ly/stardewios472

Price: £7.99



Frustrated farmers everywhere can now



build and maintain their own virtual farm with this massively popular agricultural role-playing game that's finally available on Android.

TOOLS

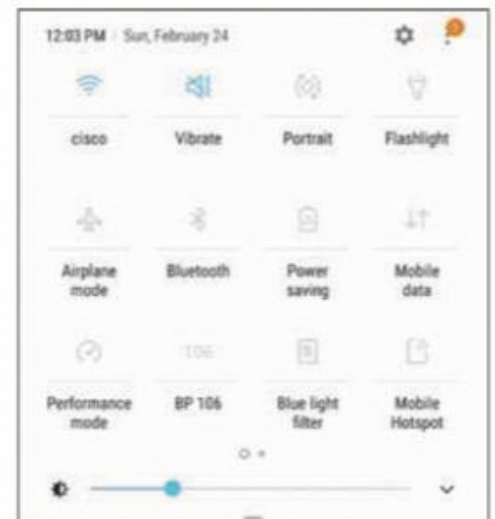
Brightness Patch

bit.ly/brightness472

Price: 99p



Easily set your device's brightness to a specific level using this tool, which provides a numeric value. You can add Brightness Patch to the Quick Settings menu on your Android device.



VIDEO

1984 Cam

bit.ly/1984cam472

Price: 89p



Not an Orwellian surveillance camera, as the name might suggest, 1984 Cam is in fact a retro camcorder app that adds authentic VHS-style glitches and effects to your footage.



Title Waves



Tide Plotter 2019



Stardew Valley



Brightness Patch



1984 Cam



Don't install...

WIFI Analyzer

bit.ly/analyzer472

We're not saying that every app you install on your device has to look beautiful, but it helps if they don't look like WIFI Analyzer, which appears to have been beaten severely with the digital equivalent of the ugly stick. The harsh colours don't help, and neither do the copious adverts. Still, at least we got it to work – according to the app's reviews, other users haven't been so lucky.



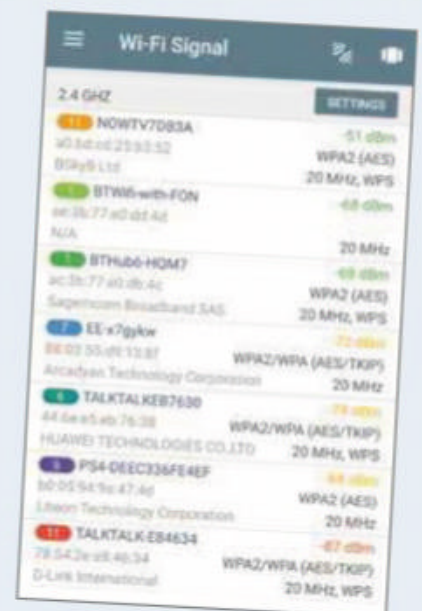
...Install this instead

Network Analyzer

bit.ly/network472



As well as looking much more presentable, Network Analyzer offers a decent selection of tools for anyone needing to diagnose network problems, such as overcrowded channels or suspicious activity. Tap Menu, then Information for details about your current network; or select Wi-Fi Signal to see wireless networks within range, along with their channel and signal strength – you can view this data as a list or as a graph. Tap Menu, then select LAN Scan to scan for all the devices currently connected to your network. See something you don't recognise? If so, it might be time to change your Wi-Fi password! ■





Take a Screen Break

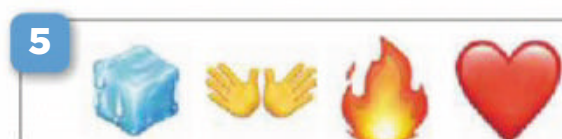
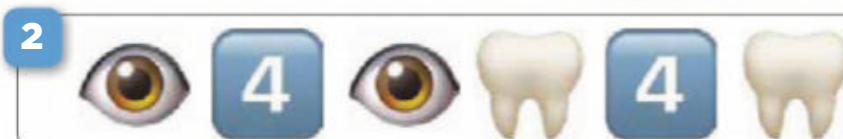
Give your eyes a rest from your browser by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you guess our proverb emoji and our Wikipedia article?

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

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



CAN YOU GUESS THE PROVERBS FROM THE EMOJI?



GUESS THE WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE

NEW!

Can you work out which technology-related Wikipedia entry the following clues refer to?



WIKIPEDIA

1 "After leaving CERN in late 1980, he went to work at John Poole's Image Computer Systems. He ran the company's technical side for three years."

2 "He wrote his proposal in March 1989 and, in 1990, redistributed it. It was then accepted by his manager, who called his proposal 'vague, but exciting'."



4 "As a child, he learned about electronics from tinkering with a model railway. While he was at college, he made a computer out of an old television set."

5 "He has received many awards and honours. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2004, and in June 2007 he was appointed to the Order of Merit."

Credit: Robert Scoble

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 4 Kitvision Observer 720p Dash Cams

Once installed, the Observer Dash Cam begins recording when the car starts. It records over unneeded footage unless a collision occurs, so you'll never waste space on your memory card.

To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'observer' in the subject line. For more information on Kitvision products, visit www.kitvision.co.uk and follow [@KitvisionUK](https://twitter.com/KitvisionUK) on Twitter.



**WORTH
£49.99
EACH**

WIN 1 OF 4 Blink XT One security cameras

When the Blink XT detects motion, it sends an HD video with audio to your phone. Its infrared night vision gives you 24-hour surveillance of your home. It beat the BT Smart Home Cam in our head-to-head review in Issue 470. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'blink' in the subject line. For more information visit <https://blinkforhome.co.uk> and follow [@blinkforhomeuk](https://twitter.com/blinkforhomeuk) on Twitter.



**WORTH
£149.99
EACH**



FAQ

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

Our guide to FIDO2

Is it time to ditch passwords for a faster and more secure way to log into websites? **David Crookes** examines the latest alternative

What is FIDO2?

FIDO2, which stands for Fast Identity Online 2, is a set of security specifications designed to make website passwords obsolete. Building on the FIDO standard already used by many apps, it seeks to replace online passwords with a seamless login method that uses common hardware devices to authenticate users across different services. This makes web logins less vulnerable to security breaches, which is why, after years of effort, FIDO is now being backed by some of the biggest names in tech.

How does it work?

You may have already seen the FIDO process in action when logging into certain mobile apps, such as PayPal. Rather than enter a password – perhaps to buy an item from an online retailer – you may have been asked to use your face or

Some mobile apps let you log in using a fingerprint rather than a password

your fingerprint to quickly log in. FIDO2 extends this use of cryptography-based authentication to websites.

What is involved?

FIDO2 uses two components: a JavaScript API called WebAuthn (created by the World Wide Web Consortium) and a Client to Authenticator Protocol (or CTAP for short). The former integrates FIDO authentication with web browsers, while the latter allows for the use of an external authenticator, such as a dongle that uses Bluetooth, NFC or USB to communicate with a computer or a mobile phone with a fingerprint sensor or face identification.

How does FIDO2 actually work?

Let's say you're using an app or website that offers FIDO2 sign-in. A private cryptographic key is generated and



stored on your device, allowing it to be unlocked locally, perhaps using a PIN or a fingerprint. Meanwhile, a public cryptographic key – registered with your user account – is generated and stored in the cloud by the app or site.

When you want to access a service, the biometric or numerical information you enter on your device is verified by checking it against data stored locally. Random data sent by the service to your device is then signed by the private key and returned before being verified against the public key. At that point, you'll be granted access – or denied it if, for example, you used the wrong finger.

Why is this more secure?

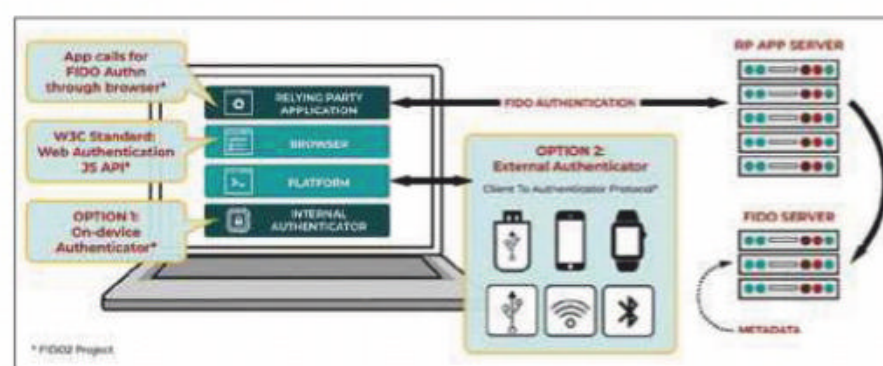
Passwords are effectively shared secrets: you tell a website or an app the password you want to use and it then knows (and

stores) the string of letters, numbers and symbols you've chosen. This makes your logins vulnerable because hackers could access the server where your data is saved or intercept the password as it's sent across a network for verification.

With FIDO2, the authentication process happens solely on your device. Your fingerprint, PIN, face ID or security key details are not stored on a remote server or sent over a network. Indeed, a server will only contain a list of public keys, which can't be used to log into your account, and the information sent over the network is merely a signed, single-use verified key.

But what if someone steals my login details?

Again, FIDO2 protects against phishing attacks because, as we've said, crucial data involved in the login process – such as biometric information – is



FIDO2 sounds complicated but all the hard work is done in the background

stored locally or on a separate device (a physical key may be plugged into a USB port or tapped against a mobile phone via NFC). What's more, FIDO2 won't let you log into an unsafe web domain or any sites that have dodgy-looking URLs, and it protects against man-in-the-middle attacks that use stolen credentials.

Does this mean I'll never need a password again?

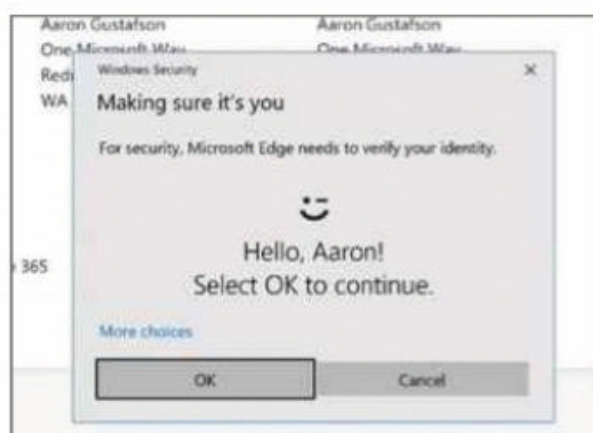
Well, if FIDO2 becomes ubiquitous, then it's entirely feasible that we'll one day laugh at having once spent so much time and effort remembering and entering passwords. However, some services may still require you to provide a password after using FIDO2 for added two-factor security.

Does FIDO2 have much support from tech companies?

Yes. Many big names in technology now allow users to sign in securely using a FIDO2-compatible device. Microsoft, for example, lets you access Outlook, Office, OneDrive, Bing, Skype and Xbox Live without needing a password. Your face or fingerprint can also form part of your login using Windows Hello, Microsoft's biometric security system (bit.ly/hello472). Other companies using FIDO include Google, Facebook, Dropbox (see boxout, below), eBay and GitHub.

But what's the incentive for companies to use FIDO2?

Quite aside from being able to offer customers a higher level of security, thereby building greater trust, FIDO2 removes friction. People are more likely to log into a site if it's as easy as placing a thumb on a scanner or looking into a camera, and it could result in an increase in profits or encourage customers to stick



Microsoft now lets you log into many of its services using a FIDO2 device

with a service for the sake of convenience. In that sense, FIDO2 is perfect, which is why Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Intel and Facebook are part of the Fido Alliance (fidoalliance.org) that's developing and promoting the technology. Together with the World Wide Web Consortium, the Alliance announced FIDO2 as an official web standard on 4 March.

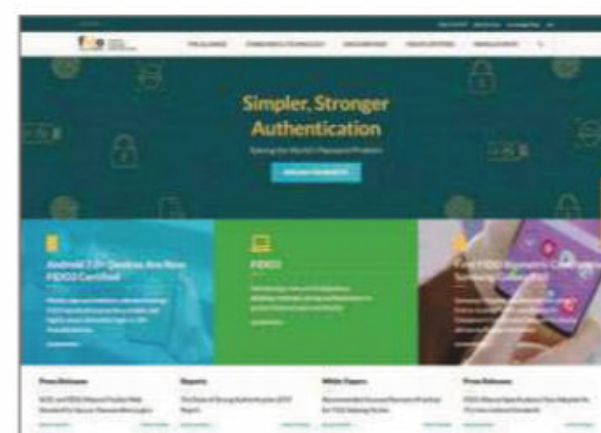
Which browsers are compatible?

All the major browsers have adopted FIDO2 and the WebAuthn standard, including Firefox, Chrome and Edge; and Apple has been testing WebAuthn with Safari, making it available in preview versions. However, web developers will need to add non-password authentication to their sign-in pages before you can use the function on their sites.

Are mobile systems supporting FIDO2?

Yes. Android added certified support for FIDO2 in February. It had already offered FIDO logins as an option in apps but, by extending support to mobile browsers, it has opened non-password access to far greater numbers of digital services.

As always, things are not entirely



Lots of well-known technology companies are now part of the Fido Alliance

straightforward: to benefit from this

move, you need a device running Android 7 or later. But assuming you do (and that accounts for a billion devices), then you're ready to go. Even if your phone or tablet doesn't have a fingerprint or facial scanner, you'll be able to authenticate a login using your device's PIN or through hardware-based security keys such as Titans or those from Yubico.

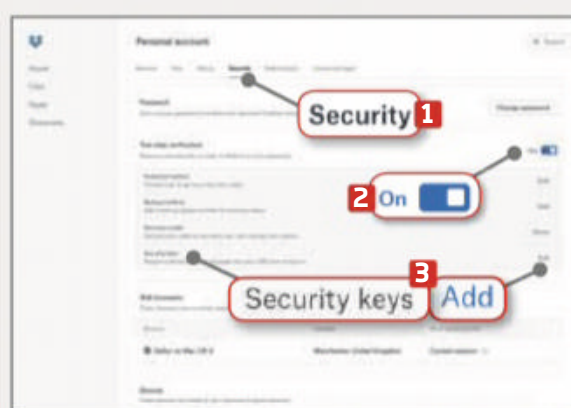


Yubico keys offer an easy and secure way to log into mobile devices

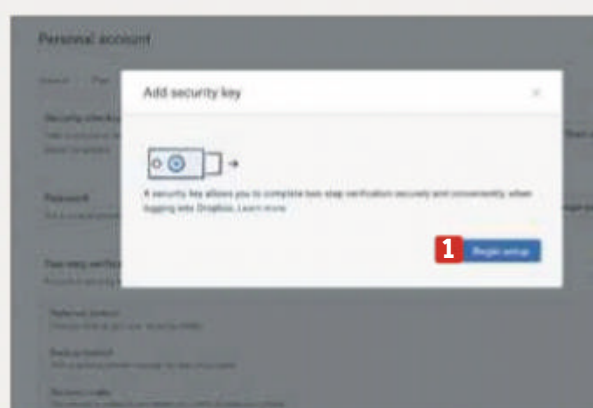
Do I need to download FIDO2 for Android?

No. An automatic Google Play Services update should bring FIDO2 to your compatible devices and this will help enormously in making the feature widely available. You can check to see if the update has been installed on your device by going to the Services page on the Google Play Store (bit.ly/play472) – if it says a new version is available, then update the app manually.

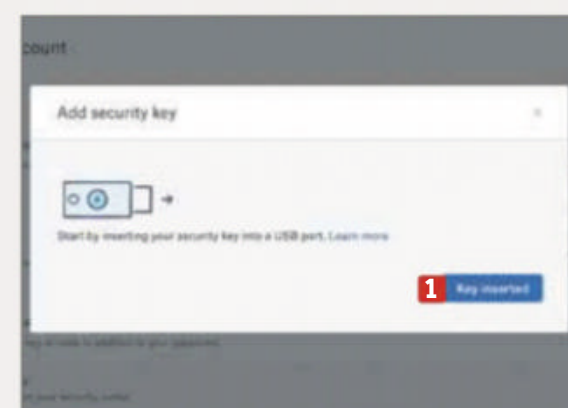
HOW DO I SET UP FIDO2 SECURITY?



1 Here, we are using FIDO2 to log into Dropbox. Click your profile image, select Settings and click the Security tab. **1** Turn on 'Two-step verification' **2** and select Add next to Security Keys. **3**



2 You will need a security key – that is, a small USB, Bluetooth or NFC device that is compatible with FIDO2. If you have one of these devices, click Begin Setup **1** and enter your Dropbox password.



3 You'll be prompted to insert your key in a USB port and asked to complete the setup process by clicking 'Key inserted'. **1** Dropbox only lets you use a security key if you're signing in through Chrome or Firefox.

ACCESS BLOCKED WEBSITES

COVER
FEATURE

ISPs are now restricting our access to certain sites. **Wayne Williams** explains why and reveals how to bypass these restrictions, while still protecting your children from inappropriate content

This month sees the introduction of controversial age-verification measures for websites that contain adult content. The new system is part of the Digital Economy Bill 2017 (bit.ly/digital472) and will be regulated by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), which can now order ISPs to block sites that don't verify their users' ages, as well as those that feature "non-conventional sex acts".

But while the new rules are designed to protect young users from unsuitable content, they've also been criticised

as a form of state censorship and a threat to online privacy. Do you really want adult sites knowing who you are and storing your personal data? UK ISPs are already obliged to enforce parental controls on their users – even if you don't have children – so age checks can be seen as yet another example of government 'nannying'.

In this feature, we explain how responsible grown-ups can bypass unreasonable blocks to access the web content they want without being made to feel like criminals (or perverts!).

Your ISP-Blocking Questions Answered

What is the new age-verification legislation?

In late 2017, the British government announced that it would be introducing compulsory age-identification checks on websites to prevent web users aged under 18 from accessing adult content online. Any applicable site that fails to comply with the new rules could face a fine of up to £250,000 or be blocked by UK ISPs.

What does it mean for web users?

Users who want to access websites containing commercial adult content will need to prove they are over 18 before they are allowed in. The exact steps this involves will depend on the sites they visit (the government has left the actual implementation to the sites themselves).

MindGeek, which owns popular sites including Pornhub, YouPorn, RedTube and Brazzers, has introduced its own secure online age-verification tool called AgeID (www.ageid.com). Launched in 2015 to provide a secure system for adult websites in Germany, AgeID uses third-party verification services to permit or decline access to a website based on a user's age.

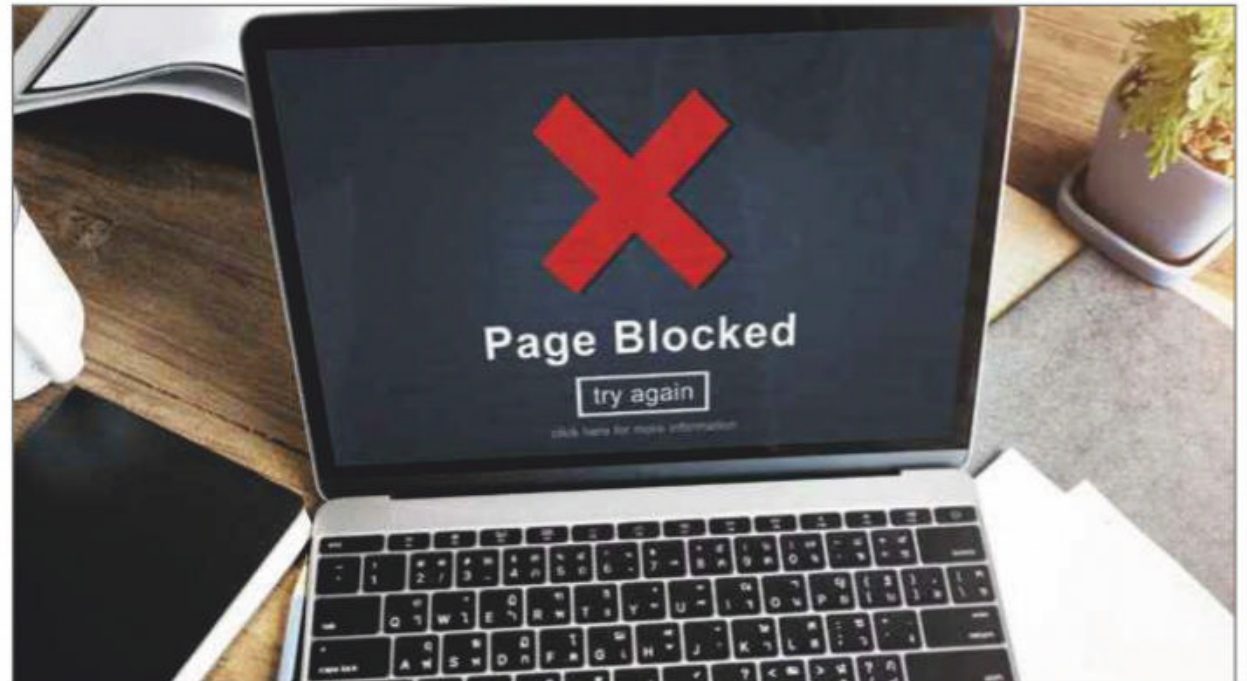
There are other solutions, too, including a card that links to an app and allows you to access sites without needing to enter a valid email address.

What does it mean for websites?

Any website that offers adult content as part of its business model will need to comply with the new rules. This needn't be too much hassle because AgeID (mentioned above) is being offered free of charge to all independent UK studios, producers and bloggers. Providers based outside the UK will pay a non-variable flat fee based on an estimate of their UK-only traffic. Sites can't simply take a user's word to comply, they must cross-check the information with documentation. Nor can they try to pass the buck by using a disclaimer stating "anyone using this site will be deemed to be over 18".

What privacy concerns does this raise?

At the moment, it's easy for anyone to access adult content anonymously, but this new law will stop that – in theory, anyway. People may need to supply



their real names, email addresses and credit-card details before they can access the content.

Although adult sites are likely to use third-party services to verify a person's age – so you're not supplying that information directly to the sites themselves – this law essentially means creating a large database of people who watch pornography, and no matter how securely that data is safeguarded, there's a very real chance that at some point the database will be breached. Verification systems will be a prime (and potentially lucrative) target, as extramarital site Ashley Madison was when it got hacked back in 2015.



What negative consequences might arise?

This plan relies on the BBFC, a non-governmental organisation originally set up to rate movies, to regulate the system and assess whether a site should, and is, complying with the new law. The BBFC won't be working to stop under-18s from accessing adult content,

but rather making sure that sites are offering proper age verification.

Critics claim that this will lead to a lot of porn being forced underground, with pirate sites that don't care about the law springing up to feed the need for anonymous adult content, and probably serving up a healthy dose of malware at the same time.

What does it mean for the future of the web?

While many parents and guardians will understandably welcome the strict new law, there are legitimate fears that this is the thin end of the wedge. British adults will no longer be able to access content that's readily viewable by the rest of the world, and there is a danger that this approach could be extended to other areas of the web, such as social networks, which currently have voluntary age limits.

The UK government has already said it believes Facebook needs regulation (bit.ly/fbook472), and the widespread sharing of the Christchurch shooter's video on the social network hasn't helped Facebook's cause. Once a law has been introduced to prevent easy access to one area of the web, and the technology to enforce it is made widely available, it's a fairly sure bet that the government will set its sights on other sectors of the internet that it believes need policing, such as websites and forums that are deemed to promote self-harm, suicide and anorexia.

How To Access Blocked Websites

The UK already blocks a huge number of sites for copyright and trademark infringement, including The Pirate Bay and Kickass Torrents (Wikipedia has the full, regularly updated list at bit.ly/wiki472). If you add those websites offering adult content to the mix, then

that's a lot of sites that people in the UK won't be able to access. However, there are numerous ways around these blocks – some of them definitely work, while others are partially successful, but only when applied to specific websites.

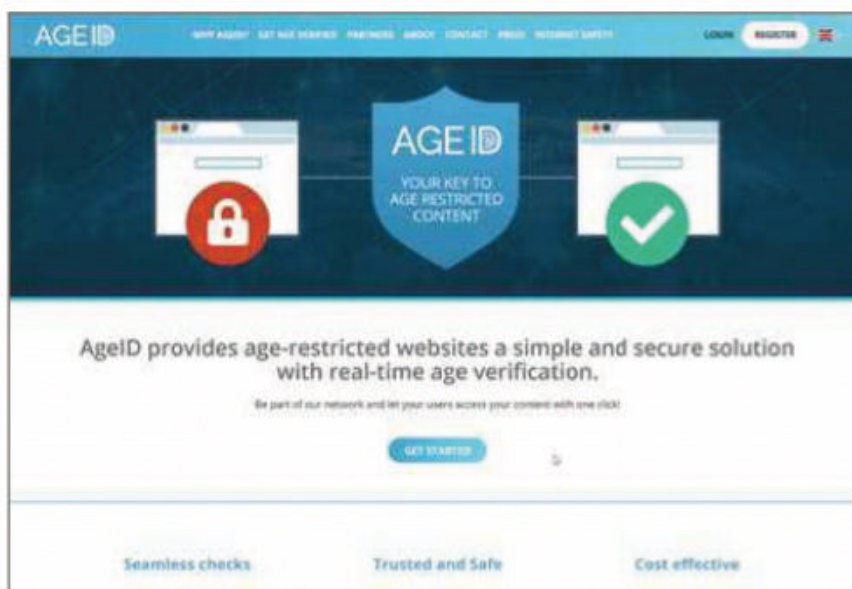
Sign up for the AgeID one-click system

If you want to access sites that offer adult content once the age restriction comes into place, then signing up for AgeID (www.ageid.com) is likely to be the easiest solution. You will need to verify your ID with personal documents but once you've done so, you'll be able to access multiple sites using the same login.

The way it works is simple. When you first try to visit a site protected by AgeID, you will be asked to create an account by entering your email address and choosing a password. AgeID is free to the consumer, but sites that use the system have to pay a flat-rate fee, depending on how popular they are. You will then need to verify your age using a credit card, passport or driver's licence. Once you've passed the check, you can use your account to sign into other AgeID-protected sites with a single click.

