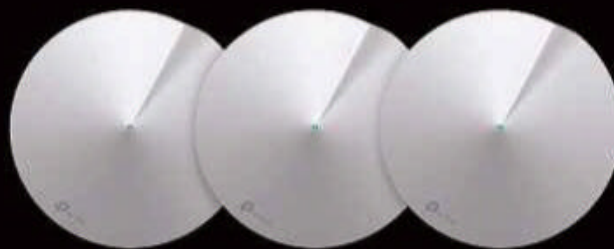


# STREAMING WITHOUT LIMITS



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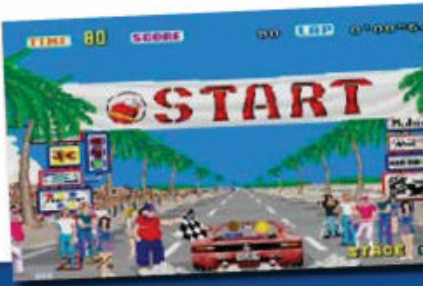
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# STOP USING SOFTWARE

Run **EVERYTHING** in your browser instead **p40**



✓ **Malware scanner**



✓ **Image editor**



✓ **System cleaner**



✓ **File converter**



✓ **Video editor**



✓ **Word processor**

**+ MORE FREE TOOLS**

**PLUS**

**MAKE ANDROID CALLS FROM YOUR DESKTOP**

And send text messages too **p52**

**NO '€' SYMBOL ON YOUR KEYBOARD?**

Get tools the maker forgot **p50**

**SKIP ANNOYING IMAGE CAPTCHAs**

Say goodbye to this **p48**





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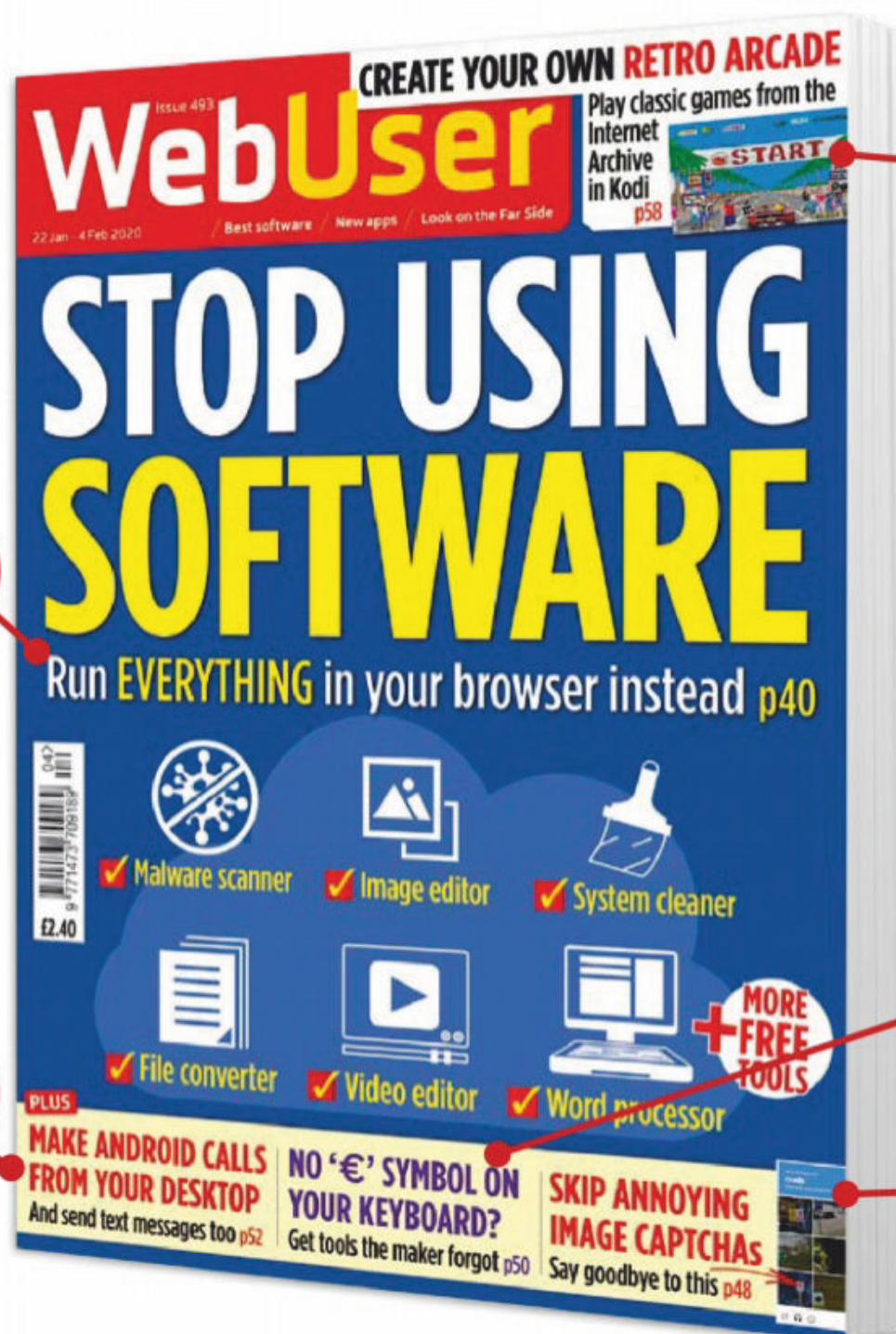
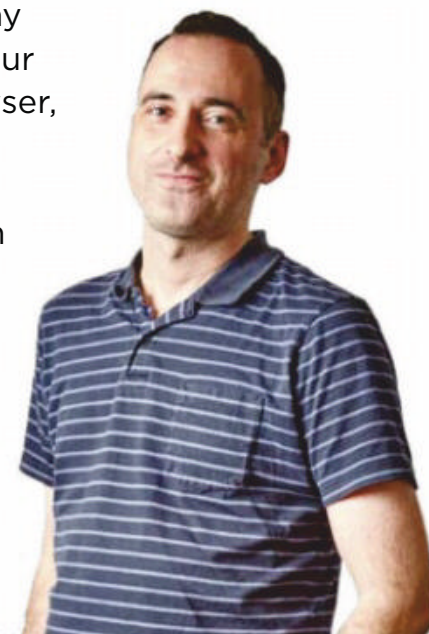
## Ditch your desktop downloads

**H**ow are your New Year's resolutions holding up in 2020? My dry January is going well, though this may be because I've hardly left the house since my festive hangover wore off. But whether you pledged to stop drinking, eating meat or being a senior member of the Royal Family, chances are you didn't vow to stop using software. That would be crazy, right?

As we explain in this issue's cover feature, switching from desktop programs to web-based alternatives isn't as foolish and pointless as it sounds. Online tools have improved significantly in recent years and

now let you perform all manner of everyday tasks – from editing photos to scanning your system for malware – directly in your browser, without downloading anything. We're not suggesting you ditch software altogether – that would render much of the content in *Web User* irrelevant! But by following our tips, you can save yourself the time and effort of downloading bloated programs by using their online equivalents instead.

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



### 5 Things you'll learn this issue

**1** How to use Facebook's new privacy controls to block unwanted friend requests  
page 6

**2** How to find out where it's snowing in the UK using tweets plotted on a map  
page 17

**3** How to set the Windows Recycle Bin to delete space-hogging files automatically  
page 29

**4** How to use a mobile app to ensure you don't exceed the drink-driving limit  
page 34

**5** How to remove the text labels that appear on some taskbar items  
page 69



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**COVER  
FEATURE**

# STOP USING SOFTWARE

The best free online alternatives  
to desktop programs



✓ Malware scanner



✓ Image editor



✓ System cleaner



✓ Word processor



✓ File converter



✓ Video editor

**p40**

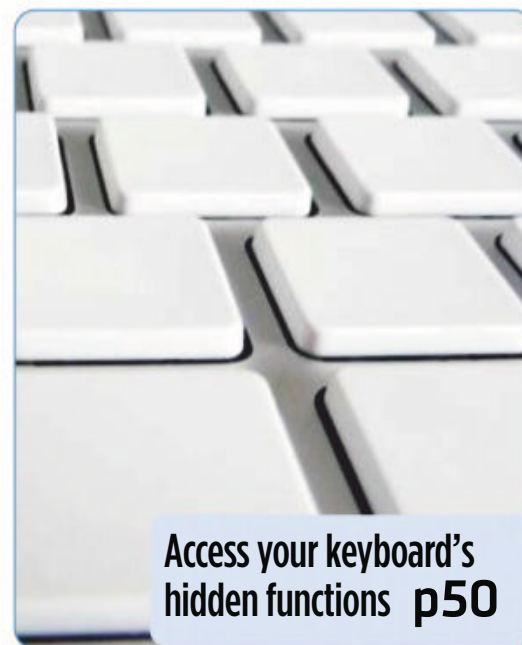


Banish annoying pop-ups  
and widgets **p48**



How Google is using AI to aid  
wildlife conservation **p38**

Wildlife Insights:  
Saving Biodiversity with Tech



Access your keyboard's  
hidden functions **p50**

## IN DEPTH Articles on the latest tech topics

- 38 FAQ**  
Wildlife Insights
- 40 COVER FEATURE**  
**STOP USING SOFTWARE**  
Run essential tools in your browser instead
- 46 Best free download managers**  
Six tools for streamlining downloads
- 48 Beat online obstructions**  
The best workarounds for web distractions
- 50 Restore missing keyboard tools**  
Find the keys that make typing quick and easy

## REVIEWS Apps, sites and products on test

- 14 Best New Websites**  
Get a daily dose of surreal humour at The Far Side and bookmark our top weather sites
- 22 Group Test**  
Mini PCs
- 28 Best Free Software**  
Improve digital photos with Darktable 3
- 32 Best New Browser Tools**  
Customise your right-click menu in Firefox
- 34 Best Free Apps**  
Check your alcohol consumption with My Limit



## FAVOURITES Must-read regulars

- 6 What's New Online**  
Improve your privacy on Facebook
- 8 Need to Know**  
This fortnight's top tech news stories
- 12 Stay Safe Online**  
Security advice for PC and mobile
- 18 Build a Better Site**  
Expert tips, tools and practical help
- 20 What to Watch Online**  
Films and TV shows you can't miss
- 26 Best Buys**  
Our pick of the best new products
- 37 Take a Screen Break**  
Guess the classical music emoji



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



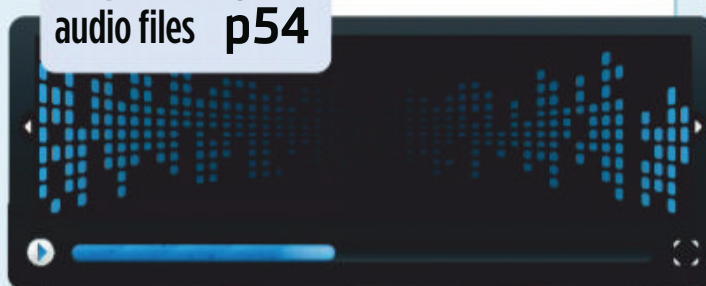
## Practical WebUser

Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

16  
pages

- 52 Workshop 1**  
Make calls from your PC with Your Phone
- 54 Workshop 2**  
Wave Editor
- 56 Workshop 3**  
VLC add-ons
- 57 Workshop 4**  
Hide your Chrome bookmarks
- 58 Weekend Project**  
Create a retro games console
- 64 Web User Masterclass**  
Automate emails and texts
- 66 Ask the Expert**  
All your technical questions answered
- 69 Readers' Helpdesk**  
Solve other readers' problems
- 70 Readers' Tips**  
The best tips from our readers

Simple editing for  
audio files **p54**



Play classic video games  
– legally and for free **p58**



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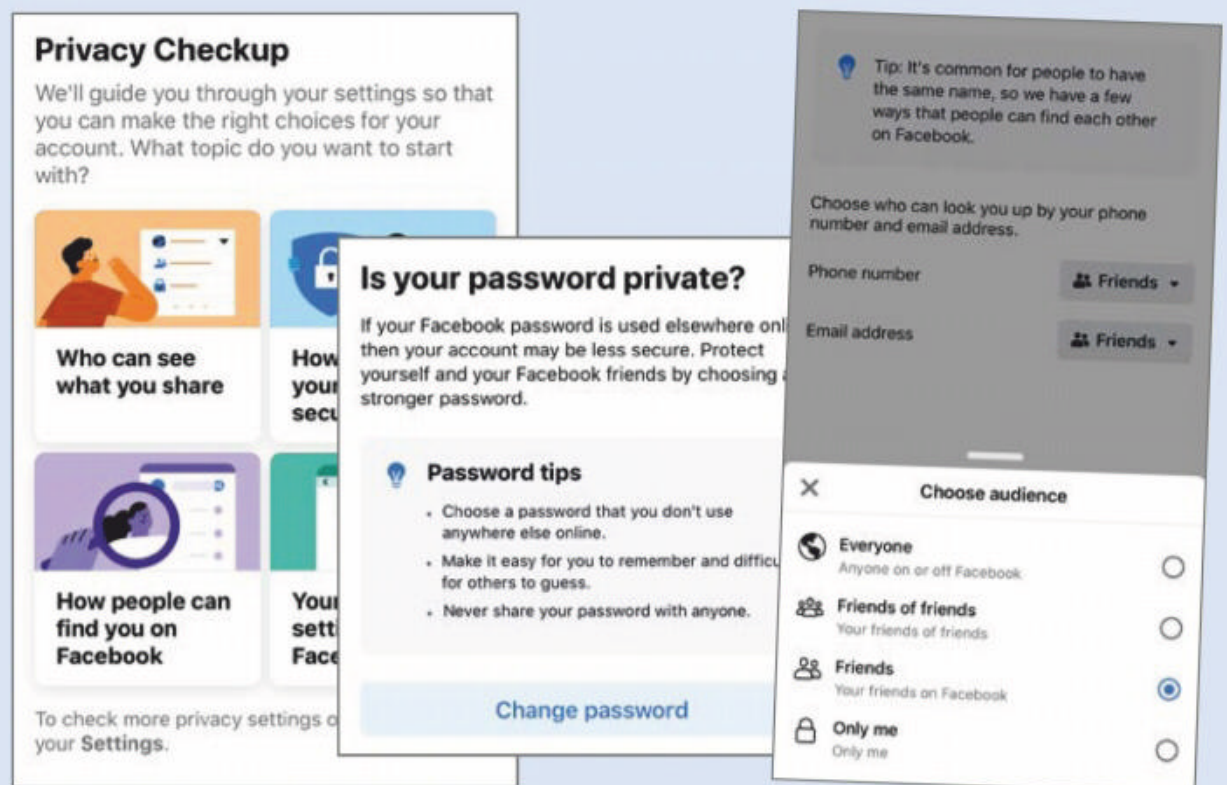
# What's New Online

## Tighten Facebook privacy settings

**F**acebook has revamped its Privacy Checkup tool and, given the scandals that have beset the social network in recent years, it's something all users should take a look at. You can do this by clicking the '?' icon at the top of any Facebook page and selecting Privacy Checkup. Alternatively, search for "privacy checkup" in the iOS or Android app and select the shortcut.

There are four groups of settings. The first, 'Who can see what you share', lets you review who is able to see your profile information by selecting Public, Friends, 'Only me' or a specific group from the drop-down menus. It also lets you control who sees future and past posts, and add people to a block list.

The second - 'How to keep your account secure' - lets you change your password and indicate how you want to be informed if someone logs into your account from an unknown



location. 'How people can find you on Facebook' lets you control who can send you friend requests and whether your phone number and email address can be used for searches. Finally, you

can review any apps and websites that have access to your Facebook account - all of which should help keep you more private and secure. [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

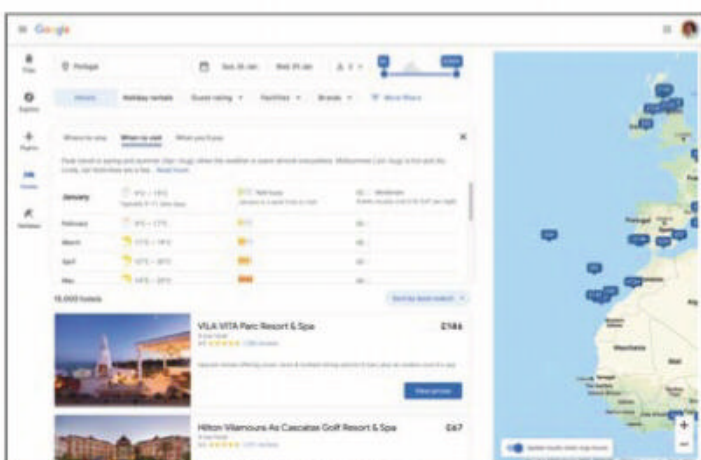
## Discover the best time to book your holiday

[www.google.co.uk/travel](http://www.google.co.uk/travel)

If you're planning this year's holiday but aren't sure about the best time to visit your chosen destination or how much it's going to cost, it's worth heading over to Google's updated Travel site. Here, you can not only check the typical weather over the year but see how busy and expensive the location can become.

To view the data, select the Hotels tab in the left-hand column and enter a destination, then click When To Visit to see the peak and non-peak travel seasons broken down by month. You can then select What You'll Pay to see average prices across different grades of hotel and choose Where To

Stay for the lowdown of the best areas ranked in order. This includes information about what you can expect to see and do, as well as an average location score provided by travellers.

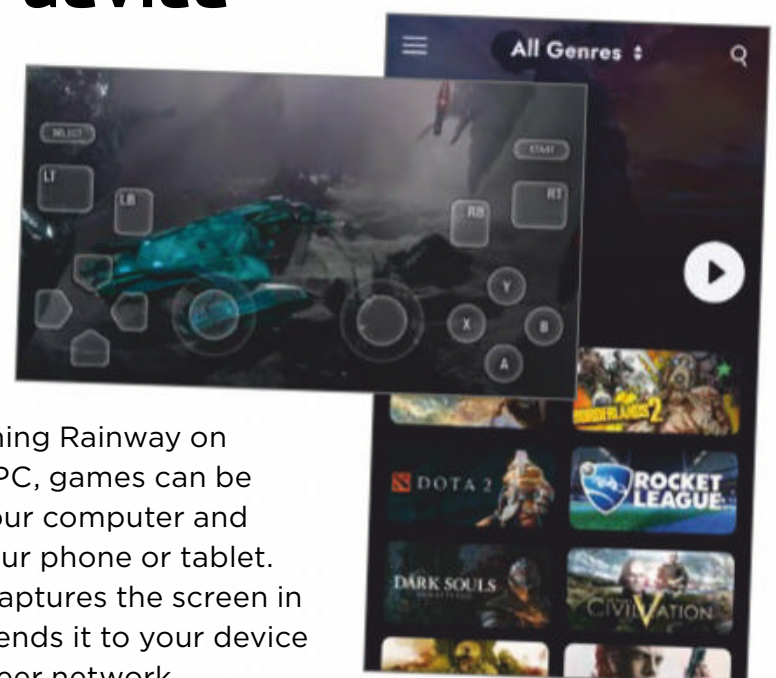


## Stream PC games to your mobile device

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

With Rainway's new apps for iOS and Android, you can play your favourite PC games on your mobile device. By running Rainway on a Windows 10 PC, games can be launched on your computer and streamed to your phone or tablet. The software captures the screen in real time and sends it to your device via a peer-to-peer network.

Since you'll be playing games that you already own from services such as Steam, Xbox Game Pass and Epic Games, you won't need to fork out for new copies. You can also enjoy the titles by connecting a gamepad or by using your fingers on the screen to replace the mouse input. It takes less than a minute to get everything up and running (simply scan a QR code on the PC's Rainway Dashboard), and the entire service is free to use.





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

## Learn how eco-friendly your area is

[bit.ly/ecofriendly493](https://bit.ly/ecofriendly493)

Enter your postcode in Friends of the Earth's new online tool to display collected data for your area, looking at transport, waste, renewable energy, housing and the percentage of tree coverage, together with an overall percentage score out of 100. The site offers advice on how you can help improve this score and provides the option to view the area's full dataset.

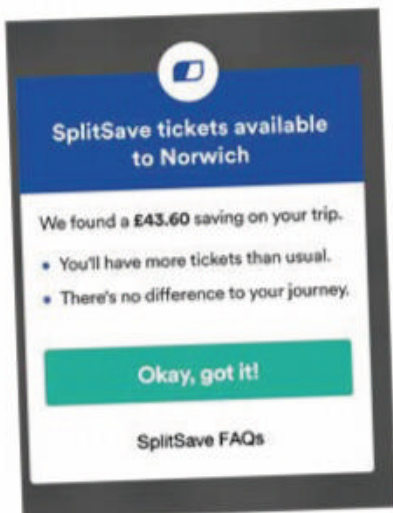


## Save money by splitting rail fares

[bit.ly/split493](https://bit.ly/split493)

Travel-booking service Trainline has launched a new tool that lets you save money on rail travel by buying multiple tickets covering different stages of the same journey. It's not a new idea, but SplitSave now works within the Trainline app for Android and iOS, so you can simply search for tickets as normal and be alerted if

splitting tickets proves cheaper. In each case, the SplitSave options is flagged, with a detailed breakdown of the tickets involved so you can buy them all at once. The tickets can then be saved in the Trainline app or your Apple Wallet.



## See how Europe's motorways grew

[bit.ly/motorway493](https://bit.ly/motorway493)

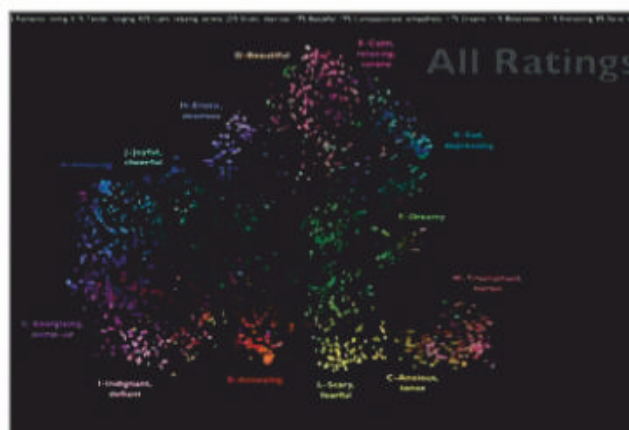
In 1924, Italy completed the world's first motorway, from Milan to Varese; it took another 34 years for the UK to follow suit with the Preston Bypass. To see how the rest of Europe's motorway network evolved, take the Victoria & Albert Museum's interactive map for a spin. It charts the development of the continent's superhighways – just keep scrolling to see the road network build before your eyes. You can also select a specific year and click Read More for extra information, including the length of the road, get a close-up view and map city names and ferry routes. The map has a night mode, too.



## Explore emotions evoked by music

[bit.ly/music493](https://bit.ly/music493)

According to a new study in which participants in the US and China were asked to listen to snippets of music and describe their feelings, tunes can evoke more than 13 key emotions in human beings. You can explore these emotions plotted on an interactive map that lets you hover over colour-coded categories, hear music samples and see the emotions registered.



## NEW VOICE COMMANDS



### Delete your last request

If you accidentally trigger Google Assistant into action, you can cancel your most recent voice command by saying, "Hey Google, that wasn't for you".



### Use To Do shortcuts

Users of the Microsoft To Do app can now use Siri shortcuts as of version 2.7. This lets you create shortcuts that open specific lists or add new tasks. Find them in your To Do settings and tap Add Task.



### Play a board game

Alexa can now play along with the board game Ticket to Ride. You need to have the physical product, then say: "Alexa, launch Ticket to Ride" and it'll join in, play sound effects and even keep score.



## Check the world's most at-risk locations

[bit.ly/atrisk493](https://bit.ly/atrisk493)

This interactive map assesses the world's most dangerous countries based on medical concerns, road safety and security. Select a tab to see a global, colour-coded risk profile and search for a specific country or city for an evaluation.

## Listen to Radiohead songs

[bit.ly/radiohead493](https://bit.ly/radiohead493)

Radiohead let fans pay what they wanted for *In Rainbows* and now you can stream the band's entire discography on YouTube for free, with videos where available.

## Browse historic butterfly images

[bit.ly/butterfly493](https://bit.ly/butterfly493)

Drawing on digital records from the Natural History Museum, this collection of 150,000 butterfly images from the past 100 years has been organised and classified using deep learning.



## Facebook and eBay pledge to crack down on fake reviews

### What happened?

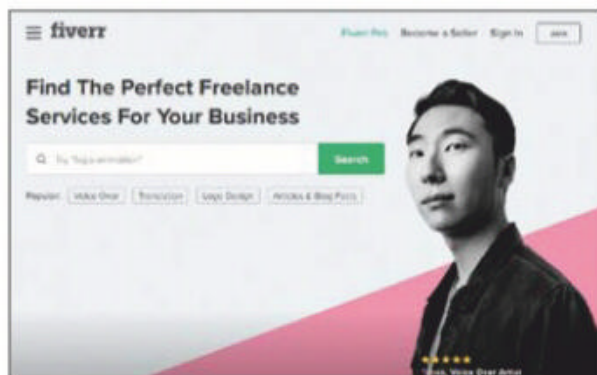
Facebook and eBay have promised to hit back against the fake reviews flooding their websites, but only after pressure from the UK's competition regulator.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) convinced both tech giants to sign up to agreements to make more effort to identify and remove dodgy reviews. That follows an investigation by the CMA last year, which identified more than 100 eBay listings selling fake reviews and more than two dozen Facebook groups offering to write fabricated reviews.

The watchdog stressed that neither Facebook nor eBay had intentionally allowed such activity – both companies removed the offending groups and listings when informed last year, as well as banning hundreds of users.

Now, both sites are promising to be more proactive. Facebook said it would use more robust systems to spot such content, while eBay will improve its existing filters. However, a quick search reveals that plenty of “reviewers” groups remain on Facebook. And they aren't the only sources of dodgy reviews: in recent years, US regulators have targeted gig-economy site Fiverr and the rather obviously named [amazonverifiedreviews.com](http://amazonverifiedreviews.com) in the battle against fake reviews.

The CMA action comes as Amazon has also promised to do more to fight fake reviews, after a *Daily Mail* investigation ([bit.ly/mail493](http://bit.ly/mail493)) revealed that marketing firms were selling false reviews by dubious testers for as little as £13 each.



**Fiverr has been targeted by US regulators for letting users buy and sell fake reviews**



Credit: Rawpixel.com / Shutterstock.com

That's illegal in the UK, though most of the companies offering such services are based overseas. Amazon said it would take legal action against the companies involved, but said its efforts already catch the vast majority of dodgy reviews, and 99% of comments posted on the site are legitimate and authentic.

### How will it affect you?

According to the CMA, 75% of online shoppers read customer reviews before deciding what to buy, so fake praise has the power to influence a purchase.

The fake-review groups on Facebook operate by matching sellers – who offer products for free in exchange for positive ratings – with would-be reviewers. The reviews could end up on Amazon, TrustPilot or anywhere else, and are difficult for retailers to battle against, which is why Facebook needs to do more to ban such groups before the reviews are even generated.

Amazon has already spent hundreds of millions of dollars on a mix of automated systems and human investigators to take down false reviews but, inevitably, some still slip through. This means any online review should be considered carefully – if a product

seems too good to be true, you should assume that it is and seek independent advice from other sources before shelling out on a big-ticket item.

### What do we think?

It's embarrassing for Facebook and eBay that regulators had to force them into action over this long-standing problem, and that after investing hundreds of millions of dollars, Amazon still can't stop dodgy reviews.

This suggests that current efforts simply aren't enough, and raises the question of how journalists at tabloid

**“ If a product seems too good to be true, assume that it is and seek independent advice from other sources ”**

newspapers and investigators at the CMA are able to spot fake reviews containing misleading and bogus information, yet the companies

in question – with all their money and automated systems – cannot.

A positive review on eBay, Amazon and other sites helps retailers sell their products but, if we can't trust the information, there's no point in even allowing reviews. Much more needs to be done before such ratings are fully trustworthy again, if they ever were – and we shouldn't have to wait until regulators and watchdogs come sniffing around before the retail and web giants take action.



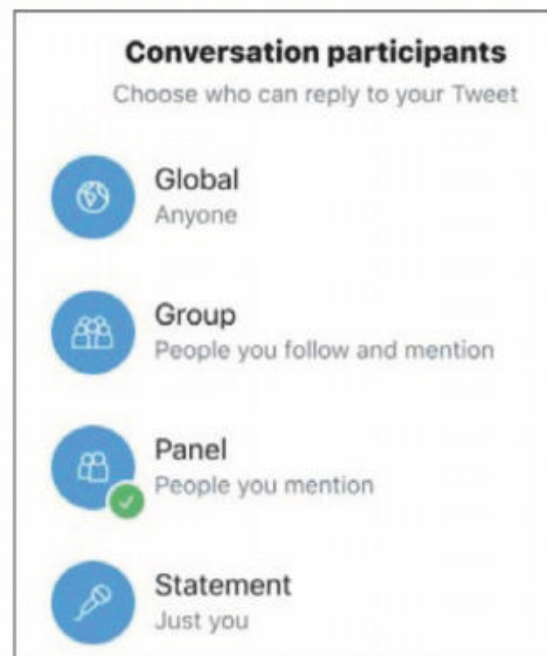
What we think of this fortnight's top tech news stories and rumours, and how they affect you

## Twitter to let users control tweet replies

### What happened?

Twitter is continuing its efforts to clean up abuse on the social network with a new feature that lets users restrict who can reply to their posts. The aim is to reduce "pile ons", when large numbers of people reply to a tweet with harassing or aggressive messages because they don't like something said in the original post.

The feature could also help to stop abuse by anonymous accounts because they won't be able to reply to all messages. Twitter has already introduced tools to limit which messages you see if you're worried about



offensive content, and this move is the latest effort to lessen the torrent of abuse and bullying on the site.

### How will it affect you?

Twitter said the idea will be

tested early in 2020 and, if successful, will roll out across the site globally later in the year. If and when it does arrive, you'll have four options for each post: Global, Group, Panel and Statement.

The Global setting lets anyone reply to your tweet, as is the case now, while Group limits replies to people who you follow or mention in the tweet.

Panel allows replies from only those people you mention in the tweet and, with Statement, no replies are possible. Essentially, the settings provide control over who you're willing to have a conversation with.

Twitter is still developing the feature but staff at the company have suggested that users would still be able to quote a tweet if they want to discuss it.

### What do we think?

More control for Twitter users is generally a good idea, and this could help people who are frequently abused or trolled on the site. But it also makes it harder for users to dispute or correct false information in a tweet, and the spread of misinformation is another serious problem for the site. Twitter faces a challenge in that addressing one problem may make another situation worse.

## DuckDuckGo wins Android search ballot

### What happened?

DuckDuckGo ([duckduckgo.com](https://duckduckgo.com)) has won the auction to be advertised in the Android search-engine ballot, even though it disagrees with the system.

Google was forced by EU regulators to show Android users alternative search engines and browsers that they can use on their phones, rather than sticking with the default options of Google and Chrome. The initial ballot's alternative options appeared to be based on market share so, to address complaints from its rivals, Google ran a sealed-bid auction for three of the top four slots.

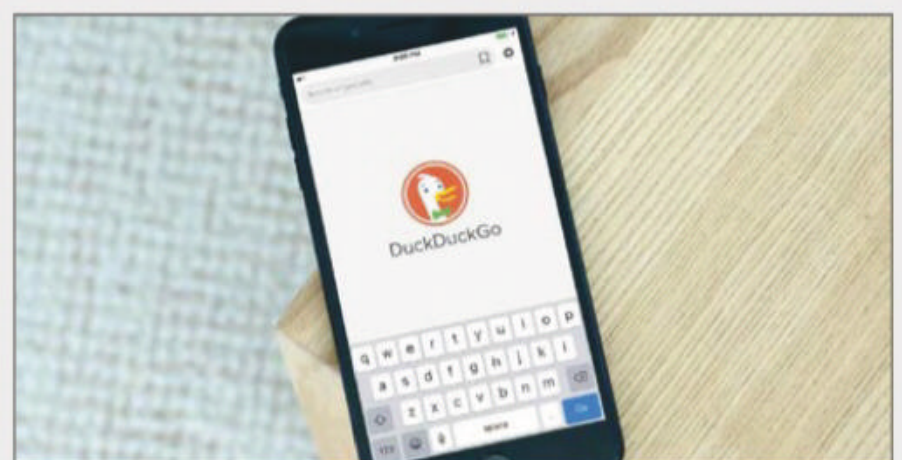
DuckDuckGo won one of those slots, which means

Google will offer the privacy-focused search engine as an option when users set up their new devices.

### How will it affect you?

This particular ballot only covers March until June of 2020, with another auction set to follow for browser-choice screens. By winning the auction, DuckDuckGo will be listed as a Google alternative to all European markets for that time period, alongside Info.com and, in the UK, Bing. One major rival, Ecosia, will not be shown because it refused to take part in the "pay to play" auction. DuckDuckGo also disagrees with the auction system, but still took part.

The screen is only shown during setup of a new phone,



reminding users that they don't have to use Google because other options are available. Of course, you can still switch to another search engine manually at any time.

### What do we think?

This is a complicated way to deal with the problem of Google's mobile dominance. Most phone users simply stick with the default settings

and apps, which makes it difficult for other, smaller developers to win market share - even if they offer a superior product. And DuckDuckGo is well worth a look for anyone who doesn't want everything they do online used to target them with ads. Don't wait for the search ballot on your next phone - try DuckDuckGo today.



# Police want to ban pay-as-you-go phones

## What happened?

The police have called for a ban of anonymous pay-as-you-go mobile phones in a bid to stop county-lines drug dealers. The term refers to city drug dealers who expand their network into smaller towns, crossing 'county lines'. Using violence to overthrow local drug dealers, these gangsters then force young and vulnerable people from the city to act as drug runners far from home ([bit.ly/county493](https://www.bit.ly/county493)). Anonymous mobile phones, known as 'deal lines', are essential to the operation's success.

In a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), which inspects the UK's police forces, the organisation suggested that criminals are easily circumventing current laws, allowing them to operate unimpeded using phones that don't require or log their identity. The police liken the situation to banking – if banks require people to prove their identity to prevent fraud and money laundering, why don't mobile-phone networks?

According to the police inspectorate: "It is easy for anyone, including drug



dealers, to anonymously get a replacement mobile phone and number through 'pay as you go' services. We were told of one example where a county lines network received and shared a new number within an hour."

HMIC believes the government must begin a review of the situation, saying: "the present arrangements that enable criminality by allowing the anonymous acquisition of phones and numbers, should be re-examined".

## How will it affect you?

Assuming you're a decent, law-abiding

*Web User* reader – rather than a dangerous racketeer – and you use a pay-as-you-go phone, the biggest impact will be control over your private information. One reason why many of us are resistant to handing over our personal details to a network provider is that, sure as night follows day, you'll be bombarded with marketing emails. The new rules may also force people into signing up for mobile-phone contracts they don't really want.

## What do we think?

If the ban helps limit the impact of county-lines drug dealing, which destroys many lives, then we're not averse to identifying ourselves to our mobile networks. But – and it's a big but – bans of this nature often end up only affecting the 'good guys'.

Preventing the sale of anonymous mobile phones won't stop county-lines drug dealing and will probably just drive the perpetrators even further underground, as criminals move to encrypted internet-based platforms such as WhatsApp and Signal – if they haven't already. And that could make catching them even harder.



## FIRST LOOK

### Lenovo ThinkPad X1 Fold

[bit.ly/think493](https://www.bit.ly/think493)

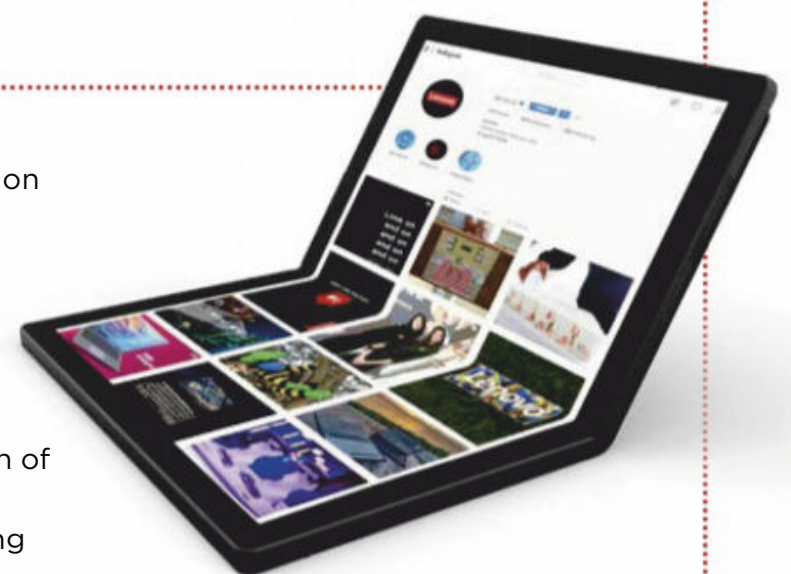
Lenovo unveiled its new ThinkPad X1 Fold at this year's CES trade show in Las Vegas. Scheduled to launch later this year, it's set to become the world's first foldable computer.

The X1 Fold features the same exceptional build quality as Lenovo's traditional ThinkPad line-up: hard-wearing, no-nonsense and – at its heart, at least – built for business. Don't write it off as a mere gimmick – from what we've seen of the Fold, it's a solid device that seems to have ironed out the kinks found in other bendables. Mind you, with a £2,500 price tag, we'd expect little else.

Lenovo states that the device has been in development for over four

years, which includes more than 20 different variations before it settled on the X1 Fold's 4x3 aspect ratio and 13.3in display. The laptop's durability is increased by a distinctive, multi-layered leather cover that not only protects the Fold, but also adds a touch of class. According to the manufacturer, each of the two OLED screens can display independently of each other, allowing users to multi-task with ease.

Running on Windows 10 – as well as Microsoft's forthcoming dual-screen OS Windows 10X, "at a later date for an enhanced foldable user experience" – the laptop-cum-tablet features an Intel Lakefield hybrid processor, 8GB of RAM and a 1TB solid-state drive in the premium model. In a nod to the device's portability, the Fold also supports a SIM card and optional 5G connectivity, while



it's made as versatile as possible with the inclusion of an Active Pen stylus and Bluetooth Mini Fold keyboard.

The ThinkPad X1 Fold is due to go on sale in mid-2020, with prices starting at £2,500. However, the Windows 10X operating system won't be available until the end of the year, by which time we hope the device will have come down in price.





## WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

## Is the Millennium bug biting again?

Cast your minds back 20 years and you'll recall that, as Big Ben struck midnight, banks wiped account details, planes fell out of the sky and humanity faced a digital apocalypse.

Nope, it didn't happen – but, at the time, the threat of the Millennium bug was alarmingly real. Experts explained that, due to the way dates had been coded into programs, computers would read '00' not as '2000', but as '1900', throwing our entire civilisation into a tailspin.

Now it's feared that the Millennium (or Y2K) bug could be making a comeback. In New York, parking meters unexpectedly went offline, preventing card payments. Meanwhile, wrestling video game WWE 2K20 also stopped working – and could only be played by changing the date to 31 December. Rumours abound that a recent subway system software fail in Hamburg was also the result of the revived Y2K bug.

