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WebUser

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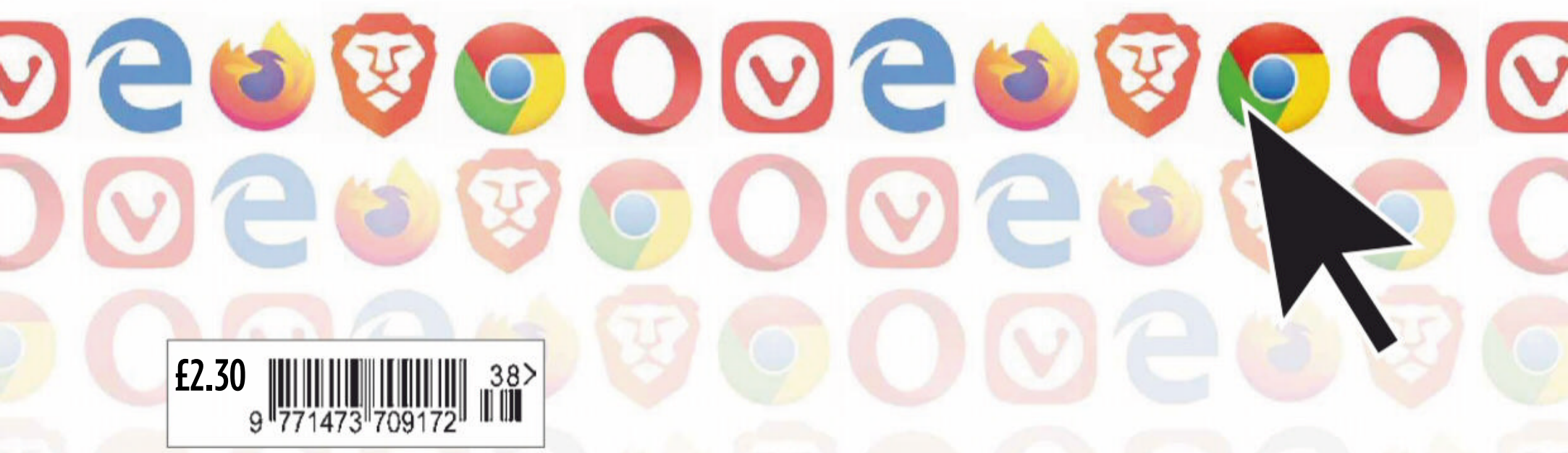

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Issue 484

Unsung heroes of Browsertown

There are 188,620 extensions in the Chrome Web Store, roughly equivalent to the population of Northampton, and like that East Midlands town, it has some very famous residents. But just as not everyone in Northampton is as well-known as comic book writer Alan Moore, Eleventh Doctor Matt Smith and former face of Fairy Liquid Nanette Newman (well she was born there, anyway), not all browser add-ons are as popular as Adblock Plus, Grammarly and Tampermonkey. Indeed, a recent report found that 87% of Chrome extensions have fewer than 1,000 users, which is a shame because many of them are very useful.

In this issue's cover feature, we round up 50 of the best browser tools you may never have heard of, but which thoroughly deserve a place on your toolbar. From blocking cookies and disguising your location to editing photos and saving you money, we've got all the extensions you need to make Chrome, Firefox, Opera, Vivaldi and Edge the best browsers they can be.

Robert Irvine, Editor
editor@webuser.co.uk
#webuser

abc Average sales, Jan-Dec 2018, 26,519 copies per issue

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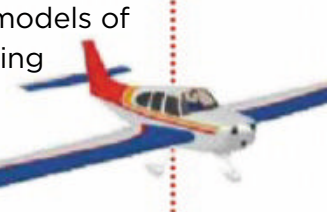

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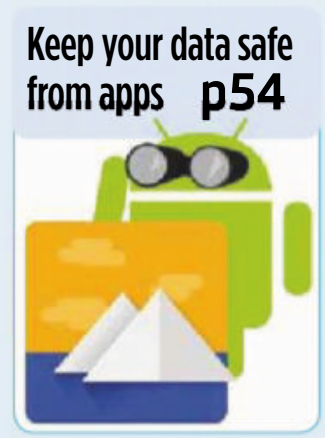

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PRINTING
Printed by Wyndeham Bicester, Oxon
Distributors Seymour 020 7396 4000

Web User is produced by Robirv Limited and published fortnightly by Dennis Publishing Ltd, a company registered in England 1138891.

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Web User is published fortnightly by Dennis Publishing Ltd, 31-32 Alfred Place, WC1E 7DP. Company registered in England.
ISSN 1473-7094

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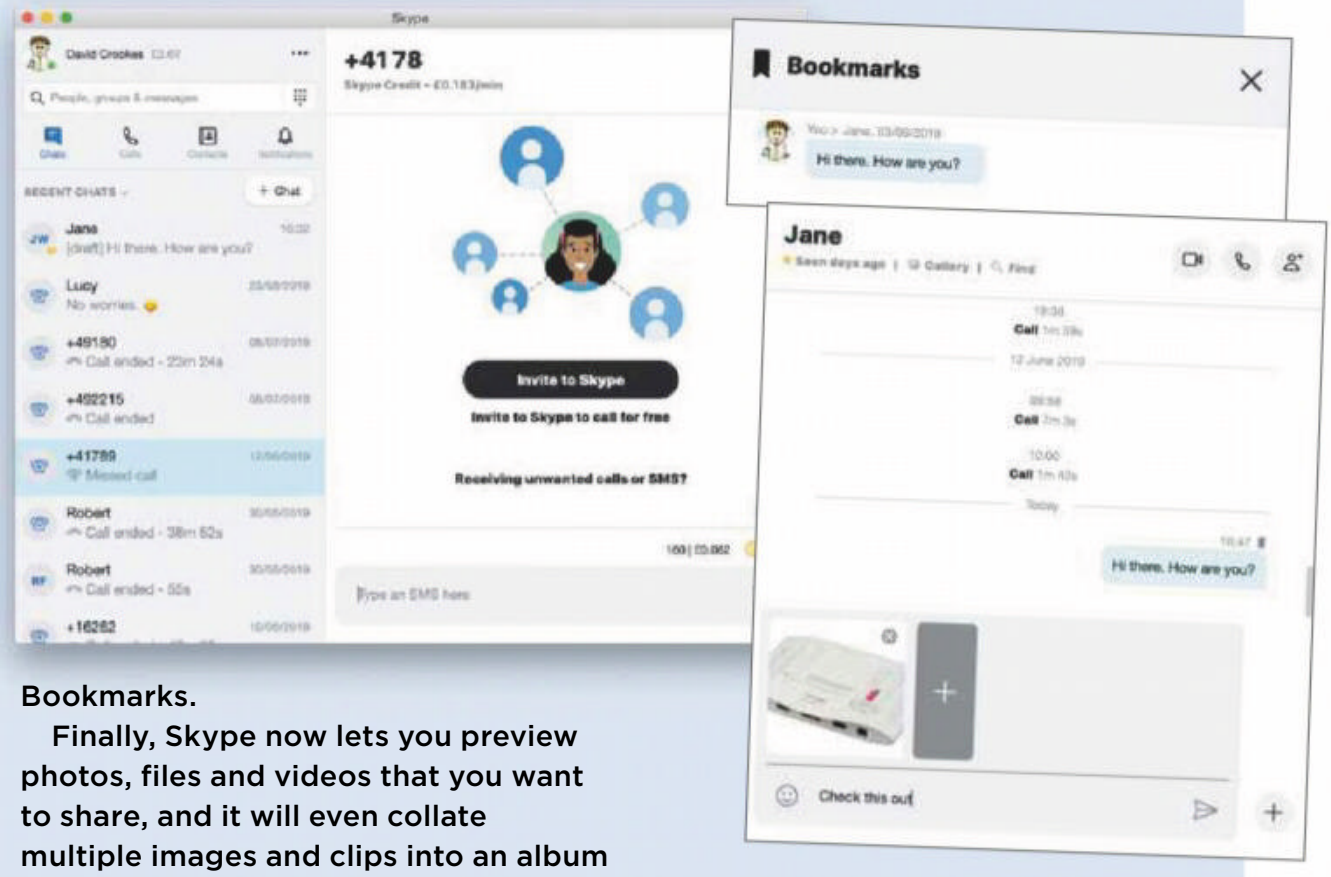
What's New Online

Master Skype's new messaging tools



Skype may have been overtaken as a messaging tool by WhatsApp, Messenger and Apple Messages, but its owner, Microsoft, is keen to boost its credentials by adding a host of handy new features.

For starters, you now don't need to worry about finishing a message you've started. Provided you don't delete your text, you can go off and do something else before returning to complete it. Unfinished, unsent messages are marked "[draft]" so you can easily spot them when you look down your list. It doesn't even matter if you close Skype: those drafts will remain.

Messages can also be bookmarked, which is very handy. You do this in the desktop app by right-clicking and selecting Add Bookmark or by long-pressing if you're on a mobile device. Tap your profile picture and you'll see all your saved entries under Bookmarks.

Finally, Skype now lets you preview photos, files and videos that you want to share, and it will even collate multiple images and clips into an album within the chat history.

All desktop versions also benefit from a new split window that puts the contact list in one frame and conversations in the other.

www.skype.com

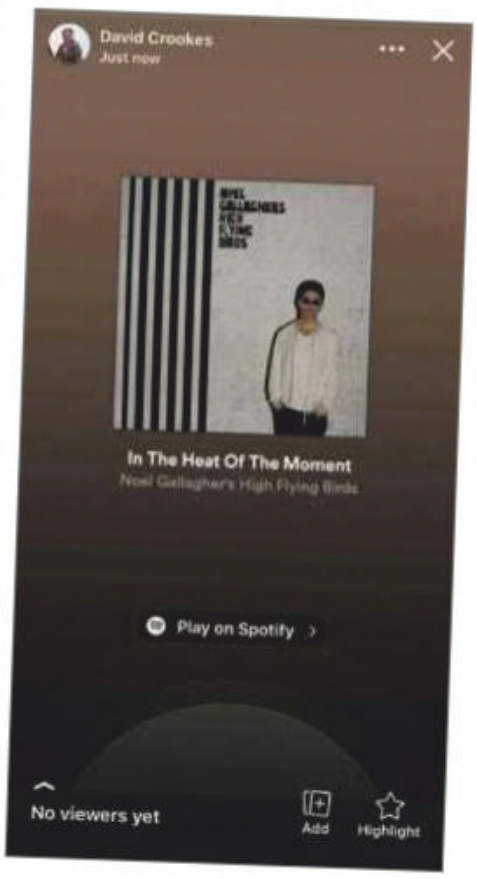
Search for text in images in Google Photos

photos.google.com

Some of your photos and screenshots are likely to contain text – many of us snap Wi-Fi passwords or recipes from books, for example – but such images are easily lost among your other pictures. With the latest update to Google Photos, help is at hand. You can search for text within your images to find the picture you're after and, even better, copy and paste those words elsewhere.

To start, just tap the search bar in the Google Photos app and type the words featured in the image you're looking for. When the image appears, open it, press the Google Lens button at the bottom of the screen and select the image to highlight some text. You'll be able to indicate exactly how much text you want to copy using the sliders, then transfer them to another app for pasting. It's a brilliant use of optical character recognition (OCR) technology.

Share Spotify songs to Facebook Stories



www.spotify.com/uk

Spotify now lets you share music and podcasts on Facebook Stories. The new feature allows for an instant 15-second preview of a single track on the social network. The listener can then tap if they want to hear the track in its entirety within Spotify.

The function is primarily geared towards artists who want to promote their own content but it can be used with any song and by anyone. You simply need to view the track in Spotify and tap Share then select Facebook and customise the Story before posting it.

When someone views the Facebook story, they'll get an audio preview and be able to click the relevant button for the whole track. The feature doesn't work with more than one song so it's not suitable for albums, playlists or artist profile pages.

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

Discover footballers' birthplaces

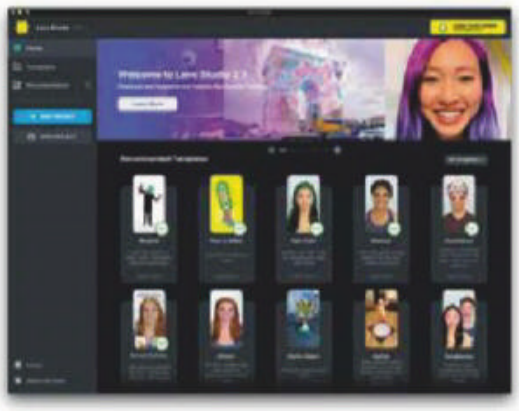
bit.ly/premier484

It could be argued that some footballers are so out of touch, they don't actually know they were born, but Sky Sports has nevertheless plotted the birthplaces of 557 Premier League players to show how global the English game has become. See an overall view or select a specific club before clicking a marker for a player profile.

Make your own SnapChat lenses

lensstudio.snapchat.com

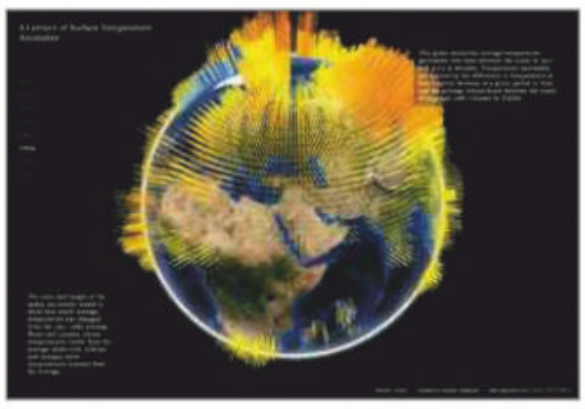
SnapChat is making it easier to produce your own augmented-reality lenses. The messaging service's desktop app Lens Studio allows for step-by-step creation by selecting Help, Start Tutorial and also offers a range of new templates including one that applies 2D content to a video and others that allow for makeup and different hair colour. You'll need to download Lens Studio to get started, but you can see what other users are creating by tapping the smiley icon in the mobile app when the Lens Carousel is active. An extra 14 world landmarks have been added, too.



See temperature changes globally

bit.ly/temp484

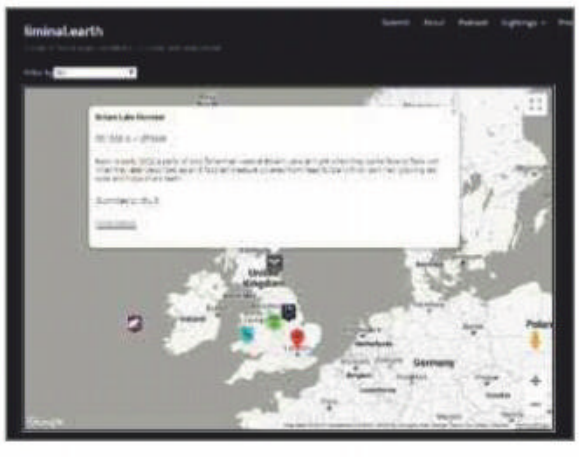
Using data from NASA, this interactive globe lets you see how temperatures have changed on Earth over the past century. Select a decade and the tool will compare the temperature for that 10-year period with the average for 1951 to 1980, before spinning the globe to see the anomalies in different parts of the world. Red, yellow and orange spikes show warmer than average temperatures, while blues and purples indicate cooler averages. Take a deep breath before you select the 2010s – it's rather worrying.



Explore global paranormal sightings

liminal.earth

Described as a "map of the strange, wonderful, unusual, and unexpected", Liminal.Earth lets you explore spooky sightings around the world, as reported by users, from fairies and ghosts to aliens and time travellers. The UK is currently underrepresented, although a "classic flying saucer" has been spotted in Birmingham and a scary, 8ft lake monster was seen in Northumberland.



NEW VOICE COMMANDS

Keep Assistant quiet

Google now lets you turn off speech output, so responses appear on an Android phone but aren't spoken aloud. Say "Ok, Google" and tap the Explorer icon, then your profile picture and select Settings, Assistant before tapping Speech Output under 'Voice and Speech' and choosing Hands-Free Only.

Find a new book

Audible's new Alexa skill gives recommendations for your next book or audiobook. Say "ask Book Finder for inspiration" to hear from editors, authors and celebrities, or ask for bestsellers, new releases and books similar to those you like. Audio samples are also available.

Combine transport methods

google.co.uk/maps

Google Maps now recognises that you may need a bike or taxi ride before you can hop on public transport, so it includes cycling and ride-share options with directions when you search for a destination. Routes include travel time and costs.

Distort text with your hand

pose.yee.gd

Touch Type uses body tracking from Posenet as well as a clever algorithm to allow you to wave your hand in front of your webcam and make typography on the screen distort and disappear. It works best if you stand back, so that both hand cursors appear on the screen.

Learn Latin with Duolingo

www.duolingo.com

Latin may be considered a dead language, but Duolingo has added it to its list of courses. Available via its website and iOS and Android apps, it uses Duolingo's process of reinforcement and repetition.

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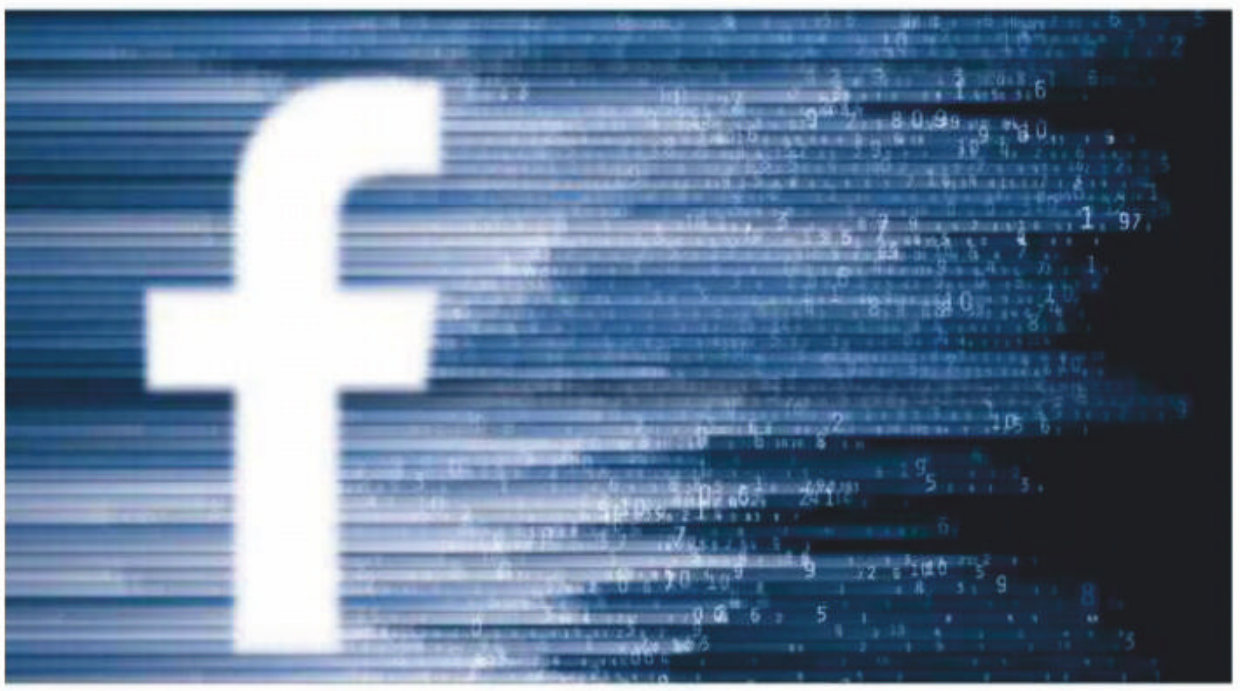
Need to Know

Facebook leaks phone numbers of 210 million users



What happened?

Facebook has admitted to yet another privacy breach, this time leaking 419 million phone numbers shared with the social network by its users. According to reports, the information was stored on a server connected to the web and not password-protected, which meant anyone who spotted the data could view it without any effort.

The leaked dataset included Facebook IDs (made up of your username and a unique number), as well as associated phone numbers. Full name, gender and country were listed for some of the records. It's not yet clear who scraped the data, but it has been removed by the web-hosting company. The dataset was spotted by security researchers at the GDI Foundation.

Facebook previously collected phone numbers so users could search for each other, but the practice was stopped last year after it became clear that scammers and political campaigns were using Facebook's automated tool to scrape names and profiles by entering a phone number.

This latest incident follows last year's data breach when hackers accessed the data of more than 50 million users, as well as the Cambridge Analytica scandal. And it comes as US regulators pile on another antitrust investigation into the company, with New York state authorities looking into whether Facebook has "endangered consumer data, reduced the quality of consumers' choices or increased the price of advertising". Facebook says it isn't a monopoly because there are plenty of social-media alternatives online, though it now owns WhatsApp and Instagram.

The leaked data is a year old but many of the phone numbers still work

How will it affect you?

Some of the records were duplicates, so the actual number of users affected is around 210 million. Of those, about 18 million were UK Facebook users, while 133 million were in the US. The tool that is suspected to have collected the data was disabled last year, which Facebook said suggests the affected phone numbers are old. However, tests by tech news site TechCrunch shows plenty of the numbers are still in use.

"This dataset is old and appears to have information obtained before we made changes last year to remove people's ability to find others using their phone numbers," a Facebook spokeswoman said in a statement sent to journalists. "The dataset has been taken down and we have seen no evidence that Facebook accounts were compromised."

While it's possible for your phone number to be harvested by data brokers or abused by scammers, this particular data breach isn't likely to lead to other serious repercussions. Still, it makes us think twice about entering phone numbers on Facebook, or letting the site peek at our contacts list.

To leave Facebook, you can either deactivate or delete your account: the former removes it from active use, letting you re-enable it later, while the latter completely removes your profile.

What do we think?

Oh, Facebook! The company can't seem to catch a break. But we have no pity for Mark Zuckerberg or his social network. The reason this data was collected and left unprotected is the company's profound disrespect for data privacy. Facebook never needed our phone numbers – the tool to search for friends using their number was clearly nothing other than a data grab to help further identify users. Even after disabling the phone-number search tool, Facebook kept asking users for phone numbers, saying it was for security authentication. Yet last year, researchers revealed that such numbers were used to target ads.

We think it's right that regulators consider whether Facebook has too much power, and ensure that it doesn't further link accounts across Instagram and WhatsApp. It's disappointing that so many popular web properties have been snapped by Zuckerberg's company, given its many data issues.

Of course, none of these data problems should come as a surprise. Facebook has failed time and again to protect user privacy. The time may have come to abandon it altogether.

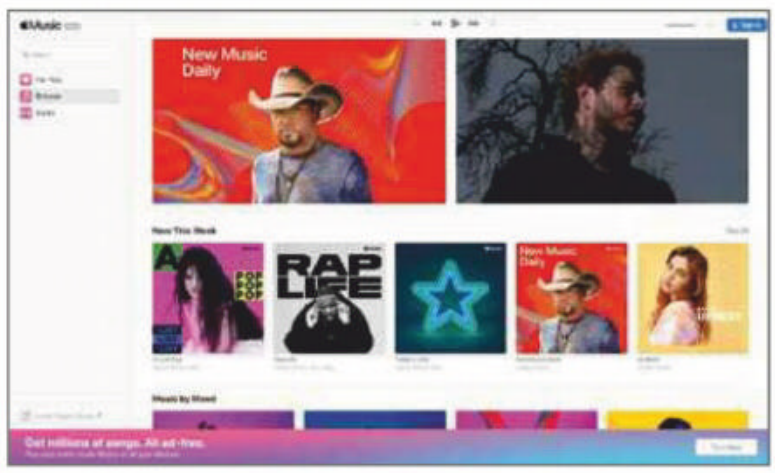
What we think of this fortnight's top tech news stories and rumours, and how they affect you

Apple Music launches on the web

What happened?

Forget installing bloated iTunes software or the Apple Music app – a new web interface for the streaming service means you can play your favourite tracks directly in your web browser.

If you already use Apple Music, the website will look familiar because it's structured in a similar way to the app. The web version of Apple Music is available at beta.music.apple.com and as its URL suggests, it remains in beta, so some features are currently missing. While you can access the full streaming music catalogue, some Apple-only content such as certain music videos and the Beats 1 radio station aren't yet available. Such features are expected to arrive eventually, though it's not clear when the web version of Apple Music will come out of beta.



How will it affect you?

Apple Music isn't limited to iPhone and iPad users – it's already available as an Android app, too. Now, you can listen to the service even if you're not using a mobile device, although for the time being you'll still need to register via an app, so ask a friend for help if you don't have a smartphone.

If you're already a subscriber, you'll now be able to play your tunes on your PC or laptop of choice, rather than be limited to your smartphone. Apple Music costs £9.99 a month for a single subscription, or £14.99 for a family deal with support for six people.

What do we think?

One of the great things about the web and browsers is that they're interoperable: websites can be read on a Mac or a Windows laptop, on an Android phone or an iPhone, and everything in between. Rather than locking down the streaming service, Apple is opening it up for anyone to use, which isn't the way the company normally operates but is a welcome development. Handily, it also brings Apple Music in line with its biggest rival, Spotify, which also has a web version.

Android hit by text-message security flaw

What happened?

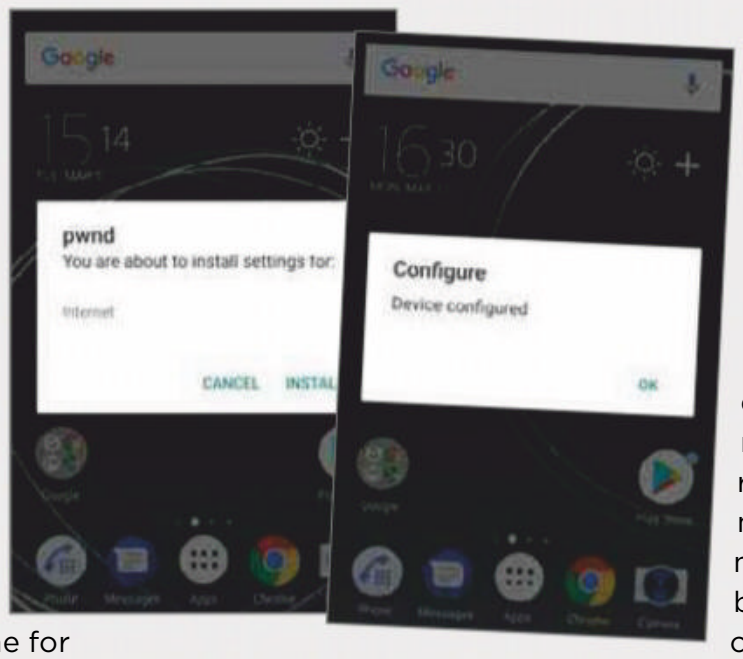
The Android mobile platform has been hit by another security flaw that could affect up to a billion phones. Researchers at cybersecurity firm Check Point (www.checkpoint.com) spotted a vulnerability that allows smartphones to be hacked with a single text message. It takes advantage of network settings to pretend to be an operator, and sends a dodgy text to a target. If the victim accepts the new settings, their internet activity could be viewed by the attacker.

How will it affect you?

The researchers said that Samsung phones were particularly at risk from this attack because they don't require operator messages to undergo checks for authenticity. While other phones do authenticate, there are still ways around the checks, the researchers said.

This vulnerability is serious, but it's one for Android and phone manufacturers to solve – indeed, Samsung and LG have already rolled out patches, while Huawei says one is in the works.

If you receive a text purporting to be from your operator that you find confusing, don't click Accept until you've contacted customer services. It's worth remembering that such research finds flaws in order to fix them, and doesn't necessarily mean any hackers are using this particular technique.



Credit: Check Point

What do we think?

This may sound like a niche flaw, but it serves to highlight the many different ways hackers can target us. While most attacks will still come via the usual routes, such as dodgy emails, there are myriad ways we're at risk online and on mobile devices. There's no cause for panic because most attacks can be avoided with a bit of common sense – if something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

Don't be afraid to ask a friend or family member for help or to call customer support at your network provider – that's what they're there for, after all.

Fraud fears over Chinese ‘deepfake’ app

What happened?

Chinese-developed video app Zao has come under fire for stripping users of the rights to the images they upload. The ‘deepfake’ app lets people cast themselves in the role of popular film and TV characters. One video, which recently went viral, replaced actor Leonardo DiCaprio with a Chinese user in scenes from the 1997 blockbuster movie *Titanic*.

Despite the fun and games, the app’s end-user agreement has come under intense fire. According to the South China Morning Post, it “gave the developers the global right to permanently use any image created on the app for free”. And Chinese messaging app WeChat has now banned the use of the Zao app due to associated “security risks”. Developer Momo has since apologised and removed this clause from its terms and conditions.

However, the issue doesn’t end there. Some experts have suggested that the deepfake technology could be used to defraud facial-recognition systems at financial institutions. Chinese internet giant Alibaba, which owns the PayPal-style AliPay, went as far as releasing a statement explaining that even the impressively accurate deepfake videos could not be used by others to pay for goods. It said: “There is a lot of online

face-changing software – but no matter how realistic, it is impossible to break through the facial payment system”.

How will it affect you?

If you haven’t used Zao, your data is safe because for now, the issue only relates to users of the AI app. So far, it’s impacted Chinese audiences, but it’s entirely possible that western developers will release a similar app with an equally obtuse end-user agreement. As always, check the terms and conditions before signing up for apps.

These types of apps are becoming more popular – a new one hits the app store each weekend and it’s all too easy to get swept up in their viral nature. But it isn’t always “just a bit of a laugh”. No technology company should own the rights to your image – and any that try should be shown the door.

What do we think?

Fears over advanced artificial intelligence, data misuse and cybersecurity are all part of a modern disaster story that’s becoming all too prevalent. Following the recent Russian-made FaceApp – which aged users’ selfies to make them look like pensioners – it highlights yet another example of the way apps use, or own, the data you provide.

FIRST LOOK

Amazon Fire TV Cube

bit.ly/fire484

The Amazon Fire TV Stick has proved remarkably popular. The branded USB stick makes TVs ‘smart’, so you can watch Prime, Netflix, iPlayer and YouTube without needing to buy the latest models. The Amazon Fire Cube, however, failed to set the world alight, and didn’t even go on sale in the UK.

The all-new Fire Cube is set to change that. This second-generation box promises to offer “the fastest, most powerful Fire TV ever, delivering a fast, fluid experience for your favourite films and TV programmes”.

Think of this 4K-capable streaming media player as a combination of a Fire TV Stick and an Alexa smart speaker. That means no more hunting for the remote control to change the channel – just use your voice. Film fans and TV binge-watchers should also approve of the support for HDR, HDR 10, HDR10+, HLG and Dolby Vision.

Setting up the hands-free TV streamer proves just as easy as any Fire TV device – simply connect it to your TV through the HDMI port, switch it on, and sign in. You’re also able to hook up multiple supported devices such as sound bars, using the cloud, infrared or HDMI-CEC. These, too, can be controlled by your voice.

But the Fire Cube is not without shortcomings. For one thing, you won’t be able to connect your phone via Bluetooth (so no Spotify blaring from your TV’s sound bar), and there’s a lack of consistency across apps – some can be fully controlled via Alexa, while others can’t. This makes it an occasionally frustrating experience, should you step outside the usual Prime-Netflix comfort zone.

However, it’s not enough to make the Cube a total write-off. Especially given Amazon’s tendency to update its software and associated apps over time.

The Fire TV Cube goes on sale on 10 October for £109.99 – which, for a TV-focused Alexa device, will make it a Christmas must-have for many of us.

WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is it time to prepare for Wi-Fi 7?

Wi-Fi 6 may have only just launched, but already there's talk about the coming of Wi-Fi 7. The current Wi-Fi standard has brought increased speed and flexibility – it uses both 2.4GHz and 5GHz channels, which makes it ideal for high data streams over longer ranges.

But apparently that's not enough for technology company Qualcomm. The chip manufacturer, which has helped place Wi-Fi 6-enabled chips in modern devices, held a so-called Wi-Fi day this summer, where the company's VP of Tech claimed: "I'm excited about delivering a gigabit everywhere in your house, every nook and cranny. You'll be at the point where wireless is faster than wired."

It's thought that Wi-Fi 7 will roll out in three stages. The first sees users jumping on the 6GHz channel – this will only be available to devices running Wi-Fi 6 or above, preventing older devices from clogging up the channel. The second stage, expected in 2022, sees an uplink upgrade. Entitled uplink multiuser multiple-input multiple-output – or UL MU-MIMO for short – the technology allows Wi-Fi signals to send data across multiple paths, and upload data faster.

The third and final stage sees network manufacturers creating 16-antenna devices – for comparison, Wi-Fi 6 allows up to eight. That should mean, for everyday users, ever quicker internet speeds and improved range.

LIKELIHOOD RATING
✓✓✓✓✓

It's inevitable that Wi-Fi will receive another upgrade. While the technology is impressive, it's not fit for an always-on world that demands instant connections – especially as internet usage grows in Africa and Asia. There are also technical complications that will need to be ironed out before Wi-Fi 7 is fit for human consumption. As such, the rumoured 2024 final release date may be optimistic.

What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

EarHD

bit.ly/earhd484 | From £199

"Upgrade your ears," yells the tagline to EarHD, the passive hearing aid. Using 60-degree reception, this aural device acts as a kind of satellite dish, amplifying sound from all directions, rather than just in front of you. The precision-milled earbuds were tested by the University of Southampton to see if they help you hear conversations better (they do). But this isn't strictly a medical device for the hard-of-hearing – EarHD is also suitable for listening to music, going to gigs and generally enhancing your audio environment. Pledges start at £199 for a pair of aluminium EarHDs, or £299 for the titanium version.

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Vivaldi launches Android browser

Vivaldi has released the first mobile version of its web browser. The long-awaited Android app, which is still in beta, can be installed from the Google Play store and offers end-to-end encrypted sync of your passwords, Bookmarks, Notes, open tabs and more.

BBC leads fight against fake news

Plans to tackle "fake news" have been announced by the BBC and some of the biggest names in technology, including Google, Facebook and Twitter. The new measures include an early warning system for use during elections and when lives may be at risk.

WE DON'T LIKE...

CVs from Monster leaked online

A web server storing the CVs of job seekers, including from recruitment site Monster, has been discovered online. The CVs include job applicants from 2014 to 2017 and contain private information such as phone numbers, email addresses and work history.

18% of Brits are still not online

Almost a fifth (18%) of British people still don't use the internet, according to a new survey. The Oxford Internet Institute, which carried out the research, said that people falling into the category tended to be older and poorer than regular web users.

Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Hackers steal e-tickets from transport apps

Mobile phone apps for public transport can be manipulated to create free tickets, it has emerged, after an activist group hacked two Manchester-based services. The hackers were able to generate digital tickets by exploiting a security flaw in the transport apps, which create QR codes that function as e-tickets, but store the keys used to generate these codes in the apps themselves.

The group, who call themselves The Public Transport Pirate Association of the United Kingdom, released its findings on Reddit and called the apps' security "laughable at best". The hackers believe that public transport should be free to all, which is why they've gone public with their findings. The initial hack focused on the Greater Manchester area, but the group said it can be easily adapted to other transport networks that use the same software for their electronic tickets.

A spokesperson for Transport for Greater Manchester said: "We want to assure customers that the security of customer data is paramount and we've been informed by our suppliers that no personal data has been compromised". bit.ly/etickets484

Fraudsters use AI voice tech to steal money

Cybercriminals have used artificial intelligence (AI) and voice technology to impersonate a UK business owner, resulting in the fraudulent transfer of $243,000 (£201,000).

In March this year, an unknown hacker group is said to have exploited AI-powered software to mimic the prominent business leader's voice to fool the CEO of a subsidiary into transferring funds to a Hungarian supplier. The money was then moved to other locations.

This social-engineering attack could be a sign of things to come, according to ESET cybersecurity specialist Jake Moore, who expects to see a huge rise in machine-learned cybercrimes.

"We have already seen deepfakes imitate celebrities and public figures in video format, but these have taken around 17 hours of footage to create convincingly," he said. "Being able to fake voices takes fewer recordings to produce. As computing power increases, we are starting to see these become even easier to create, which paints a scary picture ahead." bit.ly/voice484

Credit: cowardlion / Shutterstock.com

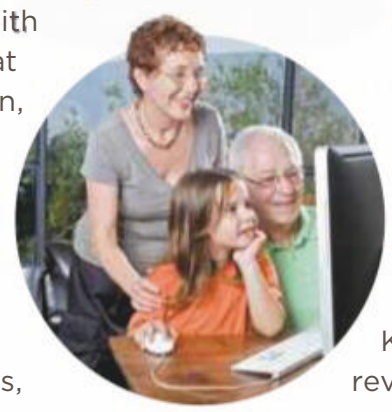
Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

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

Q Are schools doing enough to educate children about cybersecurity?

Miriam Simmons, Facebook

A While younger children are becoming more tech-savvy, they are by nature less risk-averse and lack the understanding to fully appreciate the dangers of being online. With reports of toys that can spy on children, and kids as young as three owning social-media accounts, it's clear the dangers are real – for homes and schools, as well as children.



> "A young person's potential 'attack surface' is a lot wider than someone older"

Although the government and schools are increasingly teaching children how to spot potential dangers online, there's still a lack of awareness around basic device protection. This means parents need to take more responsibility to ensure their children are cyber-secure.

Recent research by Kaspersky revealed that while younger generations are often asked to provide tech assistance to older relatives, people over 50 are likely to be more worldly, and adopt a greater sense of caution. This means they are generally more selective about their reasons for going online, whereas younger people have grown up immersed in tech and are happy to use the internet in nearly every aspect of their lives.

For this reason, a young person's potential 'attack surface' is a lot wider than it is for someone older. That said, it's important to note that people of all ages are vulnerable to scams and other threats. It is crucial to adopt the same sense of caution when we are online as we do in the real world.

Email us your security questions at webuser@webuser.co.uk

tp-link | deco

STREAMING WITHOUT LIMITS

Choose Deco mesh routers for high-speed, seamless, whole home Wi-Fi

Robust Parental Control

3-Year Built-In Antivirus

Quality of Service

Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

HOME

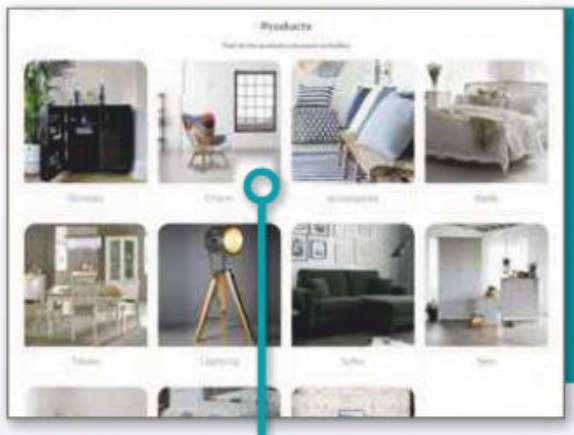
NEW

Kuldea

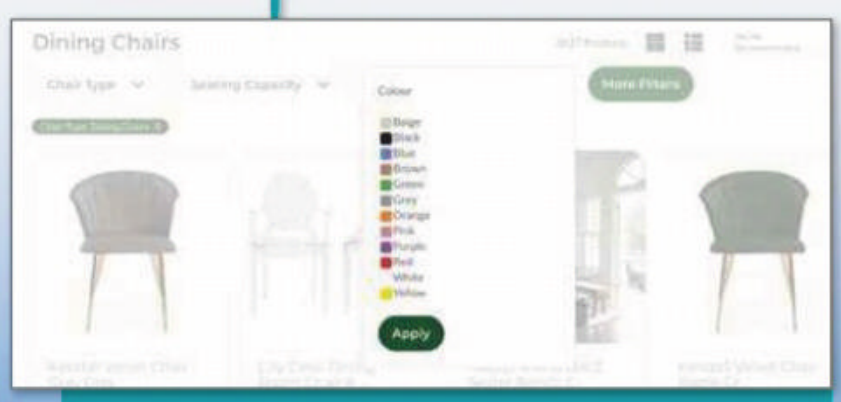
www.kuldea.com

Claiming to be a Skyscanner for the home, Kuldea allows you to compare similar styles of interior furnishing from up to 68 retailers. Select the type of item you're looking to buy and the site will scour shops for matching products, not only letting you check out the differences in price but saving you the hassle of having to visit individual websites first. It's possible to search by room or product type, and filter by anything from colour and price to type and material. You can also narrow down by retailer, get sales alerts and save favourite products, all of which make Kuldea a real game-changer for the online furniture market.

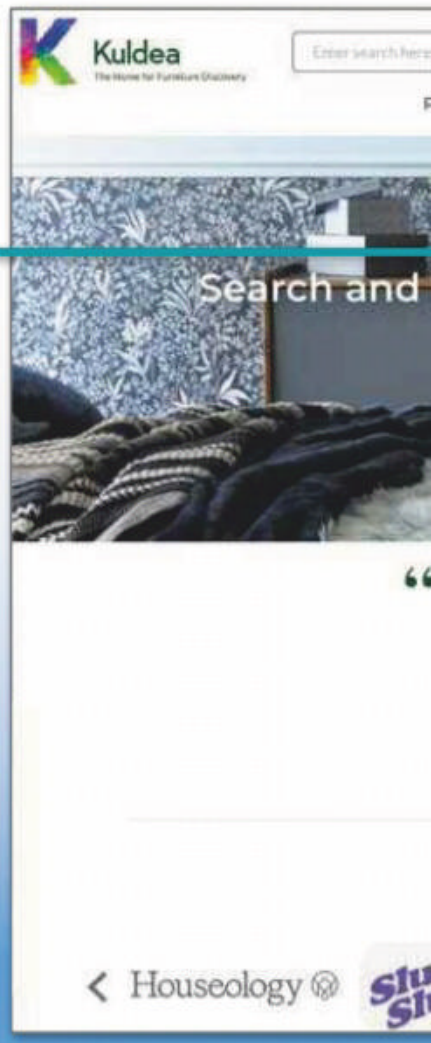
Our rating ★★★★★

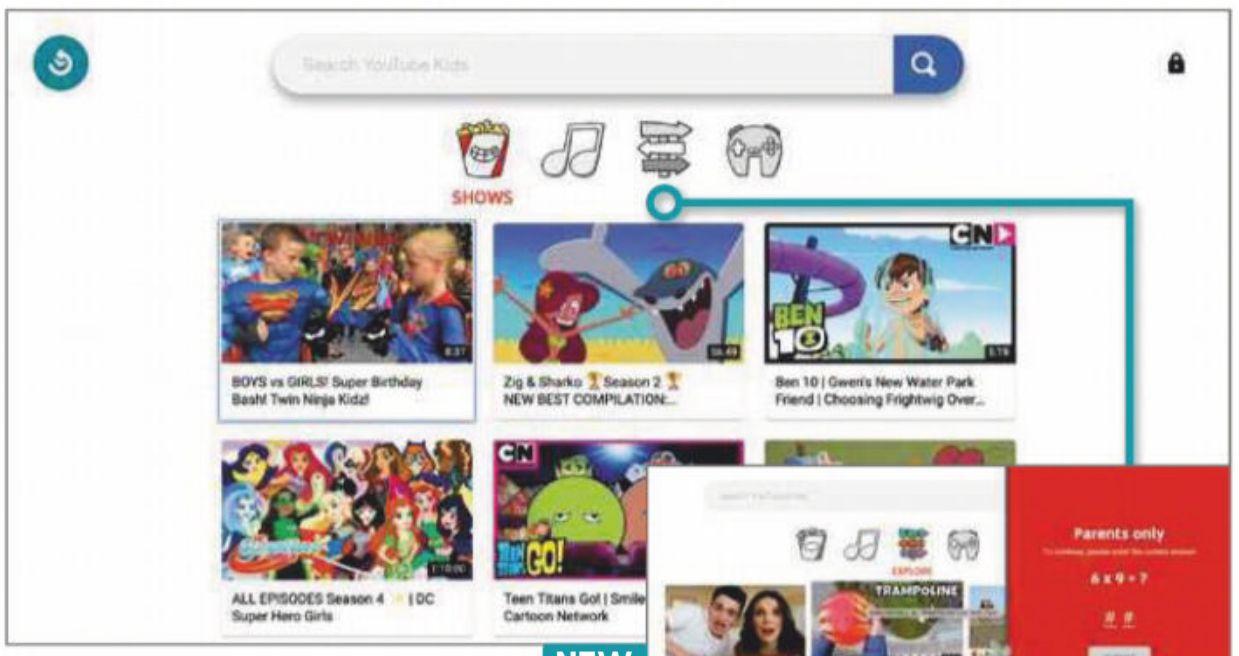


BROWSE PRODUCTS
You can view specific types of product or look for items according to their intended room



FILTER ITEMS
Once you've found a certain type of item, you can see which retailers stock your requirements





NEW

VIDEO

YouTube Kids

www.youtubekids.com

YouTube has created a website just for children in a bid to prevent kids from accessing inappropriate content on the main video hub. Once a parent has unlocked YouTube Kids on behalf of their child, they can set up the site to only serve content suitable for age groups four or below, five to seven or eight to 12. It's also possible to deactivate searches, limiting videos to pre-verified channels. Kids can use the cartoony icons to browse shows, music, gaming and random items, while parents can flag content and see a child's watch history. Just set a passcode if you don't want kids to answer the simple sums needed to access the parental controls.

Our rating ★★★★★

NEW

SCIENCE

Science News

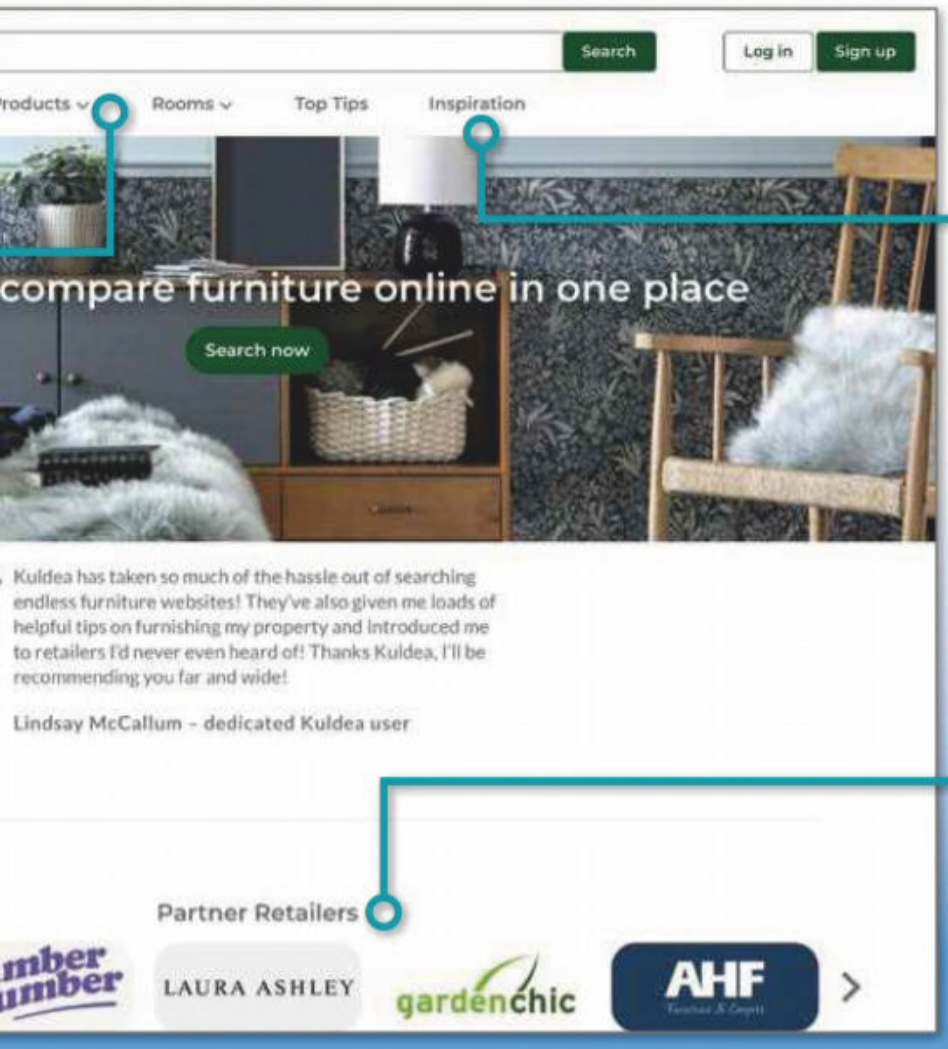
www.sciencenews.org

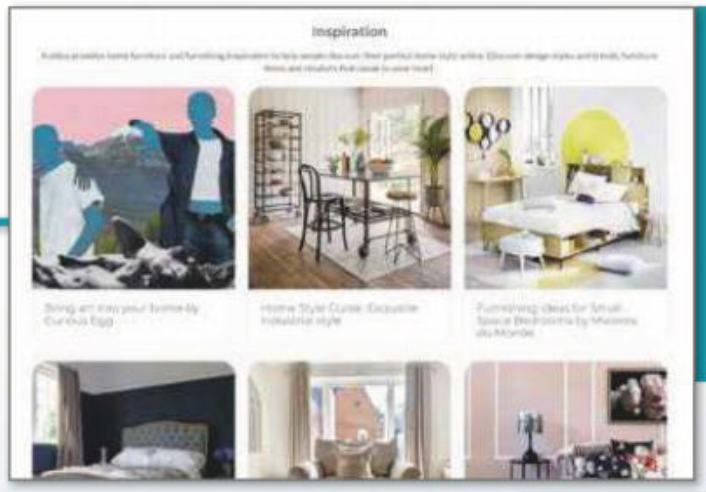
Non-profit organisation Science News is nearly a century old and its pledge to be honest, transparent and accurate in its reporting has seldom been more needed. The revamp has dropped some sections, such as blogs, but the site is no poorer for it. Instead, images and videos are at the fore and lot of work has gone into creating a less-cluttered design with clearer navigation categories and more space to breathe. Built using WordPress, the site also has mobile devices in mind. Comments on stories, however, need to be emailed so there's less chance of building a bustling community.