Buy a PortesCard from a shop

Another way to access blocked adult sites is to buy a PortesCard. This is a special voucher that you'll be able to



Sign up for an AgeID account to skip the age-verification check on websites

purchase from a shop for £5 and then link to the Portes app (portes.is) within 24 hours. The app is designed to let you prove your “status” rather than your identity (status, in this example, being aged over 18).

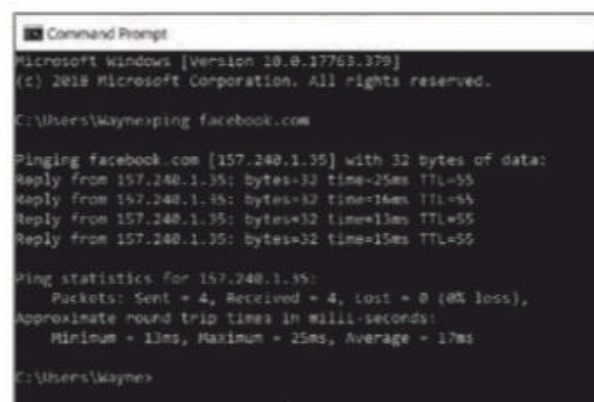
This option has the advantage of not requiring an account, username or password, so you're not handing over your personal data. You just need to show proof of age to the person you buy the PortesCard from.

Going into a shop to buy a voucher so you can access online adult content may bring back memories of pre-internet days when embarrassed teenagers buying ‘dirty mags’ were sent on their way with a flea in their ear by the local newsagent, but a PortesCard can also be used for other age-restricted activities, such as buying alcohol, so it's not quite the same.

Like all age-verification methods, Portes may not be accepted at all adult sites, so that's something to bear in mind. It's also primarily designed for people who want to access restricted sites on their mobile devices.



Use a PortesCard to access age-restricted sites without sharing your personal data



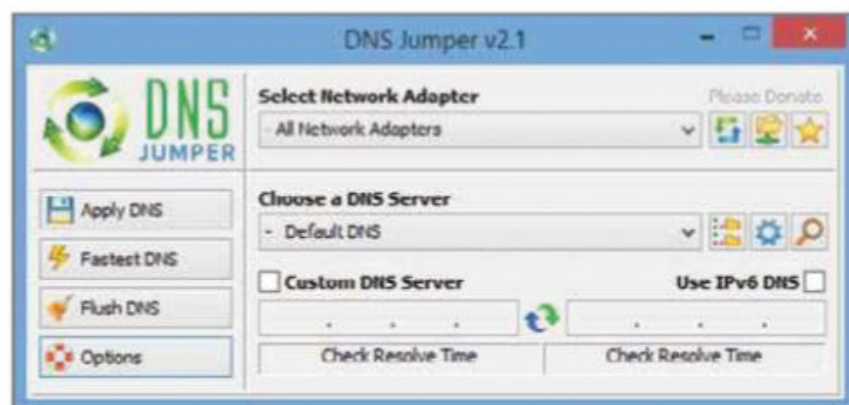
Try using a blocked site's IP address rather than typing the URL

Use the site's IP address rather than URL

If you can't access a website by typing in its name, try using its IP address instead. You can usually find out the required IP address by typing [site name] IP address into Google (replace [site name] with the actual name of the site you require). Or you could type cmd into the Windows search box, press Enter and then type ping [domainname] (replacing [domainname] with the actual domain name). Admittedly, if a site URL is blocked, its IP address(es) will probably be, too – but it's worth a try.

Change your default DNS server

DNS (Domain Name System) is the service used to translate site names into IP addresses that web servers and internet routers can understand. When you type a website name into your browser, your ISP's DNS server looks up the IP address that's linked to it, allowing the right site to be loaded.

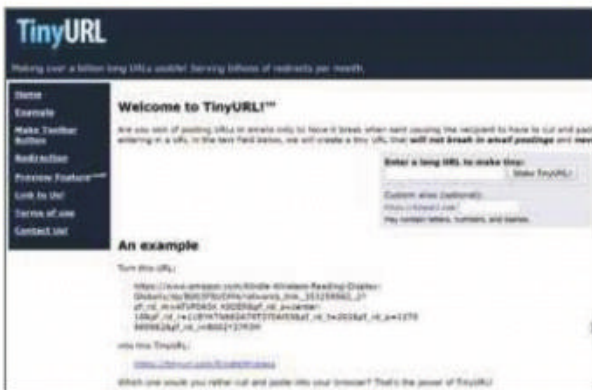


DNS Jumper lets you change your DNS server from the one used by your ISP

Some routers let you change the DNS they use, but many don't. You can get around this restriction to access sites that are blocked by your internet provider by changing the DNS server on your PC – either manually or by using a free program such as DNS Jumper (bit.ly/jumper472).

Try the shortened-URL trick

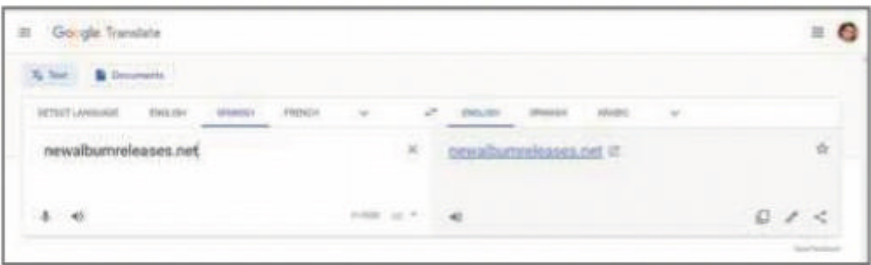
Another trick is to shrink down a blocked site's URL using a redirection service such as Bitly (bit.ly) or TinyURL (tinyurl.com), then paste the short link into your browser's address bar. If the trick works, the site will open, if it doesn't – well, it only takes a few seconds to try so it's worth a go.



Shortening a web address may help you bypass your ISP's block

Use Google Translate

A really old trick for defeating site blocks, which surprisingly still works very well, is to go through Google Translate (translate.google.com). Type in the web address you're trying to

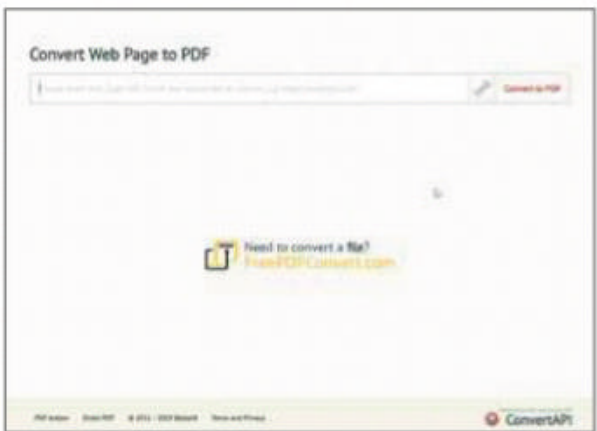


Translating a page to another language can beat content restrictions

reach, and change the language to something other than English – Spanish or French, for example. Select English as the translation language on the right (if it isn't already) and click the link to load the site. You probably won't be able to view every page on a blocked website, and responsive pages and video-streaming sites don't display well, but for single pages it's a great solution.

Convert a page to PDF

This trick won't work on video or music-sharing sites, or indeed any sites with elements you need to interact with,



Converting a blocked web page to PDF format can unlock its content

but if you want to just read the content of a blocked site, you can use Web2PDF (www.web2pdfconvert.com) to turn a page into a PDF. Just enter

the page address into the search box and wait.

Use HTTPS instead of HTTP

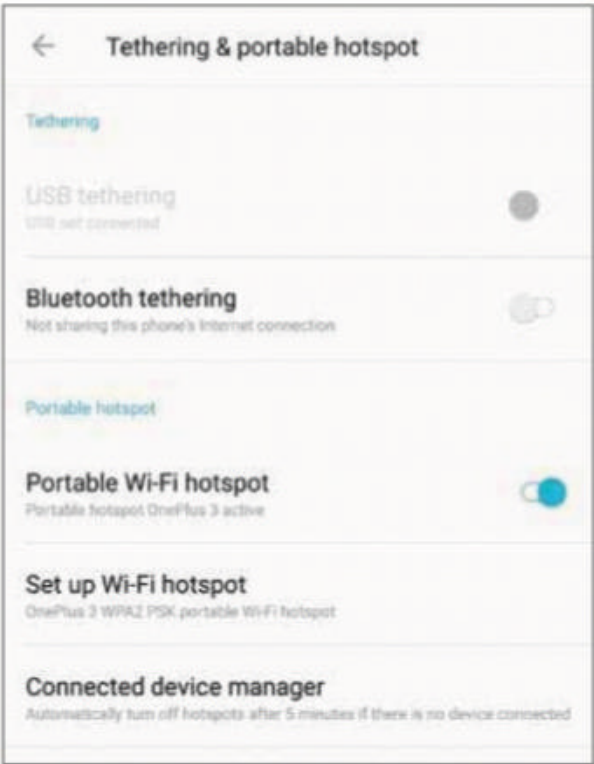
When UK access to The Pirate Bay was blocked by the courts in 2015, it seemed as if BitTorrent users would have to go elsewhere for their download fix, but then it was discovered ISPs were only blocking the HTTP version of the site, and the HTTPS version loaded just fine. These days HTTPS is used by most websites, but this trick still works sometimes. Just swap HTTP at the top for HTTPS and see what happens.

Use your mobile broadband connection

If your ISP is blocking a certain site, you may be able to view it using your phone's mobile network. You can turn your device into a personal hotspot, then connect to it using your PC. To do this on Android, open Settings and under Wireless & Networks, tap More. Open 'Tethering & portable hotspot' and enable 'Portable Wi-Fi Hotspot', then 'Set up Wi-Fi Hotspot' and note the password.

In iOS, open Settings, tap Personal Hotspot and enable the feature there. Once the hotspot (on Android or iOS) is active, just connect to it on your PC as you would to any network.

It's worth pointing out that accessing the internet in this way can be slow, and it will also eat into any data allowance you have – so be warned!



Try turning your phone into a Wi-Fi hotspot to access blocked content

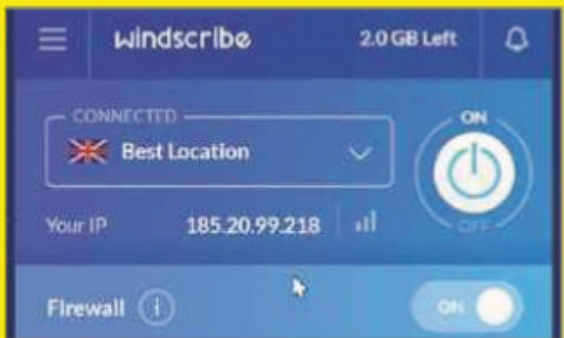
Access blocked sites using a VPN

As the age-verification rules and court-ordered ISP site-blocking only affect web users in the UK, the simple solution is to use a VPN to make it appear as if you're somewhere else in the world. Services that don't want traffic from outside their local market, for copyright reasons (such as Netflix and iPlayer), detect and block VPN usage, but most sites don't check – and those that just want the traffic and ad revenue certainly won't.

There are a lot of VPNs to choose from, but our favourite is Windscribe (windscribe.com), which gives you a generous 10GB of data a month, unlimited connections and access to more than 10 countries, including the US – and all for free. If you need additional data and features, you can pick one of the many paid-for versions. Windscribe's Monthly Plan costs \$9 (about £6.78), while the Yearly Plan is \$49 (£37). There's also a new Build a Plan option which lets

you add locations for \$1 each a month, gives you an additional 10GB of data and includes ROBERT (Remote Omnidirectional Badware Eliminating Robotic Tool) – Windscribe's intelligent DNS-level blocking tool, which kills ads and trackers, bad domains and more. This costs a minimum of \$2 a month.

Windscribe is available for most major platforms including Windows, macOS, Linux, iOS, Android, Chrome and Firefox. We'll be taking a closer look at Windscribe's new ROBERT feature in our next issue.



The free VPN Windscribe lets you access sites that are blocked in the UK

Disable Your ISP's Content Filters

Many UK internet providers filter and block websites that contain content judged to be sexually explicit, dangerous (drugs, alcohol, suicide and so on), or violent or gory. Although we definitely appreciate the value of content filters for families, they can be annoying and unnecessary for many adults.

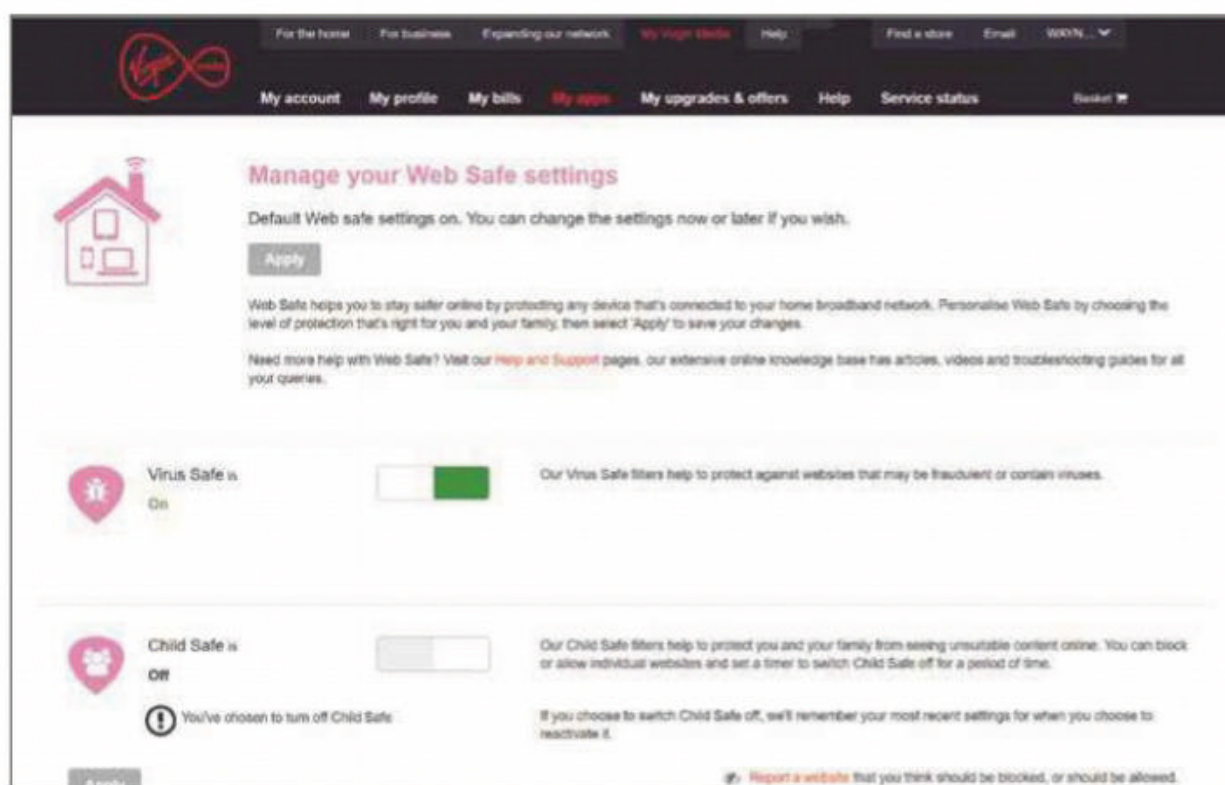
Thankfully, it's possible to turn off – or at least loosen up – your ISP's default parental controls, which typically work on an opt-out basis, meaning you need to inform your provider that you don't want your content filtered. The process varies depending on your ISP, but is broadly the same across all providers.

Virgin Media Web Safe

Virgin Media's Web Safe filter offers two types of protection – Virus Safe (which protects against websites that may be fraudulent or contain viruses) and Child Safe (protects your family from seeing unsuitable content online). In the case of the latter filter, you can block or allow individual websites and set a timer to switch off Child Safe for a period of time. To manage or disable either element of Web Safe, log into your My Virgin Media account (my.virginmedia.com), click My Apps and select Web Safe.

BT Parental Controls

BT offers its users a choice of filter levels – Light, Moderate and Strict – or you can customise the settings to suit your preference. There's a timer and a homework-settings feature, which blocks gaming and social-media sites to ensure children aren't distracted from their school work. To manage the filters, go to My BT (bt.com/mybt) and log in with your BT ID and password. If you don't have an account, you can easily create one.



If you don't have children, you can turn off Virgin Media's Child Safe filter

Sky Broadband Shield

Sky protects its users from inappropriate content by using age ratings. You can choose from PG, 13 and 18 – depending on the age of your children or grandchildren. Selecting the 18 option means you'll have access to all adult content. There is also a watershed option that lets you set a low age filter

for the daytime – such as PG – and have it switch to 18 at night. To change the settings, go to the Sky Broadband Shield (broadbandshield.sky.co.uk) and log in with your account details.



Sky Broadband Shield lets you block and unblock specific web-content categories

REPORT UNFAIRLY BLOCKED SITES

UK ISPs can be rather overzealous when it comes to blocking sites, occasionally preventing access to perfectly legal and valid content. If you suspect a favourite website has been unfairly – and incorrectly – targeted by your ISP, you should notify Blocked (www.blocked.org.uk/sites). The service includes a form that you can use to send an email to ISPs requesting the site be removed from their block list. You will need to enter your details (name and email address) and relationship to the site – user, owner or simply someone who's concerned about censorship.



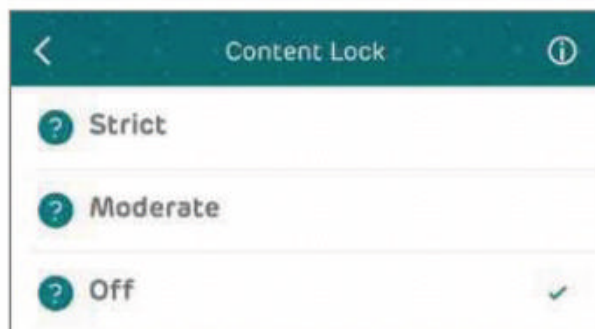
TalkTalk HomeSafe

TalkTalk gives parents a fair amount of control over what is and isn't allowed.

Log into your account page (myaccount.talktalk.co.uk) and you'll be able to select the sort of categories you want to block. Like BT, TalkTalk offers a homework-time option and also lets you block sites of your choosing.

EE Content Lock

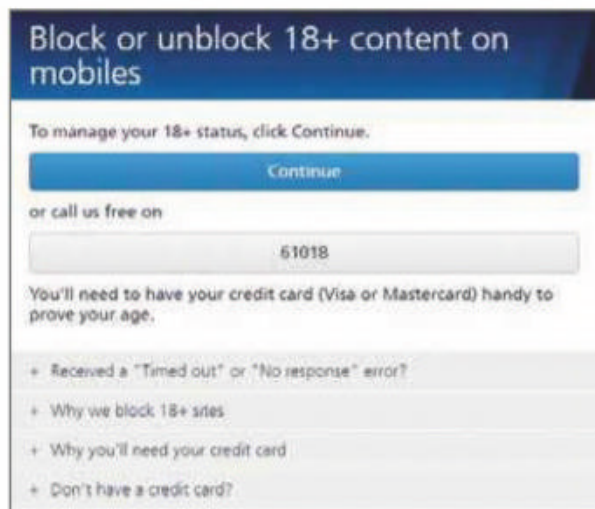
EE protects mobile users with its Content Lock parental controls. There are three settings for this – Strict, Moderate and Off. Moderate is the default, but if you want to change this, log into My EE (id.ee.co.uk) and tweak the setting in Menu, Manage Device, or text Strict, Moderate or Off to 879.



EE makes it easy to turn off its parental controls on your phone altogether

O2 age verification

O2 blocks sites that have been classified by the BBFC as 18+. To disable this, you will need to either go into an O2 shop



O2 makes you verify your age with a credit card to unblock adult content

HOW I PROTECT MY FAMILY ONLINE

As the parent of a young child, I know it's important to shield kids from the dangers of the web. My daughter's school teaches online safety, which is to be applauded, but I'm a big believer in parental responsibility. It should be down to parents to safeguard their children online, not solely the school – and not the government, especially as ministers have shown time and again that they don't fully understand the online world.

Placing age restrictions on adult-content sites is a commendable idea, but it's hard to enforce in a world where VPNs and torrenting software are easily accessible. If there's a way



around a block, then a determined youngster will certainly find it – or be told about it by their friends. For this reason, I believe the government's new initiative will end up mainly affecting

less tech-savvy adults, not the under-18s it's actually aimed at.

Sadly, not all parents know how to protect their children online, and not all parents take an active interest in what their offspring get up to (a recent 'online safety day' at my local school saw just a handful of people attend). I allow my child to access YouTube, but only the Kids version, and I keep an eye on what she's watching because I don't fully trust Google's ability to ensure that only age-appropriate content makes it onto the site (we've all heard the horror stories). If my daughter wants to use the web, that's fine, but I make sure I'm with her while she does it.

As my daughter gets older and more independent, I know I will need to take a step back – but I'll make sure she fully understands the risks of social media, knows that anything shared online is rarely truly private and that once something is on the internet, it can be nearly impossible to remove it.

If necessary, I will resort to parental-control software, but I'd rather use the tool of education first.

with photo ID, or visit ageverification.o2.co.uk (or call 61018) and prove your age with a credit card. O2 will charge £1 to your card and then refund it immediately.

Vodafone age verification

Vodafone also requires you to prove your age with a credit card. Go to My Vodafone (bit.ly/voda472) and select your device under 'Services and extras'. Click 'Bars and Data Alerts' and you'll see an 'Age-restricted content' bar.

You'll be able to verify your age, or turn filters off if you've already done this.

3's adult filters

If you're a customer with 3, you can manage the age-appropriate content filters by heading to My3 (mobile.three.co.uk/my3) on your phone, selecting Security and then tapping 'Update adult filter settings'. Enter your PIN when asked (you can set up a PIN if you don't already have one) and change the filter to whatever setting you require. ■

NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 17 April 2019

STAY ANONYMOUS ON DUCKDUCKGO

Ditch Google for a smarter, faster and more private way to search the web



PLUS...

SHARE YOUR SCREEN

Best free tools that let you access your PC remotely

HACK YOUR HARDWARE

Convert old PC peripherals to give them a new lease of life

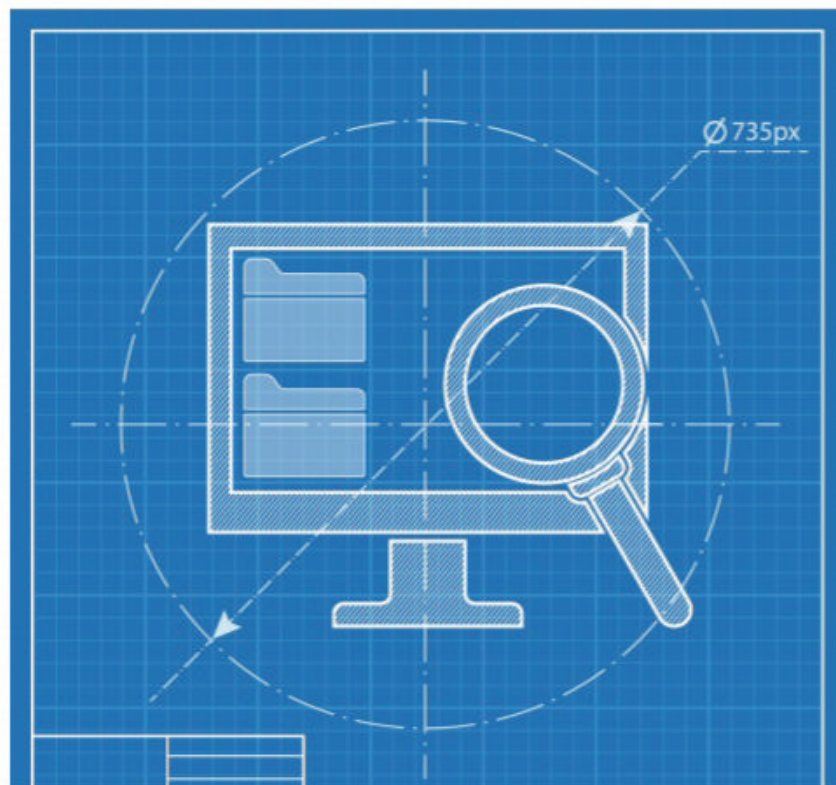
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Best free replacements for File Explorer

The default File Explorer in Windows is best described as “fine”. Tiring of the tool’s limited features and crowded interface, **Steve Clark** explores the best free alternatives for managing your files



XYplorer Free | bit.ly/xypl472 | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

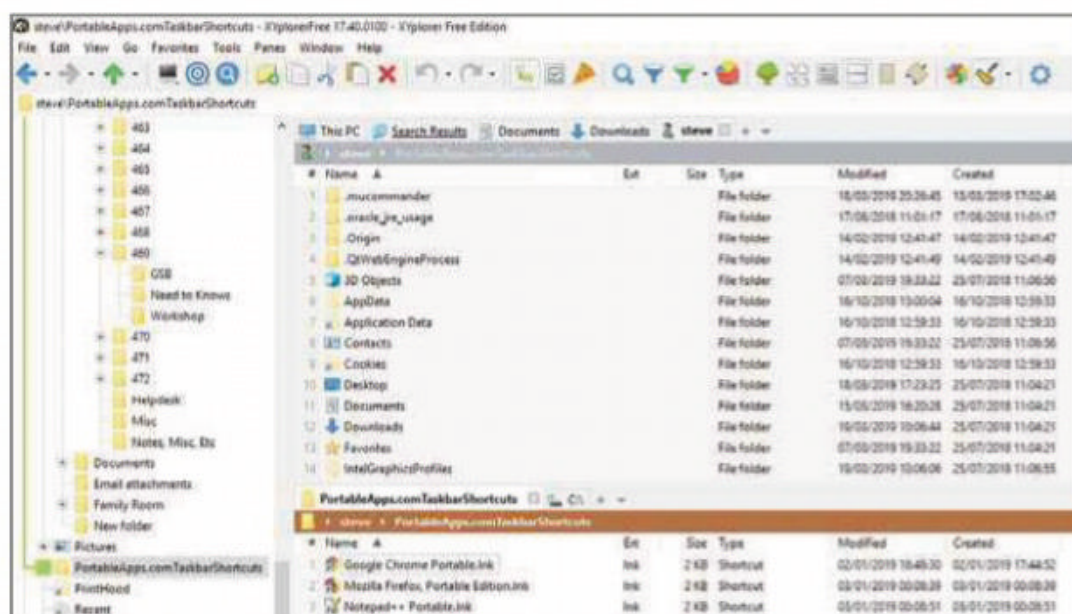


What we liked:

It’s the excellent tabbed layout that first attracted us to XYplorer Free. Like tabs

in a web browser (or Microsoft’s long-awaited ‘Sets’), they offer a quicker way to flit between multiple locations, and will be appreciated by anyone frustrated with File Explorer’s clunky ‘one-step-forward, one-step-back’ navigation. It’s typical of this clean File Explorer replacement: even the tree-map in the sidebar feels less cluttered compared to Explorer’s.