It seems that rather than fix the root cause, some developers lazily swept the problem under the millennial rug by altering the software date from '00' to '20'. Back in the late 1990s, companies spent around £400bn rewriting all the code to ensure the Millennium bug didn't happen. Now, much like the



Time Warp, some businesses may have to do it all over again.

## LIKELIHOOD RATING



It will surprise no one to learn that some developers took the easy way out – rewriting code from scratch takes time so, when faced with an unmissable deadline, it's understandable that corners were cut. We're unlikely to see the same level of hype and hysteria we witnessed 20 years ago but just be aware that the occasional 'software glitch' headlines that are likely to appear over the coming years perhaps are because, instead of solving the problem, some developers simply shifted the catastrophe to a back burner.

## ↑ WEBOMETER ↓

## WE LIKE...

## ↑ Royal Mail honours British games

Royal Mail has launched a set of 12 stamps celebrating UK-designed computer games from the 1980s and '90s. These include Worms, Wipeout, Elite and Dizzy, as well as four stamps commemorating Tomb Raider ([bit.ly/stamps493](http://bit.ly/stamps493)).



## ↑ AA accepts What3words addresses

Drivers who break down in unfamiliar locations can now use What3words ([what3words.com](http://what3words.com)) addresses to tell the AA exactly where they are, thanks to a new partnership between the motoring association and the location-technology company.



## WE DON'T LIKE...

## ↓ Amazon calls Honey a security risk

Amazon has warned online shoppers that the popular deal-finding browser extension Honey is a security risk that "tracks your private shopping behaviour". PayPal bought the add-on last year in a deal worth \$4bn (£3bn).



## ↓ Joker malware plagues Play store

More than 1,700 apps infected with malware known as Joker (or Bread) have been detected and removed from the Google Play store since 2017. The malware uses various techniques to register users for premium subscriptions.



## What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

## Low Cost Rockets for the UK

[bit.ly/rockets493](http://bit.ly/rockets493) | From £20

Heading to space isn't cheap – even more so if you plan on taking cargo. Award-winning Welsh startup Smallspark is seeking to drive the price down, with its low-cost, environmentally friendly rocket. This exciting proof-of-concept will help scientists explore new engineering designs to make space travel more affordable and encourage the UK government to fund space travel, as governments do in America, China and India. Designed to make multiple trips, backers can send messages into space for £50 and photos for a £100 pledge. Meanwhile, £500 investors can watch a live test firing of the rocket.





# Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

### Travelex hit by ransomware attack

The foreign-exchange company Travelex suffered a serious ransomware attack, which caused chaos for its customers and partner companies who rely on its systems to conduct financial transactions.

Travelex first detected that a "software virus" had compromised its services on 31 December and, as a precaution, took all its systems offline to prevent the malware from spreading any further. The firm subsequently confirmed that the virus was the ransomware known as REvil, also known as Sodinokibi.

The group behind the attack claimed to have taken approximately 5GB of customer data, and demanded a ransom of \$6m (approximately £4.6m) to return it.

The data is believed to comprise dates of birth, national insurance numbers and credit card information.



Travelex is now in discussions with the National Crime Agency (NCA) and the Metropolitan Police, who are both conducting their own investigations into the breach. It apologised to customers "for the inconvenience caused".

[bit.ly/travelex493](https://bit.ly/travelex493)

### Criminals exploit flaw in Firefox

Mozilla has patched a critical security flaw in its Firefox browser that's being actively exploited by criminals. The company said the vulnerability affects users running version 72.0.1 of Firefox



and confirmed that it's "aware of targeted attacks in the wild abusing this flaw". Firefox users should update their browsers immediately.

The flaw allows an attacker to seize control of an affected computer through a mechanism that causes 'type confusion', according to Mozilla. This is a potentially critical error that can lead to data being read from or written to locations of memory that are normally out of bounds. When triggered, it can lead to an exploitable crash when the browser attempts to manipulate JavaScript objects.

It's the second time in seven months that Firefox has sustained a critical zero-day vulnerability being actively exploited in the wild. A previous flaw, discovered in June 2019, gave attackers the ability to execute arbitrary code on affected machines and, in some cases, take over users' devices remotely.

[bit.ly/firefoxflaw493](https://bit.ly/firefoxflaw493)

Credit: Ascannio / Shutterstock.com

## Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

**THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:**  
**Vyacheslav Zakorzhevsky,**  
Head of Anti-Malware  
Research at Kaspersky  
([www.kaspersky.co.uk](https://www.kaspersky.co.uk))



**Q**

**Did malware attacks get worse in 2019?**

Jason Hines, Twitter

**A**

The volume of online attacks has been growing for years but, in 2019, certain types of attack became less effective and hackers focused on gaining profit

from users.

This is partly because we've become more aware of the threats and how to avoid them, and organisations are more responsible.

A good example is cryptominers, which have lost their popularity due to lower profitability and cryptocurrencies' fight against covert mining. Attempts to install programs that secretly generate cryptocurrency on users'



**“**

There has been an increase in attackers using online skimmers to steal credit card data from websites **”**

computers (called 'local' miners) have dropped by 59%.

We witnessed growth in zero-day exploits, which shows that many products remain vulnerable and are used for sophisticated attacks, a trend that is likely to continue in the future. Meanwhile, the share of new backdoors and banking Trojan files, among all types of threat detected by Kaspersky, grew by 134% and 61% respectively.

Most notably, we saw an increase in online skimmers (sometimes referred to as sniffers), where scripts are embedded in online stores and used to steal customers' credit card data from websites. There was a 187% growth in the number of online skimmers' unique files (scripts and HTML) detected by Kaspersky.

Web skimmers also entered the top 20 malicious objects detected online, taking 10th place in the overall ranking.



**CTRL** your web business and **SHIFT** projects from good to great. **DEL** time-intensive administration and access management. **ESC** from long working nights with cold pizza. Your **ALT**ernative: The **IONOS Partner Program** for agencies, developers and designers.  
[www.ionos.co.uk/partner-program](http://www.ionos.co.uk/partner-program)





# ★ Best New Websites

## Site of the Fortnight

CARTOONS

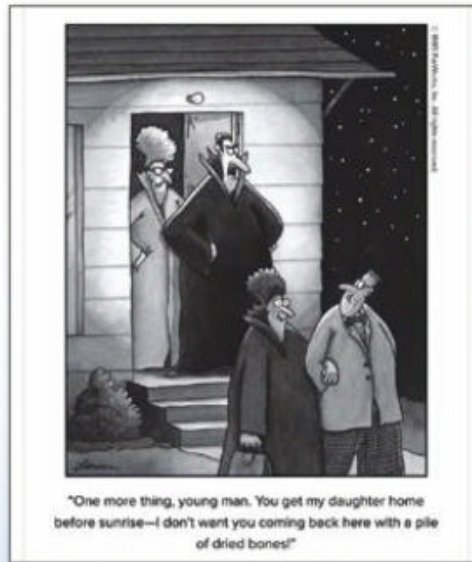
NEW

### The Far Side

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

As if the world isn't currently surreal enough, up pops cartoonist Gary Larson with a reprisal of his wacky comic-strip series, The Far Side – staple of some 1,900 daily newspapers between 1980 and 1995. The website serves up daily cartoons while enthralling fans with previously unseen sketches and doodles. According to Larson's publisher, new work will be unveiled at various stages over the coming year and themed collections are being updated weekly. You can't search for cartoons and the site doesn't use tags but the blog-like format does at least encourage repeat visits and there's plenty to twist your mind around.

Our rating



#### DAILY DOSE

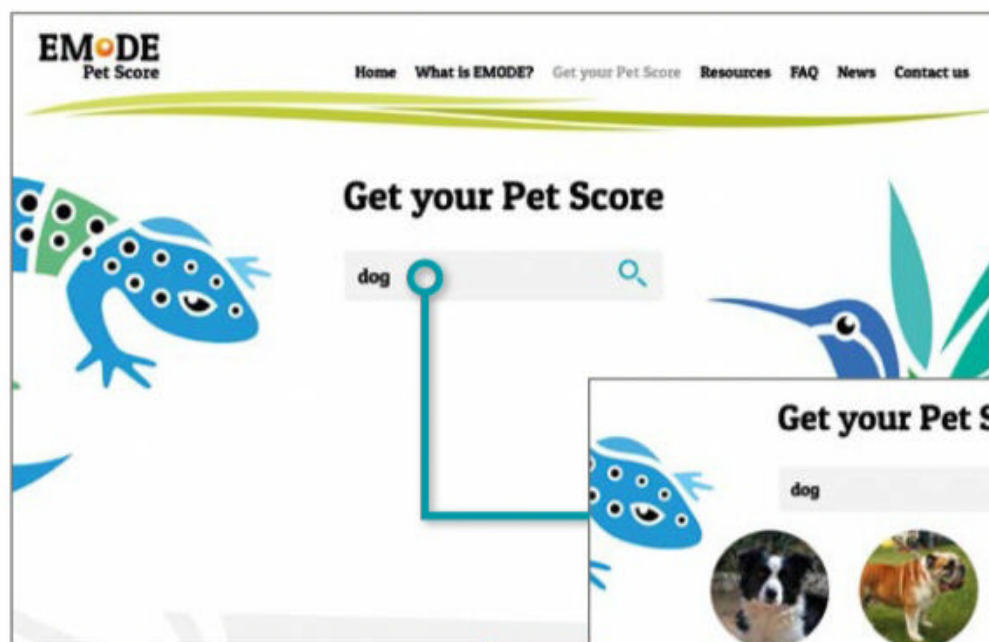
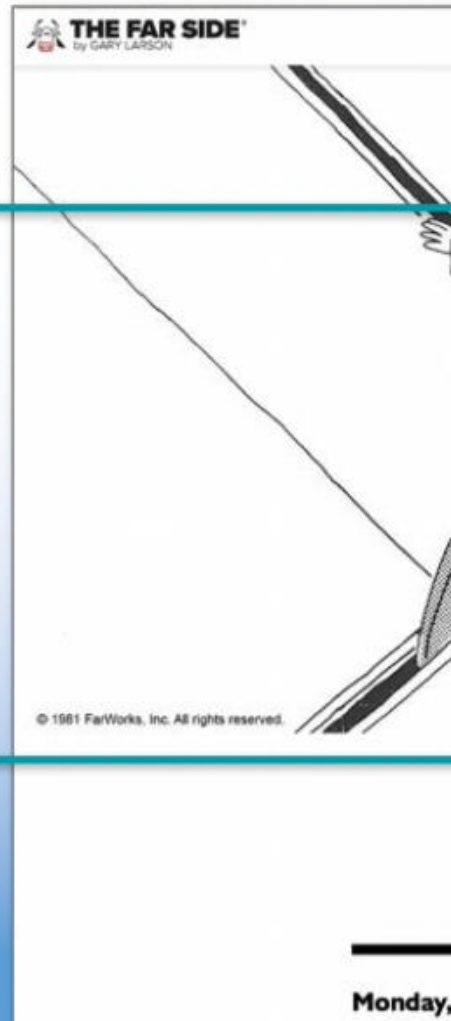
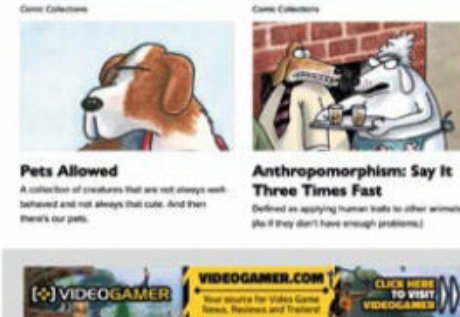
A selection of shareable cartoons are posted each day, inviting likes and comments

#### COMIC COLLECTIONS

Curated, themed collections of comics, updated every week

#### COMIC COLLECTIONS

Each week brings another set of Far Side cartoons set around a particular theme



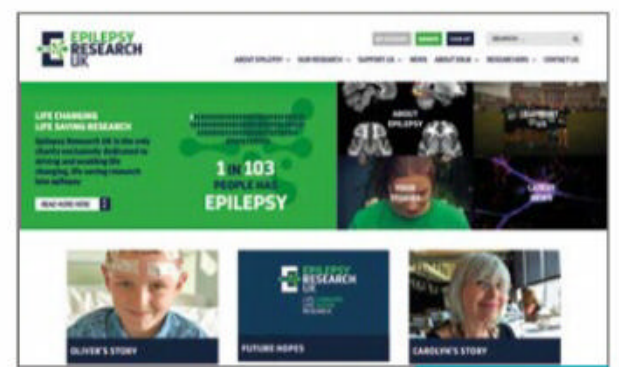
PETS

### EMODE Pet Score

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

Certain animals make better pets than others, so scientists and vets have created a ranking system called EMODE which, by letting you enter the species or common name of an animal into this website, tells you whether looking after it will be easy, moderate, difficult or extreme. In each case, the scores are clearly displayed and broken down, calculated according to how sensitive an animal is along with how long they live, their diet, their habitat and potential threat. The well-designed site also offers an abundance of advice and top tips, as well as a handy section that examines the cost of pet ownership in terms of money and space.

Our rating



HEALTH

### Epilepsy Research UK

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

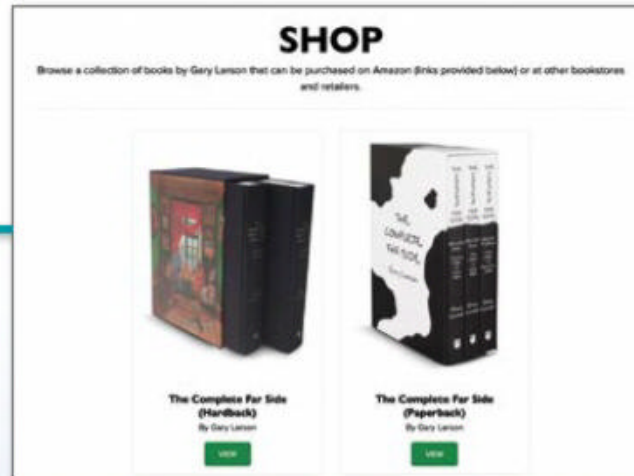
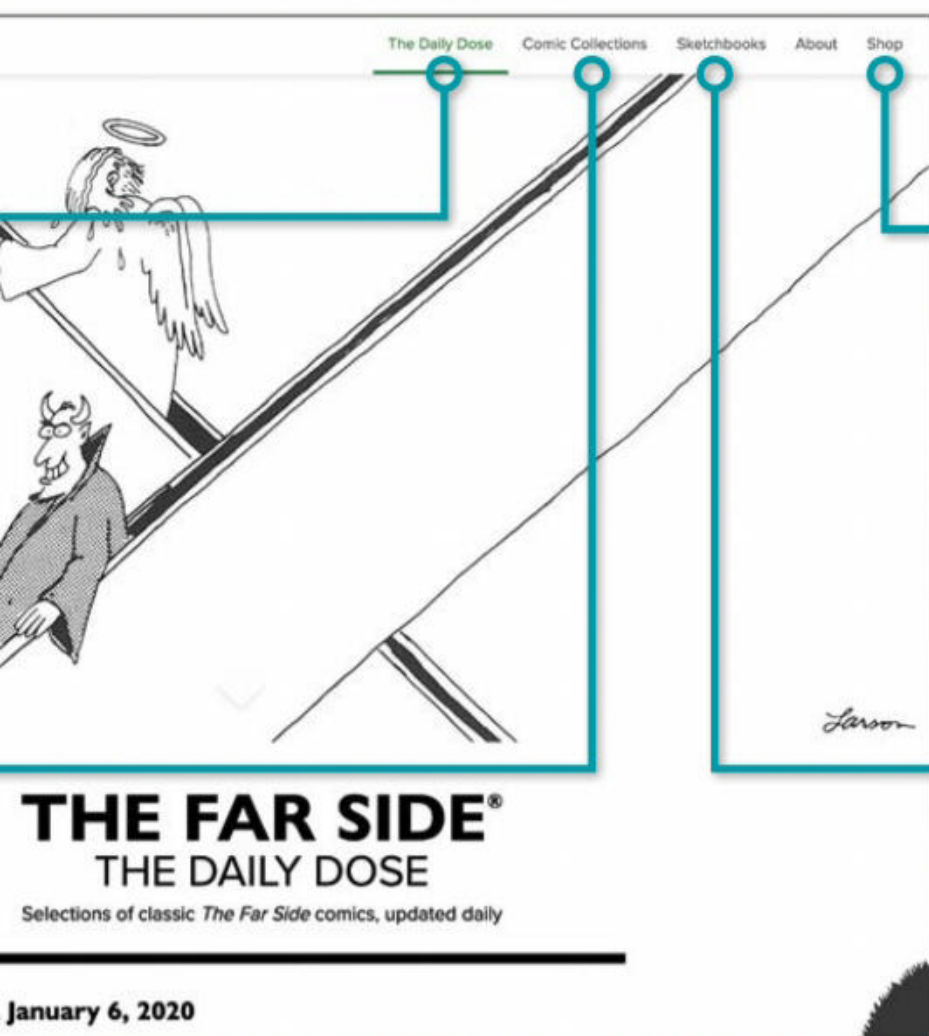
Epilepsy Research UK's redesigned website is now more immediate and approachable, providing better insight into the medical research being carried out and the people it is helping. The most noticeable improvement is to the pages explaining the causes, diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy. Once primarily made up of simple blocks of text, these now include headlines, charts, diagrams, images and expandable sections where you can learn even more. There's also lots of news, case studies and info about research and fundraising, along with an easier way to make donations.

Our rating





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

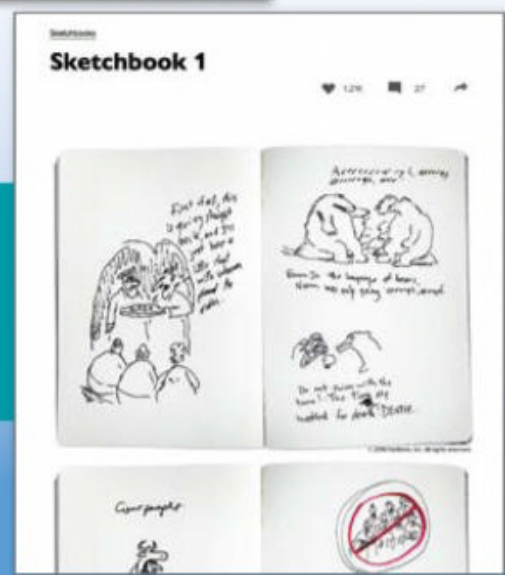


## SHOP

As well as learning more about Gary Larson, you can browse and buy Far Side books from Amazon.com

## SKETCHBOOKS

Larson doodled his cartoons in a series of sketchbooks and he's sharing them here



## RELAUNCH

### SOCIETY

## Looking Out For Our Neighbours

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

Relaunching the campaign to combat loneliness and social isolation, this site has made some subtle yet effective tweaks to increase engagement. The new Get Involved button suggests 'Simple things you can do', along with associated downloads such as safety sheets and recipes, while new additions include an inspiring news section and videos showing the impact a simple "hello" can have on others. Visitors are encouraged to use the hashtag [#OurNeighbours](https://twitter.com/OurNeighbours) on social media to share their own stories and promote the scheme.

Our rating



## RELAUNCH

### TRANSPORT

## Transport for Wales

[tfwrail.wales](http://tfwrail.wales)

Aiming to get commuters back on track for the long haul, Transport for Wales has added a season-ticket buying option to its homepage. Just click the relevant tab, select where you want to go to and from, indicate a start date, add a railcard and select a ticket type to view the options and make a purchase. The rest of the site remains much the same, with options to switch between Welsh and English, see destinations and view travel updates. Timetables and a link to download the app have been added to the Planning Your Journey section and the site is as easy to get around as ever.

Our rating



## NEW

### POLICE

## Major Incident Public Portal

[mipp.police.uk](http://mipp.police.uk)

If, heaven forbid, you witness a disaster or a terror attack, you can now upload photos and videos to the police using this new major-incident hub. Designed to make investigations less time-consuming and allow a greater flow of information, it lists each UK force by name and logo while highlighting any key incidents that have taken place nationally. Clicking an active incident lets you read about it and discover how you may be able to help, and information can then be submitted anonymously by filling in a form. It's also possible to request a callback and see if Crimestoppers is offering any rewards.

Our rating







NEW

CRYPTOCURRENCY

**Nakamoto**  
[nakamoto.com](http://nakamoto.com)

Named after Satoshi Nakamoto, the inventor of Bitcoin, this site has already divided the cryptocurrency community. Despite involving several crypto personalities, including the co-founder of Ethereum, Vitalik Buterin, and Brian Armstrong, CEO of Coinbase, there are objections to its pro-Bitcoin stance and fears that contributors may use the platform as a promotional tool. Either way, there are interesting articles to get your teeth into, covering the culture and philosophical principles of Bitcoin, as well as explorations of the technical side. Articles can also be saved via Pocket and shared on social media.

Our rating ★★★★★



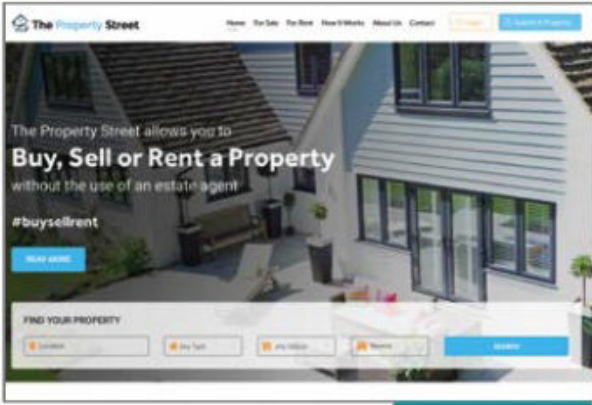
NEW

HISTORY

**Sharing Swindon's Story**  
[swindonstory.uk](http://swindonstory.uk)

The town of New Swindon was created in 1841 but, in 1900, it joined with Old Swindon under a charter signed by Queen Victoria to create a single municipal borough. This website, created by 40 young people, looks back over those 59 years, telling the town's story from its beginnings to the creation of the Railway Village, Mechanics' Institution, GWR Park and more. With fascinating photos and written insights into the era, the site is both slick and simple to navigate. You can also learn more about the project and watch videos, including a wonderful documentary about the life of a Swindon Railway Worker.

Our rating ★★★★★



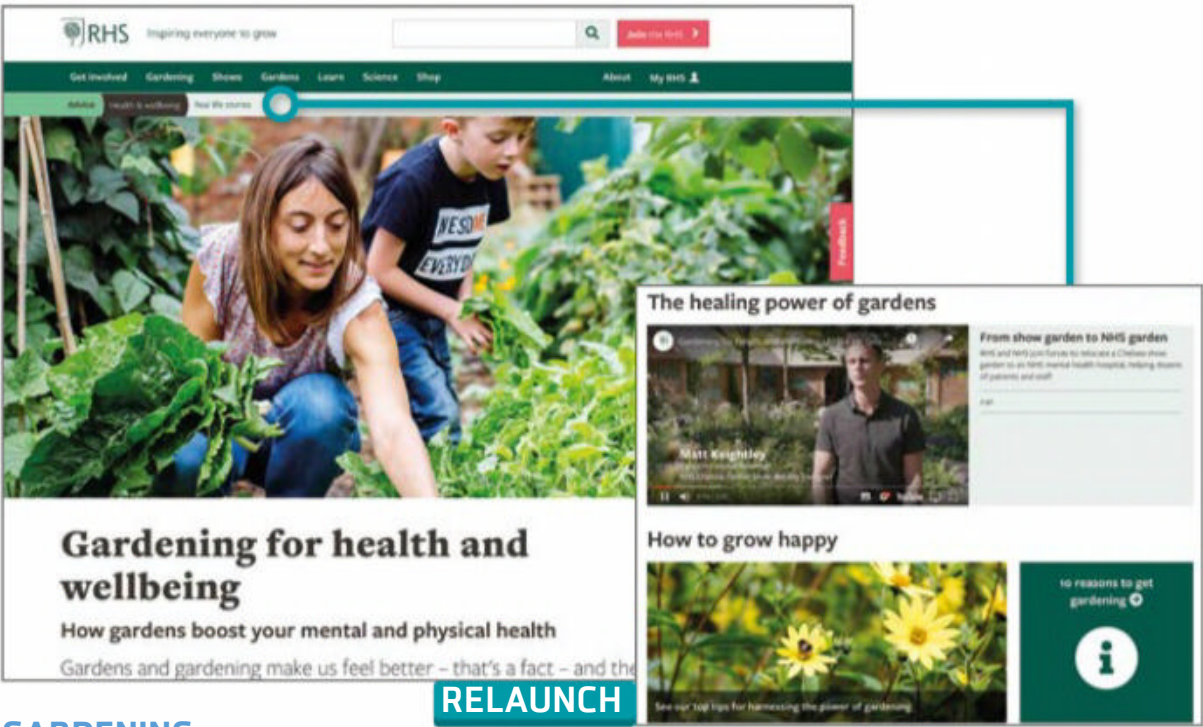
RELAUNCH

PROPERTY

**The Property Street**  
[www.thepropertystreet.com](http://www.thepropertystreet.com)

The Property Street lets buyers, sellers, tenants and landlords circumvent estate agents and do business directly. You'll have to arrange viewings and haggle on price yourself but the management dashboard should inspire confidence, showing successful viewings and offers while detailing steps such as instructing a solicitor, completing surveys and mortgages and exchanging contracts. Submitting a listing is as easy as filling in a comprehensive form and adverts can be placed for free for two weeks, costing up to £49.99 for six. Searching for homes is also easy but, currently, there are only a few properties to browse.

Our rating ★★★★★



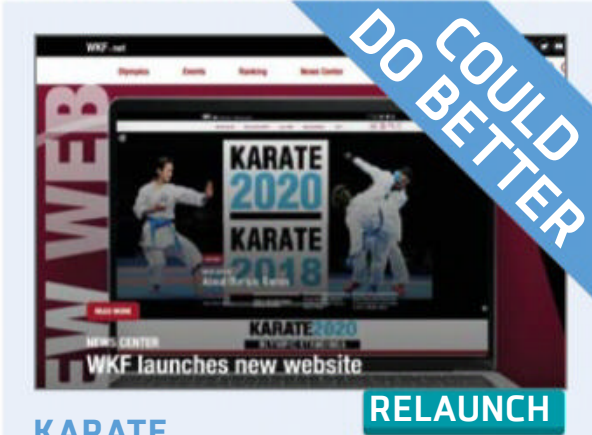
RELAUNCH

GARDENING

**Royal Horticultural Society**  
[bit.ly/royal493](http://bit.ly/royal493)

The trend towards promoting health and wellbeing has now taken root on the Royal Horticultural Society's website, helping you learn new skills and make new friends. A new section focuses on the mental and physical benefits of gardening, highlighting real-life stories and showcasing gardens specifically designed to promote positive feelings. Watch a video of a Chelsea show garden relocated to an NHS mental health hospital and read 10 reasons to get green-fingered, then check out the science supporting the theory, examining the healing power of nature. You can also learn the first steps towards successful planting and growing through a series of tutorials.

Our rating ★★★★★



RELAUNCH

KARATE

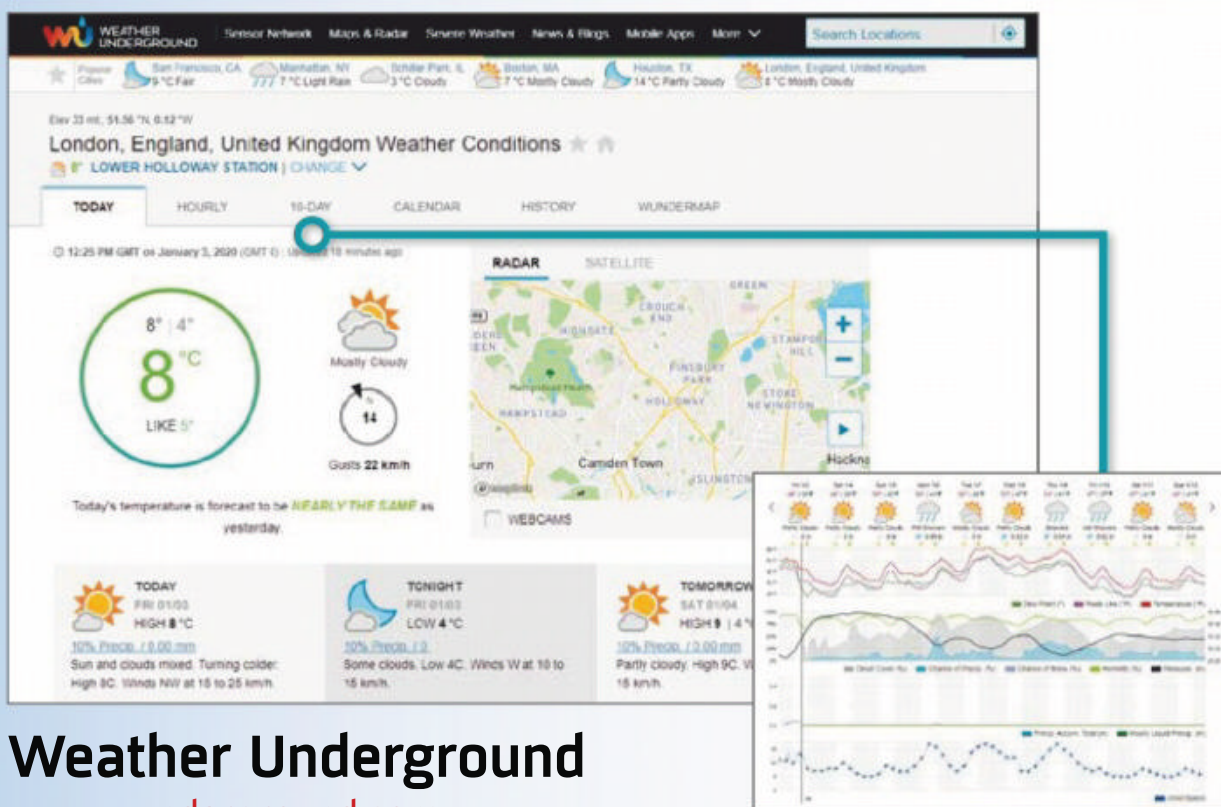
**World Karate Federation**  
[www.wkf.net](http://www.wkf.net)

The new official hub for the World Karate Federation is packed with features including videos, photos and the ability to share all the content via social media, with results, event information and competition details split into microsites for each tournament. However, the design feels too haphazard, with little thought for layout or content presentation. There are also too many annoyances: some story links take you straight to YouTube without warning, while one merely showed a photo and no extra content or explanation.

Our rating ★★★★★



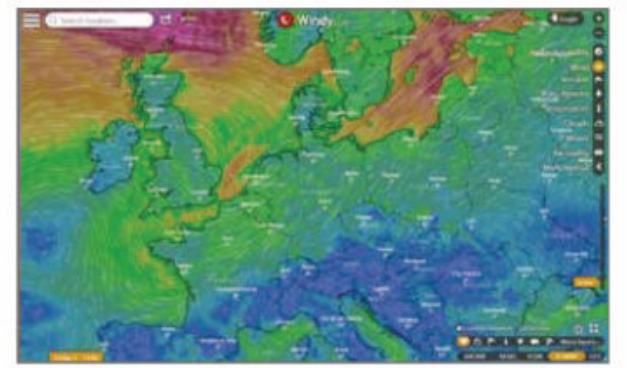
# ESSENTIAL BOOKMARKS THIS ISSUE: Wonderful weather sites



## Weather Underground

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

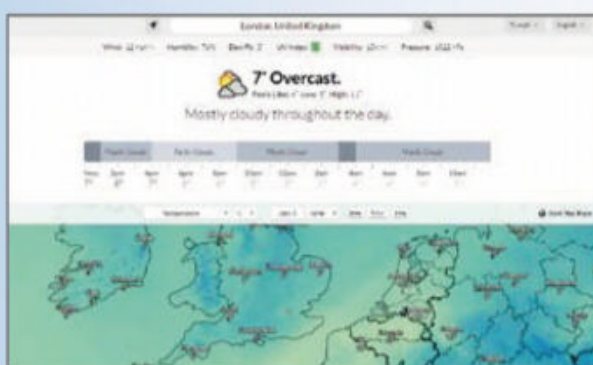
If you're wondering what the weather will be like today, Weather Underground gives you a far more comprehensive and accurate answer than you'll get from the BBC or Met Office. Tell the site your location to see a host of useful information for the next hour, day or 10 days – from the basics such as temperature, wind speed, general outlook and how conditions compare to yesterday; to radar and satellite maps with webcams, details of precipitation, air quality and pollen, a calendar view and even astronomical data, including the percentage of the Moon that's illuminated. The site lists all the local weather stations it sources data from and lets you explore them on its WunderMap. Just remember to change Fahrenheit to Celsius via the settings cog.



## Windy

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

Created by a self-confessed wind lover for fellow wind enthusiasts, Windy is a colourful animated map displaying current weather conditions across the world, as well as a forecast for the next 10 days. That may not sound particularly exciting but the presentation is superb, with a slick, simple design and some brilliant features to complement its wind focus. These include layers for rain and thunder, temperature, clouds, waves, air quality and much more, including a hurricane tracker, satellite imagery, a route planner for weather trackers, integrated webcams and the ability to create and share GIFs and videos of Windy's data. It's also a breeze to use!



## Dark Sky

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

Dark Sky is a weather site that's easy to navigate and delivers a flood of detailed, accurate data, allowing you to skim the surface or dive deep depending on the level of forecast you're after. As well as a brief overview, range of stats and a clear breakdown of the day's weather, the site offers brilliant 2D and 3D maps that let you select a time and date, and view visual precipitation forecasts, the UV index, wind speeds, cloud cover, feels-like temperature and more. Clicking a day presents the mass of data plotted on to timeline graphs and there's a wonderful Time Machine feature that shows you the weather conditions in both the past and the future. Dark Sky also offers excellent apps for Android and iOS, and even works on smartwatches.



## Severe Weather

[www.severe-weather.eu](http://www.severe-weather.eu)

With global temperatures climbing, increasingly frequent flooding and a worrying rise in bush and forest fires, severe weather is rapidly becoming the weather, and this site provides detailed reports and analysis of the latest events. Inviting visitors to "follow severe weather as it happens. Anywhere. Any time", it's updated several times a day, and illustrates its information with fascinating – if often alarming – charts, satellite images and maps. Although some sections of the site haven't been updated for a while, its social-media feeds are buzzing with severe-weather news and discussion, as well as stunning photos and videos submitted by its followers, and a weekly photography contest.



## UK Snow Map

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

So far, this winter has been more wet than white but, with snow forecast in many areas of the UK, this site can tell you where it's falling. Based on the fact that it only takes a few falling flakes for people to rush to social media proclaiming "it's snowing!", the site asks Twitter users to include the hashtag #uksnow with their location and a snow rating out of 10 in their tweets, so it can plot the info on a live map. Now entering its 10th year, UK Snow Map is a simple but useful idea that's more personal – and often more accurate – than standard weather reports, especially as many contributors share their snow photos and videos.



# Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

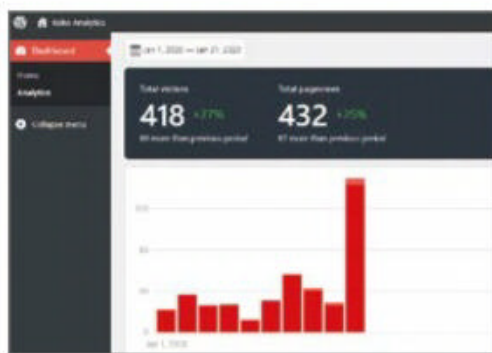
## Top Tips of the Fortnight

### Get a cut-price SSL certificate

If you run a website without an SSL certificate, Chrome flags it as “Not secure”. This isn’t a huge problem but your site will look more reputable and trustworthy if you have one. Your web host can sell you an SSL certificate, but it may be a premium add-on so you might get a better deal if you shop around. The website GoGetSSL ([gogetssl.com](http://gogetssl.com)) offers a range of certificates from various providers for as little as \$3.11 per year (around £2.40), if you commit to four years. There’s a 90-day free trial, so you can check the certificate works before committing.

### Privacy-focused analytics

Services that tell you about your visitors are a goldmine and, although Google Analytics gives you vast amounts of this information, it also means Google



sees everything. If you’d rather opt for a more private alternative, try Koko Analytics ([bit.ly/koko493](http://bit.ly/koko493)). Install this WordPress add-on and it will record the number of visitors to your site. The results are stored on your WordPress website and not shared with any third parties.

### Deal of the Fortnight

Bluehost ([www.bluehost.com](http://www.bluehost.com)) is offering hosting at half price – its Basic package is down to £3.90 per month and comes with a free domain for the first year.

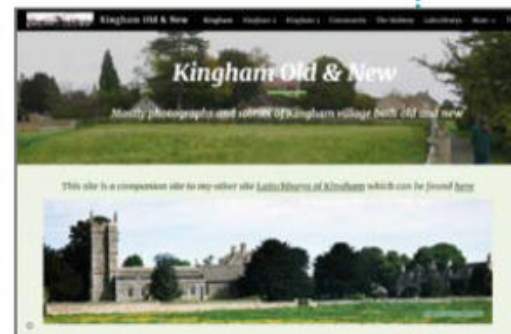
## Web-building Helpdesk

**Q** How do I get search engines to list my websites? I have two sites hosted on Google Sites and I have verified both, but only one of them appears in search results.

John, via email

**A** You’d think that Google would be able to see sites hosted on its own servers but apparently this is not the case. The best option is to create a link to the unlisted site on the homepage of the the listed site. We see you’ve already done that but the link you’ve used is a bit odd – presumably, created by Google Sites – and redirects from somewhere else. Manually update it to ensure it links straight to your unlisted site. Google should then do the rest.