Our rating ★★★★☆

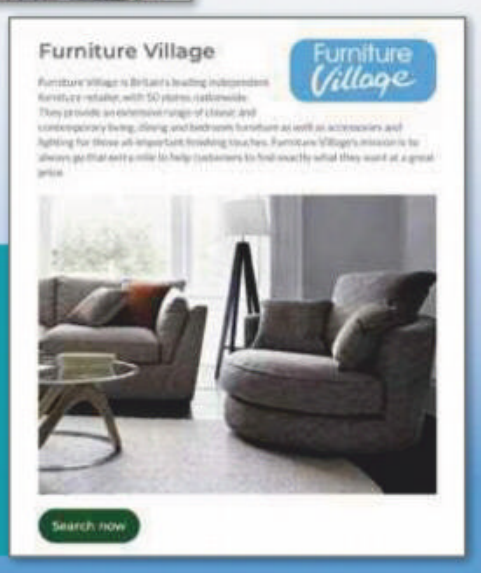
Reviews by David Crookes

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





GET INSPIRATION
This blog-like section looks at dream homes, furnishing ideas and new items from specific retailers



LOTS OF SHOPS
Kuldea will look through the inventories of shops such as Laura Ashley, Dunelm, Harveys and Dwell

RELAUNCH

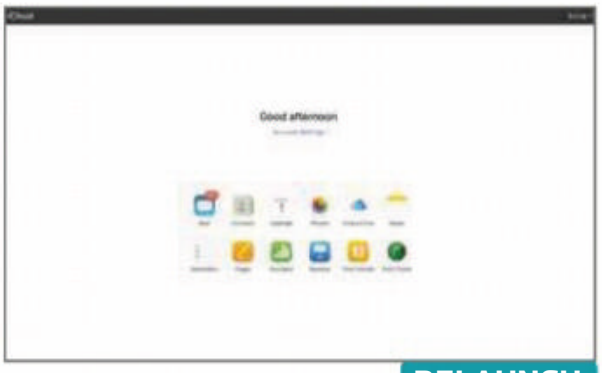
FOOTBALL

FA Women's Leagues and Competitions

womenscompetitions.thefa.com

Having announced the closure of its previous website, FAWSL.com, the FA has moved all news concerning women's football to this relaunched hub. Covering the Women's Super League and the Women's Championship, it shows league tables, fixtures, results and player stats while keeping up to date with match reports and transfers. The site covers the women's domestic cups as well as the academies, but sadly the previous site's fan page has not been transferred over. You can, however, find and buy tickets, albeit via links to individual clubs.

Our rating ★★★★☆



RELAUNCH

TECHNOLOGY

iCloud

beta.icloud.com

Apple is in the process of giving iCloud a fresh, minimalist look, previewing the changes on a beta website. A clean, white background replaces the patterned blue, and it now has much smaller icons, a welcome message and a clearer link to your Account Settings. From there, you can manage your Apple ID, see how much storage you have in iCloud and view the devices linked to your account. You're also able to use many Apple apps such as Mail, Contacts, iCloud Drive, Numbers, Keynote and Find Friends just as before, jumping from one to another in-app via a handy drop-down menu.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

RELAUNCH

ONLINE SAFETY

Net Aware

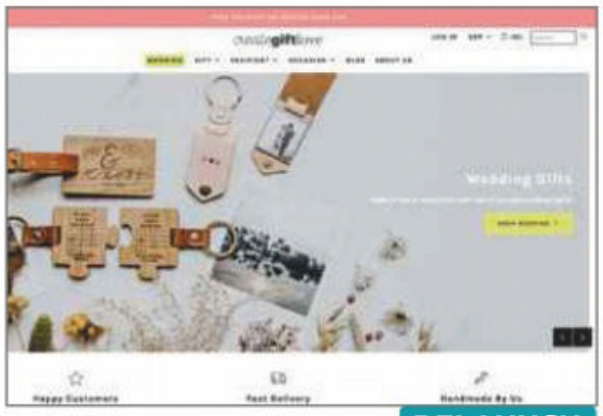
www.net-aware.org.uk

Given the alarming findings that 29% of eight- to 13-year-olds have given their details to strangers they've met online, the relaunch of Net Aware can't come too soon. Developed by the NSPCC with O2, it delivers a host of tips and advice about social networks, games and apps giving each one a set of risk ratings for attributes such as violence and bullying, explaining what they are and how they can be used. It supplements this with feedback from parents and kids and serves up-to-date news that promises to alert you to potential issues. You can also sign up for email alerts to stay informed.

Our rating ★★★★☆

Tell us about your website via webuser@webuser.co.uk

Best New Websites



RELAUNCH

SHOPPING

Create Gift Love

www.creategiftlove.co.uk

Offering a host of handmade gifts from keyrings and luggage tags to coin purses and jewellery, this site's revamp has slimmed down its navigation menu and placed more emphasis on wedding gifts. The product menu is now more focused, making it far easier to see what's on sale without being distracted by catch-all categories such as Best Sellers, Team Picks and Gift Vouchers. Videos have been dropped, but the blog has been retained and product pages include customer reviews and full descriptions. We like how the site counts down to the next available delivery date and offers 10% off your first order.

Our rating ★★★★☆

RELAUNCH

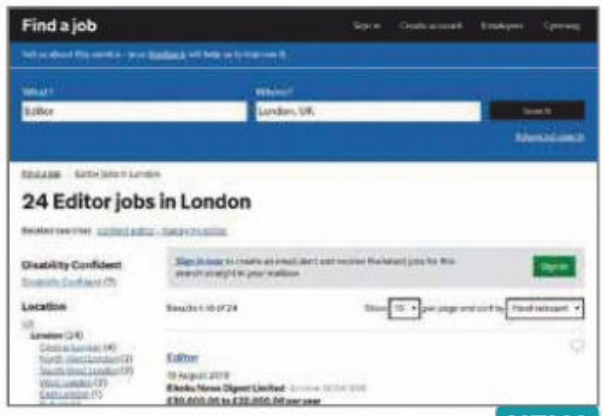
SPORT

World Curling Federation

worldcurling.org

Curling was given a major boost by the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympics and Paralympics, so the World Curling Federation has decided to sweep in with a new site. Now fully mobile-friendly, it's much easier to navigate thanks to a clear menu linking to news, events, galleries and broadcasts that play via YouTube. Easier search and access to the latest results make for a huge improvement on the old site and, because the WCF is canny enough to recognise that the sport is still niche, there's an explanation of curling complete with a two-minute video and an interesting summary of its history.

Our rating ★★★★★



NEW

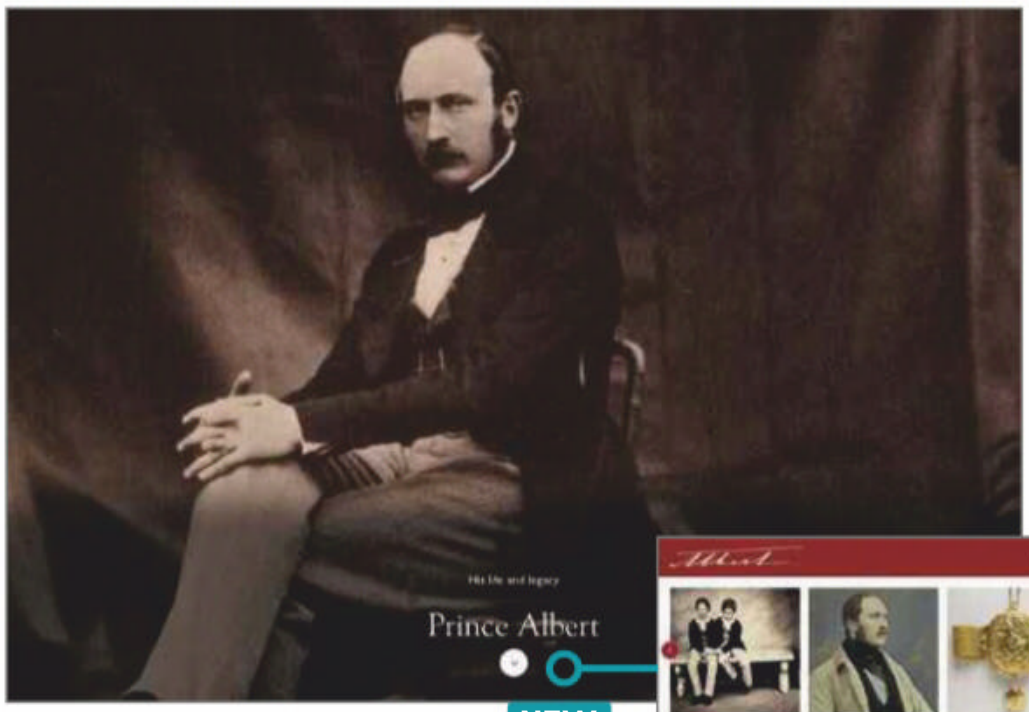
EMPLOYMENT

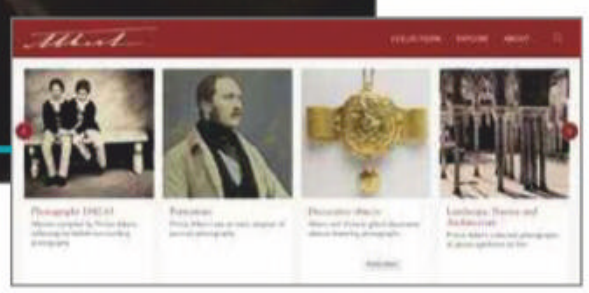
Find a job

findajob.dwp.gov.uk

Designed to help parents find employment with flexible working hours, the government's new site pools 50,000 job ads that you can browse by type of role and location. You can do this without creating an account, but you'll need to sign up if you want to apply. In each case, the listings clearly state the salary, hours, closing date for applications, the job type and the company with a summary of the expected tasks. Jobs can be saved, printed, shared or reported and you can filter by contract type, hours and salary range. It's very straightforward and you can also create email alerts for specific roles.

Our rating ★★★☆☆





NEW

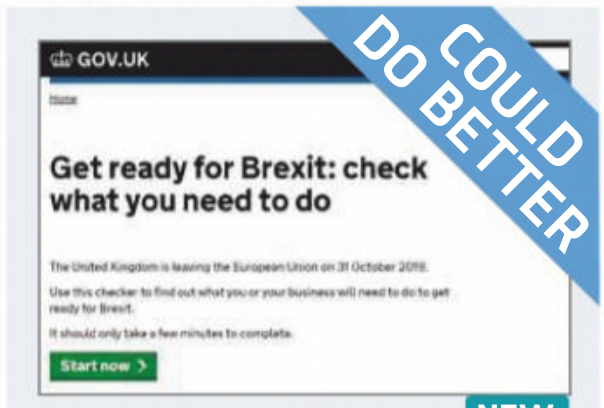
HISTORY

Prince Albert

albert.rct.uk

By collating more than 17,500 photographs, prints and papers related to Prince Albert, the Royal Collection Trust has developed a fascinating picture of the life and legacy of Queen Victoria's husband. It draws upon his love of photography, offering views of the albums he compiled and the collections he cultivated, which provide a glimpse of past events, working methods and commissioned works. You can also explore themes and topics such as the Great Exhibition of 1851 and photographic technologies. Thanks to intuitive navigation and clear presentation, the site can keep you enthralled for hours. There's also a collection of personal and official papers.

Our rating ★★★★★



NEW

POLITICS

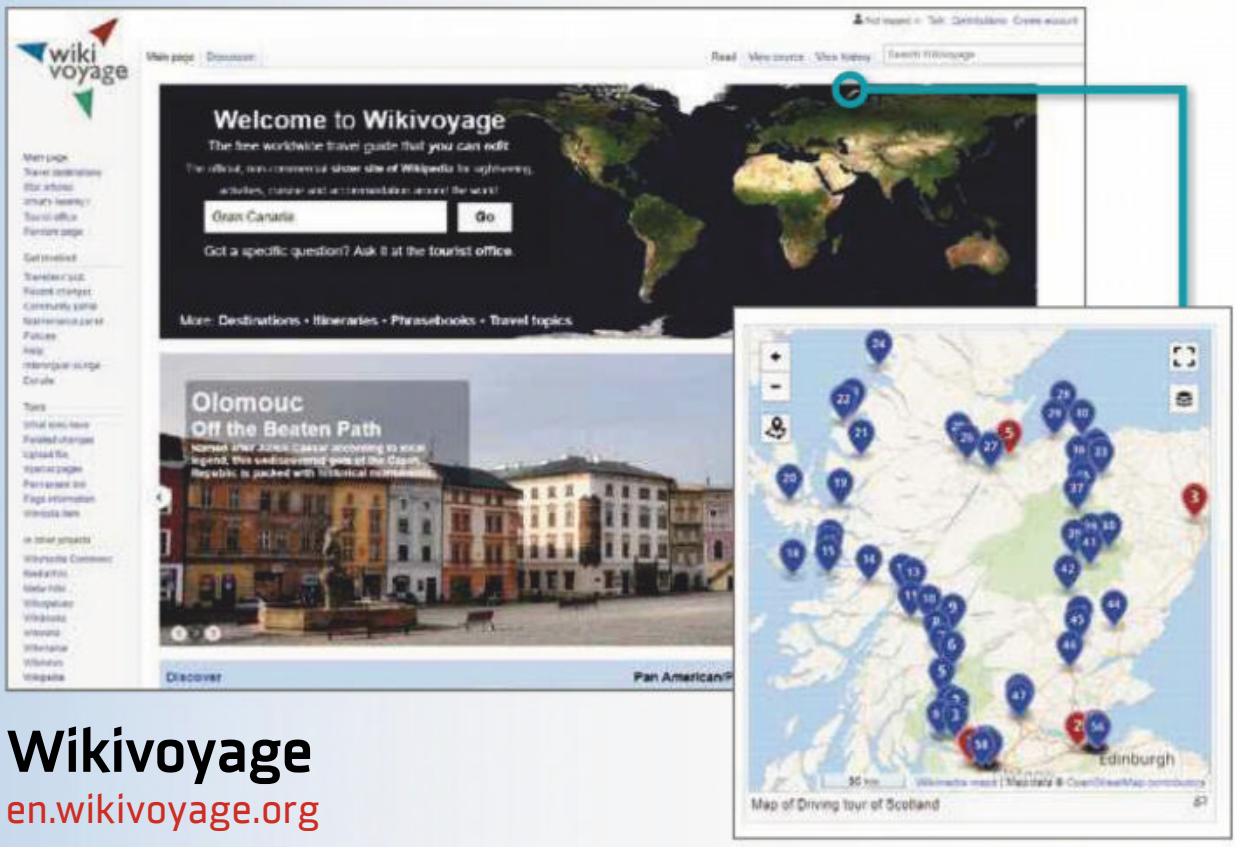
Get Ready for Brexit

www.gov.uk/brexit

Regardless of which way you voted and whether Brexit goes ahead as planned, it's good to be prepared. The site explores various scenarios – travelling to the EU, exporting to Europe, living in the UK or EU as a non-native citizen – and provides a Brexit checker which asks a series of questions and then provides details of the action you should be taking. Trouble is that the advice comes with the caveat that the circumstances may change so you may not need to carry them all out. The site also fails to go into as much detail for individuals as it does for businesses.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

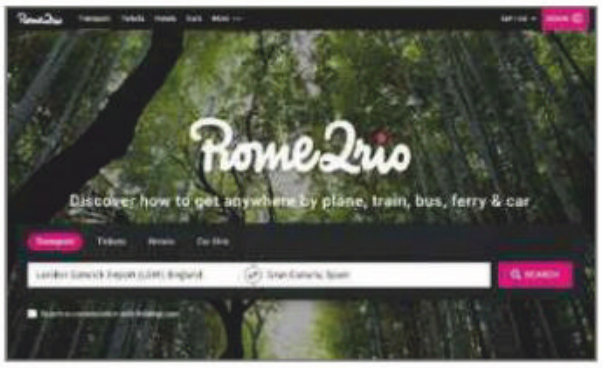
ESSENTIAL BOOKMARKS THIS ISSUE: Tremendous travel sites



Wikivoyage

en.wikivoyage.org

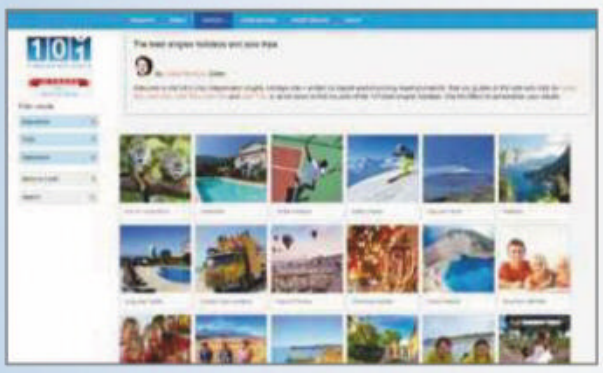
Wikipedia's lesser-known sister site is a lot better travelled and far easier on the eye, with splashes of colour and plenty of photos. As a similarly non-commercial venture, Wikivoyage is a reliable, helpful and up-to-date resource for researching destinations across the world without having to wade through sponsored content and ads from 'partners'. Its advice and information are provided and edited by fellow travellers, with articles covering topics such as attractions, activities, transport, language and staying safe, with helpful maps and climate-data charts. You can also browse phrasebooks for hundreds of languages, get answers to specific questions about your destination in Wikivoyage's 'Tourist office' section and view itineraries for many countries.



Rome2rio

www.rome2rio.com

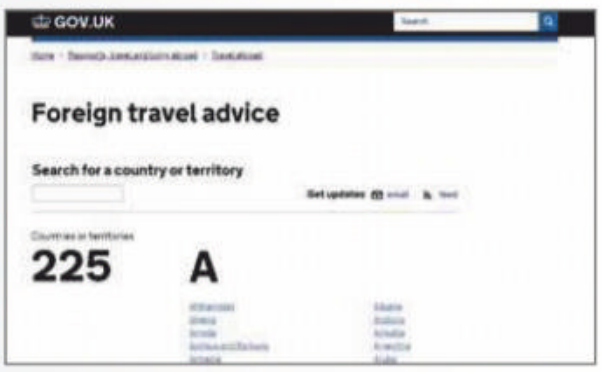
The Directions feature in Google Maps is impressive but slow, and it doesn't tell you the cost of different methods of transport. On top of all that, you have to be willing to share the details of your trip with Google. For more reliable and less invasive route planning, we prefer Rome2rio, which provides door-to-door directions and distance for any start point and destination you enter. What's more, you can compare the price and duration of various combinations of transport types including car, bus, train, plane, ferry and taxi, and book tickets for certain options directly through the site. Rome2rio also offers travel guides for popular trips and free mobile apps.



101 Singles Holidays

bit.ly/singles484

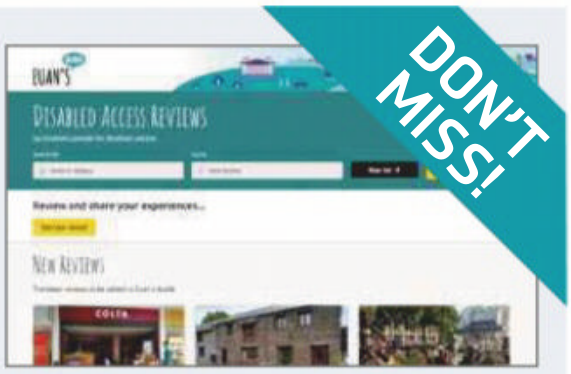
As many as a third of holidaymakers go away on their own, and this spin-off from independent travel site 101 Holidays provides inspiration and advice for those travelling solo. There are travel guides organised by age group – from under-40s to over-70s – and the titular 101 different holiday ideas, presented in an attractive photo-grid layout. These can be filtered by experience, price, destination and month, and include trips as disparate as 'Hiking for foodies', 'Whale watching', 'Christmas breaks' and 'River cruises'. The site tells you whether you'll need to pay a single supplement and if you get your own double room, and provides links to travel operators personally recommended by the website's editors.



Foreign Travel Advice

bit.ly/foreign484

The official government website for getting advice before you venture abroad is as basic as they come, but it remains one of the most useful online travel resources. Click one of the 225 countries and territories listed alphabetically on the main page – from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe – to view a summary of the latest travel advice, including the date of the most recent update. You can then explore sections for 'Safety and security', 'Entry requirements', 'Local laws and customs' and more, which contain impressively comprehensive information, presented in a large-text, no-nonsense manner. Usefully, the site also lets you subscribe to email alerts and an RSS feed for your intended destination.



Euan's Guide

www.euansguide.com

Euan MacDonald, who suffers from Motor Neurone Disease, set up this excellent site six years ago to provide information about disabled access in the UK, Europe and beyond. Search for a venue (or type of venue) or attraction in a location to read honest and in-depth reviews of hotels, restaurants, theatres and more, written by disabled people and their companions. Each entry includes photos, contact information and details of accessible toilets, hoists, changing rooms and other facilities, and the pages themselves are suitably accessible. There's also a frequently updated news section covering disabled issues.

Tell us about your favourite travel sites via webuser@webuser.co.uk

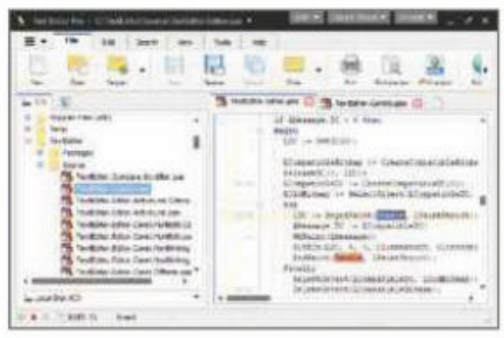
Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Create eye-catching web animations

Google has launched version 6 of its Web Designer software (webdesigner.withgoogle.com). It's aimed at users looking to create interactive HTML5 ads for Google's advertising platforms, but it can also be used to create all kinds of snazzy web-friendly animated graphics, if you have a good eye for design. The latest version has an improved code view, so if you understand what's happening behind the tool's user interface, you can tweak your effects using the raw HTML code created by the software.



Try coding in a new text editor

If you're still looking for the perfect text editor to help you create HTML and CSS pages, give the new version of Text Editor Pro (texteditor.pro) a whirl. It's free, and its tabbed interface lets you work on several files at the same time. It also marks up all your coding as you type, so it's clear and simple to read.

This latest version has tightened up the tabbed interface and added some new options to the menu bar.

Deal of the Fortnight

Hostinger (www.hostinger.co.uk) is offering big savings on its hosting deals, including unlimited bandwidth on unlimited websites for £3.11 per month.

Web-building Helpdesk

Q **My WordPress (wordpress.org) website uses a lot of pictures, many of which I regularly reuse. But it's hard to find the images because the Media Library is basically just a long list of files.**

Ralph Fordham, via email

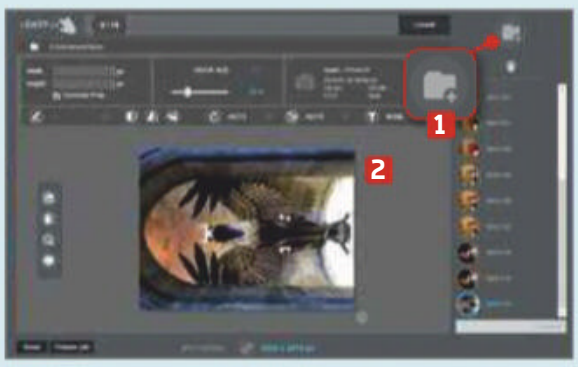
A Media Library is little more than a big bin to throw your pictures in. You have two options. On the one hand, WordPress's search tool is useful, as long as you're adding keywords and other searchable information in the Description box as you add your pictures. Another option is to use a plugin to help tame the library. Media Library Plus (bit.ly/mlp484) lets you add folders, so you can organise the library with a file structure, as you would on your hard drive.

Andy Shaw, Technical & Reviews Editor

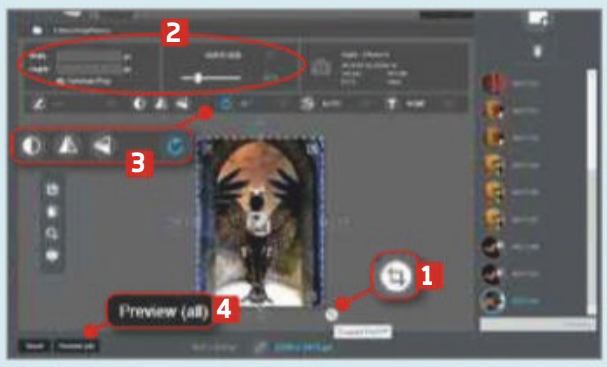
MINI WORKSHOP | Batch edit your pictures to prepare them for uploading to the web

rEASYze: reasyze.com | 10 mins | Windows 7, 8, 10

Webmasters are constantly cropping, resizing and watermarking the images they post to their websites. rEASYze is a handy tool for performing all these actions on multiple photos at once



1 Click the Add New Images icon 1 to select the files you want to change. Note that the changes you make to one image will apply to all of them, so if some need rotating, 2 for example, make sure you're happy with all the selected files being changed in the same way.



2 Now, make all the changes you want to the images. You can crop them, 1 change their size (by choosing specific pixels or opting for a percentage), 2 flip or rotate them. 3 To make sure that your changes haven't messed up any of the pictures you've selected to apply them to, click the 'Preview (all)' button. 4

3 When you're ready to commit to the changes, click the folder icon to select a folder to save the changes to, then click the Convert button. 1 You get the chance to double-check your folder (and change it) 2 and make changes to the filenames, 3 if you wish. Click Start Export. 4

Email us your website building questions at webuser@webuser.co.uk

JOIN THE PRO SQUAD!

G-MASTER™
#MONITORS4GAMERS
by iiyama

RED EAGLE™

GB2560HSU[1] | GB2760HSU[1] | GB2760QSU[2]

24.5" | 27" | Free Sync | 1ms 144Hz | 🎧

Panel	TN LED / 1920x1080[1], TN LED / 2560x1440[2]
Response time	1 ms, 144Hz, FreeSync™
Features	OverDrive, Black Tuner, Blue Light Reducer, Predefined and Custom Gaming Modes
Inputs	DVI-D[2], HDMI, DisplayPort, USB
Audio	speakers and headphone connector
Height adjustment	13 cm
Design	edge-to-edge, height adjustable stand with PIVOT

gmaster.iiyama.com

What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight

NETFLIX

Watch David Tennant in Netflix's *Criminal*

From 20 September

Police interviews have become a hallmark of quality TV drama, with *Line of Duty* and *Mindhunter* devoting hours to intense interrogations. Now Netflix's ambitious 12-parter *Criminal* ups the ante by taking place entirely in the interview room.

The series spans four countries and 12 stories, with each episode focusing on the interrogation of a different suspect. Netflix has kept details under wraps, but its official teaser (bit.ly/crimteaser484) suggests two suspects are played by David Tennant (good in *Broadchurch*; evil in *Good Omens*) and Hayley Atwell (best known as super-'tec *Agent Carter*). A second trailer offers a glimpse of Rochenda Sandall (Lisa McQueen from *Line of Duty*) as she murmurs "guilty": bit.ly/crimtrail484.

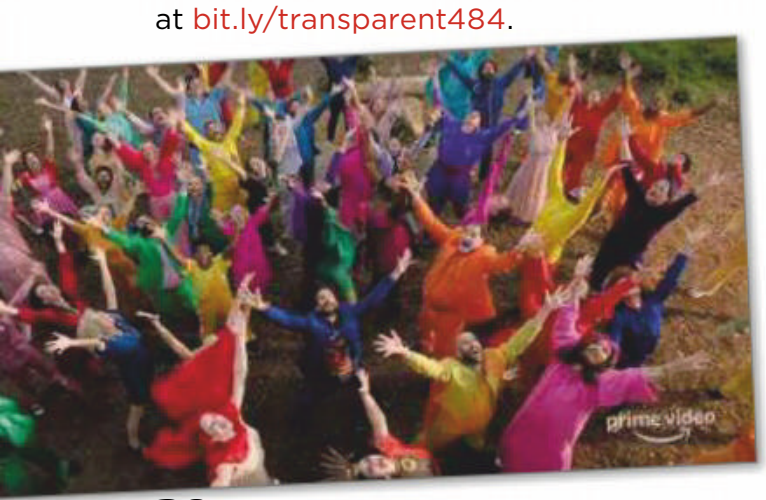
The three UK-based episodes also feature Katherine Kelly (*Happy Valley*), Lee Ingleby (also *Line of Duty*), and Shubham Saraf (*Bodyguard*). The remaining stories take place in France, Germany and Spain. All 12 episodes arrive on Netflix on 20 September at bit/criminal484.

Sing farewell to *Transparent*

From 27 September

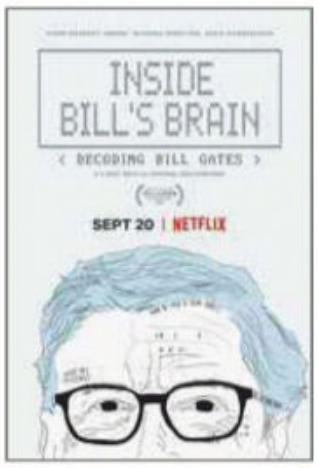
Amazon's groundbreaking comedy-drama hit the buffers when star Jeffrey Tambor – who played transgender matriarch Maura Pfefferman – was sacked following #MeToo allegations. But the show survived, killing off Maura and putting co-star Judith Light (Shelly Pfefferman, heroic mother to Maura's kids) centre stage. And for this feature-length finale, she's on an actual stage.

Instead of letting the story fizzle out *House of Cards*-style, *Transparent* bows out with a musical staged by the defiant Pfeffermans – and judging by the comments under the trailer (bit.ly/transtrail484), fans are delighted. The finale joins all five seasons on Amazon at bit.ly/transparent484.



Take a peek *Inside Bill's Brain*

From 20 September



Microsoft multi-billionaire William Gates III, better known as Bill, is the latest subject for Oscar-winning filmmaker Davis Guggenheim (*An Inconvenient Truth*).

The official trailer (bit.ly/inside484) feels a lot more sympathetic than the usual documentary style we've come to expect from Netflix. Guggenheim and Gates enjoy numerous chats about the bespectacled brainiac's career, philanthropy, fears – and his favourite animal (dog). Watch all three parts on Netflix from 20 September.

Watch new BBC comedy *Defending The Guilty*

From 19 September

Katherine Parkinson (*The IT Crowd*) stars as a hardened barrister in this new BBC comedy whose wry humour falls

somewhere between *Rev* and *The Thick of It*. Parkinson's character Caroline is mentor to a hopelessly idealistic student attorney (Will Sharpe), who just wants to put the world to rights.

Episodes arrive on the iPlayer each Thursday, shortly after airing at 10pm on BBC2. Watch the latest trailer at bit.ly/guilty484. Will Sharpe's *Flowers* is still available on demand via All4 at bit.ly/flowers484.

Watch Ryan Murphy's two new blockbusters

From 19/27 September

Ryan Murphy shows are everywhere. He's the brains behind *American Crime Story* (OJ Simpson and Gianni Versace seasons on Netflix at bit.ly/simpson484 and bit.ly/versace484); *Pose* (iPlayer,

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

Why isn't Disney+ launching in the UK?

Disney has announced a 12 November launch date for its Netflix-style streaming service – but not in the UK. Disney+ launches in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the US and the Netherlands in November, but there's no word on a UK date. The delay is largely due to Disney's existing deals with Sky, whose Sky Disney channel – which carries a tiny fraction of the content Disney+ will – is contracted to run until at least 2020.

The new platform's exclusives will include numerous Marvel originals; *Star Wars* shows including Ewan McGregor's Obi-Wan Kenobi series; and all episodes of *The Simpsons*. Subscriptions cost $6.99 for up to four simultaneous 4K streams.

UK Disney fans can sign up for updates at preview.disneyplus.com/uk.

bit.ly/pose484); *9-1-1* (Now TV, bit.ly/911-484) and *Glee* (Amazon Prime Video, bit.ly/glee484) – and he just can't stop them coming.

A ninth season of Murphy's wicked FX satire *American Horror Story* comes to Now TV on 19 September with a new story, subtitled *1984*. The trailer (bit.ly/ahs484) promises a *Friday the 13th*-style slasherama, with big-haired teens heading into the woods to their doom.

Then, on 27 September, comes *The Politician*, Murphy's witty new Netflix show starring Ben Platt as a student determined to become US President. Grown-up co-stars include Gwyneth Paltrow and Jessica Lange. Watch the official trailer on Netflix at bit.ly/politician484.

Return to Dreamland in Matt Groening's *Disenchantment*

From 20 September

More than a year since Netflix launched the first 10 episodes of this fantasy animation from Matt Groening (*The Simpsons*), new episodes are finally upon us.

The irreverent medieval tale follows Bean, a rebellious princess who runs away for adventures in Dreamland with half-elf Elfo and demon Luci. Groening promises "cranked-up suspense, thrilling plot twists and beloved characters getting knocked off" in Part 2, whose 10 half-hour episodes arrive on Netflix at bit.ly/disenchant484. Watch the latest Part 2 teaser on YouTube at bit.ly/distease484.

Watch Kevin Bacon in *City on a Hill*

From 25 September

Kevin Bacon stars in this fact-based drama as a corrupt and deeply unlikeable FBI agent who teams up with a black district attorney to subvert the legal system of 1990s Boston.

Matt Damon and Ben Affleck executive-produce the show, which aired on Showtime in the US and will be back for a second season. Watch the official trailer at bit.ly/city484, and follow Season 1 on Now TV with an Entertainment Pass (£7.99 per month, bit.ly/nowent484). Discover the real-life case at the centre of the story at bit.ly/hillmurder484.

In case you missed it...

The iPlayer has squeezed in a couple of intriguing miniseries as an antidote to attention-hogs *Strictly* and *MasterChef*. Conspiracy thriller *The Capture* is a timely tale that explores fake news and digital snooping. Episodes arrive weekly on the iPlayer at bit.ly/thecapture484, where they'll be available on-demand for more than a year. Watch the trailer at bit.ly/capture484.

Then there's dark comedy *State of the Union*, written by Nick Hornby and directed by Stephen Frears. Each 10-minute episode sees Rosamund Pike and Chris O'Dowd bracing for a weekly marriage therapy session. Watch episodes at bit.ly/state484 and catch the trailer at bit.ly/union484.

New on Now TV is Sky's gripping thriller *Temple* about medics who set up an underground clinic in tunnels beneath London. Watch the official trailer at bit.ly/temple484.

Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

Acer Aspire C 24

Instead of a chunky desktop computer, why not make your next PC a sleek all-in-one, where the PC is built into the screen?

Many people choose a laptop as a compact alternative to a desktop PC, and then plug it into a big screen when they want to get a better view. But if you're not bothered about portability, you could opt for an all-in-one PC, where the components are built into a large screen you can use all the time.

We've had a few all-in-ones pass through our labs in recent months, so we can compare this latest Acer model against the slightly older Acer Aspire S 24 and the similarly priced rival Medion Akoya E23401. All three of these models are built around a 24in screen with a resolution of 1,920 x 1,080 pixels, an Intel Core i5-8250U processor and 8GB of memory.

Build and design

The C 24 has an attractive slimline design. Its minimal screen bezels (the plastic area around the edge of the screen) have a faux brushed-aluminium finish, and its angular stand complements its clean, modern aesthetic, even if it's largely made out of plastic. It's not as eye-catching as the S 24's gold trim, but it's a good-looking PC for the price.

Both 802.11ac Wi-Fi and Bluetooth 4.1 are integrated, while all the physical connectors are positioned on the rear. These amount to one HDMI output, one Ethernet socket, a 3.5mm audio jack and two USB 2 ports, with an SD card reader and two USB 3 ports sitting higher up, one of which is intended for the included USB webcam.

> "An affordable all-in-one PC that will solve all your desktop space problems without compromising on screen quality"

This camera perches on top of the screen, held on by a magnet so it's easy to remove when you don't want to use it. This is an almost identical system to the Akoya E23401, and it's a nice touch. Video quality is good, with smooth movement, and removing it is more reassuring than a sliding privacy cover, because physically disconnecting the camera means you can be sure it's not working. If anything, it's probably best to leave the camera unplugged until you need it, because four USB ports isn't very many – fewer than the port count on both the aforementioned S 24 and the E23401.

The bundled mouse and keyboard can be connected to the same USB port via a single wireless receiver but this still limits you to three ports with the camera unplugged, or just two ports if you'd prefer to keep the camera accessible.

> It's probably best to leave the camera unplugged until you need it, because four USB ports isn't very many

USB ports aren't the only way the C 24 has scrimped to keep its price low. The speakers are awful – completely devoid of bass and incapable of making music sound like anything other than a scratchy mess. They're not particularly loud, either, although considering their lack of fidelity, that may be a good thing.

Screen quality and performance

The C 24 managed to display a satisfactory 82.4% of colours in the SRGB colour standard and has a decent contrast ratio of 1,008:1. Peak brightness is 272.2cd/m² (candles per square metre). These aren't the kinds of figures you'd expect from a top-class monitor but they're not bad considering more corners could have been cut. Furthermore, it's a much better screen than you get on both the E23401 and the more expensive S 24.

With regard to performance, the C 24's small compact build means it relies on the graphics hardware integrated with the processor, so it's not a great option if you're looking for smooth gaming. The best we could get out of Dirt Showdown – a game we regularly use to test PCs – was 32fps (frames per second). To get this, we had to lower it from the preferred Ultra detail settings to High, and reduce the resolution to 1,280 x 720 pixels.

All that said, the C 24 is a good general-use family PC, acceptably priced and perfectly adequate for browsing and simple office tasks. As you'd expect with similar core setups, the performance on the other all-in-ones was similar.

The C 24's lone 1TB hard drive, however, can cause some frustrating slowdowns. With no SSD or solid-state cache, Windows is entirely reliant on creaky old mechanical tech, which is bad news for booting and transfer times. At one stage, the C 24 took more than six minutes to perform a simple restart.

The E23401 escaped this problem by pairing its mechanical hard drive with a master SSD drive, which gave it a significant boost when booting Windows and launching key software. The compromise comes with the screen, which pales in comparison to the C 24.

PRODUCT INFO

Acer Aspire C 24

Price: £649
Buy from Currys:
bit.ly/aspc484

SPECIFICATIONS

- Quad-core 1.6GHz Intel Core i5-8250U processor
- 8GB DDR4 SDRAM memory
- 2 x USB 2, 2 x USB 3 ports
- Intel UHD Graphics 620
- 1TB hard drive
- 24in 1,920 x 1,080 pixels display
- Windows 10 Home

FOR

- ✓ More compact than a desktop
- ✓ Bigger screen than a laptop
- ✓ Good quality screen beats rivals

AGAINST

- ✗ Lack of SSD makes booting sluggish
- ✗ Not enough USB ports
- ✗ Integrated graphics

MORE EXPENSIVE, BETTER LOOKING

Acer Aspire S 24, £937.97
bit.ly/asps484

FASTER PC, WORSE SCREEN

Medion Akoya E23401, £699
bit.ly/medion484

OUR VERDICT

★★★★☆

This affordable all-in-one PC will solve all your desktop space problems, particularly if you don't want to compromise on screen quality. The PC's components are built into a 24in screen, which is large enough to satisfy most needs and provides the best quality viewing we've seen in recent all-in-one PCs.

However, this has led to compromises elsewhere. With no SSD to keep Windows zipping along, the C 24 was sometimes frustratingly slow, particularly when booting up. The integrated graphics means it's not much use for games, either, though it handles other Windows tasks well.

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

Ikea Symfonisk

These new wireless speakers from Ikea offer the most affordable way to get Sonos-compatible speakers in your home

A trip to Ikea can fill even avowed shopaholics with dread, but the Swedish retailer's latest wireless speakers may have you beating a path through its showroom. Outwardly, they've been designed to blend in with your home's Ikea furniture, but the music-playing element comes from Sonos, which promises multi-room Wi-Fi connectivity and a quality of sound you wouldn't expect from something this affordable.

It's worth noting that there's no microphone, so you can't use them in conjunction with Google Assistant or Amazon Alexa. That said, you don't get Amazon and Google smartspeaker compatibility with standard Sonos devices until you reach the £195 Sonos 1.

PRODUCT INFO

Ikea Symfonisk

Price: Speaker £99, lamp £150
Buy from Ikea:
bit.ly/ikea484

SPECIFICATIONS

- Lamp compatible with A++ to B LED lightbulbs
- Bookshelf speaker: 310 x 150 x 100mm; lamp: 401 x 216 x 216mm
- 150cm power cable

FOR

- ✓ Good sound
- ✓ Room-optimisation technology
- ✓ Sonos app

AGAINST

- ✗ No 3.5mm input
- ✗ No microphone

Build and design

There are two models, both available in black or white. The 'bookshelf' speaker is designed to sit comfortably and discreetly on a shelf (though there's also a wall-mounting kit available), and costs a mere £99, which makes it the cheapest Sonos speaker to date (the nearest Sonos-branded alternative is the £149 Sonos Play:1). The 'table lamp' has the speaker hidden in the base and is more expensive at £150.

The bookshelf speaker is built from minimalist, solid-feeling plastic with a textile grille covering the drivers and all cables hidden at the back. The lamp is bigger and more suited to a living room than a bedside table. Similarly sturdy, its base is covered in what looks like a knitted tea cosy and topped with a shade of frosted glass. Speaker aside, it's pretty basic – there's a circular switch for turning the light on or off, but no dimmer option. There are Play, Pause and Pairing buttons on the front of both designs.

Sound quality and control

The Sonos system lets you set each speaker as a standalone device or as part of a multi-room system (playing the same music around your home), and they're compatible with Apple AirPlay 2.

Besides AirPlay 2, the best way to control the Symfonisk speakers is to use the brilliant Sonos app, which gives you access to numerous streaming services, from TuneIn Radio through various high-resolution audio options, and all the big-name music services including Spotify, Google Play Music, Apple Music and YouTube Music.

> "Each speaker works as a standalone device or as part of a multi-room system"

The app lets you integrate services if you use more than one, so you can search and build playlists across multiple music services. It also has a fantastic automatic tuning tool that optimises the speaker to perform as well as acoustically possible in the space you've placed it.

Both speakers provide impressive performance, particularly after the automated tuning process. They can't compete with expensive audiophile brands but you get a significantly better sound from these models than you do from similarly-priced Amazon and Google smart speakers.

OUR VERDICT ★★★★★

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

Given the prices, Ikea's Sonos-inspired speakers represent phenomenal value for money. You could probably get a better-sounding £99 or £150 Bluetooth speaker, but it won't have Sonos' smarts or room-optimising technology built-in, and it certainly won't look as good. And the sound quality is still much better than the Google Home or the Amazon Echo 2 or Echo Plus.

THE WEEK

Countdown to Brexit

As the Brexit deadline approaches, the stage is set for a tumultuous political showdown. We could be heading for the hardest of all exits – or a parliamentary revolt.

Cut through the endless claim and counterclaim with Countdown to Brexit, *The Week*'s Friday-afternoon guide to the gravity and absurdity of British politics. We immerse ourselves in the minutiae and emerge, with sanity and humour intact, to write a concise summary of what really matters.

Get our weekly email delivered straight to your inbox.

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HARDWARE, SOFTWARE & SERVICES

CHROMEBOOK

Lenovo Chromebook 500e

£349.98 from bit.ly/leno483
Tested: Issue 483

This versatile and rugged convertible Chromebook has been designed for the classroom but would be just as useful at home and on the move. It's tough enough to survive a few knocks and you can use a stylus on its touchscreen.

KEY SPECS

Intel Celeron N3450 processor ■ 32GB storage ■ 4GB memory ■ 11.6in touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ Intel UHD Graphics 500 card ■ 2 x USB-C, 2 x USB 3 ports ■ 290 x 204 x 20.4mm ■ 1.31kg ■ 1-year collect-and-return

SECURITY CAMERA

Google Nest Cam IQ Outdoor

£279 from bit.ly/nest481
Tested: Issue 481

This is the best-quality external security camera we've tested, capable of capturing clear, sharp video footage. It takes a bit of setting up and is expensive, but it's worth paying for if you're serious about your home security.

KEY SPECS

Outdoor camera ■ 1080p video resolution ■ 130-degree lens ■ Motion and audio detection ■ Night vision ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ 128 x 93 x 93mm ■ Three hours of free cloud storage ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

INKJET PRINTER

Canon Pixma TS6250

£114.36 from bit.ly/cango479
Tested: Issue 479

This multifunction printer looks smart and is easy to use, whether you're printing from a PC, mobile device or its own touchscreen. With great results and acceptable running costs, it's easy to recommend.

KEY SPECS

4,800 x 1,200dpi print resolution ■ 2,400 x 1,200dpi scan resolution ■ 200-sheet A4 paper capacity ■ Double-sided printing ■ 7.5in colour touchscreen ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 372 x 315 x 139mm ■ 6.2kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

MINI PC

ASRock DeskMini 310

£668.70 from bit.ly/asro477
Tested: Issue 477

The performance of this diminutive PC comes remarkably close to a full-size system, once you've paid for and installed its components. It's compact, quiet and runs Windows well.

KEY SPECS

Intel Core i5-8400 processor ■ 250GB SSD ■ 16GB memory ■ Intel UHD Graphics 630 card ■ 1 x USB Type-C, 2 x USB 3.1, 1 x USB 2 ports ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi, Gigabit Ethernet ■ 158 x 155 x 80mm ■ 1.87kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

GRAPHICS CARD

Asus ROG Strix RX 570 OC

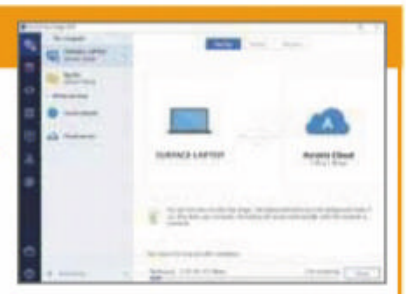
£189.99 from bit.ly/asusbox475
Tested: Issue 475

Asus's twin-fan graphics card gets the balance perfectly right. It comfortably plays games that are designed to push a graphics-processing unit to the limit, and for the price it kicks cards with similar specifications right out of the game.

KEY SPECS

AMD Radeon RX 570 graphics processor ■ 2,048 GPU cores ■ 1,300MHz clock speed ■ 4GB memory ■ 1 x DisplayPort, 2 x DVI, 1 x HDMI outputs ■ 200W power ■ 240mm ■ Two-year repair-and-replace warranty

BACKUP SOFTWARE



Acronis True Image 2019

£35 from bit.ly/acro473
Tested: Issue 473

Acronis True Image is a versatile backup tool that does everything from cloud storage to disaster recovery. It's not cheap compared with rival software, but it's flexible and simple to control, and should cover all your backup needs.

KEY FEATURES

Windows, macOS, Android, iOS ■ Local backup ■ Disc-image backup ■ Restore from the web ■ Create disaster recovery ■ AES-256 encryption ■ Continuous, daily, weekly or monthly backups ■ Multiple backup sets

All prices correct at time of review

Gold Award winners

The best from our software tests

ANDROID DATA SHREDDER

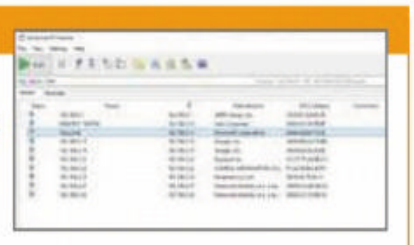
Shredder

NEW!

Free from bit.ly/shredder483
Tested: Issue 483
Shredder is an excellent, easy to use tool that permanently deletes sensitive and unwanted files so they can never be recovered.

WI-FI MONITOR

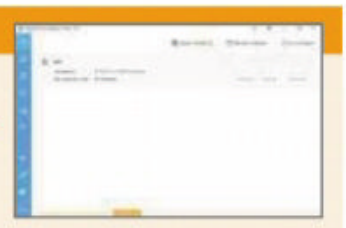
Advanced IP Scanner



Free from www.advanced-ip-scanner.com
Tested: Issue 482
This easy-to-use tool identifies all devices connected to your Wi-Fi network. There's a portable version available, too.

BACKUP SOFTWARE

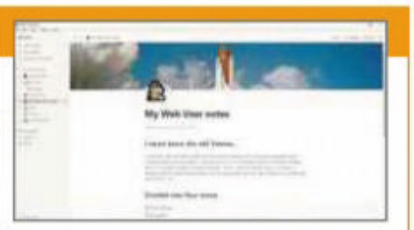
EaseUS Todo Backup Free



Free from bit.ly/ease481
Tested: Issue 481
The free version of EaseUS Todo Backup is more than enough to keep your PC backed up for years to come. It's missing a few tools by nothing that hampers its usefulness.

NOTE-TAKING TOOL

Notion



Free from www.notion.so
Tested: Issue 480
Notion lets you keep and organise all the thoughts cascading through your mind, no matter what device you're using. It has every feature you'll ever need, and it's free for personal use.

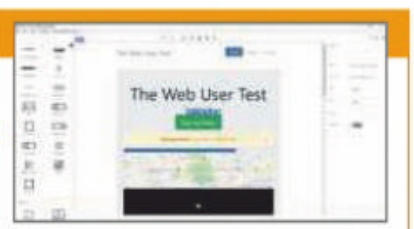
SANDBOX SOFTWARE

Sandboxie

Free from www.sandboxie.com
Tested: Issue 479
If you can get past the dated interface and upgrade nags, Sandboxie is the most thorough sandboxing tool we've seen for running programs in a fenced-off environment.