Finding your way around the program is straightforward – the handy tools populating the ribbon menu let you effortlessly jump to recent locations and view folder sizes, which is useful if you’re embarking on a mass cleanup. And the ability to switch these icons out for others better suited to your purpose is just the start of an exceptionally extensive personalisation menu. Dip into Tools, Configuration and you’ll find more tick boxes than you ever thought



necessary: each one letting you customise the information shown and how it’s displayed.

Locating specific files brings up a meticulously targeted menu that lets you search files by name, date and size, and by keywords and phrases within a document. But the real bonus is being able to view duplicate files clogging up your computer. It’s also impressively fast at locating any file you need.

Once you try the clever Instant Color Filter, you’ll be demanding it in every program. Click the arrow beside the paint-roller icon and choose an option (for example, files modified today). XYplorer then highlights every onscreen

file that matches your specific filter, for instant at-a-glance ease.

How it can be improved:

XYplorer Free has one major drawback – and it may be a deal-breaker: since discontinuing the free version, the software hasn’t seen an update since 2016

(unlike its pricey premium counterpart). The program has a lot of depth beneath the surface, so if you’re looking for a program that matches File Explorer’s simplicity, check out our Bronze Award-winner instead.

OUR VERDICT

Fast and effective, XYplorer Free does everything we wish File Explorer could do. It’s a shame it’s been dropped in favour of a paid-for version, but it still works brilliantly and has the best tabbed-file interface we’ve seen.

FreeCommander | freecommander.com | ★★★★★☆

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

WebUser
SILVER
AWARD

What we liked:

FreeCommander looks a lot like the business version of XYplorer and reminds us of a hangover from the serious days of Windows 98. Functionally, though, there's little difference between our Gold and Silver Award winners – from the dual-pane tabbed browsing to the speedy duplicate file finder – and, like its rival, support stretches back to Windows XP. So choosing between the two becomes a series of minor trade-offs – for example, you may be won over by FreeCommander's portability (bit.ly/fcport472).

If productivity is important, you're in luck – it informs FreeCommander's every design element. Jog the cursor in any direction and you're guaranteed to land on a feature that speeds up your file management: alongside a lightweight ribbon menu, where you can preview and relocate files, there's a second bar that runs through the middle of the screen, loaded with quick-access options such as a copier and viewer.



How it can be improved:

Efficient in every other department, FreeCommander's interface is nowhere near as intuitive to navigate. We found ourselves hovering the cursor across indecipherable icons, desperately trying to perform basic tasks – we almost started to miss File Explorer. This is a program you'll want to spend a little time with before fully judging its worth.

OUR VERDICT

The powerful FreeCommander is ideal if you want to manage – not simply explore – your hard drive. All the extra tools mean more complexity, so it's not as simple to use as the barebones File Explorer.

TagSpaces | www.tagspaces.org | ★★★★★☆

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

WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD

What we liked:

Cock one eye at the offline-supported, open-source



TagSpaces and it seems to have more in common with Instagram or WhatsApp than Microsoft. The brash, boxy layout gives it a visual flavour that jazzes up an otherwise dry tool. It also makes it ideal for those who balk at the complexities of the Windows' default.

The central premise is that tagging files with custom labels leads to better, faster file management. The system undeniably makes it easier to locate files or filter out search results – but before you faint at the thought of tagging every file on your computer, it is optional. Running a search or clicking your way through the file explorer works just as well.

Navigation unfolds along the left-hand sidebar – it's a quick jump to the location manager, tagged files and search. Showing its note-taking

heritage, clicking the plus sign lets you create a quick note, then save it as a text, markdown or HTML file.

How it can be improved:

TagSpaces is a simple File Explorer replacement, but it's a bit basic and the search speeds could do with a boost. You also need to manually add online sources such as OneDrive by selecting Connect A Location.

OUR VERDICT

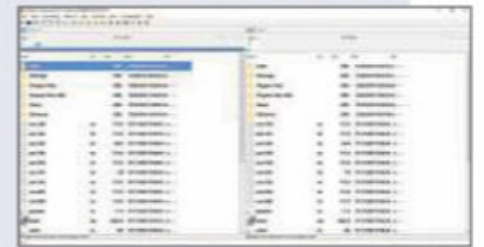
It may look like an app, but TagSpaces offers all the basic features you need. Tagging is an effective organisational tool, but it's time-consuming and best limited to your main files and folders.

BEST OF THE REST

Double Commander

doublecmd.sourceforge.io

Double Commander is like a less refined FreeCommander. Sure, it offers a tab-based interface, and scratching the surface reveals plenty more useful tools for advanced users, but it lacks some universal settings such as the duplicate file finder.

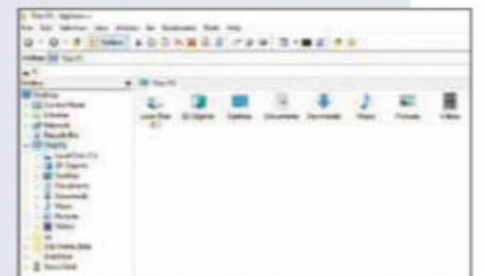


Searches can be slow and poorly displayed (you'll need to squint), and the interface looks 20 years old, which makes the whole experience a tad frustrating.

Explorer++

explorerplusplus.com

Explorer++ is perfect for making a straight switch from File Explorer. Performance and functions are near-identical, while the layout retains the old-school

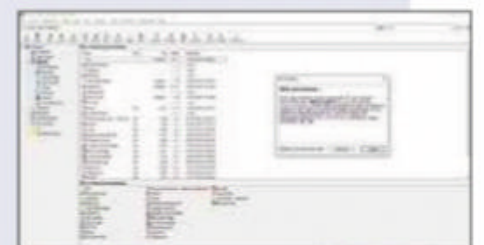


format of a tree-map and a preview pane. The main difference is the introduction of tabs, but otherwise this is treading familiar territory. However, the search tool can be fiddly, requiring specific search locations – and it won't even let you search your entire PC.

xplorer2

bit.ly/xplorer472

It may look like it's creaking under the weight of its Windows XP influences, but the free – or 'lite' – version of xplorer2 promises full File Explorer functionality with none of the hassle. By and large, it delivers on that promise, and the only reason xplorer2 doesn't rank higher in this round-up is that the selling points it loudly trumpets on its website are far more user-friendly in XYplorer and FreeCommander.



Fix these app security flaws – NOW!



Your apps are riddled with security snags and privacy flaws – and app makers are in no hurry to fix them. **Jane Hoskyn** exposes the gaps and shows you how to fill them

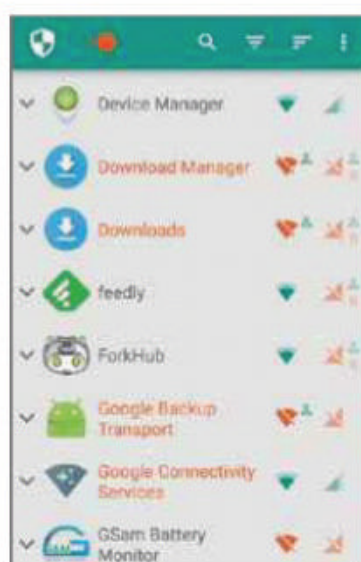
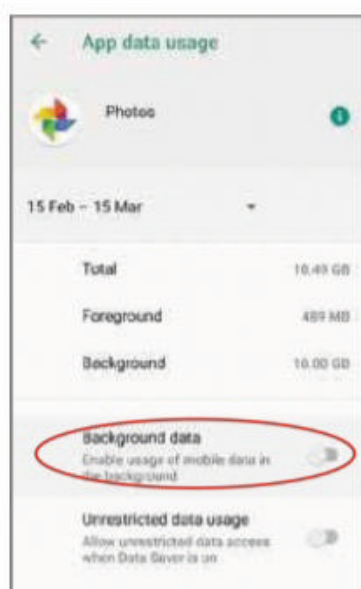
Android apps phoning home about your every move

Android apps automatically claim permission to use the internet, even

when they're running in the background, so they can phone home with valuable info about every swipe you make and every tap you take. It's a brazen invasion of your privacy, not to mention a waste of your battery and mobile data, but it's integral to Google's business model of "personalised" ads.

Google does its best to kill workarounds – there's no longer a one-tap 'Restrict background data' option – but you can still limit the snooping. On devices running Android 8 (Oreo) or later, go to Settings, Network & Internet, 'Data usage' and 'Mobile data usage'. Tap an app in the list, then tap the toggle for

Switch off apps' background access to Wi-Fi and mobile data



Use the free app NetGuard to block apps and system services from accessing the internet

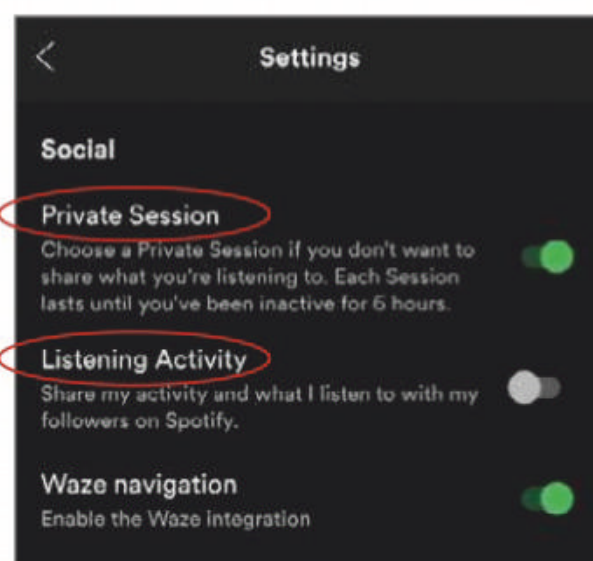
'Background data' so it's off (grey). Go back to 'Data usage' and tap 'Wi-Fi data usage', then repeat the process.

However, this only keeps apps offline when they run in the background. To block certain apps from using the internet at all, install the open-source app NetGuard (Android, bit.ly/netguard472). It lets you block apps from using either mobile data or Wi-Fi or both, then allow again with one tap.

Spotify making all your listening public

In space, no one can hear you scream, but on Spotify everyone can hear you play *Who Let The Dogs Out* eight times in a row. Spotify automatically shares all your activity with the public and doesn't even let you block certain users.

To limit these mortifying over-shares, switch off Listening Activity in Settings. You can also launch a Private Session if you want to play Spandau Ballet in peace. Other privacy options are



Switch off Spotify's default 'Share my activity' setting and use Private Sessions

configurable only via the desktop app (open.spotify.com/download), including 'Automatically make new playlists public', 'Publish my activity' and 'Show my Recently Played Artists' – all switched on by default.

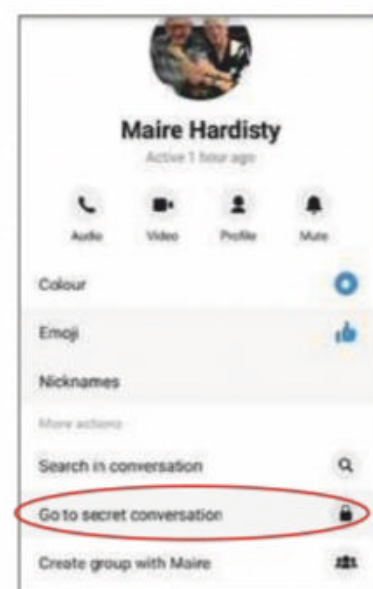
Unencrypted messages in Twitter and Facebook

Unlike WhatsApp and Apple's iMessage, Facebook and Twitter don't encrypt messages by default. They're there for the taking by any police officer with a warrant or a hacker with a spare minute.

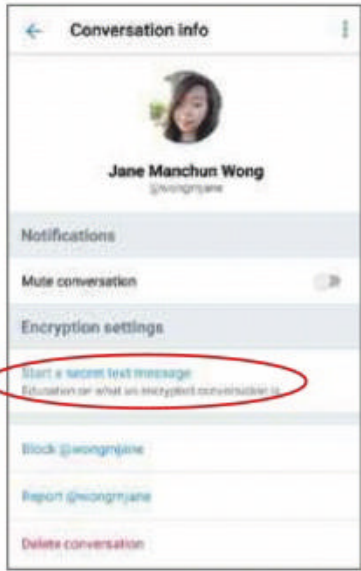
Facebook Messenger does have a secure option, but it's well-hidden. Tap a contact, then the info icon and choose 'Go to secret conversation'.

The new chat's contents are protected by end-to-end encryption, but other details, such as when and to whom you chatted, are not.

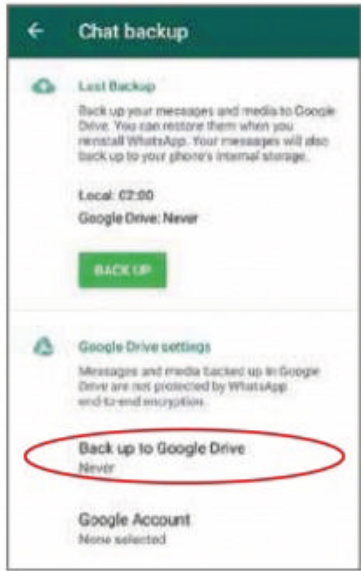
A 'Start a secret text message' option was spotted in a test version of Twitter's Android app a year ago (bit.ly/secret472), but it's never appeared in a public beta. Currently, the only way to encrypt a Twitter DM (direct message) is to funnel it through a third-party client such as Pidgin (pidgin.im – find instructions at bit.ly/twittertrick472).



Send encrypted Facebook Messenger messages in 'secret conversation' mode



Twitter was rumoured to be testing a 'secret' encrypted mode for DMs, but it never launched



WhatsApp's encryption doesn't apply when it's sending your data to Google Drive for backup. The window for attack is small (your backup is encrypted by Google once it arrives) but it exists, so back up locally for top security. Go to WhatsApp Settings, Chats then 'Chat backup' to set your preferences.

The surest way to chat in secret is to use Signal Messenger instead (Android, iOS and desktop: signal.org). It uses

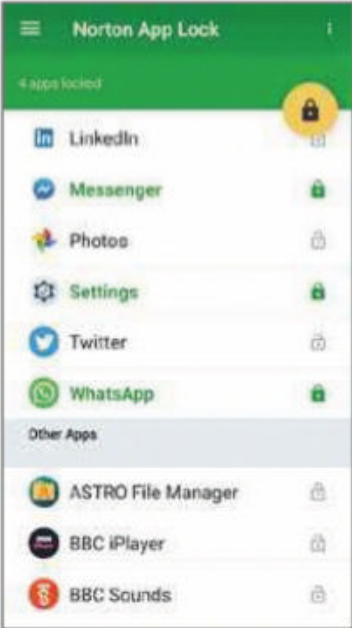
To stop WhatsApp sending your data unencrypted, switch off Google Drive

the tightest encryption tech available, stores nothing on a server, and has a self-destruct mode to obliterate chats without trace.

WhatsApp lacking password protection

WhatsApp is one of many potentially sensitive apps with no built-in password or lock option, so any family member scrolling through your photos or thief who snatched your phone has full access to every WhatsApp message you've sent and received.

To fix this on Android, install Norton App Lock (bit.ly/applock472) and



create a lock pattern that you can apply to selected apps, such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Settings. App Lock will also take a selfie of anyone who tries and fails to unlock an app three times. App-locking tools only work on iOS

Use Norton App Lock to PIN-protect WhatsApp

if you jailbreak your iPhone or iPad, which does more harm than good for security. Instead, just make sure you hide sensitive chats by swiping them from the main WhatsApp screen and block lock-screen notifications.

Facebook identifying you in photos

Facebook loves to find cruel and unusual new ways to invade your privacy. Its face-recognition technology is now so advanced it detects when someone posts a photo or video you're in – even if you're not tagged.

In some ways it's useful (you get a notification about the unflattering snap) but it's also creepy – and it's enabled by default. To switch it off via the app, tap the menu, then Settings & Privacy, 'Privacy shortcuts' and then 'Control face recognition'. Tap the 'Do you want...' message, and then No.



Stop Facebook looking for you in photos and videos by disabling face recognition

Chrome sharing your information

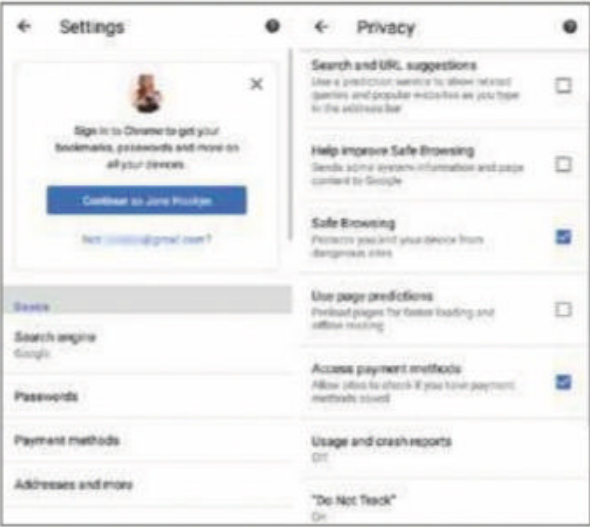
At last, some good news. Chrome's preinstalled Android app no longer leaks information (including patch level) about the device it's running on.

The bug was fixed in January, three years after it was first reported.

Now the bad news: Chrome is still a privacy nightmare with several defaults you need to change. First, check 'Usage reports' is off so it stops sending Google your preferences, button clicks and site-loading times on your device. Go to Settings, Privacy, 'Usage and crash reports' and tap the toggle.

Chrome also sends data to your saved search providers (not just Google) as you type. To stop this, untick 'Search and URL suggestions'. Also enable Do Not Track and Safe Browsing, which are both disabled by default. For tighter security, switch off autofill (in 'Payment methods') and set permissions to 'Ask first' (in 'Site settings').

Ignore Chrome's insistence that you should enable Chrome Sync. If spyware or adware infects one of your devices, Chrome Sync risks spreading it to all of them. And if one device is stolen, Chrome Sync is a lucrative gateway to all your personal information. ■



Many of Chrome's default settings are for Google's benefit, not yours

CAMPAIGN URGES TECH FIRMS TO PATCH FLAWS

Security holes are easy to repair – the problem is that many tech companies don't want to. That's the message from privacy watchdog the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF, www.eff.org), whose new Fix It Already campaign calls on firms to stop using hidden flaws to exploit users.

"Companies are running out of excuses to neglect security and privacy best practices," declared the EFF, launching the campaign in February (bit.ly/fixit472). Go to fixitalready.eff.org to discover more flaws, including Apple's failure to encrypt backups and Facebook's leaking of your contact information. You can use the #FixItAlready hashtag to contribute any dodgy settings you discover.



But will it work? We think so. After all, it was an EFF campaign that finally pushed Google to make HTTPS the default setting in Chrome last year. You can still use the EFF's extension HTTPS Everywhere (bit.ly/https472) to add encryption to sites that don't use it – in Firefox and Opera as well as Chrome.

Capture your screen on any device

A picture speaks a thousand words, but it's not always obvious how to take one. **Steve Clark** reveals the best ways to grab and share screenshots using built-in tools and third-party software

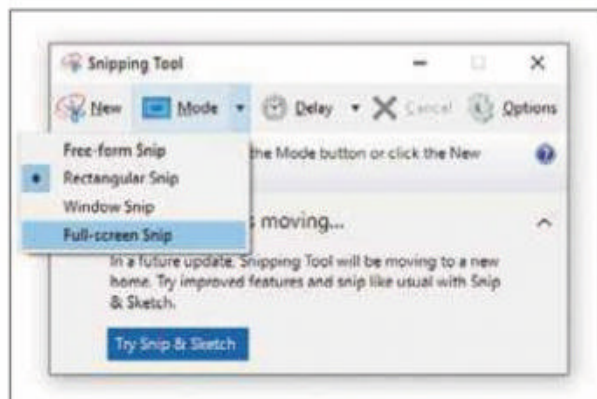
ON YOUR COMPUTER

WINDOWS PC

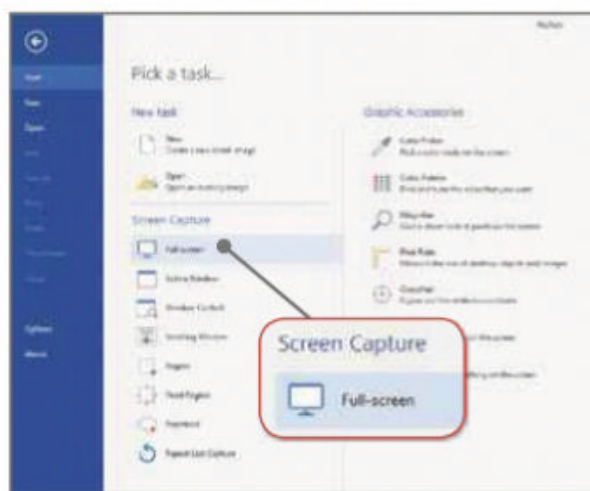
The quickest way to take a screenshot on your computer is to use Print Screen (press **PrtScn** or **Fn+PrtScn**). Paste the shot into any image editor – Microsoft Paint works fine for a quick screen grab – then save the image. It's a bit long-winded, but a reliable method for one-off captures.

Both Snipping Tool and Snip & Sketch take full screenshots and portions of the screen. Open Snipping Tool (type **snipping** into the search box to find it), click the Mode button, choose Full-screen Snip and your screenshot is immediately copied. Launch Snip & Sketch, then press **New** to activate three options, with Full Screen Clip taking a complete screenshot.

With the introduction of Windows' Game Mode, Windows 10 delivers an alternative method. Start by pressing **Win+G**, then click the Camera to capture your screen or Record for video. Since you're not screenshotting a game, when prompted, check the box to 'Enable gaming features'. Every capture is saved automatically, which is ideal for multiple screenshots.



Snipping Tool is the tried and tested method for taking Windows screenshots



We love the Microsoft Office vibe and the choice of screenshot options in PicPick

If you want to copy images of web pages, Awesome Screenshot (www.awesomescreenshot.com) supports screen capturing and recording. Select either by clicking the extension icon, then use the browser-based editor to add notes and highlights, or blur information before saving to your computer or Google Drive.

PicPick (picpick.app) is excellent for general PC screenshots, and its capture types include Full Screen, Active Window and Window Control, which captures elements within a window, such as the Ribbon Menu in Word or a browser address bar. It also offers extra graphical goodies including the handy colour picker and a protractor for measuring on-screen angles.

CHROMEBOOK

There's no Print Screen button on a Chromebook keyboard, so capturing a screenshot involves holding down **Ctrl** and pressing the Switch Window key (in the top row of buttons on your keyboard) – you may need to hold down



Hold down Ctrl, Shift and Switch Window to take a Chromebook screenshot

Shift as well. This saves a copy of your screen to the Downloads folder. And since Chromebooks run Chrome, add the Awesome Screenshot extension (see previous tip) to your browser.

macOS

With macOS Mojave, Apple gives you more control over your captures. **Shift+Command+5** launches the capture bar to give you five capture options: whole screen, specific window and selected area of the screen, plus two screen-recording options.

Not running macOS Mojave? Then use **Shift+Command+3** to take a screen grab, while **Shift+Command+4** lets you capture a window (by clicking the space bar and picking your window) or a selected area of the screen (by dragging the area select box into position).

For a third-party alternative, check out Skitch (bit.ly/skitch472) from Evernote. This app, which works across all Apple devices, lets you add annotations, sketches and notes to a screen capture before sharing it.



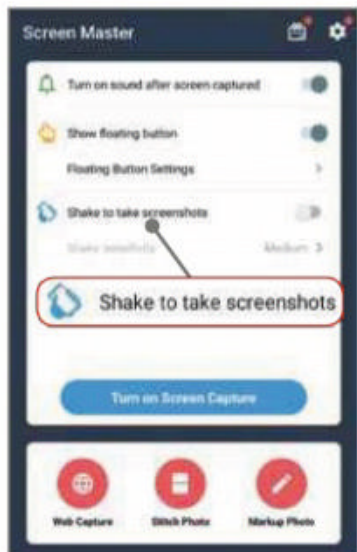
Skitch is a versatile tool for capturing screenshots on macOS

ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE



ANDROID

There are two ways to take screenshots on an Android phone or tablet. The first is to press and hold the Volume Down key and the power button at the same time. A less fiddly method is to add the 'Screen capture' icon to your notification area – first, pull down the bar and tap the Pencil icon to edit which icons appear here, then drag and drop the 'Screen capture' action into place for quick access.



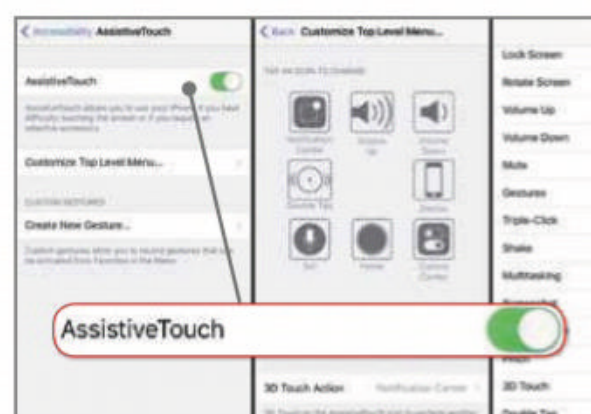
Shake your phone to take a screen grab with Screen Master

For an app that gives you more flexibility, download the free Screen Master (bit.ly/screenmaster472). This adds a moveable, near-invisible icon to your screen that can be tapped any time on any screen, generating a capture ready to be edited, stitched together, shared or, most usefully, saved as a high-quality PNG file.