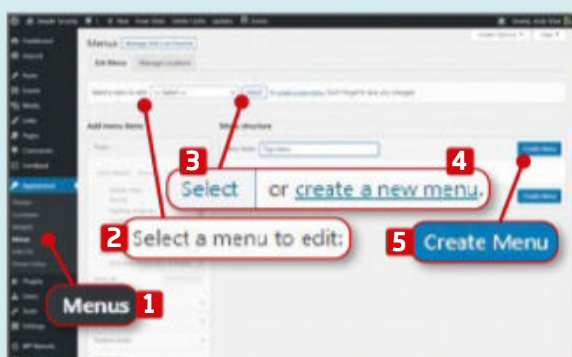
Andy Shaw, Technical & Reviews Editor



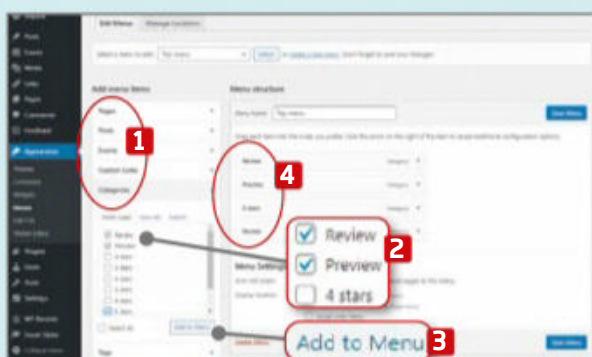
## MINI WORKSHOP | Create drop-down menus in WordPress

WordPress: [wordpress.org](http://wordpress.org) |  10 mins | Any WordPress website

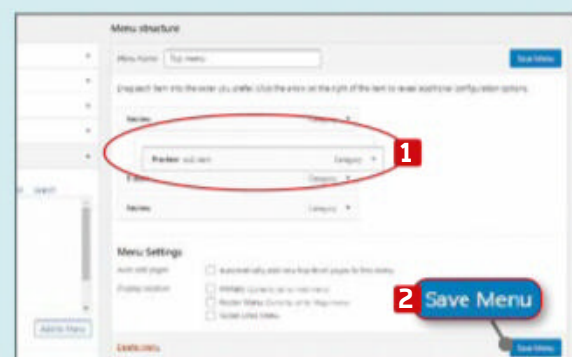
WordPress includes a handy tool for building menus that your site’s visitors can use to navigate their way around your site. It’s great for making lists of options and can also create drop-down menus



**1** In the sidebar, click Appearance, then Menus. **1** Choose the menu you want to work with from the ‘Select a menu to edit’ box **2** and either click Select **3** or ‘create a new menu’. **4** The latter lets you start from scratch – just give your menu a name and click Create Menu. **5**



**2** Open the various headings in the column on the left to view the Pages, Posts, Categories and Tags you can add to your menu. **1** Tick the boxes to add options, **2** then click the ‘Add to Menu’ button. **3** The options appear in the list on the right. **4**



**3** Once you have a list of options you’re happy with, you can drag and drop to rearrange them. To turn a menu option into a drop-down, drag the item you want in the menu below the heading, then drag it to the right. Wait for the indented dotted box to appear **1** before dropping it. Click Save Menu. **2**





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# What To Watch Online

## Pick of the fortnight

**NOW**TV



### Watch Captain Hugh Laurie in space satire *Avenue 5*

From 22 January

*The Thick of It* and *Veep* creator Armando Iannucci launches into space for his latest comedy, *Avenue 5*. And judging by the official trailer for the HBO/Sky show (free to watch at [www.hbo.com/avenue-5](http://www.hbo.com/avenue-5)), the journey hasn't blunted Iannucci's satirical skewer.

*Avenue 5* stars a dapper Hugh Laurie as Ryan Clark, captain of the titular interplanetary cruise ship. When a malfunction leaves it stranded in space, there's panic among the crew and passengers (including Rebecca Front and Nikki Amuka-Bird) and a shrug from *Avenue 5*'s useless tycoon Herman Judd (Josh Gad, aka Olaf in *Frozen*).

HBO's website has a couple of trailers but there's even more on YouTube, including an official teaser at [bit.ly/avenue493](http://bit.ly/avenue493) and a spoof advert for Judd's "Luxury Space Experience" at [bit.ly/judd493](http://bit.ly/judd493).

*Avenue 5*'s eight episodes air weekly on Sky One, three days after debuting on HBO. Stream on-demand via Now TV with an Entertainment Pass (£8.99 per month, [bit.ly/nowent493](http://bit.ly/nowent493)), and via Sky Go with a Sky subscription.



### Welcome back Patrick Stewart in *Star Trek: Picard*

From 24 January

The plot of the new *Star Trek* show is a closely-guarded secret, but who cares? Patrick Stewart is in it! Yes, *Next*

*Generation's* Captain Jean-Luc Picard returns to the *Trek* universe after two decades. And this time, he's got a dog.

*Star Trek: Picard's* 10 episodes arrive weekly, landing on Amazon Prime each

Friday after premiering on CBS in the US. An extended trailer ([bit.ly/picard493](http://bit.ly/picard493)) hints at reunions with beloved characters including Data (Brent Spiner), but CBS has geo-blocked other teasers. Follow [@primevideouk](https://twitter.com/primevideouk) on Twitter for new clips that you can actually watch.

If you need a catch-up, all seven seasons of *Next Generation* are on Netflix at [bit.ly/nextgen493](http://bit.ly/nextgen493).

### **N** Watch Netflix thriller *The Stranger*

From 30 January

Two years after Netflix scored a hit with its adaptation of Harlen Coben's novel *Safe* (still available at [bit.ly/safe493](http://bit.ly/safe493)), the team has reunited to bring another Coben thriller to the screen.

*The Stranger* stars Richard Armitage as a man reeling from a shock revelation about his wife Corinne (Dervla Kirwan). The supporting cast includes Jennifer Saunders, Anthony Head and Paul Kaye.

All eight hour-long episodes arrive on 30 January, at [bit.ly/stranger493](http://bit.ly/stranger493).



### **N** Watch new episodes of *Riverdale* and *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*

From 23/24 January

Two young comic-book heroes return to Netflix this fortnight. *Riverdale*, based on the Archie comics ([archiecomics.com](http://archiecomics.com)), is back with new episodes from Thursday 23 January at [bit.ly/riverdale493](http://bit.ly/riverdale493).

A fifth season has been announced as being in the works.

A day later, Kiernan Shipka returns with Season 3 of *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, whose eight new episodes join Seasons 1 and 2 at [bit.ly/sabrina493](http://bit.ly/sabrina493). Watch Netflix's



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



Season 3 announcement – all 14 seconds of it – at [bit.ly/chill493](https://bit.ly/chill493).

### **Watch Daniel Radcliffe get angelic on Sky Comedy**

From 27 January

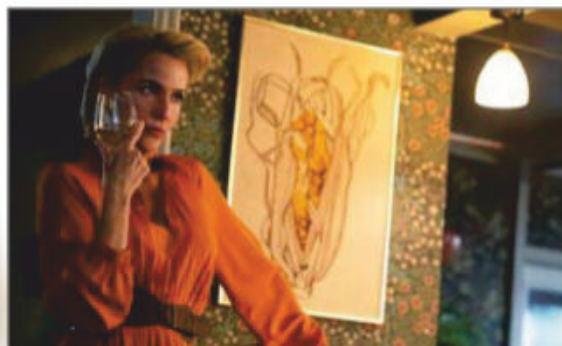
Daniel Radcliffe is a blue-collar angel and Steve Buscemi plays God in *Miracle Workers*, which arrives on the same day as new channel Sky Comedy. The show's trailers include Radcliffe welcoming you to 'Heaven Inc' ([bit.ly/heaven493](https://bit.ly/heaven493)) and Buscemi as a dressed-down deity ([bit.ly/god493](https://bit.ly/god493)).

Also arriving on Sky Comedy's launch day is *AP Bio*, starring US comedian Glenn Howerton as a philosophy professor turned biology teacher. Watch the trailer at [bit.ly/apbio493](https://bit.ly/apbio493).



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

*Sex Education* was one of Netflix's biggest hits of 2019, so the new Season 2 is unlikely to be the last. Watch the British comedy-



drama, which stars Gillian Anderson as a sex therapist and Asa Butterfield as her resourceful teen son, at [bit.ly/sexed493](https://bit.ly/sexed493). Also back

on Netflix is *Grace and Frankie*, the award-winning sitcom starring Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin. Watch new Season 6, plus trailers, at [bit.ly/frankie493](https://bit.ly/frankie493).

Amazon/BBC co-production *Good Omens* has finally arrived on the iPlayer, so you can watch it for free at [bit.ly/omens493](https://bit.ly/omens493)

– although you'll have to wait a week between episodes. The whole series is still on Amazon Prime ([bit.ly/omensam493](https://bit.ly/omensam493)).

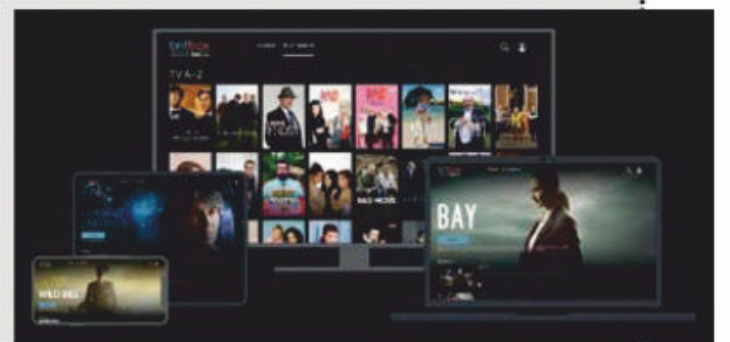
New to Apple TV+ is *Little America*, an anthology drama exploring the lives of immigrants. Watch the show with an Apple TV+ subscription (£4.99 per month after seven days free), and see the trailer at [bit.ly/little493](https://bit.ly/little493).

## BritBox comes to Chromecast

BritBox now supports Google's Chromecast streaming sticks, meaning the BBC and ITV's joint catch-up service is now available on around 10 million devices in the UK – around two-thirds of video-on-demand homes.

Panasonic's premium TVs, and smart TVs that use the Vestel platform (Toshiba, JVC, Hitachi, Bush and more), have also added a BritBox app. The app was already available on Samsung smart TVs, Apple TV, mobile, PC and Roku, although not Roku Express. Fire TV and YouView support is "coming soon".

Progress has been slow in other areas. Despite assurances that "most" BritBox content would have optional subtitles "by Christmas", closed-captioning is still largely absent, making the service all but unusable for the hard of hearing.



On 28 January, Sky Comedy adds long-runners *Saturday Night Live*, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* and *The Tonight Show*, with Season 10 of *Curb Your Enthusiasm* arriving the next day. Also coming soon is HBO's *The Righteous Gemstones*, starring John Goodman as a televangelist.

All Sky Comedy shows are included with a Now TV Entertainment Pass (£8.99 per month, [bit.ly/nowent493](https://bit.ly/nowent493)).

### **Wave farewell to BoJack Horseman**

From 31 January

Netflix's animated Hollywood satire *BoJack Horseman*, whose lead character just happens to be a horse, is a witty gem that's improved with



each of its six seasons – so Netflix is killing it off. They shoot horses, don't they?

Gallop to [bit.ly/bojack493](https://bit.ly/bojack493) to watch the final eight episodes on 31 January. Will Arnett returns as BoJack, along with Alison Brie (*Glow*) and Aaron Paul (*Breaking Bad*). Regulars past and present include Rami Malek, Stanley Tucci and Lisa Kudrow.



# Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

## Mini PCs

You don't have to clear your entire desk to make room for a computer. Instead, why not get a mini PC that has all the benefits of a desktop in a case that fits in the palm of your hand?

**O**ne of the most off-putting aspects of getting a new desktop PC for your home is having to accommodate a huge, unsightly machine that occupies acres of space around your monitor or encroaches on your leg space if you stash it under your desk. But there is a solution. If you're willing to sacrifice a bit of computing power, you can have a fully functional desktop PC that's a fraction of the size. Choose the right model and it could be a lot cheaper, too. Here, we compare five of the best mini PCs.

### HOW WE TESTED

This Group Test covers a range of PCs, two of which don't run Windows, so we couldn't employ our full suite of benchmark tests to make direct comparisons between them. However, we still ran some benchmarks, where we could,

to get a good idea of how powerful each device is.

In the final analysis, with such a wide range of prices and operating systems, we've had to use our own judgment to weigh up which devices were worthy of our awards.

### Raspberry Pi 4 Model B | £34 | Buy from The Pi Hut: [bit.ly/pi493](https://bit.ly/pi493)

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

The Raspberry Pi has been pushing the boundaries of affordable mini computers since it launched, but the Raspberry Pi 4 is the first to truly approach the capability of a regular PC. For £34, that's simply phenomenal.

The device now has two mini-HDMI ports, so it can be used to run two monitors at once. This works best at Full HD resolution (1080p), which supports a refresh rate of 60Hz, though it can manage two 4K screens, too, but only at 30Hz. The Pi also uses USB Type-C to power it.

The processor is a quad-core 1.5GHz Broadcom BCM2711 and is by far the best processor the series of Pi computers has had to date. The basic £34 model only has 1GB of memory, but 2GB (£44) and 4GB (£54) models are also available. What you can't do is buy a 1GB model now and upgrade it later so, when purchasing your Pi, we recommend you buy as much memory as you can afford – particularly if you're aiming to run your Pi as a regular computer.

We couldn't test the device with our standard suite of benchmark tests because the Pi doesn't run Windows, and there's not much point anyway because it's never going to compare well with a £300 Windows PC. However, it's significantly faster than the previous generations of



Raspberry Pi computers.

The Pi 4 can get a bit hot if running at full pelt so it's worth spending a little extra on a compatible passive heatsink or miniature fan, if you intend to run it continuously with demanding applications. In reality, it can run most basic tasks relatively smoothly, but it's nice to be able to call on a burst of power if a particular application needs it. It's noticeably slower than Windows users will be accustomed to, though.

The Pi is now equipped with decent network connections, including a built-in 802.11ac Wi-Fi network adapter and a full-speed Gigabit Ethernet port. It also has Bluetooth 5.0 and it still boots from a microSD card.

### VERDICT

★★★★★

The Pi 4 is unquestionably the Raspberry Pi Foundation's best ever model. It has the fastest processor and speediest network, along with the option to use dual monitors, which makes it an amazing option for the price. Not much has changed in how this latest model operates so, if you're familiar with an older Pi, you'll find it easy to get to grips with. It's just more powerful than ever.



## Acer Chromebox CX13 | £431.41 | Buy from Sotel: [bit.ly/acer493](http://bit.ly/acer493)

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



While most people are familiar with the concept of a Chromebook – a laptop computer that uses the browser as the core of its operating system and runs most of its apps over the web – the desktop-like Chromebox hasn't been as enthusiastically supported by manufacturers. However, it's essentially the same thing, except that it comes in a desktop-style configuration, including a mouse and keyboard, and needs connecting to a separate monitor.

The Acer Chromebox CX13 is a recent model that's available in a bewildering assortment of specifications. For example, you could get it with an Intel Celeron 3865U and 4GB of memory for around £280. The model we've used in the Group Test has a quad-core i5-8250U, 8GB of memory and a 64GB SSD. At £431.50, it's a bit expensive, but it runs Chrome OS like a dream. Our benchmarks don't let us compare ChromeOS devices to Windows machines but it feels remarkably smooth, even with lots of tabs open.

### VERDICT

★★★★★

The Chromebox CX13 runs Google's Chrome OS and is a great alternative if you want a more accessible operating system than the Raspberry Pi's Linux. It won't run Windows software but is well suited if you spend a lot of time in a browser.

## Minix Neo J50C-4 | £300 | Buy from OnBuy: [bit.ly/minix493](http://bit.ly/minix493)

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



Built around the Intel Pentium Silver J5005 processor, this affordable Windows 10 Pro PC won't stretch to running the latest games but it's still a capable Windows model considering its affordable price.

It only comes with 4GB of memory but you can open the case and upgrade it to 8GB without spending too much more money, which we would recommend.

Windows is installed on a 64GB eMMC storage device, so it's quick but doesn't leave a lot of room to store anything else. It only has three standard USB ports, though they're all USB 3, but it comes with an additional USB Type-C port, Gigabit Ethernet and 802.11ac Wi-Fi. You connect it to a monitor via its HDMI port.

For the price, it fared reasonably well in our Windows benchmark, scoring 33 overall. The Quiet PC (below, left) is faster but it's also vastly more expensive.

### VERDICT

★★★★★

If you're only willing to consider Windows as an operating system, this is an excellent PC – as long as your expectations aren't too high. It's pricier than a Pi, but more powerful, and costs less than the arguably less versatile Chromebox.

## Quiet PC UltraNUC Pro 8 Fanless | £745 | Buy from Quiet PC: [bit.ly/quiet493](http://bit.ly/quiet493)

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



Intel makes barebones PCs similar to the Raspberry Pi, but they're a lot more expensive and powerful. This is one such unit – an NUC83i3BEK, to be precise – that's been built up into a proper PC with 8GB of memory and a Samsung 250GB SSD with Windows 10 installed.

It's a great-looking PC that lives up to its silent name – the case itself acts as a cooler to transfer heat away from the processor. It did well in our benchmark tests, significantly outperforming the cheaper Minix PC (see review, right), but at more than twice the price, that's no surprise.

Generally, if performance is your priority in a PC, it's more cost effective to buy one that comes in a larger case. But if you want a mini PC the runs Windows well, and you're willing to pay for the privilege, this stylish model won't disappoint.

### VERDICT

★★★★★

This pricey Windows PC has a decent amount of fast storage, plenty of memory, runs silently and looks great. If you want good performance in a small PC, this is a great option, but you could get more for your money in a bigger package.

## Minix Neo G41V-4 | £254.90 | Buy from Amazon: [bit.ly/miniam493](http://bit.ly/miniam493)

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



If you're looking for a truly tiny Windows PC, this unit is only 38 x 290 x 290mm. There's no fan, so it runs silently, but it also doesn't have a cooling case, which means it can only run with a low-powered Celeron N4100 processor. Along with its 4GB of memory, this makes it relatively slow, but the affordable price reflects this. It's good enough for office work and web browsing, but will struggle with anything more sophisticated.






The 64GB of storage is disappointing. It's fast enough but its Windows installation takes up more than half of the drive's capacity. Fortunately, you can upgrade by accessing the storage from a flap on the underside. The device includes four USB ports, though only two of them are USB 3. It also has Gigabit Ethernet and 802.11ac Wi-Fi.

### VERDICT

★★★★★

This is the cheapest mini PC in this test that's capable of running Windows. However, it's a bit underpowered for anything except basic office and browsing tasks, and it doesn't have the modern ports of the Minix Neo J50C-4.



	 WebUser GOLD AWARD	 WebUser SILVER AWARD	 WebUser BRONZE AWARD		
	Raspberry Pi 4 Model B	Acer Chromebox CX13	Minix Neo J50C-4	Quiet PC UltraNUC Pro 8 Fanless	Minix Neo G41V-4
WEBSITE	<a href="http://www.raspberrypi.org">www.raspberrypi.org</a>	<a href="http://www.acer.com">www.acer.com</a>	<a href="http://minix.com.hk">minix.com.hk</a>	<a href="http://www.quietpc.com">www.quietpc.com</a>	<a href="http://minix.com.hk">minix.com.hk</a>
PRICE	£34	£431.41	£300	£745	£254.90
BUY FROM	The Pi Hut: <a href="http://bit.ly/pi493">bit.ly/pi493</a>	Sotel: <a href="http://bit.ly/acer493">bit.ly/acer493</a>	OnBuy: <a href="http://bit.ly/minix493">bit.ly/minix493</a>	Quiet PC: <a href="http://bit.ly/quiet493">bit.ly/quiet493</a>	Amazon: <a href="http://bit.ly/miniam493">bit.ly/miniam493</a>
PROCESSOR	Quad-core 1.5GHz Broadcom BCM2711	Quad-core 1.6GHz Intel Core i5-8250U	Quad-core 1.5GHz Intel Pentium Silver J5005	Dual-core 3GHz i3-8109U	Quad-core Intel Celeron N4100
MEMORY	1GB	8GB	4GB	8GB	4GB
GRAPHICS	Broadcom VC6	Intel UHD Graphics 620	Intel UHD Graphics 605	Intel Iris Plus Graphics 655	Intel UHD Graphics 600
MONITOR PORTS	2 x Micro HDMI	1 x HDMI, 1 x USB Type-C	1 x HDMI, 1 x DisplayPort, 1 x USB Type-C	1 x HDMI, 1 x Thunderbolt 3	1 x HDMI, 1 x DisplayPort, 1 x VGA
STORAGE	X	64GB SSD	64GB eMMC	250GB SSD	64GB eMMC
USB PORTS	2 x USB 2, 2 x USB 3	5 x USB 3, 1 x USB Type-C	3 x USB 3, 1 x USB Type-C	4 x USB 3, 1 x USB Type-C	2 x USB 2, 2 x USB 3
NETWORK	Gigabit Ethernet, 802.11ac Wi-Fi	Gigabit Ethernet, 802.11ac Wi-Fi	Gigabit Ethernet, 802.11ac Wi-Fi	Gigabit Ethernet	Gigabit Ethernet, 802.11ac Wi-Fi
SIZE	86 x 57 x 19mm	151 x 149 x 40mm	290 x 290 x 36mm	248 x 114 x 95mm	290 x 290 x 38mm
WARRANTY	One-year return-to-base	One-year return-to-base	One-year return-to-base	Two-years parts-and-labour	One-year return-to-base

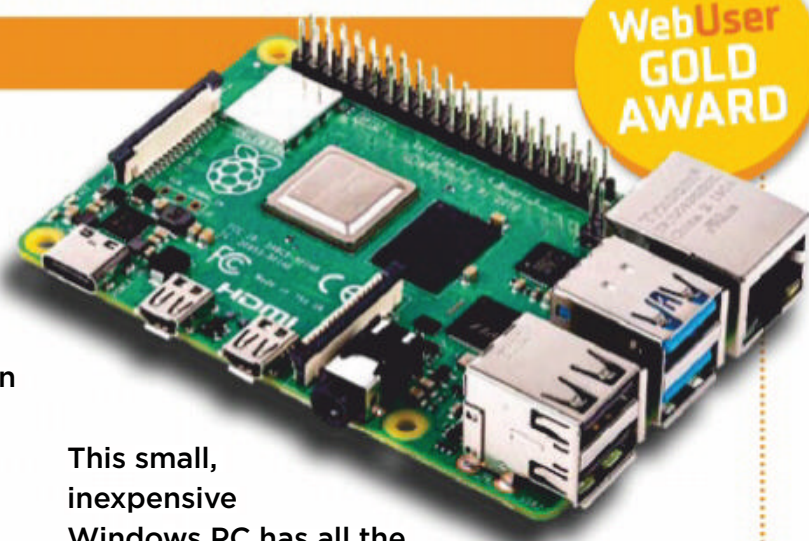
## OUR VERDICT

We gave our Gold Award to the latest Raspberry Pi because it's so affordable. Even if you opt for the model with the most memory, it's hundreds of pounds cheaper than anything else in this Group Test. Admittedly, it doesn't quite have the power to fully replace an everyday desktop PC but the current model makes such a good stab at it, you can't help but marvel at its abilities.

If you're happy to abandon Windows but don't want the complication of learning Linux,

you'll feel perfectly at home with our Silver Award-winner, the Acer Chromebox. Running Google's Chrome OS, this familiar browser-based operating system won't work with all your favourite Windows software but is more than powerful enough to run the plethora of web-based apps that are available instead, and it integrates well with cloud-based services such as Google Drive.

If you're not prepared to ditch Windows, try our Bronze Award-winner – the Minix Neo J50C-4.



This small, inexpensive Windows PC has all the right ports and network connections, and provides more than enough power to run your web browser and office software. ■





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# Web User's Best Buys

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## HARDWARE, SOFTWARE & SERVICES

### MINI PC

#### Raspberry Pi 4 Model B

£34 from [bit.ly/pi493](https://bit.ly/pi493)

**Tested:** Issue 493



This latest Raspberry Pi effectively provides a full desktop computer with the footprint of a book of stamps. Its fast processor and quick networking make it snappier than older models, and it can be set up to use with dual monitors.

#### KEY SPECS

Quad-core 1.5GHz Broadcom BCM2711 processor ■ 1GB memory ■ Broadcom VC6 graphics ■ 2 x Micro HDMI ports ■ 2 x USB 2, 2 x USB 3 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet, 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ 86 x 57 x 19mm ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

### SMARTPHONE

#### Google Pixel 3a

£399 from [store.google.com](https://store.google.com)

**Tested:** Issue 491



For a pure Android experience, the Google Pixel 3a can't be bettered for the price. It has a brilliant camera and an exceptional screen, plus the promise of access to future updates and security patches as soon as they're available.

#### KEY SPECS

8-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 670 processor ■ 4GB RAM ■ 64GB storage ■ 5.6in, 2,220 x 1,080 pixels resolution screen ■ 12.2-megapixel rear camera, 8-megapixel front camera ■ Android 9 ■ 151 x 70 x 8.2mm ■ 167g ■ 1-year return-to-base

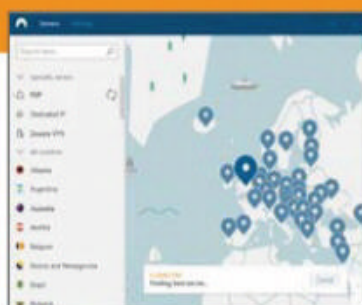
### VPN

#### NordVPN

From £2.29 per month from

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

**Tested:** Issue 489



NordVPN strikes the perfect balance between usability, features and price. It's easy to set up a private connection and it has servers in dozens of countries across the globe.

#### KEY SPECS

Six simultaneous connections ■ Choice of 60 countries ■ 5,500+ servers ■ IKEv2, OpenVPN protocols ■ Double VPN security ■ Router support ■ 1,000+ BitTorrent servers ■ Static IP option ■ Windows, macOS, Linux, Android, iOS, Fire TV

### LAPTOP

#### HP Pavilion x360

£679 from [bit.ly/hp487](https://bit.ly/hp487)

**Tested:** Issue 487



Slim, attractive and powerful, and with a great keyboard, the HP Pavilion x360 gets more or less everything right, at a price that undercuts most of its rivals. The ability to flip the laptop's screen into tablet mode is a bonus.

#### KEY SPECS

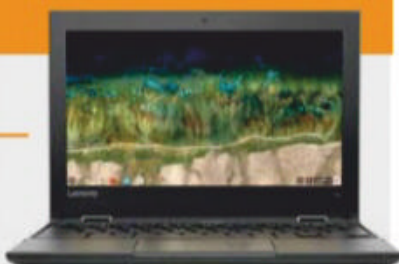
Intel Core i5-8250U processor ■ 256GB SSD ■ 8GB memory ■ 14in screen ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 2 x USB 3, 1 x USB-C ports ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ Windows 10 Home ■ 326 x 224 x 20mm ■ 1.61kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

### CHROMEBOOK

#### Lenovo Chromebook 500e

£349.98 from [bit.ly/leno483](https://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 ■ One-year collect-and-return

### SECURITY CAMERA

#### Google Nest Cam IQ Outdoor

£279 from [bit.ly/nest481](https://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



# Gold Award winners

The best from our software tests

## VIDEO-EDITING SOFTWARE

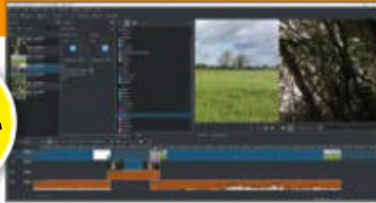
### Kdenlive

Free from [kdenlive.org](http://kdenlive.org)

**Tested:** Issue 492

Kdenlive is a phenomenal piece of free software, crammed with useful tools for editing your video clips into seamless, sophisticated movies, complete with transitions and effects.

**NEW!**



## OPEN-SOURCE CLOUD STORAGE

### Cozy

Free from [cozy.io](http://cozy.io)

**Tested:** Issue 491

Cozy is a cloud service that anyone can use – you don't need any extra tech know-how to get started. It's a great option if you want to switch from more famous storage providers.



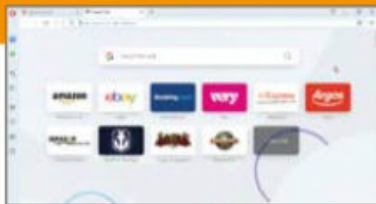
## PORTABLE BROWSER

### Opera

Free from [www.opera.com](http://www.opera.com)

**Tested:** Issue 490

Opera is the perfect portable browser. Its interface is clean and focused, but also rich in features, and includes elegant, built-in privacy tools to help you browse more carefully.



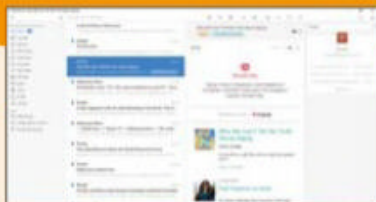
## EMAIL SOFTWARE

### Mailspring

Free from [getmailspring.com](http://getmailspring.com)

**Tested:** Issue 489

Mailspring is a modern, well-designed take on classic email software. Standard features sit alongside some quirky extras, but the focus remains firmly on sending and receiving emails.



## OFFICE SUITE

### Google Docs

Free from [docs.google.com](http://docs.google.com)

**Tested:** Issue 488

Google's suite of cloud-based tools is the king of free office suites – online and off. It offers comprehensive collaboration, access from any device and unlimited file storage.



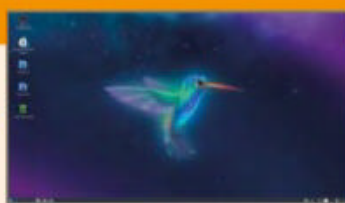
## LINUX DISTRO

### Lubuntu

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

**Tested:** Issue 487

Lubuntu is as close to perfect as a lightweight operating system can get. Its interface is instantly appealing and is packed with all the tools you need.



# WebUser

## BACK ISSUES DISC 2018



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# Best Free Software

## IMAGE EDITOR

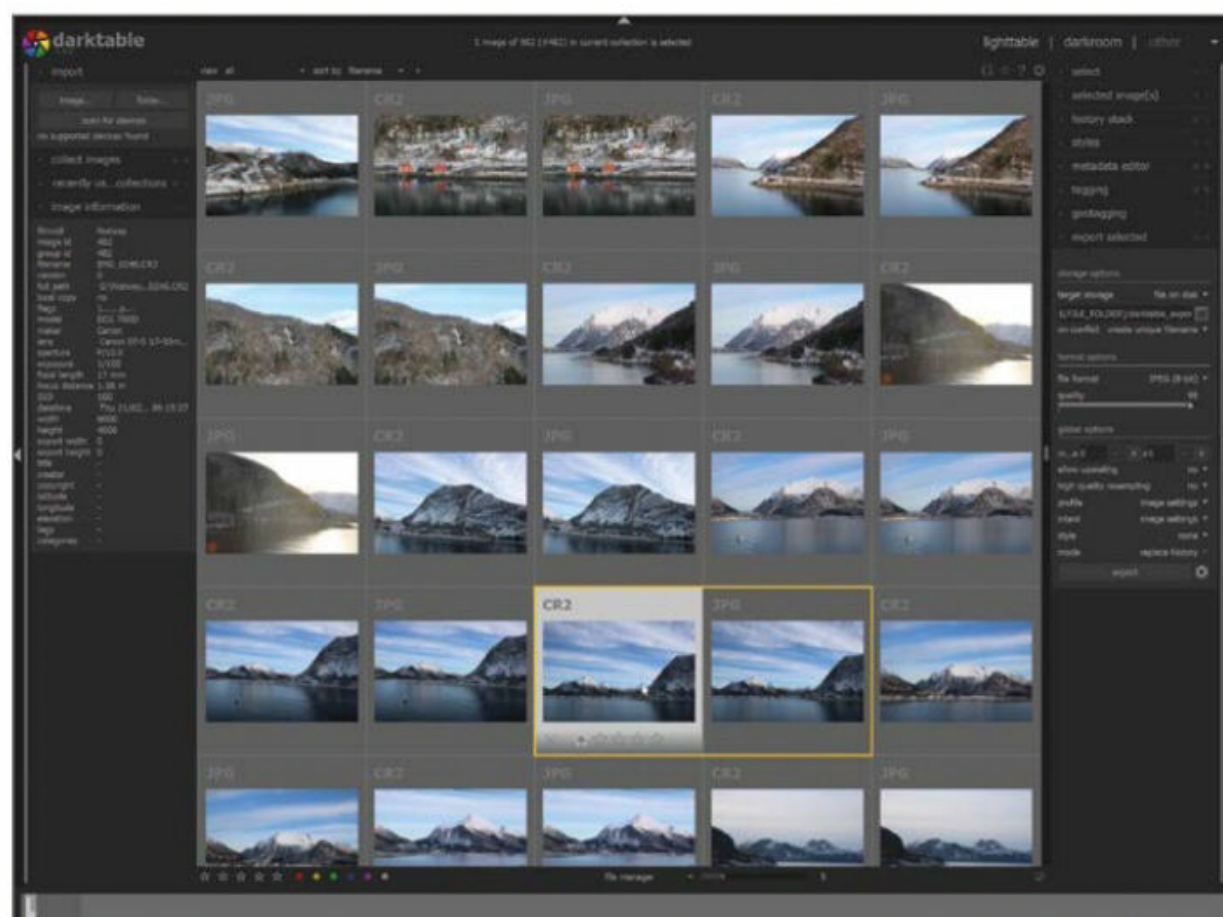
### Darktable 3

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

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8+/10, macOS or Linux

**File size:** 69MB

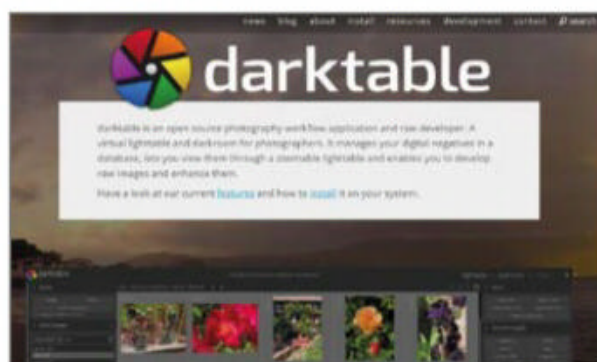
Darktable is a photo editor and manager that's similar to Adobe Lightroom but with one major difference – it's open-source and entirely free. It offers RAW processing, non-destructive editing throughout (so you can make lots of changes to a photo without overwriting the original), professional colour-management features, a powerful export system and a wealth of highly configurable editing tools. You can search for images by tag, star rating, colour labels and more, and Darktable also supports 'tethered shooting' for some camera brands, so you can see the shot on your computer before you press the button to take it.



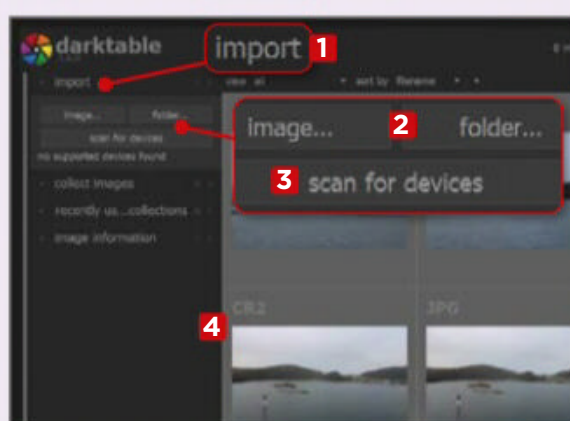
The updated version of the software introduces a new, customisable interface (there are three new themes to choose from) and a 'culling' mode on the 'lighttable', which displays a fixed number of consecutive images and allows you to pan and zoom them, and compare shots. The lighttable view has been rewritten so it's faster and easier to use on 4K+ screens, and there's a new timeline view that lets you select a date range for images. Darktable 3 also

introduces a number of new modules, and improves existing ones. The program is now much better at removing noise from images, too.

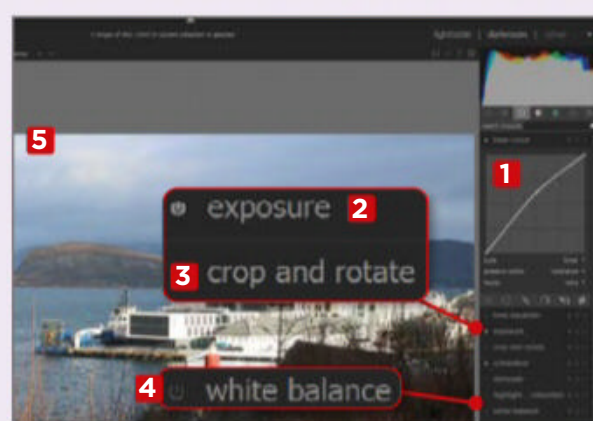
Darktable isn't really aimed at casual snappers but, if you take a lot of photos and want to make sure they look their absolute best, we would definitely recommend the program. The online manual will help you make sense of it all although, at the time of writing, this hadn't yet been updated for version 3.



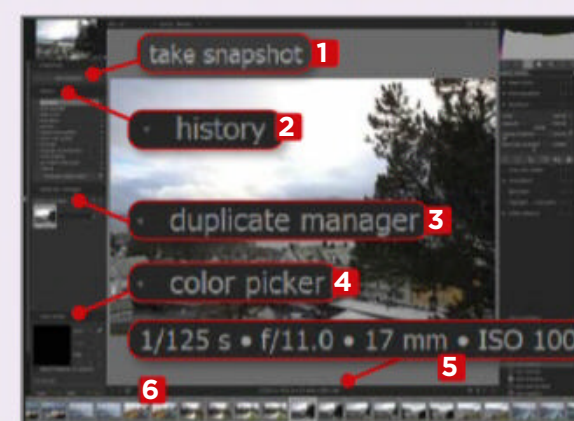
## MINI WORKSHOP | Improve your digital photos with Darktable



**1** To get started with Darktable, you first need to add some photos. Expand the Import option on the left **1** and add individual images or folders, **2** or scan for connected devices, **3** such as a USB drive that contains your images. Thumbnails of your photos will appear in the main menu, **4** ready for editing.



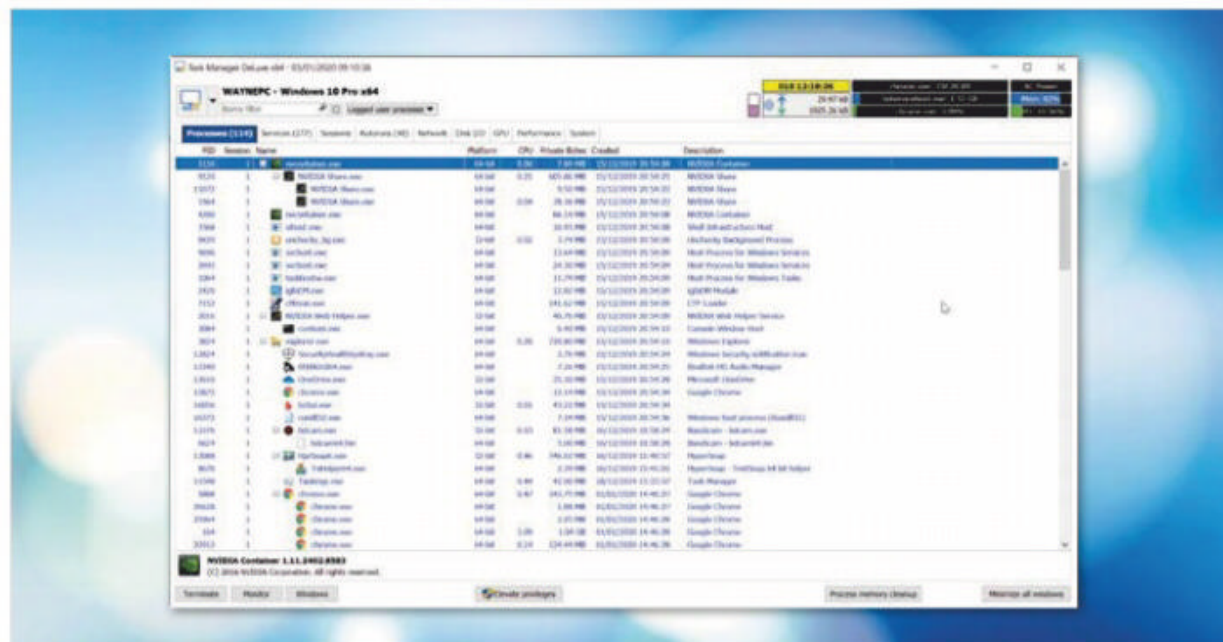
**2** Double-click any image to open it. A histogram window appears top right. **1** Click and drag the sliders to change the photo's exposure and black point. Below this, you'll see basic tools that let you play around with the exposure, **2** crop and rotate the image, **3** and alter the white balance. **4** All changes are made instantly. **5**



**3** The options on the left-hand side of the interface let you take a snapshot, **1** view the history of your changes (and step back through them), **2** manage duplicates, **3** open the colour picker **4** and view information about your image. **5** You can select any other photos from the film strip at the bottom. **6**



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



## TASK MANAGER

### MiTeC Task Manager DeLuxe 3

[bit.ly/tmx493](http://bit.ly/tmx493)

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8+/10 **File size:** 3.9MB

This alternative to the Windows Task Manager doesn't require installation and is available in 32- and 64-bit versions. It shows everything that's happening on your PC, in real-time, including running processes, installed services and drivers, network traffic and disk activity. This updated version improves processor usage and clock frequency measuring, and adds a new CPU clock indicator. It also displays better on high-resolution screens and offers a new dark mode.