WEB-DESIGN TOOL

Basic WebPage Builder



Free from bit.ly/bwpb478
Tested: Issue 478
Basic WebPage Builder is ideal for budding but inexperienced web designers. Its impressive range of elements will fulfil most basic needs, with no HTML knowledge required.

WebUser

BACK ISSUES DISC 2018

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

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

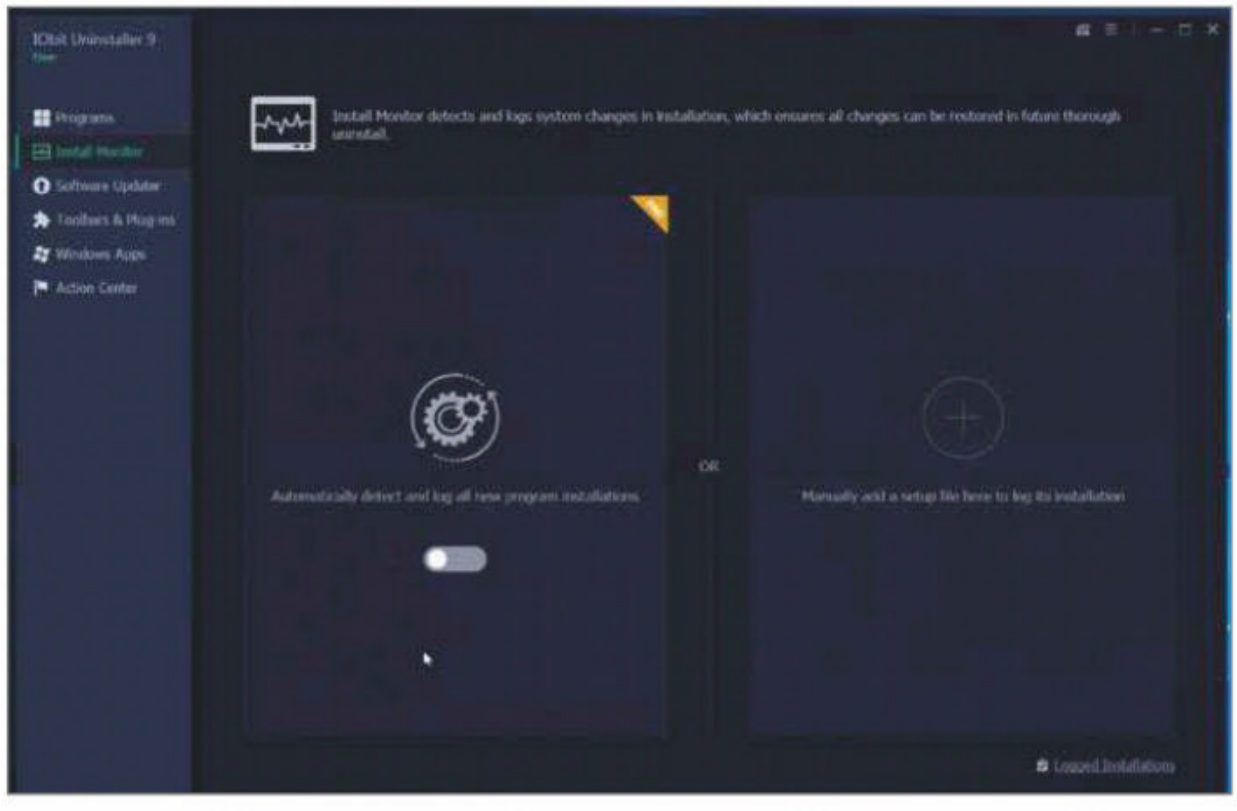
You can still buy our 2014-2017 Back Issues Discs, search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon

Best Free Software

UNINSTALLER

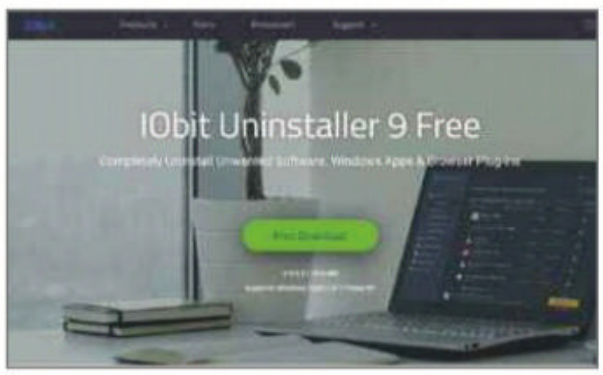
IObit Uninstaller 9

bit.ly/uninstall484
Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10
File size: 19.5MB



Windows comes with its own built-in uninstaller but there are better free third-party solutions available. IObit Uninstaller not only removes programs you no longer want, but it cleans up after them, too, deleting leftover junk that other similar programs might leave behind, including temporary and installer files, and Registry entries. It can batch-uninstall unwanted software and force-remove broken files and applications, as well as hidden and unlisted programs.

The list of installed software can be filtered by All Programs, Bundleware, Recently Installed, Large Programs and Infrequently Used, and you can also reorder the list by Name, Size or Install Date, or simply search for the items you want to remove. There are additional sections for Windows Apps and Toolbars & Plug-ins.



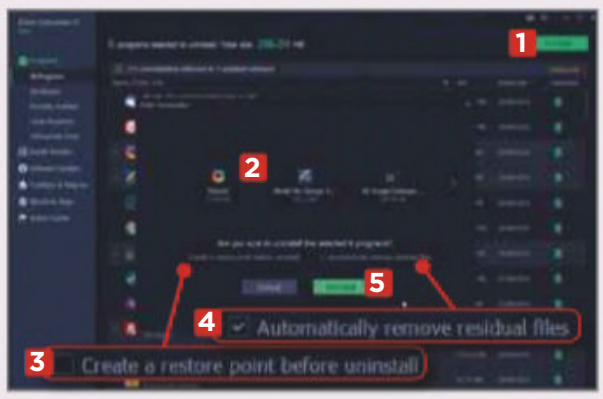
The updated version of IObit Uninstaller comes with a handy Install Monitor, which detects and logs system changes when you install a program so you can make sure everything gets removed and all changes are undone when you come to uninstall it. Automatic monitoring is only available in the paid-for Pro edition, but the free version can monitor an install if you drag the setup file to the Install Monitor window. You can view the list of logged installations by clicking a link.

There's also a new Software Health option which scans your system drive and reports back on any leftovers from programs you've previously uninstalled. In our case, there were 299 of these and IObit Uninstaller removed them all with a single mouse click.

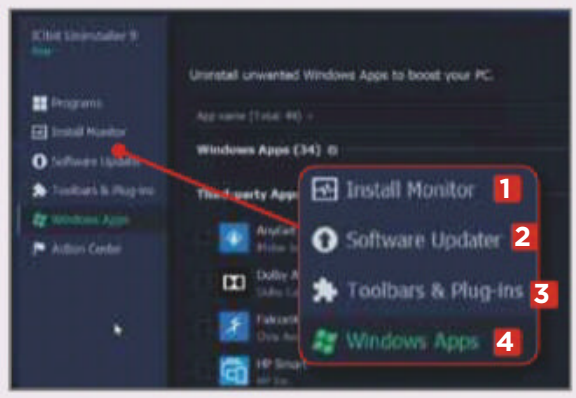
The new version also now displays ratings from the Microsoft Store, so you can decide whether or not to remove specific Windows apps. Be sure to decline the bundled junk during installation.

MINI WORKSHOP | Remove unwanted programs with IObit Uninstaller 9

1 Find the software you want IObit Uninstaller to remove by browsing the All Programs list. 1 You can also filter the list by category 2 or search for something by name. 3 To batch uninstall multiple programs, tick the box next to each one. 4 The number of programs selected and total size is shown here. 5

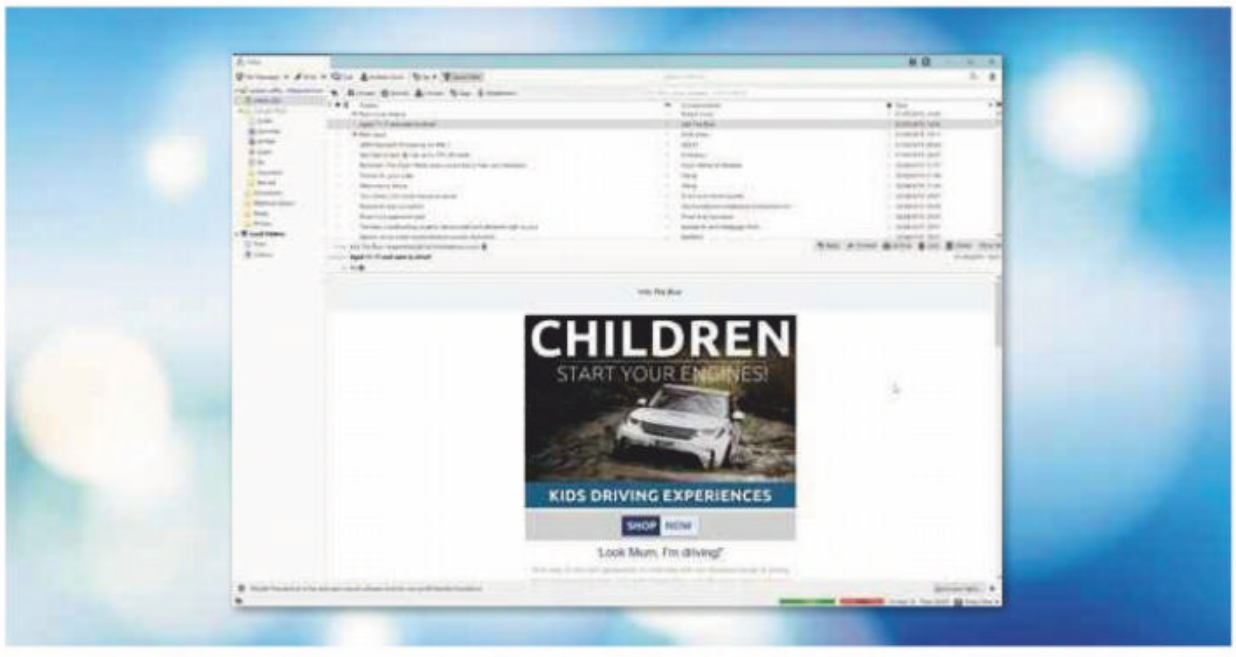


2 Click Uninstall 1 to begin the removal process. You'll be shown which programs will be uninstalled. 2 IObit Uninstaller can create a restore point, so you can roll things back should problems occur. 3 It will also automatically remove residual files afterwards, unless you untick this box. 4 Click the Uninstall button 5 to begin the process.



3 Install Monitor is where you can install new software. 1 The Software Updater lets you install the newest version of programs on your PC. 2 You can remove unwanted browser extras under Toolbars & Plug-ins. 3 Remove unwanted applications, including ones bundled with Windows 10, under Windows Apps. 4

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



EMAIL CLIENT

Thunderbird 68

www.thunderbird.net

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 38.2MB

Although most of us now use webmail and mobile apps to access email on the go, desktop clients such as Thunderbird are still popular. Just enter your email address and password, and it will quickly configure everything and start downloading your messages. This new version adds support for different language packs, and you can now mark all folders as read. There's a 64-bit installer, too. Note that this new version of Thunderbird is only available as a direct download, not an upgrade.

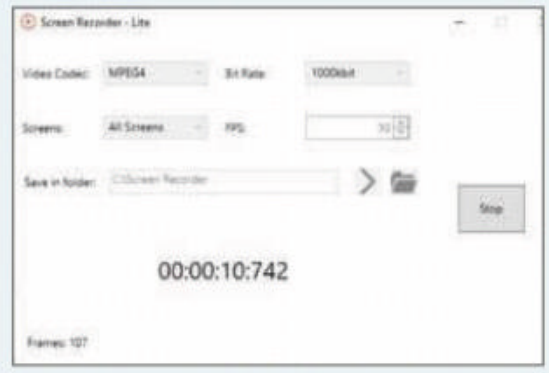
New Windows 10 App

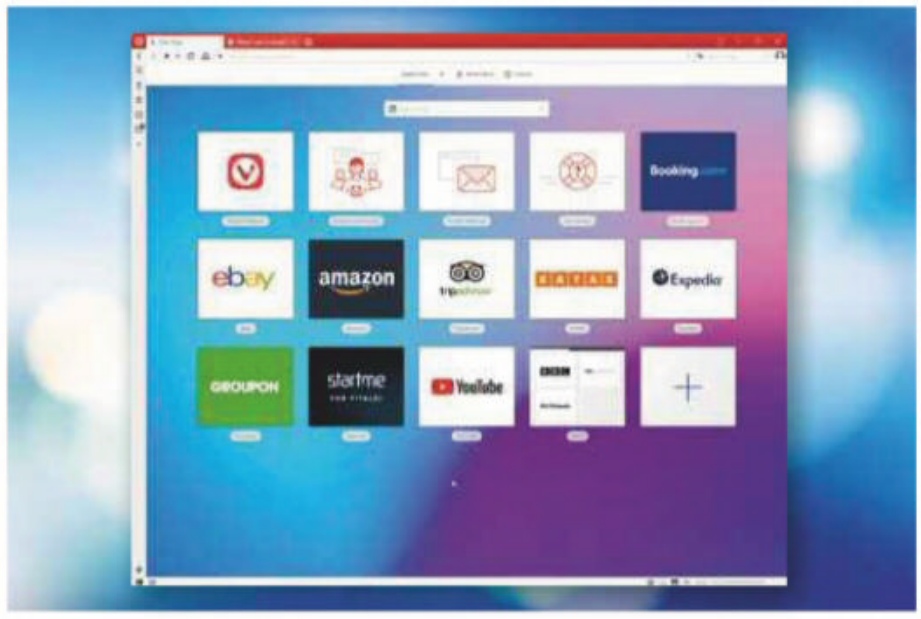
Screen Recorder – Lite

bit.ly/screenrec484

File size: 22.7MB

You can record your onscreen activity in Windows 10 using the built-in game bar, but Screen Recorder – Lite is another, even simpler option. To use it, just click the Start button and then click Stop when you've finished. You can change the video codec, bit rate and frames per second, and choose which screen to record if you have more than one.





WEB BROWSER

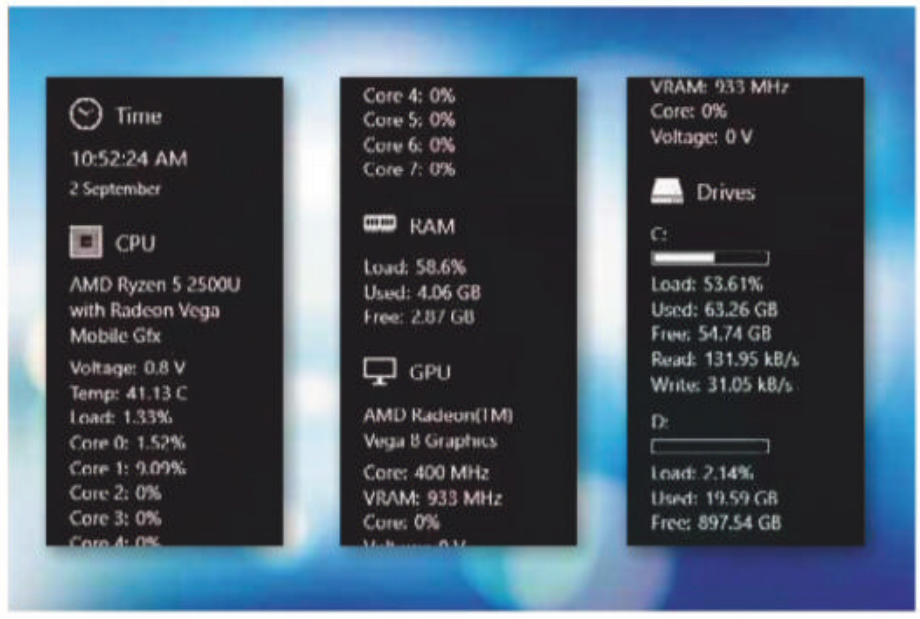
Vivaldi 2.7

vivaldi.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 or macOS

File size: 56.5MB

Vivaldi is a popular web browser from the former CEO of Opera. This update adds a Mute option to the browser's tab controls so you can quickly quieten noisy sites, and you can save individual profiles as desktop shortcuts in the Windows version for easy switching. The status bar now shows loading information so you can see what's going on in the background. There have also been some stability improvements made to the macOS build.



SYSTEM INFORMATION TOOL

Sidebar Diagnostics

bit.ly/sidebar484

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 3.4MB

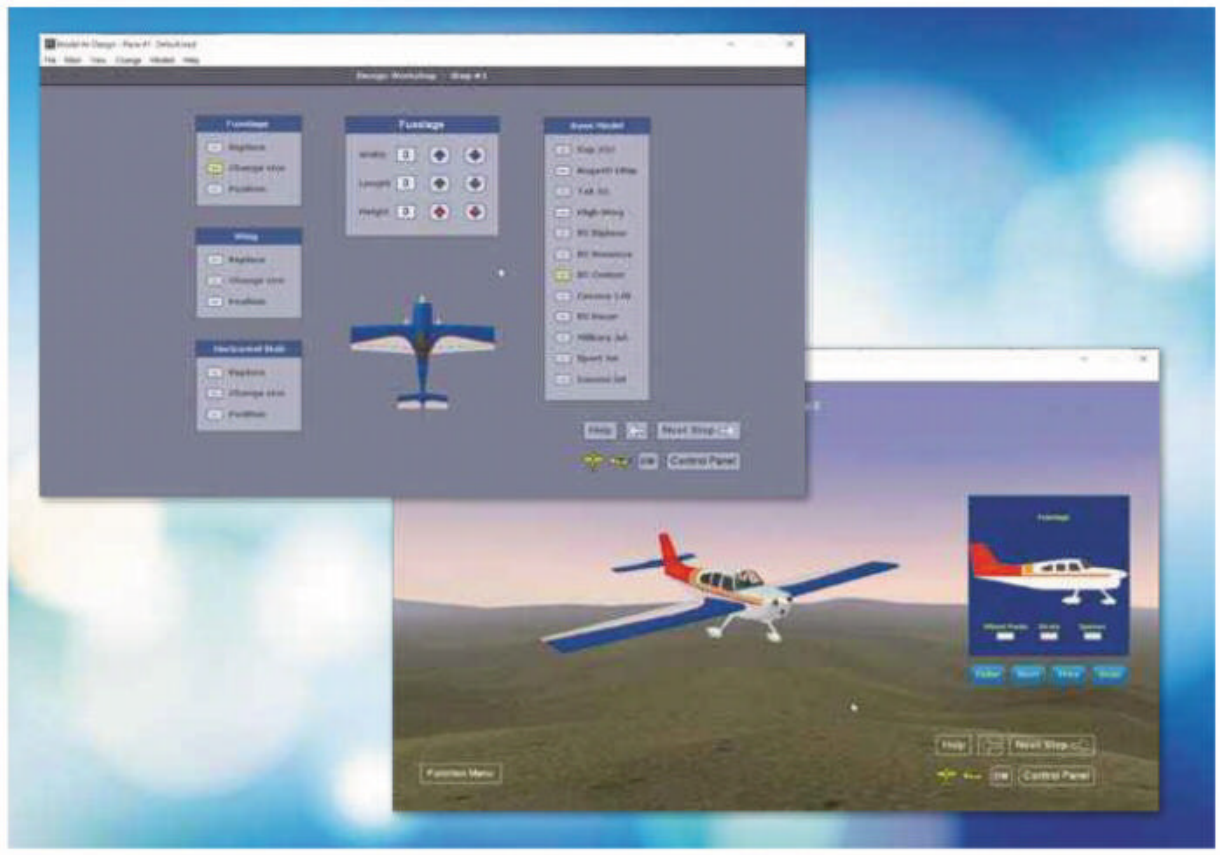
This handy tool provides useful information about your system, including the make, status and temperature of your PC's processor and graphic processor; details of memory usage and remaining RAM; and the load and speed of your hard drives. The data is displayed in a sidebar docked on the side of your screen – right or left, whichever you prefer – which you can customise by changing the information displayed, its colour, font size and opacity, and making it always visible.

3D DESIGNER

Model Air Design 2

www.modelairdesign.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10
File size: 2.1MB



This free tool lets you create 3D aeroplane models without having to master the complexity of Computer Aided Design (CAD). The software lets you choose from a number of base models – such as a Bugatti 100p, RC Biplane, Military Jet, Canard Jet and Cessna 140 – and then replace, reposition and resize the fuselage, wing and horizontal stab.

You can make further changes in the design grid, and rotate your creation in 3D. When you're happy with your model you can paint it, view it and watch how it flies – either solo or in formation.

PHOTO RESIZER

AI Image Enlarger

imglarger.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 or macOS **File size:** 3.3MB

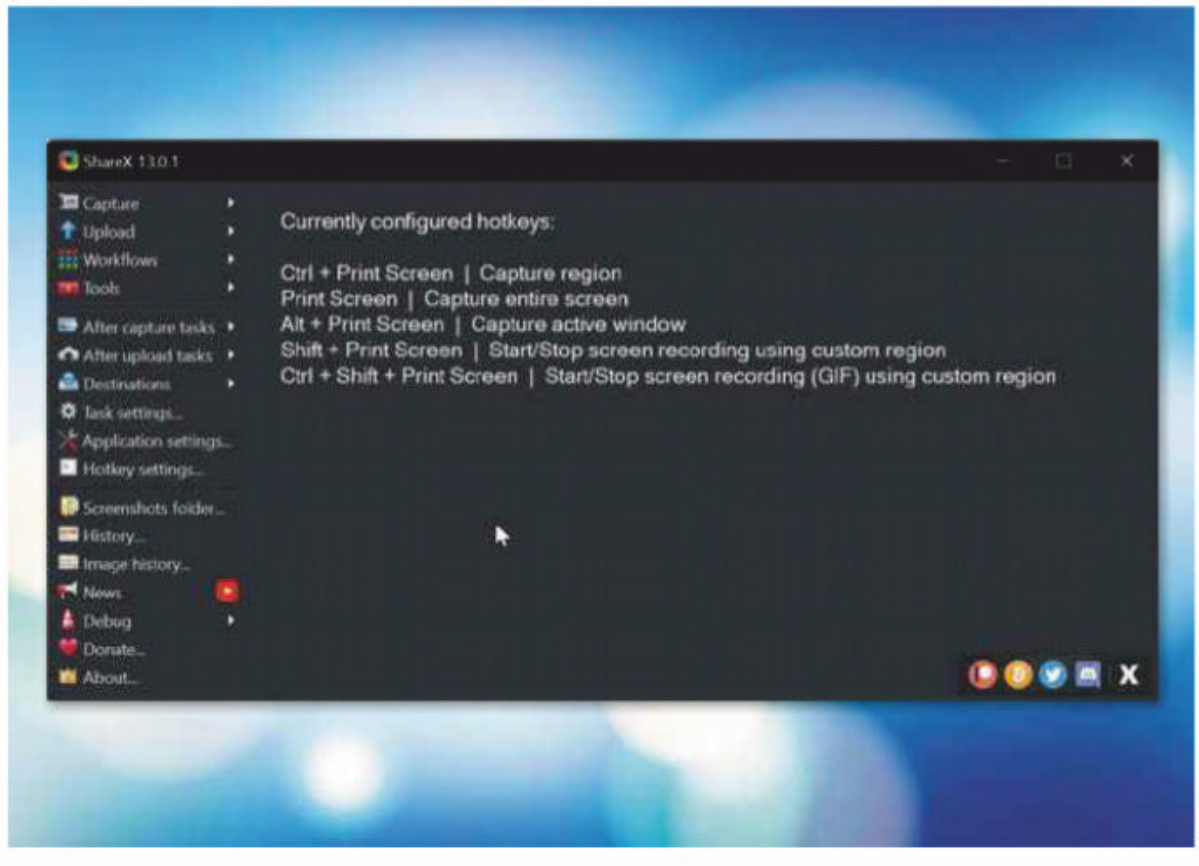
If you have a photo that's too big to share or send via email, making it smaller is easy – any editing program will reduce it in a couple of mouse clicks. Making a small photo bigger, however, is trickier because blowing it up can cause all kinds of problems, including blurring, general loss of sharpness and jagged edges. AI Image Enlarger aims to solve this problem by using artificial intelligence to upscale your photos. Just drag an image to the window, select a style and upscale ratio, then click Submit. Be aware, though, that the image is uploaded and enlarged on the developer's server, which you may not be comfortable with.

SCREEN-CAPTURE TOOL

ShareX 13

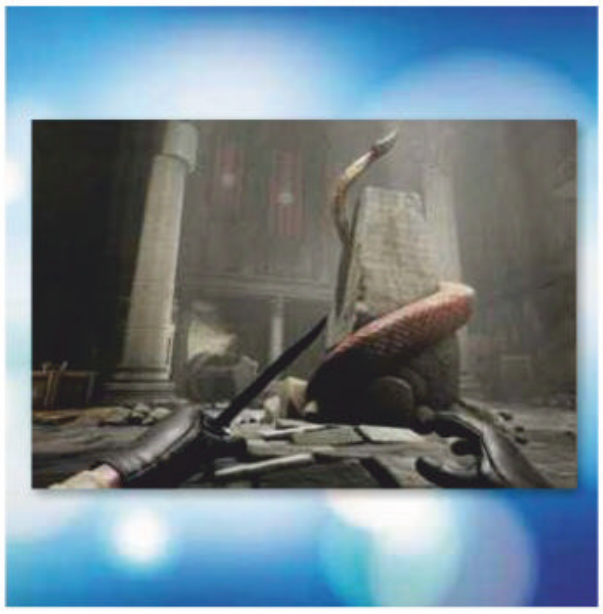
getsharex.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10
File size: 5.4MB



ShareX can take a screenshot of your desktop or record a screencast, then perform a variety of tasks, such as copying the image to the clipboard, printing it, adding effects and/or a watermark and uploading it – more than 80 destinations are supported. The program can capture the full screen, the active window, a region, a long-scrolling window or just text (OCR).

The new version of ShareX adds a thumbnail view mode to the main window, and a dark theme which is enabled by default. There's also dark title bar support for Windows 10, and a new select-and-move annotation tool.



GAME

Vouivre

bit.ly/vou484

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10
File size: 4GB

Vouivre is a 3D action-adventure game created by three students. The aim is to explore a seemingly abandoned enemy base to loot weapons and resources. However, it doesn't take long to discover that you're not alone. The game feels and plays rather like Doom, with excellent graphics and sound, and you can use your keyboard or mouse to control the gameplay.

✓ Install this program...

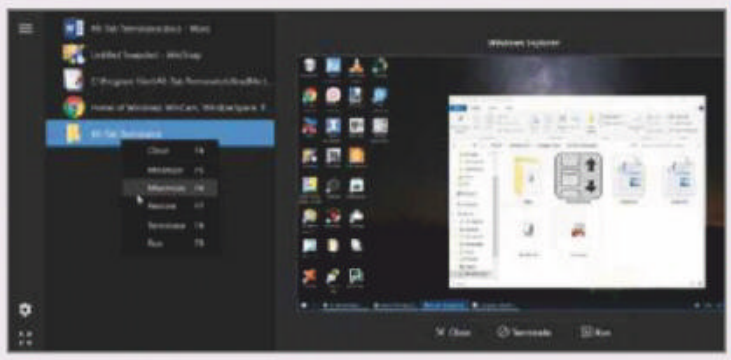
Alt-Tab Terminator

bit.ly/alttab484

Min requirements: Windows 7/8/10
File size: 2MB

Alt-Tab Terminator replaces Windows' built-in Alt-Tab feature with a more powerful and versatile version. Once activated, it displays a list of all running tasks on your PC, with previews so you can see exactly what they are. You can switch to any of them, and close or terminate unwanted items.

Right-clicking a program entry brings up a list of tasks that can be performed on it. You can navigate the interface using your keyboard or mouse, apply different themes to make it look more interesting and click the Full Screen button to maximise the switcher window to fill your whole screen.



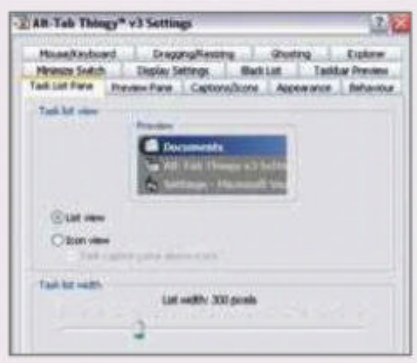
...Not this one ✗

Alt-Tab Thingy

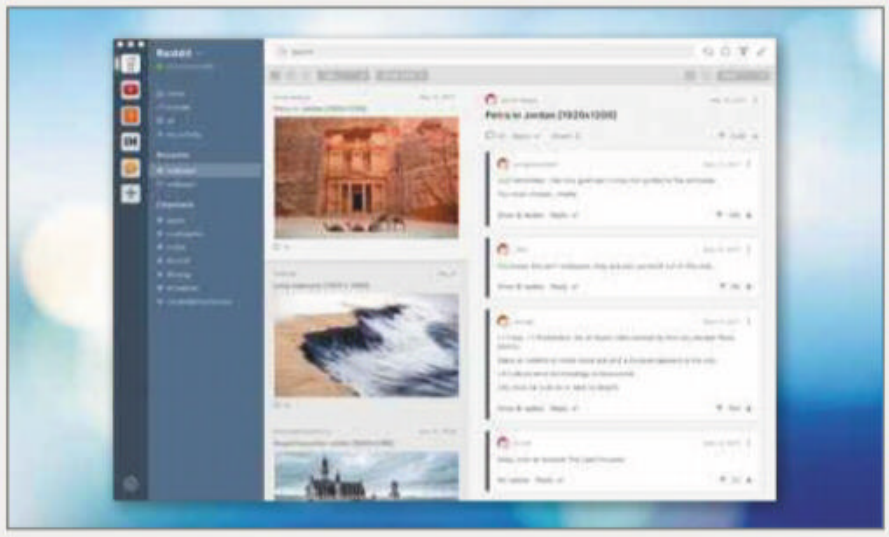
bit.ly/thingy484

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7
File size: 404KB

We love the name of this task-switching program but it hasn't been updated since 2009, and the developer's website has long disappeared, although you can still download the tool from various other sources, such as MajorGeeks. You're better off using the superior and up-to-date Alt-Tab Terminator, though.



OTHER OPERATING SYSTEMS What's new for Linux and macOS



COMMUNITIES BROWSER

Yack

hyack.io

Min requirements: macOS **File size:** 64.8MB

Yack is an attractive desktop app for macOS that lets you browse online communities such as Reddit, YouTube, Hacker News and more in a single, easy-to-navigate interface. You can choose how to organise and view your networks, and it comes with a browser for opening links, videos and more. Yack is currently in public beta, so you need to sign up before you can use it. There is a Windows beta coming soon.

LINUX DISTRO

MX Linux 19 Beta 1

bit.ly/mxlinux484

Min requirements: 8GB hard drive space **File size:** 1.3GB

If you enjoy trying out different Linux operating systems, then MX Linux is definitely worth a look. Currently available in beta, version 19 of the popular OS is built on Debian 10 Buster and uses the new Xfce 4.14 desktop environment. It comes with the latest versions of packages including GIMP, Firefox, VLC, Thunderbird and LibreOffice.

We found the beta to be very stable, but you may encounter bugs in regular use.

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Best New Browser Tools

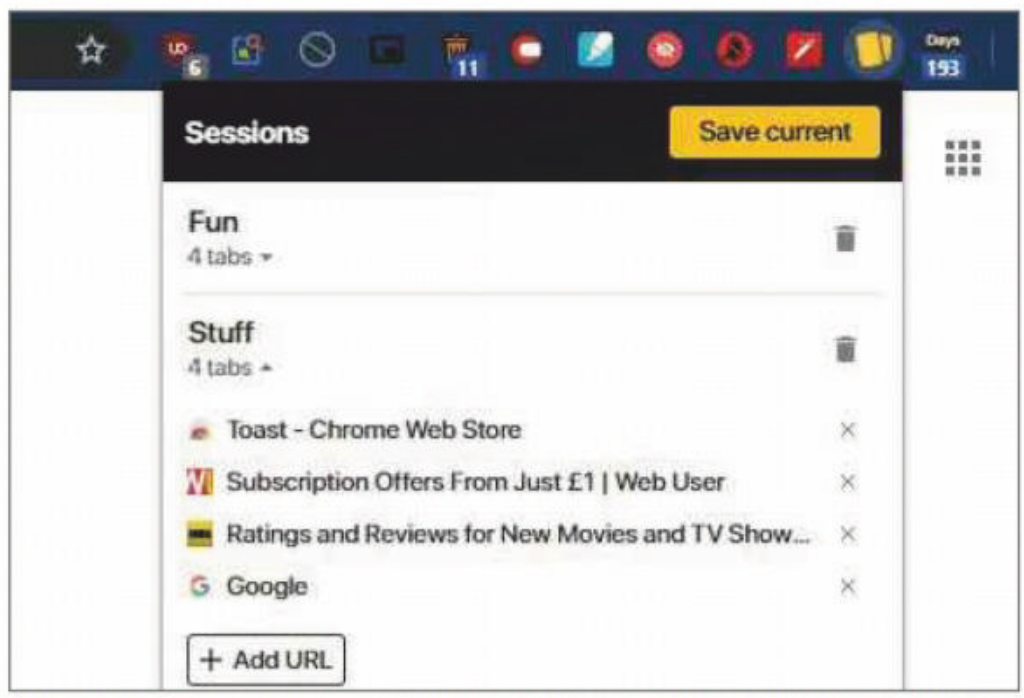
CHROME

Try the best Chrome tab manager yet

Tab management is always a hassle. You open multiple tabs for work, then you need a separate browser window to have multiple tabs open for fun sites. And then another for that holiday you're planning. It can quickly become overwhelming.

There are lots of tab managers out there – and we've covered several on these very pages – but most such extensions tend to group tabs into sections along the browser ribbon. This means that while they're useful, it can still be tricky to find precisely what you want among the clutter.

Toast (bit.ly/toast484) is easily the best tab manager we've come across. With the extension installed, open your many tabs, then click the Toast toolbar button to name and save them as a group. You can then open more tabs or restore older saves with one click.

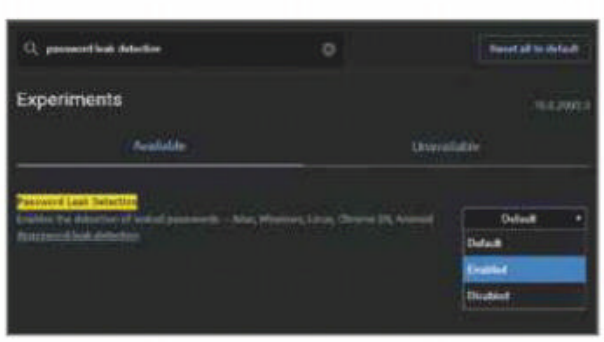


Check your password security in Chrome

A new flag (experimental feature) has been added to the Canary developer version of Chrome (bit.ly/canary484) that automatically checks to see whether any passwords you enter have been involved in a data leak.

We've covered extensions that do this job before, but this new flag offers the function directly in the browser. Any time you use a password, Chrome's super-experimental browser will double-check it against a list of compromised passwords held by Google. You'll then either be given the all clear or Chrome will suggest that you try a safer password. It's not imperative that you do this, but it's recommended. This handy new monitoring system is only available in Canary, but we expect to see this reach the stable version of Chrome at some point.

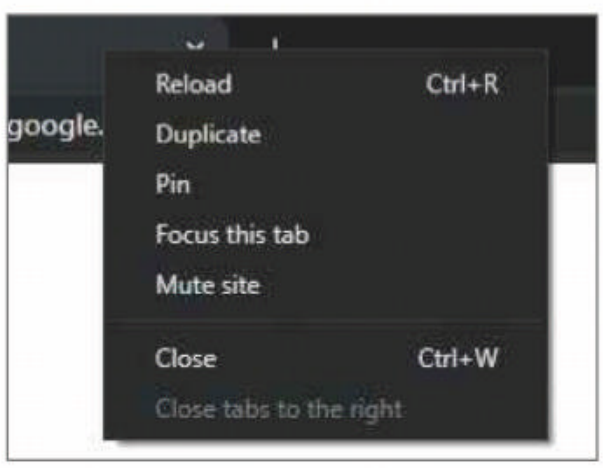
In Canary, head to `chrome://flags` and search for 'password leak'. Using the drop-down menu, switch the flag to Enabled. Restart the browser when prompted, then you're set.



Chrome improves the tab right-click menu

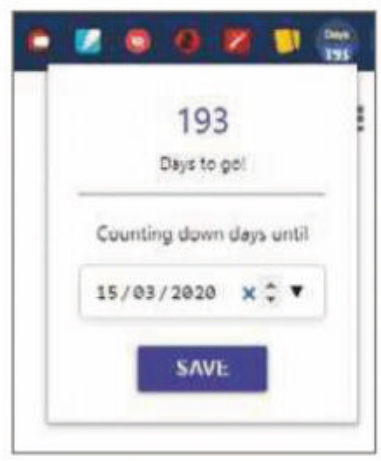
In another Canary exclusive, Google has introduced significant changes to the tab context menu – the menu you see when right-clicking tabs. The multiple 'close tab' options are gone, replaced with a single Close, and you no longer send specific tabs to your device and open bookmarks via a right-click. In the new version, these have either vanished altogether, or can be accessed by right-clicking the browser bar. By trimming the fat, Canary leaves only the option to Reload, Duplicate, Pin, Focus and Mute Site.

As ever with an experimental browser, this change may never be implemented beyond Canary but it's very useful, so we fancy its chances.



Keep track of important dates

Got a special event coming up – a holiday, birthday or that anniversary you swore you wouldn't forget (not after last time!)? Instead of setting a phone reminder that you'll probably forget to check, install Days Until (Days Countdown) (bit.ly/days484). This extension counts down to a specified date right inside your browser, so you've got no excuse to forget the event and have plenty of warning to build up to it.

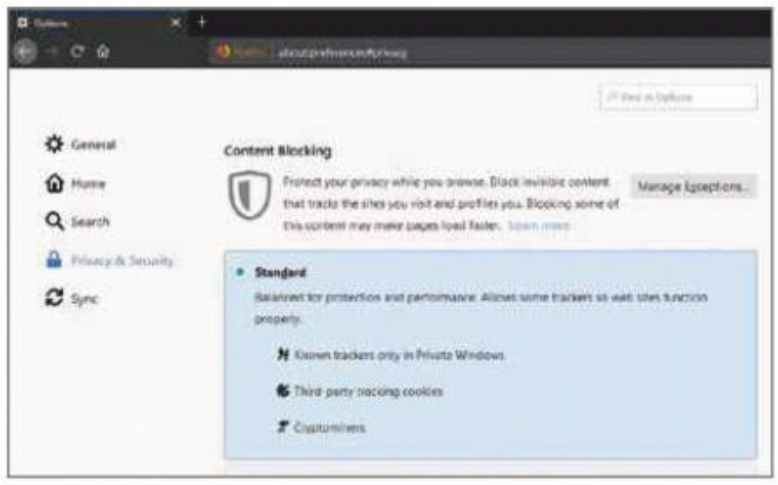


Install the browser tool, then click its toolbar button. You're prompted to add a date, either by typing it or via the drop-down calendar menu. Handily, you can move between day, month and year using both the Tab key and the arrow keys – something most online calendars let you do. When you've set the date, click Save. The extension now displays the number of days until the big day.

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

FIREFOX

Try new tools in Firefox 69

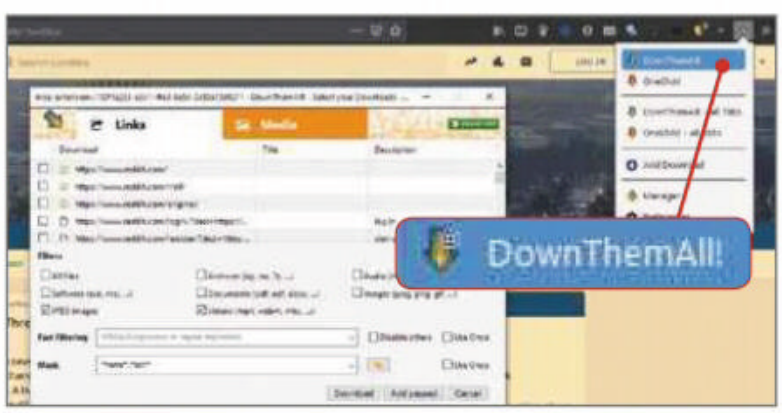


The latest version of Firefox adds a host of useful features. Most notable is the introduction of what Firefox is calling the Enhanced Tracking Protection. This feature automatically blocks known tracking cookies. You can check how well the browser is blocking content by going to `about:preferences#privacy`. By default, it's set to Standard, but you can lock down your browser further using the Strict and Custom settings.

Autoplay blocking options also received an update. You can now stop websites automatically playing videos and sound – prior to version 69, autoplay would only block videos with audio. To set this up, go to `about:preferences#privacy` and, under Permissions, click the Autoplay button. Here, you can set your default setting and whitelist websites.

Download files faster with DownThemAll

The much-loved Firefox add-on DownThemAll (bit.ly/down484) has returned. The tool, which lets you download multiple files at once, famously dropped off the radar after Mozilla introduced its new WebExtensions system. After two years, the developers have brought it back – and it's just as good as you remember it. Visit any web page, then click the extension's toolbar button. You can download everything on the page – from uploaded images to the text itself – and everything on every tab you have open. If that's too much, there's also a filtering system that lets you decide what type of files you want to download. Visit the Preferences for the option to turn the browser button into a OneClick downloader.



Stop Google breaking the web

If you've ever wondered why, when clicking a link on your computer, you're suddenly confronted with a mobile version of the site, check the address bar – chances are that hidden within that URL are three letters with the power to ruin your entire browsing experience: AMP.

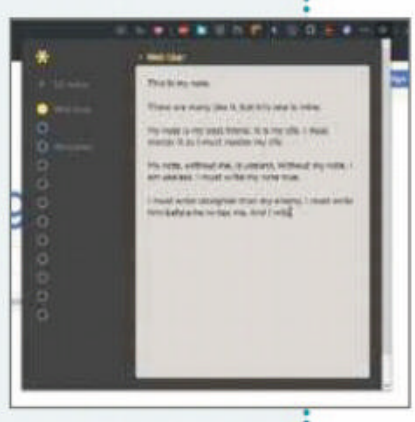
AMP was created and is controlled by Google, and designed to hasten website loading times on phones, using a cached lazy loading technique – good for your mobile data, bad if you're not using a phone. Not only does it alter the website's look and remove certain functions, it can also send data about your browsing straight to Google.

Redirect AMP to HTML (bit.ly/noamp484) solves this problem. Whenever you click an AMP link, the browser tool steps in and forces the desktop version of the website to load.

OTHER BROWSERS

Make notes while you browse

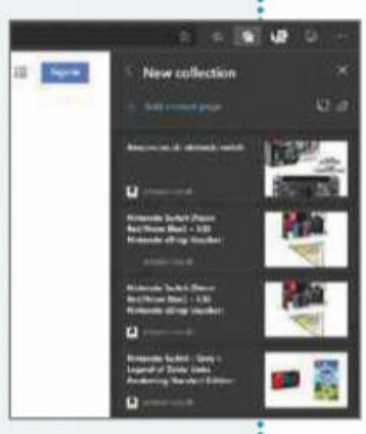
It's always useful to make notes while you browse – whether it's a passing thought or details of a website you want to check back on. Rather than scrabbling around for a notepad and pen, install Plain Text (bit.ly/text484). This tool places up to 15 notebooks right in your browser, so you can make on-the-fly notes with one click. You're also able to change the background colour for each notebook to make management a lot simpler. Click the Plus sign to begin, give your note a name and choose a colour, then click the enthusiastic 'Create!' button.



Collect and compare as you browse

Collections is a new "general-purpose tool" in Edge that pulls together everything from products you intend to buy to trip itineraries, depending on how you use it.

It's still in beta phase, so only available in the Edge Canary build. To set up Collections now, go to `edge://flags#edge-collections`. In the drop-down menu, switch from Disabled to Enabled, and restart the browser when prompted.



You'll now see a pane icon beside the address bar. Click 'Start new collection' and you can add your current page to the collection. It's then easy to flick between your collections, to collate or compare.

Best Free Apps

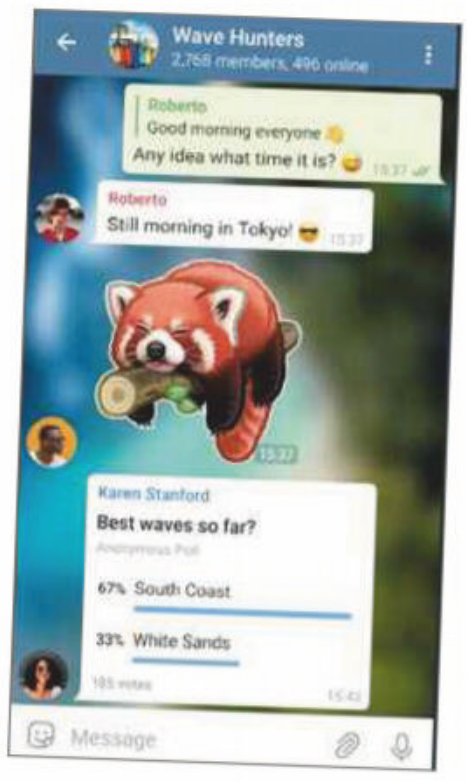
App of the Fortnight

MESSAGING

UPDATED

Telegram

bit.ly/telegramdroid484
bit.ly/telegramios484
(varies) 8

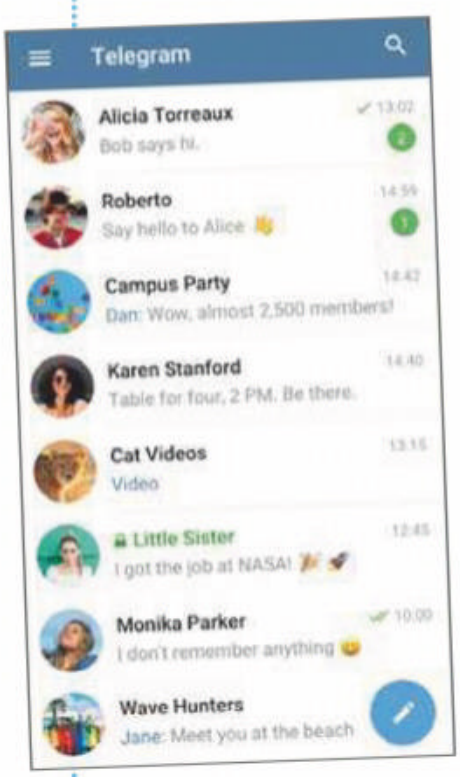


WhatsApp is so ubiquitous these days, it's easy to forget there are other excellent messaging tools out there – such as Telegram.

Launched in 2013, Telegram already offers several features that give it an advantage over its rivals, including groups that can host up to 200,000 members, an open sticker platform and cloud-based messages, which sync seamlessly between devices while ensuring attached GIFs and videos don't eat up your phone's limited storage.

Over the past few weeks, however, the app's developers have launched a steady stream of updates and new features, with the clear intention of persuading staunch WhatsApp users to switch their allegiance.

Telegram's most useful new feature is its hidden Send menu, which offers two brilliant options. The first is the ability to send messages to your contacts that don't make an alert sound on arrival – useful if you know that your recipient is currently in a situation where that notification 'ping' would be inappropriate, such as asleep or driving, or at the cinema.



The other new option, also in the Send menu, is Schedule Message, which lets you set a specific date and time for your message to be sent – handy for pre-planning birthday greetings or sending messages across time zones.

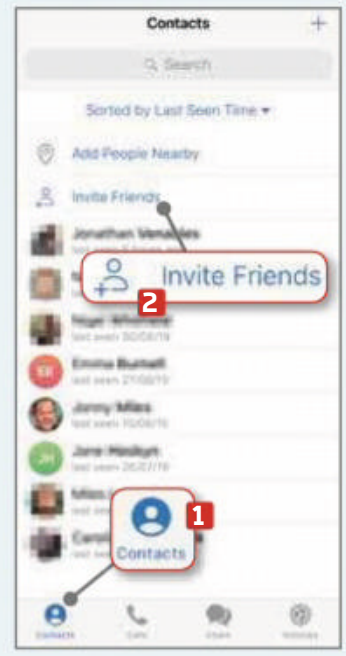
The latest update also includes new customisation options that let you choose themes for Telegram across all your devices, as well as an expanded selection of animated emoji.

Telegram has also boosted its privacy settings. You can now ensure that strangers who randomly add your phone number cannot access your profile, while still allowing anyone in your contacts to find you by your number.

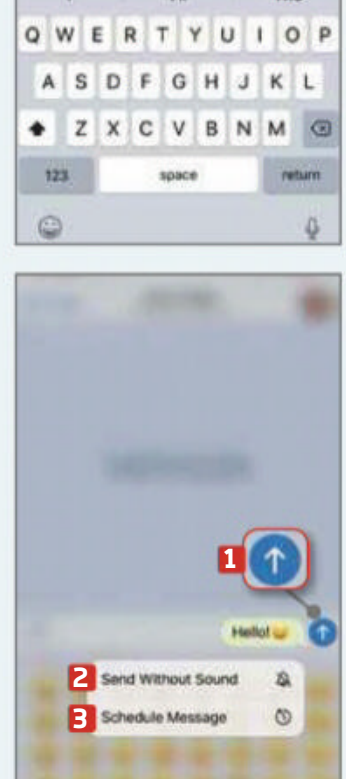
MINI WORKSHOP

Send private and silent messages using Telegram

1 If this is the first time you've used Telegram, swipe through the initial welcome screens and tap Start Messaging. Enter your phone number, name and a profile picture when prompted, and allow the app permission to access your contacts and send you notifications when requested. To get other people you know to join you on Telegram, tap Contacts, 1 Invite Friends, 2 then select the recipients and press Share Telegram.