IPHONE

For iPhone X owners, screenshots are simply a case of pressing and holding the phone's side button, followed by clicking Volume Up. On older iPhones, press and hold the top or side button, then press the Home button – the moment you release the buttons, the phone takes a screenshot.

If that sounds awkward, there's a one-handed hack for iPhones. In the General settings, head into the Accessibility menu where you'll see an option called Assistive Touch. Toggle this to On, enter the Customise Top Level Menu options, tap Custom Icon,



Use Assistive Touch to take screenshots on your iPhone one-handed

then select Screenshot. Doing so adds a small icon to your screen that will take a screenshot when pressed.

If you plan to take grabs of your browser, Awesome Screenshot for Safari (bit.ly/screensafari472) is worth installing. It's more finicky on the iPhone compared to Chrome, though.

KINDLE

For every Kindle, there's a different way to take a screenshot: Kindle Paperwhites need to be pressed in the top-left and bottom-right corners; the Kindle Touch asks you to press and hold the Home button and tap the screen; and the Kindle 4 has you press the Home and Keyboard buttons simultaneously. Depending on the model, screenshots may be stored in the Documents folder, or you'll need to connect the device to your computer to retrieve the grabs. For Kindle Fire tablets, bring up the screen you want to capture, press the Power and Volume Down buttons at the same time. Hear that camera sound? That means your screenshot has been taken. You'll find it saved in the Screenshots folder in your gallery.

ON YOUR GAMES CONSOLE



XBOX ONE

To save your awesome gaming moment on your Xbox, hit the Guide button followed by either X for a still image or Y to grab the last 30 seconds of video. The console also features voice support, which works when you hook up a headset, get the Xbox skill for Alexa or use the underrated Kinect 2.0. You can then command the voice assistant to "take a screenshot" or "record that." Captures are saved to the Upload



You can upload, edit and share screenshots on your Xbox

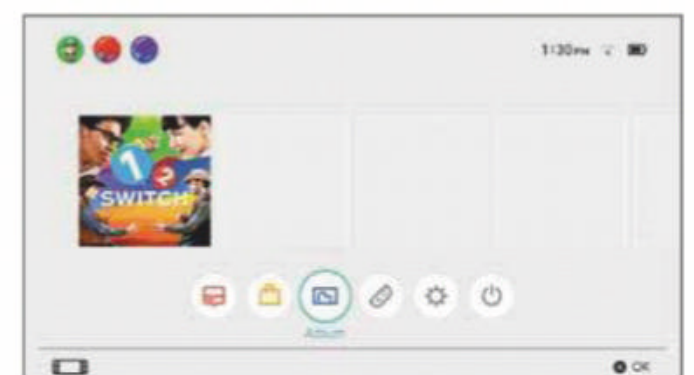
Studio app, a clunky media editor but one that offers excellent OneDrive and social-media support.

PLAYSTATION 4

Understanding that the future of online is all about sharing content, Sony added a dedicated button to the PlayStation controller – making it the easiest way to save and share screenshots. Tap the Share button to bring up the Share screen, and select Screenshot from the list to save it to your gallery.

NINTENDO SWITCH

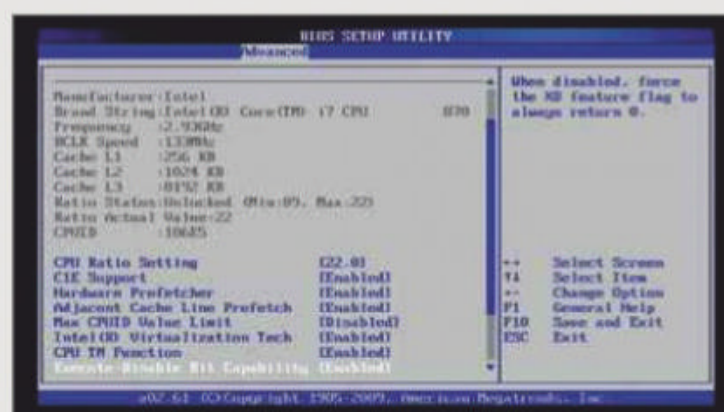
As with the PlayStation 4, Nintendo includes a capture button on its Switch console's joy-con. Pressing the button lets you take a screenshot, but hold it down to record a short video. You can then check your media in the Album, choosing to add text to the image before posting it on Twitter or Facebook.



Nintendo's Switch console includes a handy built-in screenshot button

HOW TO TAKE SCREENSHOTS OF YOUR BIOS

When your computer's having a meltdown, it can be useful to screenshot your BIOS before start-up. Begin by inserting a FAT32-formatted USB stick, then restart your computer – during initial boot, press the key prompt to enter set-up, which whisks you to the BIOS screen. So long as the USB stick is detected, navigate to the setup page you need and press Print Screen (or F12, depending on your computer).



If successful, a confirmation flashes on the screen, with the screenshot then accessible on the USB stick as a bitmap (BMP) file.



Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Watch, convert and share video files using Splash

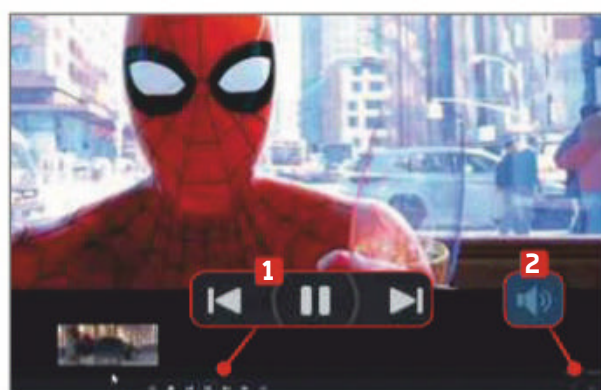
Splash is a great free media player that gives VLC a run for its money. Here's how to use it

Splash: bit.ly/splash472 | 🕒 20 mins | 🖥️ Windows 7, 8, 10

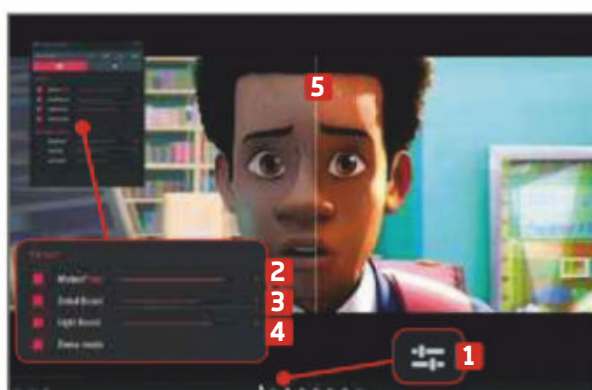
Windows has a built-in tool for playing audio and video files, but you're much better off with a dedicated media player. The best known is VLC, but Splash is an attractive alternative that can handle most media types and convert one video format to another with ease. It can even upload videos straight to YouTube and

Facebook. The software features an advanced picture post-processing engine, which delivers high-quality playback with smooth motion, crisp details and vivid colours. All this can be customised for each separate video.

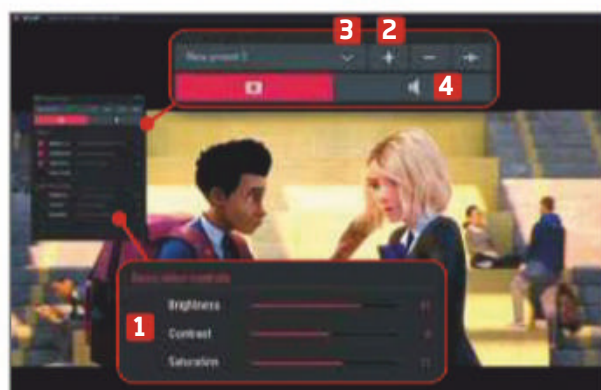
If you find VLC too fussy and old-fashioned, then Splash may be the media player you've been looking for.



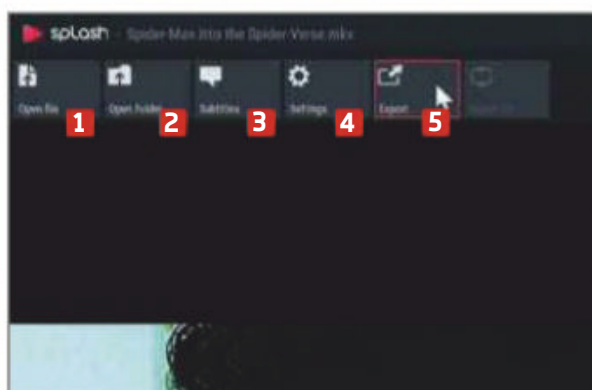
1 Splash's interface looks smart and is easy to use. To start a file playing, drag and drop it into the program. The playback controls disappear but pop back into view when you hover your mouse over the bottom of the window. From here, you can control playback **1** and adjust the volume. **2**



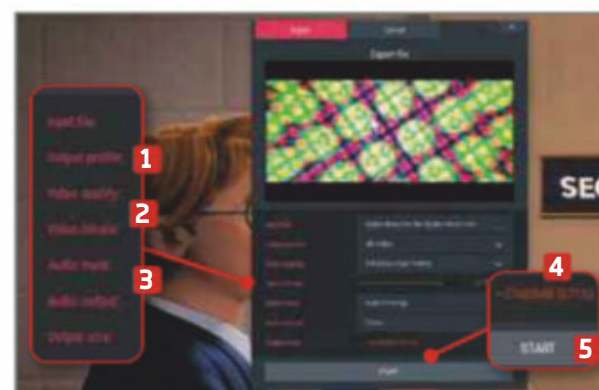
2 Clicking the button for Playback Options **1** lets you significantly improve the quality of the video. You can adjust the motion smoothness, **2** and boost the detail **3** and light **4** by using the sliders. Select Demo mode **5** to compare your changes side by side with the original.



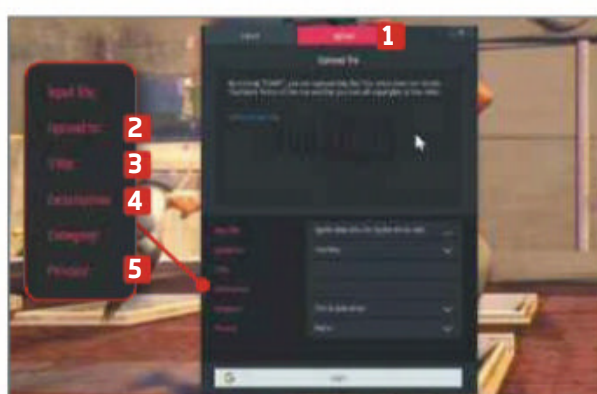
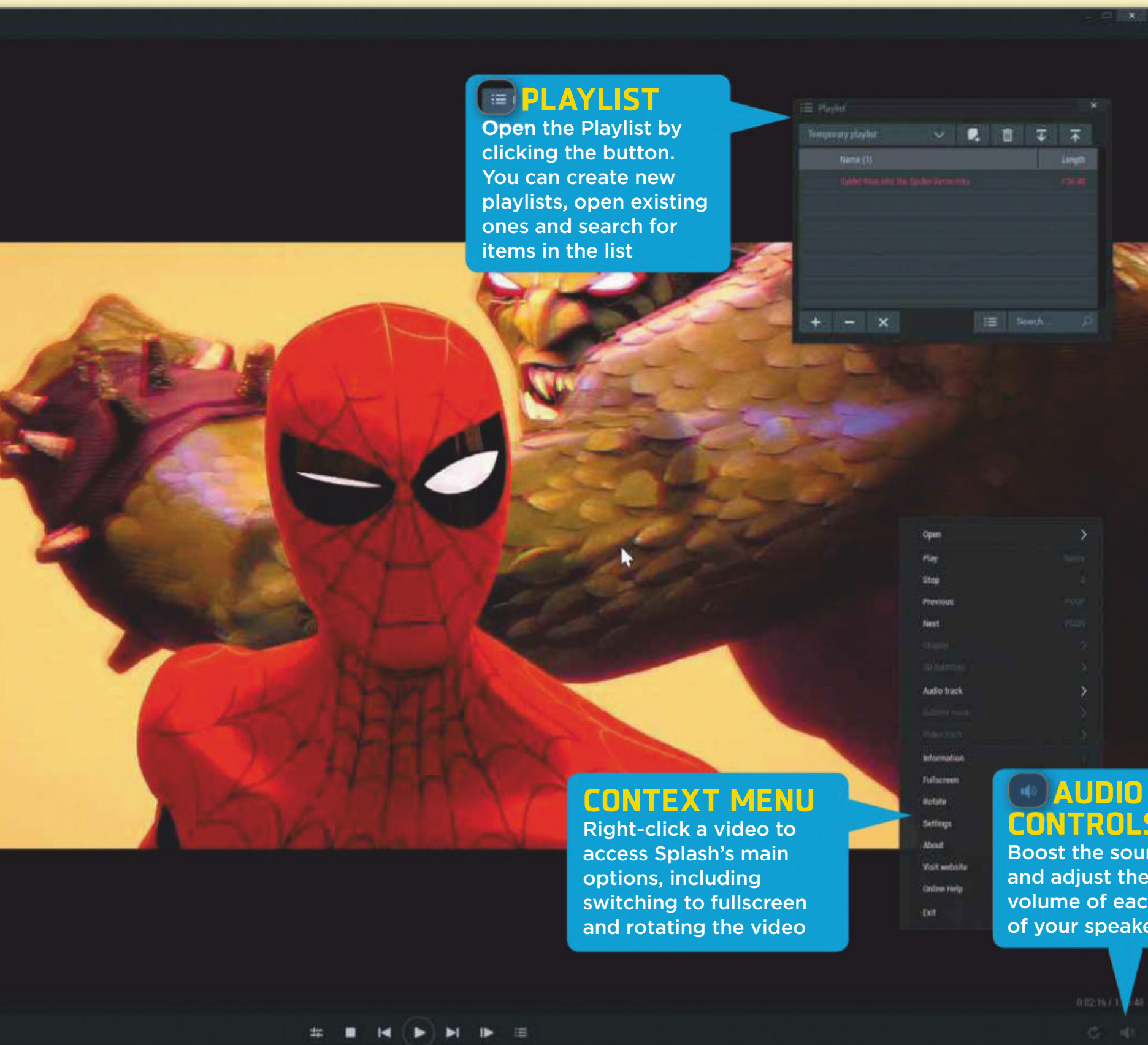
3 You can also manually adjust the Brightness, Contrast and Saturation **1** of your video. Clicking the plus sign at the top **2** lets you save the current changes as a new preset that you can select in the drop-down menu. **3** Click the Audio tab **4** to make changes to the sound quality.



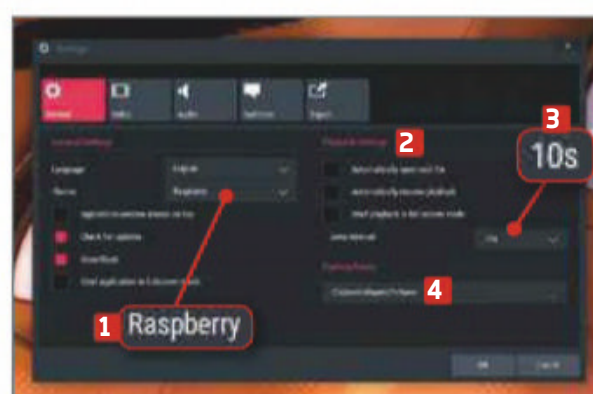
4 Hover your mouse toward the top of the video window and a new menu appears. From here, you can open a file **1** or folder, **2** access subtitles **3** and open Settings. **4** You can also export a video. **5** Click this last option to save and share the file in a variety of ways.



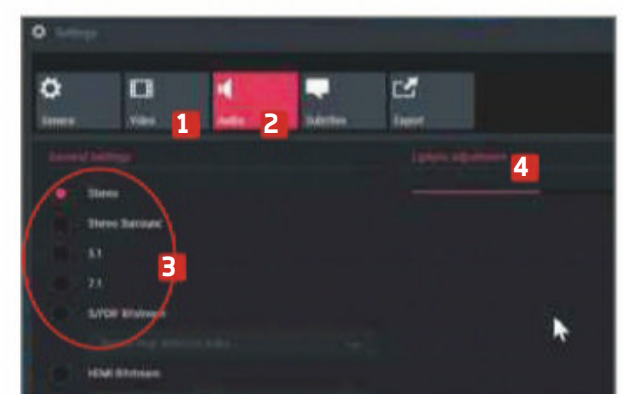
5 Select the video to convert and pick an output profile, **1** such as HD Video, YouTube, Facebook or Mobile. You can change the video quality and bitrate, **2** and the audio track and output. **3** The new size is shown. **4** If converting for YouTube or Facebook, you need to log into your account first. Click Start. **5**



6 Click the Upload tab **1** to upload a video to either YouTube or Facebook – assuming you own the copyright to it, of course. Select the target site **2** and enter a title **3** and description. **4** Choose a category and a privacy option (public, unlisted or private), **5** then log in and upload the file.



7 Splash's Settings menu lets you change the interface theme, **1** configure playback settings **2** and set the jump interval **3** (how far backwards and forwards the video jumps when you press the left or right arrow key). You can also change the location that screen captures are saved to. **4**



8 The Video tab **1** lets you toggle hardware acceleration on or off, change the Motion2 settings, and alter the display format. The Audio tab **2** lets you switch between surround-sound options (Stereo, 5.1, 7.1 and so on) **3** and adjust the lipsync **4** to get out-of-sync audio correctly matching the video.



Explore the new tools in Windows 10 April 2019 Update

Windows 10 April 2019 update: bit.ly/winup472 | ⌚ 30 mins | 🏠 Windows 10



EXPERT TIP

Andy Shaw says

Unfortunately, you may not be able to use all the new tools. If you have the Home version of Windows 10, you won't be able to use Windows Sandbox, which only works in the Professional and Enterprise versions; and you can only use the smartphone screen-mirroring tools if you have a Samsung Galaxy S8, S8 Plus, S9 or S9 Plus, although Microsoft is planning to expand support to more Android phones in the future.



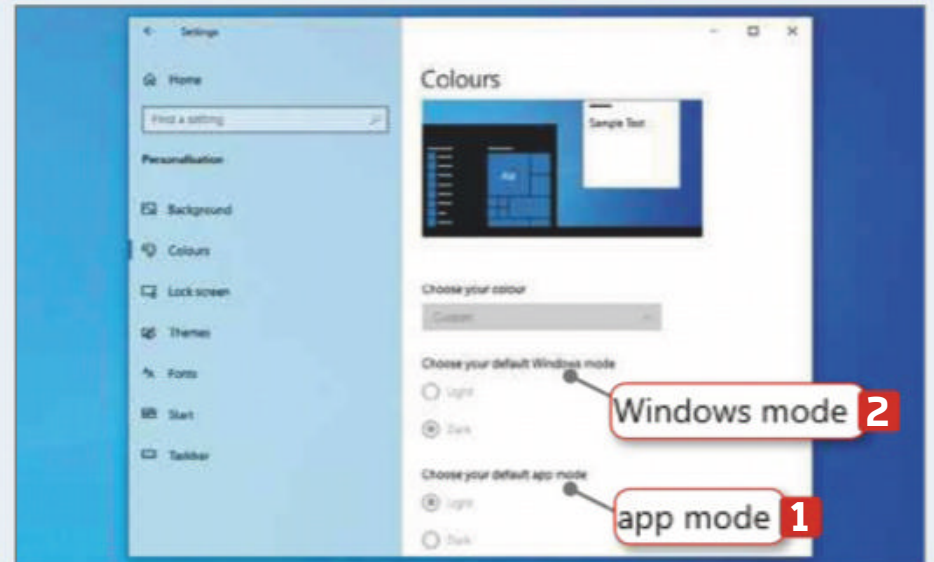
As we write this introduction, the next significant Windows 10 features update is just around the corner – you may even have it already. We've been exploring a pre-release version to provide you with a guide to what we think are its most interesting new tools and settings.

It seems Microsoft has settled down a bit with its development of Windows. Indeed, this update pares back some elements, such as its Cortana voice assistant, which has been separated from Windows search so it's not in the way if you don't use it.

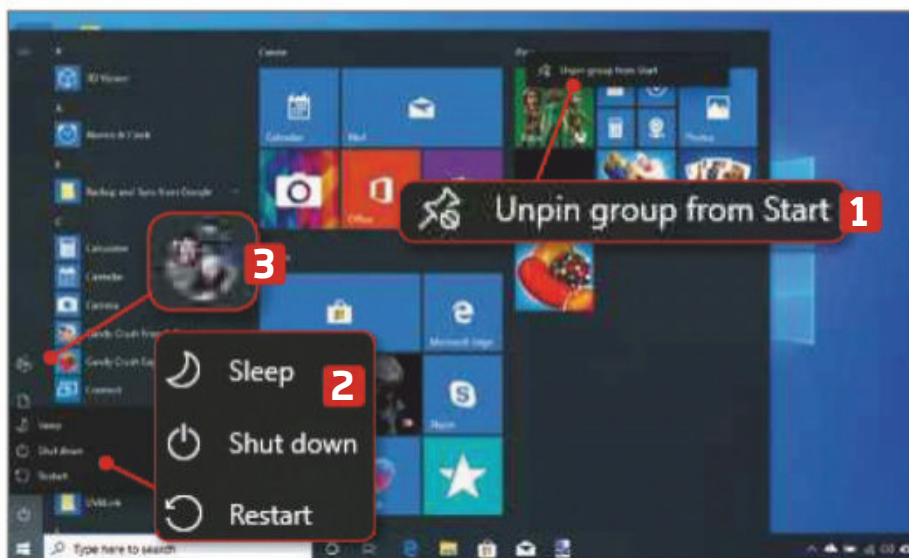
Because we've looked at a preview version, there's no guarantee that every step we've covered here will be included in the final release. If you find something that doesn't work, skip it and move on.



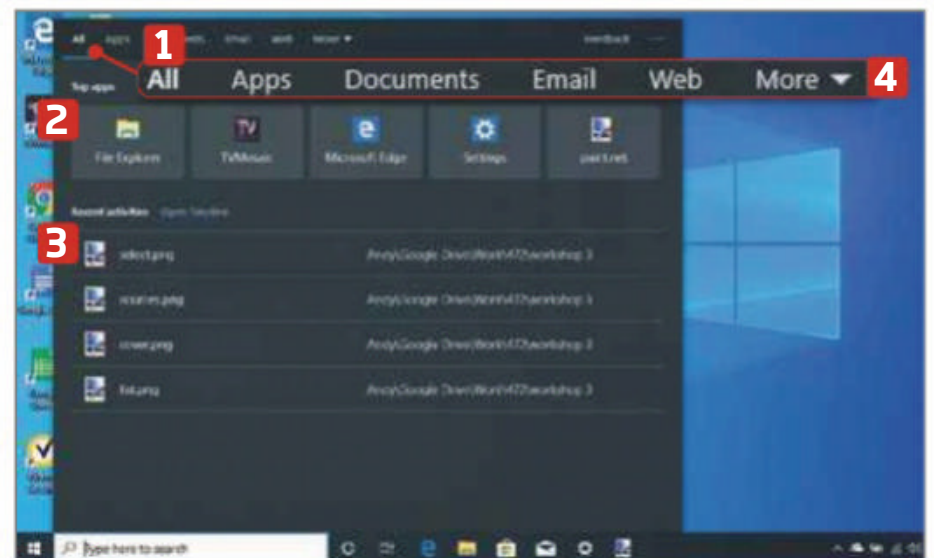
1 For once, Microsoft is blazing a trail. Just as everyone else is activating dark themes, Microsoft has gone and introduced a light one. Gone is the dark, foreboding default background; back in vogue is a bright blue wallpaper. **1** The taskbar and Start menu can be lightened, too. **2**



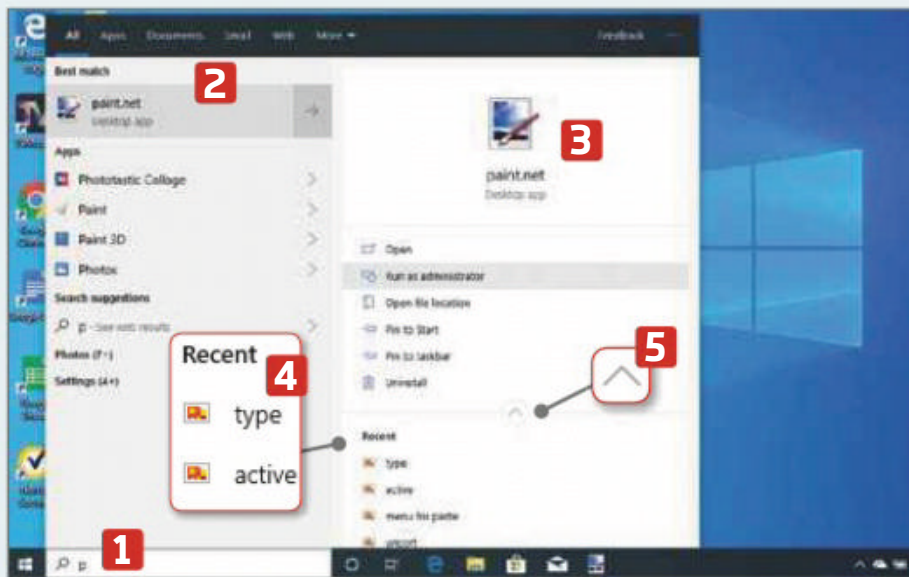
2 To change modes, go into Settings (Windows+i). Previously, you could only choose between Dark and Light mode for apps **1** but the update adds the option to change Windows, too. **2** You can have the two in sync, or choose Light for apps and Dark for Windows, or vice versa.