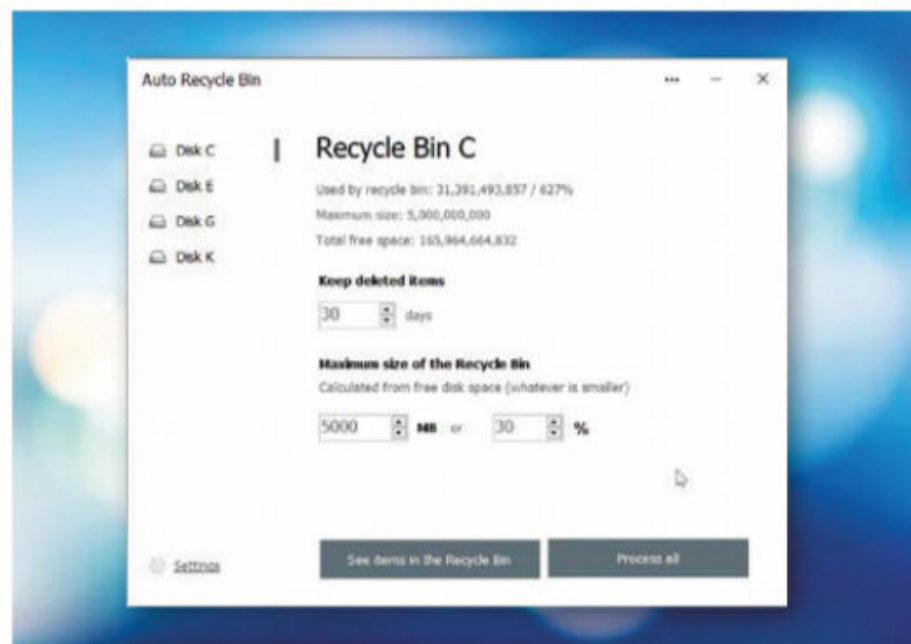
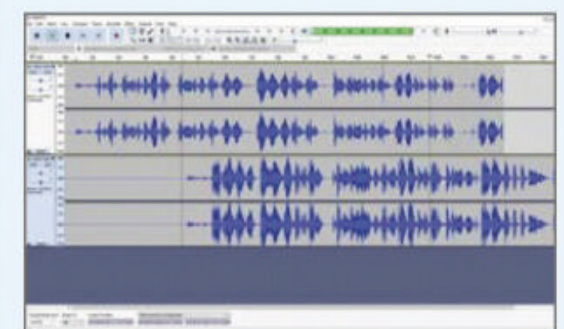
## New Windows 10 App

### Audacity Windows Store Version

[bit.ly/auda493](http://bit.ly/auda493)

**File size:** 72.69MB

Audacity ([www.audacityteam.org](http://www.audacityteam.org)) is a hugely popular audio-editing tool. This unofficial Windows Store port lets you record audio; import, edit and combine sound files; cut, copy, paste and delete sections; add effects; and export the results in different formats. Like the desktop version of Audacity, it also supports various plugins. See our workshop on page 54 for details of a simpler Audacity alternative.



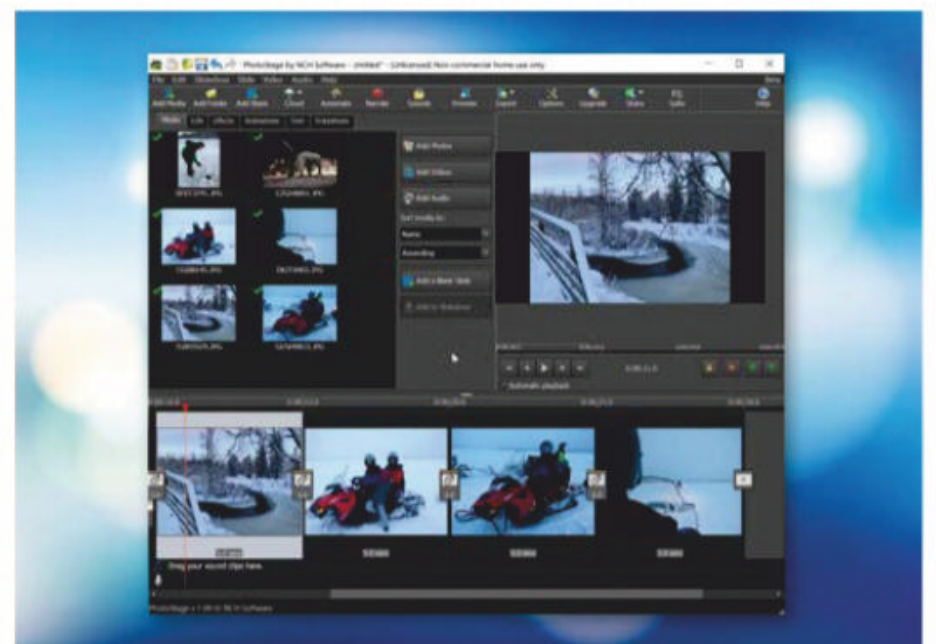
## SYSTEM TOOL

### Auto Recycle Bin

[bit.ly/arbin493](http://bit.ly/arbin493)

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8+/10 **File size:** 1.6MB

The Windows Recycle Bin provides a useful safety net because it lets you view – and restore – any recently deleted files. This tiny program gives you additional control over the bin and lets you choose when and how it gets emptied. You can set it to keep smaller files for longer and remove larger ones more quickly, or have Windows empty the bin every time you shut down your PC. You can even set individual rules for different file types.



## SLIDESHOW CREATOR

### Photostage Slideshow Software Free 7

[bit.ly/pstage493](http://bit.ly/pstage493)

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8+/10 **File size:** 5.2MB

This free program lets you transform your photos into a slideshow with zooms, pans and fades. You can tweak or enhance your images; add captions, narration and music; and save and share the finished creation in a number of ways, including writing it as a video file, burning it to DVD/Blu-ray or uploading it to YouTube, Vimeo or a cloud-storage service. To get started, just drag some photos to the interface and then add them to the timeline.



## IMAGE VIEWER

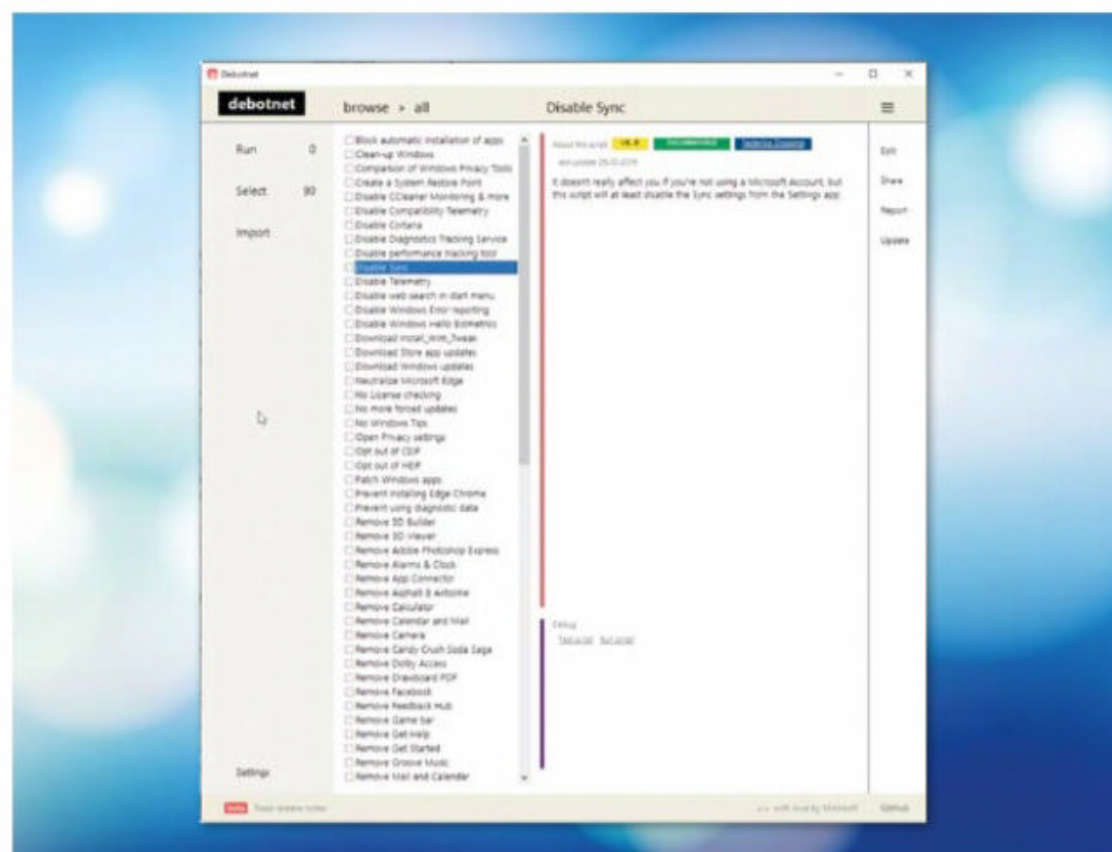
### IrfanView 4.54

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

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8+/10

**File size:** 3.4MB

IrfanView is a tiny but feature-packed image viewer and editor that lets you browse photos, convert and optimise them, add effects, create slideshows, draw and paint, and much more. This new release (available in installer and portable versions) introduces a number of new features and improvements, such as support for multi-undo/redo (to a maximum of 20 steps), a zoom magnifier in the full-screen mode and individual print profiles – so you can make changes to your print settings, then save them to a new profile to use another time. The program settings also gain a number of new options, such as the ability to easily enable or disable plugins.



## SYSTEM TOOL

### Debotnet

[bit.ly/debot493](http://bit.ly/debot493)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 1.3MB

Windows 10 has a wide variety of privacy settings but finding them all is no easy task and, even when you do finally locate them, it can be just as difficult to work out what they do, and decide which ones are safe to disable. Debotnet is a new, free tool that gives you complete control over the privacy settings in Windows 10. When you run the software, it displays these settings in a long list – simply click one to find out exactly what it does and whether it's recommended for it to be enabled. You can disable any settings you don't require.

Debotnet also lets you share and edit scripts, which could be useful if you want to modify commands or add additional notes.

## MEDIA PLAYER

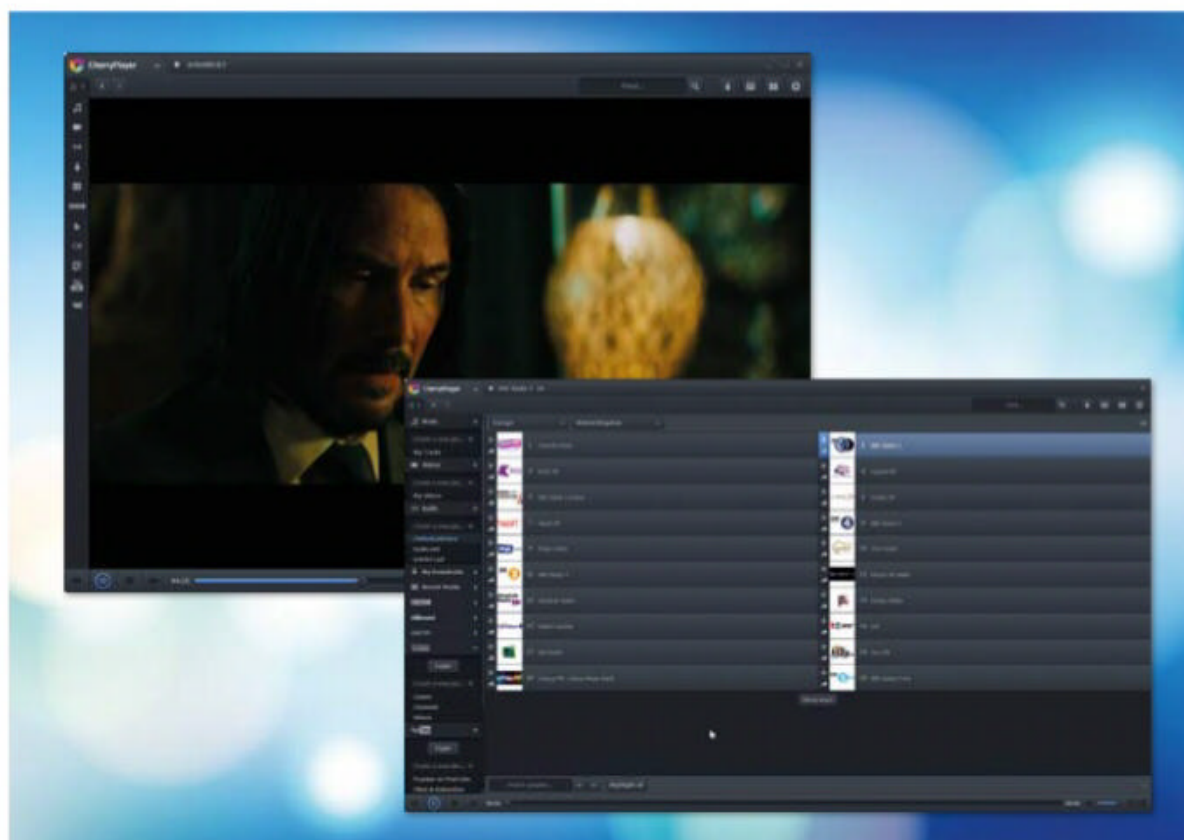
### CherryPlayer 3

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

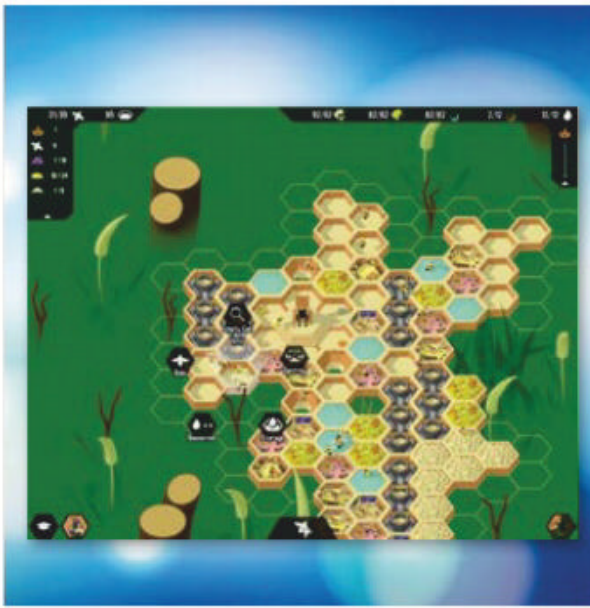
**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8+/10

**File size:** 62.1MB

If you're looking for a new media player that can handle local and streaming content, then CherryPlayer is a good choice. It supports all the major formats, plus live streaming and IPTV. The interface lets you listen to radio from a choice of stations, such as Smooth Radio, Magic Radio, Heart FM, BBC Radio 1 and Classic FM, and browse videos from Twitch, YouTube and more. Some features require you to upgrade to the paid-for CherryPlayer Pro. This new release adds a right-to-left view for languages that read in that direction, Windows Aero Snap support and a restart-playback hotkey.







## GAME

### Hive Time

[bit.ly/hive493](http://bit.ly/hive493)

**Min requirements:** Windows 7/8+/10, macOS or Linux **File size:** 86.1MB

Hive Time is a time management and base-building simulator in which you control and grow a beehive, adding new and different types of cells. The ultimate aim is to produce a new queen before the current one dies, and this entails controlling a number of different bee types as well as overcoming various challenges, such as wasp and fruit-fly attacks.

## ✓ Install this program...

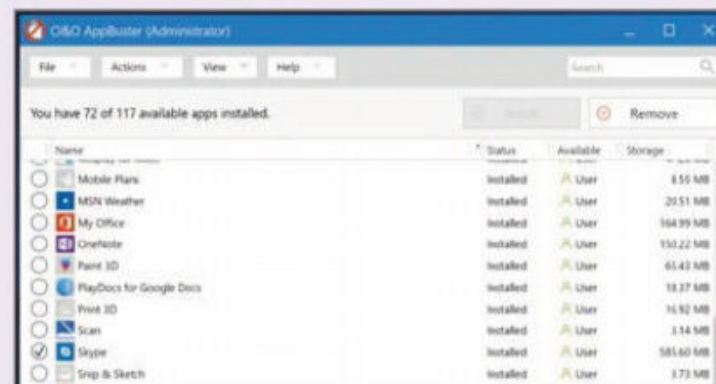
### O&O AppBuster

[bit.ly/appbuster493](http://bit.ly/appbuster493)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 1MB

Windows 10 comes with a number of built-in apps – some from Microsoft, which you may want to keep, and others from third-parties, which you probably won't. Uninstalling them can be tricky and time-consuming, but O&O AppBuster can help. It lets you quickly remove unwanted preinstalled apps, including hidden ones, and gives you the option to reinstall any apps you uninstalled by accident and undo changes by creating a restore point in advance. AppBuster is tiny, portable and very easy to use: just run it, wait while it detects installed apps and select the ones you want to remove.



## ...Not this one ✗

### Uninstall Tool

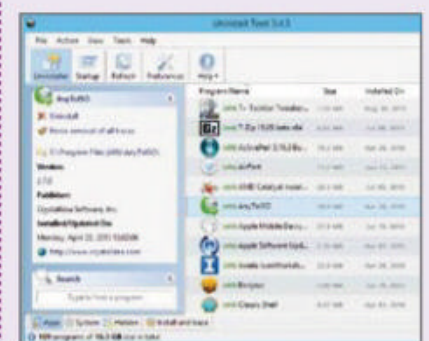
[www.crystalidea.com](http://www.crystalidea.com)

**Min requirements:**

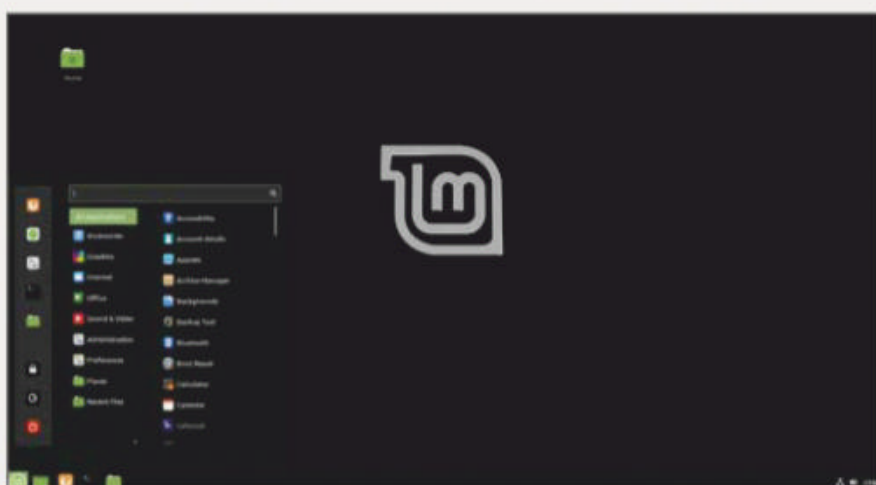
Windows 8.1/10

**File size:** 3.9MB

Despite its unimaginative name, this program manages to present itself as a powerful uninstaller for removing unwanted Windows programs and apps by offering a host of useful features. Sadly, it hasn't been updated for a few years (it still refers to 'Metro apps') and will set you back an unseemly \$24.95 (£18.77).



## OTHER OPERATING SYSTEMS What's new for Linux and macOS



## LINUX DISTRO

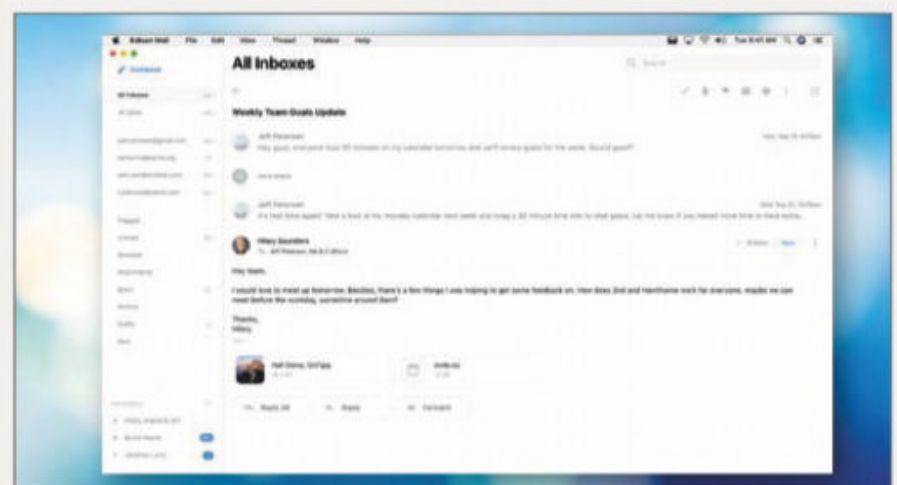
### Mint 19.3 Tricia

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

**Min requirements:** 2GB RAM, 20GB disk space

**File size:** 1.9GB

Mint is one of the more popular Linux distributions. Based on Ubuntu, it's available in a choice of three desktop environments – Cinnamon (the most popular), MATE and Xfce. This latest release, codenamed 'Tricia', replaces VLC and Xplayer with Celluloid as the default media player, and swaps the note-taking app Tomboy for Gnote. The GIMP image editor has also been removed in favour of a simpler graphics tool called Drawing.



## EMAIL CLIENT

### Edison Mail

[bit.ly/edison493](http://bit.ly/edison493)

**Min requirements:** macOS **File size:** 144MB

Edison Mail (previously EasilyDo Mail) has been available for iOS and Android for a while, but the developers have now ported the email client over to the Mac (a Windows version is also in development). This release has a similar interface to the mobile app and includes an optional dark mode. The software supports unlimited email accounts, easy unsubscribe to get you off unwanted mailing lists and the ability to block read receipts, so senders won't know when you've opened their messages.

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





# Best New Browser Tools

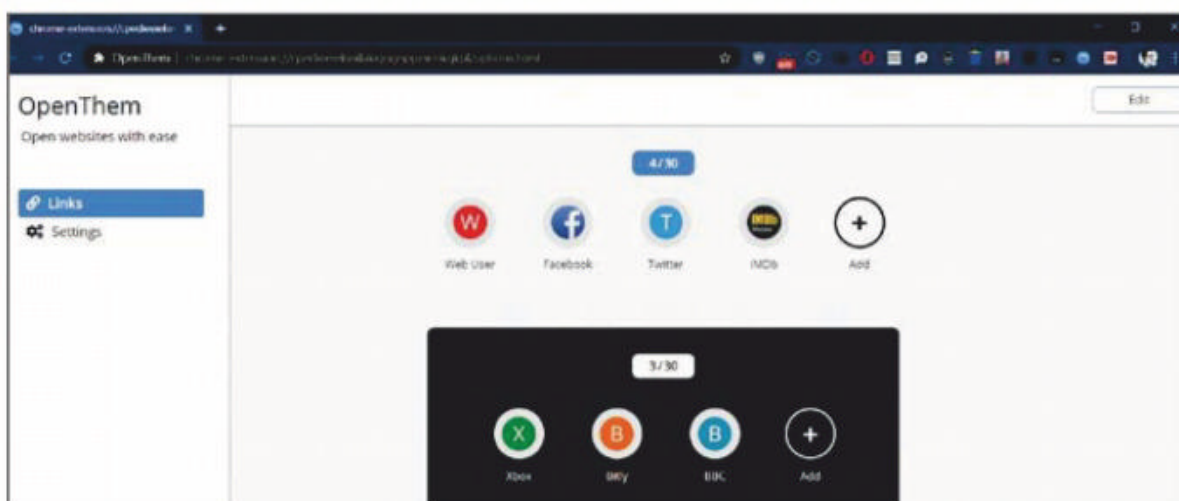


## CHROME

### Start Chrome with your favourite websites

Modern browsers are smart – they let you choose whether to start afresh each time you open them, continue where you left off or open specific pages. Open Them ([bit.ly/open493](https://bit.ly/open493)) is a new browser tool that lets you decide which websites open whenever you start up Chrome. “But wait,” we hear you cry, “doesn’t Chrome already let you do this?”. And, in the words of Sir Humphrey Appleby, we reply: “Yes. And no.”

While Chrome does let you set specific pages, or collections of pages, by visiting `chrome://settings/onStartup`, Open Them adds a few more useful options. For one thing, you



can force specific websites to open in Incognito mode, simply by toggling that option to On. You’re also able to determine what time these links will

open – so, for instance, if you have sports pages on standby but don’t want to know the latest scores, you can stop those pages showing.

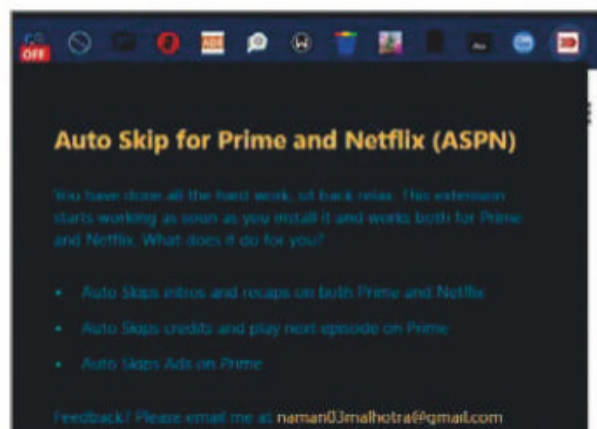
### Skip intros and ads on Amazon Prime and Netflix



Billed as a solution for the ‘super lazy user’, the Auto Skip Intro ([bit.ly/skip493](https://bit.ly/skip493)) extension does away with adverts for new releases on both Amazon Prime Video and Netflix, automatically

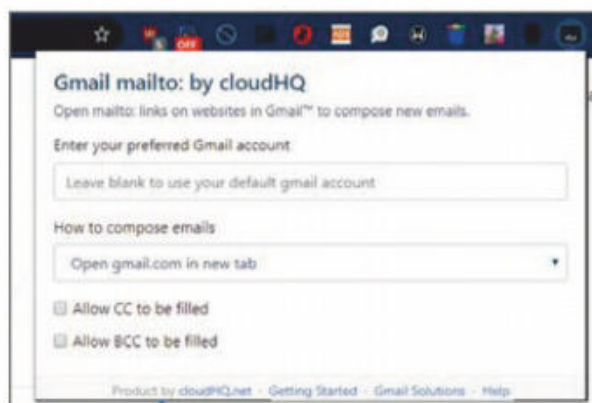
skipping them. The tool also jumps past intros and end credits, so you can get on with watching shows without the tedium of having to click Skip yourself.

There’s only one bit of setup to carry out – once you’ve added the browser tool, you need to refresh the Netflix or Prime Video page you’re on. This extension is especially ideal if you hook up your computer to the TV.



### Open ‘mailto’ links with Gmail

If you’re a hardcore Gmail user, clicking ‘mailto’ links – the ones that open a



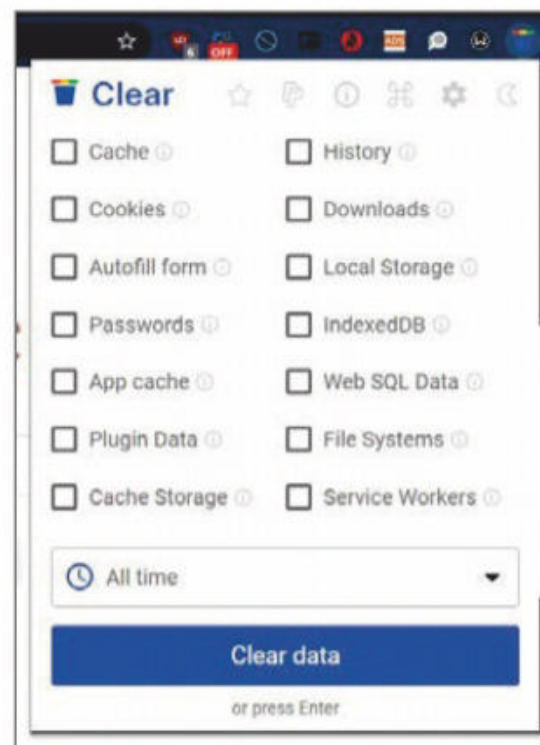
desktop program such as Outlook so you can send an email – can be a pain. It’s often easier to click (or right-click) the link, then copy the email address from Outlook to paste into Gmail.

Mailto ([bit.ly/mailto493](https://bit.ly/mailto493)), from developer CloudHQ, streamlines this process. Instead of being directed to your default email client when you click a mailto link, you’re taken to Gmail instead, so you can start emailing without all the faff that mailto links typically involve.

To use another of your Gmail accounts, not just the default one, click Mailto’s toolbar button to add them. You can also choose whether mailto links open in a new tab or window, and tweak the CC and BCC settings.

### Clean up Chrome more easily

Clear Cache for Chrome ([bit.ly/clear493](https://bit.ly/clear493)) makes clearing your browser data easier than ever. Click its toolbar



button to see a list of items you can remove, from cache and cookies to plugins and passwords. Tick each item you want to clear, then turn your attention to the bottom of the screen where you can specify time ranges, which span from one minute to all time (and everything in between, if you choose to edit the available times). Finally, select ‘Clear data’ to purge Chrome of unwanted data.

In addition to clean-up options, there are keyboard shortcuts that help you clear Chrome more quickly – and these, too, can be customised.



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

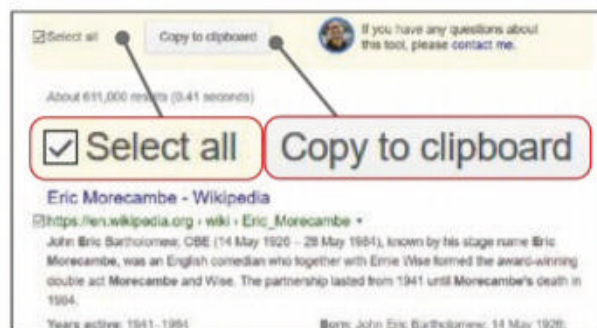
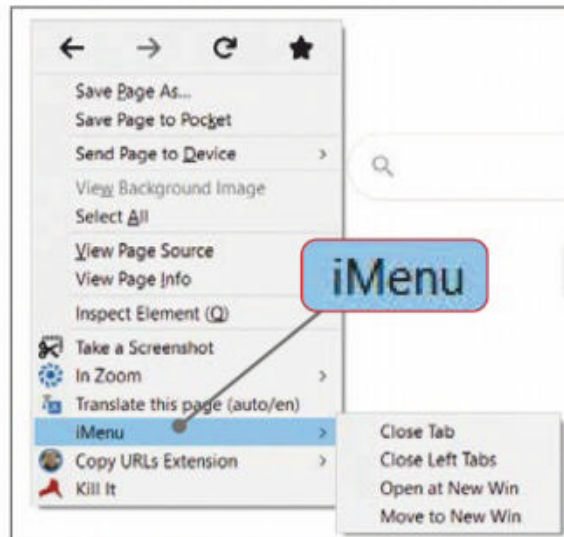


## FIREFOX

# Customise your right-click menu

If you've ever felt your context menu – the one that pops up when you right-click – is a little lacking, iMenu ([bit.ly/imenu493](http://bit.ly/imenu493)) lets you add some useful settings. Click the extension's toolbar button and you can choose which extra options you'd like to add to your context menu. There are six settings, ranging from Close Tab to 'Move to New Window' – just add a tick beside each setting you want (and leave the boxes blank for those you don't), then close the window.

Now, any time you right-click in Firefox, you'll see a new 'iMenu' option at the bottom of the context menu – just hover over this to reveal your extra settings. Handy options such as 'Close Left/Right Tabs' make navigating Firefox faster and more convenient.



## Copy Google search URLs in a flash

Copy URLs Extension ([bit.ly/copyurls493](http://bit.ly/copyurls493)) simplifies grabbing specific links from Google search results. There's no setup required – you just head straight to Google and perform a search.

At the top of the page, you'll see a Select All box and the option to 'Copy to Clipboard'. If you only want individual links, rather than the whole page, scroll down the page and you'll see that each search result has a tick box by it. Select the links you want and click 'Copy to Clipboard', from where you'll be able to paste them into Notepad, a Word doc or your email.

Using Select All won't gather every single search result – just those on each page of

results. The extension doesn't work with other search engines, though.

## Stop slide-in pop-ups for good

Most browsers now feature built-in protection against annoying pop-ups that disrupt your browsing experience and slow down your computer. This has prompted some websites to resort to more nefarious ways to grab your attention, such as slide-in pop-ups that fly in from the side of the screen as you scroll down the page: "Click here!", "Subscribe to our newsletter!", "Sign in!". Fortunately, you can banish these annoyances with Kill It ([bit.ly/stop493](http://bit.ly/stop493)).

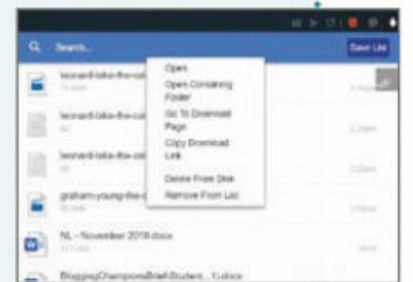
To set it up, visit the add-on's information page by clicking its toolbar button, then selecting Help, where you'll find all the information you need to eliminate slide-in pop-ups for good. See our feature on page 48 to find out how to beat other online obstructions.



## OTHER BROWSERS

### Add a better download manager

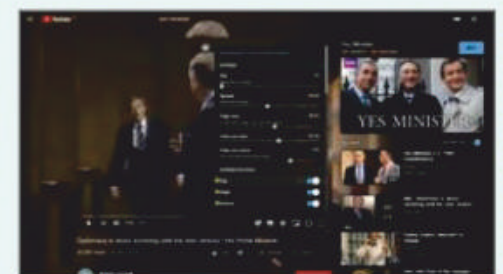
Compared to rival browsers, Opera's built-in download manager is, by far, the worst. The add-on Popup Download Manager ([bit.ly/download493](http://bit.ly/download493)) doesn't replace Opera's existing download manager, but serves as a more functional addition.



When you're downloading something from the web, click it's toolbar button and you'll see all downloads, alongside a search bar and the option to clear the downloads history and save the list. Right-click any download for more options, such as opening or copying the file, or deleting it from your hard drive.

### Immerse yourself in YouTube

YouTube Ambilight ([bit.ly/ambi493](http://bit.ly/ambi493)) is an Opera add-on that applies the content of the video player to the whole browser window, to provide a more immersive viewing experience. You need to play around with the settings to get the effect just right, so start by playing any YouTube video and click the cog icon to customise the ambilight settings – adding blurs and fades around the edges of your videos, and altering the direction of the ambilight effect. Scroll deeper into the settings to tweak gamma settings and shadows, and add details such as frame-rates to videos.







## App of the Fortnight

### HEALTH & SAFETY

#### My Limit

[bit.ly/limitdroid493](http://bit.ly/limitdroid493)

[bit.ly/limitios493](http://bit.ly/limitios493)

4.1 9

Many of us like to relax with a beer or a glass of wine, but drink driving is still a massive problem in the UK, with recent data suggesting that offences have doubled in some parts of the country. My Limit aims to help tackle the problem by providing users with a quick way to work out if they're fit – and legal – to drive.

It works by calculating how much alcohol you have in your blood, based on the amount and type of drinks you've consumed, alongside other factors such as your sex and body weight. Just input a drink to display your current blood-alcohol level, along with warnings about how your reactions are impaired and a countdown clock showing when the alcohol will leave your system.

My Limit is a great idea but there are a couple of very important issues to bear in mind. For a start, the app's

safety guidelines come from the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), which differ slightly to the drink-drive limits imposed by UK law (see [www.gov.uk/drink-drive-limit](http://www.gov.uk/drink-drive-limit) for more information). Also, the way alcohol can affect you depends on a wide range of factors, including what and when you last ate, and your own stress levels. As such, the results provided by the app will never be as accurate as those from a physical blood-alcohol test, such as a breathalyser, and should only ever be treated as a very rough estimate. Indeed, when you first use the app, you'll see

a disclaimer saying that information provided by the app "is for entertainment purposes only and shall not be construed as medical, legal or financial advice". We would never advise relying on this app alone to determine anyone's ability to drive safely.



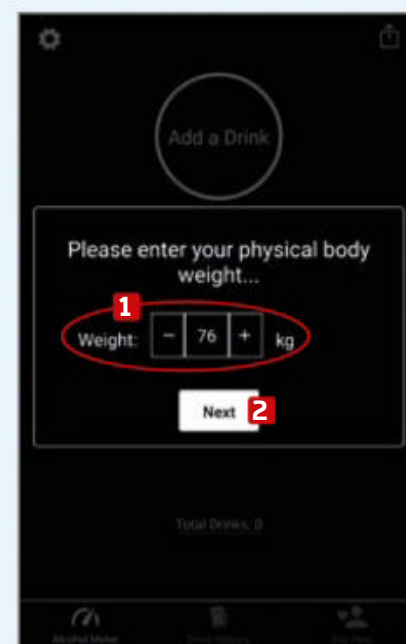
NEW



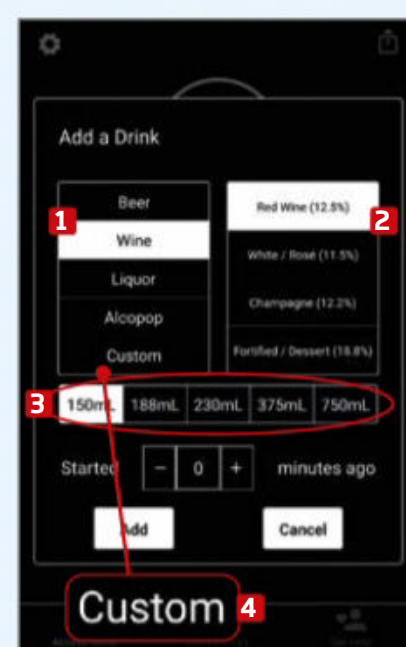
### MINI WORKSHOP

#### Calculate your blood-alcohol level using My Limit

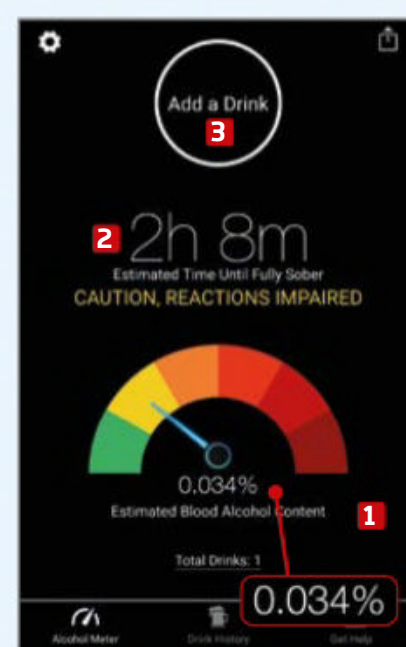
**1** When you first launch My Limit, you're asked to input some personal information – this will help the app calculate your blood-alcohol content, so you need to be as accurate as possible. Press Begin, then use the plus or minus buttons to enter your correct body weight (in kg), **1** and tap Next. **2** On the following screen, select your sex and press Next, then tap All Done.