2 To send a message, press Chats at the bottom of the screen, then tap the pencil icon and select the contact or group you want. Telegram works in a similar way to many other messaging tools – tap in the Message box 1 to type a text message, tap the paperclip 2 to attach or take a photo, or press the microphone icon 3 to dictate a voice message. Press the sticker icon 4 to send stickers, GIFs and emoji.



3 If you want to use Telegram's new enhanced Send menu options, long-press the Send button 1 to bring up the hidden menu. To send a silent message, tap Send Without Sound 2 – this will deliver your message to its recipient(s) without making an audio notification alert. To send a message later, select Schedule Message, 3 select your date and time and press Send.

Our rating ★★★★★

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

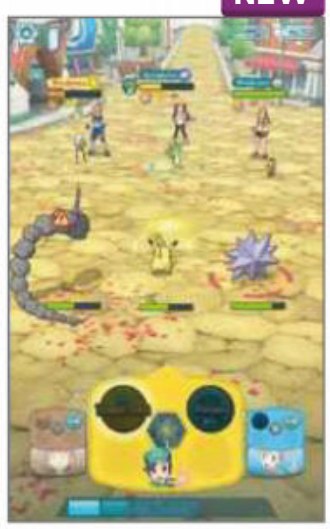
GAME

NEW

Pokémon Masters

bit.ly/pokemondroid484
bit.ly/pokemonios484

5 11



Downloaded more than 10 million times in just its first four days, the latest mobile game based on the Pokémon franchise is already guaranteed to be a colossal hit. Unlike the hugely popular Pokémon Go, however, there's no augmented reality 'gotta catch 'em all' element this time. Instead, gameplay centres around Pokémon battles, similar to those found in Nintendo console Pokémon games. The twist here is that you can play 3v3 or in co-op mode, as well as recruiting and levelling up new trainers and Pokémon.

Our rating ★★★½☆

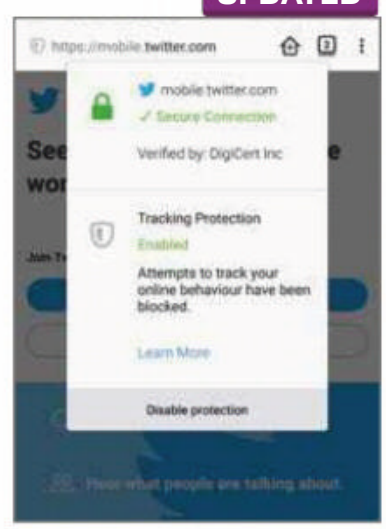
BROWSER

UPDATED

Firefox for Android

bit.ly/firefoxdroid484

(varies)



Mozilla's brand-new Firefox browser for Android was our App of the Fortnight back in Issue 480. Now the app – technically still a preview release – has been updated with Enhanced Tracking Protection. In theory, you won't need to do anything to benefit from this protection because the latest version of the browser will now block third-party tracking cookies and cryptominers by default – check for the little shield icon in your address bar. If you don't see one, tap Settings, Privacy to make sure that Tracking Protection is enabled.

Our rating ★★★★★

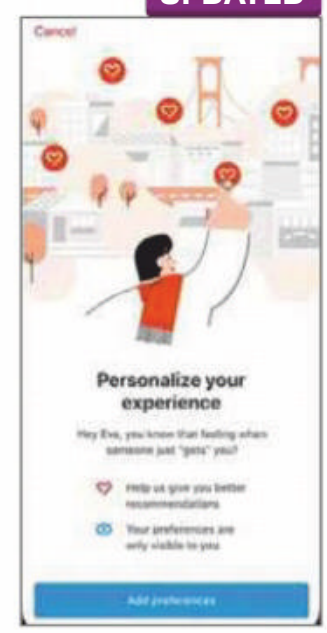
REVIEWS

UPDATED

Yelp

bit.ly/yelpdroid484
bit.ly/yelpios484

(varies) 11



Yelp is adding new personalisation features to its app, designed to help focus its recommendations for restaurants, shops and other services. Make sure you've got the latest version of the app, then tap the heart icon on the homepage and start selecting your preferences. If you don't see the heart icon on the home screen, you may need to wait until Yelp rolls them out to your device. Currently, these features are limited to the iOS version of the app, with Android due to follow next year.

Our rating ★★★½☆

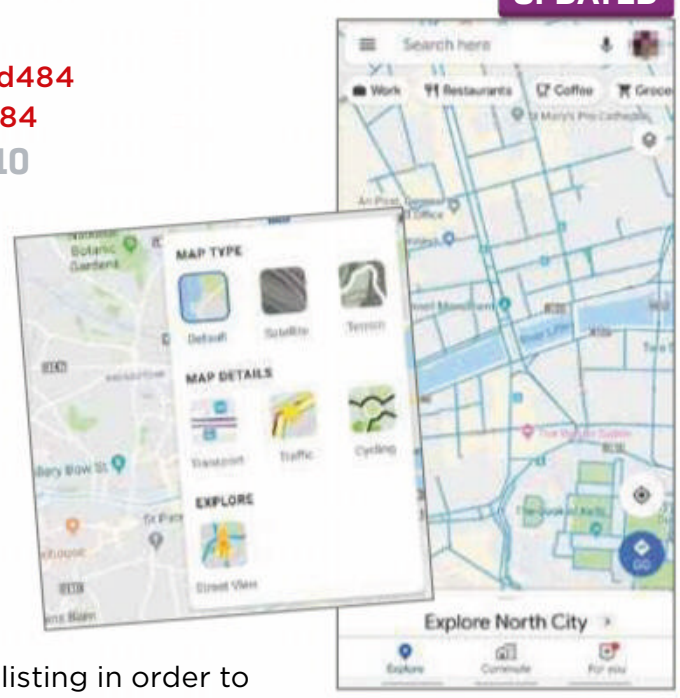
NAVIGATION

UPDATED

Google Maps

bit.ly/mapsdroid484
bit.ly/mapsios484

(varies) 10



Android's version of the Google's Maps app has a new Street View layer, which you can now switch to quickly. Previously, you'd need to drop a pin or open a location listing in order to access Street View; now you just tap the Map layer icon (two squares overlapping), then select Street View. Viewable streets in your current location will turn blue – tap one to switch to Street View. If your Maps app is up to date but you can't yet see this option, you may have to wait until Google rolls out the feature to your device.

Our rating ★★★★★

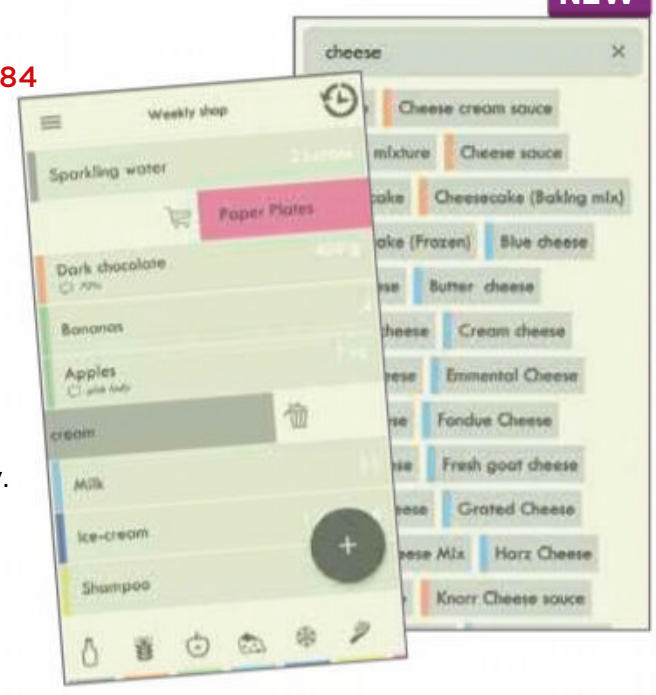
TOOLS

NEW

Überliste

bit.ly/uberdroid484
bit.ly/uberios484

6 10



If you make shopping lists on your mobile device, you should definitely give this app a try. It lets you put together grocery lists from a selection of predefined items, organised into colour-coded categories – though you can add your own custom items, too. Better still, you can share and collaborate on lists with others in real time – family members, say, or friends planning a party. It's also possible to keep multiple lists running at the same time. Überliste is sleekly designed and easy to use. Plus, it's one of those rare free apps that's completely free of ads and in-app purchases.

Our rating ★★★★★

5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

MUSIC

SpotWidget

bit.ly/spotwidget484

Price: £2.09

6

Spotify claims that it will bring back the Android widget it unceremoniously killed off. But if you can't wait, or if you'd prefer to use an alternative, then this opportunistic app will plug the gap.

GAME

Tropico

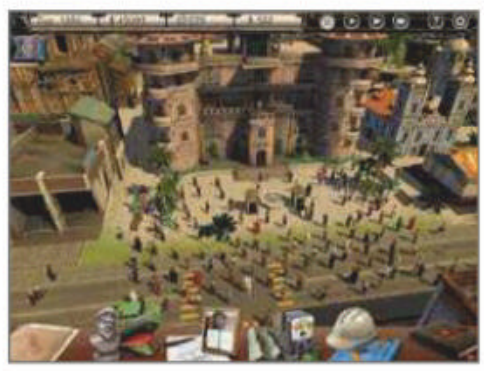
bit.ly/tropicdroid484

bit.ly/tropicios484

Price: £11.99

8 11

Based on the PC game of the same name, this addictive strategy simulator – which casts you as the leader of a Caribbean island state – is now available on Android.



KIDS

Human Heroes – Curie on Matter

bit.ly/curie484

Price: £3.99

12

Educate your kids with this fun, gamified exploration of science with one of history's great female role models, Marie Curie, featuring Miriam Margolyes as the Nobel Prize-winning scientist herself.

PERSONALISATION

Crayon Icon Pack

bit.ly/crayon484

Price: 69p

4.1

If you're not keen on the current trend for flat-looking user interfaces, why not brighten up your device with this set of more than 4,250 pastel-coloured, cartoon-like icons?

OUTDOOR

Cycling Climbs of Yorkshire

bit.ly/cycling484

Price: £1.99

4.1

With maps, gradients and guides, this latest app from cyclist, author and incline expert Simon Warren aims to make finding and navigating the best climbs in Yorkshire less of an uphill struggle.

SpotWidget

Tropico

Human Heroes – Curie on Matter

Crayon Icon Pack

Cycling Climbs of Yorkshire

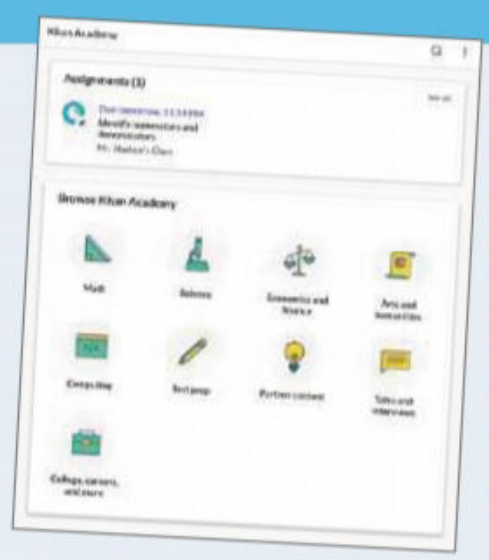
✓ Install this app...

Khan Academy

bit.ly/khandroid484

bit.ly/khanios484

(varies) 10



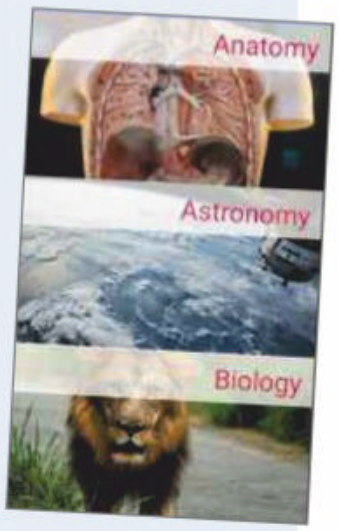
The UK is built on the principle that everyone has a right to a free education – something that's clearly shared by the makers of the Khan Academy, a non-profit Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) provider, created in 2008 with an aim to provide free online resources for students around the world. The app offers literally thousands of lessons across subjects such as maths, science, economics and more, with videos, interactive exercises, quizzes and tests. Whether you're studying for a genuine qualification or just learning for fun, you can download resources to continue learning offline, and earn points or badges to encourage further achievement.

...Not this one ✗

VR Education & Learning 360

bit.ly/vreducation484

This is an admirable attempt to encourage younger users to learn various subjects – including Anatomy, Astronomy, Biology and English – using the power of VR to immerse them in the educational experience. Sadly, in practice, this app gets an 'F' for 'Fail'. Why? Well, it's stuffed with ads, requires third-party apps in order to run and hasn't been updated in nearly three years. Worst of all, many users have found that the VR doesn't even work properly.



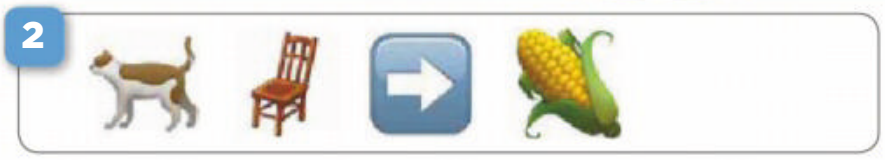
Take a Screen Break

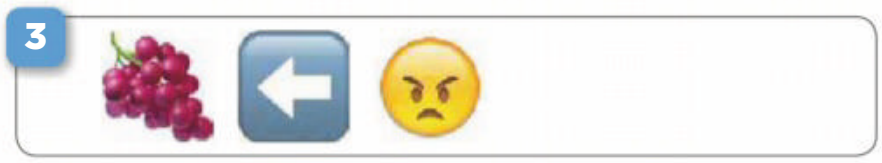
Give your eyes a rest from your browser with our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you solve our book emoji quiz and guess our Wikipedia article?

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 CLASSIC BOOKS FROM THE EMOJI?

1

2 

3 

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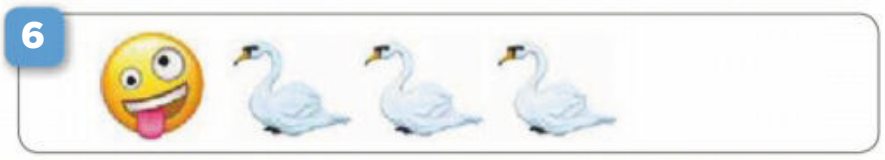
6 

GUESS THE WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE

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

4

1 "Launched in 2007 in several US cities, it has since expanded to include cities and rural areas worldwide, although many places still have limited or no coverage."

2 "Most of the photography is done by car, but some is taken by tricycle, boat, snowmobile and underwater apparatus, as well as on foot. The cameras contain no mechanical parts."

3 "Privacy advocates have objected to it, pointing to views that show men leaving strip clubs, sunbathers in bikinis and people engaging in activities in which they do not wish to be seen publicly."

5 "A local business owner in Edinburgh issued an apology for wasting police time after staging a fake murder for its cameras by lying in the road while his colleague stood over him with a pickaxe handle."

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 8

WORTH £34.99 EACH

D-Link Mini HD Wi-Fi Camera

D-Link's DCS-8000LH Mini Wi-Fi Camera protects your home with 720p high-definition clarity. It's a day and night camera, letting you view your home around the clock. It sends alerts to your phone or tablet when sound and motion are detected. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'D-Link Mini' in the subject line. For more information, visit https://eu.dlink.com and follow @DLink_UK.

WIN 1 OF 2

WORTH £114.95 EACH

Pinnacle Studio 23 Ultimate

The latest version of Pinnacle's flagship video editor has powerful new editing tools, such as Video Masking, which lets you enhance or remove elements in your video. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'Pinnacle Studio 23' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.pinnaclesys.com/en and 'like' www.facebook.com/PinnacleSys.

FAQ

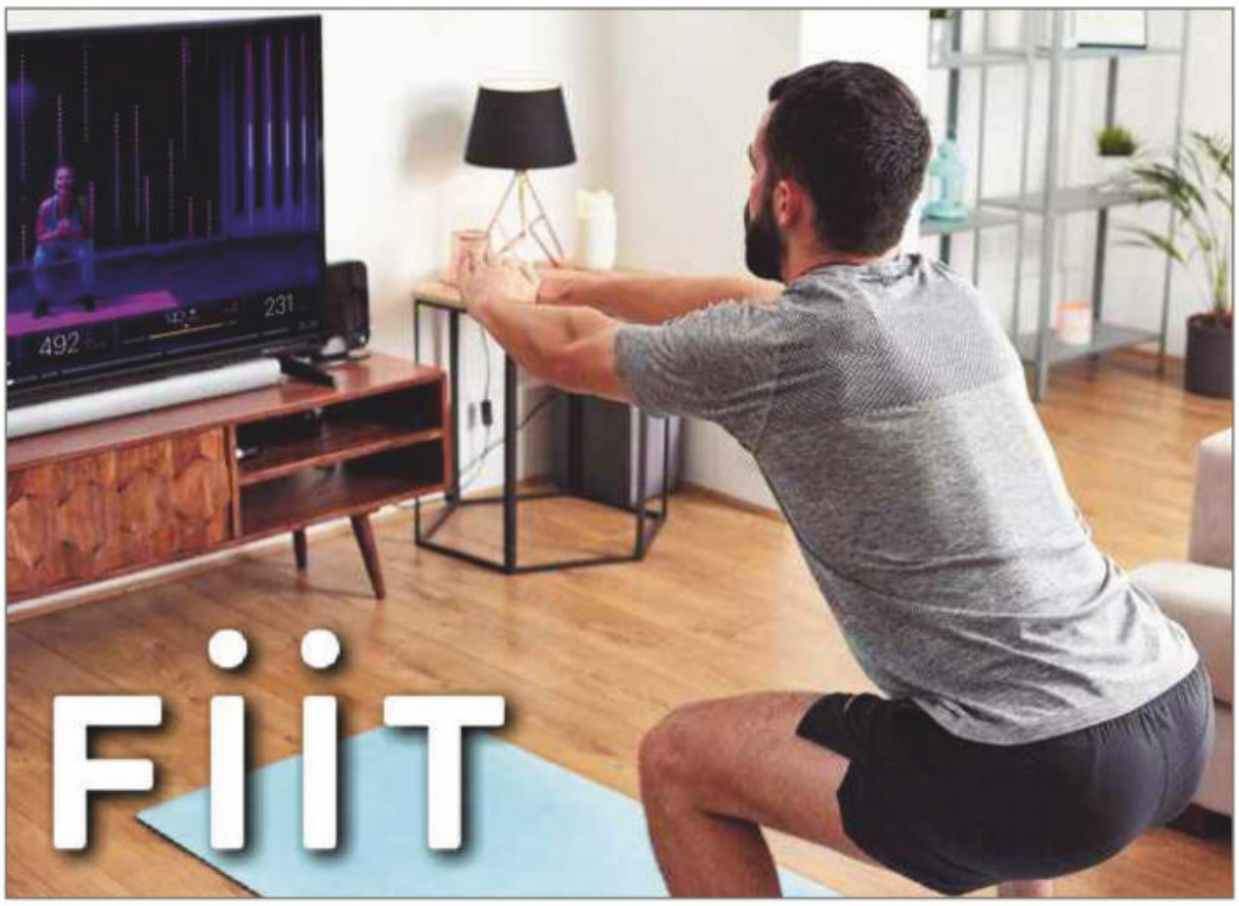
Everything you need to know about the most interesting new technology trends and events

Our guide to Fiit

Want to get in shape without the expense and hassle of the gym? **David Crookes** looks at a fitness app that helps you work out at home

What is it?

Fiit (fiit.tv) is a smartphone app that has been described as "Netflix for workouts". It aims to replace your gym membership with video-based classes and courses fronted by expert trainers, so you can engage in a vigorous workout from the comfort of your home.



Just like a fitness DVD?

Not quite. Although you can draw parallels with the many fitness videos and DVDs that have emerged over the past three decades or so, Fiit has successfully upped the stakes. It's not simply a matter of following the exercise regime set by someone like Jane Fonda, Davina McCall, Joe Wicks or the scores of other celebrities who have lost a few stone and want to share their secrets. Fiit aims to be social and it also keeps a close eye on your progress.

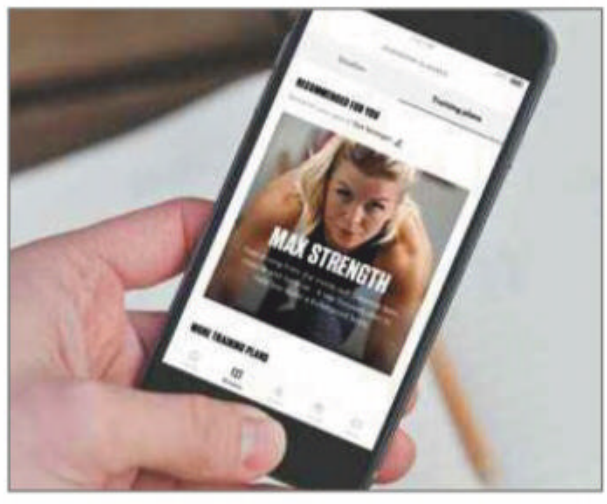
Replace your pricey gym membership with Fiit's app

So how do I get started?

When you open the Fiit app for the first time, you tell it your fitness level – from entry to advanced – then indicate your goal, whether it's to lose weight, get stronger, gain better flexibility and balance or improve your overall fitness. You can then start a 14-day personalised plan made up of thrice-weekly 25- and 40-minute workouts. Alternatively, you can pick one of the 75 classes that best suit your goal and level.

How much do they cost?

The 14-day plans are free and there are four in total, covering cardio workouts, strength and muscle, rebalance and one that involves classes from the previous three. Each of these can be repeated, but if you want to take things to the next level, you'll have to buy a premium subscription. Depending on whether you're paying for a month, a quarter or a year, it'll cost between £10 and £20 per month – but this is where things become interesting.



Fiit offers a choice of four free plans, as well as premium subscriptions

What's the benefit of paying?

Aside from getting a personalised training plan with recipes and nutritional advice as well as access to more than 350 on-demand workouts, the premium tier tracks your health. It does this by giving you a device – worth £65, according to Fiit – that you wear around your chest, which tracks your heart rate, calories and reps, displaying these stats live on the screen so that you can easily monitor your progress.

The device is actually a rebranded Wahoo Tickr X and it's easy enough to connect – open the app, strap the device on your chest and watch out for the blue light to indicate a connection and red for heart rate detection. It is equipped

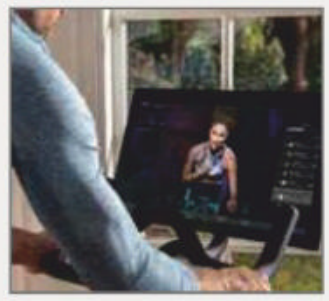
The Fiit device tracks your heart rate, calories burned and number of reps

OTHER DIGITAL FITNESS APPS

AAPTIV
aaptiv.com

Answer a series of questions and Aaptiv will put together a personal plan before giving you access to thousands of audio-guided workouts and structured programs across a range of activities from running to strength-training for £13.49 per month.

PELOTON
www.onepeloton.co.uk



To take part in the Peloton experience, you need to invest in one of its exercise bikes, which cost from £1,990 and also require a monthly membership of £39 per month. For this, you get five streaming and on-demand classes as well as performance tracking.

SWEAT: KAYLA ITSINES FITNESS
www.sweat.com

With subscriptions starting from £9.99 per month, Australian personal trainer Kayla Itsines's Sweat app offers Bikini Body Guides workouts for women that take just 28 minutes each day, whether at home or in the gym.

with Bluetooth and it generates workout data in real time.

What are the classes like?
Each of the videos is filmed in a studio in east London using a five-camera setup, so they look slick and professional, and offer plenty of visual stimulus and close-up detail. They also feature several high-profile tutors including the advanced yoga teacher Cat Meffan, Instagram fitness blogger Chessie King and celebrity trainers such as Richie Norton and Tyrone Brennand who ordinarily charge up to £120 per hour for one-on-one personal training. Many of the tutors have specialisations, such as quiet workouts, Hatha yoga and those who target posture. All the trainers are hugely positive and they're constantly focused on keeping up your energy levels.

Isn't staring at a phone screen distracting, though?
Fiit works from a smartphone – iOS for now with Android due later this year – but squinting at a tiny screen while throwing yourself into a workout routine isn't ideal. To use the app properly, you connect your handset to your television, mirroring your phone screen using an HDMI-Lightning cable (sold by Fiit for a tenner) or using Apple TV. Fiit is also working on Chromecast compatibility.

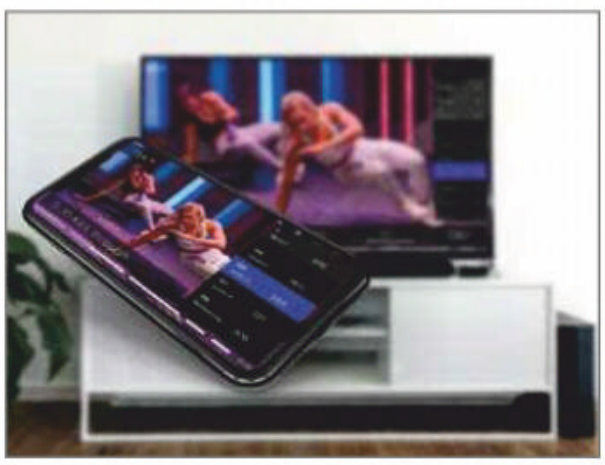
How does Fiit keep users motivated to keep coming back?
Premium subscribers get progress data which helps to turn fitness into a game. With the Fiit device strapped to your body, you'll earn points during the main workout when you stay in the target heart-rate zone, and the app will keep challenging you to beat your personal best. This works to optimise your safe fitness level too, since anyone over- or underworking will see fewer points being scored.

Does it lose the camaraderie of a group workout, though?
If you find exercising with others motivates you, then you can get involved with Fiit Club. It offers high-intensity interval training to get your heart pumping while allowing you to train with others across the UK. These classes are made available at specific times on certain days and you simply log on and connect up with the device up to 10 minutes before the start before virtually mingling with other users in the lobby. When the class gets underway, a live leaderboard will appear. The person with the most Fiit Points wins. However, rather than dish out rewards based on your level of fitness, Fiit awards you points for effort, and for keeping in a safe target heart-rate zone personal to you.

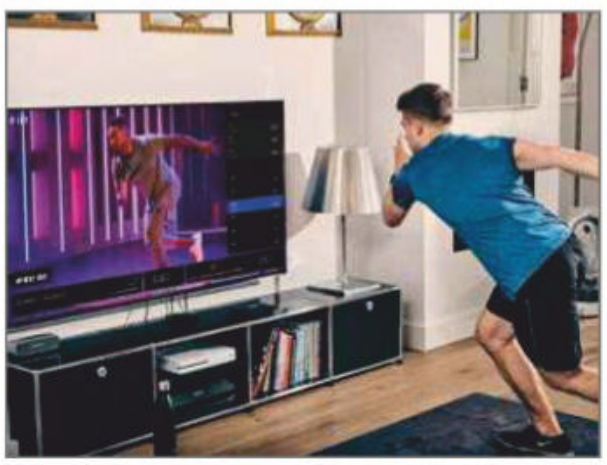
Are there enough people to compete against?
Yes. Not only can you invite your friends to join you in a workout (assuming they're also premium members), Fiit is able to draw on thousands of users – some 150,000 have downloaded the app so far and 500,000 classes have been taken. A Fiit Challengers Facebook group has more than 3,870 members (bit.ly/fiit484).

What if I'm into into weights?
Fiit offers equipment classes that involve using dumbbells and kettlebells in the Cardio and Strength studios. It links to a company called Origin in its in-app shop, offering four different weight packages. Fiit also sells mats, resistance bands and bottles.

Surely there are some potential dangers?
As with any physical fitness regime, there's a risk of injury, so there are certain best practices you should follow. Fiit advises users to warm up and cool down, and it's also important not to overdo things or go without water during a workout. Extreme exercise can lead to rhabdomyolysis which, while uncommon, is serious and involves muscle tissue breaking down. Listening to your body is always the best way forward.



You can follow your Fiit fitness instructor on your TV rather than your phone



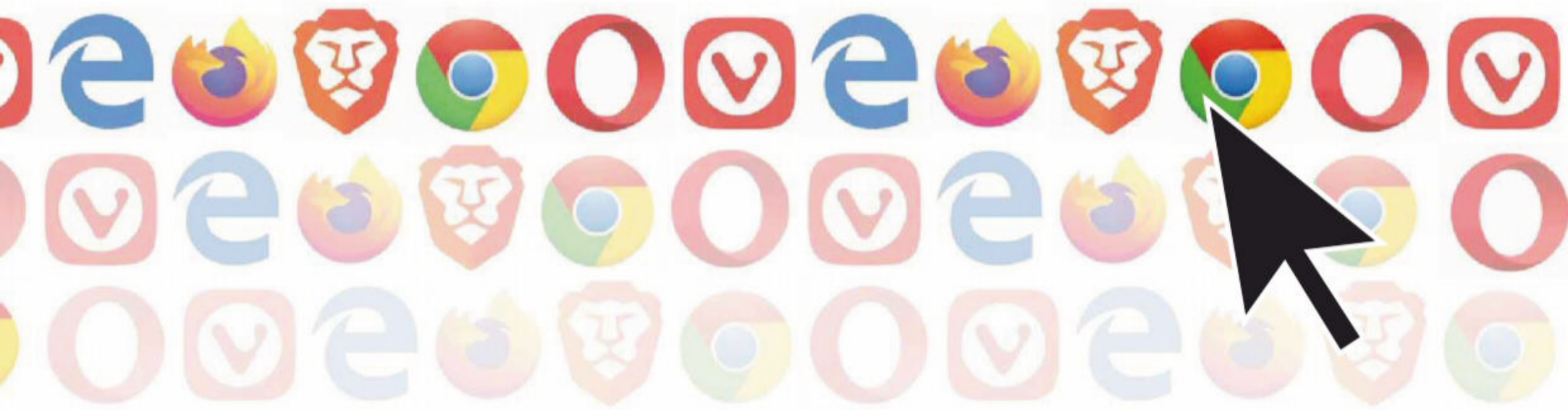
You can compete against other Fiit users – points are rewarded for effort

If you're more interested in weight training than cardio, Fiit has you covered

50 BRILLIANT BROWSER TOOLS (you never knew existed)

COVER FEATURE

Sticking to the same old extensions may be familiar and safe, but you're missing out on all kinds of terrific tools. **Nik Rawlinson** rounds up the best add-ons to make your browser faster, smarter and safer



According to a recent report by Extension Monitor (bit.ly/extension484), of the 188,000 add-ons available in the Chrome Web Store, only 13 have more than 10 million users, despite the browser itself being used by more than two billion people worldwide. Even more surprising is that 87% of extensions have fewer than 1,000 installs, which means a huge number are being overlooked and ignored.

In this feature, we shine a light on the 50 best add-ons for Chrome and Firefox that you may have missed, but which can boost your online security and privacy, add useful and fun tools to your browser and make the web quicker and easier to use. Wherever possible, we've chosen tools that cater for both Chromium-based browsers and Firefox: if you're running Chrome, Brave, Opera, Vivaldi or even the beta of Microsoft's forthcoming version of Edge, you're using a Chromium-based browser; if you're using Firefox, you have a Gecko-based browser.

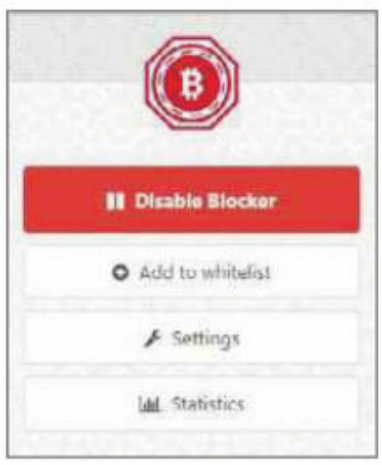
All the add-ons we've recommended are available from the official Chrome Web Store (chrome.google.com/webstore) and the Firefox Add-ons site (addons.mozilla.org). However, it's always worth being careful and checking the permissions required by an extension before you install it, to make sure it doesn't access more of your data than you're happy with.

Privacy and Security

Anti Miner

bit.ly/antiminer484

Although you may never have knowingly handled cryptocurrency, you may unwittingly have helped bolster the global supply. That's because digital currencies, of which Bitcoin is the best-known, are generated by solving very complex mathematical equations, which are getting harder all the time. We've now got to the point where the amount of energy required to generate every unit of cryptocurrency costs more than the currency is worth, which has prompted some digital-currency advocates to hijack other people's computers to 'mine' for coins. This can result in a laggy PC for you and slow down your browsing. Anti Miner helps block these mining scripts from working on your computer so that the resources you've paid for are yours alone to use. Although this add-on is for Chromium browsers, the Firefox extension minerBlock (bit.ly/miner484) performs a similar function for Mozilla's browser.



Random User-Agent

bit.ly/useragent484
bit.ly/agentswitcher484

Remote servers can use a browser's user agent – or its identifier – to track your activity as you move from page to page through a site and, often, to sites further afield if it's part of a network or they're all using the same agent-sniffing software. Random User-Agent (Chrome) and User-Agent Switcher and Manager (Firefox) randomly change this identifier after a specified period to offer you a degree of anonymity.

Incognito-Filter

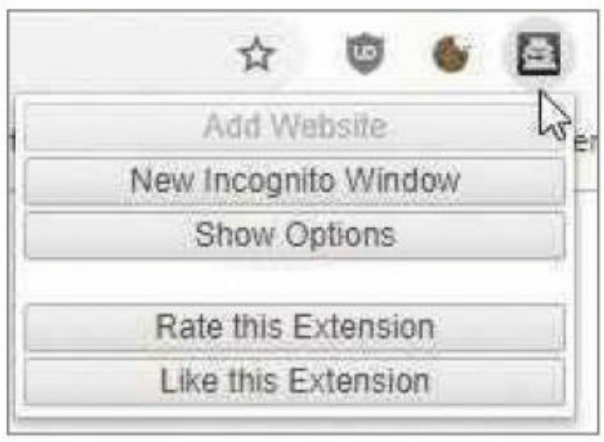
bit.ly/incognito484

Some websites shower your hard drive with cookies and tracking beacons, and a few even force you to accept all their cookies before they'll allow you to peek at their content. Opening this kind of website in a private or incognito window, which will wipe all the cookies you were forced to accept when you close it, gets around this problem – but remembering to right-click and select incognito every time is a faff. Incognito-Filter gets around this by opening specified websites in incognito windows every time they're clicked, without the need for any manual intervention.

Trace

absolutedouble.co.uk/trace

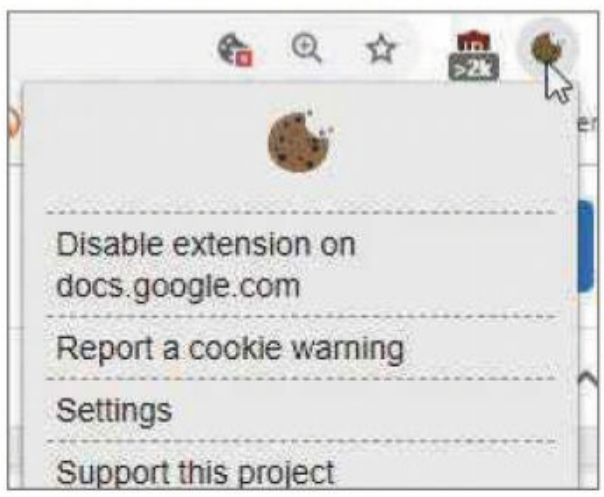
Websites can use more than just cookies to track you. They also look at the kind of browser you're running, which page you came from to reach them, special 'headers' identifying installed components, the version of JavaScript you're running and more. Trace either hides each of these elements or spoofs them so that you and your browser can enjoy a greater degree of anonymity.



I Don't Care About Cookies

bit.ly/cookies484
bit.ly/biscuits-484

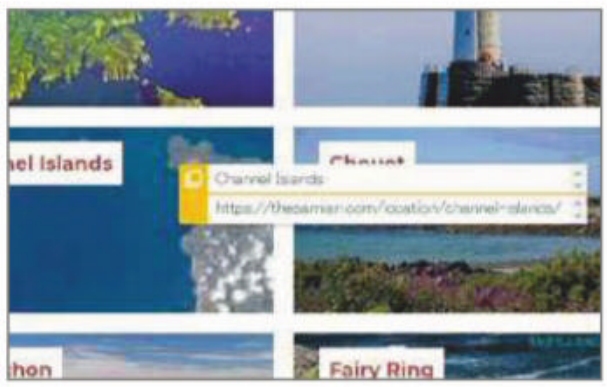
Are you being driven mad by cookie permission requests? Do you tend to just blindly accept them all for the sake of a quiet life? If so (and we wouldn't necessarily recommend that course of action), install I Don't Care About Cookies, which accepts them on your behalf without displaying the permission-request pop-up.



URL Popper

bit.ly/urlpopper484
bit.ly/urltooltip484

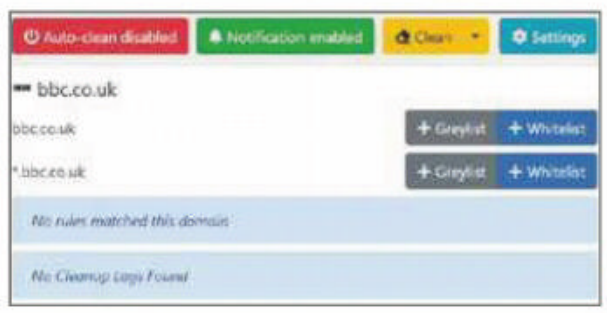
Hover over a link and its destination will usually appear in your browser's status – but not if you've hidden the bar, or its default state is hidden and you don't want to clutter your screen. URL Popper (Chrome) and URL Tooltop WE (Firefox) provide a similar service, but display the address in a floating tooltip right by the cursor as you hover over the link.



Cookie AutoDelete

bit.ly/autodelete484
bit.ly/autodeletefire484

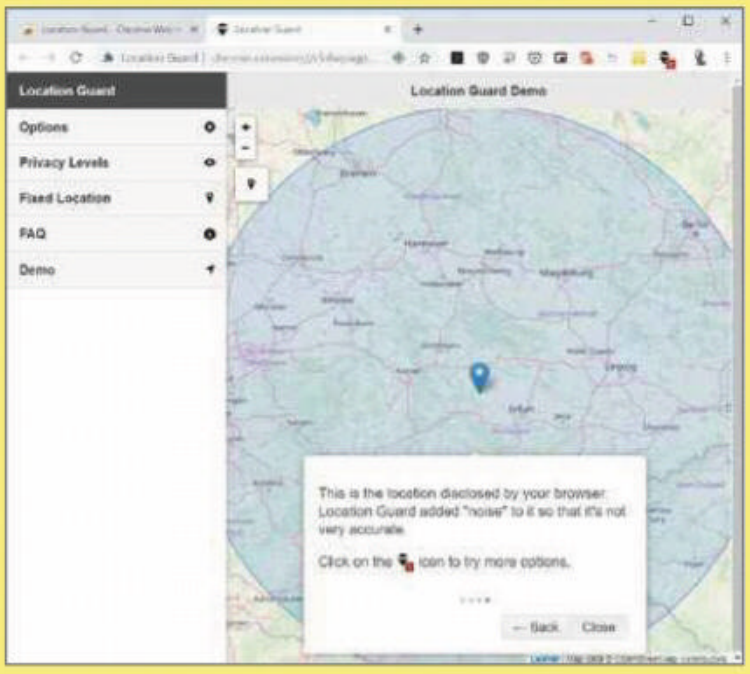
Automatically delete cookies as you close the tabs that created them, clear out cookies for whole domains and create lists of sites you want to either permanently or temporarily allow cookies from so you can import them to other browsers. This cross-platform extension takes a lot of the legwork out of keeping your browsing secure.

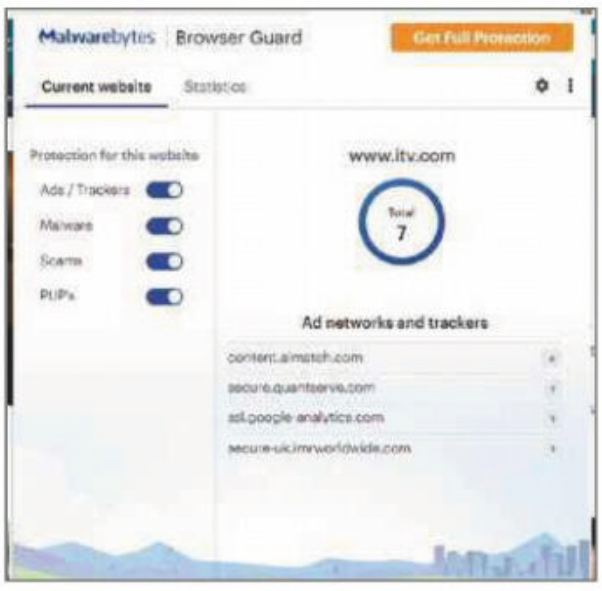


Location Guard

bit.ly/locationguardchrome484
bit.ly/locationguardfire484

Servers can easily work out where you are, and it's often helpful that they do so – for example, to serve up content that's relevant to your location or display prices on a website in your local currency. However, the accuracy with which they can locate you – often to within a few metres – could be a cause for concern. Fight back with Location Guard, which adds a degree of 'noise' to your detected location to make it less accurate. How much noise – and how inaccurate – is up to you.





Browse up to four times faster, promises Malwarebytes. How? By filtering out ads and other 'annoying content'. It also squashes pop-ups and unclosable dialogues that hijack your browser, so you can enjoy an altogether more pleasant and secure online experience.

IBA Opt-out

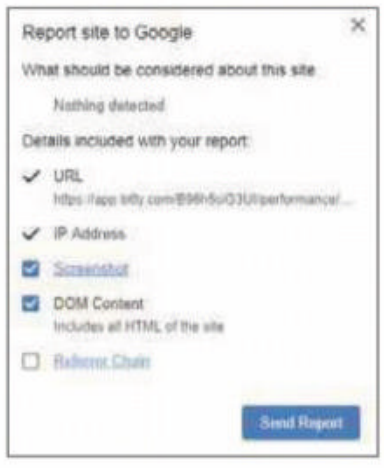
bit.ly/optoutchrome484
bit.ly/optoutfire484

When Google shows you adverts, it displays what's known as IBA – Interest-Based Advertising – which uses what it's divined about your personal interests to prioritise ads that it believes you're more likely to click. IBA Opt-out (Chrome) and Interest-based Advertising Opt-out (Firefox) block IBA ads to show you generic promos, not only on Google's own web pages, but on sites that have signed up to use the DoubleClick advertising network. Both tools linked here were created by Google itself.

Suspicious Site Reporter

bit.ly/suspicious484

Users of Chromium-based browsers benefit from Google's anti-phishing tools, which warn you before you stumble on a questionable site. Where does this information come from? Often, from other Chrome users. Suspicious Site Reporter lets you give back to the online community by quickly and easily reporting any site you think deserves further investigation.



Malwarebytes Browser Guard

bit.ly/mwbchromium484
bit.ly/mwbfire484

Also consider

Cleaner for Chrome

bit.ly/cleaner484

This extension protects your privacy by deleting your browser history, cookies, form data, downloads, plugin data and more, so websites have a harder time tracking your moves around the web.

No History

bit.ly/nohistory484

No History stops Chrome recording your browsing history, so it's particularly useful if you're working on a shared PC.

History AutoDelete

bit.ly/historyautodelete484

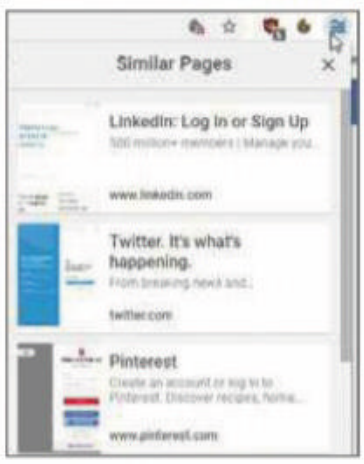
Automatically remove history for specific domains, reducing the amount of clutter and identifying any data they leave behind on your drive.

Search Tools

Google Similar Pages and Similar Sites

bit.ly/similar484
bit.ly/similarsites484

When you're elbows-deep in research, you may need a hand sorting the wheat from the chaff. That's what Google Similar Pages does, by recommending other sites you should look at based on what your browser's displaying when you click its icon. The results are drawn from Google, and accompanied by thumbnails and snippets. Better yet, because the extension was developed by Google itself, it should always be updated to work with any tweaks it makes to the way it ranks and indexes pages.

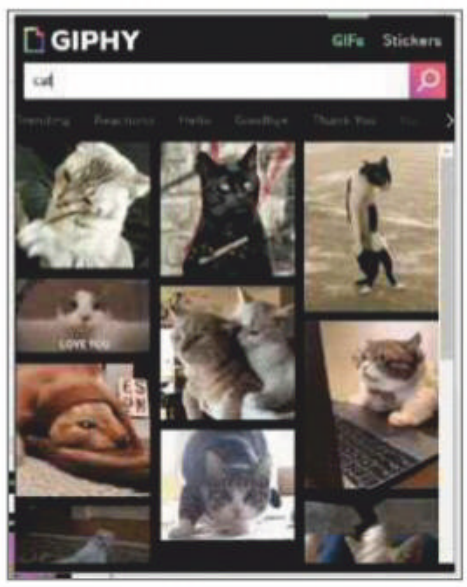


Similar Sites, linked on the left, performs a 'similar' function on Firefox, in this case, taking results from similarsites.com

Giphy

bit.ly/giphychrome484
bit.ly/giphyfire484

If a picture is worth a thousand words, imagine how much more effective a well-chosen moving image can be. Giphy is a search engine for animated GIFs that's been providing savvy web users with a constant stream of apt reactions to emails and texts for years. Its tailored tools for Chromium- and Firefox-based browsers let you search for GIFs and drag them directly into your webmail and social-media posts like a pro.



Social Media

Stencil

bit.ly/stencilchrome484
bit.ly/stencilfire484

Highlight text on a website and turn it into an image, or put words and shapes of your choosing on your own photos. This is a must-install for anyone who enjoys making inspirational posts for Instagram and other social networks.

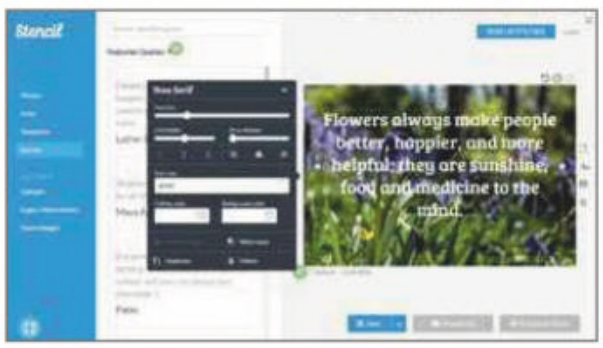
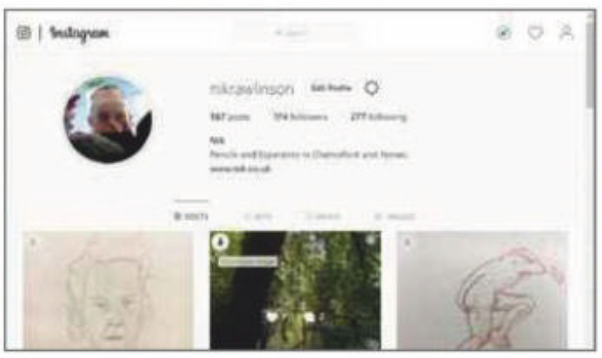


Image Downloader for Instagram

bit.ly/instachrome484
bit.ly/instafire484

This neat little add-on overlays every image on Instagram with a transluscent grey arrow in the top-left corner which, when clicked, saves the picture to your Downloads folder. Simple but effective.



Facebook Container

bit.ly/container484

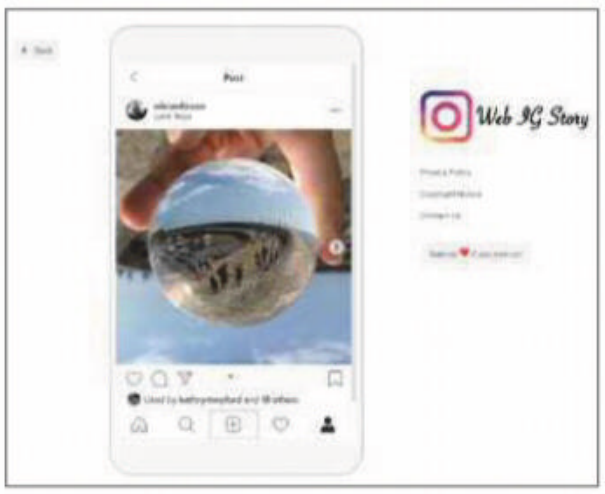
Closing a Facebook tab doesn't stop the social network tracking you. Through the magic of cookies and other code snippets, it can often continue to see where you go on the web, to build up a more accurate profile of your activities and interests. If you'd rather keep that kind of information to yourself, this extension, developed by the team behind Firefox, will isolate your Facebook identity in a sandbox, making it harder for the network to track you beyond its own domain.