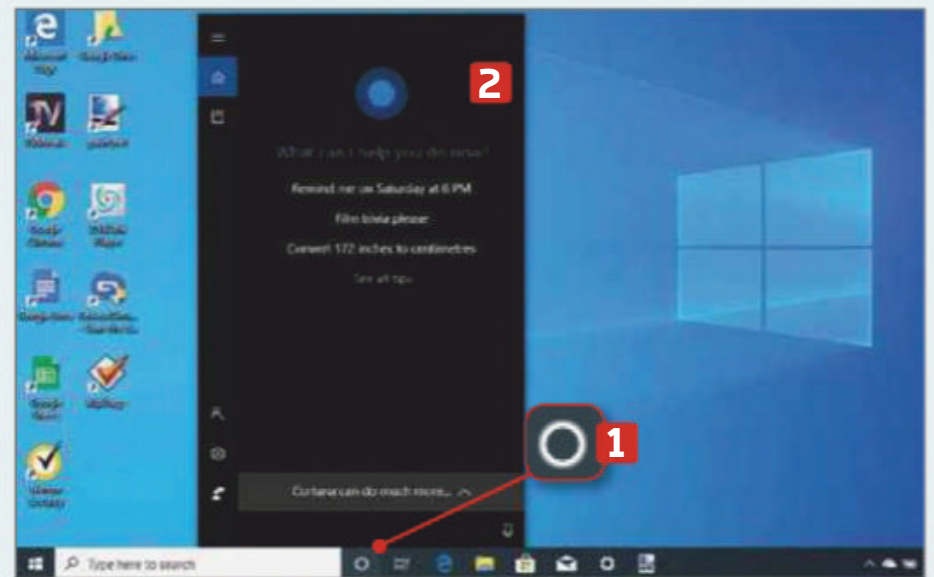
3 There are only minor tweaks to the Start menu. You can right-click a group to unpin it from the menu, **1** and there are new icons on the Power button (Sleep, 'Shut down' and Restart) **2** and profile button **3** ('Change account settings', Lock and 'Sign out').



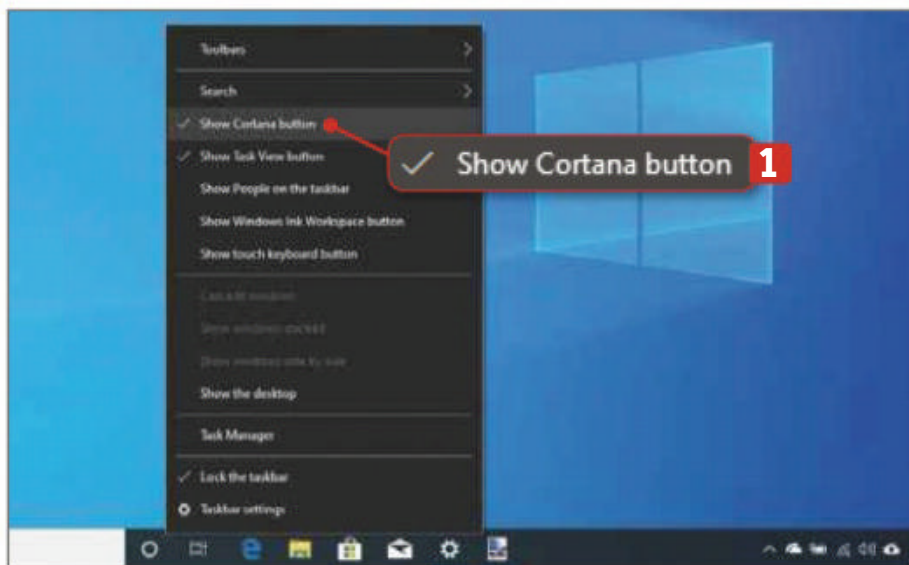
4 Click the search bar and a new window pops up. This is much bigger than the old one and is almost like a Start menu in its own right. It defaults to the All tab, **1** which displays your most-used apps **2** and some recent files. **3** The other tabs **4** drill down into different areas and activities.



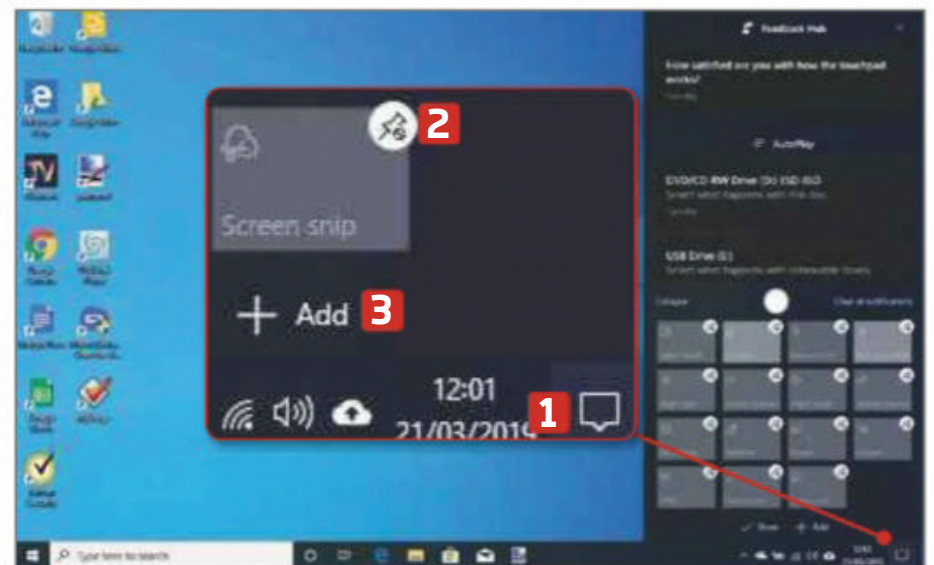
5 Once you start typing in the bar, **1** the style changes back to the familiar Windows 10 look on the left. **2** On the right, however, you get a link to the app you're most likely looking for, **3** a list of recent files associated with it **4** and a drop-down arrow hiding extra options that used to be restricted to the right-click menu. **5**



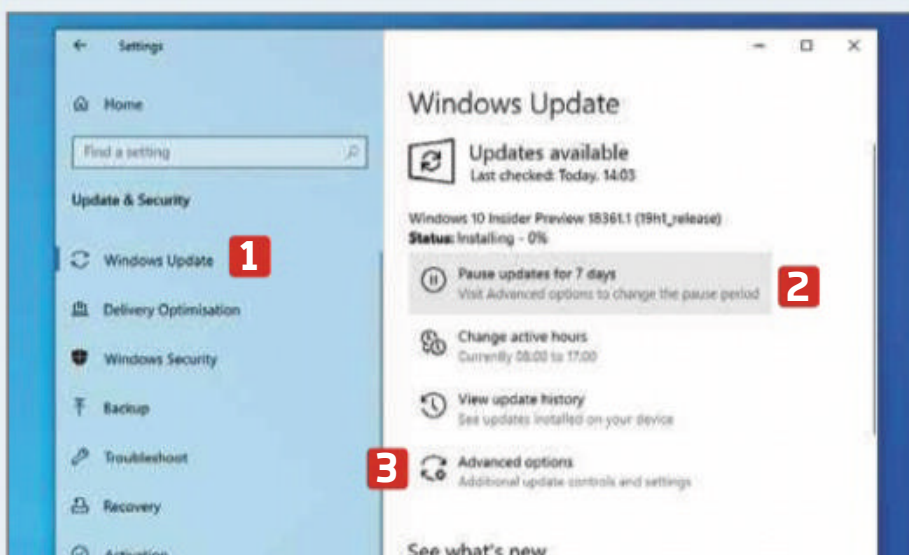
6 Notice that the search bar is now separate from Cortana, which has its own 'Talk to Cortana' button to the right. **1** Clicking this summons a Cortana box, **2** similar to the one that appeared in the previous version when you clicked in the search box.



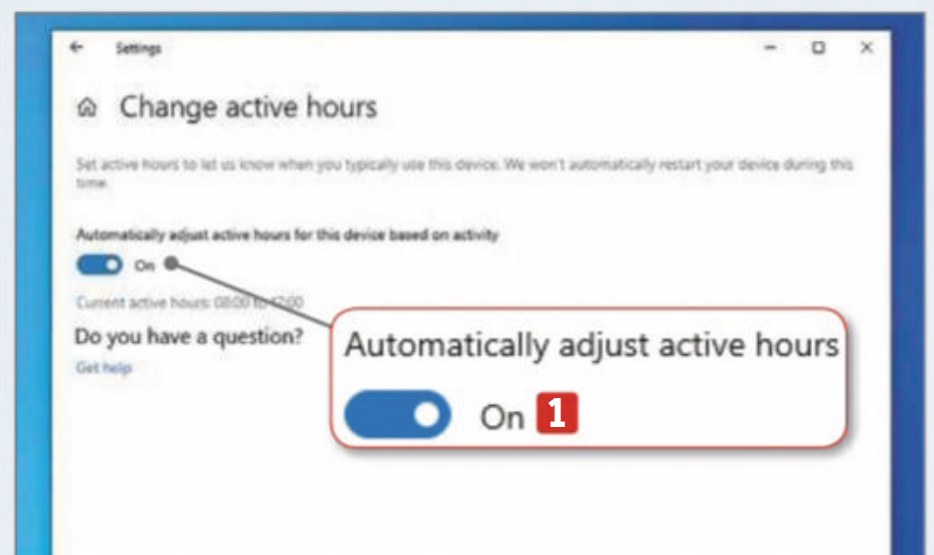
7 If you use Cortana, there are some new buttons and services to experiment with. The Notebook button links to Microsoft's To Do app, so you can keep track of lists and other things you want to remember by talking to Cortana. If you're never going to use Cortana, you can remove the button. Right-click it and untick 'Show Cortana button'. **1**



8 The Action bar is now easier to configure. Click the Notifications button **1** to open it, click Expand, right-click a Notification panel and choose 'Edit quick actions'. A pin appears in the top-right corner of each box. **2** Drag and drop to reorder them, or add **3** a new one.



9 Newly available to Home users is the ability to pause updates. Go to Settings, choose 'Update & Security' and Windows Update. **1** There's an option to 'Pause updates for 7 days'. **2** You can reduce the time paused by clicking 'Advanced options'. **3**



10 While you're in the Windows Update section, you can have Windows analyse your behaviour to try and work out when it's best to download and install updates. Click 'Change active hours' and flick the switch under 'Automatically adjust active hours...'. **1**



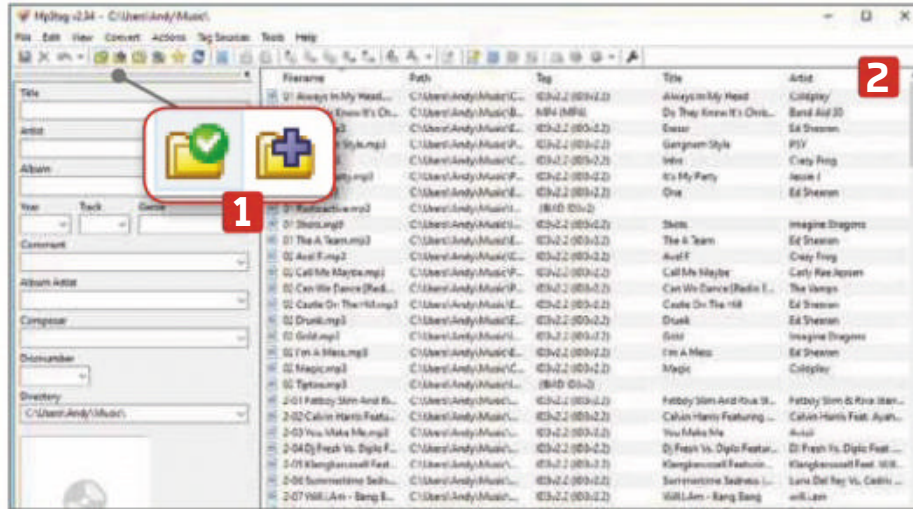
Sort out your music files once and for all

Digital music collections gathered over the years are often badly organised, with file information all over the place, particularly if music has been ripped from CD or downloaded from lots of different sources. Missing or incorrect

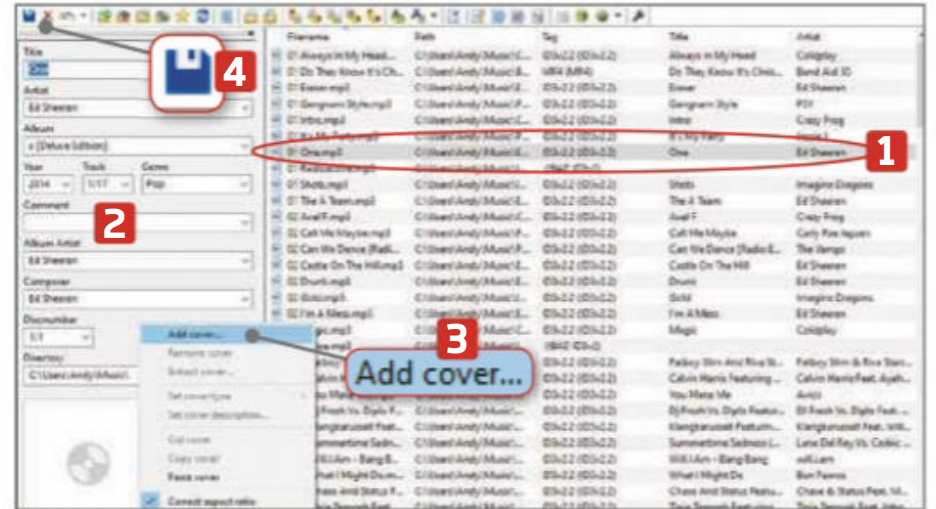
tag information messes up the way your audio software manages your files. Mp3tag is a handy free tool that lets you sort any problems swiftly and simply.



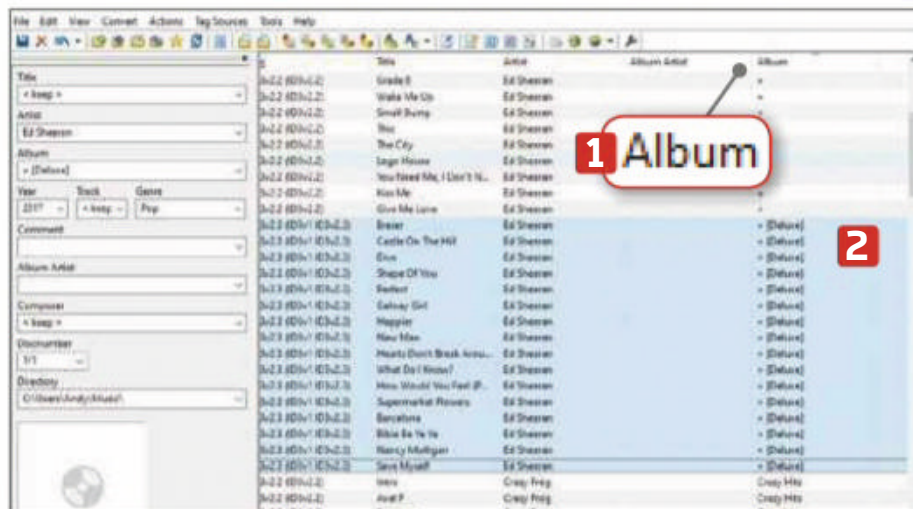
Mp3tag: bit.ly/mptag472 | 20 mins | Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10



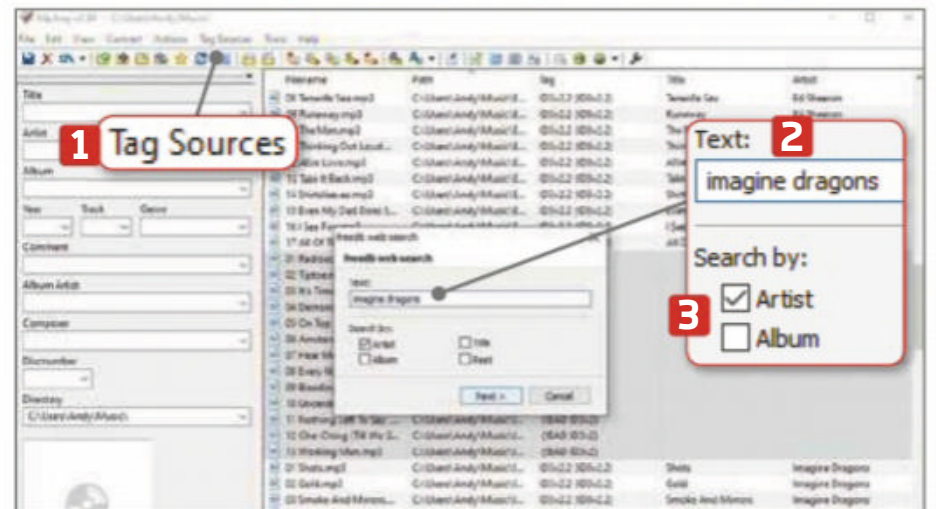
1 Click the 'Change directory' or 'Add directory' buttons **1** to add the folder containing your music. All your tracks will be loaded into the main window. **2** If you only want to work with a particular band or album, and the files are stored in separate folders, just add the folders you want to work with.



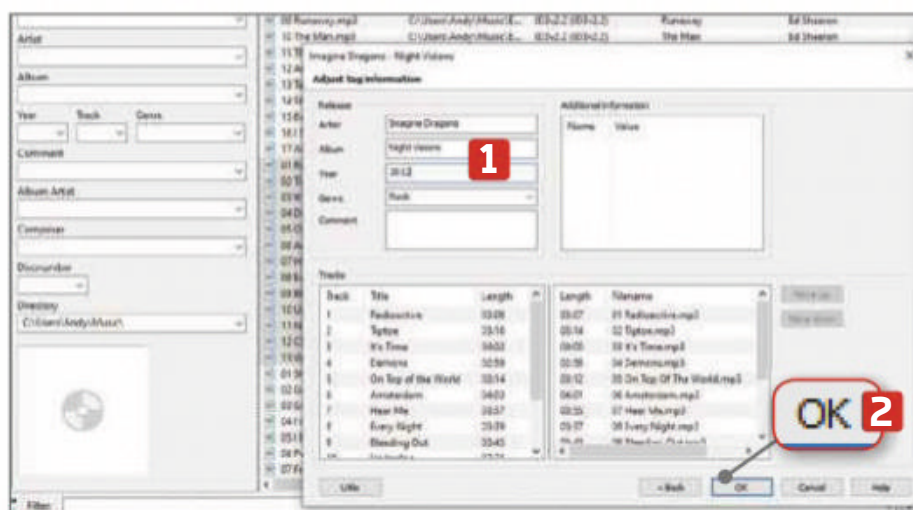
2 To make limited changes, click the file you want to work with. **1** Existing tags are listed in the left-hand panel. **2** Type in any missing or incorrect information. If the cover is missing, right-click the blank icon and choose 'Add cover'. **3** Changes must be saved by clicking the Save button. **4**



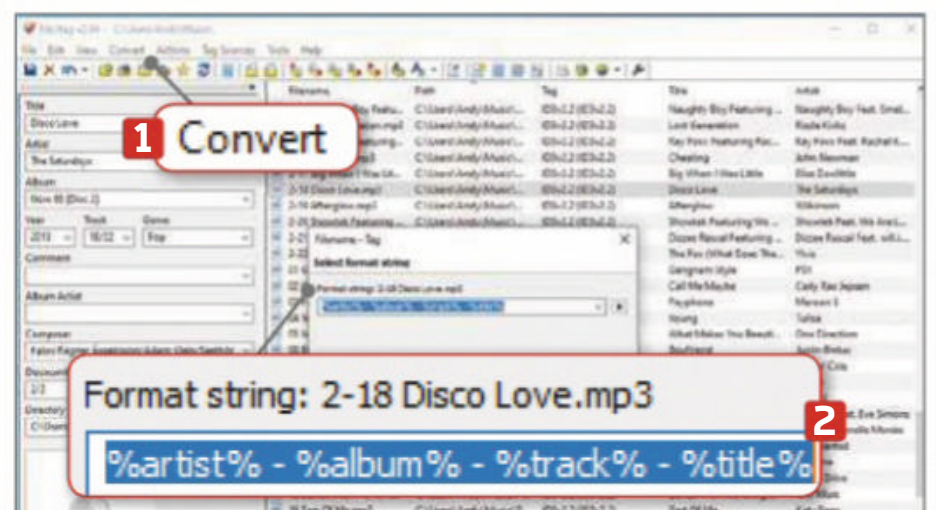
3 To select an entire album or all works by an artist, sort the tracks by clicking the heading you want to group together, such as Album, **1** so you can easily select more than one track **2** using the Shift and Ctrl keys. You still need to click the Save button to save changes to groups of files.



4 If an album has a lot of missing information, you can use a database of tracks to try and fill it automatically. Select all the files and click Tag Sources, **1** then select 'freedb'. Choose 'determine via web search', click OK, then enter some search information **2** and tick the options. **3**



5 Click Next. You'll get a list of potential matches for your album. Hopefully, the database will fill in the gaps. If you want to add more information, you can do it from here. **1** When you've finished, click OK **2** and the information will be transferred over to the files.



6 If you have files with all the information in the filename but not in the tags, click Convert **1** and choose 'Filename - Tag'. Change the format string so the information from the title is in the right place. Anything including and between % signs **2** will be replaced by information from the filename.

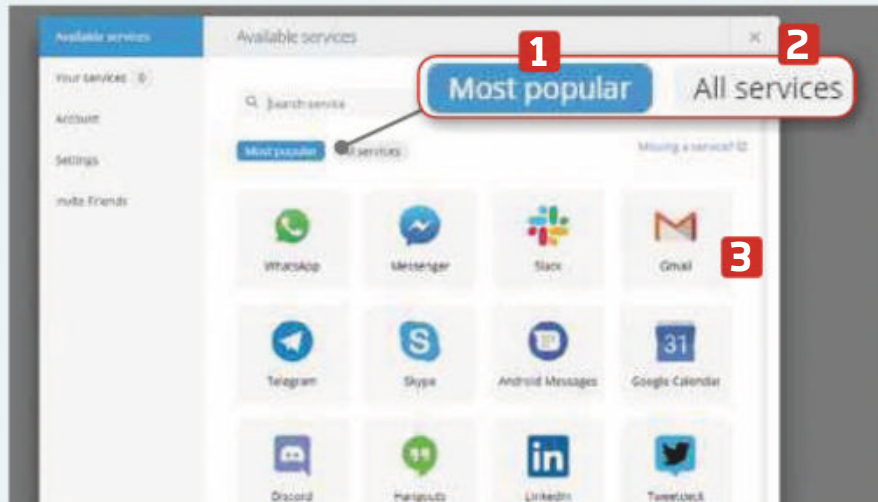


Manage all your messengers in one app

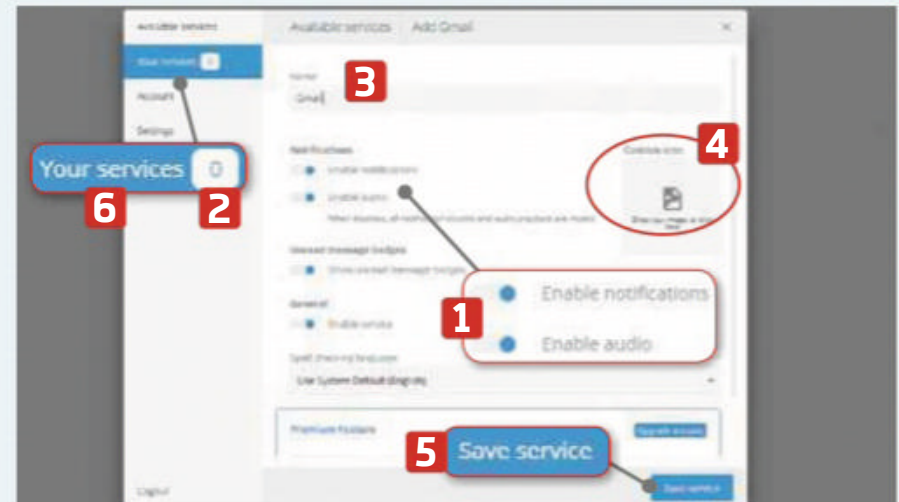
Franz is a free program that collects all your email and messenger accounts in one place, so you don't have to switch between multiple apps or cycle through loads of browser tabs to find your messages. Setup is fast and Franz

supports all the major services, making it the quickest way to access your messages on a range of services including Gmail, Facebook, WhatsApp and even Android text messages.

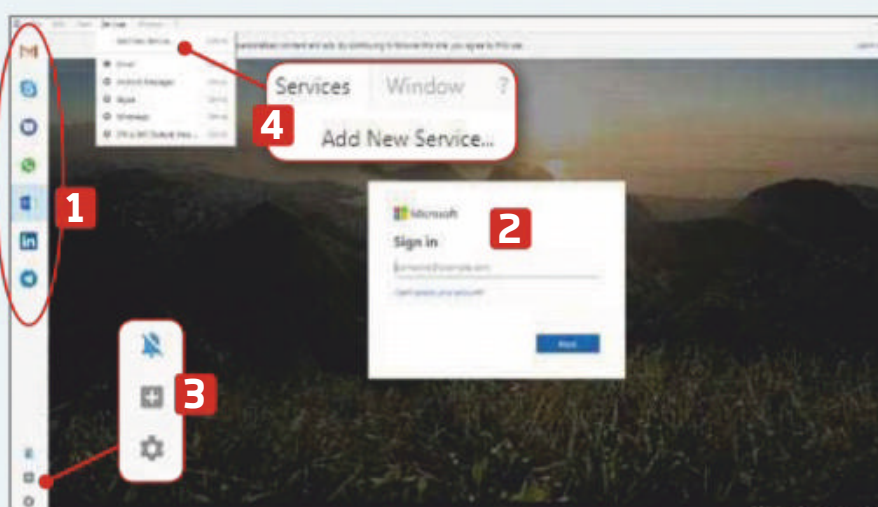
Franz: meetfranz.com | 10 mins | Windows 7, 8, 10 macOS 10.9+ Linux



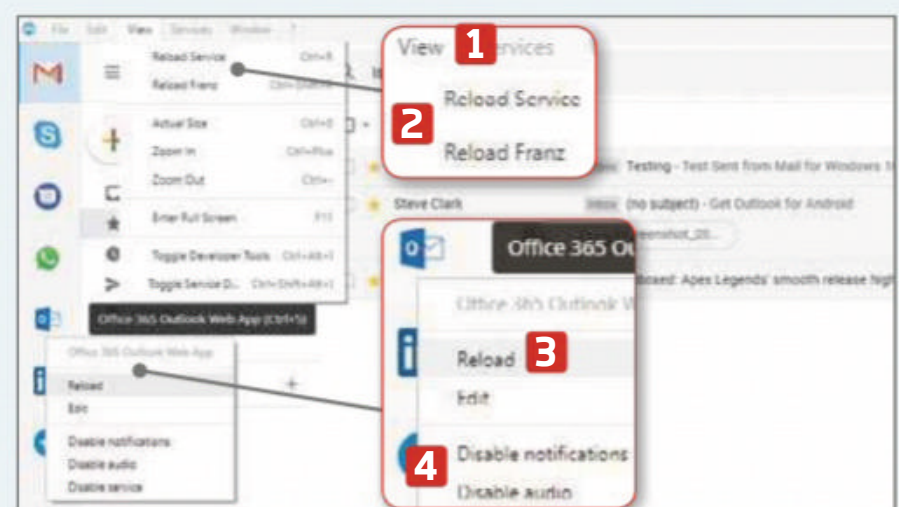
1 Click Get Started to display a list of the most popular services, **1** including WhatsApp, Skype and Outlook. If you don't see your service, click the 'All services' button **2** for the full list (or check bit.ly/serv472). Click a service tile **3** to personalise the way Franz works with it.