**2** To estimate your current blood-alcohol level, tap 'Add a drink'. From the pop-up menu, select the type of alcohol you've consumed from the column on the left, **1** then refine your selection using the choices in the right-hand column **2** and select a measurement below. **3** If none of the preset categories fit the bill, press Custom **4** and input the details manually.



**3** Use the plus or minus buttons to select how many minutes ago you started your drink, then press Add. You'll be returned to the Alcohol Meter screen, where your current estimated blood-alcohol level will be displayed, **1** along with an estimate of how long it will take you to become fully sober again. **2** If you have another glass, choose 'Add a drink' **3** again and repeat the process.



Our rating





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

## TOOLS

NEW



### Flow Desktop

[bit.ly/flow493](https://bit.ly/flow493)


Flow is basically an Android launcher but, unlike other launchers, the app aims to harness Android 10's hidden desktop mode, so you can connect your device to a larger screen and control it like a Windows or ChromeOS PC. It's a fascinating concept but this one-man project is still a test release and, as such, is somewhat buggy – a number of key functions don't currently work. Also, Flow only supports a handful of relatively recent Android 10 handsets so, as yet, it's one for tinkerers only.



Our rating



## FUN

NEW

### Lego Building Instructions

[bit.ly/lego493](https://bit.ly/lego493)


Fed up with your kids losing the instructions for all those expensive Lego kits you shelled out for? If so, this app could be a godsend. Essentially, it provides a quick and easy way to locate and download digital versions of the building instructions for a wide variety of Lego kits. PDFs are available for every set released from 2015 onwards – we're hoping that Lego will eventually provide access to older instructions, too. Some newer sets offer an additional 3D building experience. Users can save all their set instructions to their Lego accounts.



Our rating



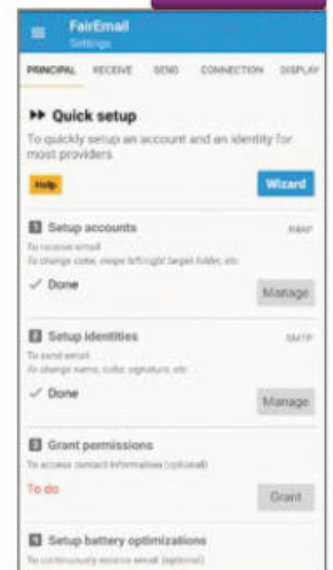
## EMAIL

UPDATED

### FairEmail

[bit.ly/fairemail493](https://bit.ly/fairemail493)


FairEmail is a full-featured, open-source alternative to the stock email app on your Android device. It offers a number of useful privacy and security features, including support for OpenPGP and S/MIME encryption, and tracking and phishing-protection tools. The latest update introduces a new 'treat as spam' button and improved support for landscape mode, along with further fixes and features. Paying £5.49 for the Pro version unlocks some advanced options, such as customisable notifications and the option to snooze or schedule messages.



Our rating

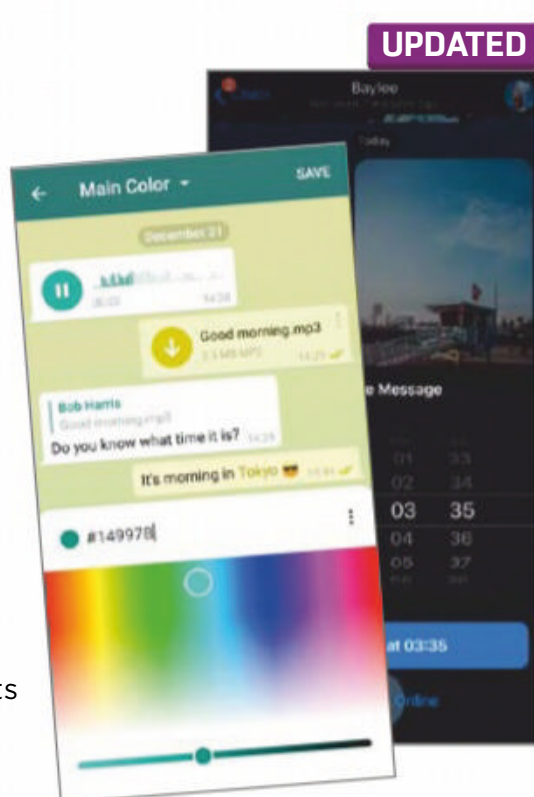


## MESSAGING

### Telegram

[bit.ly/telegramdroid493](https://bit.ly/telegramdroid493)
[bit.ly/telegramios493](https://bit.ly/telegramios493)


Telegram's developers have just released a major update that brings a large number of new features to the popular messaging app. First up is a new theme editor, which lets you fine-tune the style elements of your chat screens, including colour gradients for your messages and background. There are also new predefined styles and background patterns, if you just want to implement a quick change. Telegram now allows you to schedule messages to be sent when your recipient comes online and improvements have been made to the location-sharing function, including new dark maps when in Night Mode.



Our rating



## LANGUAGES

### Microsoft Learn Chinese

[bit.ly/chinesedroid493](https://bit.ly/chinesedroid493)
[bit.ly/chineseios493](https://bit.ly/chineseios493)


Microsoft's AI-powered Chinese learning app first appeared for iOS devices back in 2017. Now, finally, Android users can use it to master the most widely spoken language in the world. The app specifically focuses on speaking Mandarin Chinese, using chatbots to recreate a series of everyday scenarios to help you hear what phrases sound like, and allowing you to record yourself to practise and perfect your own pronunciation. If you're serious about learning Chinese, Microsoft's app is no substitute for a dedicated language course, but it's a great way to expose yourself to Chinese vocabulary and grammar. And – best of all – it's completely free.



Our rating





# 5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

## AUDIO

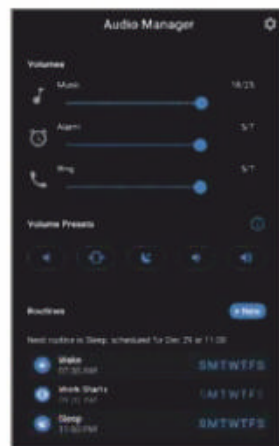
### Audio Manager

[bit.ly/audio493](http://bit.ly/audio493)

**Price:** 89p



This clever tool lets you fine-tune your device's music, alarm and ringtone volumes based on a variety of criteria, such as time or location. You can set daily and weekly routines, for example.



## MUSIC

### Time Trainer

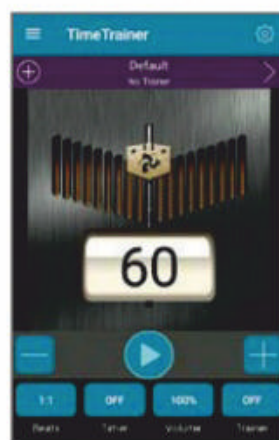
[bit.ly/timedroid493](http://bit.ly/timedroid493)

[bit.ly/timeios493](http://bit.ly/timeios493)

**Price:** £1.79 (Android), £1.99 (iOS)



This metronome app, now launched on Android, offers traditional metronome functions and three training modes – Bar Breaks, Random Beat Drop and Speed Upper – to help master rhythm.



## GAME

### Age of Civilization II Europe

[bit.ly/civdroid493](http://bit.ly/civdroid493)

[bit.ly/civios493](http://bit.ly/civios493)

**Price:** £4.49 (Android), £2.99 (iOS)



The latest game in the 'Age of' series is a satisfyingly deep strategy sandbox that sees you employing military tactics and diplomatic cunning to unite the countries of Europe or conquer them.

## AUDIO

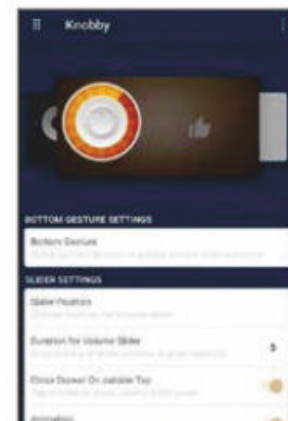
### Knobby volume control

[bit.ly/knobby493](http://bit.ly/knobby493)

**Price:** £1.29



Recreate the volume knob from your old hi-fi amplifier with this highly customisable volume-control app and accompanying widgets. It supports gestures, so you can swipe up your Knobby controls when you need them.



## FUN

### The Mandalorian Stickers

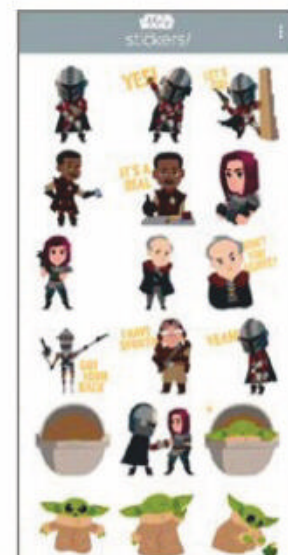
[bit.ly/mandydroid493](http://bit.ly/mandydroid493)

[bit.ly/mandyios493](http://bit.ly/mandyios493)

**Price:** £1.79 (Android), £1.99 (iOS)



Disney+ arrives in the UK in March – until then, you can use these iMessage and WhatsApp-compatible stickers from the service's Star Wars show, *The Mandalorian*, some of which feature baby Yoda.



Audio Manager



Time Trainer



Age of Civilization II Europe



Knobby volume control



The Mandalorian Stickers



## ✓ Install this app...

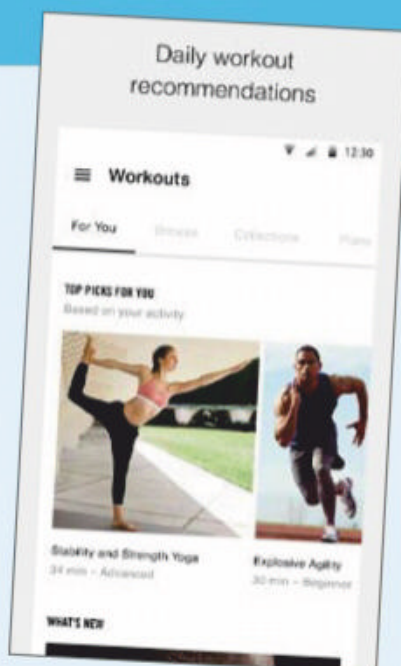
### Nike Training Club

[bit.ly/nikedroid493](http://bit.ly/nikedroid493)

[bit.ly/nikeios493](http://bit.ly/nikeios493)



Around this time of year, many of us are thinking about getting ourselves into shape and, with the right app as your personal trainer, working out needn't be a slog. The trouble is that there are so many fitness apps out there, many of which aren't necessarily the greatest (see right), while others want to sign you up to costly subscriptions. Nike Training Club is one of the best, in our opinion, since it offers a respectable amount of personally tailored warm-ups, workouts and fitness plans for free. There's a shopping element to the app, but this can largely be ignored.



## ...Not this one

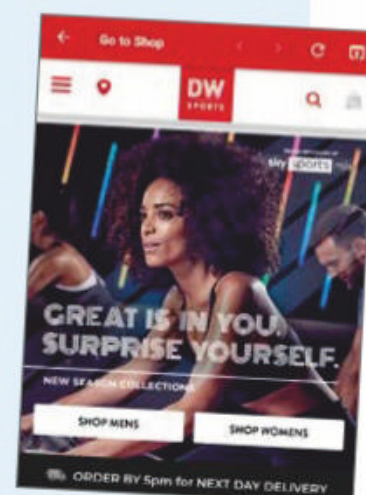


### DW Fitness First Core

[bit.ly/dwdroid493](http://bit.ly/dwdroid493)

[bit.ly/dwios493](http://bit.ly/dwios493)

If you've recently signed up to your local Fitness First gym, you may be tempted to download this accompanying app, which promises to book classes, track workouts and more. Disappointingly, it mainly serves as a tool for the company to shovel adverts and promotions at you. At worst, it often doesn't work at all, according to the overwhelmingly negative reviews on both Google Play and the Apple App Store.







# Take a Screen Break

Take a rest from your browser with our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you solve our classical-music emoji and guess our Wikipedia article?

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

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



## CAN YOU GUESS THE CLASSICAL MUSIC PIECES FROM THE EMOJI?

1



2



3



4



5



6



## GUESS THE WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE

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



# WIKIPEDIA

**1** "It is the largest "social travel website" in the world, with about 315 million reviewers and over 730 million reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions and other travel-related businesses."

**2** "The website services are free to users, who provide most of the content, and the website

is supported by a hotel-booking facility and an advertising business model."

**3** "In 2013, a fake restaurant was set up by a disgruntled businessman and reportedly had diners looking for the eatery in an alley filled with garbage cans. The fake



listing went undetected for two months."

**5** "In 2019, a *Which* survey of the 10 top-ranked hotels in 10 popular destinations around the world found that one in seven had "blatant hallmarks" of fake positive reviews."

Credit: Parker Harrington

## COMPETITIONS

### WIN 1 OF 6 CHERRY MW 8 ERGO mouse

The ergonomic design of this large mouse is designed for right-handed use. Its rubber-padded side sections provide comfort, while its contours allow the thumb to automatically find a relaxed position in which to rest. To enter, email your address to [webusercomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webusercomp@dennis.co.uk) with 'CHERRY' in the subject line. For more information on CHERRY products, visit [www.cherry.co.uk](http://www.cherry.co.uk) and follow [@org\\_cherry](https://twitter.com/org_cherry) on Twitter.



WORTH  
£47  
EACH

### WIN 1 OF 3 Peli Storm GoPro Case

Watertight, crushproof and dustproof, the iM2050GP2 Peli Storm Case will keep your GoPro action camera safe while you travel. It has a double-layered, soft-grip handle, and a latch that locks automatically but opens with a light touch. To enter, email your address to [webusercomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webusercomp@dennis.co.uk) with 'Peli' in the subject line. For more details on Peli Products, visit <https://peliproducs.co.uk> and follow [@Peli\\_Products](https://twitter.com/Peli_Products) on Twitter.



WORTH  
£90  
EACH





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

# Wildlife Insights

Google is using AI to help with wildlife conservation, and is making the data freely available to explore, as **David Crookes** explains

## What is it?

Wildlife Insights ([www.wildlifeinsights.org](http://www.wildlifeinsights.org)) is a new project from Google that has been set up in partnership with seven conservation organisations: Conservation International, World Wildlife Fund, Zoological Society of London, Map of Life, Wildlife Conservation Society, the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and the Smithsonian. It is mapping millions of animals in the wild using photos taken with motion-activated cameras. By employing artificial intelligence, it aims to speed up data analysis so that wildlife researchers can make better and more timely decisions.

## How does it work?

All around the world, camera traps are taking snaps of animals as they wander around their natural habitats, triggering carefully located sensors. The resulting images are used by biologists and land managers to assess the health of the wildlife, but sorting through them can be an arduous task and many of the images end up languishing on old hard drives. With Wildlife Insights, the photos can be uploaded to Google, where specially created AI models that have been trained to identify species promptly get to work.

## What is the AI doing?

To get technical, the developers of Wildlife Insights have employed a 'deep convolutional neural network' for multi-class classification. This uses Google's open-source TensorFlow framework and was set up by manually inputting 8.7 million photos of animals gathered by various conservation organisations. Such



Google's AI models identify wildlife species in uploaded photos, such as this British fox



a large set of data has allowed the technology to be trained to recognise the differences between the animals, with the training data including information about class, order, family, genus and species.

As a result, fresh uploaded images can be analysed and compared against learned data points so that the animals in the photographs can be predicted with the highest probability. As it stands, there are more than 4.5 million images taken from camera traps on the system. You can read more about the AI at [bit.ly/wildlife493](http://bit.ly/wildlife493).

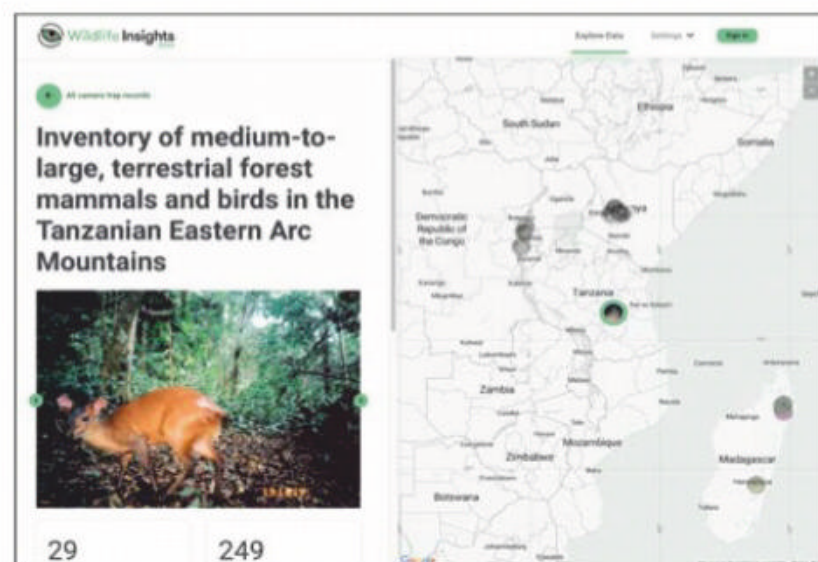
## What is the AI looking for?

According to Google, the AI models analyse patterns, colours and textures, along with other attributes, to make a prediction. Where it struggles to identify an animal, Wildlife Insights will say "No CV result" (which means No Computer Vision result). Species labels are only returned if the AI is relatively sure about its prediction. Identifications

can be edited and corrected, which will enable the AI to grow and improve.

## How much quicker can it be?

Far quicker than any human, that's for sure. According to Google, a human expert could sift through 300 to 1,000 images each hour, identifying the animal pictured in each photo. Wildlife Insights, however, can process a staggering 3.6 million photos an hour – some 3,000 times more. Humans may still need to add GPS coordinates for the traps that took the snaps but the time saving for researchers is clearly immense. Scientists



Wildlife Insights identifies millions of photos an hour, such as this Tanzanian duiker



will be able to concentrate on discovering trends rather than first spending ages working out what's in a photo.

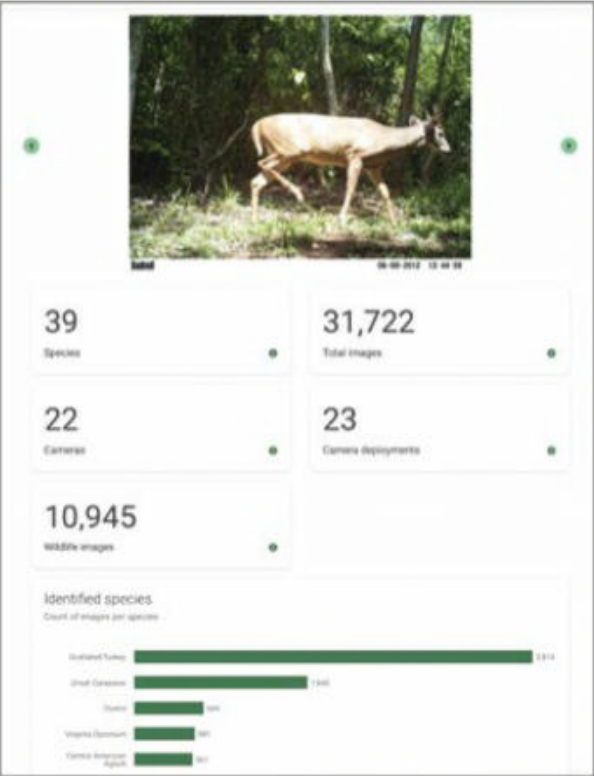
Is it proving very accurate?

Currently, identification is between 80 and 98.6% accurate across 614 species, but the more input Wildlife Insights receives, the greater the probability of a correct prediction. Much depends on the quality of the data – animals that are far away from the camera, hidden or snapped in poor light, for instance, could prove difficult to identify.

Additionally, as anyone with a security camera at home will know, sensor-activated devices can give off alerts for innocuous events such as the wind blowing or a leaf falling. The same goes for camera traps, where a huge proportion of photos are taken because the sensor has been triggered by a non-animal related event. In these circumstances, Wildlife Instincts flags empty-looking images so that time isn't wasted trying to analyse them.

What does Wildlife Insights do with the images?

The images are stored online in Google Cloud so they can be accessed anywhere around the world on any internet-connected device. Since they are mapped to a specific camera trap, it's possible to see how many images have been taken at each location, view the number of cameras and, most importantly, identify the number and type of species ([app.wildlifeinsights.org/explore](http://app.wildlifeinsights.org/explore)). In London, for example, the Red Fox is the most commonly snapped species, while in Korup National Park in Cameroon, AI is distinguishing between the Blue Duiker, Forest Giant Pouched Rat, Ogilby's Duiker and the Red River Hog among 48 species.

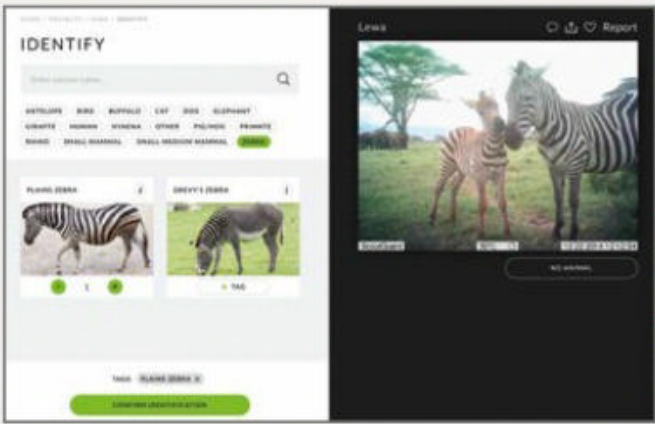


Wildlife Insights can distinguish between the different species captured by cameras

HELP IDENTIFY ANIMALS ONLINE

The Zoological Society of London is one of the organisations involved with Wildlife Insights, but it also has its own non-AI initiative called Instant Wild ([instantwild.zsl.org](http://instantwild.zsl.org)). This shows visitors a series of live images and videos from locations across the world and asks for help in identifying them.

By visiting the website, you can view as many images as you like. Simply click Tag next to an image and either enter a species name or select one from a list of animals named by conservationists as being generally found in that area.



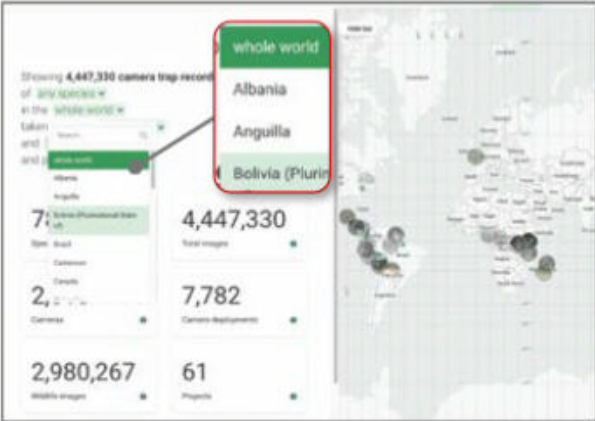
When more than 10 people give the same identification, the result is passed through to the project scientist. You can also use the mobile app, which has been downloaded more than 130,000 times.

What can scientists discover about animals?

They can look at the population size of a species, see how human activity is affecting numbers and work out the relationship between predators and prey. Land managers, meanwhile, can assess the success of anti-poaching measures, get a better overview of protected areas and see more quickly where conservation is needed. Given that a report by the United Nations says nature is declining at unprecedented rates – a million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction and many could disappear within decades – the initiative is likely to prove invaluable.

Can anyone use the data?

Yes. Anyone can view the maps and download data. Google claims Wildlife Insights is the largest and most diverse collection of camera-trap images open to the public, and lets you filter by image, species, country and year to get an insight into the diversity of the globe's wildlife. However, the platform is still in beta, and is only accepting applications from scientific organisations, so you'll have to wait if you fancy sharing the data from a camera trap in your garden and want access to the full set of features.



Use filters to explore Wildlife Insights' data by species, year and other criteria

Do scientists have access to advanced tools?

Scientific users, once they've been verified, can use Wildlife Insights to create and collaborate on projects, share data, have species identified using AI and view basic analytics. There are video tutorials that guide you through uploading photos, creating projects and navigating the platform.

Furthermore, everything is currently free to use – although a premium subscription-based tier is being considered. There's an online manual at [bit.ly/manual493](http://bit.ly/manual493).



The Wildlife Insights website provides full details of how to get involved in the project

Will it allow tracking of individual animals?

Not at this stage. The AI is being developed to identify species rather than pinpoint any single animal, although Google says it is looking to head in that direction at some stage in the future. The company also explains that the Wildlife Insights infrastructure could pick up on acoustic data but that, currently, the AI technology is only supporting camera-trap images. In any case, the technology looks set to move conservation on in leaps and bounds at this critical time for the world's wildlife.



# STOP USING SOFTWARE

**COVER  
FEATURE**

Why download hefty programs when you can run everything in your browser instead? **Wayne Williams** reveals the best free online alternatives to desktop software



✓ **Malware scanner**



✓ **Image editor**



✓ **System cleaner**



✓ **File converter**



✓ **Video editor**



✓ **Word processor**

**W**e all love free software – the joy of discovering a great new program, the satisfaction of a successful installation, the excitement of turning to the Best Free Software section in every issue of *Web User* – but that doesn't mean we have to rely on it completely.

Thanks to ever-faster broadband

connections and cross-platform web technology such as HTML5, it's now possible to perform an increasing number of previously PC-based tasks without needing to download and install bloated and slow desktop programs. Not only does this save you time and storage space, but it also means you can avoid bundled junk and potential malware threats.

In this feature, we look at the latest free web-based alternatives to traditional software that let you do everything in the cloud. From security scanners and office tools to image editors and messaging clients – with our recommendations, you can run everything in your browser from any device and it won't cost you a penny!



# System & Security

## ✓ REMOVE JUNK AND FREE UP SPACE

CCleaner ([www.ccleaner.com](http://www.ccleaner.com)) is an excellent if controversial (since it was purchased by Avast) system-cleaning tool, but you don't need to install and download the program. CCleaner Cloud Free ([www.ccleanercloud.com](http://www.ccleanercloud.com)) offers the same functionality, but runs in your web browser, which means you can completely avoid the bundled junk that plagues the desktop software.

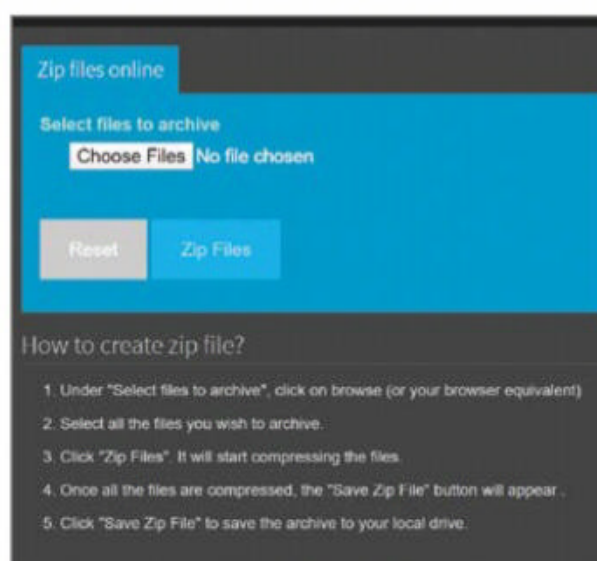
This cloud service lets you manage and maintain up to three PCs remotely (including systems belonging to friends and family), and it can also clean every user profile on your PC, making it more thorough than the desktop version. Other features include the ability to remove junk files, disable unnecessary startup programs, repair Registry issues and defrag hard drives.

You need to sign up with CCleaner Cloud and run the 14-day trial but, after that expires (no credit card details are required), you will automatically be switched to the free edition. This means losing some functionality, but it's nothing to be too bothered about.

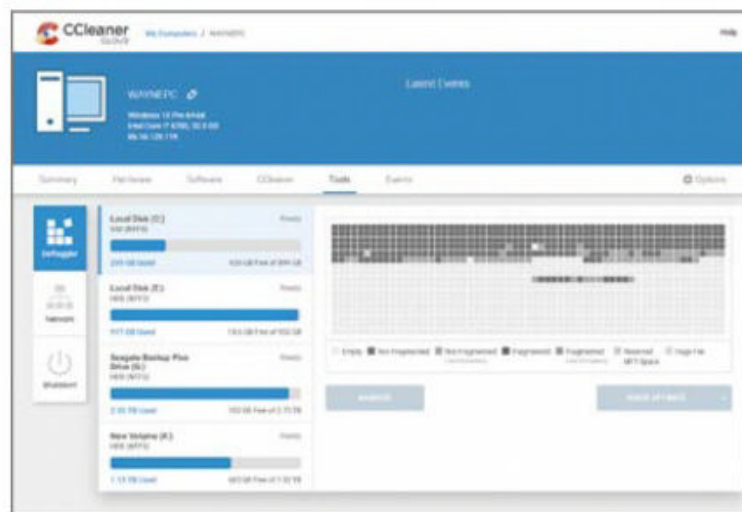
**✗ Software you no longer need: CCleaner, BleachBit**

## ✓ ZIP AND UNZIP FILES

Windows comes with built-in zip support, allowing you to compress files and open archives directly in the operating system without needing to install any software. However, it's not the most elegant of solutions, which is why most people prefer to install a third-party program such



**Compress files and open archives in a jiffy using the online tool ezyZip**



**CCleaner Cloud offers all the benefits of the desktop tool but without the bundled junk**

as 7-Zip ([www.7-zip.org](http://www.7-zip.org)) instead.

An even smarter option, which doesn't require installation, is ezyZip ([www.ezyzip.com](http://www.ezyzip.com)). This online compression service can create zip files and open archives in a variety of compressed formats including ZIP, RAR, TAR, TGZ and JAR. Usefully, it can also convert one archive format into another – RAR to ZIP, for example – directly in your browser.

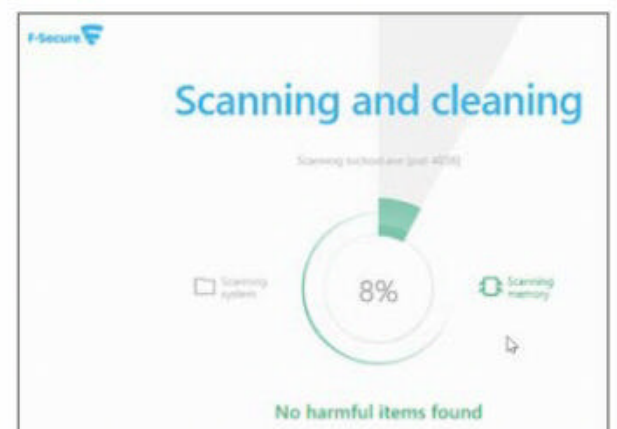
**✗ Software you no longer need: WinZip, WinRAR**

## ✓ SCAN YOUR PC FOR MALWARE

If you suspect that your PC may have picked up some malware but your existing antivirus solution (assuming you have one installed) isn't finding anything, you can use an online scanner to provide a second opinion, rather than downloading a second security tool that may cause clashes.

F-Secure Online Scanner ([bit.ly/fsscan493](http://bit.ly/fsscan493)) is one of the better options and promises to scan and clean your PC for free. To use it, click the blue 'Run now' button and it will save a small file to your desktop. Launch this to open the online scanner and click the 'Accept and scan' button. This will set up the scanner so it can begin checking for harmful items.

If you don't want to download anything at all, you can use Chrome to look for malware on your PC. Type `chrome://settings/cleanup` in the address bar and press Enter. Click the blue Find button and it will begin to look for potential threats. Chrome displays a spinning circle during the process – you don't get any idea of the progress – so be patient and it will eventually report back with its findings.



**Avoid security-software clashes by checking your PC with an online scanner**

**✗ Software you no longer need: AVG Free Antivirus, Avast Free Antivirus**

## ✓ SCAN SUSPICIOUS FILES FOR THREATS

The real-time protection offered by reputable antivirus software ensures you're protected from most threats at all times but, if you're careful and don't visit bad sites, download suspect files, or blindly click on unknown email attachments, you may not need this level of security, especially as Windows 10 has Defender built-in.

Google's VirusTotal service ([www.virustotal.com](http://www.virustotal.com)) can help keep you safe by analysing suspicious downloads and potentially malicious websites. It uses more than 70 different antivirus engines including AVG, Bitdefender and Sophos.

To scan an item from your hard drive, click the 'Choose file' button and navigate to it. The file will be uploaded to VirusTotal and scanned by all the engines, with the results displayed in your browser. To check a website, click the URL tab and enter the site address.

**✗ Software you no longer need: Malwarebytes**



**Upload a file to VirusTotal to scan it using more than 70 antivirus engines**



# Photos, videos & music

## ✓ EDIT YOUR PHOTOS WITHOUT SOFTWARE

Thanks to the proliferation of smartphones, taking photos has become a daily occurrence, but if you want to post or share a snap, it might need some editing beforehand, to crop unwanted elements, fix colour issues or just apply a snazzy filter. There are some great online tools that are comparable – or even superior – to desktop photo-editing software.

PhotoPea ([www.photopea.com](http://www.photopea.com)) and Pixlr ([www.pixlr.com](http://www.pixlr.com)) are our favourites.

PhotoPea is a brilliant free online Adobe Photoshop clone that brings advanced editing capabilities to your browser. It offers all the basics you need for resizing, rotating and colour-correcting photos, and includes a number of advanced tools, including support for layers, layer masks and styles. It can also open and edit vector graphics and PSD (Photoshop) files.

The most recent update to PhotoPea introduced smarter selections and a background eraser.



*Once you've tried PhotoPea, you may never use a desktop image editor again*

Pixlr, another advanced photo editor, offers two versions: the Flash-based Pixlr Editor and the newer, faster Pixlr X. All the tools you require to make changes and improvements to your photos are accessible from a strip down the left-hand side, and include a wide range of filters and effects.

✗ **Software you no longer need:**  
**Photoshop, GIMP**

## ✓ FIX PROBLEMS IN PHOTOS

All online photo-editing tools provide filters and effects that you can apply to your images, but Polarr ([bit.ly/polarr493](http://bit.ly/polarr493)) is especially good and offers a selection created by professional photographers that you can quickly apply and tweak. This free web app can also automatically detect faces, allowing



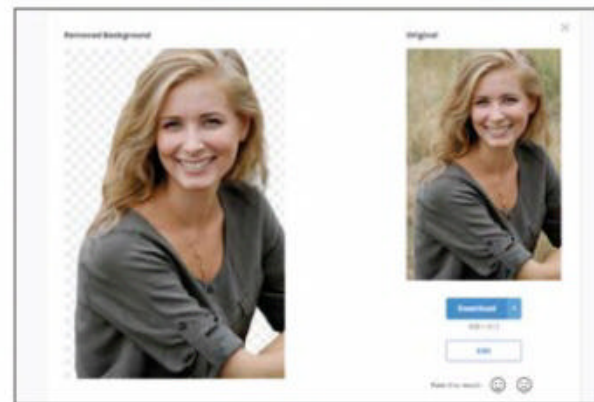
*Polarr's tools let you bring out the best in your photos' subjects*

you to remove blemishes, smooth the subject's skin and adjust the tone and saturation. It even lets you play with face width, chin and forehead height, eye size and brightness, and nose width and height. It can also whiten your teeth and, if you don't look happy enough in a photo, Polarr can plaster a smile on your face.

✗ **Software you no longer need:**  
**Paint.net**

## ✓ REMOVE THE BACKGROUND FROM IMAGES

If you've captured a stunning portrait but find that the background leaves a little to be desired, you can use an image editor to crop around the subject, then copy and paste it to a new background. Getting the results you want can be tricky – you need a steady hand to cut around your subject – but if your skills fall short, there is an excellent online solution.



*Forget shaky cut-outs – use Remove.bg to strip the background from photos*

Upload a photo to the amazing Remove.bg ([www.remove.bg](http://www.remove.bg)) and it will strip out the background automatically and let you download the copy in preview (small) or full quality. And that's not all. If you click the Edit button, you can erase or restore part of the image (useful for improving the cut-out), and add a different backdrop or colour. You can also add a customisable amount of blur to the new background to make it seem more natural. The only restriction is a one-hour time limit to download each image before it gets removed from the servers.

✗ **Software you no longer need:**  
**Corel Photo Paint**

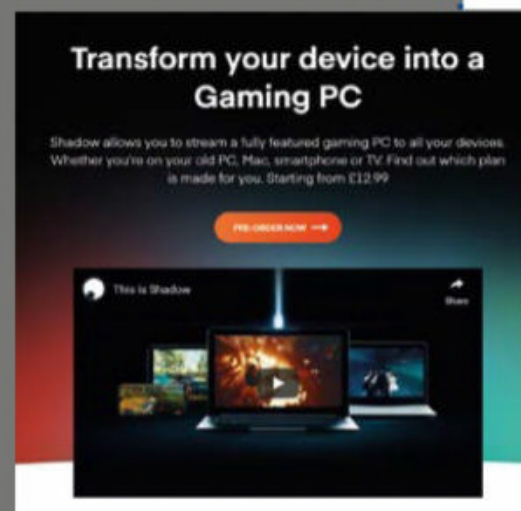
## ✓ CREATE PHOTO COLLAGES ONLINE

A great way to present a collection of photos is to turn them into a collage for printing or sharing. Fotojet ([www.fotojet.com](http://www.fotojet.com)) is an online collage maker that

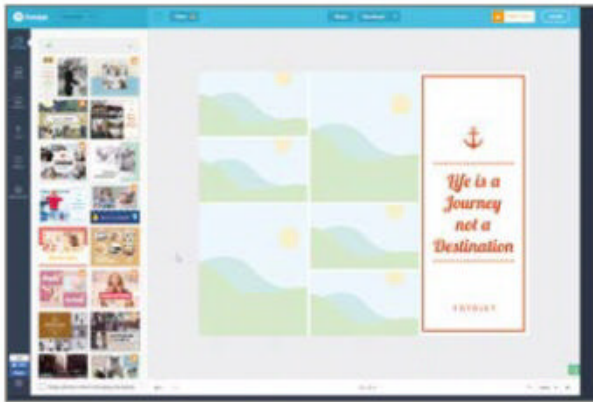
## STREAM YOUR PC FROM THE CLOUD

Even if your home PC isn't particularly powerful, you can still use it to run the latest resource-hungry games and software by harnessing the power of the cloud. Shadow ([shadow.tech](http://shadow.tech)) is a new service that's due to launch in April. It's essentially a full computer that you access remotely and store your programs and content on. Everything is hosted on Shadow's servers and streamed directly to your own PC, and the company promises any games you play will run smoothly and without any latency.

As you may expect, this technology doesn't come for free. Shadow is priced from £14.99 a month, for which you get a GTX 1080 graphics processor, a 3.4Ghz, four-core CPU, 12GB of RAM and 256GB of storage (you can pay extra for additional space). If you're after something meatier, there are Ultra (£29.99 a month) and Infinite (£49.99 a month) packages on offer. Shadow says an internet connection with a minimum speed of 15Mbps is all you need.