Photos

Web IG Story

bit.ly/igstory484

Instagram is first and foremost a mobile service, designed to be used through its app on your phone or tablet. When you open it in a regular browser, you can't do much more than view photos and stories. However, if you install the Web IG Story extension for Chromium-based browsers, you can like and comment on photos, post pictures and upload videos to Instagram TV.



Exif Viewer

bit.ly/exifchrome484
bit.ly/exiffire484

The EXchangeable Image File format, or Exif, is used by cameras, scanners and image-editing applications to add useful information to a photo. If you take a snap on your smartphone, the attached Exif data will usually include the time and date it was taken, a range of camera settings and, most interesting of all, the location. This makes it easy to attach it to a map or automatically post it to location-aware sharing services such as Instagram and Facebook. With Exif Viewer installed, you can expose all this information in a browser window to give you a fuller 'picture' of any picture you spot online. Although they have the same names, the Chrome and Firefox add-ons come from different developers.

If you find Exif Viewer provides too much information, EXIF QuickView for Chrome (bit.ly/quickview484) gives you a truncated excerpt from the Exif data when you hover over an image.

Polarr Photo Editor

bit.ly/polarrchrome484
bit.ly/polarrfire484

Once you've installed Polarr Photo Editor, you can right-click any photo to edit it directly in your browser, fixing problems with its colours, size, shape and more.

If you'd prefer a more fully-featured online photo editor for Chrome, check out the standalone Polarr Photo Editor for Chrome OS – available from the Chrome Web Store (bit.ly/polarrstandalone484). This supports custom blend modes, batch editing and even the ability to create your own filters, and is also free, but lets you build on its default feature set by making in-app purchases.

Also consider

Resizemy.photos
bit.ly/resize484
This does exactly what its name suggests, letting you quickly trim or resize any photos you upload, with options for pre-set dimensions.

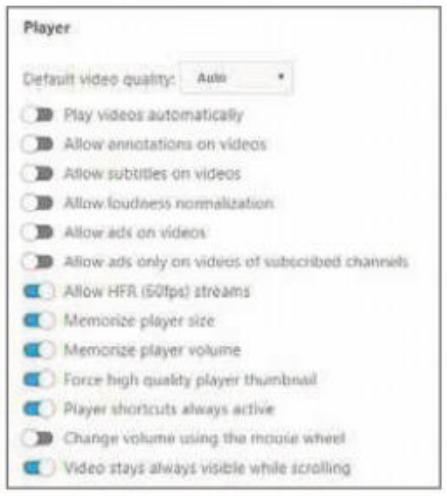
Image Resizer
bit.ly/resizer484
Performs a similar scaling trick to Resizemy.photos, but for Firefox.

Photo Filters
bit.ly/photofilters484
One of the quickest ways to apply effects and filters to your photos, with vintage, retro, noise, blur and more.

Audio and Video

Iridium

bit.ly/iridium484

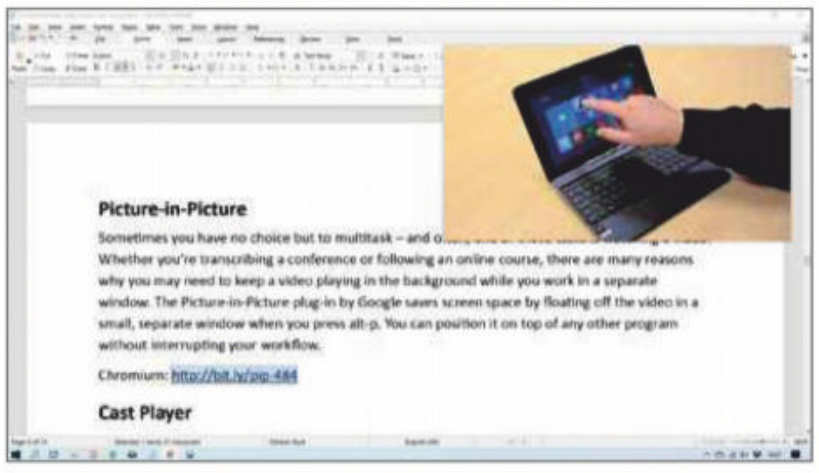


Iridium is a Swiss Army Knife of YouTube tools. You can change where clicking the YouTube logo takes you, set videos playing by hovering over their thumbnails, use a pop-up player, create a blacklist to block particular videos from recommendations and even enable a control to reverse the order of clips in a playlist, so those you've added most recently get priority over older material. If you're a frequent YouTube viewer, this will bring you a lot of features you'll wonder why Google doesn't offer itself.

Picture-in-Picture

bit.ly/picture484

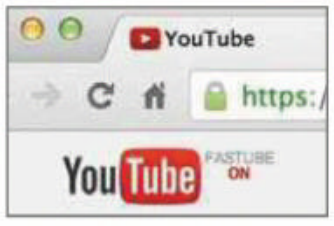
Sometimes you have no choice but to multitask – and often, one of those tasks is watching a video. Whether you're transcribing a conference or following an online course, there are many reasons why you may need to keep a video playing in the background while you work in a separate window. The Picture-in-Picture add-on from Google saves screen space by floating the video in a small, separate window when you press Alt+P. You can position it on top of any other program without interrupting your workflow, and move it around your screen as required.



FasTube and Fast YouTube Load

bit.ly/fastube484

bit.ly/fastyoutube484



FasTube helps Chromium-based browsers load YouTube more quickly by letting you navigate between videos without reloading the whole page each time. Fast YouTube Load, meanwhile, promises to increase the speed at which Firefox loads YouTube by up to five times by optimising the code used to render videos on the site.

YouTube Never Autoplay

bit.ly/autoplay484

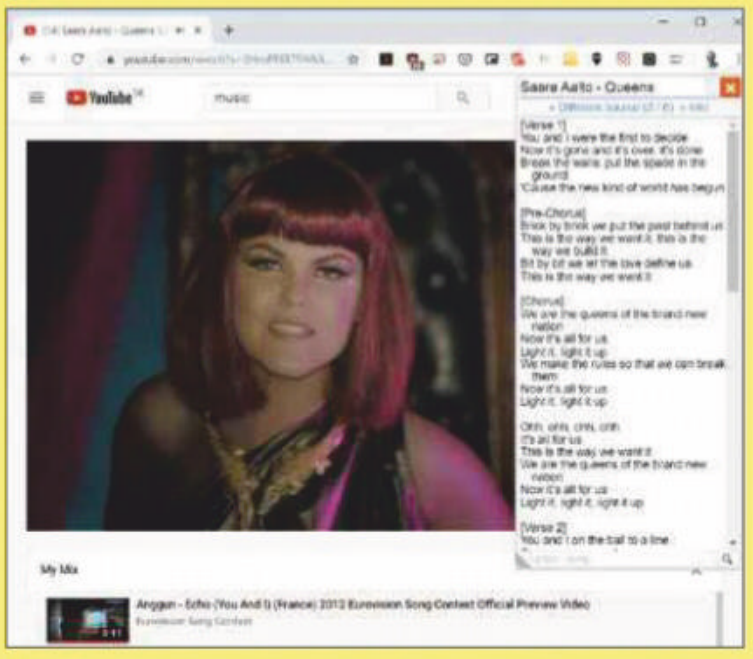
When you click a YouTube link, the video starts playing right away, which might not be convenient if you first need to plug in headphones or want to watch the video after you've dealt with something else. YouTube Never Autoplay cancels this action, making videos sit idle until you manually set them running.

Lyrics Here

bit.ly/lyricschrome484

bit.ly/lyricsfire484

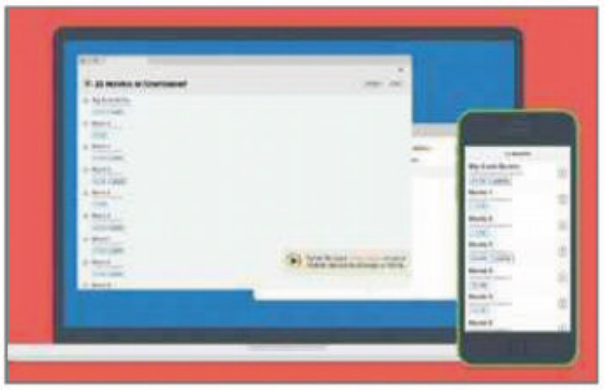
Lyrics Here displays lyrics for the currently playing song in YouTube, Deezer, Pandora, Spotify, Google Play Music and more. It has access to a wide range of lyrics databases, so you're not restricted to reading the words to English-language songs. If you're listening to foreign music, seeing the words written down can aid comprehension and provide help with learning a language.



Cast Player

castplayer.me

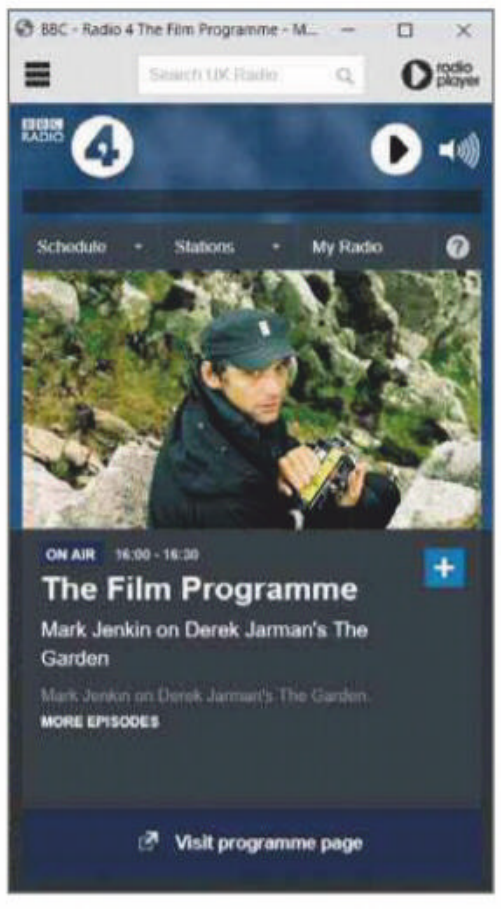
If you've got a Google Chromecast plugged into your television, this extension lets you stream videos from your PC to your TV. Once you've installed the extension, simply drag the video you want to watch (or a folder containing multiple videos, which acts like a playlist) to the Chrome browser. You can then control playback from your mobile phone, which saves you having to sit by your PC when you'd rather be relaxing on the sofa.



RadioPlayer UK

bit.ly/radioplayer484

RadioPlayer is a hub for the UK's radio stations. Both BBC channels and independent broadcasters are accessible through the site, and you can easily switch between them. It's a great way to tune into familiar favourites or to explore hundreds of regional offerings from all around the country. While the Radioplayer website (radioplayer.co.uk) works in any browser, this tool puts a dedicated RadioPlayer button on Chromium browsers' toolbars for direct access to its floating web app.



ChromeVox

bit.ly/chromevox484

Listen to the web when you're cooking, relaxing or even driving, with this Chrome extension that reads the contents of web pages aloud. ChromeVox could also be a great help to visually-impaired users and anyone learning a foreign language.

Shopping

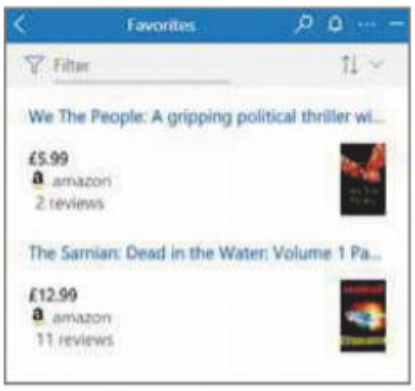
Bookindy

bit.ly/bookindy484

Amazon is most users' first stop for online book shopping. Its huge range, customer service and speed of delivery are difficult for local retailers to beat, which is a shame because physical bookstores are a great place to find new reads. Bookindy gives them a fighting chance by adding prices for your local book shop to Amazon listings, and even if you won't be stopping by your local store before you reach the end of your current read, many are happy to deliver – sometimes for free. Results are sourced from Hive.co.uk.

Microsoft Shopping Assistant

bit.ly/assistantchrome484
bit.ly/assistantfire484

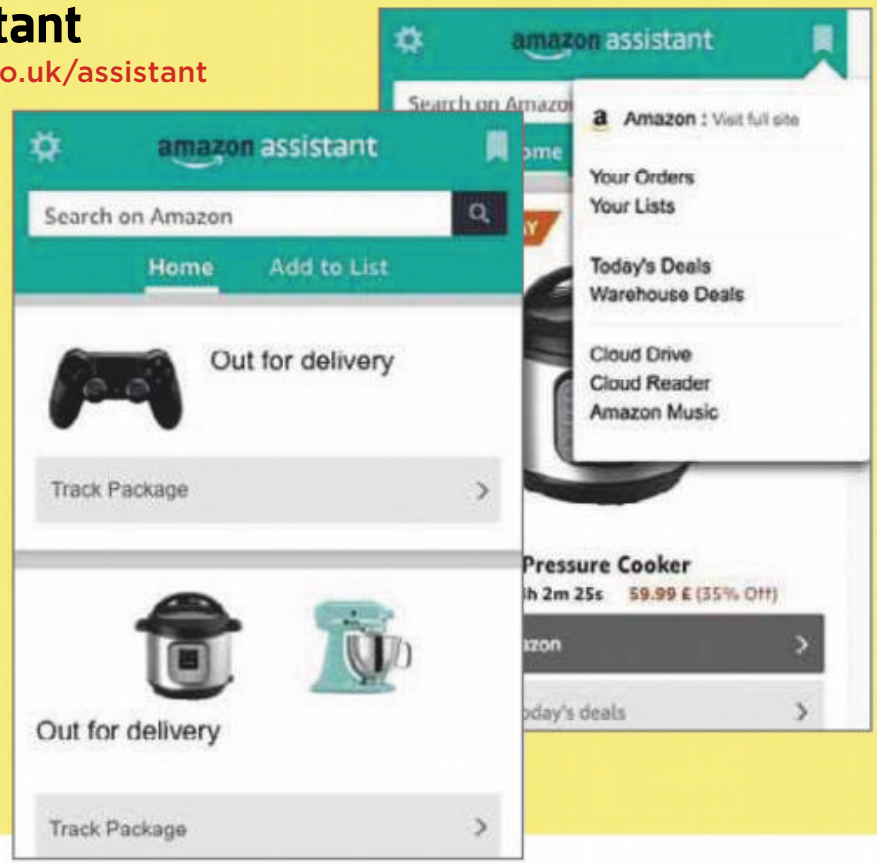


Shopping Assistant keeps track of products you've browsed so you can easily go back to them later. You can also save favourites,

Amazon Assistant

www.amazon.co.uk/assistant

If you're a frequent Amazon shopper, its official assistant can be a real time saver. It helps you track the latest deals – and your deliveries once you've placed an order – and lets you compare products. Also, like Microsoft Shopping Assistant (below, left), it lets you build a universal wish list that incorporates products from non-Amazon sites.

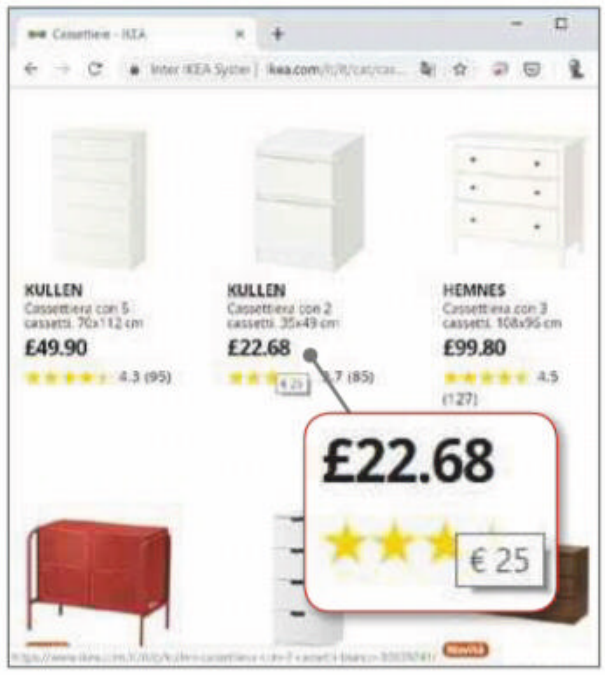


effectively building a multi-site wish list. The assistant will track prices for any products you add so if their price drops, you can pounce before they up again.

Chrome Currency Converter

bit.ly/currencychrome484
bit.ly/currencyfire484

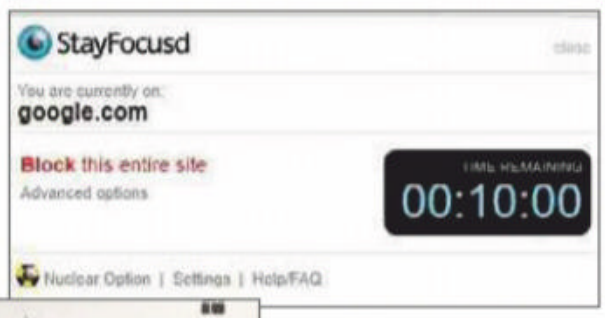
Make shopping from overseas stores less confusing by automatically converting all on-screen prices to your local currency using Chrome Currency Converter. It supports more than 160 currencies, can be set to display prices with or without an additional tax percentage and, if you want, will display the original price in brackets beside the conversion. Direct Currency Converter performs a similar function in Firefox, displaying the original and converted prices side by side.

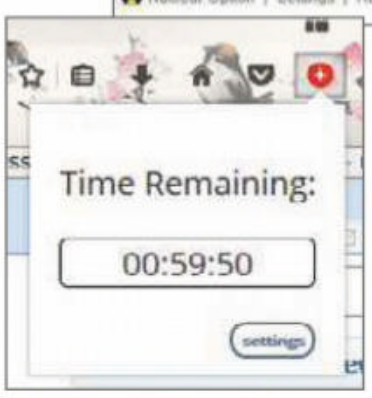


Productivity

StayFocusd and Monastery

bit.ly/stay484
bit.ly/monastery484



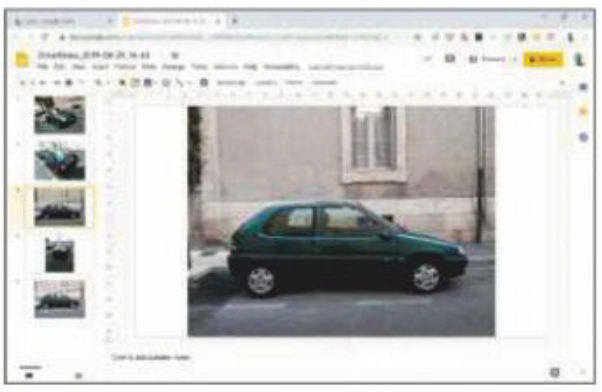


With the whole web at your disposal, it can be difficult to keep your mind and your mouse from wandering when you should be working. StayFocusd for Chrome and Monastery for Firefox help keep your attention from straying, by blocking distracting sites for a specified period.

DriveSlides

bit.ly/driveslides484

Not only is Google Drive one of the best cloud-storage services, it's also directly accessible from the company's online office apps. DriveSlides takes advantage of this fact by automatically building PowerPoint-style presentation decks in Google Slides, using nothing more than a folder of images. In just one click, the resulting presentation is stored in the same folder as the original pictures.



Also consider

Notes by Firefox

bit.ly/notesfire484

This extension adds a notepad to the Firefox sidebar, where you can jot down thoughts whenever they occur.

Tiny Notepad

bit.ly/notepad484

As its name suggests, Tiny Notebad provides a synchronised jotting space that lives within your Chrome browser.

Spritzlet

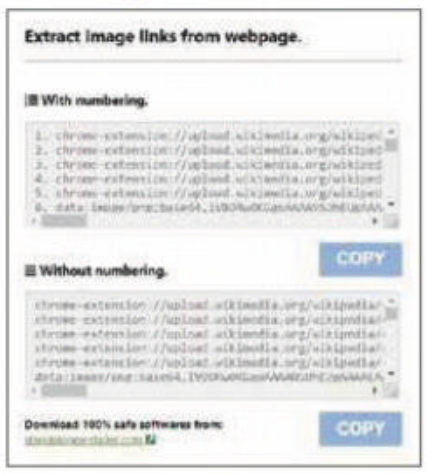
www.spritzlet.com

Read web content one word at a time and you will dramatically increase your reading speed.

Best of the Rest

Image Link Grabber

bit.ly/grabber484



Whether through accident or (bad) design, some webside creators make it very difficult to right-click and download an image from their site. Image Link Grabber can help by listing the address of every image on the page you're browsing so you can access each one directly.

I Just Want the Recipe Janet

bit.ly/janet484

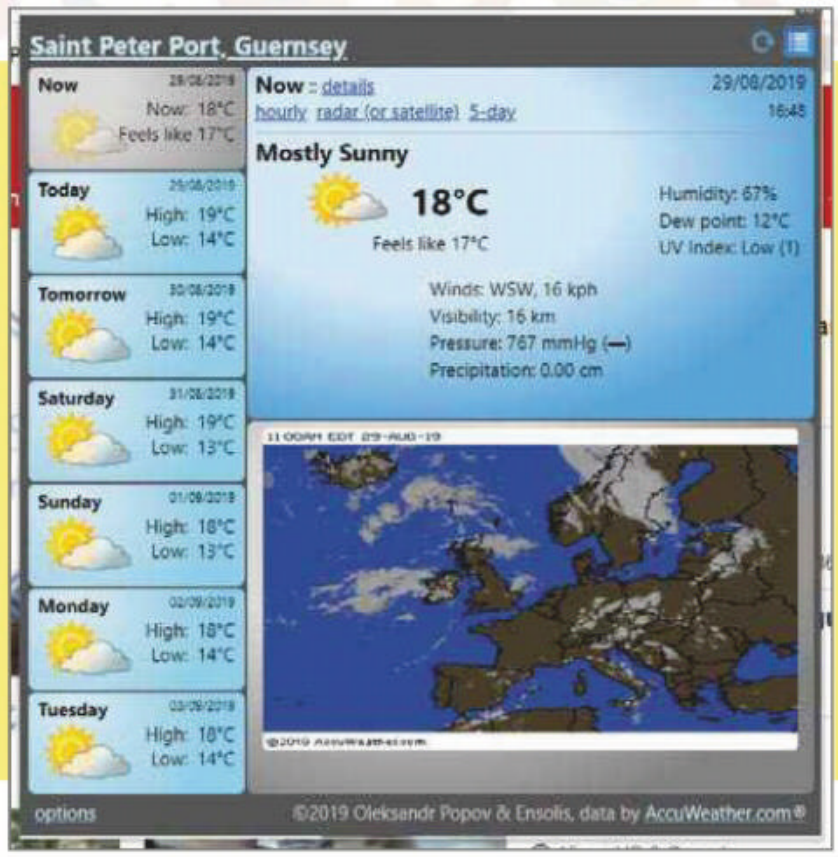
We love the name of this add-on, which cuts out the lifestyle chit-chat on recipe sites. That extra content has a good reason for being there because it makes the page longer so search engines pay more attention to it (pages of fewer than 300 words are generally given low rankings) – but it's not great when you're rushing to find a recipe so you can quickly pick up some ingredients for tonight's dinner. I Just Want the Recipe Janet cuts to the chase by excising the blather to leave you with an ingredients list and method.

Forecastfox

bit.ly/ffchrome484

bit.ly/fffire484

Despite its name, Forecastfox adds weather icons to both Firefox and Chromium browsers' toolbars, so you can see at a glance what's happening and what the temperature is. Click the toolbar button for a fuller forecast covering the next few days, for any location you specify.

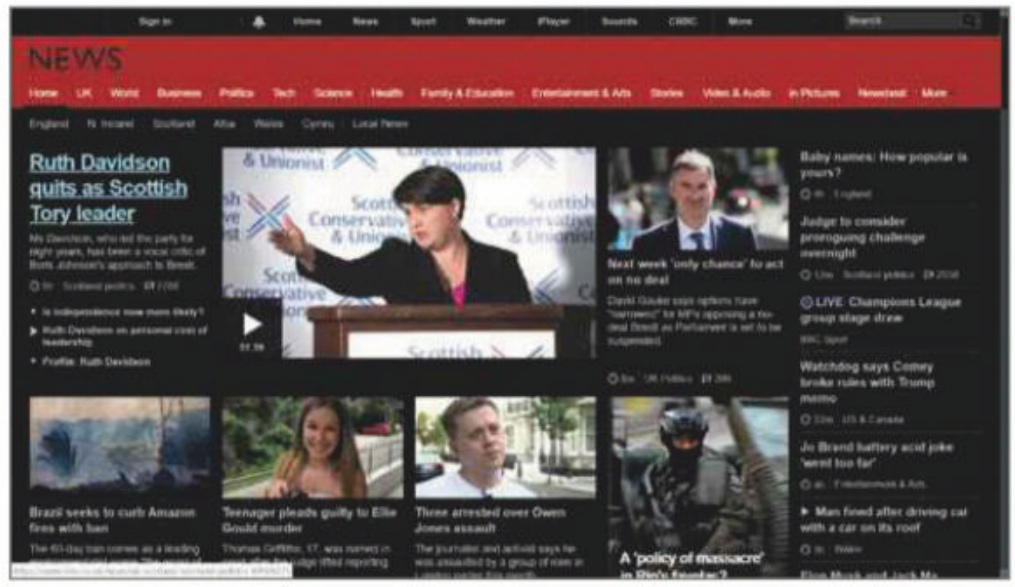


Night Eye

bit.ly/nighteye484

bit.ly/darktheme484

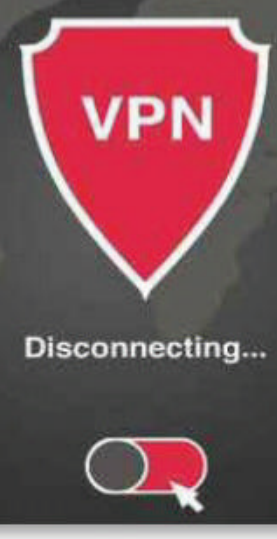
Black text on white isn't the best option for late-night reading because although you probably can't detect it, that configuration contains a lot of hidden blue light, which humans interpret as a sign to become more alert (in nature, morning light is bluer and evening light is redder). These separate extensions for Chrome and Firefox can help ease your eyes by implementing dark mode on every website, whether or not they support it natively. You should still try to minimise the amount of time you spend in front of a PC before hitting the hay, but this could help reduce the effects if you have no other option. ■



NEXT ISSUE on sale Wednesday 2 October 2019

STOP USING UNSAFE VPNs

Beat restrictions and stay anonymous online without compromising your privacy and security



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COMBINE CLOUD STORAGE
Manage all your files in all your online accounts in one place

RECOVER FROM PC DISASTER
Best Windows recovery tools you can boot from a USB stick

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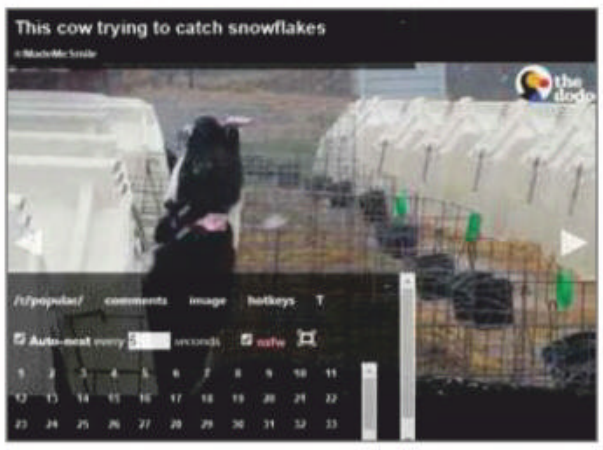
Secret hacks for Reddit

Reddit is a brilliant but basic source of news and discussion. **Robert Irvine** explains how to customise and improve its looks

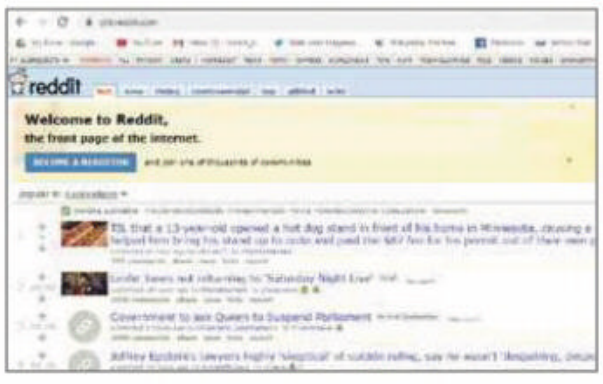
View Reddit images as a slideshow

Browsing picture-based subreddits such as the popular landscape-photography community EarthPorn (reddit.com/r/EarthPorn) involves clicking lots of individual threads to view the full-size images. If you're not interested in reading comments, add the letter 'p' after 'reddit' in the URL – for example redditp.com/r/EarthPorn – to display all the pictures (and videos) in the subreddit as a slideshow, which you can click back and forth through or let play automatically. There's also an option to filter NSFW (not safe for work) content.



Restore Reddit's classic design

Last year's redesign annoyed lots of loyal Reddit users, but you can still revert to its 'classic' look: either type `old` before the URL of a subreddit – for example, old.reddit.com/r/movies – or select Visit Old Reddit from the menu in the top-right corner. Alternatively, install the extension Old Reddit Redirect in Chrome (bit.ly/oldc484) or Firefox (bit.ly/oldf484) to automatically load subreddits in the classic design. Unlike Reddit's own option, this also works in Incognito mode.

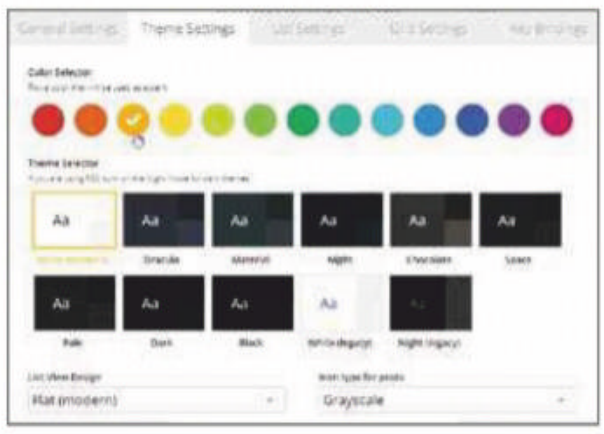


Install the Reddit Enhancement Suite

Reddit's lack of features has led millions of users to install Reddit Enhancement Suite (redditenhancementsuite.com). Available for all major browsers, this extension adds Never Ending Reddit, which removes the need to click 'next page'; keyboard shortcuts for upvoting, downvoting and hiding posts; an inline image viewer; the ability to switch between multiple accounts; clearer presentation of comments; and more.

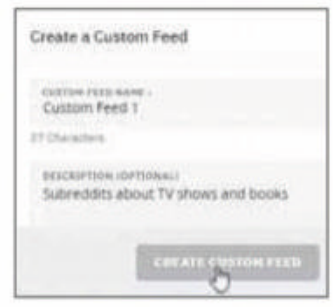
Apply different themes to Reddit

Reddit now has a dark theme, which you can switch to by clicking the menu in the top-right corner and choosing Night Mode, but for proper customisation, you need the Shine extension for Chrome (bit.ly/shine484) and Firefox (bit.ly/shinefire484). This places a menu in the bottom-right corner that you can use to switch between list and grid view, change Reddit's default colour and layout, and apply themes such as Chocolate, Material and Dracula. It also lets you use keyboard shortcuts to navigate the site.



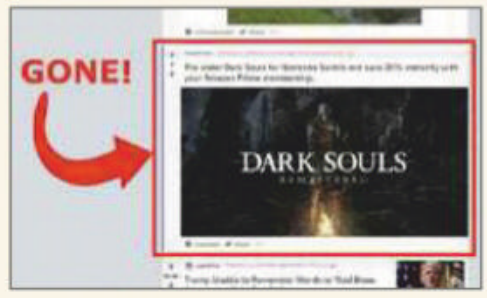
Create a custom Reddit feed

If you subscribe to lots of subreddits, keeping track of all their content via the front page can be overwhelming, while switching between separate communities is time-consuming. Save yourself hassle by creating a Custom Feed (formerly called a 'multireddit') of your favourite subreddits or some with a similar topic. To do this, click the menu in the top-left corner and click the plus sign next to Custom Feeds. Enter a name and (optionally) a description for your feed, then select Create Custom Feed. Now, type the names of the desired subreddits into the Manage Communities box and click Add for each one. Your Custom Feed(s) can then be accessed via the top-left menu.



BLOCK PROMOTED POSTS ON REDDIT

Like all social networks, Reddit supports itself through advertising, some in the form of 'promoted' posts that are easy to mistake for genuine ones. Upgrading to Reddit Premium for $5.99 (£4.89) a month removes these ads, but you can also filter them from your feed using Reddit



Promoted AdBlock (bit.ly/promoted484). Simply install this Chrome extension and you can avoid ever seeing promoted posts on Reddit, without needing to use an ad blocker to block all adverts on the site. For Firefox, there's the similar Hide Promoted Reddit Posts (bit.ly/hide484).

Best free automated file organisers

Are you tired of doing the same file admin jobs over and over again? **Andy Shaw** looks at six free tools that can streamline your Windows work, saving you time and effort

DropIt | www.dropitproject.com | ★★★★★

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

What we liked:

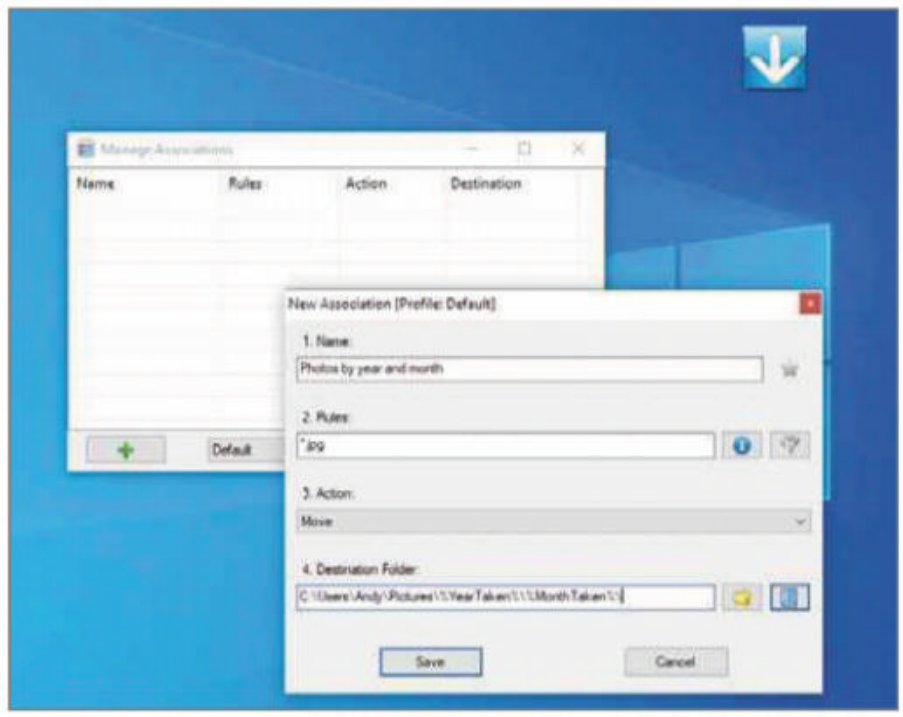
DropIt's great innovation is a floating icon with an arrow on it, which lurks on your desktop, ready to spring into action whenever it's needed.

When you've got a file that needs sorting, just pick it up with your mouse, drag it over to the icon and drop it. Presuming that you've taken the time to set up the appropriate rules, your file will be squirrelled away and automatically stored in the exact location you want.

Setting up basic rules is relatively straightforward, but there are layers of hidden depths if you're adventurous enough to explore them. You could just have all the photos that arrive in a particular folder, for example, extracted and dumped into your Photos folder. This is a relatively simple rule to set up – you just need to select the start and destination folders in the appropriate boxes, choose the file type, then specify a move action.

However, with a bit of help from the online documentation (of which there is a lot), you can go much further, creating even more folders as you go. For example, you could take the photos from the previous example and file them away in folders based on the month and year the photos were taken. If the folders don't already exist, DropIt will make them for you.

The possibilities seem endless. You can move and copy files, like you can with the other programs we've reviewed, but you can also rename, delete, zip, unzip, encrypt, decrypt, split, join and more. Essentially, if you've ever dreamed of doing something to a file, you'll probably be able to automate the process in DropIt.



How it can be improved:

The interface isn't complicated but its bleak, grey appearance does little to promote its extraordinary usefulness and could benefit from some love and attention. The advanced features aren't well integrated into the software, either, requiring that you use text commands in the boxes to fine-tune the actions you want to create.

OUR VERDICT

DropIt is extremely powerful but using its most advanced features isn't straightforward. It doesn't really matter because the basic interface is simple enough to get you started and there's plenty of help available on the website. But it would be great to see more of the specialist tools integrated into the software, rather than left as text commands that need researching and constructing manually.

Digital Janitor | bit.ly/digjan484 | ★★★★☆

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

What we liked:

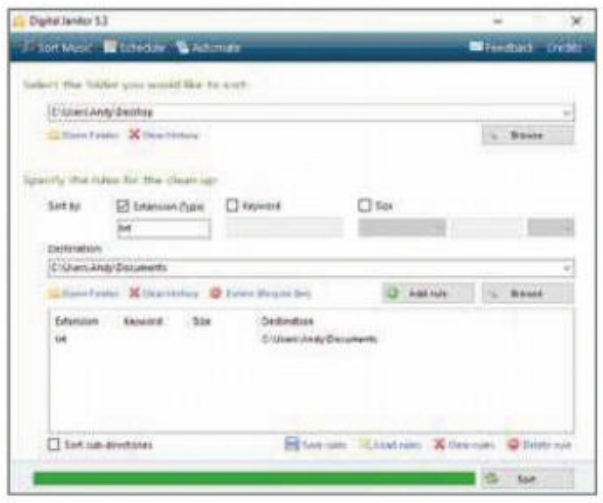
Digital Janitor hasn't been updated for a while, but it installs and works well on Windows 10, performing its job admirably. If you don't like the permanent, looming presence of DropIt's hovering desktop icon, this is a subtler alternative.

To create a rule, fill out a simple form: select the folder you want to sort, the rules you want to apply to the files it contains and the folder to send them to. The rule then appears in the list below. You can use any or all the rules at any time, by selecting them and clicking the Sort button.

Tools to schedule and automate tasks are included, so once you've set it up you can get your files tidied without even thinking about it. If you're having trouble with music files, there's also a special option for sorting them using the metadata hidden within.

How it can be improved:

The interface is starting to look a little dated (the software hasn't been



updated for a decade) but it barely matters with something as simple as this. The only thing it's really missing is a drag-and-drop option like DropIt's, to get a particular file moved to a specific place without having to click anything.

OUR VERDICT

This software is ancient but still does an admirable job of automatically sorting your files for you. It's a bit more user-friendly than DropIt but lacks the advanced tools that won it the Gold Award.

Drop Zone | bit.ly/dropzone484 | ★★★★☆

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

What we liked:

Drop Zone is incredibly simple to use but remarkably complicated to configure. All it does is provide a box on your desktop, into which you can drop one or more files. Doing this opens a menu of options featuring different folders, and you simply click the one you want your files to end up in.

However, when you right-click the box and select 'Edit settings' to make changes to the rules, it opens a text file you have to edit manually. This isn't as difficult as it sounds because the text file is crammed with comments to help you make the changes you want, and you can essentially just copy, paste and tinker with what's there and slightly adapt it to your needs. You can also create more DropZones, to perform different tasks, by copying and renaming the DropZone.exe file.

How it can be improved:

The biggest problem is the text-based configuration file, which is a frustratingly

archaic way of changing the settings of a program, though its open-ended flexibility makes Drop Zone extremely configurable. An options window would be preferable, though.

OUR VERDICT

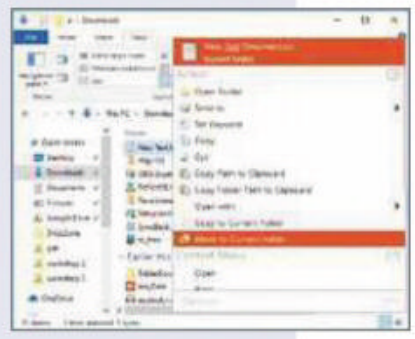
If you regularly find yourself manually dropping files into specific folders and don't mind tinkering with text files, Drop Zone is a valid alternative to DropIt. However, manually editing configuration files won't be to everyone's liking, so it's some way off being a serious contender for our Gold Award.

BEST OF THE REST

Listary

www.listary.com

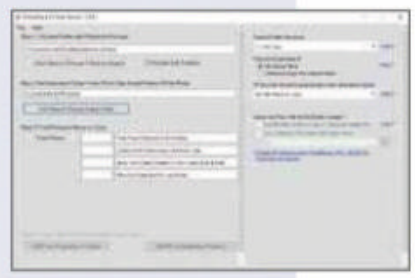
Listary has some file-management automation among its plethora of additional tools. For example, you could open an Explorer window, type the name of a file you want to move to that folder, then choose the option from the menu when Listary has located the file. However, with search and all sorts of other tools also bundled, it's very over-specified for this particular group. It's worth checking out, though, if you want a tool that does a lot more than simply sort files.



PhotoMove

bit.ly/photomove484

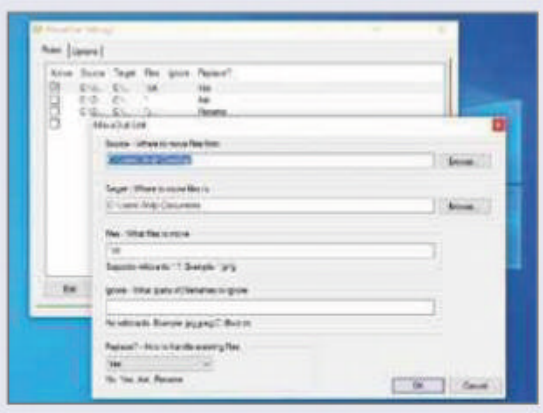
One of the biggest challenges for automated file-manoeuvring comes with storing photos in a sensible, meaningful way that lets you easily browse them. If this is the quandary you're facing, PhotoMove could fit the bill. It doesn't do anything that DropIt can't, though, and limits you to organising photos alone.



MoveOut

bit.ly/movout484

This is another simple program that's designed to automate moving files from one place to another. It requires a bit of work setting it up but seems like it might do a good job. We say 'seems like' because despite being able to set it up, we couldn't get it to actually move any files on either of the two PCs we tried it on. You may have more luck but we found ourselves forced to leave it out of our awards.



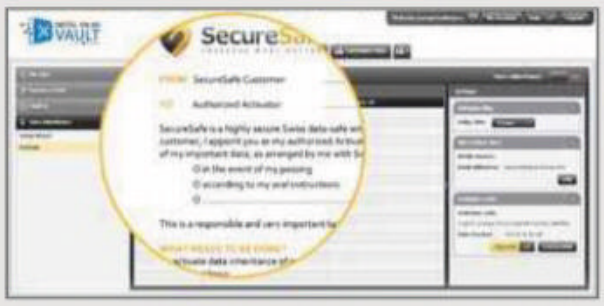
Secure your life online after you die

What happens to your online accounts when you pass away? **Jane Hoskyn** explains how to bequeath your web content and put your digital affairs in order before you go

Store your passwords in a digital safe

Leaving your logins in an encrypted digital locker is the simplest way to let your family wrap up your accounts when you're no longer around. Storage service SecureSafe (www.securesafe.com) has a free Data Inheritance feature that lets you bequeath files, passwords, PINs, two-factor authentication details and more to chosen beneficiaries (bit.ly/inherit484).

You give each beneficiary a different activation code that grants them only the access you choose for them. These codes only work when you die or are incapacitated, and SecureSafe requires numerous documents to certify that this has actually happened. All data that you haven't signed to a specific beneficiary is securely destroyed.



Leave all your logins and important files to named beneficiaries using SecureSafe

Bequeath or delete your Facebook account

Facebook was one of the first tech companies to understand that its users don't live forever, and that when they die, they may not necessarily want *all* their online data to become available to their families.

Facebook's 'legacy contact' feature imposes thoughtful limits on what actions your loved ones can perform. They can create one last pinned post, manage friend requests, download an archive of your posts and photos, and update the main photo on your profile, which will display the word 'Remembering' (see screenshot, above). What they *can't* do is rummage through your messages or pretend to be you.

Facebook is ahead of most rivals at respecting the wishes of its late users

To set up your legacy contact, go to General Account Settings (bit.ly/genfb484) and enter a name in the 'Choose a friend' box. They'll get an email about your impending mortality from Facebook, so you might want to warn them in advance.

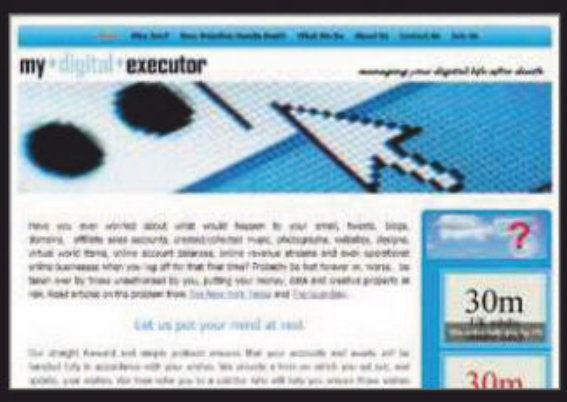
Alternatively, you can let your Facebook presence die with you. Go to the page above and click 'Request that your account be deleted after you pass away' (bit.ly/fbdelete484).

Plan your Google afterlife

Google's Inactive Account Manager is like an online funeral plan, giving you full control over what happens to the various elements of your Google

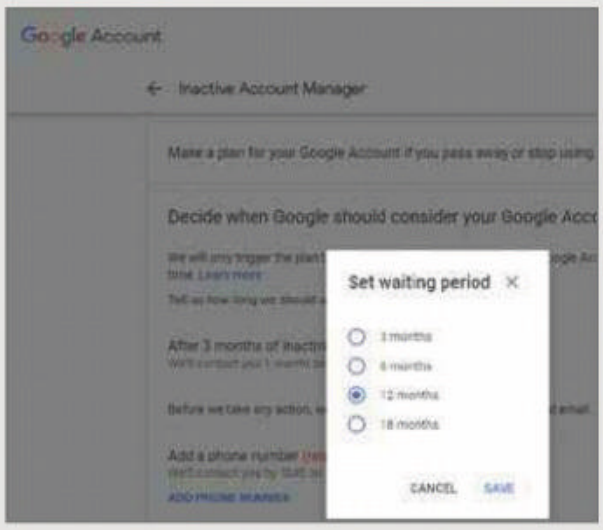
IS A 'DIGITAL WILL' LEGALLY BINDING?

Not if it's separate from your main will. In the UK, a legally-binding will needs to be on paper and signed by you and a witness. That said, it's vital to include details of your digital assets in your physical will, and services such as My Digital Executor (www.mydigitalexecutor.co.uk) help you draw up your list and find a solicitor. Here's what you should include:

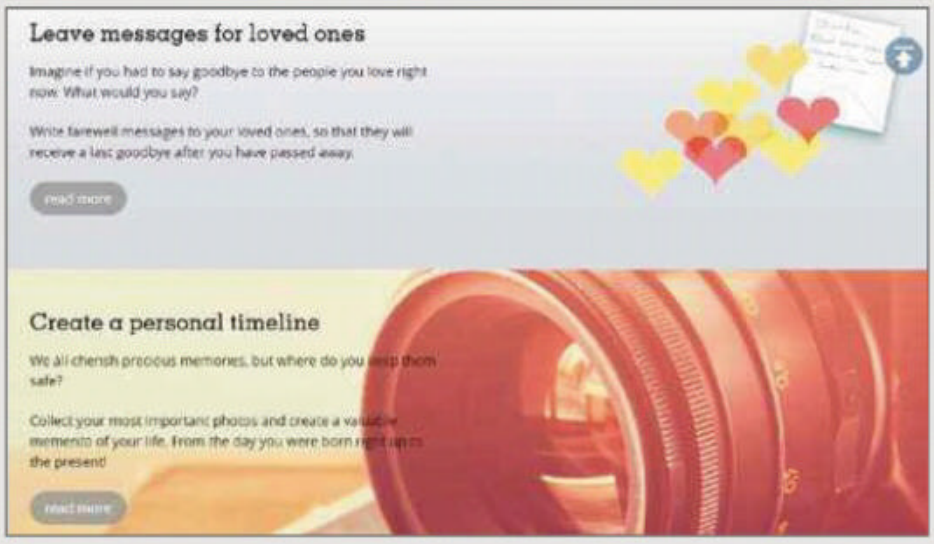


- ☑ List of your online accounts
- ☑ Inventory of digital assets such as photo albums and emails
- ☑ Names of beneficiaries
- ☑ List of wishes
- ☑ Where to find your digital locker or scrapbook
- ☒ Do NOT include your passwords. Your will is a document of public record, which means anyone can potentially access it.

You can set out organ-donation wishes online at bit.ly/donor484.



Decide how long Google should wait until it deems you gone for good



Create an Afternote timeline scrapbook that only your named trustees can see after you die

account (YouTube, Gmail, Android and so on) post mortem.