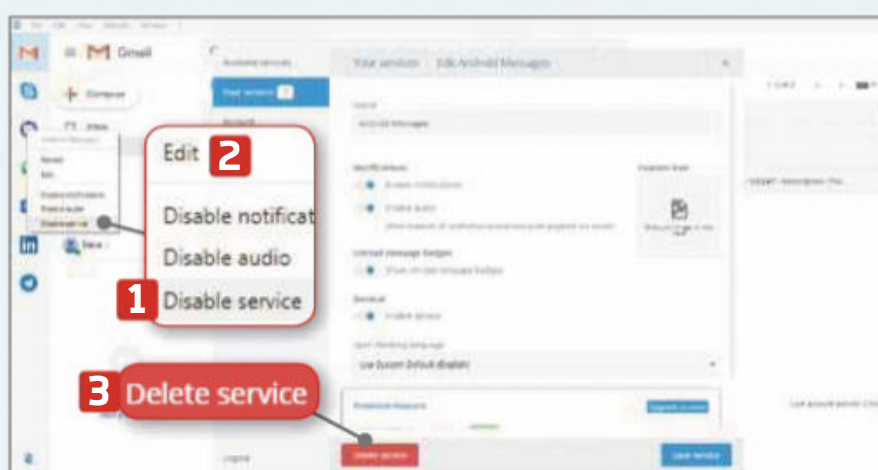
2 Set preferences for a service by toggling switches **1** to enable notifications, audio and the unread-messages badge. **2** You can rename the service **3** and click 'Custom icon' **4** to upload a different image. Click 'Save service' **5** to store it under 'Your services'. **6**



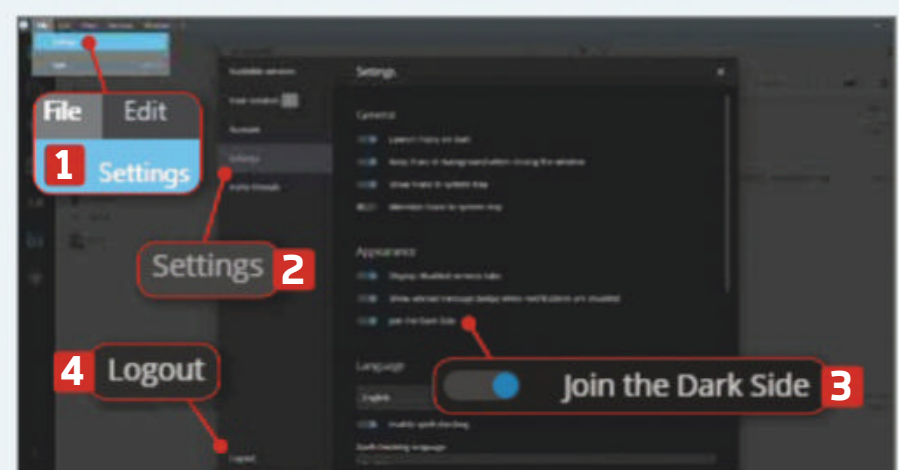
3 Drag and drop your services in the sidebar **1** to reorder them. The first time you click a service, you must sign in. **2** Use the buttons at the bottom to mute notifications, add new services and open settings. **3** You can also add them from the Services menu by choosing Add New Service. **4**



4 If your messenger app isn't working, click View, **1** then select either Reload Service or Reload Franz; **2** or right-click a service icon and choose Reload **3** to restart it. Right-clicking also offers options to edit a service's settings or quickly disable its notifications, sounds and badges. **4**



5 To temporarily stop a service looking for new messages, right-click its sidebar icon and select 'Disable service'. **1** A second right-click lets you 'Enable service' again. To remove a service permanently, right-click its icon, select Edit **2** and, in the pop-up, click 'Delete service' **3** to remove it.



6 Go to File, Settings **1** and the Settings tab **2** to tweak universal preferences, such as keeping Franz accessible in the notification area or clearing the cache. 'Join the Dark Side' enables dark mode. **3** If you share your computer, click Logout **4** to sign out and keep your messages private.

Weekend Project

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



How to...

Keep everything private on all your devices

Wayne Williams shows you how to encrypt everything, so no one can snoop on the data and devices that you want to keep secret

Most people have personal files on their PCs and mobile devices that they would rather keep hidden from prying eyes. These might include photos, videos and important documents such as bank statements, wills, copies of passports and so on. In this issue's Weekend Project, we look at the best ways to keep your files private, stop others reading your email and reveal how to create a secure space on a hard drive or portable device for storing your files and folders.



Keep your files private

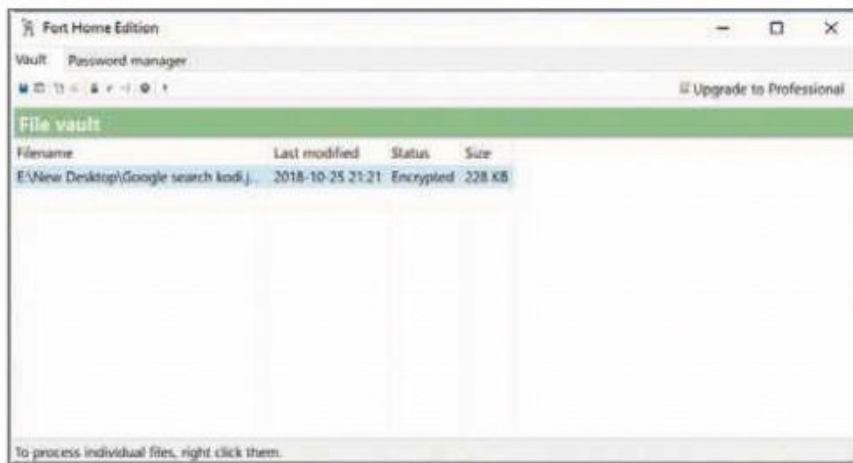
There are lots of ways to keep your files safe: you can hide them with a tool such as Wise Folder Hider (bit.ly/wise472) or lock them using programs such as Fort Home (www.byteptr.com) and FileNurse (filenurse.com). Fort Home secures your files using AES-256 encryption and is very easy to use – just add the files to lock, click the encrypt option and type in a passphrase. When you want to

access your files, repeat the process but select decrypt, then enter the passphrase. The software automatically creates a copy of your file before encrypting the original.

As well as encrypting files, FileNurse can hide folders and drives, password-protect them and recover lost or deleted files from your PC, USB drives and memory cards. All the available options are accessible from a sidebar on the left.

Create a secure space on a hard drive

One way of keeping your important files private is by creating a secure vault to put them in. There are a number of free tools you can use for this task, and one of the best is VeraCrypt (bit.ly/vera472) for Windows, macOS and Linux. This is actually a spin-off of TrueCrypt, a popular encryption program that was discontinued in 2014. The program



Fort Home offers an easy way to encrypt your personal files

can secure any hard drive (including the system hard drive, which Windows runs on) and can even transform a spare USB memory stick into a portable, private vault, so you can safely carry important personal files with you. We show you how to do this in our Mini Workshop, below. The program is updated on a regular basis with new features appearing regularly.

Secure everything you do on your PC

If you want to keep everything you do completely secure, then Tails (tails.boum.org) is a great solution. The Amnesiac Incognito Live System (to give it its full name) is a privacy-focused live Linux operating system that you can boot into from a DVD, USB memory stick or SD card. The operating system can encrypt your files, emails and instant-messaging chats, and lets you browse the web anonymously using the Tor network. Tails doesn't leave any traces behind once you shut it down, and new versions are released on a regular basis (with emergency builds rushed out if vulnerabilities are detected).

Secure your hard drive with BitLocker

BitLocker is an encryption feature that was first introduced back in Windows Vista. It's available in the Ultimate and Enterprise editions of Windows 7; the Pro and Enterprise editions of Windows 8+; and the Pro,

Enterprise and Education editions of Windows 10. BitLocker protects your files and folders from unauthorised access by scrambling the contents of any drive (system, fixed or removable), then unscrambling everything again when you enter your password. If your computer gets stolen while the drive is locked, the thieves won't have access to your data.

To get started using BitLocker, either right-click a drive in File Explorer and select 'Turn BitLocker on' or type BitLocker into the Search box, open the Manage BitLocker control panel and enable the feature for your drive there.

Encrypt your mobile device

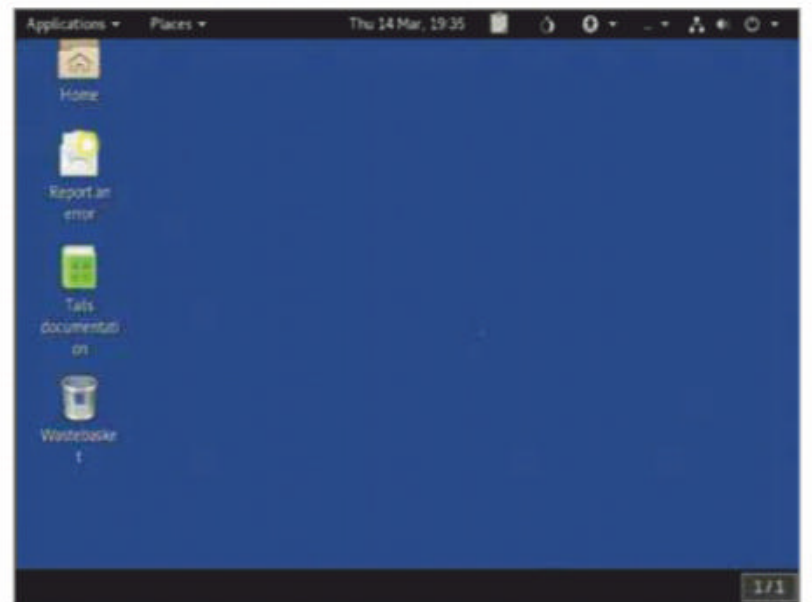
Encryption on your phone stores the data in such a way that it can only be read when your device is unlocked. Many new Android phones have encryption on by default, but if yours doesn't, start by plugging in your phone – the

process takes a while and you don't want the battery to run out halfway through. Go to Settings and tap 'Lock screen and security', then scroll down to 'Encrypt device' or 'Encrypt SD card'. Don't interrupt the encryption process at any point because this can lead to data loss.

Apple's iPhones and iPads automatically encrypt the data on them but it's worth protecting your device with a six-digit passcode, rather than the default four. To do this, go to Settings, 'Face ID & Passcode' (or 'Touch ID & Passcode' if you don't have a device with Face ID) and enter your existing PIN. Tap Change Passcode or Passcode Options and go from there.

Make webmail more private

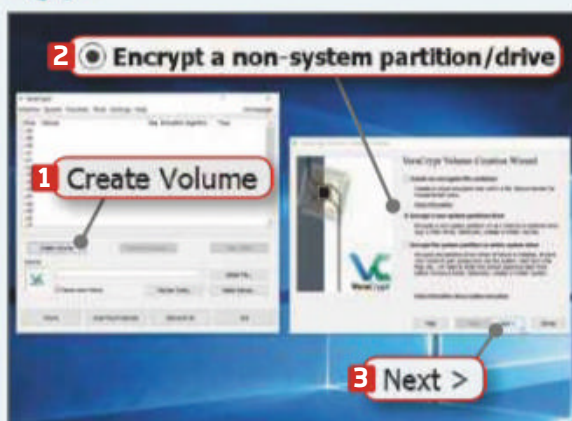
PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) has been securing email communications since 1991. The system keeps your conversations private by encrypting them and works through the use of two digital



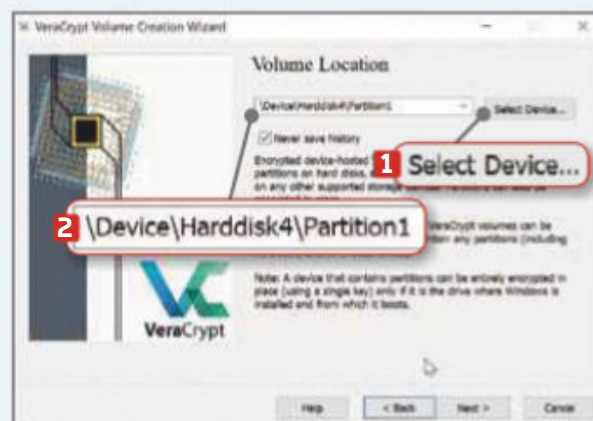
Tails is a secure privacy-focused operating system that can also encrypt personal files



MINI WORKSHOP | Create a portable USB vault for your files with VeraCrypt



1 Insert the USB flash drive you want to use, then run the software and click the Create Volume button. **1** The VeraCrypt Volume Creation Wizard opens. From the list of options, select 'Encrypt a non-system partition/drive' **2** and click Next. **3** Choose between creating a standard or hidden volume.







2 Tell VeraCrypt where to create the secure volume by clicking the Select Device button **1** and identifying your USB drive in the list. Make sure you select the partition entry and not the drive itself. It will be added under Volume Location. **2** Click OK.



3 You can either 'Create encrypted volume and format it' **1** or 'Encrypt partition in place'. **2** Choose the first option to encrypt an empty drive; the latter if you want to keep any data currently on the memory stick. Select the encryption method and volume size, and enter a password (twice) to complete the setup.

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3		First Utility: First Broadband	£18.99	18 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£227.88
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Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 18 March 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

• **STREAM ANYTHING TO YOUR TV**

Videos, films, photos, podcasts, Skype and more

• **NEVER USE A PASSWORD AGAIN**

Why it's time to trust your fingerprint

• **CREATE A SPLIT-SCREEN FILE**

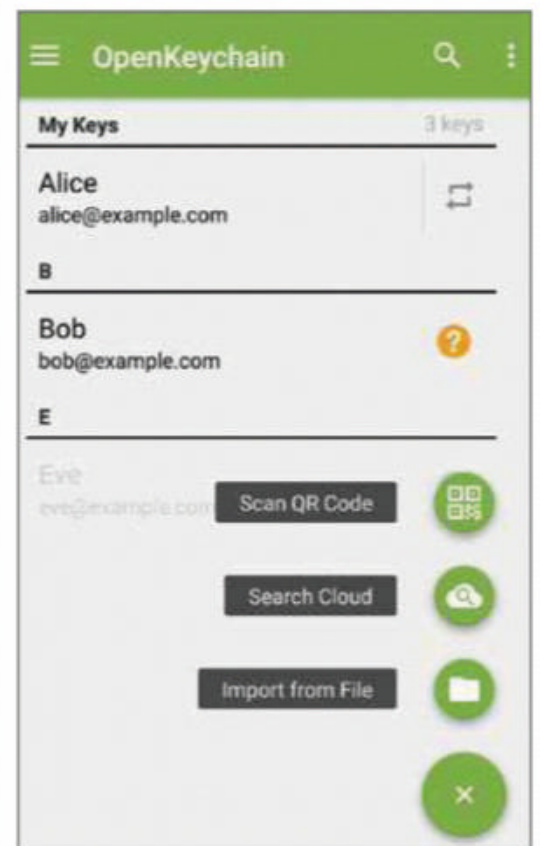
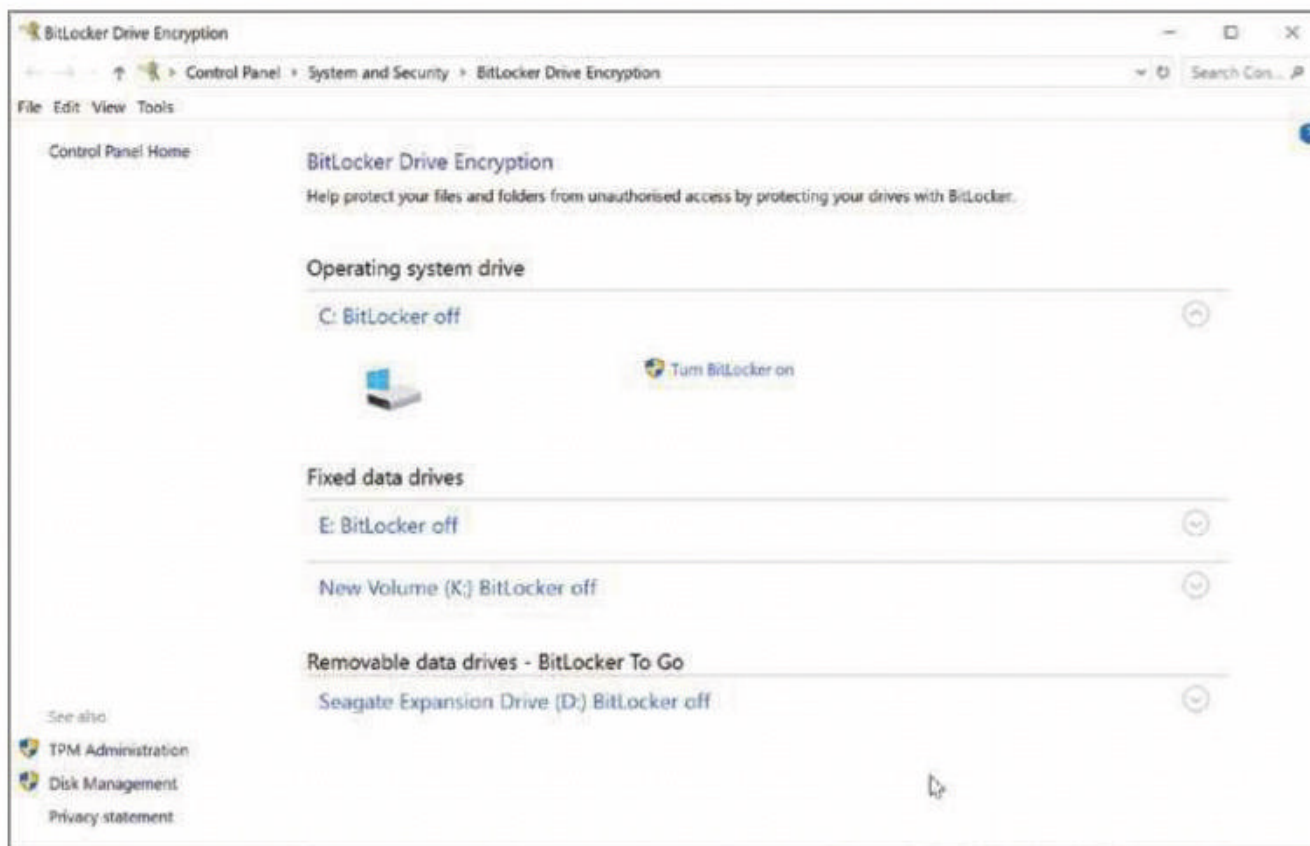
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Some versions of Windows comes with a built-in encryption tool called BitLocker

OpenKeychain brings PGP email encryption to Android

keys (passwords) – one private and one public. The private key stays with you but the public one you share freely. The software encrypts your message with the private key and the recipient decrypts it using your public key.

PGP can be tricky to set up and use, but the open-source tool Mailvelope (www.mailvelope.com) simplifies the process and integrates directly into popular webmail services such as Gmail and Outlook. It comes as an add-on for Chrome and Firefox, and you secure emails directly through the webmail

interface. Anyone you exchange emails with also needs to have Mailvelope installed so they can read the messages that you send to them.

Mailvelope has been around since 2015 and was recently updated to introduce some extended key-management features. You can now change your private key password, change the key expiration time and add new email addresses to a key (or revoke existing ones). We show you how to use it in our Mini Workshop, below.

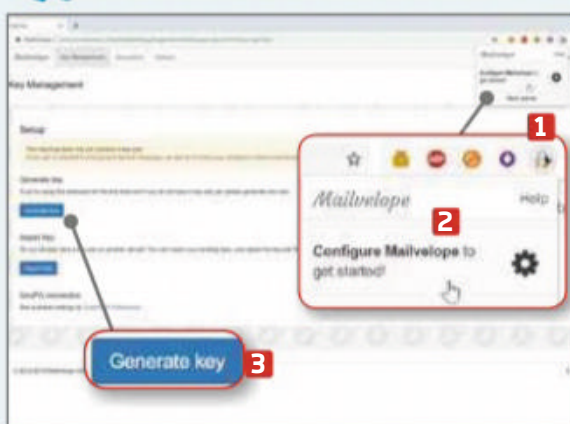
Alternatively, there's FlowCrypt

(flowcrypt.com) – a simple end-to-end encryption extension for Chrome and Firefox, which uses PGP to secure messages and attachments sent through Gmail. There's a beta app available for Android and support for other platforms is planned, but development is slow.

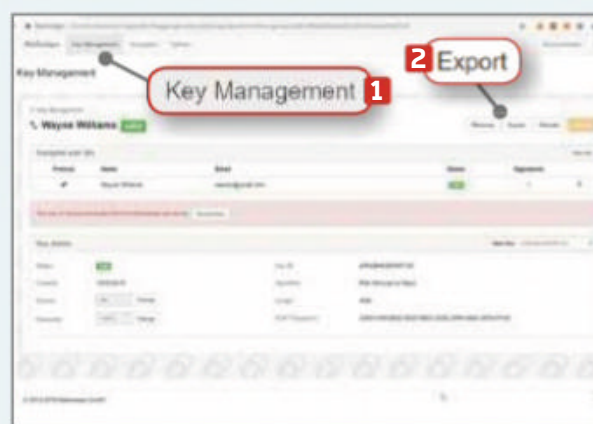
Android users can secure their email messages using the open-source OpenKeychain (www.openkeychain.org) which uses OpenPGP. The app, which is available from the Google Play store, lets you create, store and manage keys, and is very easy to use. ■



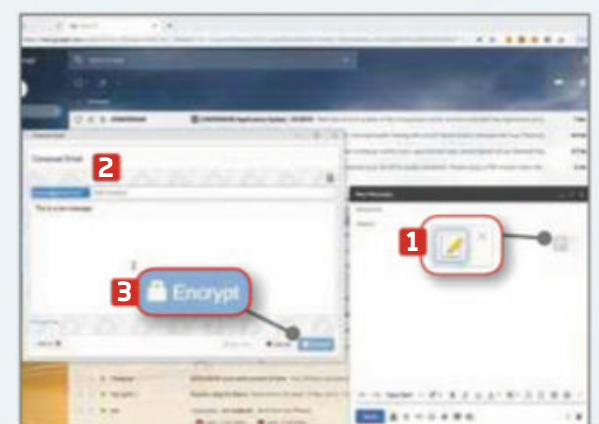
MINI WORKSHOP | Encrypt your webmail using Mailvelope



1 Install the add-on in Chrome or Firefox. Open it by clicking the button in your browser, **1** then click the Configure Mailvelope message. **2** To share emails securely, you will need both public and private keys. Click 'Generate key'. **3** Enter your name, email address and a password, then click Generate.



2 Click Key Management **1** to view your key. You'll need to share the public one with anyone you want to exchange secure messages with. Hover your mouse over the key and click the 'i' icon on the right-hand side. In the new window, click the Export button **2** and select Public. Click Save. This key must only be shared securely.