**You don't need software to create a photo collage - use Fotojet instead**

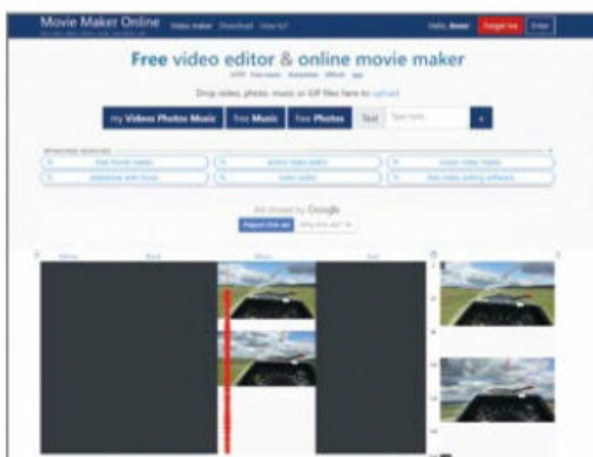
has over 600 templates to choose from, though many of them require a premium account to use. To get started, choose a template or layout and add your photos. You can rotate, flip and resize each picture, apply filters, adjust the opacity and exposure, and tweak the brightness, contrast, saturation and hue. Finished collages can be downloaded or shared directly on Twitter, Tumblr or Pinterest.

**Software you no longer need:**  
**PhotoPad**

## EDIT YOUR VIDEOS

Your phone probably lets you make basic tweaks and edits to videos but, if you want to turn your clips into a decent movie, with optional captions and a soundtrack, you'll need something more advanced.

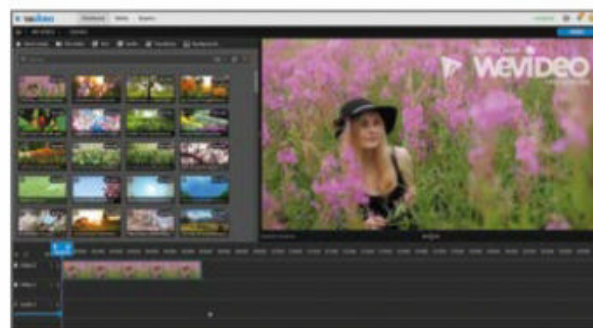
If you're planning to share a video on YouTube, the service offers its own editor, but there are better choices available, including Movie Maker Online ([moviemakeronline.com](http://moviemakeronline.com)). Despite the name, this has nothing at all to do with Microsoft's popular but discontinued video-editing software. To use it, you first need to whitelist the site in any ad blockers you use (or disable your ad blocker temporarily), then drag your videos to the main window. You can add music, effects and text, and make cuts as required.



**Movie Maker Online is packed with useful features for editing your videos**

ClipChamp ([bit.ly/clipc493](http://bit.ly/clipc493)) is a less powerful option but if you want a simple solution that lets you trim, crop, split, combine, flip, mirror, rotate, make adjustments and add text, then it's ideal. The downside is that the free version limits you to 480p (SD) quality. If you want HD (720p) or Full HD (1080p) resolution, you'll need to upgrade to a paid subscription, starting from \$9 (£6.86) a month.

WeVideo ([www.wevideo.com](http://www.wevideo.com)) is also very good and offers all the features you'd expect to see in a similar desktop tool. There are, however, some restrictions in the free version: you're limited to just 1GB of online storage and five minutes of video a month, and, like ClipChamp, you'll need to upgrade to a paid-for plan (from \$4.99 a month) if you want better than 480p quality.



**WeVideo offers similar features to a desktop video editor, but not all are free**

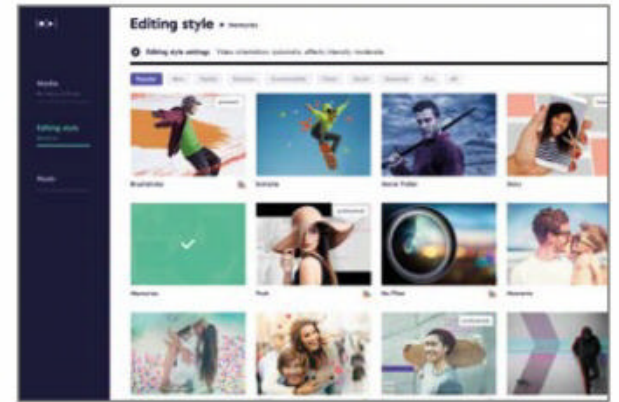
Finally, if you're happy with a basic editing tool, there's Online Video Cutter ([online-video-cutter.com](http://online-video-cutter.com)), which lets you trim, crop and rotate your clips. It currently only supports files up to 500MB in size, but this limit is due to be raised in the near future.

**Software you no longer need:**  
**Adobe Premiere, OpenShot**

## MAKE VIDEOS FROM PHOTOS AND AUDIO

There are a number of online tools you can use to create movies from your photos and videos. LightMV ([lightmv.com](http://lightmv.com)) is a relatively new service that offers a selection of templates (there are free and paid-for options), to which you just add and arrange photos, and customise the music and message. Finished videos can be downloaded or shared on all the main social-media platforms. There are no major limitations with the free version and your video creations won't include watermarks or branding.

Magisto ([www.magisto.com](http://www.magisto.com)) is another impressive tool, which can transform a selection of video clips and



**Magisto lets you turn your photos and videos into movies with music**

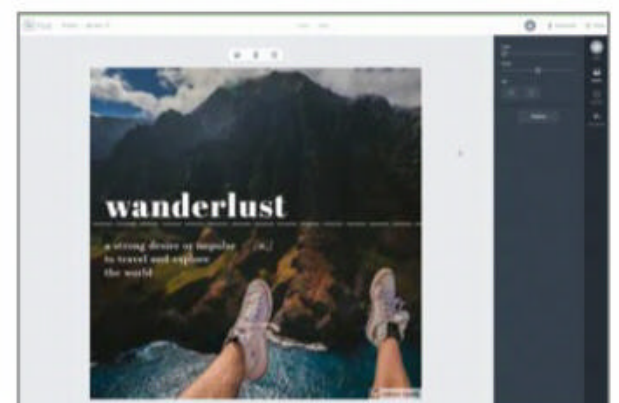
photos into movies that you can share with friends and family. It's easy to use: just upload your media, pick a theme along with some background music and give your creation a title. You can upload up to 10 different clips and five photos for free.

**Software you no longer need:**  
**PhotoStage**

## CREATE SHAREABLE CONTENT

If you want to make a simple but attractive web page, a short video or some images to share on social media, then Adobe Spark ([spark.adobe.com](http://spark.adobe.com)) is a great tool for the job. Sign up or sign in, then choose what you want to create. You can make an Instagram story or post, Facebook cover, photo collage or slideshow, or simply choose one of the free templates and adapt it as required.

The free Starter Plan has a few limitations - you can't change or customise certain elements and the finished result will bear a Spark watermark. Upgrading to the Individual plan frees you from such restrictions, but will set you back £10.10 a month.



**Adobe Spark lets you create all manner of interesting content to share online**

Kapwing ([www.kapwing.com](http://www.kapwing.com)) is a free tool that lets you make, edit or remix videos, create memes and more. The service offers a paid-for tier (priced at \$20 a month), but you probably won't need it because the free version

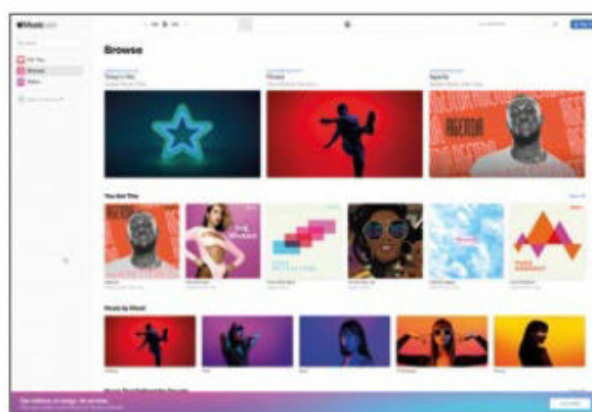


provides access to all the tools and lets you edit and store files for up to seven days. The only restriction is a maximum upload limit of 500MB per file, which shouldn't affect most people.

 **Software you no longer need:**  
**Adobe Creative Suite**

 **STREAM MUSIC IN YOUR BROWSER**

If you use Spotify (either as a free user or a paying subscriber), you don't need to download the desktop program to listen to music because the streaming



*Apple Music's beta web player means you don't need iTunes to listen to songs*

service offers an online version. Spotify Web Player ([open.spotify.com](https://open.spotify.com)) gives you access to your library and playlists,

and – as ever – lets you search for and play any songs and podcasts that you feel like listening to.

At the end of 2019, Apple launched a beta web player for its streaming service, Apple Music ([bit.ly/applem493](https://bit.ly/applem493)). Without an account, you can only preview content but, if you sign up, you can listen to full songs, including your own music and playlists, and stream radio stations such as Apple's own Beats 1. You can also add songs and albums through the service.

 **Software you no longer need:**  
**Spotify, iTunes**

# Communication

 **CHAT ON WHATSAPP AND MESSENGER**

WhatsApp is a hugely popular messaging tool owned by Facebook. Although it's mostly found on iPhones and Android devices, you can download the software for Windows and Mac, making it easy to save copies of photos and videos to your desktop. However, if you don't want to install it, there's a web version available at [web.whatsapp.com](https://web.whatsapp.com). To use it, go to the website in your desktop browser, open WhatsApp on your mobile device, open Menu or Settings and select WhatsApp Web. Point your phone's camera at the QR code on the website to connect your WhatsApp account, so you can use it just as you would the app.

Facebook Messenger also has a dedicated chat service (separate from the main Facebook site) that you can access at [messenger.com](https://messenger.com). This displays a list of your friends and past chats on the left hand side, the currently selected conversation in the centre, and details about the person you're chatting with – including previously shared photos – on

the right. You can search through a conversation, change the theme and start (or accept) a voice or video call.

 **Software you no longer need:**  
**WhatsApp, Messenger**

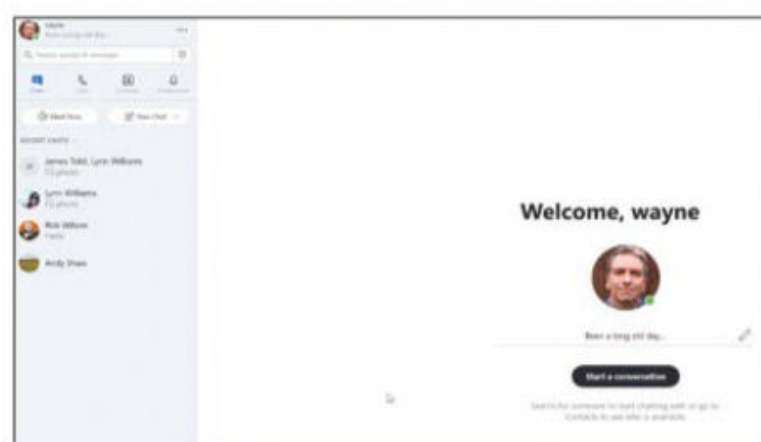
 **SKYPE WITH FRIENDS IN YOUR BROWSER**

Although there are lots of alternatives available these days, Skype remains one of the most popular services for long-distance video chats. Microsoft's service is available for all the major platforms and you can also use it on the web through Skype Online ([bit.ly/skype493](https://bit.ly/skype493)). If you use the same Microsoft account for Skype as you do for Windows 10, you should be logged in automatically – just click the 'Chat

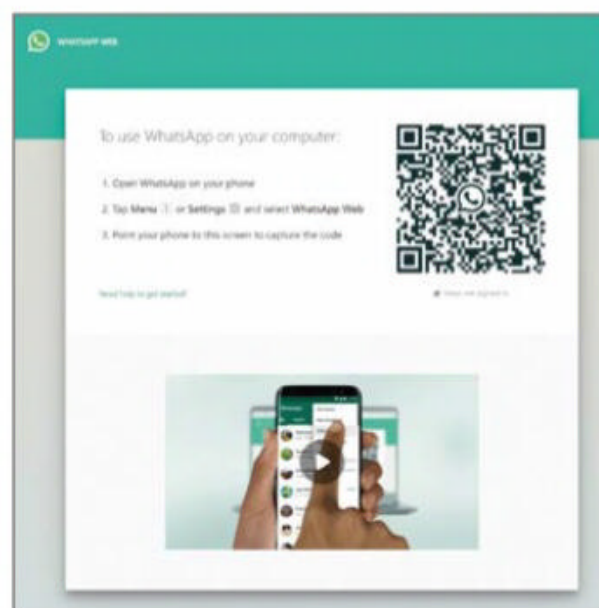
now' button to get started. You need to be using either Chrome or Edge.

The web version gives you the full Skype experience and you can view your contacts, enable notifications, switch between dark and light modes, and change the colour theme.

 **Software you no longer need:**  
**Skype**



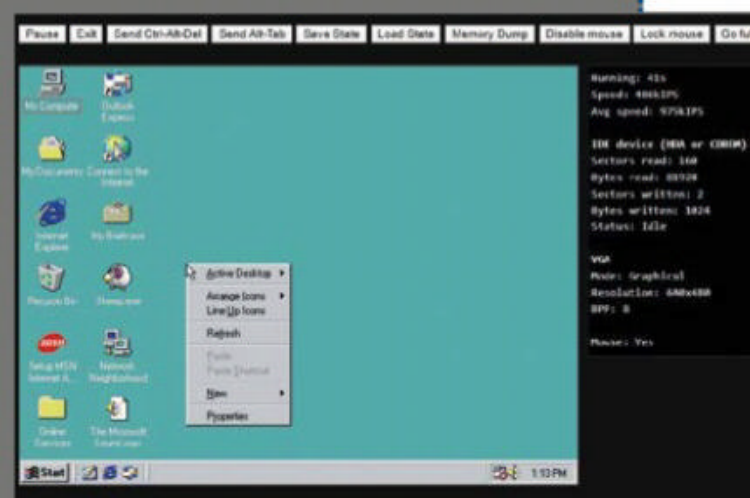
*Chat with Skype contacts without using the desktop program or Windows app*



*You don't need to use your phone to send and receive WhatsApp messages*

## RUN CLASSIC WINDOWS IN YOUR BROWSER

There are lots of ways to run old versions of Windows in your browser. If you want to go back to the very beginning, you can fire up Windows 1.0 ([bit.ly/win1-493](https://bit.ly/win1-493)) and play around with Paint, Write, Notepad, Clock, Calc and more. The same site also lets you run Windows 95 ([bit.ly/win95-493](https://bit.ly/win95-493)) and Windows 98 ([bit.ly/win98-493](https://bit.ly/win98-493)). MS-DOS is available, too ([bit.ly/msdos493](https://bit.ly/msdos493)). A different version of Windows 95 can be found at [bit.ly/altwin95-493](https://bit.ly/altwin95-493), and you can access Windows 3.0 at [bit.ly/win3-493](https://bit.ly/win3-493). While most consumers were running Windows Me back at the start of the new millennium, businesses, professionals and those in the know were using Windows 2000. You can run it in your browser by going to [bit.ly/win2000-493](https://bit.ly/win2000-493).





# Office



## WRITE IN YOUR BROWSER

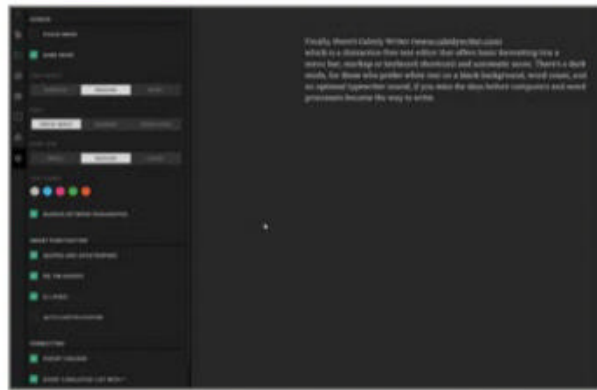
There are lots of online office suites available to use for free, including tools such as Google Docs ([docs.google.com](https://docs.google.com)) and Word Online ([bit.ly/word493](https://bit.ly/word493)). Though not as well known, Zoho Writer ([www.zoho.com/writer](https://www.zoho.com/writer)) is an excellent online word processor that lets you create, edit, share and collaborate on documents. You can create an account to use it, or sign in using Facebook, Google or LinkedIn.

If you use Dropbox for all your storage needs, then it makes sense to use the company's online word processor, Paper ([www.dropbox.com/paper](https://www.dropbox.com/paper)). An added bonus is that any documents you create with it won't count towards your Dropbox storage.

Finally, there's Calmly Writer ([www.calmlywriter.com](https://www.calmlywriter.com)), a distraction-free text editor that offers basic formatting (via a menu bar, markup or keyboard shortcuts) and automatic saves. There's a dark mode, for those who prefer white text on a black background, as well as word count and an optional typewriter sound, if you pine for the days before computers and word processors.



## Software you no longer need: Microsoft Office

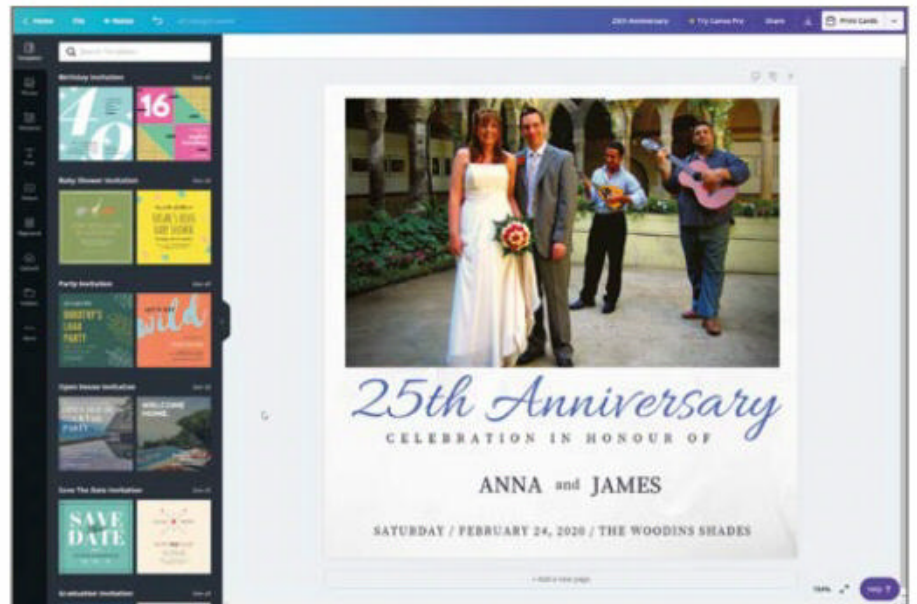


If you're writing late at night, consider using Calmly Writer's dark mode



## CREATE FLYERS AND MORE

If you want to create posters, party invites, newsletters, brochures or other graphics, then you'll probably turn to some kind of desktop publishing (DTP) software or maybe use your word processor for the task. Another option is to use Canva ([www](https://www.canva.com)



Canva offers professional desktop-publishing tools online

.canva.com), which lets you quickly put together your own professional creations in a browser window. The free version offers everything you need to design your projects, but there's also a Pro version for \$9.95 (£7.46) a month, which gives you access to millions of photos and elements, and over a thousand fonts.



## Software you no longer need: Microsoft Publisher



Online-Convert saves you having to download a program to convert a file



## CONVERT FILES IN YOUR BROWSER

If you encounter a file on the web that you can't open, the solution may be to convert it from its current format to another more common alternative. There are some excellent online tools you can use for this, such as ZamZar ([www.zamzar.com](https://www.zamzar.com)), which supports over 1,200 file formats, and Online-Convert ([www.online-convert.com](https://www.online-convert.com)) which offers separate conversion tools

for audio, video, images, documents, ebooks, archives and more. Just select the format that you want to convert your file into, then upload the item or enter a URL for it if it's on the web. Online-Convert can also pull files from Dropbox and Google Drive. You can customise the conversion, too, adjusting settings such as bitrate, file size, quality and so on.



## Software you no longer need: Freemake Video Converter

## NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 5 February 2020

# WHAT YOU MUST NEVER CLICK ONLINE

Don't get caught and scammed  
by the web's latest mouse traps



## PLUS...

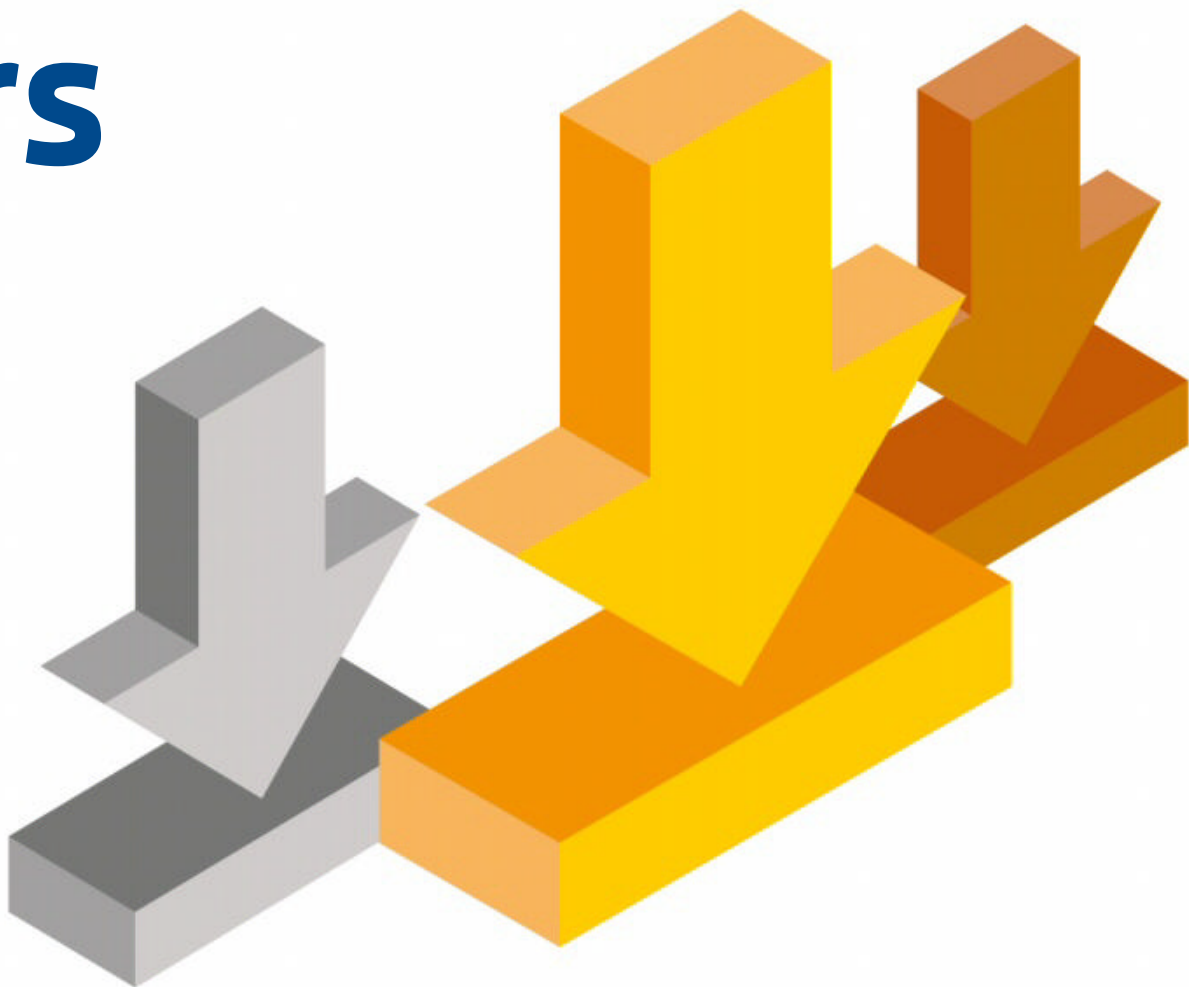
- **DUAL-BOOT LINUX MINT**  
Run a fresh new operating system alongside Windows
- **SECURE YOUR ACCOUNTS**  
Best free apps for using two-factor authentication
- **FIX YOUR USB STICKS**  
Bring corrupted, old flash drives back to life

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# Best download managers

Whether you need to download a large individual file or multiple items, or you want to schedule a download for later, a dedicated download manager can make things easier. **Steve Clark** compares six of the best free tools



**JDownloader** | [beta.jdownloader.org](https://beta.jdownloader.org) | ★★★★★  
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★☆☆

WebUser  
GOLD  
AWARD

## What we liked:

JDownloader is a long-time favourite of *Web User* and it remains our top download manager for good reason. It delivers the goods in all the areas where a download manager should, offering lots of control, whether you're scheduling downloads or downloading several large files.

JDownloader has been available in one form or another since 2011, and its developers have used that time to evolve a program that responds to just about every requirement you might need. It's quick and hassle-free to use – just copy a download link to the program and JDownloader automatically picks up the URL from the clipboard without you needing to paste it in. There's also strong support for multiple, prioritised file downloads, all of which can be managed using the 'playback' buttons in the ribbon toolbar.

To get to your files faster, the software helpfully fills in CAPTCHA codes and extracts files, so they're ready and waiting for you. There's also a handy browser extension that intercepts downloads and diverts them directly to the software.

One of JDownloader's best features is

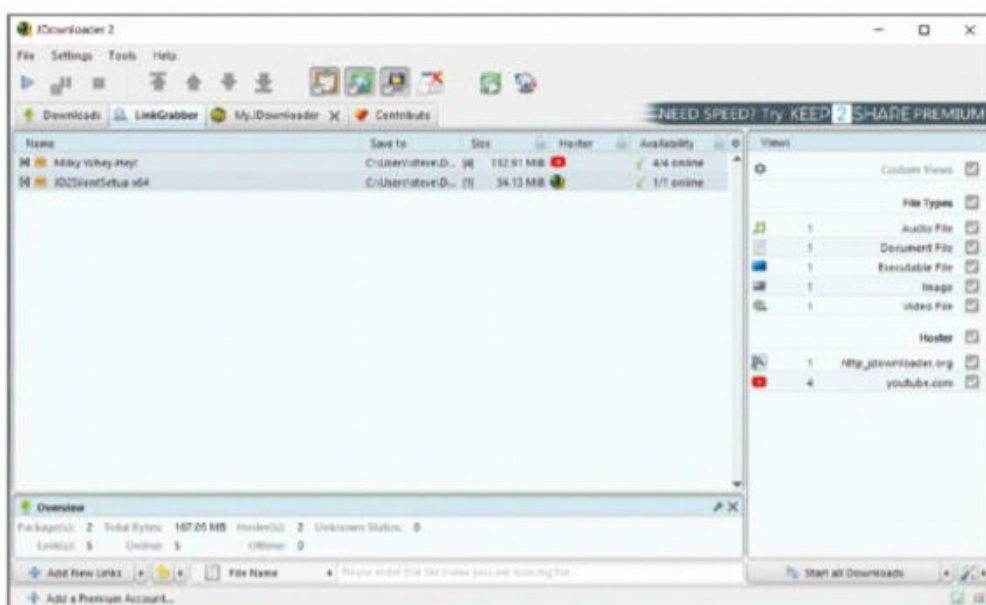
its support for video-streaming sites. Grab a link from YouTube or Vimeo and add it to your download queue. The first time you do this, you're prompted to add FFmpeg software

– which JDownloader will do for you – but this also lets you re-download videos you've uploaded at their original quality. This puts it a cut above rivals who struggled with this basic task and frequently redirected us to the original web page or failed to download anything at all.

## How it can be improved:

While its features are outstanding, JDownloader's interface could do with an update – its use of rounded edges gives off Windows XP vibes that belie its impressive power.

It's also not the easiest download manager to use. If you're new to using



this type of software, you may find JDownloader mystifying. Thankfully, there's an official tutorial online at [bit.ly/jdownloadertutorial493](https://bit.ly/jdownloadertutorial493), and YouTube is rife with video guides for beginners.

## OUR VERDICT

Packed with just about every feature you need to control multiple downloads, JDownloader remains the strongest download manager out there. It may look like an antiquity but the program's performance is sublime, once you have a handle on its intricacies.



## HTTP Downloader | [bit.ly/http493](http://bit.ly/http493) | ★★★★★☆

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

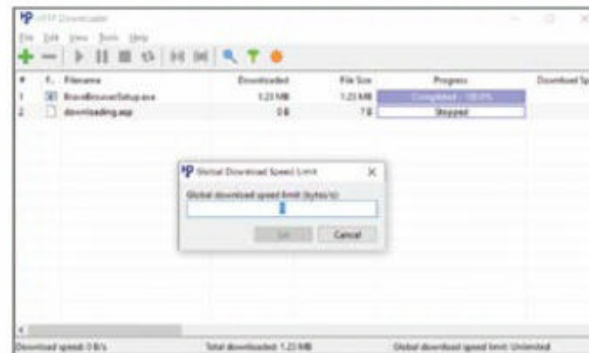


### What we liked:

HTTP Downloader is like a cleaner version of JDownloader – it performs almost identically to our Gold Award-winner, but the interface is less cluttered.

This makes it a bit simpler to jump into, with a sparse interface displaying a downloads list and core control settings, such as Start, Stop and Pause. You can hide these, too, if you want to reduce the number of on-screen icons. But don't let the basic design fool you – this software is well equipped to handle anything you throw at it.

There's support for a whole range of URL and streaming protocols, and operation is straightforward. Simply grab your download link, add it to HTTP Downloader with a press of the Plus icon and leave it to do its thing. It's also easy to set global download speed limits, should you need them. Beyond download management, the Search function is especially useful because it lets you quickly track down files you've downloaded previously.



### How it can be improved:

If you want to use HTTP Downloader's associated Chrome and Firefox extensions, you'll need to download them from GitHub and manually unpack them in your browser. This isn't a huge hardship but it's less integrated than other download managers that direct you to the Chrome Web Store or add extensions automatically.

### OUR VERDICT

**HTTP Downloader is a near-identical alternative to JDownloader.**

**However, there are a few options and settings not found here that power users may miss.**

## XDM | [bit.ly/xdm493](http://bit.ly/xdm493) | ★★★★★☆

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

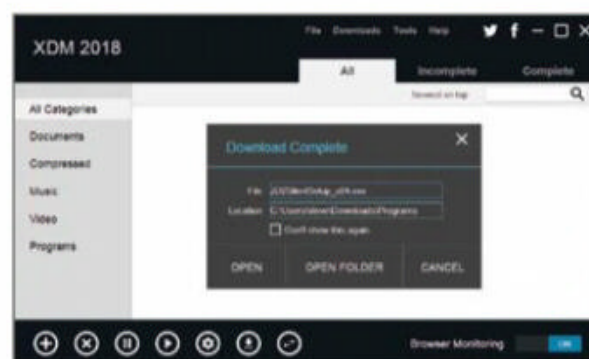


### What we liked:

XDM (or Xtreme Download Manager, to give it its full title) is a slick, modern tool with a design more akin to a media player than a download manager. Its

clean layout makes it easy to filter and find downloads, with a main pane displaying All, Incomplete and Complete tabs alongside a search bar, to quickly find what you're looking for. Format filters, such as Documents, Music and Video, sit on the far left, while other functions, settings and options are tucked out of sight under headings along the ribbon – File, for instance, is where you'll spend most of your time managing single and batch downloads, while Tools contains handy extras, including a speed limiter and, best of all, a media converter for quick file conversions.

Adding XDM extensions to popular browsers is easy – there's a complete list with links to the add-ons. These 'interceptors' can be turned off via the program's Browser Monitoring switch.



### How it can be improved:

As is typical with such streamlined tools, XDM is aimed at beginners and light downloaders, and lacks the powerful, feature-rich software required by advanced users. We found its option to download videos failed to work with many popular streaming sites, and the search field was a bit hit-and-miss.

### OUR VERDICT

**XDM offers solid, fast performance, with a modern layout that's easy to navigate. It's not short enough of functions to be called 'basic', but it's still best suited to casual users.**

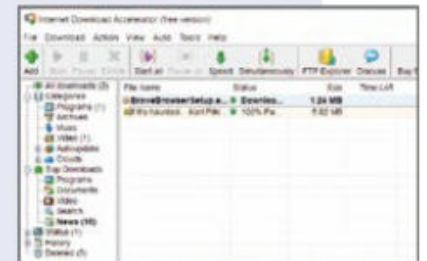
## BEST OF THE REST

### Internet Download Accelerator

[bit.ly/accelerate493](http://bit.ly/accelerate493)

Internet Download Accelerator may look a tad dated, with its File Explorer-style layout and tree-view navigation system, but performance is fantastic, with exceptional download speeds.

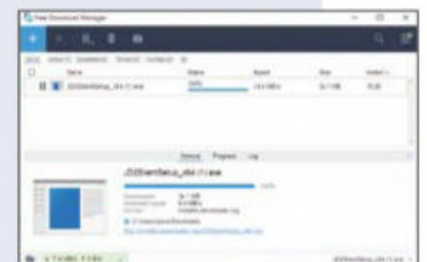
However, while it quickly downloaded sound from videos, it often failed to merge video and audio, despite repeated attempts. On the plus side, it's also available as a portable download, although only the full version, available for most Windows operating systems, has browser-extension support.



### Free Download Manager

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

No prizes for guessing what this tool is or how much it costs. Free Download Manager, like XDM, is modern-looking and user-friendly, but it doesn't pack as many features as its competitors. Nevertheless, there's more than enough



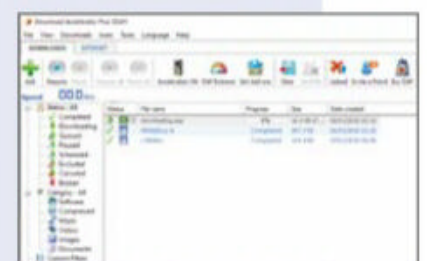
here for most users and it includes options for downloading torrents. The tool is available for Windows and macOS, with the usual browser-extension support you'd expect. Worth a crack, if you're not downloading too much too often.

### Download Accelerator Plus

[www.speedbit.com/dap](http://www.speedbit.com/dap)

Download Accelerator Plus tackles the basics, performing most of the tasks you might need, with a few extras such as link checking and file conversion thrown in for good measure.

You can download videos from sites such as YouTube and Daily Motion, but this requires the free Video Downloader tool, which is a shame because it would make more sense to bundle them together. A minor niggle for an otherwise quick and decent download manager.



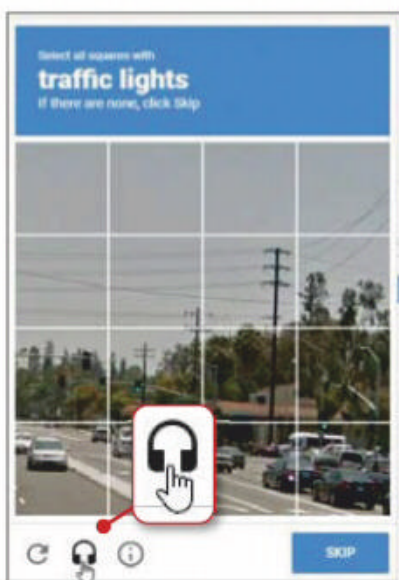


# Beat online obstructions

Don't let annoying pop-ups and widgets block your access to websites. **Robert Irvine** reveals the best workarounds for common web hindrances and distractions

## Skip image CAPTCHAs

When you're trying to sign into a website, it's very irritating to have to prove you're not a robot by selecting all the squares containing traffic lights/cars/bridges/trees/street signs and so on. These picture-based CAPTCHAs (which stands for 'Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart') are an increasingly common security measure, now that artificial intelligence (AI) bots are able to defeat most text-based ones. However, the small and indistinct photos they use can leave you baffled. Is that a vehicle in the distance or a house? Does the corner of a sign count as being an image of one? Ultimately, CAPTCHAs are there to help Google (which sources the photos from Street View) improve its own AI but, for the rest of us, they're a tiresome obstruction.

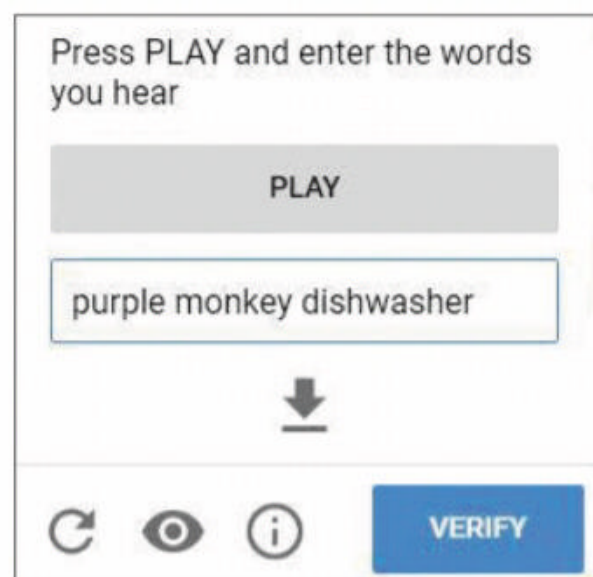


One way to bypass these square-selecting challenges is to choose an audio CAPTCHA instead, by clicking the headphones button at the

*Image CAPTCHAs require you to click all the squares containing a specific object*

bottom of the CAPTCHA widget. Press Play and type the words you hear – you can keep refreshing if you can't decipher it – then click Verify.

Alternatively, install the browser extension Buster ([bit.ly/buster493](http://bit.ly/buster493)), click its button in the widget and it will switch to an audio CAPTCHA and solve it for you. Buster is available for Chrome, Firefox and Opera.



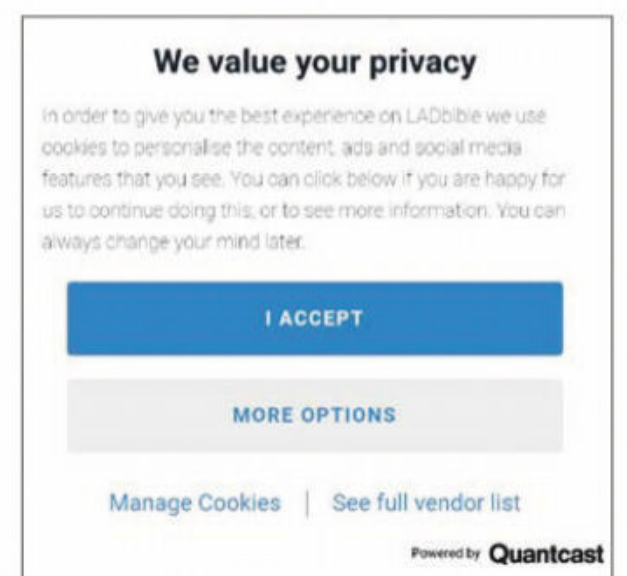
*If you're tired of squinting at tiny pictures of roads, try an audio CAPTCHA instead*

## Hide cookie notices

Since 2011, all websites accessed in the EU are required to tell their visitors that they're using cookies, explain what those cookies are being used for and get those visitors' consent to place cookies on their devices. Although this measure tackles privacy concerns, prevents tracking cookies from being

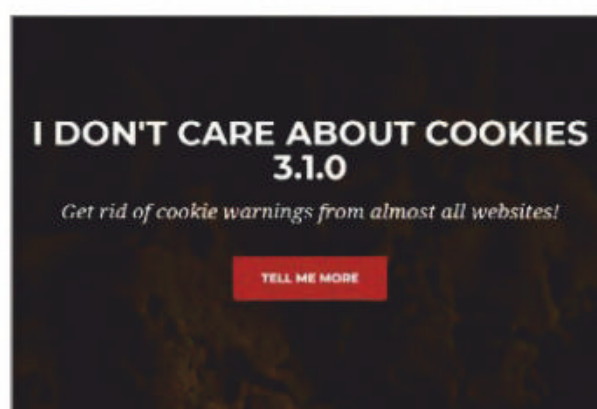
installed without our permission and should only appear the first time you visit a site, the notices can prove obstructive and annoying, especially on a phone where they take up the whole screen. Also, let's be honest: how often do you actually read the information in a cookie warning, rather than just click Agree or Accept to make it go away?