Go to myaccount.google.com/inactive to set it up. First, you have to decide how long 'inactive' means: three, six, 12 or 18 months. When there's been no activity whatsoever for that amount of time, Google will either delete your account and data, or share your chosen logins and data with a 'trusted contact'. Unlike Facebook, Google doesn't notify the contact until after you've stopped using your account. Find out more at bit.ly/inactive484.

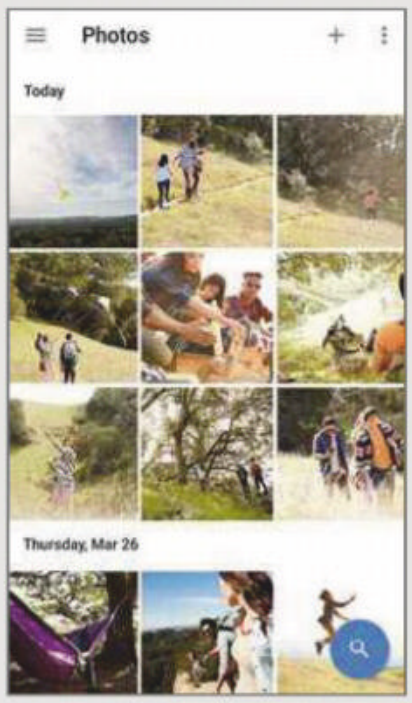
If you die without setting up Inactive Account Manager, then your next of kin can ask Google to delete your account via bit.ly/gdelete484.

Bequeath your iPhone photos

Your iPhone, iPad and iTunes data dies when you do, says Apple, and no-one is allowed to download it or even see it. Apple spent four years trying to uphold this policy in a British court, until in May this year a judge ordered the company to let a widow and her daughter see their late husband and dad's iPhone photos (bit.ly/iphonepics484).

Nevertheless, Apple is not about to change its policy. So to ensure your surviving family can access your i-photos and videos, leave the relevant passwords and codes in a digital locker.

Alternatively, sync your photos automatically to a service that allows legacy access, such as Google Photos. Install Google Photos for iOS (bit.ly/gphotos484), then go to Settings and tap Privacy, Photos, Google Photos. Find out more at bit.ly/gphotosios484.



Sync iPhone photos to your Google account so loved ones can access them

Create a digital scrapbook of your life

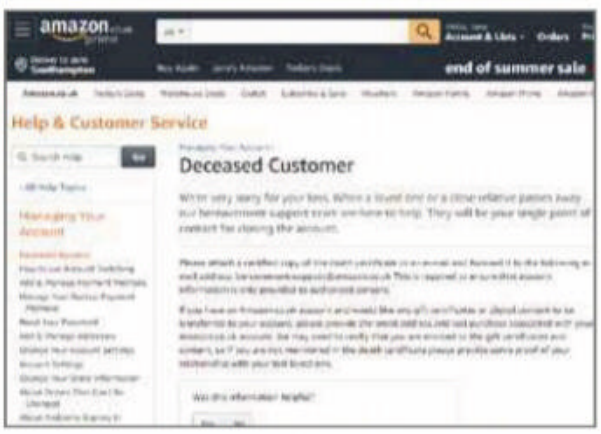
A digital scrapbook combines the best features of a secure safe and online photo album, and is a wonderful way to say goodbye to family and friends. Afternote (www.afternote.com) lets you create a timeline of photos and scanned mementoes; write farewell messages to loved ones; set out your funeral wishes; and even draw up a bucket list. It's all stored securely for as long as you live, until access is given to your named trustees when you die.

UK-based Lexikin (www.lexikin.com) is a more legally-minded affair, run in partnership with a London law firm. You can create a family tree, list digital assets, record your life story and access a collection of free end-of-life resources. Paid-for services you can hire through the site include wills and executors. ■

HOW LOVED ONES CAN* CLOSE YOUR OTHER ACCOUNTS (*OR CAN'T!)

Most sites expect your family to do the legwork when you're gone. They usually demand a copy of your death certificate, which loved ones can order online from the General Register Office at bit.ly/register484.

- **Amazon** will give limited account access and some data transfer to a verified family member of a deceased account holder. The family member will need to email their ID and account holder's death certificate to bereavement-support@amazon.co.uk.
- **Apple** will delete iTunes and iCloud accounts if next of kin provide a death certificate. However it totally bans family from accessing photos and other data.
- **Microsoft** automatically deletes your account after a year of inactivity. Within that deadline, a 'verified Next of Kin' can apply for a DVD of your Hotmail, MSN and Outlook emails and address books – but not your Windows 10, Office 365 or Xbox Live activity. They need to apply by post, with documentation, to Microsoft in the US (bit.ly/mskin484).



- **PayPal** is in line with most banks and financial services. If you haven't securely bequeathed your passwords to named beneficiaries, your family can apply to close your account and transfer funds. They'll need a copy of your will, a grant of probate and/or a letter of administration (bit.ly/paypal484).
- **Twitter** will delete an account if requested by next of kin (bit.ly/twitter484). Your family can maintain your account in your name if you want, as with WW2 veteran Harry Leslie Smith, who died in 2018 (twitter.com/Harryslaststand). Twitter won't hand out login details to anyone, so if you want your account to outlive you, you'll need to securely bequeath your password.
- **Yahoo** will close an account if a family sends a formal letter and a copy of the deceased user's death certificate to Yahoo in the US (bit.ly/yahoo484).

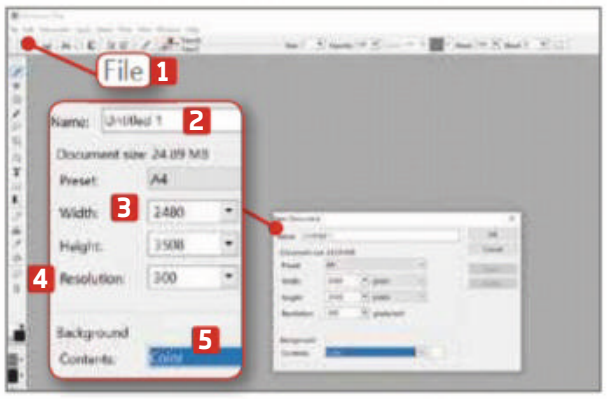
Create paintings and drawings with Artweaver Free 7

Artweaver Free lets you edit photos and create works of art from scratch. Here's how to use it

Artweaver Free 7: www.artweaver.de/en | 20 mins | 7, 8, 10

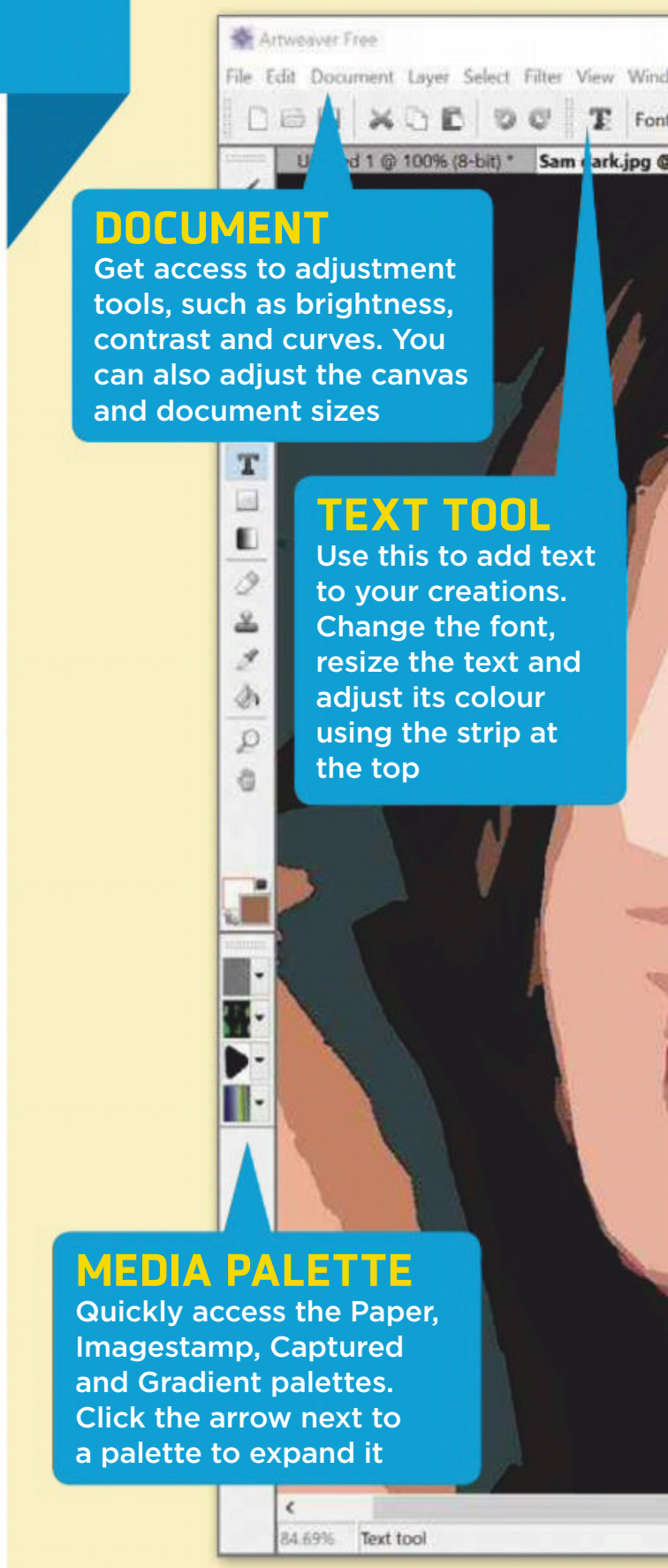
Artweaver Free is a full featured painting program that comes with a huge selection of realistic brushes and styles, including acrylics, airbrushes, calligraphy pens, chalk, crayons, oils, pencils and sponges. Pick a brush category, choose a variant and configure it to suit your needs, adjusting the size, spacing, opacity and more.

The program also offers an impressive range of editing tools, including magic wand, lasso, text tool, gradient and clone stamp, as well as powerful adjustment tools including auto levels, brightness, contrast, colourise, hue, saturation and curves. Photos can be resized, flipped and rotated, and there's a good selection of filters you can apply, too.



1 To start a new drawing or painting from scratch, click File, 1 New and give your creation a name. 2 Choose a preset size or enter the dimensions manually. 3 Set a resolution 4 and choose whether you want a coloured or transparent background. 5

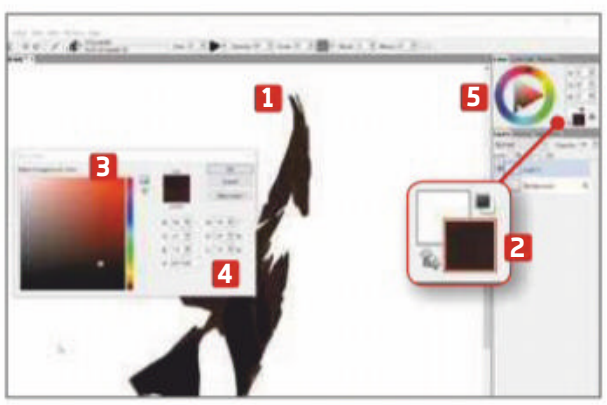
2 The Brush tool 1 is selected by default. Click the drop-down menu at the top 2 and choose the type of brush you want, 3 then pick a variation on the right. 4 You can see a preview of a stroke underneath. 5 Adjust the size and opacity in the toolbar. 6



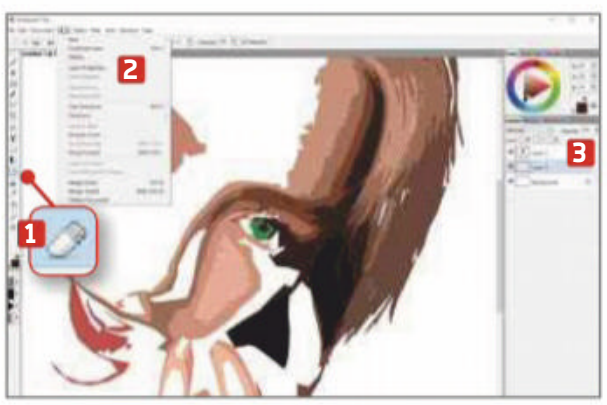
DOCUMENT
Get access to adjustment tools, such as brightness, contrast and curves. You can also adjust the canvas and document sizes

TEXT TOOL
Use this to add text to your creations. Change the font, resize the text and adjust its colour using the strip at the top

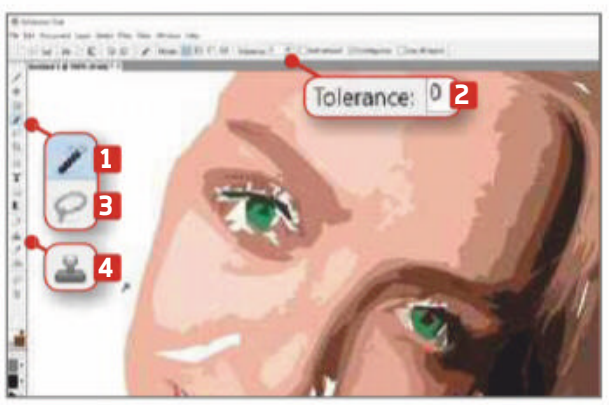
MEDIA PALETTE
Quickly access the Paper, Imagestamp, Captured and Gradient palettes. Click the arrow next to a palette to expand it



3 Start drawing on your canvas. 1 Double-click the foreground or background colour box 2 to open the picker and choose a new colour, 3 or enter the RGB or HSL values 4 if you know them. There's also a colour wheel 5 you can use to quickly select a colour.



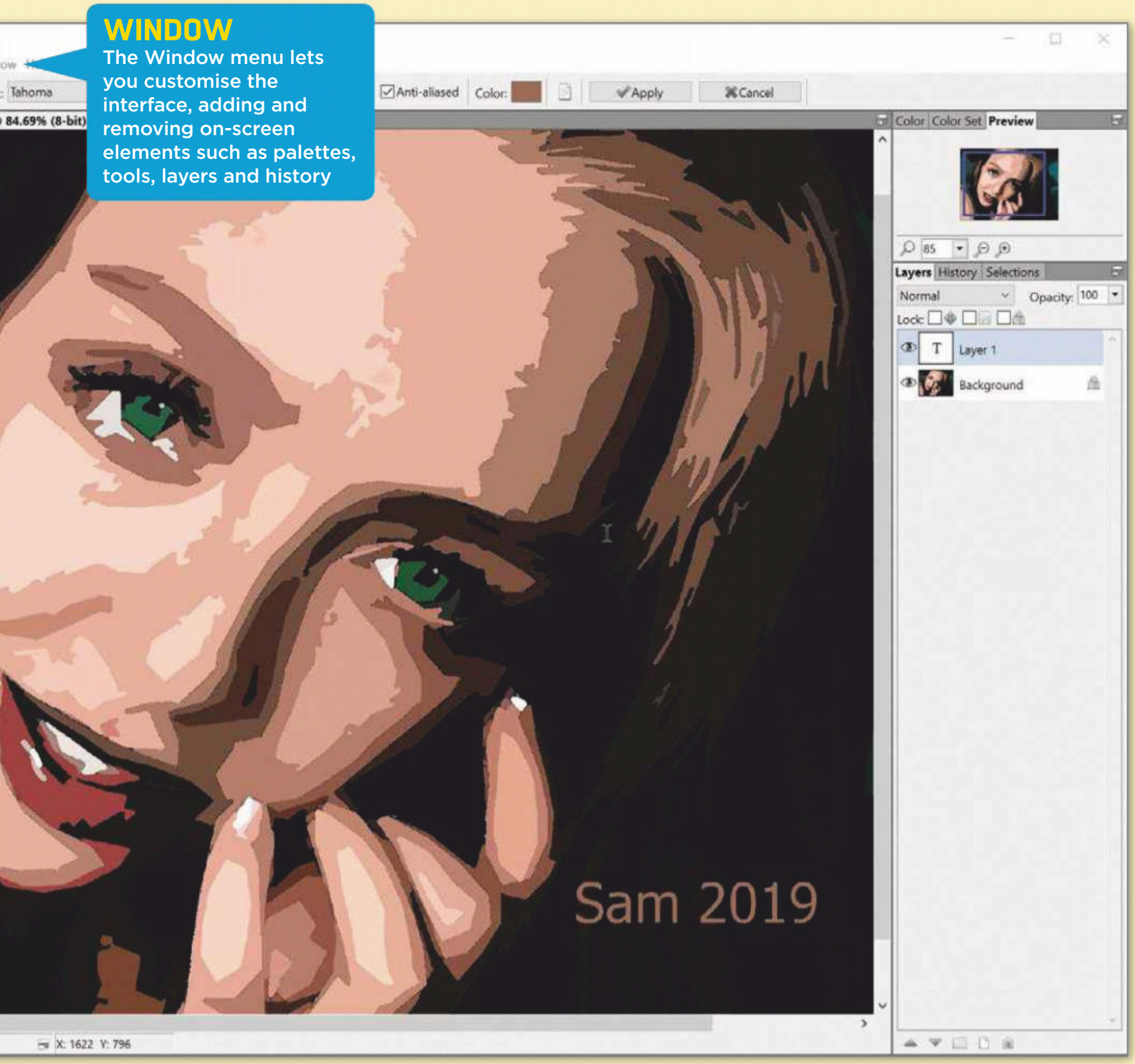
4 If you make a mistake, click the Undo/Redo buttons in the toolbar or use the Eraser tool. 1 To build up more complicated creations, select options from the Layer menu 2 to create layers and layer groups. You can manage, delete, reorder, lock and adjust the opacity of these in the Layers panel. 3

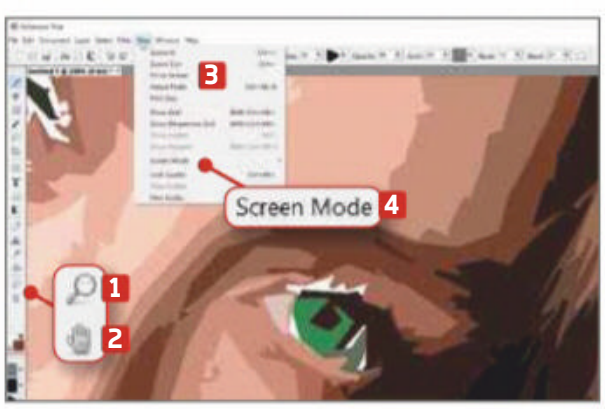


5 The toolbox offers a number of useful tools, such as the Magic Wand, 1 which lets you select part of the image with the same colour. You can adjust the tolerance at the top. 2 The Lasso tool 3 lets you draw around an area to select and the Stamp tool 4 lets you clone a section.

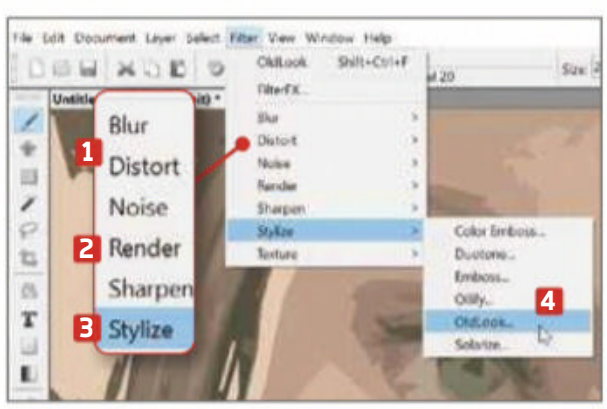
WINDOW

The Window menu lets you customise the interface, adding and removing on-screen elements such as palettes, tools, layers and history

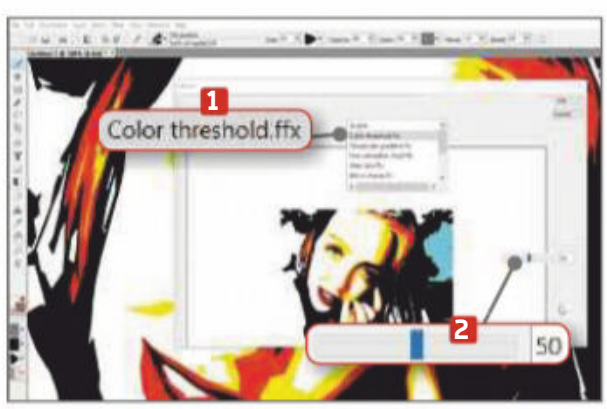




6 The Zoom tool 1 lets you get close into the detail of your creation, while the Hand tool 2 lets you pan around the canvas. The View menu provides more size options, 3 and you can toggle between normal and full screen under Screen Mode. 4

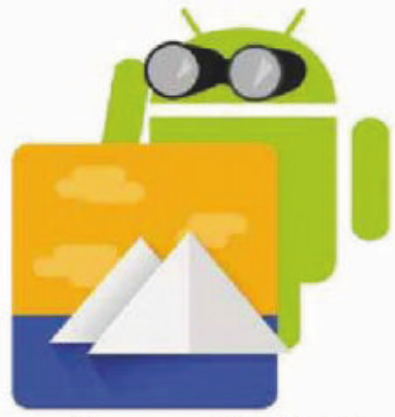


7 The Filter menu contains a variety of effects that you can apply to your artwork or photos, including blurs, distortions and noise. 1 You'll find lighting effects under Render, 2 while Stylize 3 applies a technique – for example, ageing a photo or making it look like an oil painting. 4



8 The FilterFX option in the Filter menu provides a selection of scripts you can preview and apply to your image. Some options, such as Colour Threshold, 1 provide sliders 2 for tweaking the effect. The File menu lets you save your artwork in a choice of formats or export it as a PDF.

Stop Android apps spying on you



Island: bit.ly/island484 | 20 mins | Android (version varies depending on device)

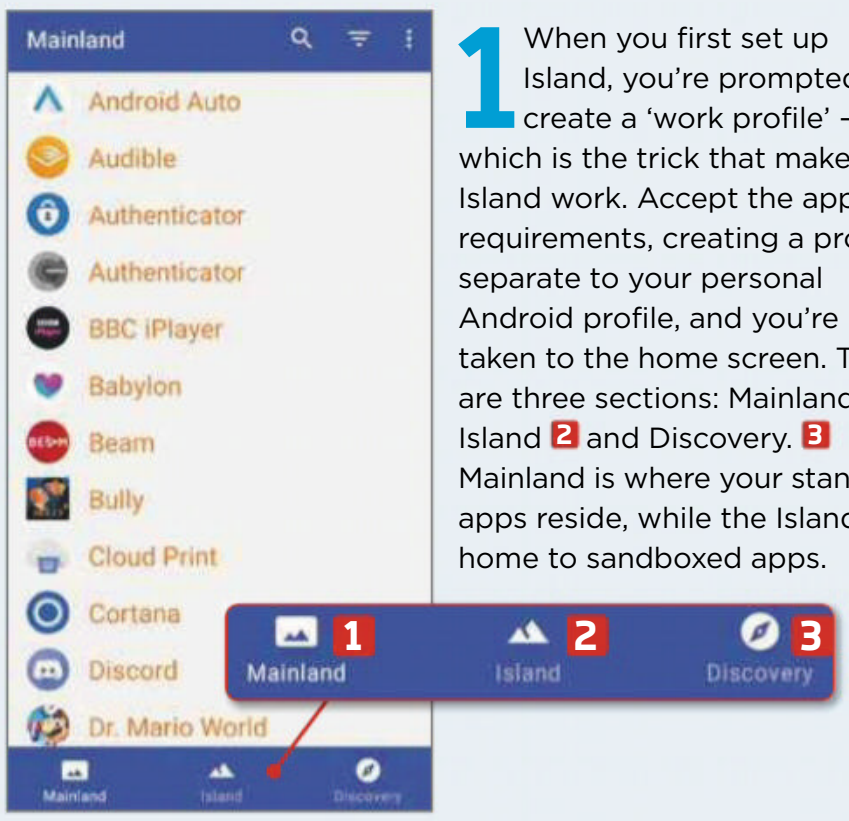
Download any Android app and it's likely to ask for access to a whole bunch of personal information, such as call logs, photos, location and more. While it makes sense for an email app to need access to your contacts, it's odd that games want to see that data, too.

In such cases, it's a good idea to sandbox apps that ask for too much, cutting them off from the rest of your data and apps. Island does exactly this, segregating your apps into 'Mainland' and 'Island'. The Mainland is where you'll find all your apps, accessing all the permissions you granted when you first downloaded them. What Island lets you do is clone a Mainland app and place it on its own private, data-free island, where it can be run in isolation from everything else.

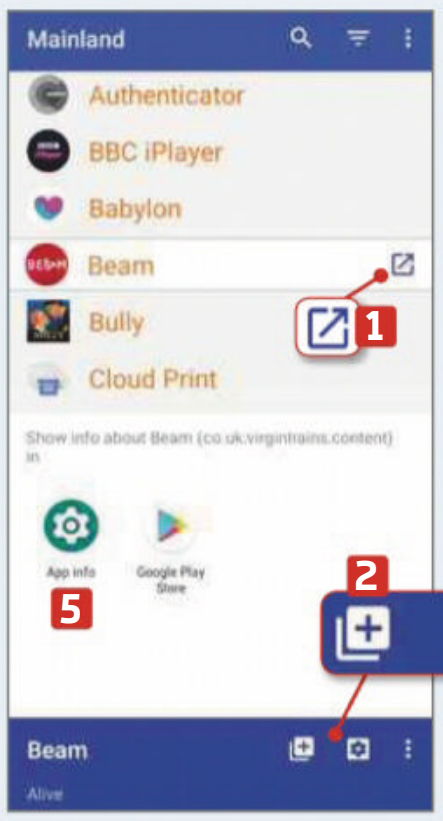
EXPERT TIP

Steve Clark says

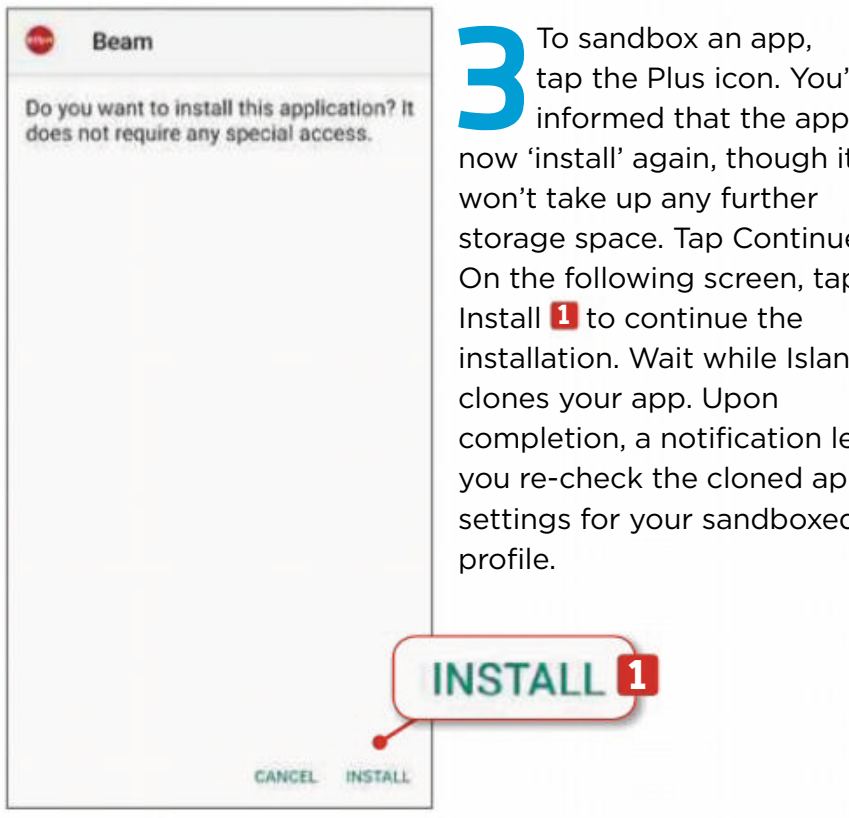
Island blocks access to your personal data, but apps can still access some device-based data, such as your IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity number). They may also still try to share certain data, such as your location (though they won't be able to access it), so it's worth checking all permissions granted. Go to Android's Settings and choose Apps, Permissions, to find out what information an app can see.



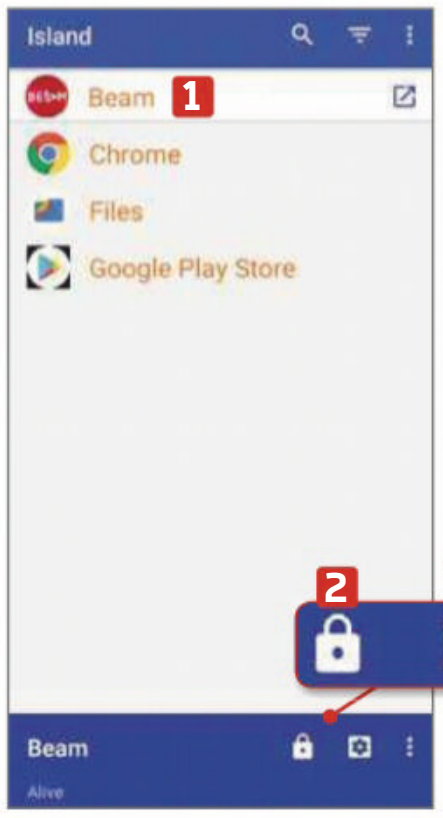
1 When you first set up Island, you're prompted to create a 'work profile' – which is the trick that makes Island work. Accept the app's requirements, creating a profile separate to your personal Android profile, and you're taken to the home screen. There are three sections: Mainland, 1 Island 2 and Discovery. 3 Mainland is where your standard apps reside, while the Island is home to sandboxed apps.



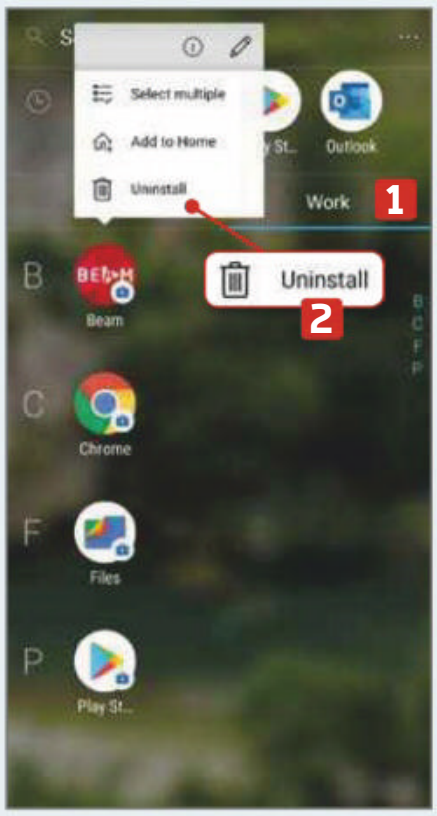
2 Go to Mainland and tap any app you want to sandbox – selected apps show an Open icon. 1 There are three options at the bottom of the screen: Clone, 2 Settings 3 and a menu 4 with the option to Uninstall App. Tap Settings, 'App info' 5 and, on the next screen, head to Permissions. This is a handy way to check an app's permissions and decide whether it needs sandboxing.



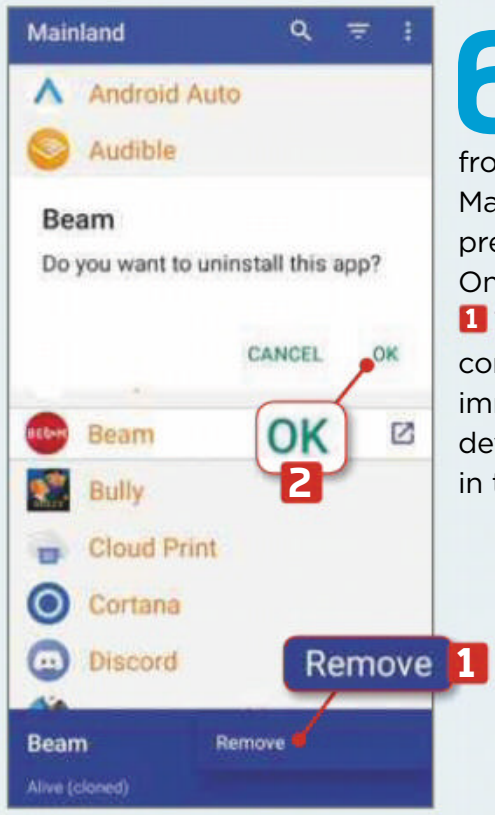
3 To sandbox an app, tap the Plus icon. You're informed that the app will now 'install' again, though it won't take up any further storage space. Tap Continue. On the following screen, tap Install 1 to continue the installation. Wait while Island clones your app. Upon completion, a notification lets you re-check the cloned app's settings for your sandboxed profile.



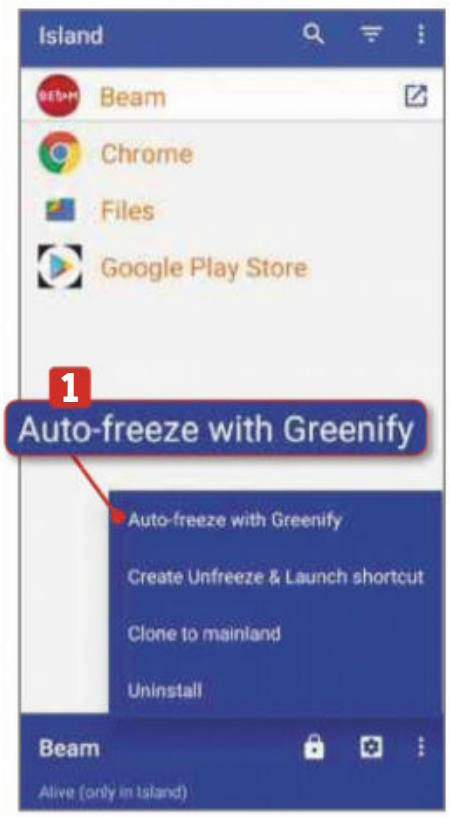
4 Now, when you flick from Mainland to Island, you can see a clone of the app in the list. 1 Any app located here is unable to access personal data, such as your contacts and location. Tap the app, as before, and you're offered three options below it: Freeze, 2 Settings 3 and the menu. 4



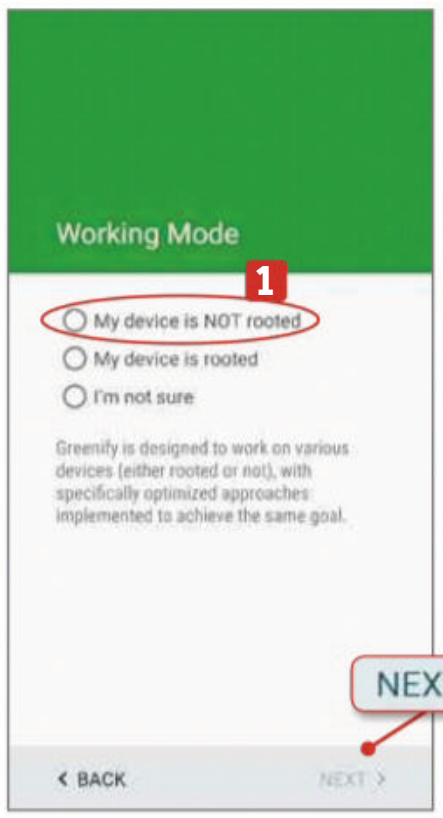
5 Your next step is to uninstall the non-sandboxed app. There are two main ways to do this. The first sees you open the app drawer from your Android home screen. Where previously your apps were located in a single list, you'll now see two: Personal and Work. 1 Locate the app in Personal, press and hold it, and choose Uninstall. 2



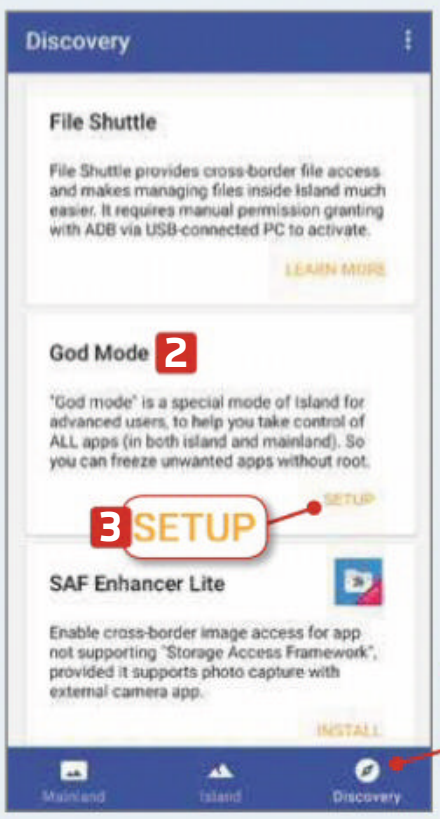
6 The second method (and we reckon the easier way) is to manage your apps from within Island. Go back to Mainland, tap the app, then press the three-dot button. One option appears: Remove. 1 Tap this, then tap OK 2 to confirm the uninstall. The app is immediately removed from the device, leaving only the clone in the Island list.



7 You can manually freeze Island apps, but it's easier to do this by pairing Island with Greenify (bit.ly/greenify484). This app, from the same developer, lets you auto-hibernate apps to save battery life, memory and data. Install Greenify, then head back to the Island list, tap an app, then the three-dot button. Choose 'Auto-freeze with Greenify'. 1 In the 'Greenify integration' pop-up, press Continue.

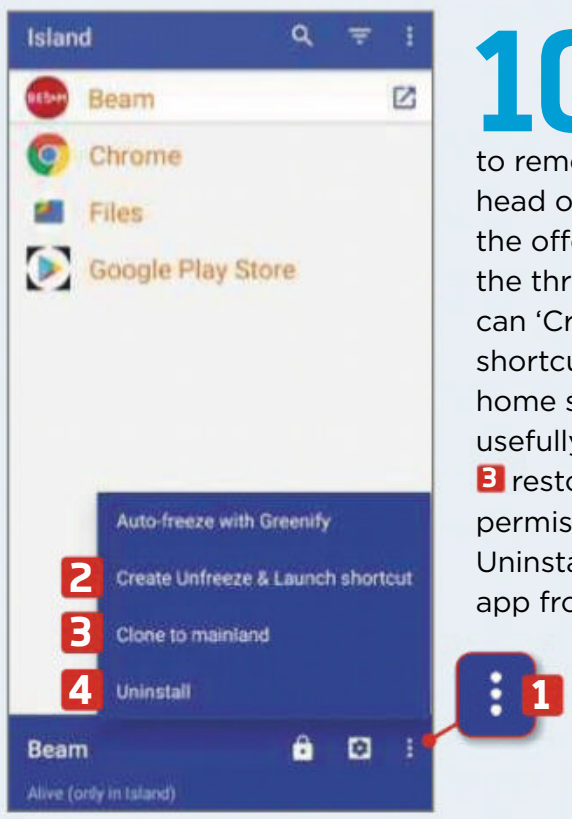


8 The first time you do this, Greenify will request some information about your device, such as whether Android is rooted. 1 Tap Next 2 and Grant Permission to set it up. You must then toggle Greenify's Android 'Usage access' to On. Go back to the app and tap Finish. Finally, tap Grant, Allow so the app can place Island-managed apps into deep hibernation.



9 If you'd like Island to control all your apps, tap Discovery 1 to see its additional features. Locate God Mode 2 and press Setup. 3 This opens 'Setup & Shutdown', which shows the status of 'unmanaged' Mainland and 'managed' Island apps. Tap Mainland to read the developer's in-depth guide (bit.ly/godmode484).

Note that this is for advanced users and you should back up everything before continuing with God Mode.

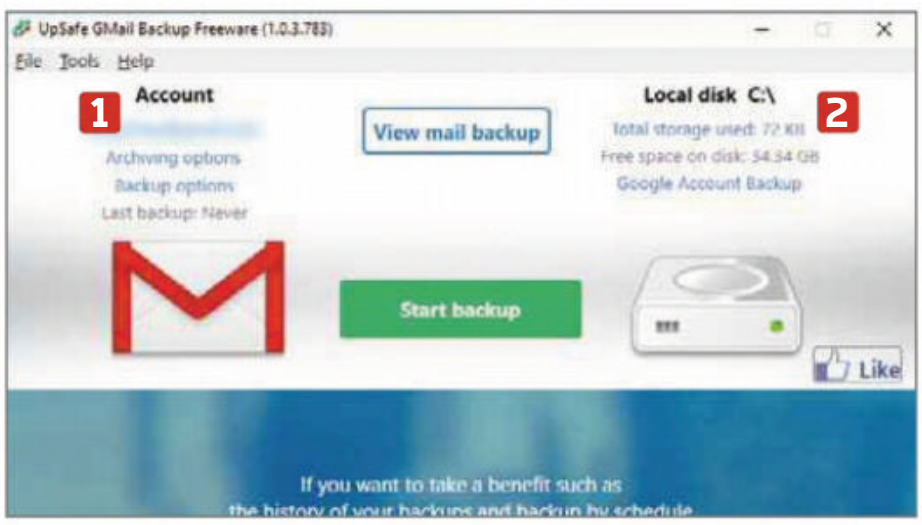


10 If you find you've sandboxed the wrong app or need to remove an app completely, head over to the Island list, tap the offending app and open the three-dot menu. 1 You can 'Create Unfreeze & Launch shortcut' 2 on your Android home screen or – more usefully – 'Clone to mainland', 3 restoring its former privacy permissions, and then Uninstall 4 the sandboxed app from your device.

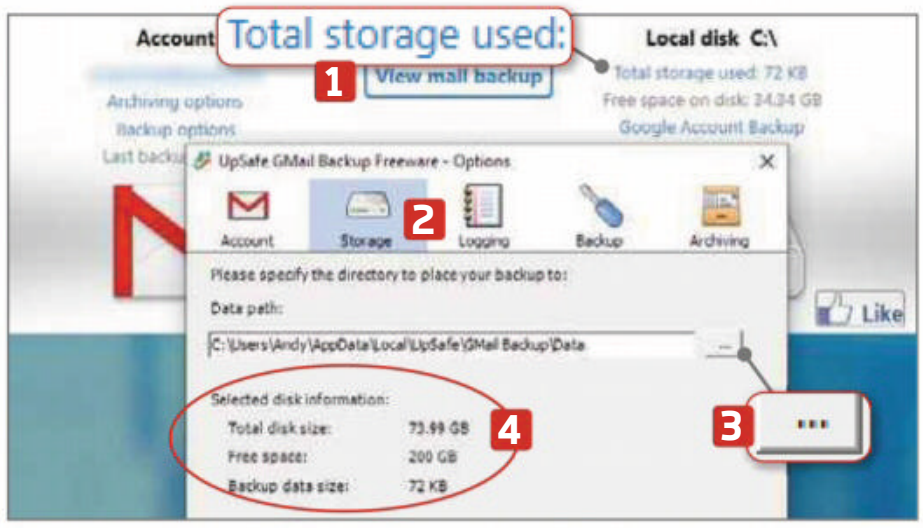
Back up your Gmail to your PC for free

Gmail revolutionised email by storing everything online so you could access your messages via a browser or app. The only snag is that if you lose access to your Google account, you can't read your emails. Free Gmail Backup protects you from dropped web connections and accidental deletions by saving a copy of your emails to your hard drive.

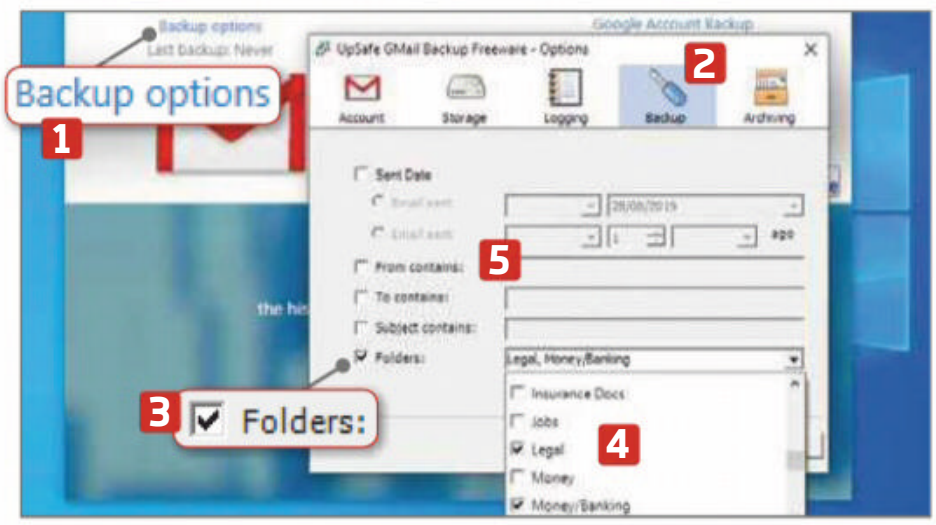
UpSafe Free Gmail Backup: bit.ly/gmbu484 | **20 mins** | **7, 8, 10**



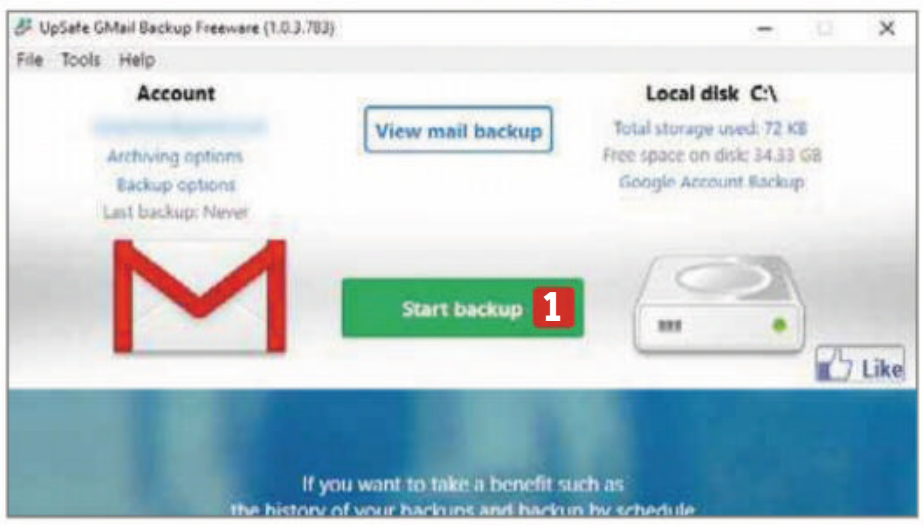
1 Launch the software and click the 'Sign in with Google' button. You log in directly with Google, so your password isn't seen by UpSafe. Enter your credentials and agree to the permissions. The main screen shows your Gmail account 1 and the proposed location of your backup. 2



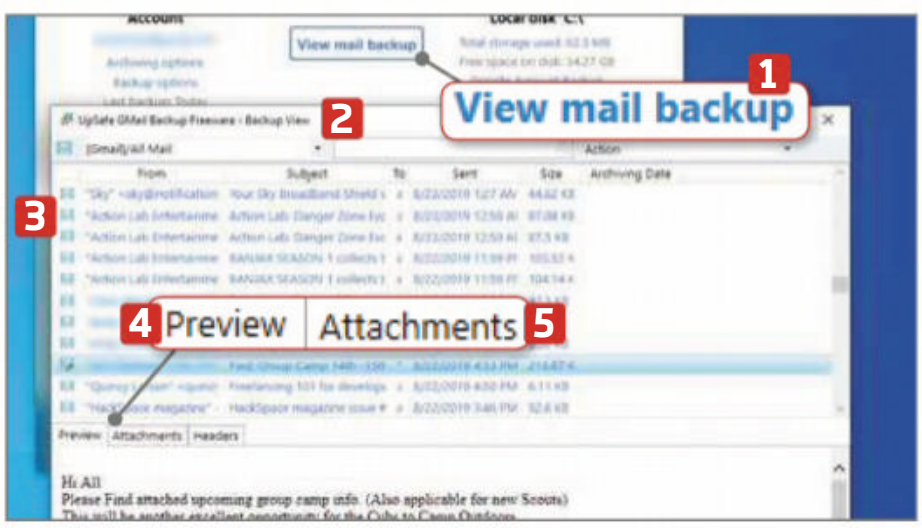
2 To see exactly where your backup will be stored, click the 'Total storage used' link. 1 This opens the Options on the Storage tab. 2 If you want to store your backup somewhere else, click the '...' button. 3 You can also see a breakdown of how much space the backup is using. 4



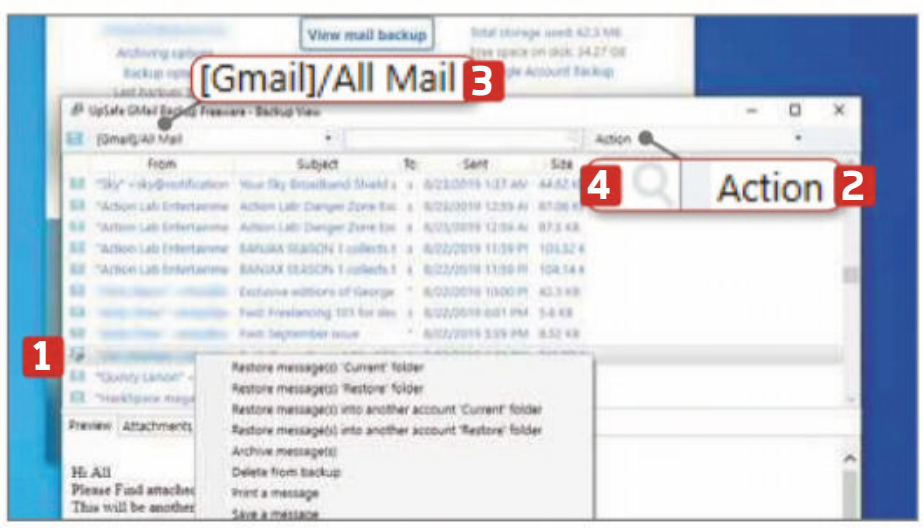
3 You can fine-tune your backup by choosing a subset of folders. Click 'Backup options' 1 to open the Backup tab 2 in Options, then tick the Folders box 3 and make your selection by ticking the boxes in the drop-down list. 4 You can also filter by date, and by the From, To and Subject fields. 5



4 Once you've configured you backup, click 'Start backup'. 1 The button is replaced with a progress bar. Depending on the volume of emails you're backing up, this may take a few minutes, but it'll be faster next time, as it incrementally adds new mail rather than backing up the whole lot again.