3 When someone sends you their public key, click Import Keys to add it. To send a secure message, go to your webmail service. Click the icon in the new message window **1** and a secure Compose Email window opens. **2** Add a recipient, write your message, then click Encrypt. **3**

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Breathe new life into your old peripherals

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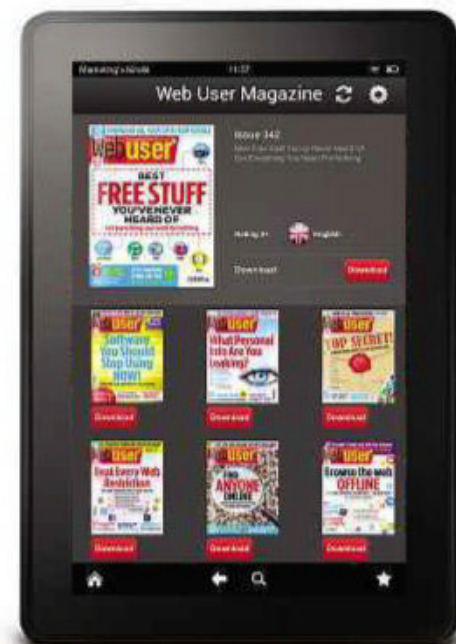
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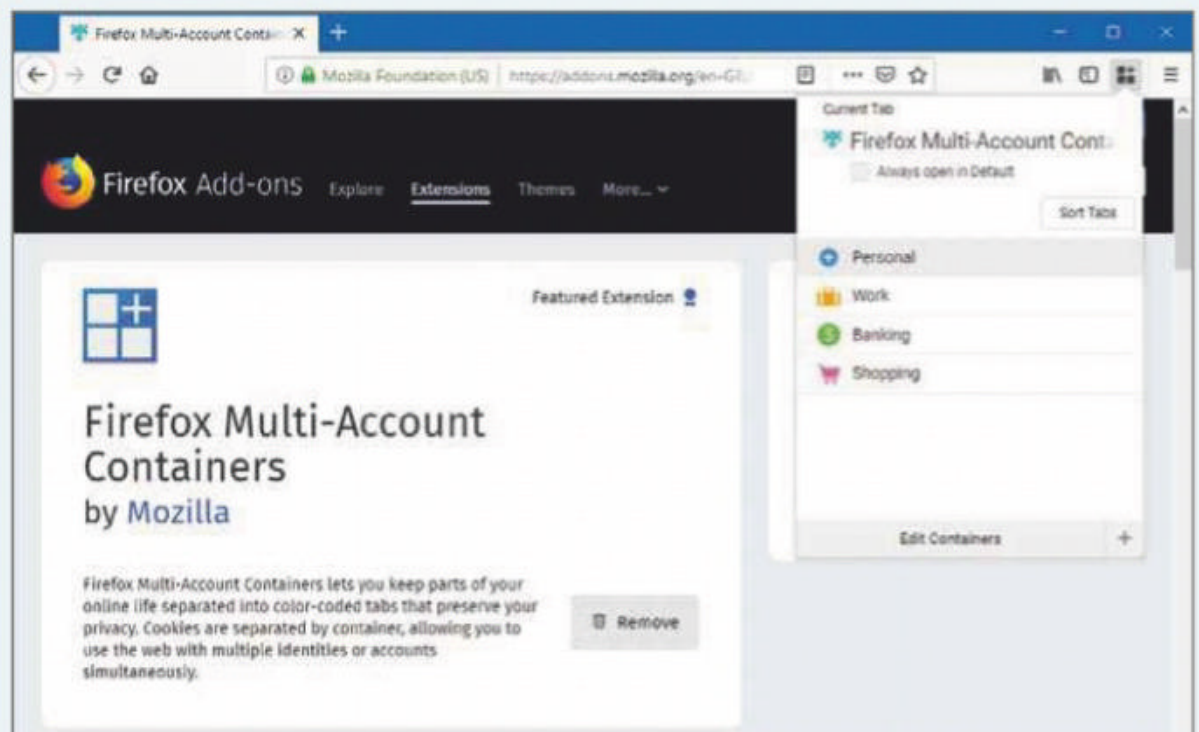
Master Firefox containers to increase your privacy and keep browsing identities separate

Sandbox Firefox by adding containers

Multi-Account Containers (bit.ly/ffmac472) is a browser extension created by Firefox's developer Mozilla. It lets you compartmentalise your web browsing into secure sectors, a bit like having several sandboxes built into a single browser. This makes Firefox more private and secure, by stopping one website from tracking the things you do in another, and can also help you keep multiple accounts with a single website open at the same time.

A container is a special tab that isolates the website you open in it. The extension comes with four tab types pre-configured – Personal, Work, Banking and Shopping – so you can separate those activities. But you can add more categories and remove the defaults if you like.

Install the extension by clicking the 'Add to Firefox' button, then click the Multi-Account Containers button on the toolbar. This shows you a list of the currently available containers. Select one to open a tab, and any websites



Add the Firefox Multi-Account Containers extension to create separate browser instances to manage accounts and privacy

you visit while using it will only be associated with this container.

This is an efficient way to organise different accounts for online services. For example, if you have two Gmail accounts – one for personal and one

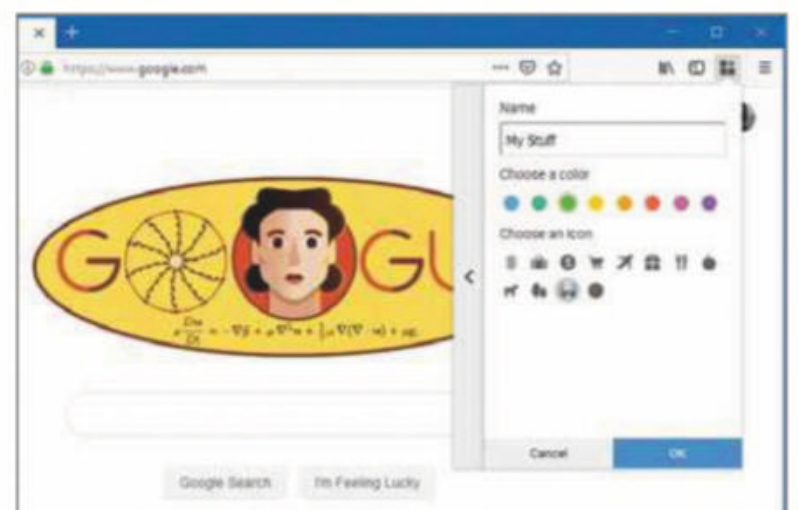
for work – you can log into each one in separate container tabs. Normally, you would need to sign into one, log out and then sign in to the other, but you can have both accounts open at the same time if you use containers.

Open sites in containers

Normally, when you click the plus button to the right of your tabs in Firefox, a new tab opens for you to start a fresh browsing session. However, once you've installed the Multi-Account Containers extension, holding down the plus button displays a menu of currently available containers. Select one to open it.

When you use a new container tab to open a website you've visited before,

the site won't recognise you because there will be no record of your saved cookies, browsing history or remembered logins. This is useful for avoiding trackers on the web and increasing your privacy while online, and can also be used for keeping online accounts separate – just log into another account in a different container.



Edit existing containers or create new ones by clicking the toolbar icon

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.

Create new containers

You don't have to limit yourself to the default list of containers because you can add as many new ones as you like. Click the Multi-Account Containers button on the toolbar, then click the plus button at the bottom of the menu to create a new container. You can then

enter a name, select a colour and assign an appropriate icon for it.

Edit the default containers

If you're not happy with the default set of containers, you can either edit



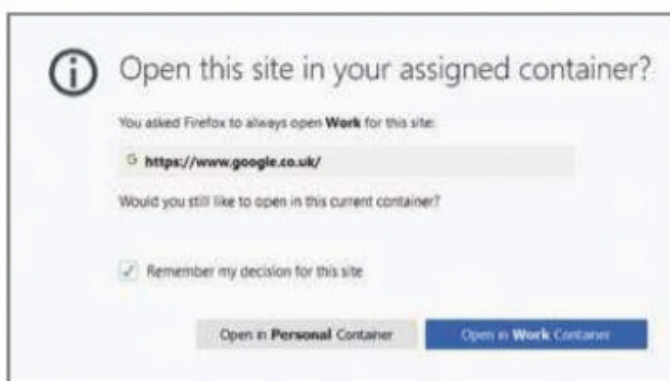
them or remove them completely. Click the Multi-Account Containers button, then click Edit Containers at the bottom. Click the bin icon next to a container to delete it or the pencil icon to edit it. Type a new name, select a colour and choose an icon, as in the previous tip.

Associate websites with specific containers

A website can be set to always open in the same container. This solves the problem of visiting a website – such as Facebook, for example – and finding you aren't logged in because you previously used the service in a different container. It also keeps the cookies and stored information separate from sites in other containers.

Open a container and go to a website. Click the Containers icon in the toolbar and tick the box 'Always open in' whatever the container is called. From now on, if you visit the site by typing its address, it will open as normal as long as you are using the container it is associated with. If you visit the site from a different container, a message is displayed asking if you want to 'Open this site in your assigned container?'.

There is an option to remember this decision for future visits.



Associate a website with a specific container for future visits

Unlink sites from containers

Linking sites and containers can be useful in some circumstances but not in others. For example, if you want to log into two Gmail accounts, you can't set one of them to always open in a particular container because Firefox will always switch to it and you won't be able to open your second account.

If you set this by mistake, there's an easy way to unlink it, although it's not obvious. Click the containers icon in the toolbar, then click Edit Containers at the bottom. Click the pencil icon next to a container and at the bottom of the edit window you'll find a list of websites that have been associated with it. As the mouse moves over them, a bin icon appears on the right. Click this to remove the website, which you can then open in whichever tab or container you type its address into.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Only allow a site to open in a specific container

Multi-Account Containers lets you restrict a website to a specific container, but you may want to assign it to two or more. For example, you might want to be able to open a site in both the Shopping and Personal containers, while keeping it away from Work and Banking.

To do this, install an extension called 'Block sites outside container' (bit.ly/bloc472). Open the Firefox menu and go to Add-ons, Extensions, then select 'Block sites outside container'. At the foot of the extension information page, there's a small New Rule button that's easy to miss. Find it and click it to create a rule that determines which sites open on which tabs. Enter a name for the rule and enable it, then add the relevant website addresses in the box. For example, name the rule Social and enter 'facebook.com', 'twitter.com' and 'pinterest.com' in the Domains box, on separate lines.

Scroll down to the 'Allowed in Containers' section, which lists the available containers. Click to select the containers that are allowed to open the sites in the list (light green border) and those that are not (light red border). You can select as many containers as you like. There is no Save button because the rule is saved automatically.

If you try to open a website in a tab that it's not allowed to open in, a message is displayed saying the site has been blocked by a rule. You're shown a list of containers that the site

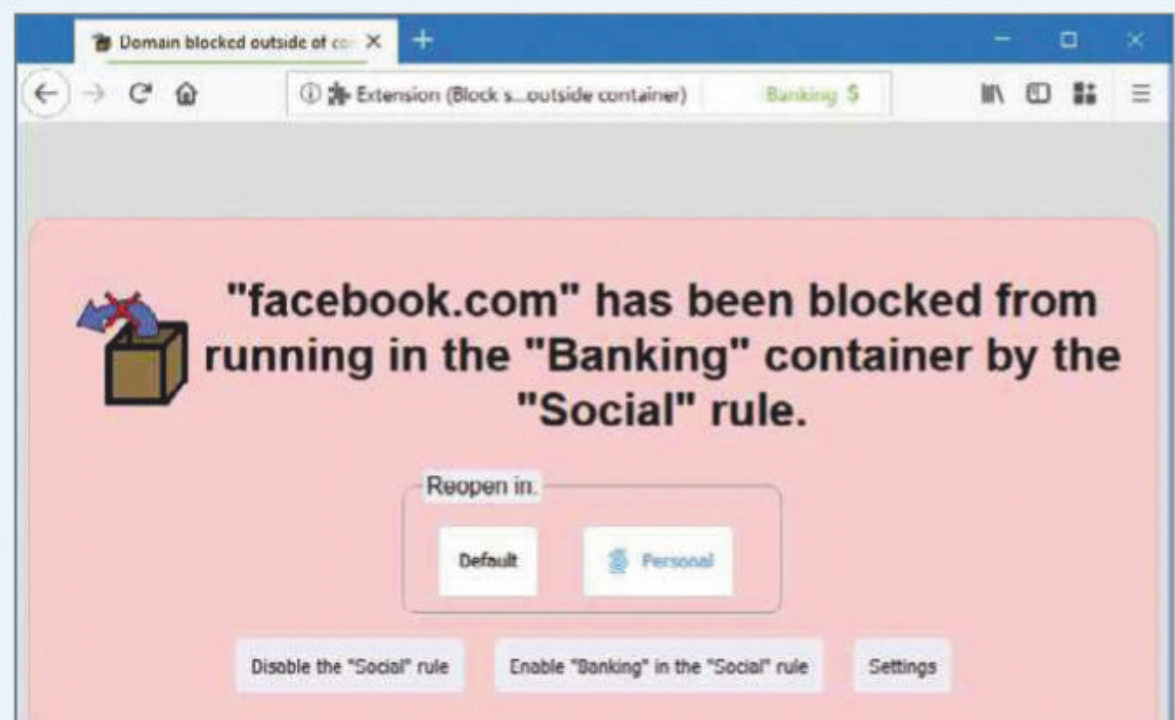
is allowed to open in – simply click one to open the site. There are also buttons to disable the rule or open the extension's settings, where the rule can be edited and modified if you need to change it.

Open links in a different container

Click a link in a web page and it will open in the same container, but you can choose to open links in any container you want by installing Containers with Transitions (bit.ly/tran472). This is a reworking of the original Multi-Account Containers extension, so if you already have that installed, disable it by going to the Firefox menu, then Add-ons and Extensions.

Enabling Containers with Transitions adds a new Containers button to the toolbar. Click this to open an existing container or add new ones. There are two Edit Rules buttons – click one to show a list of containers. You can set links from one container to open in another by selecting the relevant option.

If assigning links from one container to always only open in another feels too rigid, you may prefer to choose where links open as and when the situation arises. To do this, right-click a link and select 'Open Link in New Container Tab', then select the container you want. This could be handy if you're browsing a site in your Personal container but want to open a new link in your Shopping container, for example.



Associate websites with multiple containers using 'Block sites outside container'

Ask the Expert

Roland Waddilove, computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at webuser@webuser.co.uk



VIDEO

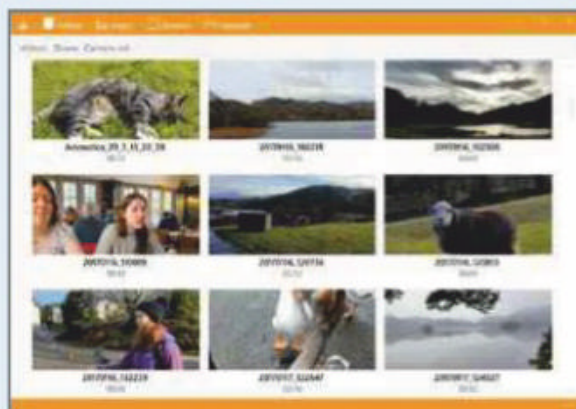
Play videos in any format

Q My friend in Spain sends me links to videos via the Messenger app but recently, when I click a video, a window appears saying I need a new program to view it and to search for one in the Windows Store. It doesn't say which program I need, and it doesn't happen every time. Is there something wrong with Messenger?

James Munroe, via email

A Windows can play only a limited number of video file types and some aren't supported by default. It's possible that you are occasionally receiving a video in a format that isn't supported by Windows.

VLC (www.videolan.org) is able to play a wider range of video file types.



VLC plays almost any video and comes in desktop and Windows Store versions

There is a simple version of VLC in the Windows Store but the full version, which you can download from its site, has more features for advanced users.

PotPlayer (potplayer.daum.net) is another excellent video player that supports many different video types, or you could try the Splash player we've looked at on page 52. Between the three, you should be able to play every type of video you receive.

people prefer it, so keep using that if IObit Uninstaller isn't working.

GENERAL PC

Move Windows to a new PC

Q My Windows 7 PC is eight years old, and everything is up to date and running well, especially since moving to an SSD. Before I take this PC offline, prior to Windows 7 support ceasing, I'd like to get a new case and motherboard. Can I just move the SSD to the new system or would Microsoft object? I'm happy to buy another Windows 7 licence if necessary, but I don't want Windows 10 and am not sure how best to proceed.

Andrew Goodenough, via email

A Windows licensing is actually quite complicated: PCs come with Windows preinstalled and your Windows 7 PC may have a sticker on the side with the licence information. This can tie it to the computer, so if you move Windows to a new computer, the different motherboard may be detected and it will probably deactivate itself.

If you bought a retail copy of Windows and installed it on your computer, the rules are more relaxed. It might still deactivate when you move it to another computer, but you should be able to get Microsoft to activate it. You'll just have to try it and see.

When the drive is started in the new computer, it may need to be activated. Follow the instructions to activate it by phone. Whether Microsoft will provide an activation key depends on the licence. You should be fine with the personal licence from a retail copy.

Windows 7 Home and Professional



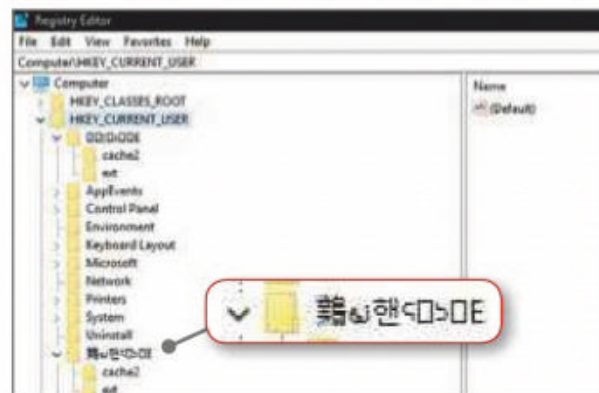
Stocks of Windows 7 are low, so buy soon if you think you'll need it in the future

GENERAL PC

Identify strange files in the Registry

Q I downloaded an update to IObit Uninstaller (bit.ly/iobu472) on my Windows 10 PC and now it won't run. I discovered that the icon didn't lead to the EXE file – in fact, there is no EXE file. After uninstalling and reinstalling a couple of times with no success, I checked in the Registry and found some strange folders with what look like Chinese characters.

I found six of these folders on my Windows 7 PC, too, which has nearly all



Chinese characters in the Registry are likely to be caused by faulty software

the same downloads and apps as my other computer. Both IObit Driver Booster (bit.ly/iodb472) and Smart Defrag (bit.ly/iosd472) are working fine, but I've now downloaded and installed Revo Uninstaller (bit.ly/revo472) and used it to get rid of IObit Uninstaller.

Billy Armstrong, via email

A We'd normally consider Chinese characters in the Registry to be file corruption, but it wouldn't happen in the same way on two different PCs. These results look deliberate and were probably created by software you have installed, which would make sense as you say that both computers have the same programs on them. However, it's unlikely that three security programs would miss the same piece of malware, so it's probably nothing to worry about. As a general rule, it's safest to leave Registry entries alone.

We've used IObit Uninstaller for a long time, so it's a mystery why it has stopped working on your computer. Revo Uninstaller is also good and some



versions are still available from some online stores, such as Amazon. Many listings are out of stock but there are still a few sellers with copies.

MOBILE

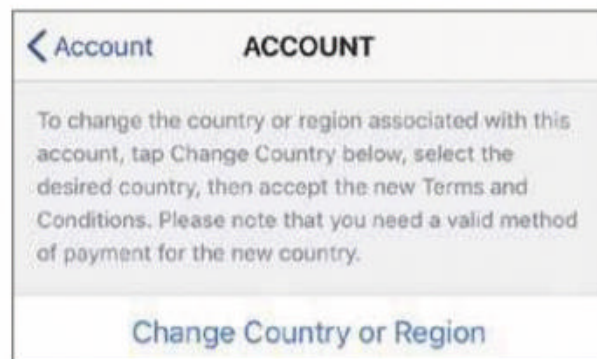
Get missing Malwarebytes for iPhone

Q In response to Wayne Pilson's tip to install Malwarebytes for iPhone (issue 469), where did he get this? It's not in the App Store and I'd like to give it a try.

Marc Haymes, via email

A Malwarebytes Mobile Security is available for iPhones in the App Stores of 19 countries. Unfortunately, the UK is not one of them – in fact, no EU countries are included. This looks suspiciously like a GDPR privacy issue, which only applies to software, websites and services in the EU. It may become available in the UK store in the future.

The only way to get it right now is to set the iPhone's location to the US and change the store from the UK to the US. Open the Settings app on the iPhone and tap iTunes & App Stores. Tap your Apple ID at the top and sign in with your email and password. Tap Country/Region, then 'Change Country or Region' and select the US. Tap Next and agree to the terms and conditions. You must then enter the payment and billing information to be used with the US store. The app can then be found and downloaded.



Change the region for your Apple ID to access a different country's App Store

EMAIL

Block unwanted junk mail

Q I am 83 and not very into computers. When I was on Windows 8, my email had a Block button I could use to stop unwanted emails, but I now can't find it. In the last month, I've received 20 to 40 emails in my Junk section. I don't open them in case they contain malware or are fraudulent – instead, I move them all to Delete and clear them out from there, but it's a tedious task to get rid of them each day.

Ray Cloud, via email

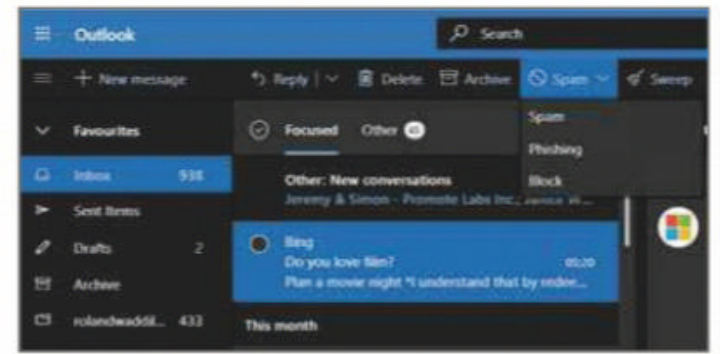
A You don't say which email service you use or how you access it. Let's assume you use the Mail app in Windows 10 with a web-based Outlook email account (outlook.live.com). Other popular email services such as Gmail have similar features, though their menus and buttons may vary.

In the Mail app on your PC, select an email in the inbox. If it's junk mail, click the three-dot icon in the top-right corner to open the menu and select 'Mark as Spam'. This moves the message to the Junk folder. You don't need to empty the Junk folder – emails are automatically deleted after 30 days.

Unfortunately, the Windows 10 Mail app has limited features and there's no option to block senders or create rules to move emails to the Junk or Deleted Items folder. The spam detector might not even be trainable.

However, you can do this if you use Outlook webmail. Select an email in the inbox and click the Spam button in the toolbar. There are three menu options: Spam, Phishing and Block. If you block senders, messages from them will not appear in your inbox.

Another way to deal with unwanted emails in Outlook webmail is to select a message in the inbox and click the three dots at the right side of the menu bar. Select 'Create rule' and it asks where it should move emails from this sender. You can choose Archive, Deleted Items,



Outlook webmail has Spam, Phishing and Block options for dealing with unwanted email

Junk or any other folder.

Rules and blocked senders created in Outlook webmail can be applied in the Mail app on your PC, but you can only create them on the website.

HARDWARE

Upgrade your router

Q I have a Virgin Media Hub supplying my Wi-Fi and internet. Can you explain the difference between a router and a hub? What are the benefits of switching to a router?

Davis Andrews, via email

A Some internet service providers, such as Virgin Media and BT, call their routers hubs. A hub may offer more than a standard router, such as providing TV and telephone capability, but it's still essentially just a router. You may have to use the hub supplied by your ISP to connect to the internet, but you might be able to put it in bridging mode and connect it to a better router that has stronger Wi-Fi, for example.

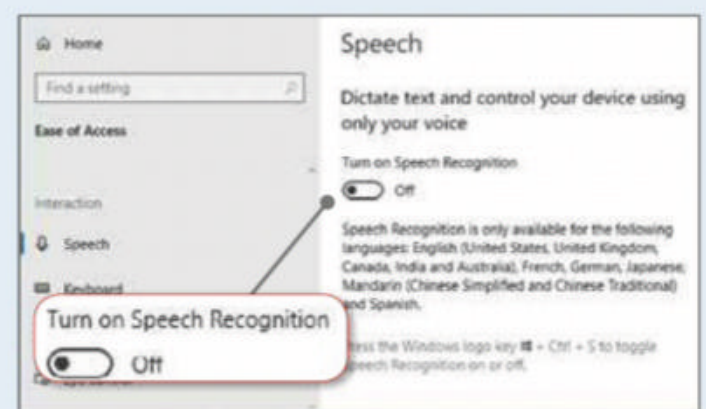
GENERAL PC

Control your PC with your voice

Q Can you help a 77-year-old having great difficulty trying to type with a tremor? I bought and registered a headset with a microphone to use Windows 10 speech recognition, but the only response I can get is 'listening'. What am I doing wrong?

Peter Kenny, via email

A Open the Settings app, click 'Ease of Access' and select Speech on the left. Under 'Talk instead of type' is the keyboard shortcut to enable dictation – Windows+H. It works in word processors, email and other apps. Click the link 'Get more info about dictation' to see a list of commands, such as Enter, Backspace,



Toggle speech recognition on or off with the switch or keyboard shortcut

comma and so on. Further down, there is a switch under 'Turn on Speech Recognition', or you can just press Windows+Ctrl+S at any time to control your PC with your voice.

Also, go to Cortana in the Settings app and turn on every feature. You can then say "Hey Cortana" to perform various functions – searching, adding appointments, creating notes, opening apps and more.



This fortnight Roland has been using Windows on his Mac, which runs perfectly in Apple's Boot Camp software

Your Top Tips

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



TOP TIP

SMART SPEAKERS

Give Alexa a new name

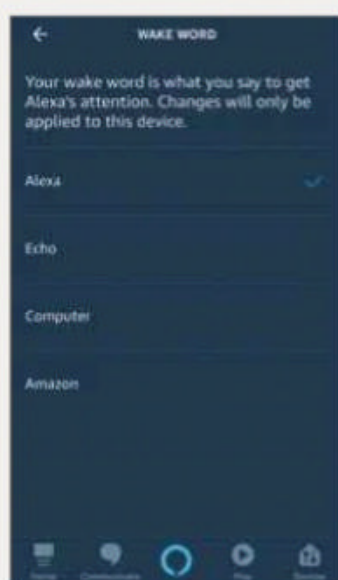
If you have an Amazon Echo smart speaker (bit.ly/echo472), you'll be familiar with saying "Alexa" when you want it to do something, such as play music. But imagine how irritating this would be if you happen to have a family member or a friend called Alexa! I have had the TV trigger an "I'm sorry, I didn't understand that" message when there was a character in a TV programme called Alexa.

Don't worry, though, because Amazon's 'wake word' can be changed to something else. Open the Alexa app on your phone, go to the menu and select Settings. Press Device Settings

and tap your device, such as Echo Dot. Swipe up and press Wake Word about half way down the settings. Choose from Alexa, Echo, Computer or Amazon.

Adam Williams,
via email

Back Issues disc winner



Rename Alexa and wake your Amazon Echo with a different word

multiple places in the document, click the Format Painter icon again and click and drag over more text.

Ben Powell, via email

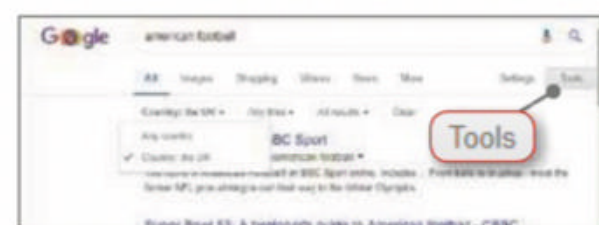
SEARCH

Force Google to search UK sites

I find Google is pretty intelligent when it comes to search, so if you search for 'football' you get results about UK football, not American football. However, I find some searches still produce US-centric results. If a Google search doesn't produce the results you want, click Tools in the menu under the search box after searching, then click Any Country and select 'Country: the UK'. Note that this only seems to appear if you're searching from google.co.uk, not google.com.