If you're tired of being pestered by these notices and aren't bothered about sites installing (mostly) harmless cookies on your computer, you can use I Don't Care About Cookies ([bit.ly/cookies493](http://bit.ly/cookies493)) to hide them. This excellent extension for Chrome, Firefox, Opera, Pale Moon and the new Edge automatically hides cookie warnings on almost any site you visit in your desktop browser. Alternatively, you can add its



*Cookie notices may protect your privacy but they also obstruct access to websites*





*I Don't Care About Cookies automatically hides cookie notices on almost all sites*

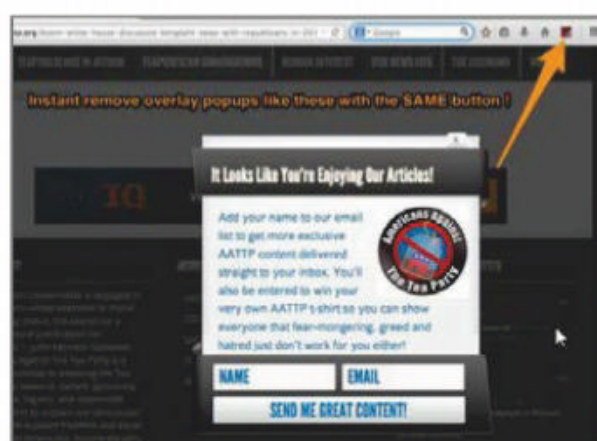
filter list to your ad blocker, although this isn't as effective as the browser add-on.

On your Android phone or tablet, you'll need to use a mobile browser that supports extensions, such as Firefox ([bit.ly/firefox493](http://bit.ly/firefox493)), or use Opera ([bit.ly/opera493](http://bit.ly/opera493)), which lets you block cookie notices by going to Settings, 'Ad blocking' and choosing 'Block cookie dialogs'. On an iPhone or iPad, your best option is to install AdGuard for Safari ([bit.ly/adguard493](http://bit.ly/adguard493)) and select a cookie-blocking filter such as I Don't Care About Cookies or Prebake.

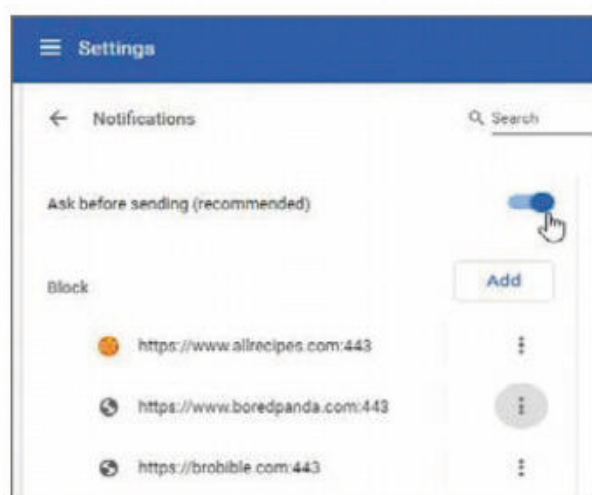
## Close website overlays

Overlays that urge you to sign up for a website's newsletter, pay for a monthly subscription or any other option that isn't relevant to a casual visit can be just as annoying as cookie notices, especially when a tiny or non-existent 'X' makes them difficult to close. Fortunately, you can bypass these obstructions to access the content behind them by using a browser tool called Behind the Overlay for Chrome ([bit.ly/btochrome493](http://bit.ly/btochrome493)) and Firefox ([bit.ly/btofire493](http://bit.ly/btofire493)). It hasn't been updated for a couple of years but still works very well. Either click its toolbar button or press Ctrl+Shift+X on your keyboard to remove the overlay from the current page.

A similarly useful extension is Quora Login Bypass for Firefox ([bit.ly/quora493](http://bit.ly/quora493)), which closes the overlay that requires you to sign up for and into the popular knowledge site Quora to read its questions and answers.



*Behind the Overlay lets you access obscured content with a single click*



*You can prevent all websites from sending you requests to show you notifications*

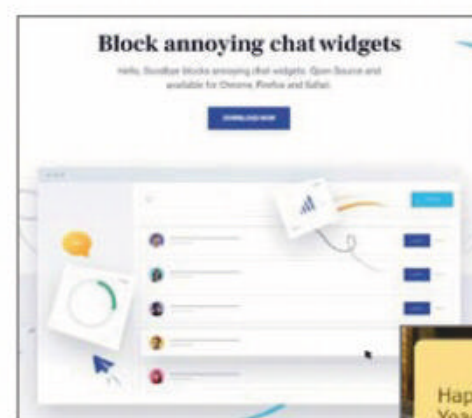
## Block website notifications

Has anyone ever intentionally clicked Allow when told that a website wants to show them notifications? We very much doubt it and, although these requests are easily dismissed by clicking Block, you may find it more convenient to disable site notifications altogether.

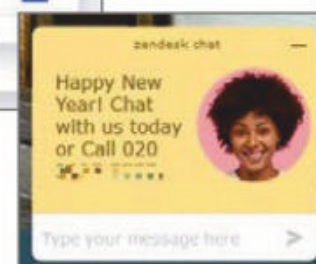
To do this in Chrome, click the menu button in the top-right corner, choose Settings, then Advanced and select 'Site settings'. In the Permissions section, click Notifications and switch off 'Ask before sending'.

In the new Chromium-based Edge browser, go to Settings, select 'Site permissions', click Notifications and deselect the same 'Ask before sending' option there.

In Firefox, click the menu button, choose Options, then 'Privacy & security' and scroll down to Permissions. Click the Settings button next to Notifications and select 'Block new requests asking to allow notifications'. You can also remove any sites for which you've allowed notifications and click Save Changes.



*Customer-service chatbots (see right) can be irritating but Hello Goodbye will block them*



## Disable live-chat pop-ups

When you're quietly browsing a website and minding your own business, the last thing you need is a customer-service agent popping up in the bottom-right-hand corner of your screen with a chirpy "Hi there!" and an offer to answer any questions you may have. We know they're only trying to help and that, behind their smiling stock photo, they're more likely to be a chatbot than a real person, but it's unnerving and distracting to feel that you're being watched.

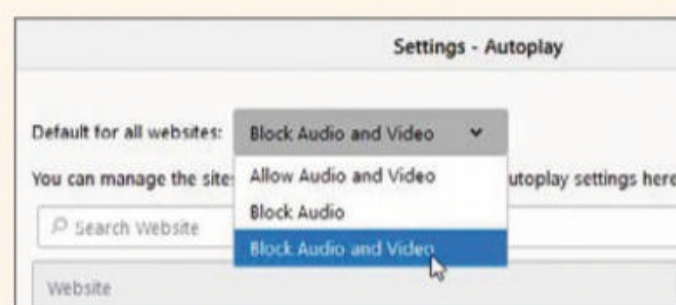
Any ad blocker worth its salt should prevent these nuisance widgets from opening but, if that seems too heavy-handed, you can install Hello Goodbye instead ([hellogoodbye.app](http://hellogoodbye.app)). Available for Chrome, Firefox and Safari, this extension blocks chat requests from the most widely-used services as well as other pushy notifications, such as those telling you someone has just bought or booked a particular item. You can easily disable the add-on when you need to talk to a customer representative or bot, by clicking its toolbar button. ■

## STOP AUTOPLAYING VIDEOS

We've previously described noisy autoplaying videos as the worst web menace of the last few years and, although they're no longer as prevalent, plenty of websites still insist on bothering you with them.

Commendably, Firefox now makes it easy to block all autoplay content. Go to Options, 'Privacy & security', Permissions and click the Settings button next to autoplay. Click the 'Default for all websites' drop-down menu, choose 'Block Audio and Video' and click Save Changes.

Chrome lets you mute the sound on autoplaying videos (in 'Site settings', Sound) but not disable



them by default – presumably because many advertisers rely on autoplay. One workaround is to install the extension AutoplayStopper ([bit.ly/autoplay493](http://bit.ly/autoplay493)), which prevents Flash and HTML5 videos from playing automatically, replacing them with a still-image thumbnail.

In the new Edge, you can turn off autoplay by going to Settings, 'Site permissions', 'Media autoplay'.



# Restore missing KEYBOARD tools

Does your keyboard lack useful options that make typing quicker and easier? **Nik Rawlinson** explains how to access your keyboard's missing features and reveal its hidden functions for free

## Access your numeric keypad

Unless you have an extended keyboard, you'll probably be missing the numeric keypad so beloved of accountants and scientists. Typing numbers using a familiar three-by-three layout is much quicker and more convenient than using the number row above a regular keyboard, but space limitations mean it's rarely possible to include the number pad on anything but the largest laptops. Don't despair, though – the keyboard is still there if you know how to find it.

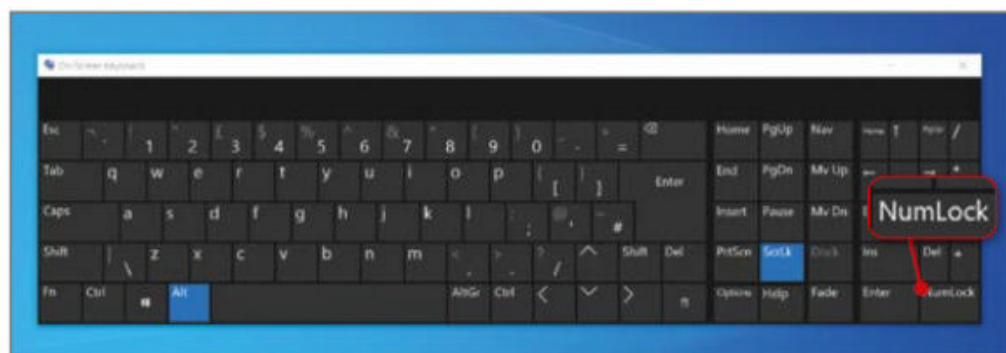
If you have a touch-enabled screen, using an on-screen keyboard is almost as convenient as a standard one. Press Windows+Ctrl+O to open it, then press Options – it's on the bottom row in the

right-hand block of buttons. Select 'Turn on numeric keypad' and click OK. When it first appears, the keypad shows

navigation controls, such as Home and End, which are duplicates of those above the Options button you just pressed. To replace them with digits, tap NumLock.

The on-screen keyboard also works with your mouse if you're prepared to hunt and peck at the button you want. Otherwise, in Options, select the radio button beside 'Hover over keys'. This lets you pause the cursor briefly above a button to activate it.

If you only need to use the numeric keypad, displaying the whole keyboard can feel like a waste of screen space – but while it's possible to remove some of the navigation keys, you can't get rid of the main alphabetical section. Instead, download a free tool called Numpad Emulator ([bit.ly/numpad493](http://bit.ly/numpad493)), launch the program, walk through the wizard and the number pad will open



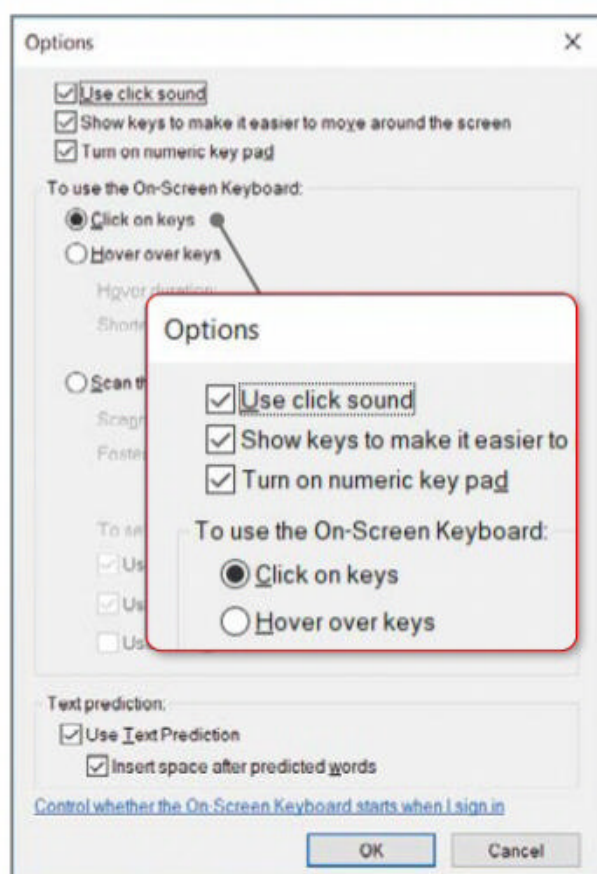
*The Windows on-screen keyboard provides access to a numeric keypad*

on-screen. Select the option to add a shortcut to your desktop if you want to access it quickly in future (this option is disabled by default).

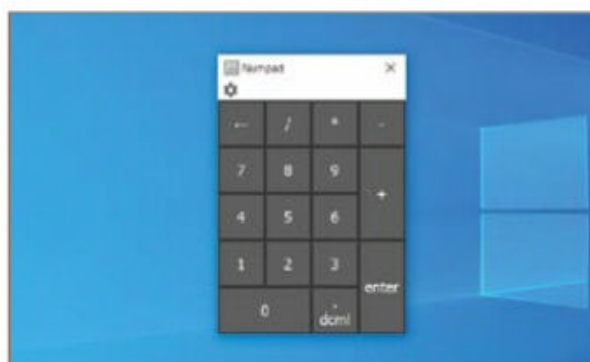
If you don't have a touch-enabled screen and find clicking cumbersome, take a close look at your keyboard to see whether it has a numeric keypad hidden within the regular keys. It will usually appear on the right-hand side of the key array, often with U-I-O doubling up as 4-5-6, J-K-L triggering 1-2-3 and M being home to O, with the existing 7-8-9 keys on the top row retaining their existing function.

If the digits are shown in a different colour to the letters on your keyboard, look for a function (or Fn) button of the same colour, and hold it down while pressing the keys to access the numbers. You may also find that your keyboard has a NumLock key of the same colour – pressing this while pressing the matching Fn button will enable the embedded numeric keyboard until it's switched off, at which point the letter keys come back into play.

If none of these options work for you, invest in an external numeric keypad. You can buy a wireless model for £7.99 from Amazon at [bit.ly/keypad493](http://bit.ly/keypad493), which can be connected to your existing keyboard if it has a spare USB port.



*Activate the on-screen keyboard's hover function to press keys without clicking*



*Numpad Emulator presents an on-screen numeric keypad in place of a real one*



# Restore missing **KEYBOARD** tools



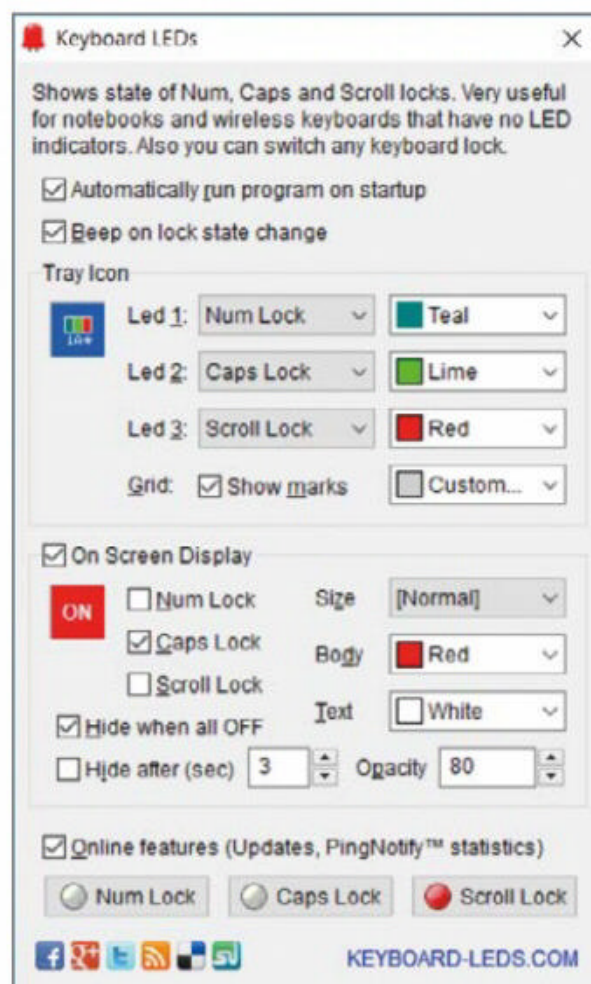
**Connect a wireless numeric keypad to make typing numbers quicker and easier**

Alternatively, run the keypad app on your iPad or iPhone, position the device on the desk beside you and use it as an extension to your regular keyboard. NumPad, £3.99 from the App Store at [bit.ly/numberapp493](http://bit.ly/numberapp493) does exactly this and, as well as being cheaper than a hardware numeric keypad, it's more environmentally friendly. If your phone or tablet runs Android, check out Monect instead ([www.monect.com](http://www.monect.com)).

## **Add on-screen status indicators**

If your keyboard lacks indicators for Caps Lock, Num Lock and so on, it can be difficult to correctly type passwords when the characters you're entering are obscured on your screen. You can't retrofit an indicator light so, if you need a visual indicator, you'll have to resort to free tools.

Keyboard LEDs adds lights to the system tray at the far end of Windows'



**You can emulate Caps Lock, Num Lock and more on your screen**

taskbar. Download the EXE file for free from [bit.ly/keyboardleds493](http://bit.ly/keyboardleds493) (it's also available as a ZIP file from the same link). When the program launches, optionally tweak its settings to suit your way of working. By default, it uses red indicators for Caps Lock, Num Lock and Scroll Lock, but you can change this using the options that appear when Keyboard LEDs first runs so you can see immediately what's active (and what's not) on your PC. You can also enable or

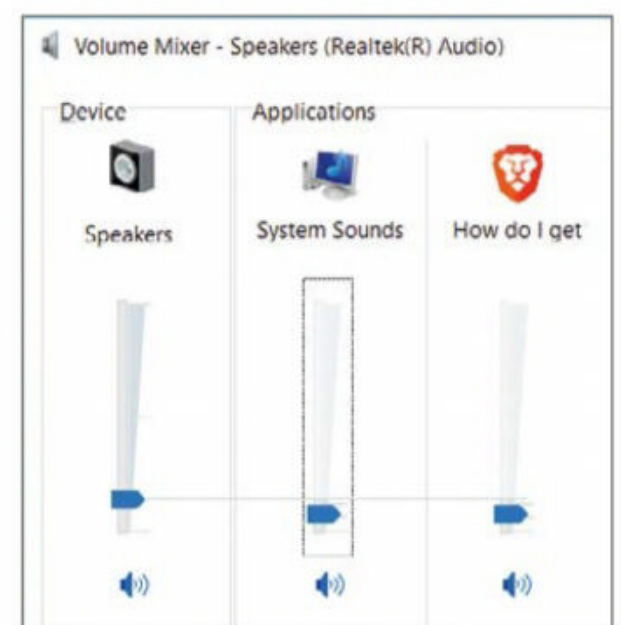
disable a chime with every change of status, and even adjust what you're tracking if you want to alter the order of the lights.

Keyboard LEDs automatically disappears when you click away from it because Windows positions it with your hidden icons. However, it's most effective when permanently on display, so click the upward-pointing chevron to reveal the icons, hold down on the LEDs and drag them onto the taskbar, beside the Windows clock.

## **Control the volume of programs**

If your keyboard has no integrated volume controls, use Windows' built-in volume tool by clicking the speaker icon on the right of the taskbar, then using the up and down cursor keys to increase and decrease the volume.

This method only controls the volume of the default output device as a whole. For finer control, use the volume mixer, which lets you control both the overall output level and the volume of individual applications. Press the Windows key and type `sndvol`, then click the top result. You can now use the up and down cursor keys to control the volume level for the output device (as before) and, by pressing the Tab key, move across to the applications slider to change that in the same way.



**Volume Mixer provides full control over each application's volume level**

## **Get Caps Lock on Chromebook**

If you've ever used a Chromebook, you're likely to have noticed two things: the lower-case etching on the keyboard and the lack of a Caps Lock key, which is replaced with a Search button (Chromebooks are, after all, a Google invention). To use the Search key as a Caps control, simply press the Search button while holding Alt and you'll remain in Caps mode until you next press Shift. ■

## **TYPING DIACRITICS AND SYMBOLS**

Diacritics are accents and flourishes – é and ù, for example – that help guide pronunciation, while symbols are commonly-used pictograms – such as © and ™ – that often aren't spoken but have specific uses in written text. In many cases, they're available directly by combining Alt Gr (to the right of the spacebar) with a shortcut key. So, Alt Gr+C gives you ©, Alt Gr+T produces ™ and Alt Gr+R results in ®. Your keyboard may also be marked with accented characters, which are accessed in the same way. On our keyboard, combining the vowel keys with Alt Gr lets us type á, é, í, ó and ú, while using it with the 4 key gives us the € symbol.

If the character you need isn't available directly, press Start, type `map` and click Character Map. This shows all the characters available in each of your installed fonts – just



**The Character Map tool finds characters that don't appear on your keyboard**

click the one you want, followed by Select and Copy. Now switch to the program in which you want to use the copied character and press Ctrl+V to insert it.





## Make phone calls from your PC

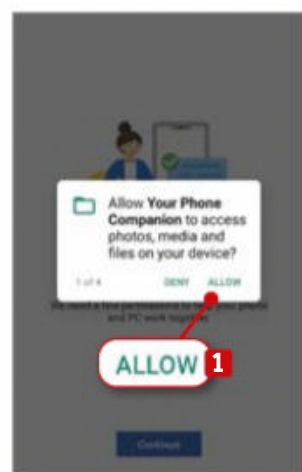
You can now make and receive calls through your Android phone directly from your Windows 10 PC. Here's what you need to know

Your Phone: [bit.ly/yourpc493](https://bit.ly/yourpc493) | ⌚ 20 mins | 🖥️ Windows 10

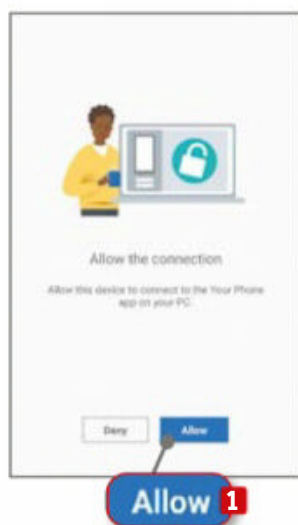
**M**icrosoft's Your Phone app connects your Android smartphone to your PC so you can reply to text messages directly in Windows, receive and manage phone notifications, and view and save copies of recent photos on your phone, without having to mess around emailing them to yourself. The app can even mirror your

phone screen, so you can interact with your apps and phone content directly on your PC, although this particular feature only works with selected phones.

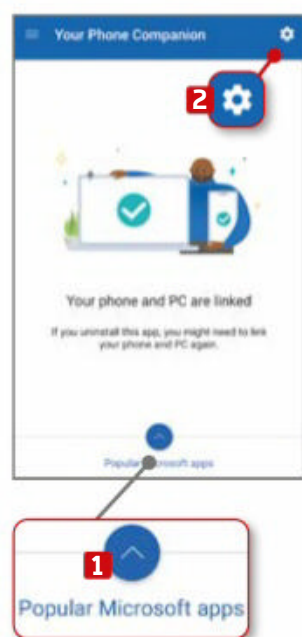
The most recent addition to the app is the ability to make (and receive or decline) phone calls directly from your PC. Your computer needs to have Bluetooth for this to work.



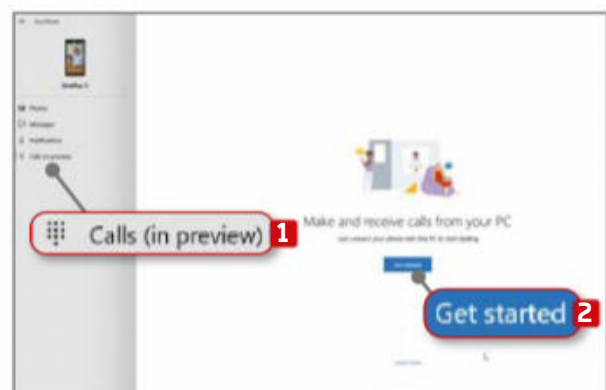
**1** Install the Your Phone app on your PC, then install the Your Phone Companion app on your Android phone ([bit.ly/ypcandroid493](https://bit.ly/ypcandroid493)). In the mobile app, sign in with your Microsoft account details. You can create a new account if you don't have one. Allow the requested access permissions. **1**



**2** You're given the option to run the companion app in the background, so text and photos stay up to date, though this may run down your battery faster. Confirm your PC is ready, open the app on your computer, allow the connection on your phone **1** and choose whether or not to send usage data to Microsoft.



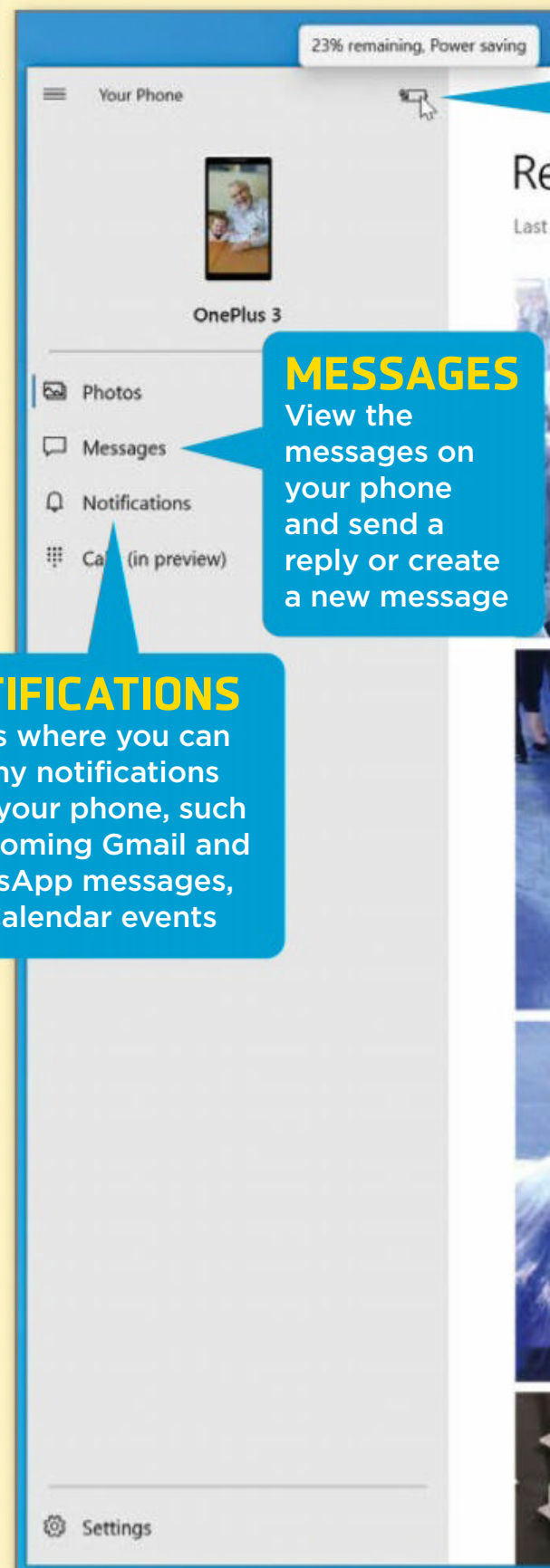
**3** The companion app on your phone doesn't offer much in the way of features. You can explore popular Microsoft apps **1** and open Settings, **2** although the latter only lets you check for updates. You can also allow data sync over a cellular connection and add a battery-optimisation exception.



**4** To make calls in the Your Phone app on your PC, click the 'Calls (in preview)' link on the left, **1** then click the 'Get started' button. **2** Grant the mobile app permission to access call logs on your phone, then tick the Yes button in the PC app to allow Your Phone to make calls.



**5** It may take a little while to set everything up. Your PC and phone need to be connected via Bluetooth, and you may need to grant the apps the same (or different) permissions a couple of times. Once it's all completed, you're presented with a long list of recent incoming and outgoing calls. **1**







## BATTERY LIFE

To find out how much charge is left in your phone, hover your mouse over the battery icon

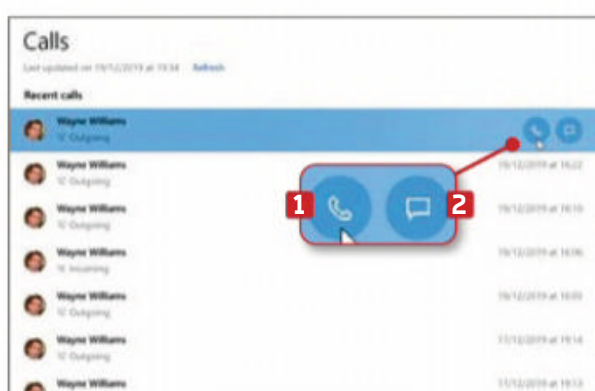
## Recent photos

updated on 19/12/2019 at 19:42 Refresh

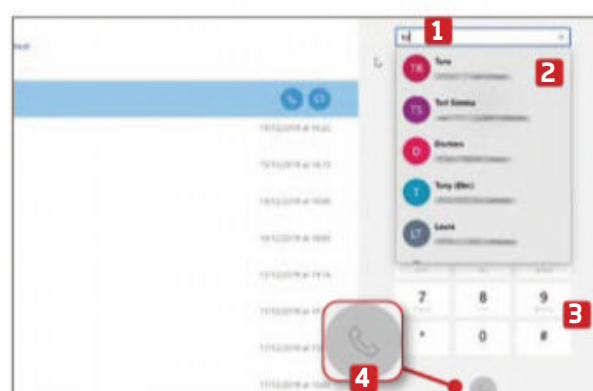


## PHOTOS

The Your Phone app displays images from your phone, and lets you open, copy, save or share them. It used to only show the last 25 but this has been increased to 2,000



**6** To make a call to someone you know, click a recent entry. You'll be able to call them by clicking the blue phone icon. **1** Wait a few seconds for the call to start. You can also send text messages from this screen by clicking the Text button in the banner. **2**



**7** To call one of your contacts who isn't on your 'Recent calls' list, search for them by name or number. **1** Possible matches appear and update as you type. **2** You can also place a call to someone not in your contacts by entering their number on the keypad **3** and pressing the call button. **4**



**8** Click the cog **1** in the app to access Settings. These apply to the phone you're connected to. From here, you can choose whether to access photos and messages, manage notifications **2** and enable or disable the new calling feature. **3** You can also choose to get taskbar notifications. **4**





# Edit audio files more easily

Wave Editor: [wave-editor.com](http://wave-editor.com) | ⌚ 20 mins | 🖥️ Windows 7, 8, 10



## EXPERT TIP

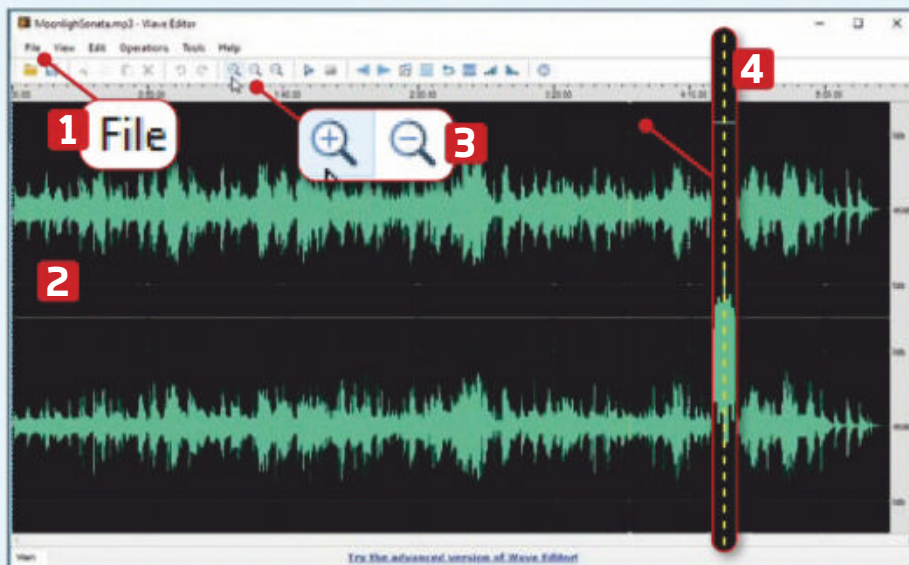
### Andy Shaw says

The Tools menu contains a selection of additional programs you can integrate with the software, but you have to pay for most of them. If you want to carry out more complex adjustments to your sounds, it's probably worth switching to Audacity instead. On the plus side, Wave Editor's free Tag Editor component is competent at editing a file's meta information, such as track and artist names. The first time you click it, you're taken to the download page.

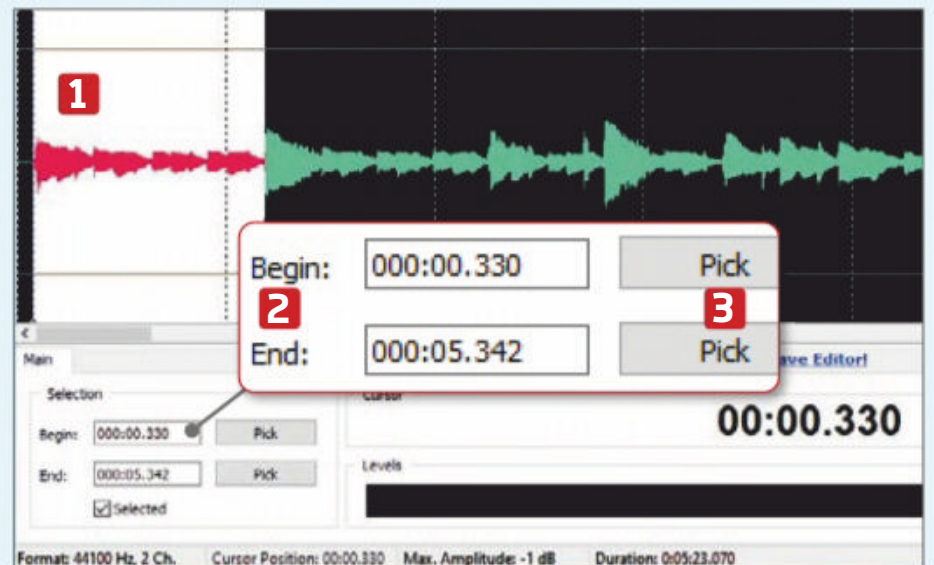


**W**e're big fans of the free audio-editing software Audacity ([www.audacityteam.org](http://www.audacityteam.org)) but its busy interface and vast array of complicated features can be overwhelming if you just want to perform a few simple edits on a sound file.

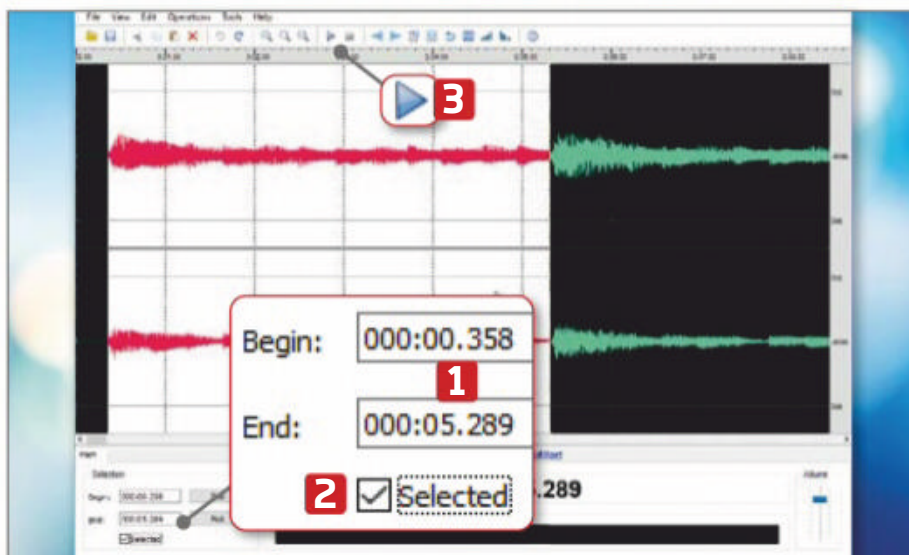
The free program Wave Editor provides a simpler alternative, with fewer tools and a simple interface that isn't bogged down with advanced options. All the basics are covered for editing and rearranging your music files, so you can trim unwanted sections; cut, copy and paste sections to create new sounds; and make a selection of adjustments to elements such as volume levels at the click of a toolbar button. Here, we explain how to use Wave Editor's best features.



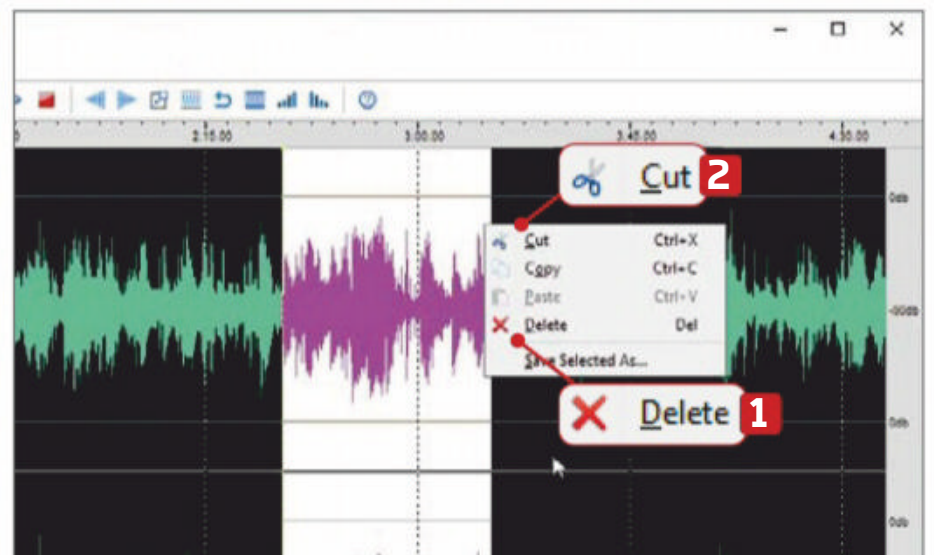
**1** Open your sound file from Wave Editor's File menu. **1** The software supports MP3, WAV and WMA files. The wave pattern fills the screen with the entire song **2** but you can zoom into sections by scrolling the mouse wheel or using the magnifying-glass icons. **3** Click the wave first to set a marker to zoom around. **4**



**2** Select part of the file by left-clicking and dragging your mouse over it. The highlighted selection shows its colours inverted, **1** and the beginning and end points are displayed in seconds. **2** You can also click a point in the wave form, then click one of the Pick buttons **3** to choose a point in the track.