5 Once the backup is completed, click 'View mail backup'. 1 This opens the Backup View window 2 where you can see all the emails you've downloaded. 3 Click one to read it in the Preview window, below. 4 Any attached files can be downloaded from the Attachments tab. 5



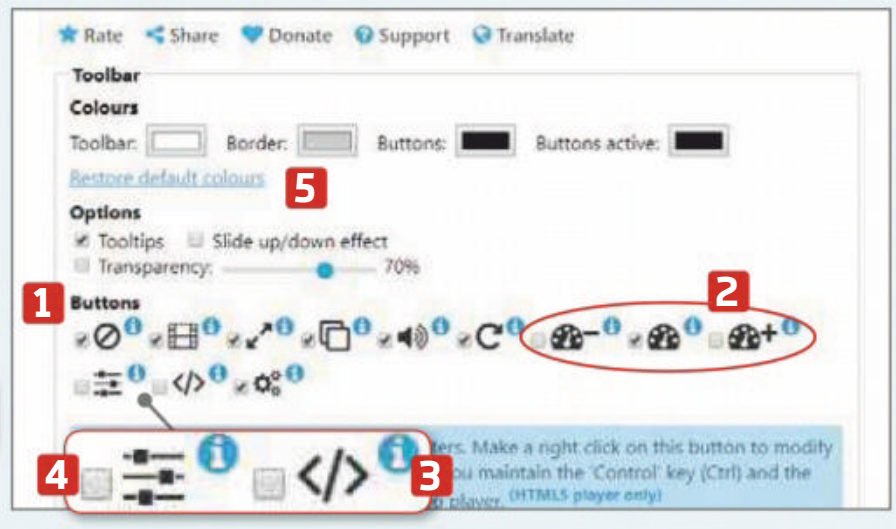
6 If disaster strikes and you lose your emails, restore them from your backup. Select an email or use Shift+Click to select several. Right-click the selection 1 or click the Action menu 2 to choose how the emails are restored. You can refine the selection by folder 3 or by searching. 4

Add useful new features to YouTube

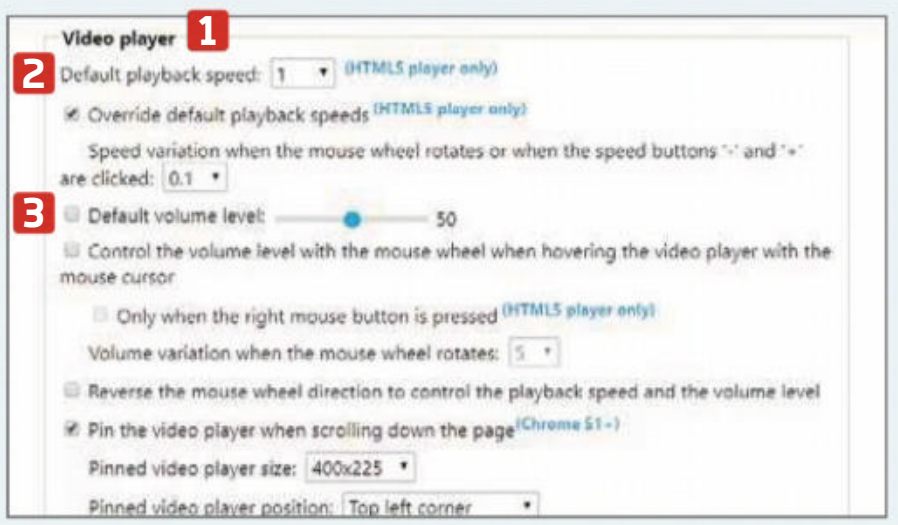
YouTube may be a technical marvel, but it's riddled with niggles and foibles. We often cover add-ons that improve controls or rectify minor issues, but Enhancer for YouTube is a must-have all-in-one toolkit that should solve most of your playback complaints. Install the extension in your chosen browser, then head to youtube.com and click any video.

Enhancer for YouTube: bit.ly/enhance484 | **10 mins** |

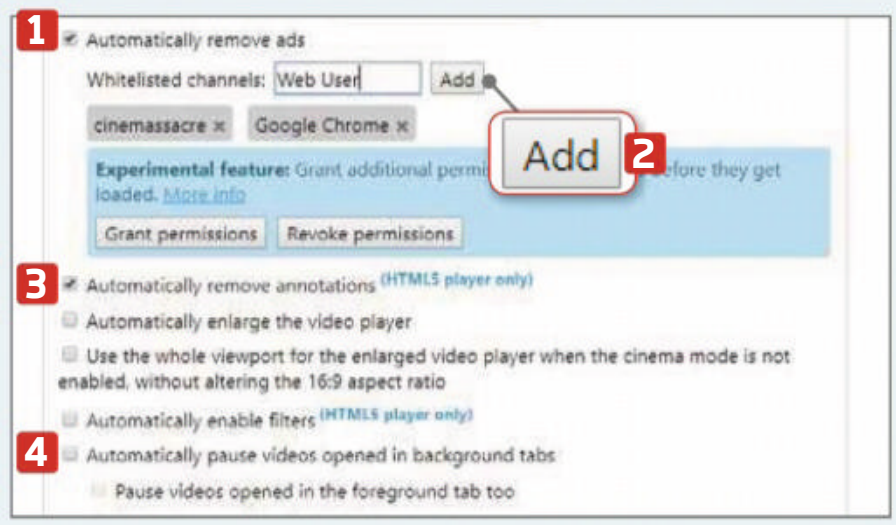
1 Enhancer places a toolbar at the bottom of YouTube pages containing eight options: 1 'Remove ads', 'Cinema mode', 'Resize player', 'Detach player' (an unpinnable picture-in-picture mode), 'Boost volume', 'Loop video', Speed (controlled via your mouse wheel) and Options.



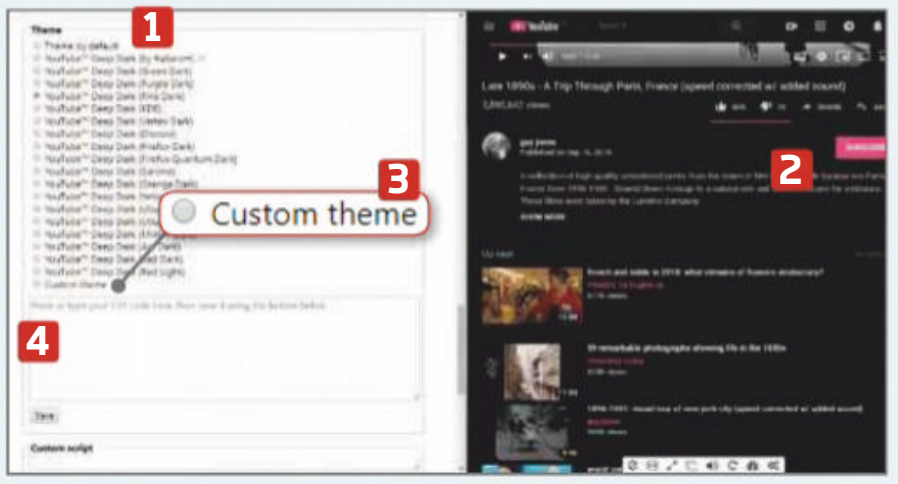
2 To add more tools, go to Options, Toolbar. The Buttons section 1 has extra speed controls, 2 custom scripts 3 and filters. 4 Tick a box to add it, or untick to remove any you don't need. New features are added instantly. You can also customise the toolbar's colour and transparency. 5



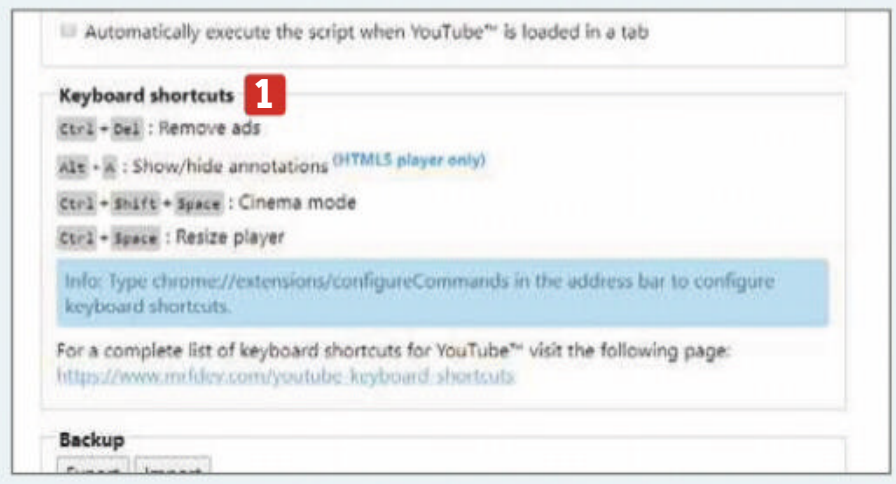
3 Scroll down the Options screen to 'Video player'. 1 Here, you can set your default playback speed, 2 volume level 3 and screen size for every video. At the bottom of this section, you can choose the default video quality, with backup options.



4 You can 'Automatically remove ads' 1 and click Add 2 to whitelist your favourite channels so they still get ad revenue. Tick 'Automatically remove annotations' 3 to stop them blocking the screen. 'Automatically pause videos opened in background tabs' 4 helps to save your data.



5 There are 18 additional themes, beyond the default setting, 1 each of which adds a black background with coloured accents. 2 Tick the box to see the effect instantly. If you know CSS, you can select 'Custom theme' 3 and paste the CSS code in the text box. 4



6 Enhancer for YouTube's keyboard shortcuts 1 go far beyond pressing the spacebar to play and pause. Useful shortcuts include 'C' to switch on subtitles, 'M' to mute videos, and arrow keys to control volume and playback speed. View the complete selection at bit.ly/shorts484.

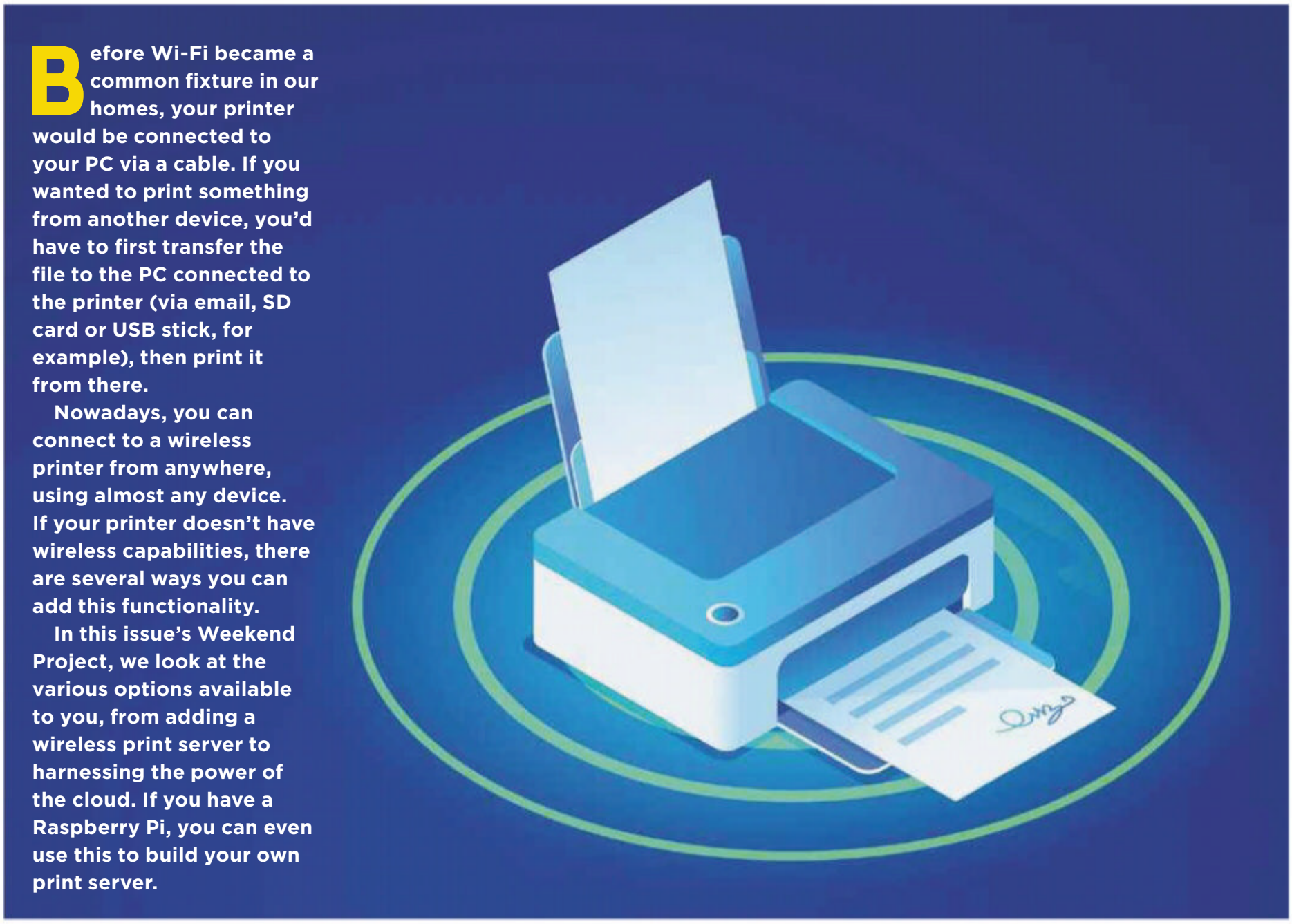
Weekend Project

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

How to...

Make any printer wireless

Wayne Williams explains how you can convert an old wired printer into a wireless model, so you can print from any device



Before Wi-Fi became a common fixture in our homes, your printer would be connected to your PC via a cable. If you wanted to print something from another device, you'd have to first transfer the file to the PC connected to the printer (via email, SD card or USB stick, for example), then print it from there.

Nowadays, you can connect to a wireless printer from anywhere, using almost any device. If your printer doesn't have wireless capabilities, there are several ways you can add this functionality.

In this issue's Weekend Project, we look at the various options available to you, from adding a wireless print server to harnessing the power of the cloud. If you have a Raspberry Pi, you can even use this to build your own print server.

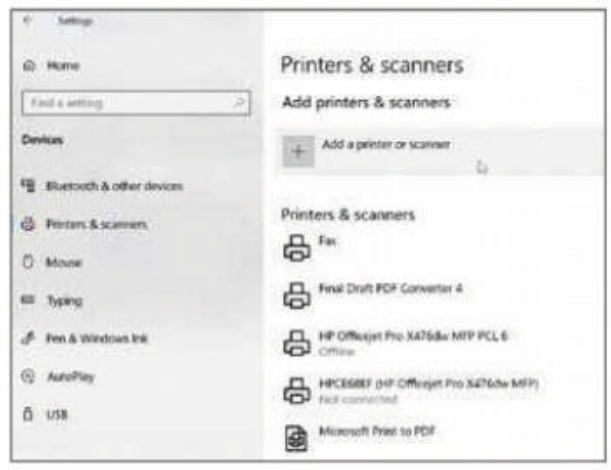
Add a wireless print server

Most modern printers now come with built-in Wi-Fi, but if your old-school printer doesn't offer this, there are various ways in which you can add it yourself. The first and easiest option – but also the most expensive – is to buy a wireless print server, such as TP-Link's TL-WPS510U (£50, bit.ly/tpl484). You plug this into your printer's USB port and can then connect to it from any device on your network.

However, there are a couple of downsides to be aware of. Most wireless print servers are a few years old, and therefore may not be fully compatible with Windows 10 – or even your printer – so it pays to do some research before you buy. Also, given the cost, it may actually be cheaper to replace your outdated printer with a newer wireless model. Shop around to see what's available.

If you own a Raspberry Pi, you could consider turning this into a wireless print server. You don't need the latest version – an older model will do, and these are very cheap to buy. We show you how to set this up in our Mini Workshop, right. It essentially involves installing and configuring the CUPS (Common UNIX Printing System) print server software from Apple that's typically used on Linux and Unix systems.

TP-Link's TL-WPS510U connects to your printer's USB port and makes it wireless



Adding a new printer is easy in Windows 10

PrinterShare lets you connect an Android device to your Raspberry Pi-shared printer

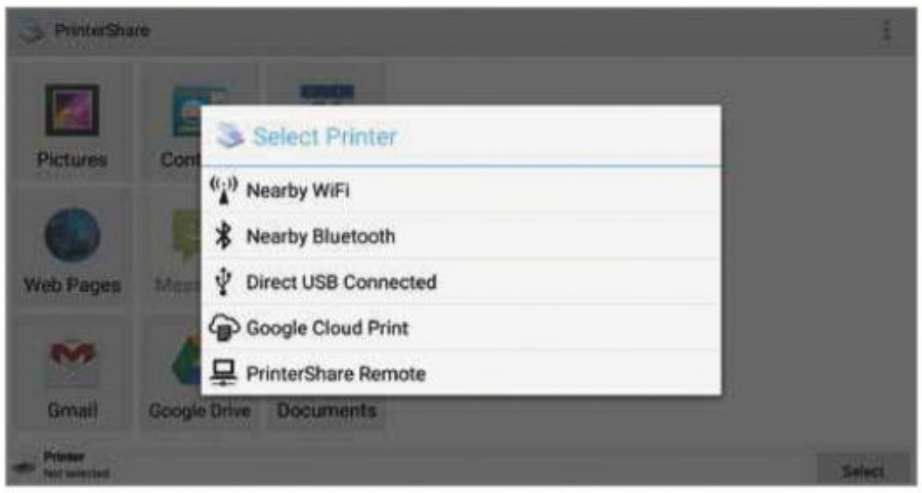
Share a wired printer over your home network

Another way to access your printer from different devices is to share it over your home network. Be aware, though, that the computer your printer is connected to needs to be switched on at all times for this to work.

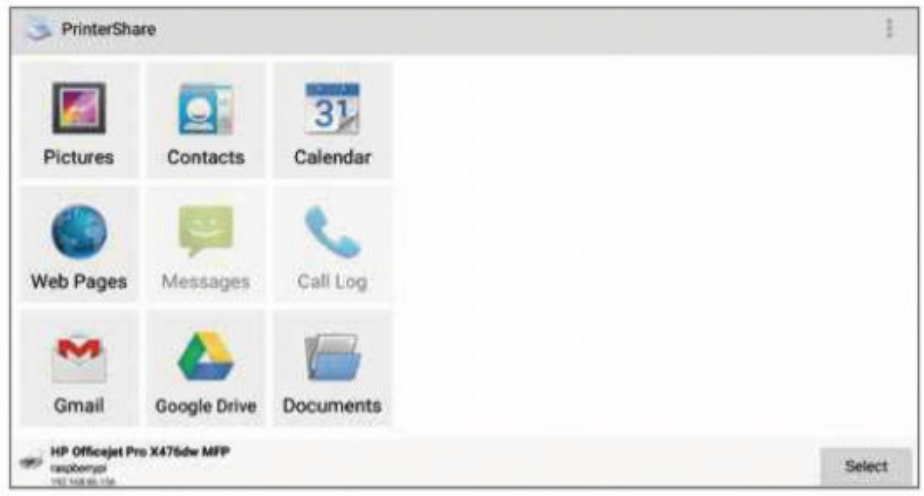
To set this up in Windows 10, click Start, Settings and select Network & Internet, then Sharing Options. This opens the Advanced Sharing Settings in the Control Panel. To get to this stage in Windows 7, go to Start, Control Panel, 'Network and Internet', 'Network and Sharing Center' and click the 'Change advanced sharing settings' link.

Make sure the 'Network discovery', and 'File and printer sharing' settings are enabled. Turn off 'Password protected sharing' under All Networks, then click the 'Save changes' button. Restart your PC (or log off and back on again) to action the changes.

When done, click Start, Settings, Devices. Select 'Printers & scanners' on the left, and select your printer on the right. Click Manage, then click 'Printer

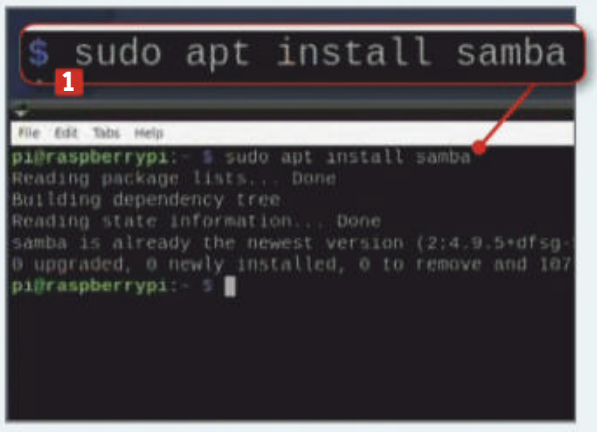


PrinterShare connects to your printer in a number of different ways

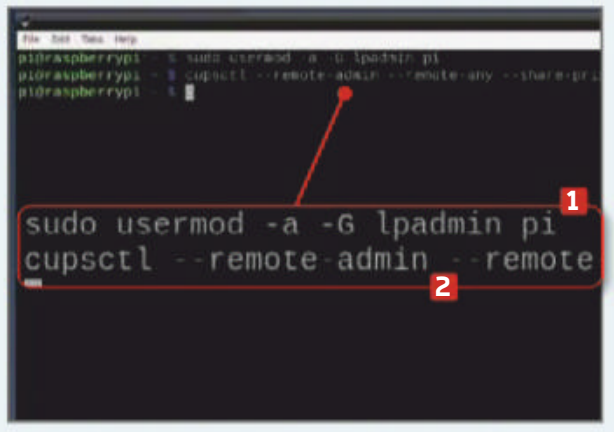


You can output all sorts of things via PrinterShare's interface

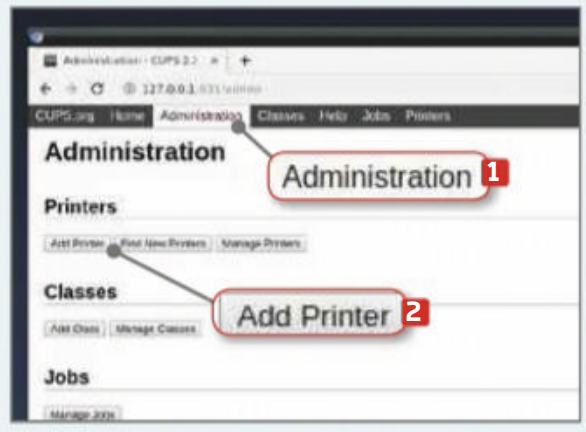
MINI WORKSHOP | Make a wireless print server from a Raspberry Pi



1 If you haven't used your Pi in a while, you'll need to make sure its software is fully up to date. Open Terminal and enter `sudo apt update` then `sudo apt upgrade` to download and install all updates. Next, install SAMBA, which lets you print from Windows devices, by entering `sudo apt install samba`. 1



2 The next step is to install CUPS (Common UNIX Printing System). In Terminal, enter `sudo apt install cups` then `sudo usermod –a -G lpadmin pi` (replace 'pi' with your actual username if you changed it from the default). 1 To allow remote access, type `cupsctl --remote-admin --remote-any --share-printers`. 2



3 You may need to reboot your Pi. Now, open your web browser and go to 127.0.0.1:631 to access the CUPS admin page. Click the Administration tab 1 and log in with your Pi username and password. Connect the Pi to your printer (if you haven't already) via USB, then click Add Printer. 2

Workshop continued on page 61

Broadband Deals

Call FREE on 0800 083 2357 to switch your broadband

	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1	TalkTalk For Everyone	TalkTalk: Fast Broadband	£19.95 (£27 after 18 months)	18 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	CHEAPEST £239.40
2	Shell Energy	Shell Energy: Fast Broadband	£19.99	18 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£239.88
3	sky	Sky: Broadband Essential	£20.00 (£25 after 18 months)	18 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited *	£240.00
4	Virgin media	Virgin Media: Big Bundle + Fibre Broadband + Weekend Calls	£30.00 (£54 after 12 months)	12 months	54Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£360.00

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details
* Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Ofcom

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 3 September 2019.

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

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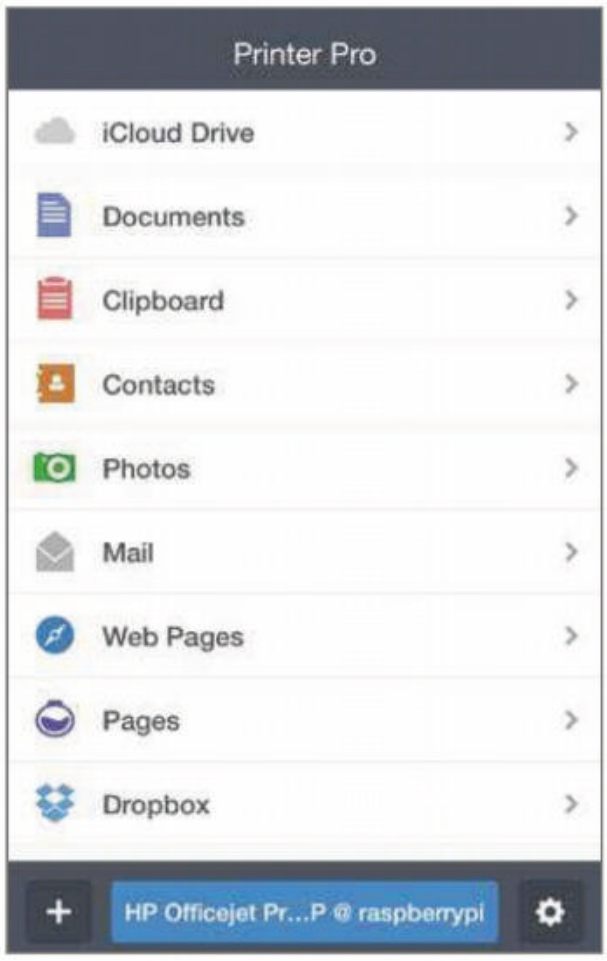
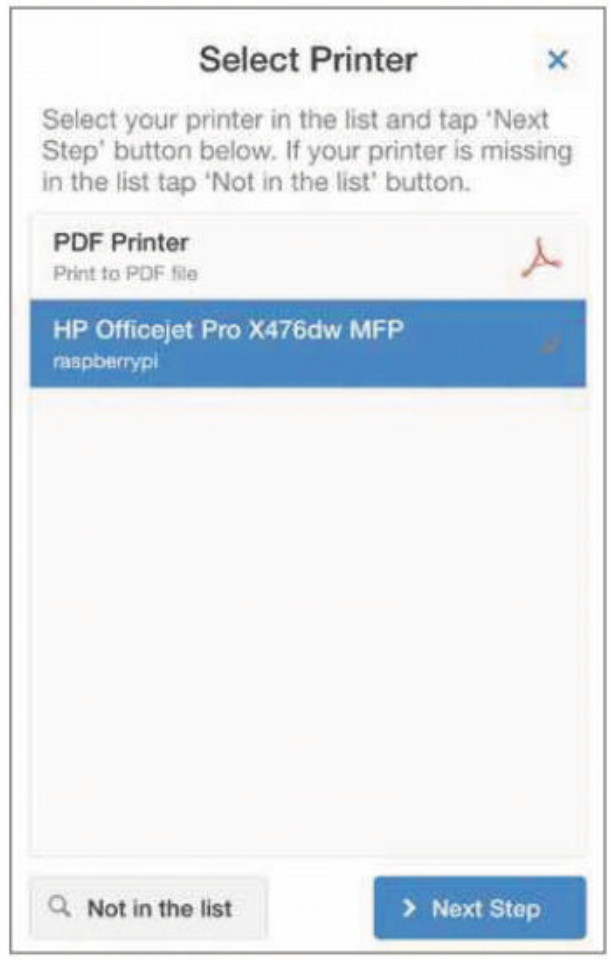


Printer Pro by Readdle costs £6.99 but it's a powerful printing app for iOS



Printer Pro searches for any available printers across your local network

properties'. In the box that opens, click the Sharing tab. Next, click the Change Sharing Options button, then tick 'Share this printer' and give the device a recognisable name (or accept the default choice). This window also gives you the option to render print jobs on the remote device if you wish.

Finally, if you plan to connect to your printer using a PC running a different version of Windows, you may need to install some drivers. Click the Additional Drivers button to do this. Restart your PC (or log off and back on again) and you should be ready to print.

To access your printer from another computer on the same network, type `printer` in the search box and click 'Printers & scanners'. In the Settings window, click 'Add a printer or scanner'. Windows 10 automatically searches for compatible devices, but with older versions of Windows there are some additional steps to follow. Select your printer in this list, click Next and complete the steps to set it up.

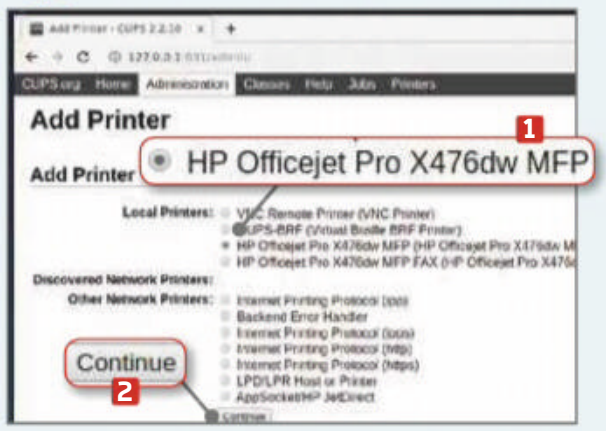
To use your printer from an Android device or iPhone, you can use an app such as Mobile Print - PrinterShare (bit.ly/pshare484). The app itself is free, but you need to buy a Premium Key via an in-app purchase to unlock all its features. This costs £4.99 (iOS) or £3.45 (Android) and lets you print photos, contact or calendar information, web pages, messages, Gmail messages, documents, Google Drive content and more.

Print from an iPhone or iPad

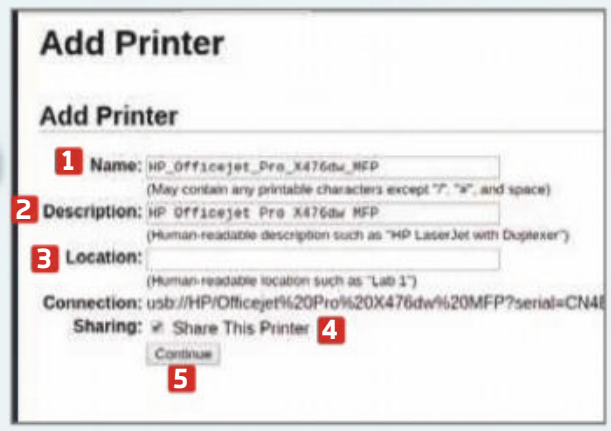
There are various ways to print from an Apple mobile device but our favourite app is Printer Pro by Readdle (bit.ly/printpro484). It costs £6.99, which might seem a little steep, but you can use it to print anything from your iPhone or iPad, including documents, photos, emails, web pages, clipboard contents and Dropbox items. It also comes with an incredibly useful Print Options screen that lets you change the orientation, paper size, scaling, number of copies and even specify the number of pages per sheet.

If your printer is connected to a PC or Mac, you need to install the free Printer Pro for Desktop program (bit.ly/ppdesk484) before you can access it through the mobile app. Once connected, you'll be invited to print a test page to make sure that everything is working correctly.

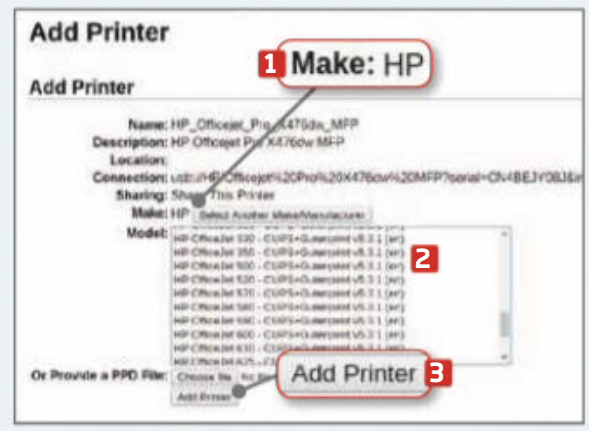
MINI WORKSHOP | Make a wireless print server from a Raspberry Pi (continued)



4 The Add Printer page opens and you're presented with a list of devices you can add, including local and networked printers. Yours should appear under Local Printers. You can always try refreshing the list (or restarting your Pi) if it doesn't. Select it, 1 then click the Continue button. 2



5 On the next screen, you can rename the printer to something easier to recognise, 1 and enter an optional description 2 and location. 3 Tick the Share This Printer box (so you can access it over your network), 4 then click the Continue button. 5



6 Select the make of your printer 1 and choose the correct model, 2 then click Add Printer. 3 On the final screen, click Set Default Options to make any required changes, then print a test page from the Maintenance menu. Connect your PC to the shared printer through Start, Settings, Devices, 'Printers & scanners'.

NEXT ISSUE **How To...** Build your own network-attached storage device

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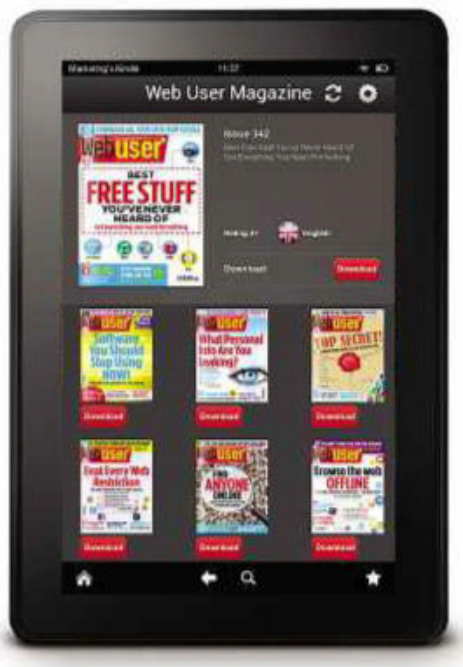

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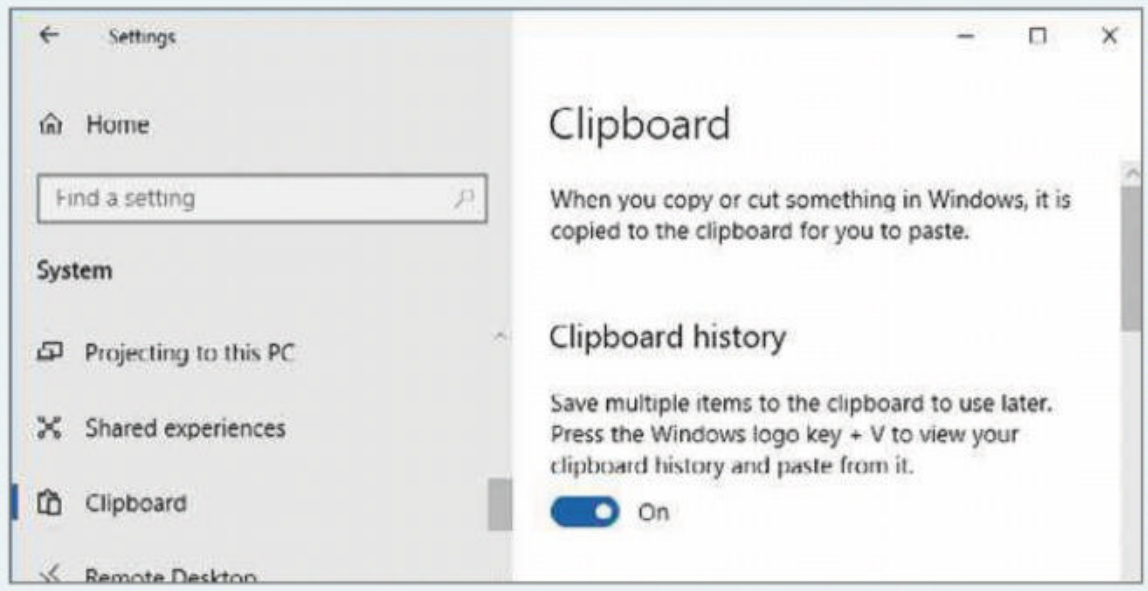
Web User Masterclass

Master the clipboard in Windows and Android

Switch between multiple clipboards in Windows 10

Before the arrival of Windows 10, the Windows clipboard only let you cut, copy and paste one item at a time. Now you can copy lots of things from various programs, then switch to another and choose the item you want to paste.

Open Windows 10's Settings, select System, Clipboard, then turn on 'Clipboard history'. Now, open a program that lets you copy and paste, such as WordPad, and press Ctrl+C to copy several bits of text. Press Windows+V to list everything that was copied and select the one you want to paste. Use the mouse wheel to scroll through the list of clipboard items if there are lots of them.



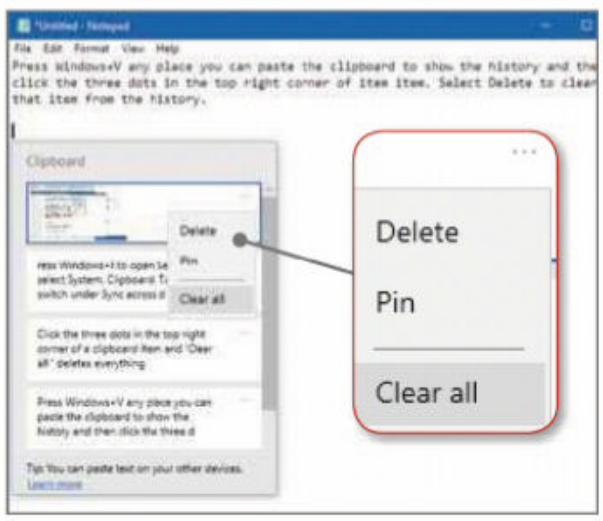
Enable clipboard history and store multiple items for pasting

Clear clipboard history

There may be times when you copy something to the clipboard that you don't want anyone else to see – for example, if you share your computer with colleagues or family members, and have copied and pasted a password into a program or web page.

While you're in a program you can paste to, press Windows+V to show the clipboard history. Click the three-dot menu in the top-right corner of an item and select Delete to clear it from the history. Select the 'Clear all' menu item if you want to delete everything.

Another method is to press Windows+i and go to System, Clipboard, then click the Clear button near the bottom.



Click the three-dot menu to clear one or all clipboard items

Pin and save items

As mentioned in the previous tip, selecting 'Clear all' from the three-dot menu deletes everything stored in your clipboard. However, if you want to retain any of the items, select Pin to preserve specific clipboard entries and exempt them from the 'Clear all' action.

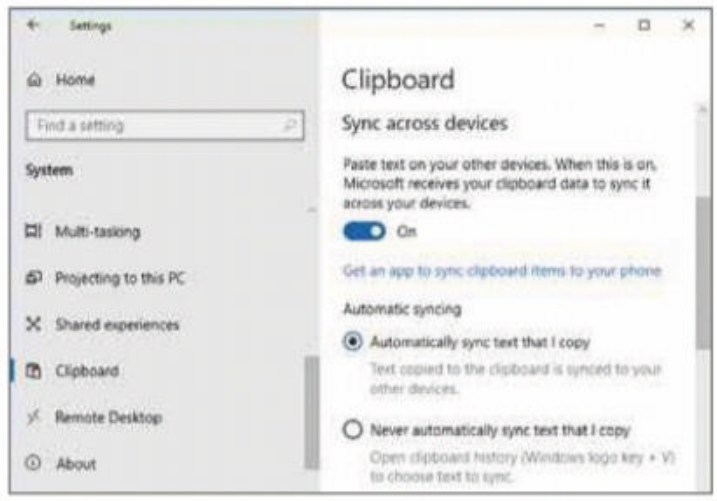
It's not obvious which items are pinned because there is no visual clue, but if you click the three-dot button for a clipboard item, the menu will offer to Unpin it if it is pinned.

Use the keyboard to control clipboard

When you're using a word processor or typing text into a web page, you may prefer to use keyboard commands for the clipboard, rather than interrupt your flow to reach for the mouse. Press Windows+V to show the clipboard history, use the up and down arrow keys to select an item, then press Enter to paste it or the Delete key to clear it.

Sync clipboard between PCs

Any text saved to the clipboard can be synced between Windows 10 PCs, which could come in handy if you're using more than one Windows 10 device.



Sync the clipboard across Windows computers and devices

When switching from one device to another, clipboard items follow you and can be used in your apps and web pages.

To enable this feature, which is disabled by default, open the Settings app and select System, Clipboard. Turn on the switch under 'Sync across

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.

devices'. Below this, select 'Automatically select text that I copy'.

From now on, any cut or copied text will appear on the other computers and devices you use.

Manually sync clipboard items

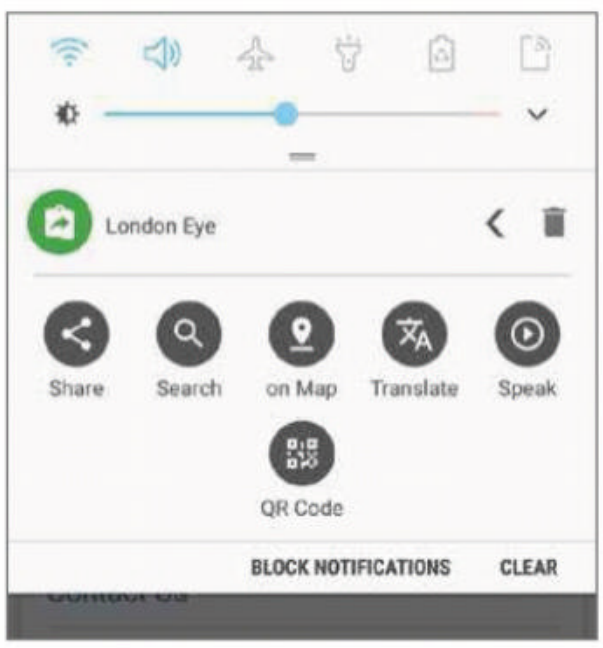
If you have set your clipboard history to sync between devices, you may want to change this to sync manually rather than automatically, for privacy and security reasons. Synced items are sent to Microsoft and stored in your account online, so it's worth being cautious with certain items, such as copied passwords.

In Settings, System Clipboard, select 'Never automatically sync text that I copy'. Go to a program you can paste into and press Windows+V to show the clipboard history. Click the three-dot icon in the top-right corner and you get a new item on the menu – Sync. This option syncs just that one specific item. Use this method to sync only the items you want to appear on other computers and devices.

Android clipboard actions

Clipboard Actions & Manager (bit.ly/clam484) is a handy tool for Android phones that lets you choose various actions for text copied to the clipboard. Copy some text in any app – such as a note-taking app or a browser – and pull down from the top of the screen to show notifications. Pull down again to expand the notification and you'll see a collection of icons.

The icons displayed depend on what's been copied to the clipboard. With most text, one tap lets you share the copied text, search Google (or another search engine), show it on Google Maps, translate it, speak it or turn it into a QR code. If the copied text features currency, such as '£125', you'll see a button to convert it to another currency, such as Euros.



Clipboard Actions & Manager lets you perform actions on copied items

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

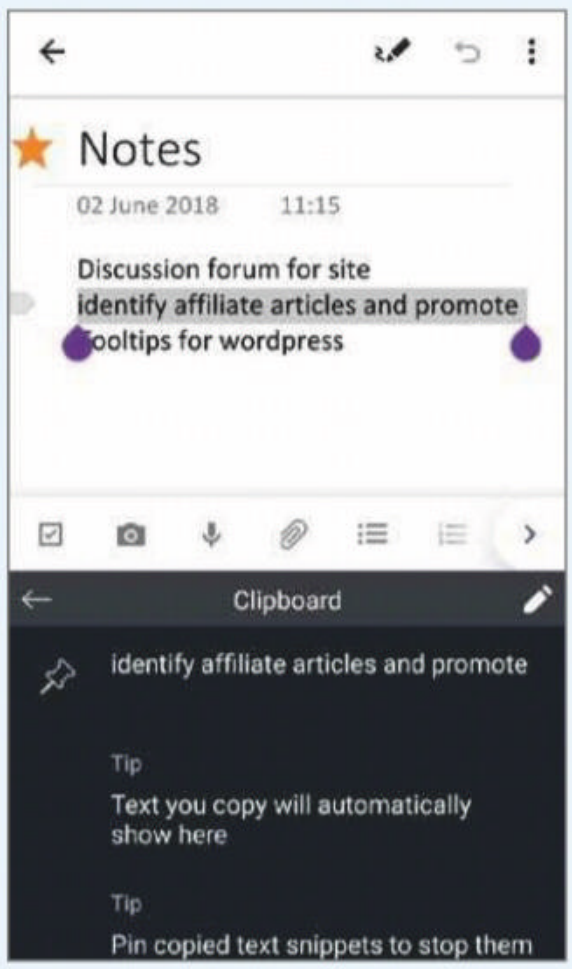
Add clipboard history to Android

As with Windows, there are lots of apps that boost the power of the clipboard on your phone. One way to create multiple clipboards is to install the SwiftKey keyboard (bit.ly/swift484). Add it, run it and go through the three-step setup to enable it. The new clipboard works everywhere, but a notes app is a good place to experiment with it.

If you don't see the SwiftKey toolbar, press the plus button on the left just above the keyboard. Tap the clipboard icon and the keyboard will be replaced with a view of the clipboard history.

Long-press some text to select it, then tap Copy to add it to the SwiftKey clipboard, which stores multiple items. Swipe up and down to browse the clipboard items, swipe left and right to remove unwanted items, and tap an item to paste it.

Run the SwiftKey app and press Typing, Clipboard to open the clipboard manager. You can now add, edit or delete clipboard items.



Add multiple clipboards to your phone with Swiftkey

Share the Windows clipboard with Android

If you have enabled clipboard history and syncing in Windows Settings, install SwiftKey Beta (bit.ly/swiftbeta484) on your Android phone. This lets you share the clipboard between your PC and your phone.

Bear in mind that as this feature is still in beta it could be a bit buggy or it may not work at all. It'll be great when it is finally finished, though!

Using the clipboard from the command line

Why on earth would you want to use the clipboard from the command line? It turns out that there are some interesting actions you can perform with it, such as copying file and directory listings.

Press Windows+R, type `cmd` and press Enter to open a command prompt. Type `cd` and drag a folder from Explorer, then drop it on the command prompt and press Enter to go to that folder. Use the `dir` command to list the directory contents, which can then be copied to the clipboard with:

```
dir | clip
```

Alternatively, if you want a list of files in this folder along with all subfolders, use:

```
dir /s | clip
```

Back in Windows, press Ctrl+V to paste the file and folder listing into Notepad, Word or any application that accepts text. You might want a list of all your photo or music files, for example, and this is a good way to create it.

A text file can be copied to the clipboard with:

```
clip < file.txt
```

and the clipboard can be cleared with:

```
echo off | clip
```

Reset clipboard in the Registry

You shouldn't need to access clipboard settings in the Registry, but if your clipboard ever stops working, press Windows+R, type `regedit` and press Enter. Go to:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Clipboard

There are several values. CloudClipboardAutomaticUpload and EnableClipboardHistory are the clipboard settings in the Windows 10 Settings app we covered earlier. Values are 1 (enabled) or 0 (disabled).

Ask the Expert

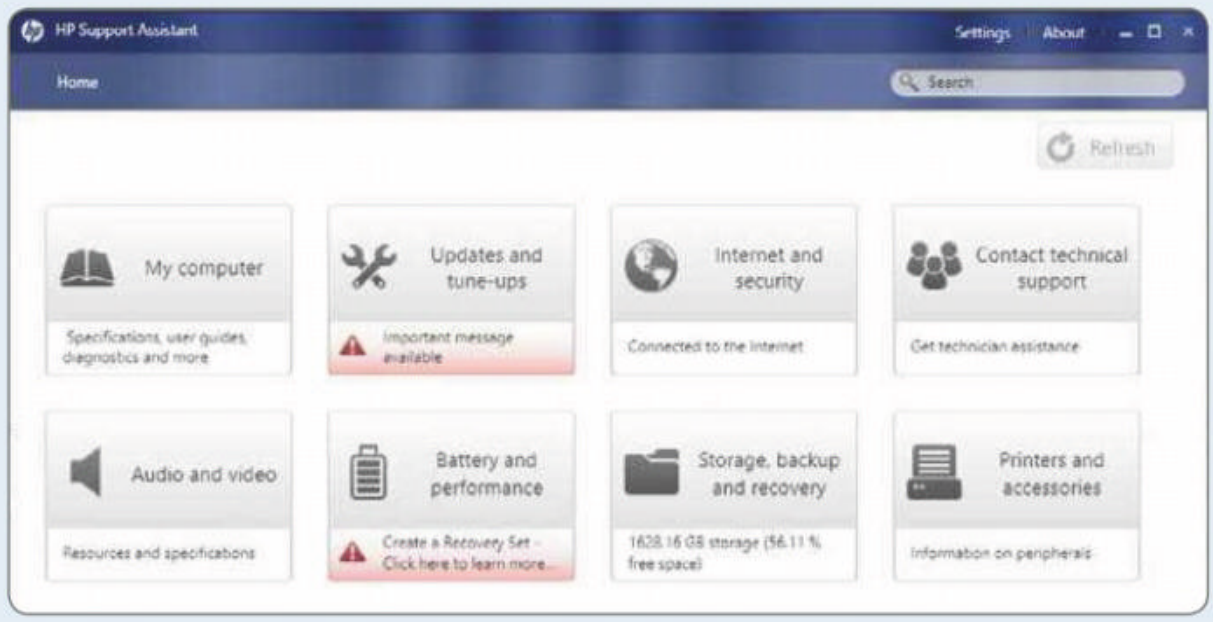
Roland Waddilove, computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at webuser@webuser.co.uk

SOFTWARE

Fix the HP Support Assistant tool

Q How do I make HP Support Assistant work on my new laptop running Windows 10? I've tried uninstalling and reinstalling it several times, but all I get when I try to open it is a white screen. Any help or advice would be greatly appreciated.