Try searching for 'American football'. When you select 'Country: the UK', you get a different set of search results, such as when American football is on UK TV, which UK universities play the sport, and so on.

Anthony Hogan, via email



Show Google search results from the UK by using the Tools menu options

GENERAL PC

Prepare for tamper-proof security

I joined the Windows Insider Programme so I get the next version of Windows 10 updates slightly ahead of everyone else (switch it on in Settings, Update & Security), and I noticed a new anti-tamper security feature. It stops malware from changing your Windows security settings. To find this new feature, open the Settings app (Windows+i) and type **tamper** in the search box. Click Tamper

GENERAL PC

Bring back the old-style Windows calculator

For all its tinkering, we still seem obsessed with bringing back Microsoft's old products. Well, here's another one: the Windows 7 calculator. This is recommended by Winaero (winaero.com), so you know it's good quality. The site also says it's really small, localised and supported on both 32- and 64-bit versions. Download it at bit.ly/calc472.

R Halsey, via email

first – indexed versions of the site you're currently visiting, it's also a very fast way of accessing websites when they're down. You can do this from the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine website (web.archive.org), but having it on a browser button is even more convenient.

Tim Skinner, via email

OFFICE

Copy text styles quickly

Microsoft Word has lots of ready-made styles, such as headings, subheadings, titles and so on, but I prefer to use my own. I always write a document first, then style it while I proofread it. However, it can be a pain going through a document setting the font, colour, size and so on. The solution is the Format Painter. It works like copy and paste, except it doesn't paste text, it pastes the style to match what was copied.

Format Painter works with both the Windows (products.office.com) and online (office.live.com) versions of Word. Style an element in the document, such as a sub-heading, then place the cursor in it. In the toolbar next to the clipboard, click the paintbrush icon on the Home tab, then click and drag it over any text to make it the same style. To apply it to

BROWSERS

See the web how it used to be

I really recommend installing the Wayback Machine Chrome extension (bit.ly/wayback472). Not only can you click it to view recent – or even the very



The Wayback Machine's browser tool shows how far websites have come



Protection in the results to open Windows Security, then scroll down and enable Tamper Protection.

Barry Hughes, via email

INTERNET

Flush the DNS to connect to a website

Whenever I'm struggling to connect to websites, I find that 'flushing' the DNS cache can help. To perform this, run Command Prompt or Windows PowerShell in admin mode, then type `ipconfig /flushdns` and press Enter. You'll receive a message that says you've 'Successfully flushed the DNS Resolver Cache.' Nine times out of ten I find that clearing the cache works, and I can connect to the website. But if it still won't load, try switching your DNS server.

Sam Phelps, via email

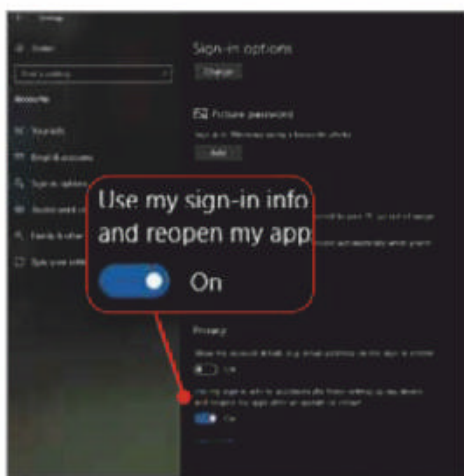
GENERAL PC

Stop apps opening after restart

If you've ever had to restart or update your computer mid-way through a piece

of work, you'll know that Windows will pick up where it left off by reopening any programs that were closed.

To stop this happening, go to Settings (Windows+i), Accounts and choose 'Sign-in options'.



Use your PC's settings to change whether apps open on restart

At the bottom of the page, in a section called Privacy, turn off the switch marked 'Use my sign-in info'. Once that's done, apps won't automatically boot up after you restart your computer – you'll need to sign in again to get them started.

Derek Wordsworth, via email

GENERAL PC

Reset your Windows 10 Start menu

I'd played around with my Start menu so much that it was a chaotic mess, so I was glad when a friend in IT explained a simple Registry hack that resets it. Press Windows+R, type `regedit` in the box and press Enter to open the Registry Editor. Find:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\CloudStore\Store\Cache\DefaultAccount

Right-click the DefaultAccount folder and select Delete. After you've restarted your computer, your Start menu will

revert to default.

Make sure you create a restore point before making changes to the Registry.

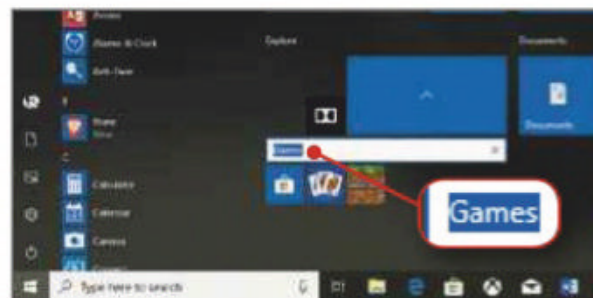
Mike Lumbergh, via email

GENERAL PC

Rename Start menu tile folders

I discovered by accident that Windows 10 now lets you rename Start menu folders. If you drag and drop a tile on another tile in the Start menu, it will create a folder to store them all. Once you've packaged everything into one folder, you'll see the option to name it. This makes it even easier to stay organised.

Sol Morse, via email



You can now change folder names in the Start menu

SOCIAL NETWORKING

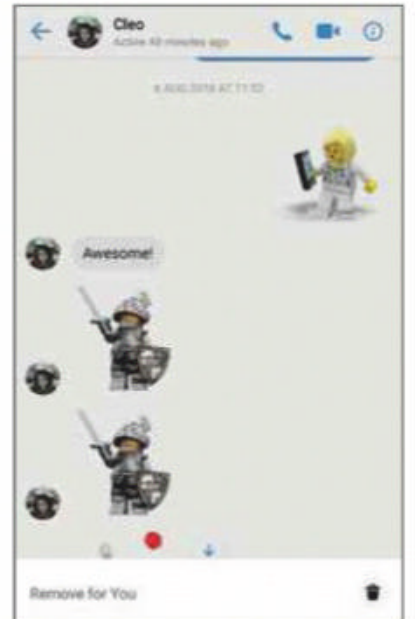
Unsend Facebook Messenger texts

I'm a stickler for good grammar and punctuation, so I find it irritating when I send a Facebook message with a misplaced apostrophe or a word that has incorrectly auto-corrected. Thankfully,

my grandson showed me how to rescind messages in the app by pressing and holding the message, then tapping the Remove icon at the bottom of the screen. Choose either 'Remove for You' (not very useful) or 'Remove for Everyone' to ensure no one will ever see your message. This also works in group chats.

Pol Niven, via email

Facebook Messenger has introduced a useful 'remove message' option



MOBILE

Take a photo while recording a video in iOS

After constantly having to break my film-making flow, I've finally learned how to take a picture while recording a video on my iPhone using the standard camera app. Once your video's rolling, look for a white Capture button next to the red Record button. Press this and the iPhone snaps a photo while continuing to record. I'm also happy to report that these photos retain your default resolution.

Paul Schofield, via email

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

GENERAL PC

Reinstall Windows 10 to solve boot-up problems

For a while, I've been at a loss as to why my PC won't boot up properly. My eldest son, an IT man, told me to press the 'on-off' reboot button of the computer three times, and it eventually comes up with various options, one of which is 'Reset'. The only problem with this is that you lose all your working programs, although it retains all files. But after going through this procedure three times – reloading all the working software on each occasion – I still couldn't get it to work.

At this point, my wife suggested I contact the shop that built the PC for me. They told me to reinstall Windows 10 from bit.ly/windows472. Once I'd downloaded it, I got



Could an outdated Windows 10 be hindering your computer?

a message from Microsoft that said my old version of the operating system was out of date. But, *voilà*, the new version of Windows 10 solved my boot-up problem, and it didn't remove my existing software, either.

Tony Shapps, via email

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?

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



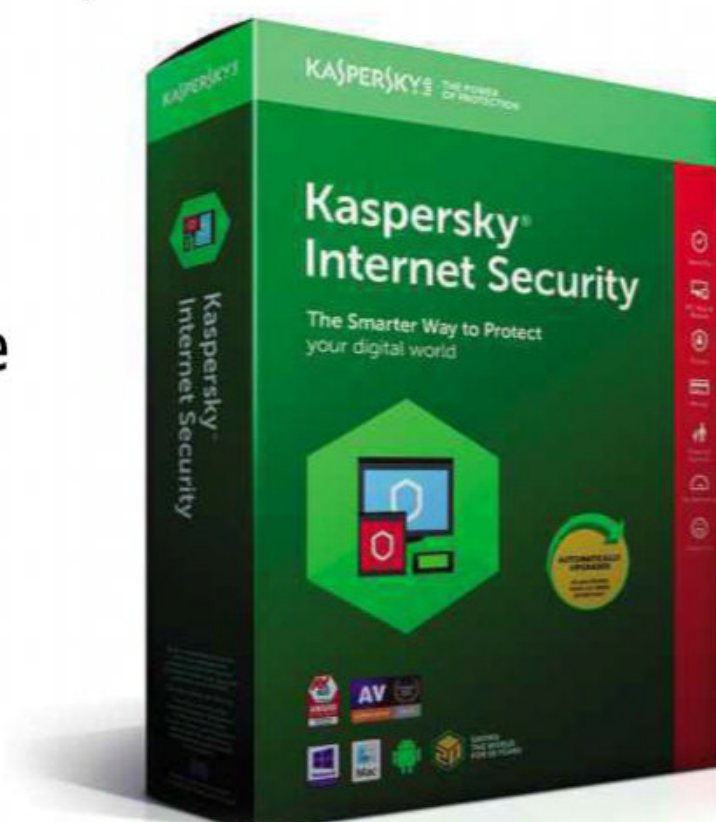
OFFER OF THE FORTNIGHT

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@webuser.co.uk

GENERAL PC

Remove bloatware from Windows 10

Q The worst thing about modern computers is the amount of bloatware that comes packed on them – I don't remember my old Windows 98 PC chugging along under the strain of so many unnecessary programs. I used to think it was the manufacturer's fault but reading some of your readers' letters, I realise Windows 10 is now the prime offender. How do I get rid of it all?

David Fenchurch, via email

A You're absolutely right, David, Windows 10 often feels like bloatware with an operating system on the side, and Microsoft makes it tricky – even impossible – to get rid of it. Download and extract Windows10Debloater from GitHub (bit.ly/bloat472) to remove tons of built-in bloatware, including certain Microsoft products such as OneNote and the Office Hub, and other companies' annoyances, such as Candy Crush Saga.

In the master folder, right-click the Windows10Debloater PowerShell script, open it with Notepad (or any text editor) and copy the code. Now, run Windows Powershell as an admin (right-click the Start menu and choose the option from there) and paste the code into it.

The cleanup happens automatically, wiping junk from your hard drive. If you would rather choose what to remove, see next issue's workshop on using the software's handy configuration tools.

Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User

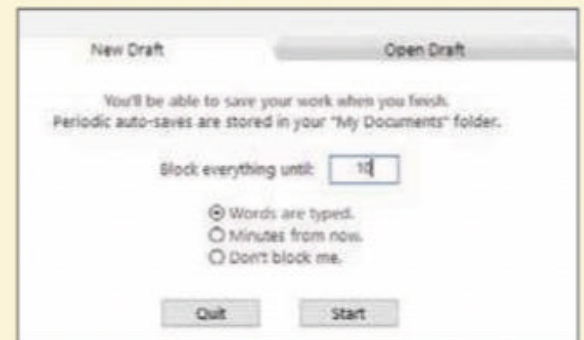


Paste this complicated-looking script into PowerShell to clear Windows 10 bloatware

READERS RESPOND

Stop getting distracted online

A A few issues back, one of your readers asked for ways to stop getting distracted by social-media sites and the like. Excluding good old-fashioned self-discipline, I use Cold Turkey (getcoldturkey.com), available for Windows and macOS, which stops you visiting distracting websites for a set amount of time. There's also the Cold Turkey Writer, which basically locks down your PC and turns it into



Focus on going Cold Turkey if you want fewer distractions

a typewriter, so you have no option but to finish writing up that report. I hope these tools focus your readers' minds.

Sean Bergman, via email

CAN YOU HELP?

webuser@webuser.co.uk

You can seek help or suggest solutions to other readers' problems by emailing webuser@webuser.co.uk or via www.facebook.com/webusermagazine or twitter.com/webusermagazine.

WEB BUILDING

Q I had a website built for me but it's never been great, so I'm considering having a go myself. I want to start by purchasing the web address but there are so many companies on the web with greatly differing prices and features. Advice from fellow Web User readers would be most welcome.

Keith Hodgson, via email

ANDROID

Q What's the difference between SwiftKey and Gboard keyboards for Android? Is one better at guessing the right words or does one have more themes? I currently use Gboard but friends tell me SwiftKey is better. However, they never explain why. What do other readers use?

Frank Cable, via email

GENERAL PC

Equalise audio levels across your PC

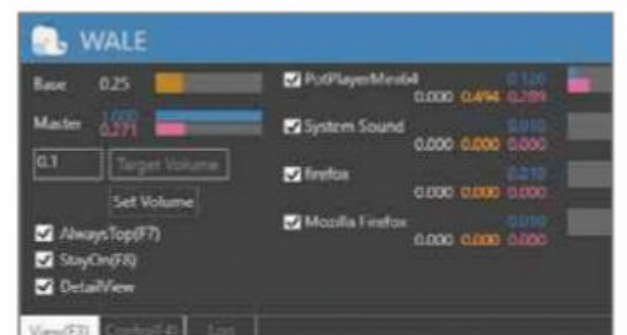
Q My PC has started to play different apps at different volumes and I'm never sure what I'm going to get! Windows Media Player is often so quiet I can't tell whether it's working, but if I switch to Spotify, it'll deafen half the neighbourhood. I've replaced the external speakers twice and experimented with headphones, but I'm still none the wiser.

Anthony Bush, via email

A We hear you loud and clear, Anthony, and while we can't diagnose a hardware issue, we can recommend Wale (bit.ly/wale472) – Windows Audio

Loudness Equalizer. Run this free software to automatically normalise the audio of all your apps and programs. You may want to play with the Master and Target sliders, and tweak the configuration to set your ideal volume.

Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User



Wale lets you fiddle with your PC's audio, so it all plays at the same volume

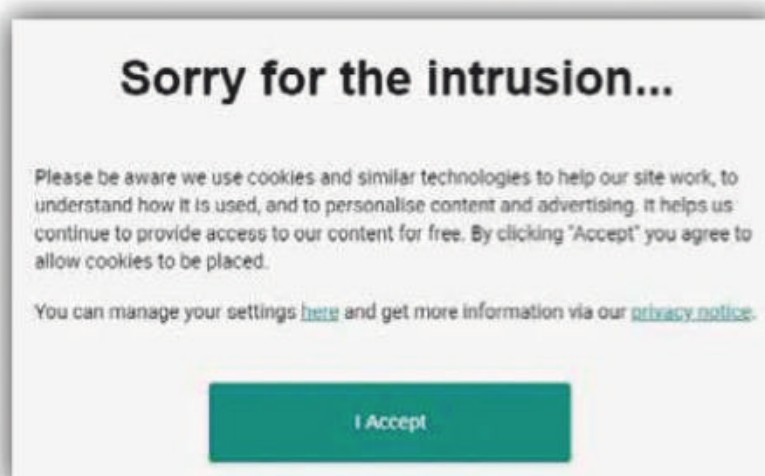
Star Email

Privacy pop-ups pry into our lives

I totally agree with Barry's views regarding pop-ups on local newspaper websites (Page 404, Issue 470), but I'm more concerned when you have to give permission for them to collect data about your sex life if you want to access their site!

This is among the terms and conditions you have to accept to get into the online news pages of, for example, the Southern Daily Echo (Southampton) and Northern Echo (Darlington) – and, so far as I can tell, all other publications that are part of the Newsquest media group, including my local weekly.

I've attached a screenshot of the pop-up and an extract from the T&Cs,



which are reached via a privacy link in the pop-up. Under "Data we collect about you", it says: "Personal data means any information about an individual from which that person can be identified. We collect it because it helps us run our

business and serve you better". Then it lists details and explanations including this: "Sensitive data means details about your race or ethnicity, religious or philosophical beliefs, sex life, sexual orientation, political opinions, trade union membership, information about your health and genetic and biometric data. It also includes information about allegations and convictions for criminal offences."

I'm not sure that they'd be able to identify me but I'd love to hear the company's explanation for how all these details enable them to run their business and serve me better.

Gordon Griffiths, via email

Back Issues disc winner



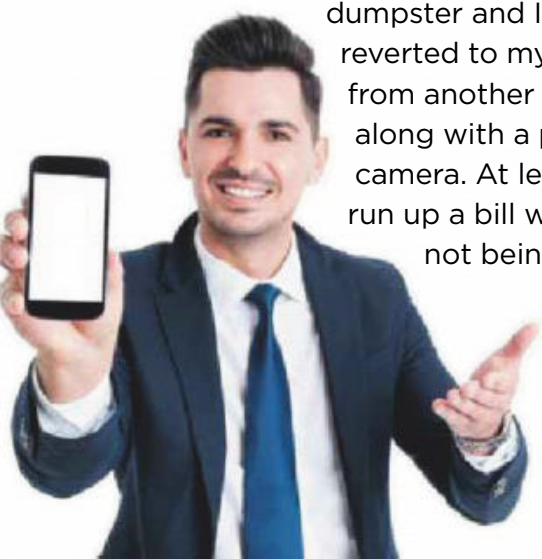
Stop confusing older customers with jargon

A plea to in-store customer advisors: if you work in a bricks-and-mortar mobile-phone store and are in your twenties, please note that not all elderly customers are stupid.

They may seem so to you, because you speak jargon-laden language about stuff that bewilders them. When you deliver your spiel at a million words a minute, they just won't get half of what you are saying. If you have a customer who looks the same age as your parents or grandparents, please listen to their question, answer only that question and speak slowly and clearly.

I wanted to buy a simple Android phone for calls, texts and photos on pay as you go. I found I had been sold a 'package' that was running down my credit at £1 a day, even when the phone was switched off! So it went in the dumpster and I have reverted to my dumb phone from another network along with a pocket digital camera. At least they don't run up a bill when they're not being used.

Colin Charles, Margate



Online ads are a nuisance

As an RSI sufferer with weak eyesight, I use voice computing when I can, but many online ads are particularly greedy in grabbing white space, widening the web-page profile and introducing flashing images. They make pages less readable and interfere with voice commands, so I use Kaspersky Total Security's Anti-Banner Blocker (bit.ly/banner472) because it's very successful at removing ads at a global level.

Having paid for a subscription to *The*

Telegraph, it is frustrating to receive a notice requesting me to allow ads from The Telegraph website. I have introduced a simple voice command – "kill it" – to remove the message.

I am quite willing to pay for good content but I am not happy to receive nuisance advertising banners once I have subscribed.

Stephen Lewis, Facebook



Quiz Answers: Issue 471

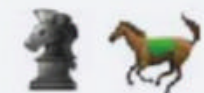
1 **Peppa Pig**



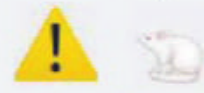
2 **Bagpuss**



3 **Knightmare**



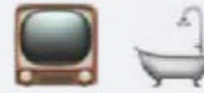
4 **Danger Mouse**



5 **Thunderbirds**



6 **Teletubbies**



WINNER!

Well done to **Rich Grove** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE

MARIO



Using an ad blocker is like stealing

People are always complaining about adverts on websites but, at the same time, they expect to get everything online for free. Don't they realise that behind every site they visit is a team of hard-working people who produce the content and design the pages, and that it takes a lot of time and money to keep a site running? You have to pay for hosting and domain registration on top of other costs, and the only way to fund that is through donations or advertising.

Small websites that are run by individuals rather than companies have no choice but to use ads, and even then they'll be lucky to balance the books. Using an ad blocker such as Adblock Plus on sites that you visit every day is akin to stealing content from the web. If you aren't willing to put up with a few ads, then those sites aren't likely to be around for much longer.

Keith Amersham, via email

Old films and TV are better than new

The letter from Alan Hill in Issue 470, 'BBC repeats are dead disappointing', is nothing but blatant ageism. Let's face it: the Beeb tries to be 'All things to all men,' as it should. As an octogenarian, I find that a lot of the repeats Mr Hill mentions – such as *Morecambe and Wise* – make better viewing than some of the 'toilet humour' of today's so-called comedians. I can assure you that I am not a prude – I spent three years in GM forces for my National Service and the rest of my working life in engineering, and I heard enough bad language there to not have to endure the same on the television!

As for monochrome films, at least they don't involve the 'one-line actors' of modern films. For example, the recent version of *Murder on the Orient Express* cannot hold a candle to the original with Sean Connery and Albert Finney. Ditto for *Dunkirk* with John Mills and Richard Attenborough. What a disappointment the new version was. It would be a sad world if we were all the same, but perhaps that is what Mr Hill would like?

Len Heasman, via email



WILL YOU USE THE NEW DUCKDUCKGO OPTION TO SEARCH PRIVATELY IN CHROME (bit.ly/duck472)?

I use DuckDuckGo, and have done for a while, but if Google is getting involved with it I might need to have a rethink.

Brian Cathcart

I use DuckDuckGo all the time since I dumped Chrome in favour of Firefox.

Geoffrey Boow

I already have the DuckDuckGo extension (bit.ly/duckduck472) installed in Chrome. I guess I won't be needing that anymore if it's now built into the browser.

Tim Head

No, invariably I use Google to answer questions I have. These queries are so disparate that if Google thinks they can help it learn who I am then good luck to it.

Rich Grove

It's about time.

Gerrit Max

WERE YOU AFFECTED BY FACEBOOK'S BIGGEST EVER OUTAGE ON 13 MARCH (bit.ly/fboutage472)?

Yes, but social media doesn't rule my life. It wasn't working so I put my phone down.

Brian Brown

Yes, I actually had to speak to people and it was horrible.

Glenn Faulkner

I just assumed I was on another 24-hour ban.

Billy Green

Yep, it wouldn't let me post a load of fake news.

Si Mellor



I was relieved to have a few hours without people going on about Brexit.

Jason Hacker

MYSPACE HAS LOST ALL CONTENT UPLOADED BEFORE 2016 (bit.ly/myspace472). DID YOU USE IT?

I used Myspace up to 2006, then I grew tired of it. My account eventually got hacked which I wasn't bothered about because it had nothing personal on it.

Dean Stockton

I occasionally still drop into my account. I like the music focus of Myspace. I guess it needs more dynamic management and new ideas.

Iain Kenworthy-Neale

I had an account until 2007. I won't lose any sleep over what data of mine they lost.

Chris Armstrong

I used it occasionally. It seems the data had been missing for a while but no one noticed. Speaks volumes.

Harvey Skipsey

HOW EXCITED ARE YOU ABOUT GOOGLE'S NEW GAME-STREAMING SERVICE, STADIA (bit.ly/stadia472)?

I'm very excited. Ditto for Microsoft's new offering. I've been in the [@NvidiaGFN](https://bit.ly/NvidiaGFNBeta) beta for almost a year and it works brilliantly, pretty much every time. Game streaming could be huge but it will depend on price, content, bandwidth and so on.

Jason @Jaffo

Game-streaming was already attempted by OnLive many years ago. It didn't take off then but maybe our connections are fast enough for it to work now.

Steve Cheesman

! Page 404



Barry Collins proposes a solution to the endless stream of website privacy pop-ups

Don't ask me, talk to my browser

What is a guaranteed way to get £300 off your next iPhone? Well, if you go to the Apple website and enter the code R4FH...

DO YOU ACCEPT THIS
MAGAZINE'S PRIVACY POLICY?
CLICK **YES** TO CONTINUE

This has become the daily grind of the web. You get half a paragraph into the article you visited a website to read, only to be rudely interrupted by an inescapable pop-up window demanding to know if you're willing to hand over the naming rights of your first born in order to continue reading.

Every website has a slightly different list of demands that you must agree to before you're allowed to read the good stuff. Some merely want the right to display ads, some want to track you from site to site, some want you to hand your personal data to the Kremlin and donate a kidney to a donkey in

Basingstoke. But you won't know that because nobody reads those privacy policies. Nobody.

We don't have enough time to talk to our own children these days, let alone find out the purpose behind the 500-odd cookies that Mail Online will drop on your computer (that's not an exaggeration, by the way). Instead, we suck our teeth, click Yes and wearily consent to the surrender of another small chunk of our privacy.

Is there any way to escape this ceaseless torrent of consent clicks every time you visit a new website? Well, I'm indebted to the Editor of this fine organ for pointing me in the direction of the extension I Don't Care About Cookies (www.i-dont-care-about-cookies.eu), which clicks Yes on many of those annoying pop-ups on your behalf,

so you don't need to see them. As the site explains, by using the add-on, "you explicitly allow websites to do whatever they want with cookies they set on your computer (which they mostly do

anyway, whether you allow them or not)".

This might solve the problem on your computer, but it doesn't stop the barrage of begging buttons on your

“ We suck our teeth, click Yes and wearily consent to the surrender of another small chunk of our privacy **”**

smartphone, tablet or any other internet device you might use to browse the web. What we need is a better solution – and the ability to turn the tables.

Instead of being asked for our preference on every single site we visit, there should be three or four simple settings that you're asked to give a Yes or No to every time you install a browser. Do you consent to ads being displayed? Do you agree to personalised ads? Are you fine with websites tracking you from site to site?

Those choices could then be fed to every site you visit, along with all the other data your browser already hands over, saving you from having to click the pop-ups. The site, of course, has the right to block you if you won't hand over what it wants, but that's business. And those sites that make unreasonable demands will soon find they have an audience of zero.

There's only one major flaw in my plan. For it to work, it would need the backing of the world's dominant web browser and the company that controls a huge percentage of web advertising. Sadly, they're both the same company: Google. Would a turkey vote for Christmas? You don't need to Google that answer.



Illustration: Andrew Torrens

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