David and Kath Armitage, via email



HP Support Assistant provides help with and easy access to common tasks

A We tried HP Support Assistant on a Windows 10 PC and it worked fine, so it's not a Windows 10 issue. Your problem could be caused by an old or outdated version of the Support Assistant, so try downloading the latest version from bit.ly/hpsa484.

Uninstall the old version of HP Assistant from Settings or Control Panel, then restart Windows before installing the new version. Make sure there are no other programs running in the background when you start it.

HP Support Assistant may be useful, but it's not essential and your laptop will run perfectly well without it. You don't need it to download drivers, tune up the PC, check storage, run troubleshooters or any of the other basic tasks it performs. It just makes it a bit easier.

GENERAL PC

Reconfigure System Restore

Q The option to configure a System Restore point is greyed out and it says protection is switched off, but I can't turn it on. My Windows 10 laptop is less than a month old and this is my first attempt to create a restore point.

Emma Clark, via email

Restore points are created automatically – just enable the feature and allocate drive space

A To configure System Restore, open the Settings app (Windows+i), type `system restore` in the search box and click 'Create a restore point' in the search suggestions. This opens the System Properties window on the System Protection tab.

Select the Windows C: drive and click the Configure button. Select 'Turn on system protection' and drag the Max Usage slider to give it some disk space to work in – as little as 3GB should be fine, but if the drive is quite large, increase it to 20GB. Click Apply.

If this doesn't fix the problem, go to the Start menu and type `powershell`. When Windows PowerShell appears, right-click it and select 'Run as Administrator'. In the PowerShell window, if you only have one drive partition to protect, type:

```
Enable-ComputerRestore -Drive "C:\"
```

Press Enter. If you have more than one drive partition, add them to the command like this:

```
Enable-ComputerRestore -Drive "C:\", "D:\"
```

If you have more than one drive or partition, type `systempropertiesprotection`, press Enter, and see if System Restore can be configured and a restore point created.

BROWSERS

MSN homepage on startup

Q Over the last couple of weeks, whenever I start my computer with the modem switched on, I get the MSN homepage popping up with Chrome with no prompting from me. I have tried altering the Chrome settings but nothing seems to get rid of it. Is there any way I can stop this MSN homepage

automatically appearing and could this be related to a virus or malware?

My PC is running Windows 8.1.

John Jones, via email

A Your problem could be caused by Chrome – open the Settings and find the 'On start-up' section to see if MSN is listed. If it is, change it to another web page you'd prefer to see. However, it's most likely to be a startup program that's requesting the web page. Chrome is probably opening because it's set as the default browser.

Press Windows+R, type `msconfig` and press Enter. Click the Startup tab and see what's auto-starting with Windows. If that doesn't produce any clues, try Autoruns (bit.ly/arun484), which is a more powerful tool for listing startup items.

SECURITY

Secure compromised passwords

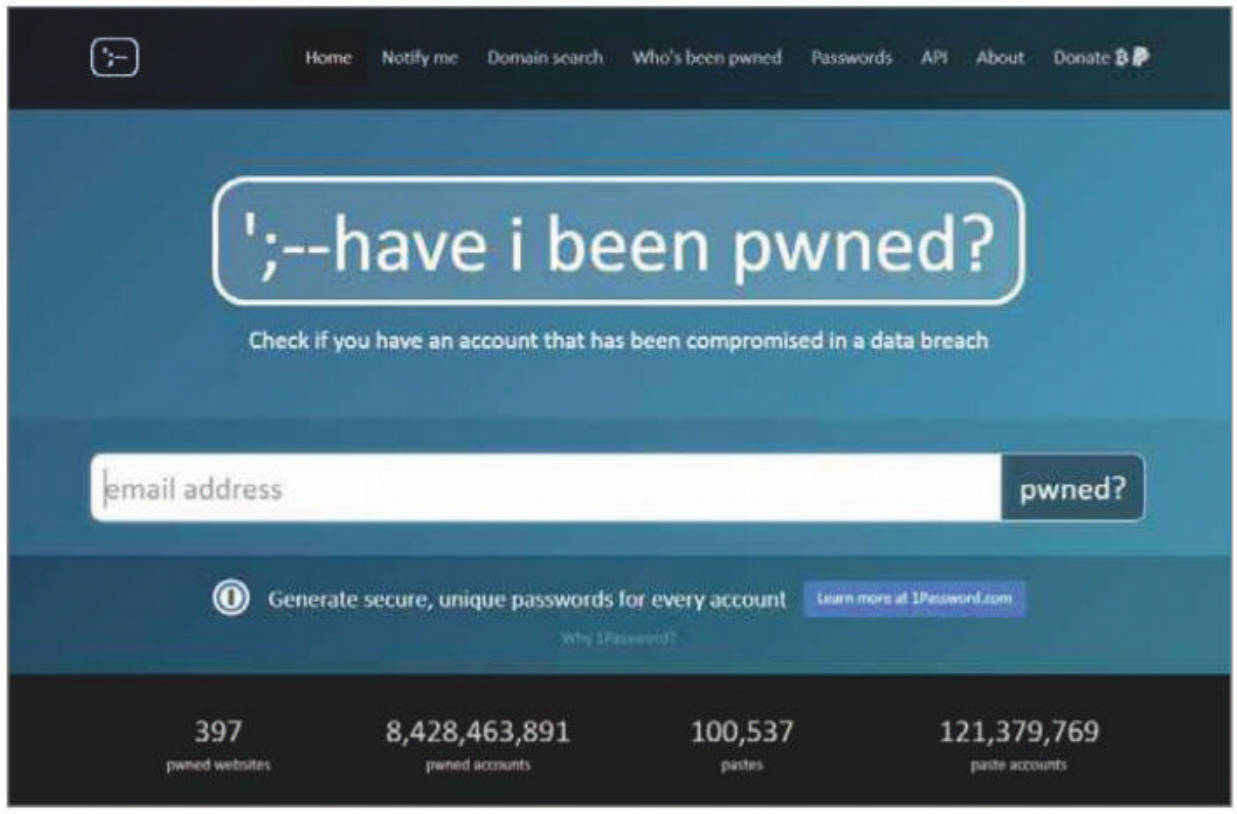
Q I received an email from Firefox Monitor (which I don't remember signing up to – I haven't used Firefox in years) saying my data has been compromised by a particular website. I visited the Have I Been Pwnd website (haveibeenpwned.com) which confirmed that my personal information had been compromised on that website, and also three other services. One was an Android app I've never used and doesn't show in either the installed or library list or under my name in the Google Play Store. Another was a genealogy website I have not accessed for years. There was also a social site I vaguely remember but which I stopped using years ago, along with a design website I had checked out to compare with other similar sites, where I must have had to enter my details.

I tried to log into these sites so I could delete my profiles, but since I had no recollection of the registered email or password, I wasted a lot of time trying to use the "I've Forgotten my password" options, which ended up leading me around in circles.

If it's so difficult for me to get on these sites, what can I do? I have thought of emailing each one, but without logging in, I can't find any contact options on their front pages.

My only comfort is that even if I had given my credit card details to these sites, my card supplier recently made me change to one with a different number and security code. Do I need to waste any more of my life on this? Not dealing with it is making me feel nervous and vulnerable.

John AC Beattie, via email



See if any websites have compromised your security by checking Have I Been Pwned

A It's easy to sign up for stuff without realising or forget that you've created an account if you haven't used a service for years. Because you received an email message, Firefox Monitor must be using your current address, so you're correct to try entering it into the 'password reset' or 'forgot password' feature of those websites.

If this method isn't working, your account was probably deactivated or deleted due to being inactive. In that case, even someone in possession of your details won't be able to log in. And even if they could, you've said that you changed your credit card, so any payment details stored on the breached sites will be useless.

The biggest risk is if you've used the

EMAIL

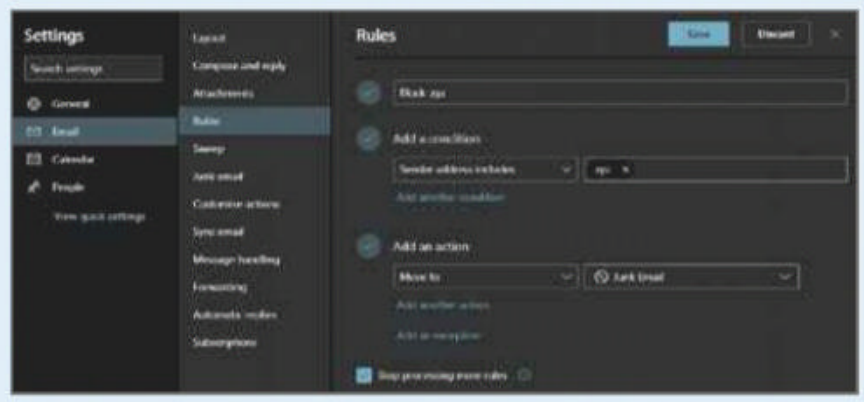
Block spammers

Q In Issue 475 (bit.ly/webuser475), you replied to an email from Davis Andrews who asked if you knew how to block emails from the '.can' Top Level Domain (TLD). Your reply explained how to block domains (since he actually referred to it as the '.can' domain), but I believe he was asking how to block a TLD, which you didn't specifically answer as you appeared to assume he was asking how to block a domain and not a TLD.

Like Davis, I am plagued by spam that comes from non-UK and non-US TLDs and would really appreciate your advice on how to block a TLD completely using email rules. I mainly use Outlook 365 (part of Office 365) and am fully conversant with how to block a domain, but not a TLD.

I would be very grateful for your help as I really want to block a load of TLDs that I never ever correspond with.

Peter Creed, via email



Prevent top-level domains from sending emails using this Outlook rule

A Blocking a whole top level domain is very broad and could result in useful or important emails being deleted. Still, it's possible to do this using rules. For example, at the Outlook website, click the cog icon followed by 'View all Outlook settings', then select Email in the first column, Rules in the second and create a new rule.

Under 'Add a condition', select 'Sender address includes' and enter the top level domain on the right, such as '.can'. Select 'Move to' under 'Add an action', then select a folder, such as Junk Email or Deleted Items.

Unfortunately, this would not only block 'everyone@somewhere.can' but also, for example 'bob.cantrell@gmail.com' and 'sue.canfield@outlook.com'.

same email address and password for other accounts. You should always pick a unique password for each of your accounts so that if one site is compromised, the same email/password combo can't be used on another. As long as your passwords are different, you probably have nothing to worry about.

SOFTWARE

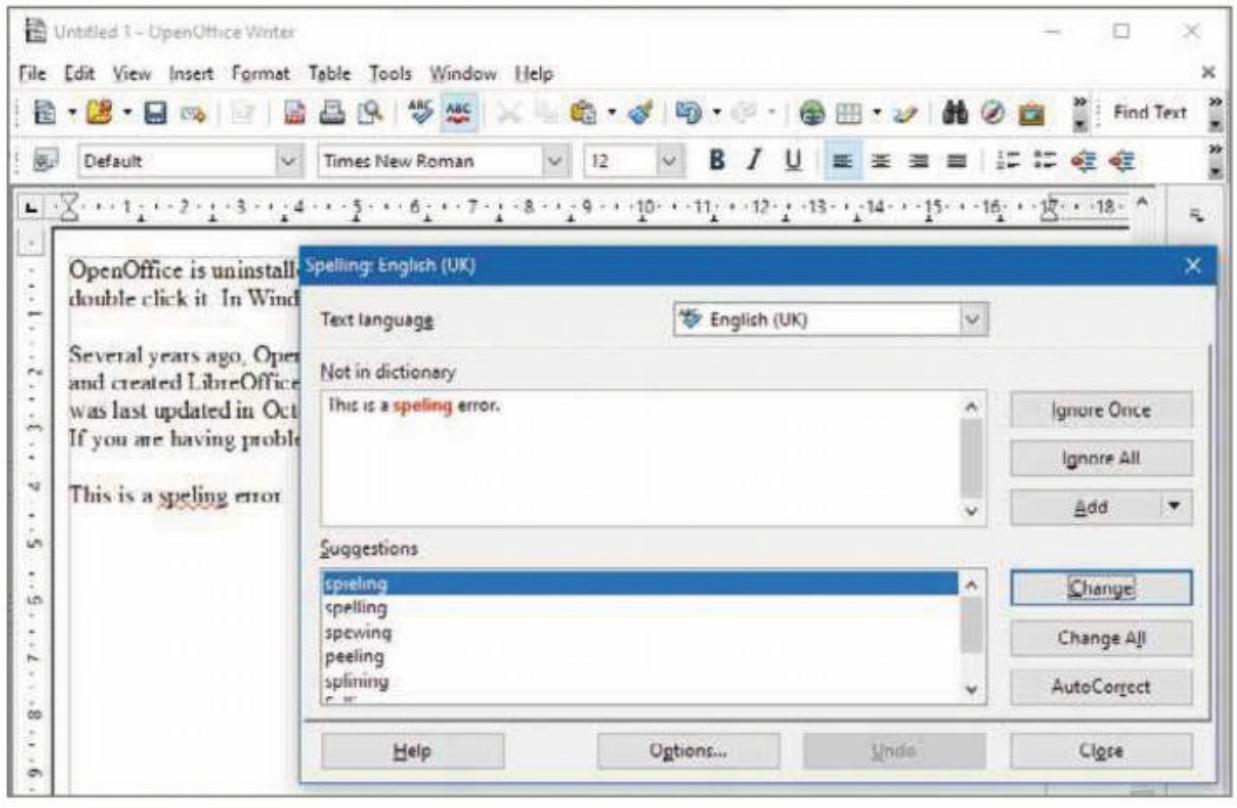
Make office software check spelling

Q I don't have any use for a sophisticated word processor and my needs are met by the basic pre-installed WordPad in Windows 10. The only thing I miss is an auto spellchecker.

Following your recommendation in Issue 468 (bit.ly/webuser468), I installed the free Apache OpenOffice suite (www.openoffice.org). This was a considerable improvement but I have never managed to get the auto spellchecker to work. For this reason, I decided to get rid of OpenOffice but now I can't uninstall it.

How do I get the auto spellchecker to work? If I can't do this, I'd rather delete the Apache suite. What is the best way to uninstall it?

Alan Possee, via email



In the spelling and grammar window in OpenOffice, click Options for more settings

A We haven't had any problems with spell-checking in OpenOffice. Straight after installation and without any configuration, it underlined misspelt words as soon as they were typed.

Make sure spellchecking is turned on in your version of OpenOffice by going to Tools, 'Spelling and Grammar'. A window opens highlighting spelling errors and offering replacements. Click Options to see a list of spelling and grammar items, such as 'Check spelling as you type'. Make sure this is turned on.

OpenOffice is uninstalled in the usual way – open the Control Panel and double-click 'Programs and Features'. In Windows 10, open the Settings app, choose Apps, find the OpenOffice option and click Delete.

Several years ago, a group of developers left OpenOffice and used the source code to create LibreOffice (www.libreoffice.org). The latter program was updated just a few weeks ago, so if you are having problems with OpenOffice, try switching to LibreOffice.

To prevent uninstaller problems, you could use the Portable Apps versions of OpenOffice (bit.ly/opoff484) or LibreOffice (bit.ly/liboff484). When run, they unzip to the Downloads folder and can be launched from there.

HARDWARE

Repair a malfunctioning laptop keyboard

Replacing a keyboard is a cheap and simple fix, but it's not ideal if you're using a laptop

Q I have been experiencing problems typing on my laptop. When I press certain keys (such as B and N), nothing happens and the keypresses are not registered. If I repeatedly press them hard, I can eventually get the letters to appear. Some of the surrounding keys occasionally produce more than one letter when pressed. Can you suggest a solution?

Paul Kline, via email

A Repairing or replacing the keyboard on a laptop can be tricky, and the ease or difficulty will depends on the design. Most modern laptops can't be opened or repaired by users. Apple MacBooks are an obvious example, along with some Windows laptops.

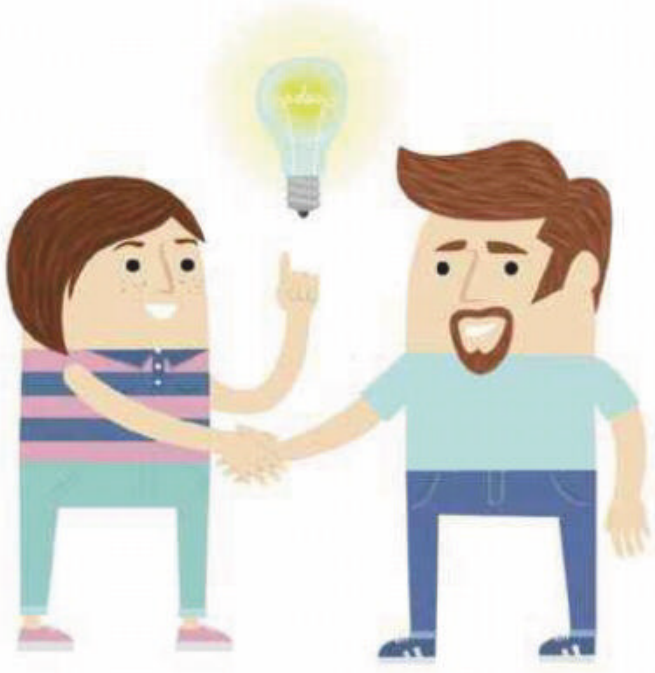
Take a look at your laptop's construction and see whether it's easy to take apart. Search YouTube for the make and model and see if anyone has created a video of it being opened for repairs or replacement of components.

If you don't feel confident taking apart your laptop – after all, you might make the problem worse or even damage its components – there are a couple of easy alternatives you can try, which may work if you're lucky.

Dust, food crumbs and other debris can get stuck in keyboards and removing them may solve the problem. Turn the laptop off, hold it upside down and gently shake it to dislodge anything under the keys. Use the pipe accessory on a vacuum cleaner with a stocking over the end to suck out anything that maybe trapped under the keys.

If the keys still don't work, try using an external keyboard instead. It's not an ideal solution with a laptop, but a USB or wireless keyboard will work as soon as it's plugged in, with no need to configure it or install extra software.

This fortnight Roland's mouse wheel broke, making him realise how much he uses it. He's now after a cheap replacement



Readers' Helpdesk

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

READERS RESPOND

Back Issues disc winner

SOFTWARE

Manage and play music in Ashampoo

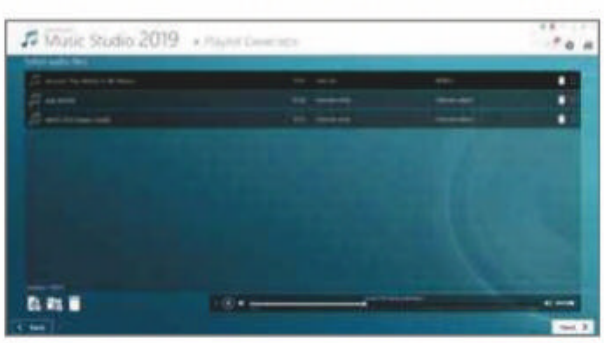
Q I'd become so frustrated with iTunes that I jumped with glee when I read about Ashampoo (bit.ly/ashampoo484) in Issue 482 (bit.ly/webuser482). It scanned and organised my entire music library surprisingly quickly. But now what? I may be missing something obvious, but there seems to be no way of playing my nicely organised music collection. If this is the case, what iTunes alternatives would you recommend? Many thanks and keep up the good work.

Danny Rushton, via email

A You're right – Ashampoo excels at managing and editing music, but it's not really a music player. The only way to play your tracks within the software is to use the Playlist Generator to create a playlist, then add files or folders of music and listen to them by highlighting them and using the playback controls at the bottom of the program window. Once you've created a playlist, you'll download the file to your hard drive. Add this file to the Playlist Generator each time you want to listen to your tunes.

If this is all too convoluted and you'd rather use a standard music player, MusicBee (getmusicbee.com) is one of our favourites.

Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User



Managing music is easy, but playback isn't

HARDWARE

Breathe new life into an old Chromebook

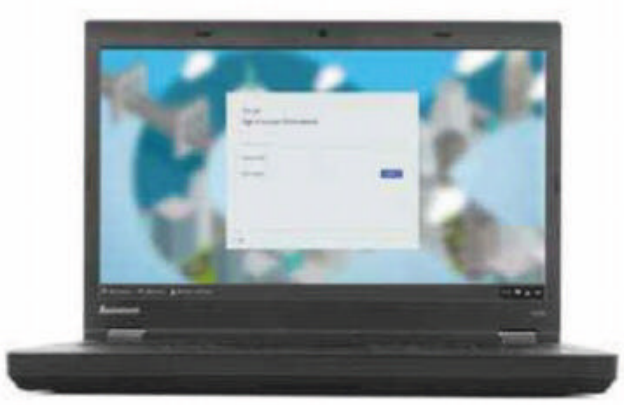
Q My beloved Chromebook has come to the end of its life – it's still in perfect working order but it no longer receives updates from Google. I've already bought a new Chromebook to replace it, but how do I recycle the old one? It seems crazy to just bin it.

Graham Castle, via email

A It's hard to say goodbye to a loved one but, thankfully, you don't have to. While it's not a good idea to use your Chromebook without security updates, you could install a new operating system – one that Google won't cut off. CloudReady (bit.ly/cloud484) is an OS that was designed to convert old Windows laptops into Chromebooks, but it also works with devices such as yours. Best of all, it continues to receive security updates and new features. However, make sure your Chromebook has enough free space to get CloudReady up and running, or first download it to a USB memory stick.

Alternatively, since Chrome OS is built on Linux, you could install this on your Chromebook instead, although it's a little more involved and less stable.

Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User



Turn a no-longer-updating Chromebook into a new CloudReady device

BROWSERS

Translate any web page in Chrome

A In Issue 482 (bit.ly/webuser482), Damien Davers asked how to translate web pages in Chrome. Usually, the browser automatically recognises a foreign language and displays a message at the bottom of your screen asking if you want to translate it. If you don't see this, click the three-dot icon in the corner and choose Translate. Both methods work in Chrome and Chrome Canary. If you're using a different browser, you can still use Google's translation tools. Copy the page's URL and paste it into Google Translate (translate.google.com) to translate the web page into English.

Google Translate can translate pages into another language in any browser

Flynn Farrow, 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.

GENERAL PC

Q I love toying with Registry hacks (and yes, I always create a backup). What I'd like to know, though, is are there any specific Registry keys that should never be touched?

Ron Cressley, via email

BROWSERS

Q Not counting those available in the Google Web Store, can anyone recommend some essential extensions for Microsoft's new Chromium-based Edge browser?

Nell Jones, via email

Your Top Tips

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

TOP TIP

Back Issues disc winner

GOOGLE

Bring back the old Google Images

Not a fan of the new-look Google Images? Me neither – I much preferred the old design. After some quick and judicious Googling, I've found the answer – a Chrome extension called Google Images Restored (bit.ly/restored484). This brings back, as close as possible, the old look before the overhaul, while removing related searches and adding a View Image button. That's really useful because, for some unknown reason, Google got rid of this entirely. It's also available for Firefox (bit.ly/restoredfox484), if that's your browser of choice.

Get back Google Images' View Image button

Fred Bliss, via email

SOFTWARE

Try new operating systems in your browser

If you want to try a new OS but can't face the rigmarole of installing virtual PC software, then I heartily recommend OnWorks (www.onworks.net), which lets you emulate different operating systems from your browser. Go to OS Distributions and choose from Fedora, Ubuntu, Windows 10 (well, a Linux clone of Windows 10), PearOS (which is as close to using a Mac as you'll get without owning one) and more. You'll then see the workstation right in your browser.

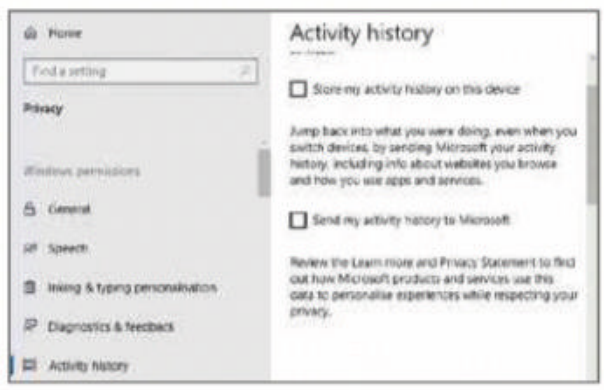
Walt Kennick, via email

Bring any OS to your browser

GENERAL PC

Use or disable activity history

Windows records your activities, such as visited websites and opened documents, in a timeline. Click the Task View button in the taskbar (second icon on my PC) to display your activities as tiles on the screen with a time slider on the right. If you use two computers – work and at home or desktop and laptop, for example – it shows activities from both. The other computer's name is shown in the top-right corner of the tile.



Do you want to store and share your PC activities or not? Choose in Settings

If you don't use this feature or find it creepy being monitored, open Windows Settings and choose Privacy, then 'Activity history'. Turn off any switches that store your activities and send them to Microsoft.

Peter Bently, via email

GENERAL PC

Get a desktop hardware monitor

The Windows 1903 update includes a new Game Bar which, though primarily aimed at gamers, has other uses, too. For example, you can pin a CPU, GPU and RAM monitor to the desktop. I prefer this to the Task Manager, which does the same thing but in a floating window.

Press Windows+G to open the Game Bar. Click and drag the panel for CPU/GPU/RAM to where you want it on the desktop, then click the pin icon to pin it. Click elsewhere on the desktop to dismiss the Game Bar and the monitor remains. To move it, press Windows+G again and unpin it.

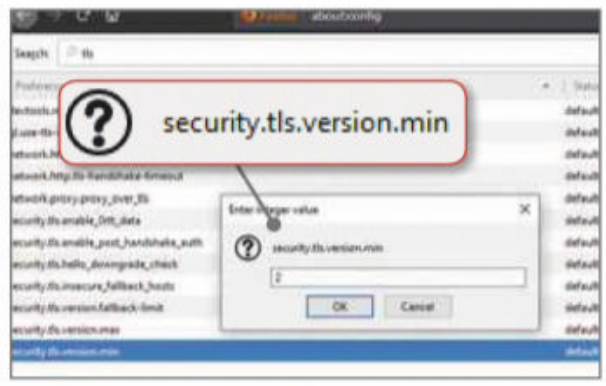
Simon Ryan, via email

BROWSERS

Speed up Firefox loading times

I am fed up with the time TLS Handshake takes in Firefox when loading pages in Windows 7. I've searched for solutions online and found only one that works reasonably well. Type `about:config` in the Firefox address bar, then type `ls` in the search box and press Enter. Right-click 'security.tls.version.min' and change the integer value to 2. It will take effect straight away, and may also help to clear your cache.

Coops, via email



Modify this setting to make Firefox load pages more quickly

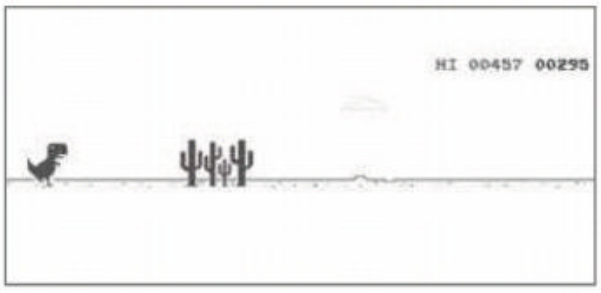
BROWSERS

Play the Chrome dinosaur game at any time

Google's dinosaur game typically only plays when you lose access to the internet but you don't have to keep

disconnecting your Wi-Fi to beat your latest high score. In the address bar, type `chrome://dino`. Press the spacebar to start playing the game full-screen.

Joshua Chung, via email

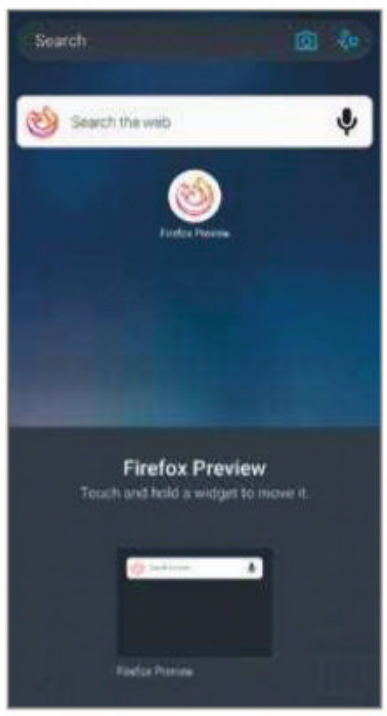


You don't need to go offline-asaurus to play this game

APPS

Add Firefox Preview to your Android home screen

The new Firefox Preview app (bit.ly/firefox484) for Android has recently had a big update. Beyond improving stability (always an issue with beta apps), it also introduces a search widget for your phone. As with Google and Bing, this adds a banner to your home screen so you can quickly search the web using Firefox. You can also press the microphone to search with your voice.



Make it easier to search Firefox on your mobile

When you install the app, it should automatically add the icon to your home screen. Next, press and hold the icon, and you'll see the option to add a widget. Click this, then select the Firefox Preview search bar at the bottom of the screen.

John MacMurray, via email

GENERAL PC

Return shortcuts

There are three ways to use the Enter key – by pressing Enter on its own, Shift+Enter or Ctrl+Enter – each of which performs a different action depending on the software that text is being typed into, such as online forms, website comments, social media sites and so on. In most word processors, such as Microsoft Word or the Word web app (bit.ly/word484), pressing Enter on its own begins a new paragraph, while Shift+Enter starts a new line – you can see the difference in the line spacing. Ctrl+Enter is used to start a new page: in Word, --- Page Break --- is inserted, which is useful for new sections or chapters in a document. When printed, Page Break starts a new page.

On Facebook (and some other sites), Enter posts your comment, while Shift+Enter just starts a new line.

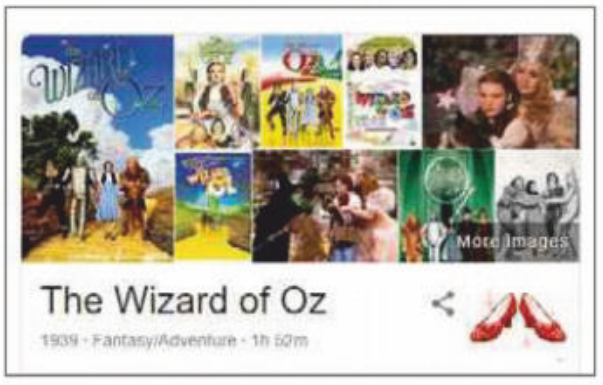
Philip Mathers, via email

BROWSERS

Head off to see the wizard

This is just a bit of fun. Head over to google.com and search `the wizard of oz`. Over to the right, beneath 'More images', you'll see a pair of red, sparkling slippers. Click them and enjoy!

Gabriel Newton, via email



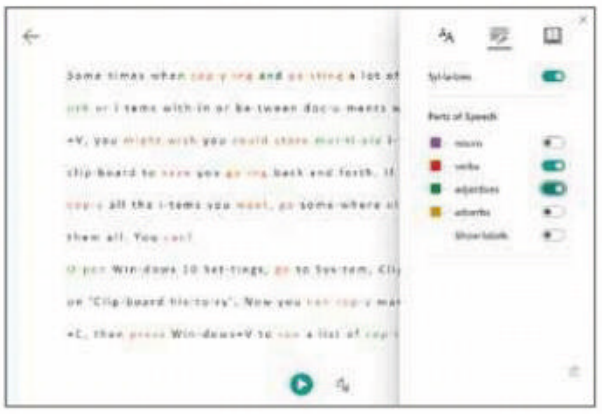
There's no place like home with Google

OFFICE

Show types of words in Word Online

Word files placed in your PC's OneDrive Documents folder can be opened in a browser at the OneDrive website (onedrive.live.com) by simply clicking the file. There's a view you can access in the Word web app that could be useful for checking a text's structure.

Click a document in OneDrive to open it in the Word web app and select the



Colourise the structure of your writing in the Word web app

View tab at the top. Click Immersive Reader, then Grammar Options (the middle button in the top right corner). A panel slides out with switches to highlight syllables, nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs in different colours. It's fascinating!

Jason Doyle, via email

GENERAL PC

Stop Windows updates

You can't stop Windows updates forever but there's a temporary method that works on laptops. Unplug the laptop so it's running on battery power, then click the battery icon in the taskbar and drag the slider all the way to the left for battery saving. Also, open the Action Centre panel by clicking the rightmost icon in the taskbar and turn on the Battery Saver. While running a laptop on the battery and in battery-saving mode, Windows update is turned off. The battery will last longer, too.

G Watson, via email

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

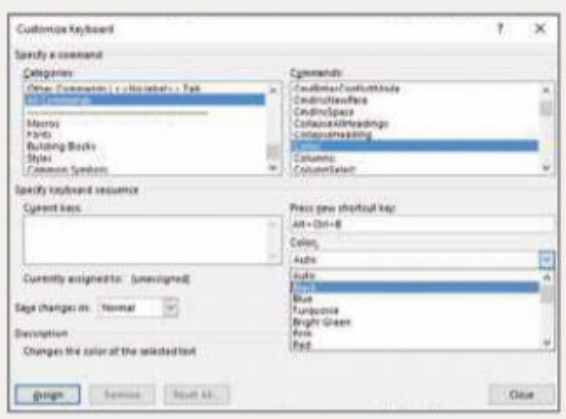
SOFTWARE

Create shortcuts to change font colours

While recording my family tree in Microsoft Word, I assigned a different colour to each generation. This entailed constant use of the font colour icon, which was a bit of a pain, especially as I had to keep dipping into 'more colours'. Setting up a shortcut for each colour made life much easier.

To do this in Word, click File, Options, Customize Ribbon. In the pop-up, select 'All commands' in the left column and Colour in the right. Choose a colour and click Apply. This method can also be used with fonts.

I use Ctrl+Alt+any letter for each colour (such as 'b' for black, 'g' for green and so on). This setup works well if you have to regularly switch to different fonts and colours.



Create keyboard shortcuts for font colours

To reset the colour of the font to the Windows default, simply repeat the shortcut to toggle it off.

Lynn Hammet, via email

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?
If so, please send your story to webuser@webuser.co.uk

Inbox

You can let us know your views via:
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Star Email

Back Issues disc winner

BritBox: a sneaky way to keep the licence fee

I have read numerous letters regarding the BBC licence fee, and I resent paying for what amounts to hundreds of repeats a day, including Saturday and Sunday prime time. I probably watch one or two programmes a month (not even every month), so is the licence fee offering good value at £154 a year?

I read that the introduction of BritBox, which no-one will sign up to if they have any sense, is the first step toward abolishing the licence fee and replacing it with a subscription service. Alternatively, it could be a sneaky way for the BBC to say it tried a subscription service but it did not work, so it has to have a licence fee to survive. How dull does the Beeb think we are?

Do any readers really think that the BBC is going to give up £3.7bn of guaranteed annual income to try and compete with the likes of Netflix? It's not going to happen because the BBC knows no-one will bother with BritBox!

I think the BBC should be forced by the government to abandon the TV licence, but that's not going to happen either because the government also profits. Looks like we are stuck with what amounts to another hidden tax.

Finally, what's with the change in conditions for having to buy a licence. Now it says *any* live TV on any channel – I thought the licence fee was just for the BBC?

Welsh Legend, via email

Three reasons in support of BritBox

There's been a lot of grumbling about BritBox from people who say that we shouldn't have to pay twice for programmes that we've already paid for via the licence fee. But there are three things folk seem to be forgetting.

First, nobody is forcing you to subscribe to BritBox if you don't want to. The £5.99 a month isn't being added to the licence fee – it's entirely optional.

Second, BritBox is a joint venture between the BBC and ITV, so why is the Beeb getting all the flak? Unlike normal ITV channels, it will be ad-free, and ITV isn't covered by the TV licence anyway.

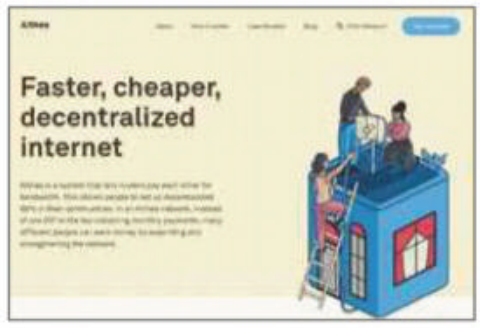
Third, how is paying to stream TV shows any different from buying DVDs of series you've already seen? I'm sure all the people who bought *Fawlty Towers* on VHS or DVD weren't new to the show, they just wanted to watch it again.

Robert McClain, via email

Cryptomining and the decentralised internet

Roland's reply to Ian Smith in 'Ask The Expert', Issue 482 ('Make money by cryptomining on an old PC') was very interesting. Since Arweave and Maidsafe presumably require cryptominers to be online 24/7, would it not be better to use something like a Linux Mint Mintbox Mini 2 to provide the 'vaults' for storing data? The Mintbox doesn't have moving parts such as fans, the absence of which would reduce the risk of fires – a very important consideration for equipment that's permanently left on in people's homes.

As for the decentralised internet, Arweave and Maidsafe are not the only kids on the block. Others that look interesting are the InterPlanetary File System (ipfs.io), Substratum (substratum.net) and Althea (althea.net). Althea appears to be going further than the rest by developing small roof-based relay stations so that independent, decentralised data transmission networks can be built (one is already up and running in Columbia).



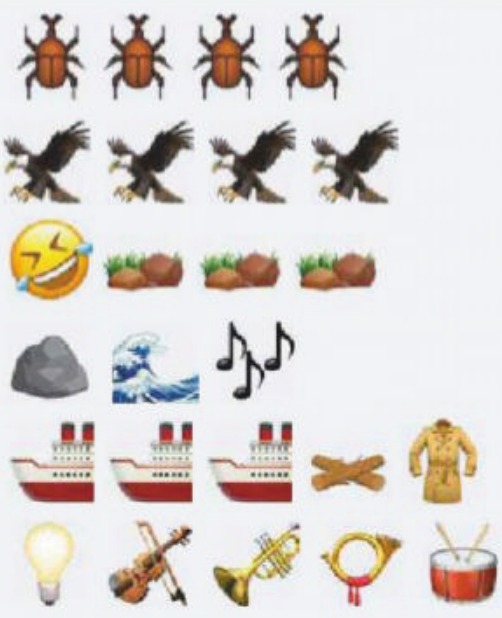
John Goode, via email

Online vigilante groups need policing

Barry Collins is right to draw attention to the worrying rise in online vigilantism in Issue 482's column ('Facebook justice fills the gap left by police'). I regularly

Quiz Answers: Issue 483

1. The Beatles
2. The Eagles
3. The Rolling Stones
4. Roxy Music
5. Fleetwood Mac
6. Electric Light Orchestra



WINNER!
Well done to **Philip Holdsworth** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc

WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE

Adobe Flash

see posts in my Facebook and Nextdoor news feeds warning of people in my area who have allegedly committed crimes. These often include the accused's name and even a photo, with no real evidence that they are guilty.

As Barry says, social media now provides an online extension of Neighbourhood Watch, but it can also lead to innocent people being harassed and attacked for no good reason.

I know that local police forces are already overstretched, but they would do well to keep an eye on these groups, to stop vigilante witch hunts developing out of control.

S Robeson, via email

Stop being paranoid about smart speakers

I don't understand all the fuss about smart speakers recording our voices. Any data analysed by human workers is shared anonymously, so it's not like you can be identified, and you're not going to get pointed and laughed at in the street for asking Alexa stupid questions.

I think voice assistants are one of the cleverest tech innovations of the last few years, but they're still not perfect, which is why companies are studying users' anonymous voice data to improve their accuracy. These things process millions of requests a day, so the chances of you being personally identified are extremely slim. Stop being so paranoid!

Simon Hanson, via email

Chromebooks aren't meant to last forever

What's the big deal about Chromebooks having expiration dates (Need to Know, Issue 483)? No piece of hardware lasts forever, especially not laptops, which are used much more intensively than, say, printers or scanners. I replace my laptop every five years, so the 'revelation' that Chromebooks only receive updates for 6.5 years is hardly a shocking one.

Chromebooks are designed to be low-spec and lightweight, and they're clearly not meant for life. They're not that expensive, either, so buying a faster new one when the time comes isn't much of a wrench.

Alan H Grant, via email

What you say...

DO YOU THINK SMARTPHONES SHOULD BE BANNED FROM SCHOOLS (bit.ly/schools484)?

Phones should be for talking to people (mum and dad) and contacting emergency services. Smartphones have taken over people's lives and most of us can't survive more than 10 minutes without messing with them. Children shouldn't be exposed to such addictive devices whilst being educated or they will never learn anything. Pointless!

Lance Parkington

Yes. Kids should have them generally but they should be confiscated at the start of the lesson or school day. Most companies won't let you use your phone when you are supposed to be working. This would be good practice.

Gavin Green

I think they should be kept in lockers during the school day, but allowed going to and from school, so parents can keep in touch.

Martin Phillp

It's amazing to me, as I approach my seventh decade, that the first thing we do with all the brilliant technology that has come our way over the last 50 years is to decide it's going to ruin the kids.

Richard Morgan

Mobile phones are okay, but smartphones – no. Personally, I wouldn't allow kids under 16 anything other than a basic talk-and-text phone.

Paul Grim

It's a toughie. You can't ban them outright because the kids'll always find a way to conceal them. Also, the parents might insist on their child taking a phone to keep in touch for the end-of-day pick-up. If they could make classrooms signal-proof, that'd fix it.

Ady Colclough *@AdyC76*

I can't believe this is even being asked. Children are at school to focus on their education and learning, and not their social media and other distractions.

Daren Bavister

WILL YOU USE THE BBC'S NEW VOICE ASSISTANT, BEEB (bit.ly/beeb484)?

Not likely, it might record audio of what you watch on TV, and the BBC can then use that to prosecute licence-fee evaders.

Dean Stockton

No, the BBC is trying to be all things to all people and quality is suffering as a result. It's time to ditch the TV licence, which is a tax on the British public, and make the BBC stand on its own merits – if it has any left.

Glenn Faulkner

All this technology is designed to do is spy on people and brainwash and manipulate them. If anyone buys me anything like this for Christmas then it's going straight into a bucket of water! A few people I know have mostly given up watching TV, and when they do, they watch recorded stuff so they can skip through the subliminal corporate commercials. Maybe the BBC are now clutching at straws because a lot of people are doing this and they are no longer relevant?

Liz F Lambeth

Not really. Even if it covered all TV services, I am happy to keep using a remote control as most TV is easily accessible already and voice control isn't really much of a time-saver.

Rich Grove

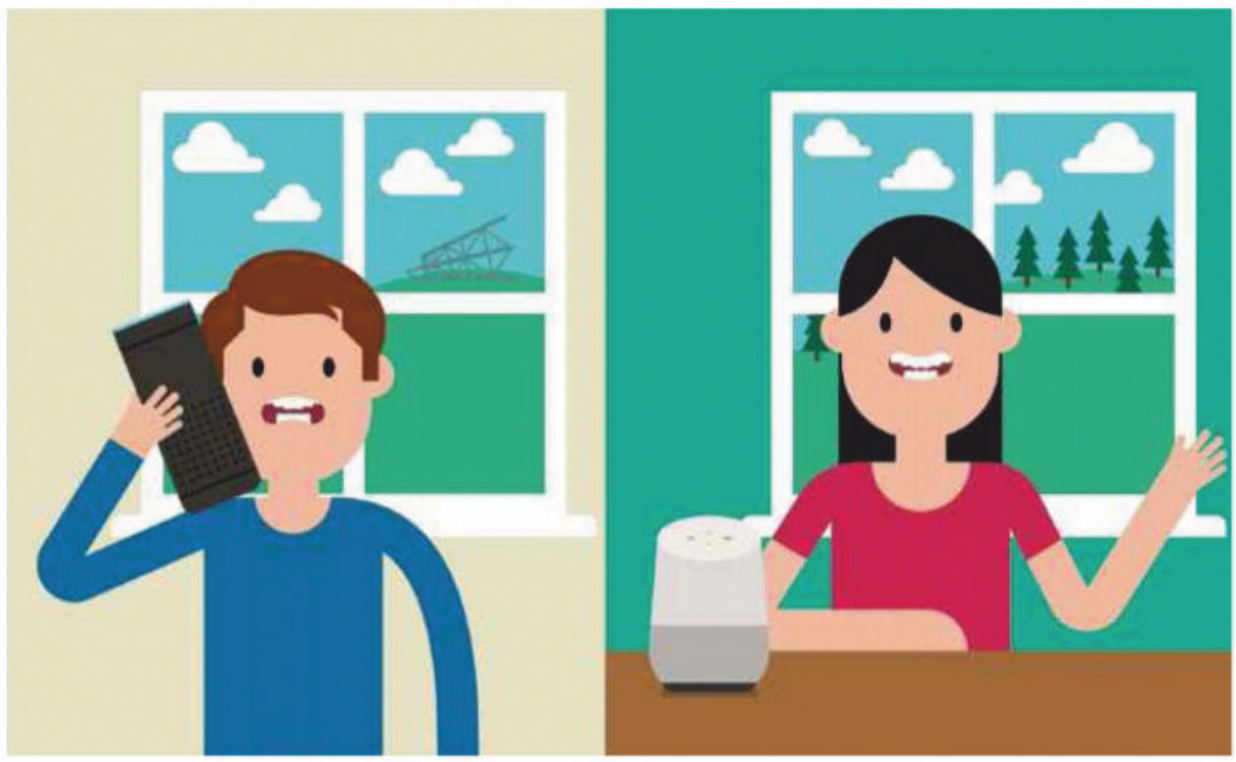
So the BBC can afford this, but they're taking away free TV licences for the over 75s?

Rob Presho

Page 404

Barry Collins finds the best way to make calls is to avoid the phone altogether

Why you don't need 5G – or a phone



Is that the Eiffel Tower I can see from my bedroom window in Sussex? My mistake, it's a 5G phone mast. Or at least it will be, if this week's Digital Secretary, Nicky Morgan, gets her way.

Morgan has launched a "consultation" – government jargon for something they're going to do anyway, but want to make it look like they're listening – that will eventually allow mobile operators to build masts taller than 25m. Bigger masts mean signals that stretch further, meaning us out here in the boondocks might stand a fighting chance of getting a decent mobile signal without having to lean out of the loft skylight.

That's the theory, anyway. The truth is that 5G signals stand as much chance of passing through trees, walls and other obstacles as I do of passing through a Pirelli calendar audition. With 4G nothing but a rumour in these parts, I'm not holding my breath for 5G. In fact, I'm beginning to give up on the 'phone' altogether.

I've tried several means of boosting my pathetic signal. I've switched mobile networks, switched handsets, switched on BT Mobile's risible Wi-Fi Calling service. The latter made yoghurt pots and string sound like Dolby Cinema.

> "5G signals stand as much chance of passing through trees, walls and other obstacles as I do of passing through a Pirelli calendar audition"

The best solution I've found is to avoid the phone – full stop. They don't shout about it a great deal, but both Amazon Echo and Google Home speakers allow you to make free mobile and landline calls over the Wi-Fi network. You say "Alexa, ring Dad's mobile" and after a couple of seconds of thinking, you get put through to the old boy's phone.

Google Home is even more impressive in this regard, because it can call numbers you don't know. If you tell Google to call the Ask restaurant in Lewes, for example, it will look up the number and put you through. It's like Directory Enquiries, except you don't need to remortgage your house to pay for it first.

Call quality via both Alexa and Google Assistant is decent and reliable (Alexa slightly more so, in my experience), and you can tell both services your mobile phone number so that when you call friends and family, your name – rather than "Unknown caller" – pops up on their mobile screen.

The only downsides are that you're completely snookered if the company you're calling has one of those "press 1 for sales" switchboards, and you feel a bit of a plum saying "Alexa, end call" when you've finished your conversation – it's normally best to let the other person hang up first.

The Amazon and Google options will deal with most outgoing call scenarios, but what about incoming calls? Here, I'm working on a Heath Robinson solution. Skype lets you buy UK numbers at a relatively modest cost of a fiver a month, so I can divert all my mobile calls to that number and pick up my incoming mobile calls on Skype, without worrying too much that the call will drop after five seconds.

The problem with this approach? Skype itself, which has an uncanny knack of ringing every device except the one you actually want to pick up the call from. This leads to hilarious scenarios where I find myself pressing an iPad to my ear. Yes – it looks ridiculous, but it's still nowhere near as ridiculous as the Crystal Palace-sized mast Nicky Morgan wants to erect in my back garden.

Illustration: Andrew Torrens

Do you agree? Let us know at webuser@webuser.co.uk

WebUser

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER
FOR MORE INFO SEE PAGE 62

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