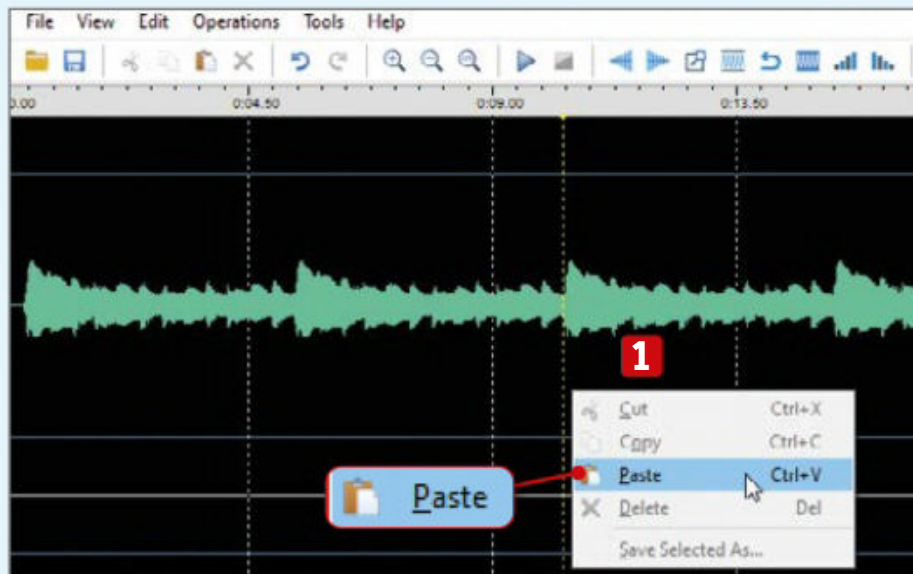


**3** Alternatively, type the beginning and end time into the respective boxes, **1** which can help fine-tune your selection. Unticking the Selected box **2** removes the highlighting but doesn't remove the times from the boxes. While the Selected box is ticked, the Play button **3** only plays the highlighted section.

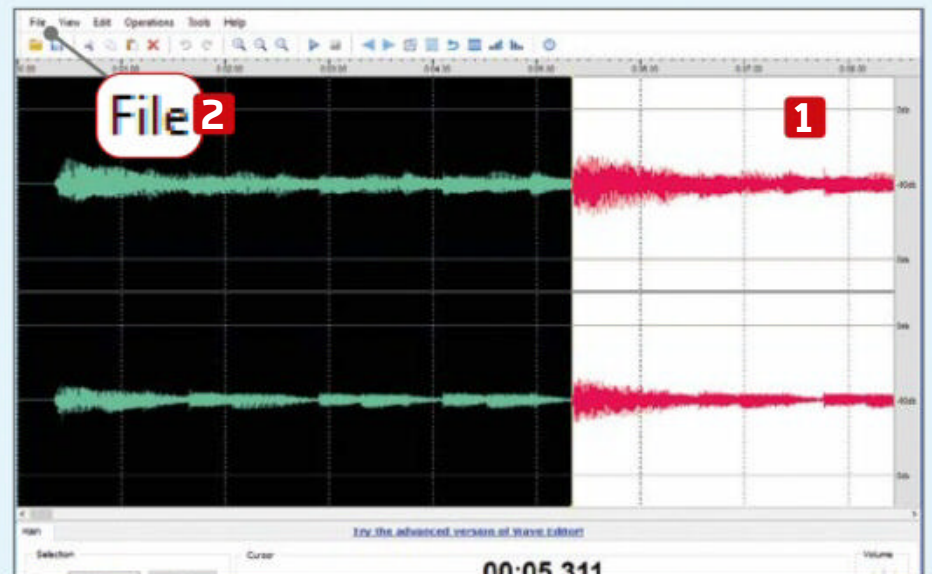


**4** To remove a section from your file, select it, right-click it and choose Delete **1** from the list of options. You can also Cut the section, **2** which does the same job but saves the deleted section to the clipboard.

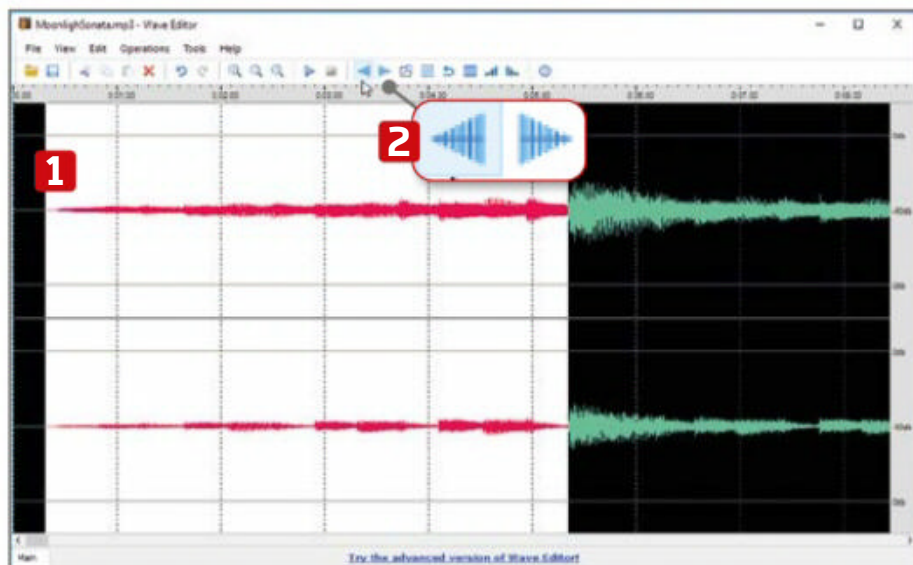




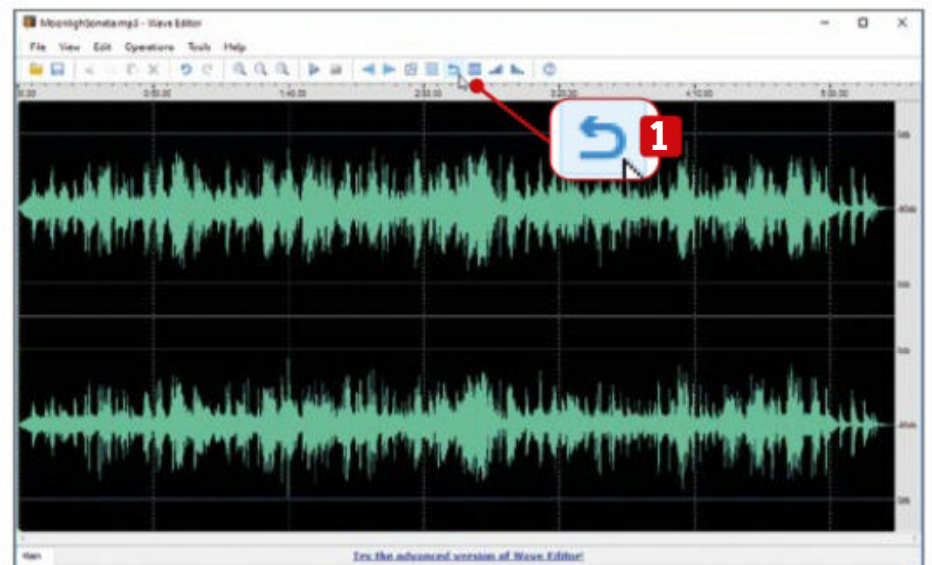
**5** Use Cut or Copy and Paste if you need to repeat a section of audio or want to create a loop that plays the same section more than once. To paste a section that you've cut or copied to the clipboard, click the point where you want the pasted sound to start, then right-click and choose Paste. **1**



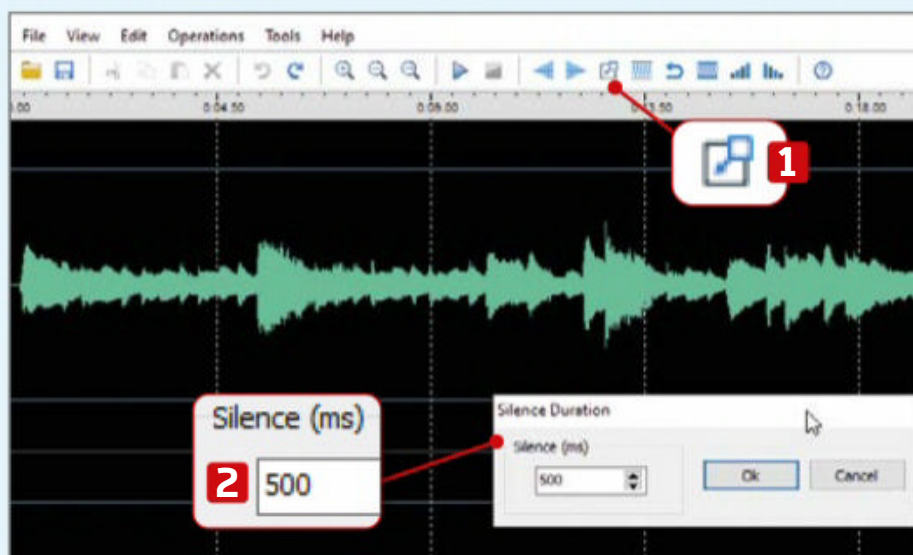
**6** To save a section as a new sound file, highlight it, **1** then right-click and choose Save Selected As. This option is also available on the File menu. **2** Once you've carried out some editing work, you can also export the entire track to a new file. Make sure nothing is selected and choose Save As instead.



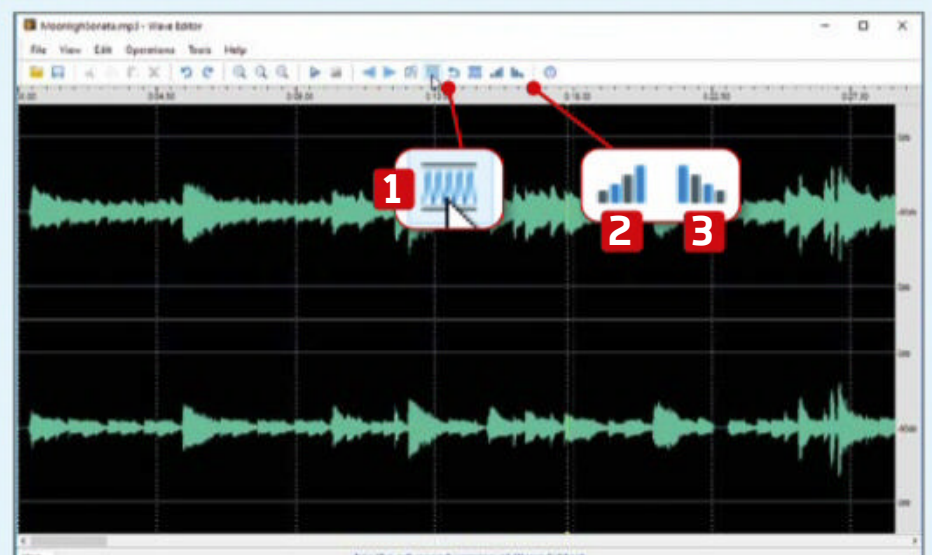
**7** You can make the start and end of your audio file smoother by using the Fade In and Fade Out tools. Use the selection tools to mark the area you want to gradually fade in or out, **1** then click the appropriate button. **2** The waves will adjust in response, increasing or decreasing the volume in a cone shape.



**8** We can't imagine many times when you'd need to reverse the audio of a file, except to have fun with sounds you've recorded, but Wave Editor can reverse the entire file at the click of a button **1** (actually, it makes for a great quiz question!). However, you can't do this to a selection – it's all or nothing – unless you cut sections to another file.



**9** There are times when you may want to add a period of silence to your audio files – at the beginning or end, for example, or if your track needs to drop out to accommodate a voiceover. To do this, click the place where you want the silence to appear, then click the Insert Silence button. **1** The time is in milliseconds, so 500 **2** is half a second.



**10** The Normalisation and Amplify options can only be applied to the entire track. Normalisation **1** smooths out variations in volume by bringing the peaks and troughs closer together. If you just want the whole track louder or quieter, use Amplify (Increase) **2** and Amplify (Decrease) **3** instead.





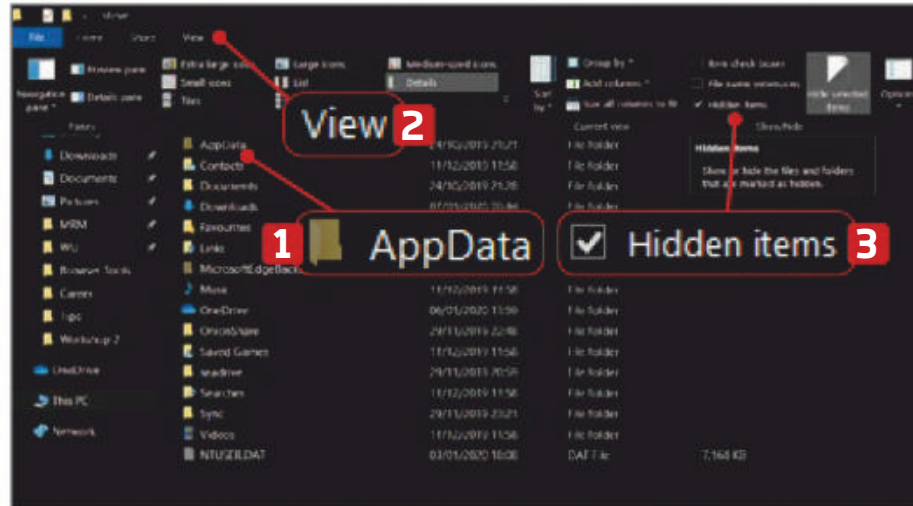
## Workshop 3

# Get more from VLC with add-ons

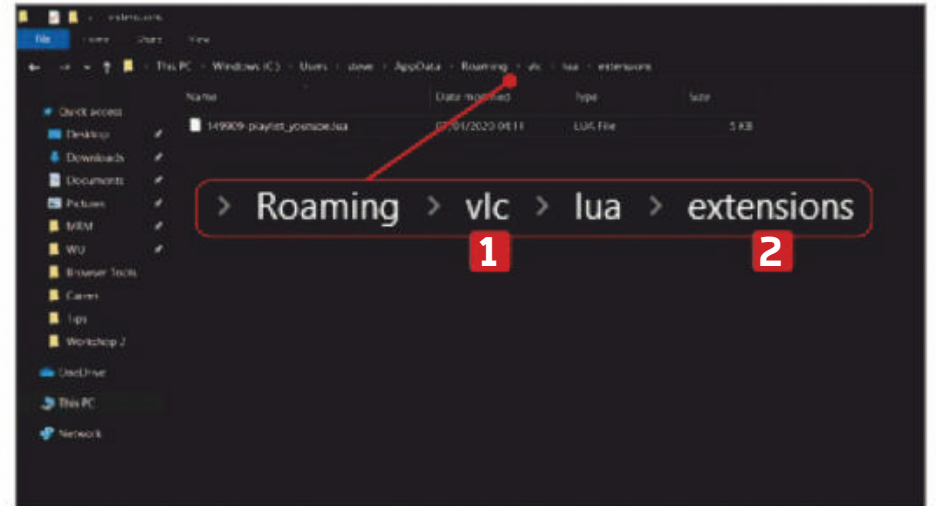
VLC ([www.videolan.org](http://www.videolan.org)) is one of our favourite media players but you can make it even better by using add-ons ([addons.videolan.org](http://addons.videolan.org)). Just like browser extensions, these give the player more options and abilities. For example,

**VLC add-ons:** [bit.ly/patch493](http://bit.ly/patch493) | 10 mins | **VLC**

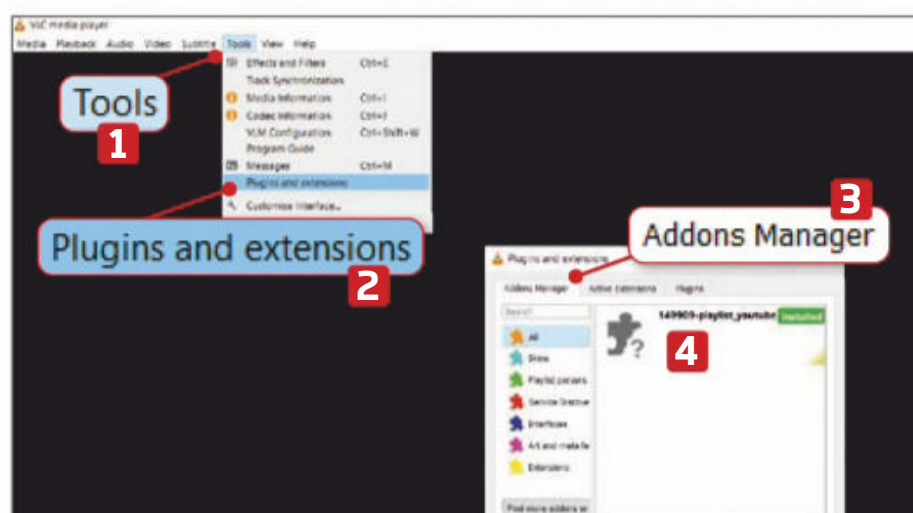
VLC is great for playing single videos from YouTube but, if you add the YouTube Playlist extension, it can play several videos in a row without ads or interruption.



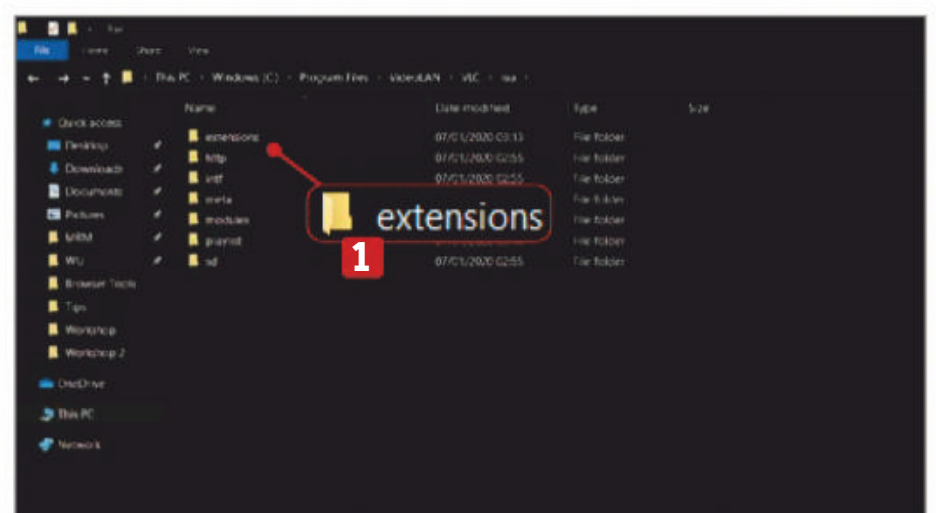
**1** With both VLC and your chosen add-on (such as YouTube Playlist, [bit.ly/playlist493](http://bit.ly/playlist493)) downloaded, copy the add-on to the correct location. In File Explorer, navigate to C:\Users\[your name]\AppData. **1** If you can't see the AppData folder, it may be hidden - click View, **2** then tick 'Hidden items'. **3**



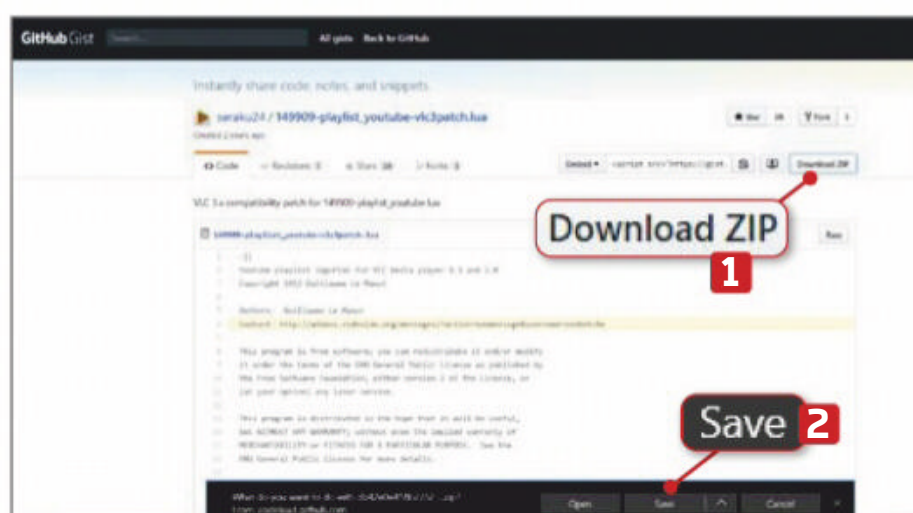
**2** In the AppData folder, go to Roaming, then 'vlc'. **1** Check that you have a folder called 'lua' - the file type for VLC's extensions. If not, create one. Open it and create a second folder - 'extensions'. **2** The final destination for the add-on is C:\Users\[your name]\AppData\Roaming\vlc\lua\extensions.



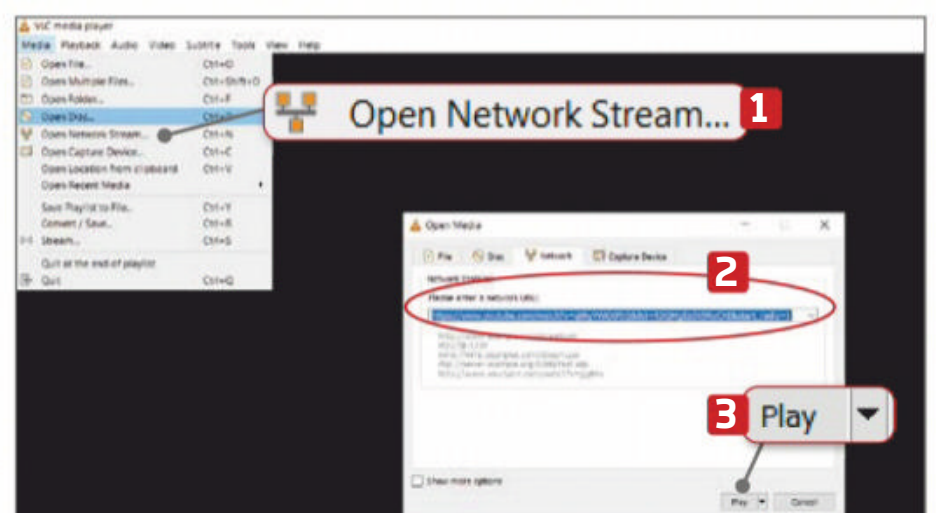
**3** Now, drag and drop the add-on from your Downloads folder into the 'extensions' folder. Close the folder, then open VLC Player. Select Tools, **1** then 'Plugins and extensions'. **2** On the next screen, under Addons Manager, **3** you should see your new extension displayed. **4**



**4** If you don't see the add-on, check the destination because VLC also has an 'extensions' folder in Program Files\VideoLan\VLC. **1** If you're using our YouTube Playlist example, it can struggle with newer updates of the software so you may need to download a different version of the add-on.



**5** You can grab YouTube Playlist Patch via GitHub ([bit.ly/playlistpatch493](http://bit.ly/playlistpatch493)). This irons out some kinks and is based on the original extension. On the website, click Download Zip, **1** then Save **2** and extract the file. Place this new add-on in the 'extensions' folder and check it displays (as in Step 3).



**6** Each extension works in different ways. To run YouTube Playlist, return to VLC Player's main screen and click Open Network Stream **1** in the Media menu. Paste the URL of a YouTube playlist in the text field **2** and press Play. **3** VLC runs through all the videos in your list, playing one after the other.



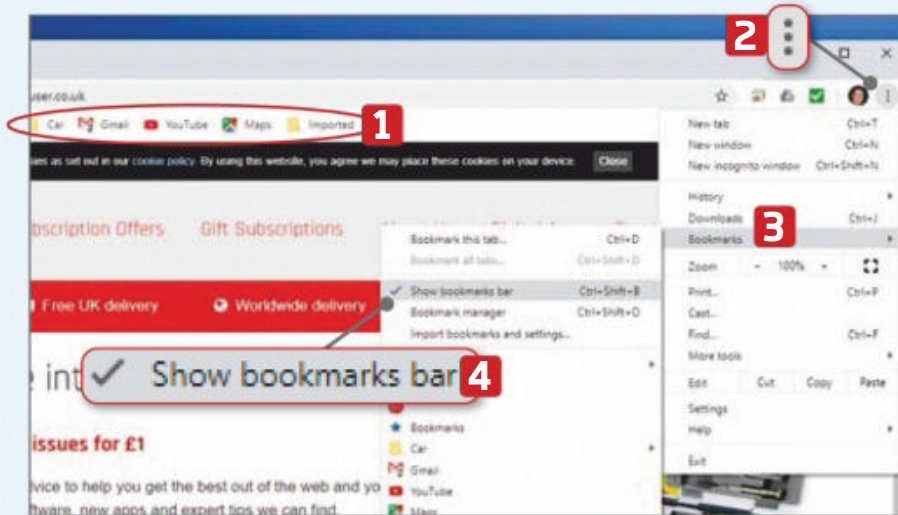


# Hide your bookmarks in Chrome

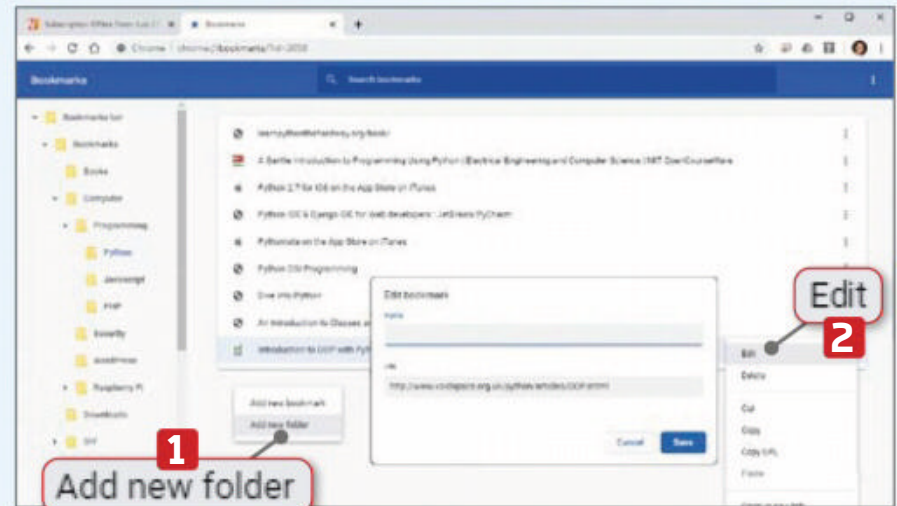
Most of us enjoy the convenience of browser bookmarks but they're difficult to keep private because anyone who uses your PC can view them. Here, we look at ways to hide and disguise your bookmarks.

Chrome: [bit.ly/chrome493](https://bit.ly/chrome493) | 10 mins | Chrome browser

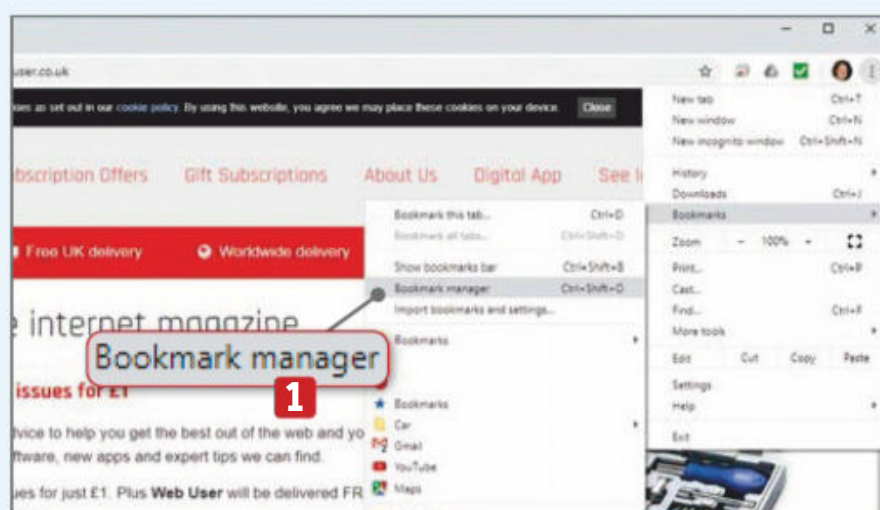
You can even remove them from your browser but keep them accessible in a convenient file that can be dragged and dropped into your browser window.



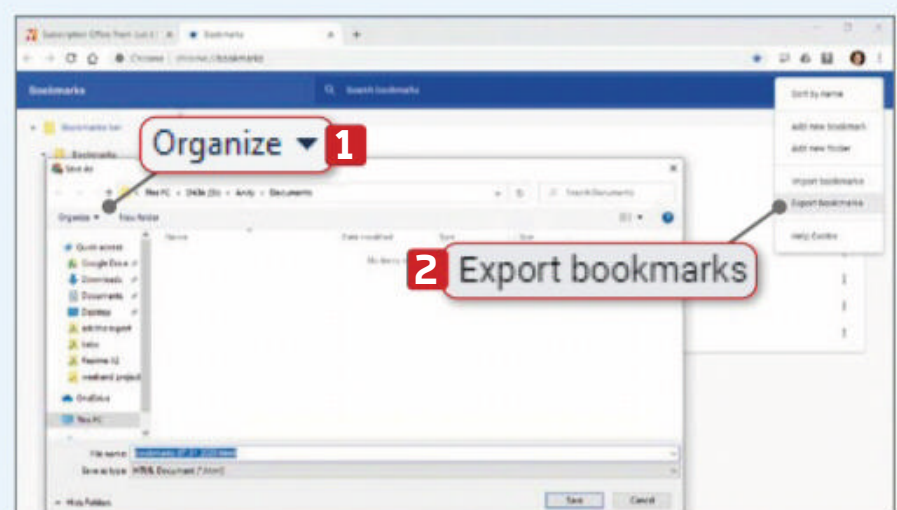
**1** It may be enough to simply remove the bookmarks bar (situated below the address bar), so your bookmarks are not immediately visible. Click Chrome's menu button, **2** hover over Bookmarks **3** and click 'Show bookmarks bar' **4** to remove the tick. The bookmarks bar disappears.



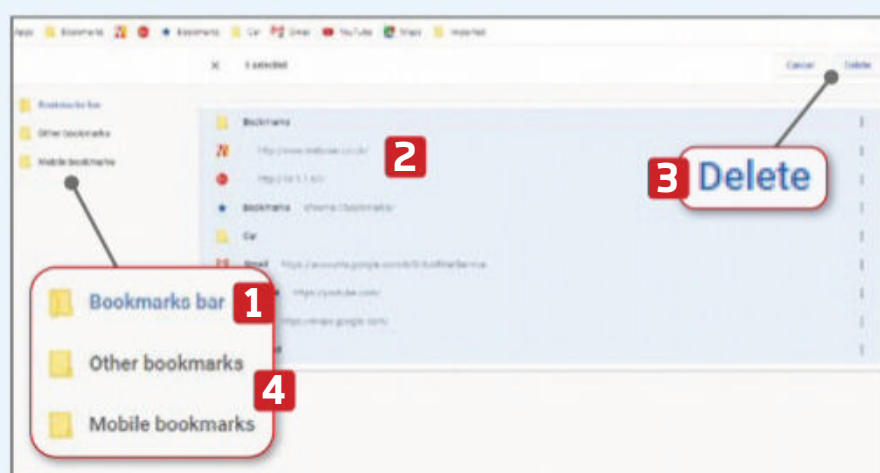
**2** Try hiding bookmarks by placing them in innocuous-looking folders. From the same Bookmarks menu, pick 'Bookmark manager'. Add folders **1** by right-clicking an empty space in an existing folder. You can also edit bookmarks, **2** removing the title so only the icon is displayed.



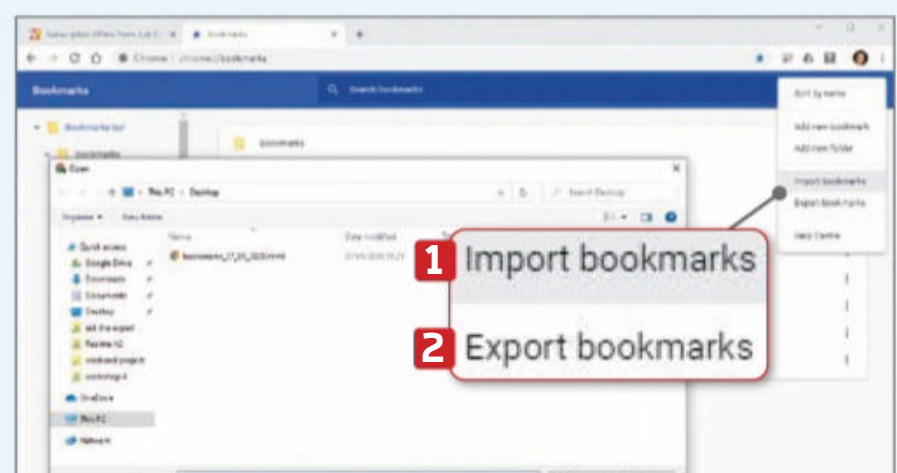
**3** The best way to hide bookmarks is to remove them from your browser. Exporting them creates a list of HTML links that you can open in your browser like a web page, then simply click the links to visit your saved pages. Open the Bookmarks manager **1** as shown in Step 2.



**4** Click Organize, **1** select 'Export bookmarks' **2** and save the file somewhere handy but safe. You can change the file's name to disguise it, but keep the '.html' file format. To open a bookmark, drag the file to your browser and find the bookmark you need in the list of links.



**5** To remove your bookmarks from Chrome, click one of the top-level folders, such as 'Bookmarks bar'. **1** Press Ctrl+A to highlight everything, **2** then click Delete. **3** You may have to repeat the process with more than one folder, such as 'Other bookmarks' and 'Mobile bookmarks'. **4**



**6** To add more bookmarks to your hidden list, re-import the list back into Chrome, edit it, then export it again. Open the Bookmarks manager, click the Organise button and choose 'Import bookmarks'. **1** Find your saved file, make any bookmark updates, then export it again. **2**



# Weekend Project

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



How to...

## Create your own retro gaming arcade for free

**Wayne Williams** shows you how to play a huge collection of classic games while staying on the right side of the law



If you're keen to play old games but no longer have the hardware to run them on, there are loads of different free emulators available to download, covering almost every arcade game, computer and console ever made. However, an emulator is nothing without the games and, unfortunately, adding them usually means downloading the relevant ROMs, which is essentially illegal. Many developers are happy for people who purchased the original game to download a version of it that will run on modern hardware but, if you didn't own the original, you shouldn't download a ROM version of it.

Thankfully, you don't need to break the law to get your retro gaming fix because there is a completely legal way to enjoy arcade and console games for free. In this issue's Weekend Project, we show you how to get started.

### What you need

Building your own, fully legal retro gaming arcade requires an emulator, but we won't be installing a standalone one for this project. Instead, we're using Kodi for the task because the latest version of the popular home-theatre system (18.5 'Leia') supports a number of popular emulators and provides an easy way of displaying your favourite games on a TV or monitor.

If you're worried about Kodi's bad reputation for providing access to illegal content, you should know that there is nothing intrinsically illegal about downloading and installing Kodi, as long as you don't use it to download or stream copyrighted material. The process we're using it for in this Weekend Project is completely legal.

If you don't already have a copy of Kodi, you can download the software

directly from [kodi.tv](http://kodi.tv). For the emulation element, you need RetroArch ([www.retroarch.com](http://www.retroarch.com)). Both programs are available for all major platforms. We show you how to install RetroArch in our Mini Workshop, opposite.

You'll also need to install the Internet Archive Game Launcher (IAGL) in Kodi – see the next section, Install IAGL, for instructions on how to do this. IAGL provides direct access to all the games





The Internet Archive's 'Best of - Arcade' contains 22 classic games, as well as loads of other coin-op titles

you are likely to want to play. Some games may also require that you use a game pad or joystick controller, though most have been adapted to work with a computer keyboard.

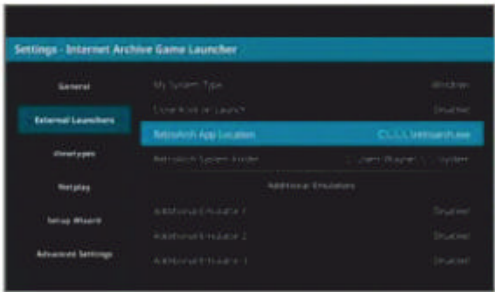
Install IAGL

To get the Internet Archive Game Launcher on Kodi, you first need to install the Zach Morris Add-ons repository, which you can download from [bit.ly/zach493](http://bit.ly/zach493) (note that this is a direct link, so it will pop up a Save As box as soon as you type the link). Once you have that, open Kodi and click the Settings cog. Click Add-ons, select 'Install from zip file', then find and install the repository. If you see a message stating: 'For security, installation of add-ons from unknown sources is disabled', click the

Settings button. Switch the toggle next to Unknown Sources to On and acknowledge the warning. Next, navigate to the Add-ons section's root menu and select 'Install from repository'. A new Zach Morris Add-ons entry appears. Click this and, on the next screen, select 'Game add-ons', then 'Game providers'. You should now see Internet Archive Game Launcher listed. Select it, click Install and then OK. Go back to the home screen in Kodi and hover over Add-Ons. You should see the Internet Archive Game Launcher. Right-click its tile and select Settings. If this is blank, go back to the main screen, click the Settings cog, go to System and click Basic (bottom, left) to change it to Expert. Now try again. Click General on the left, then scroll

CONFIGURE RETROARCH IN KODI

To make Kodi launch the emulator, you have to tell it where RetroArch is installed. Open the Settings screen and click Media, then switch to Advanced or Expert (bottom, left) and toggle 'Show hidden files and directories' to On. Next, go to back to the Home screen, click Add-ons and click the top-left box icon. Go to My Add-ons, Game Add-ons, 'Game providers' and click the IAGL entry. Click Configure and hover over External Launchers. Specify the RetroArch App Location, replacing [username] with your actual username: C:\users\[username]\AppData\Roaming\RetroArch\retroarch.exe followed by the RetroArch System Folder: C:\users\[username]\AppData\Roaming\RetroArch\system



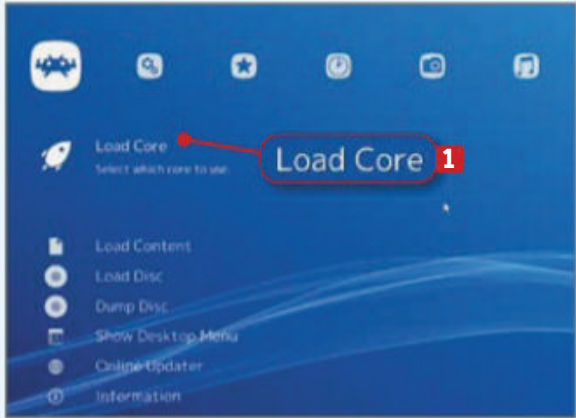
Point Kodi in the direction of your RetroArch installation

down and click Cache Size (MB). This is set to Zero (Current Game Only). You probably want to play multiple games, and switch between them as and when, so change this to at least 200MB. It's worth making the cache bigger if games seem to be running slowly. Click OK.

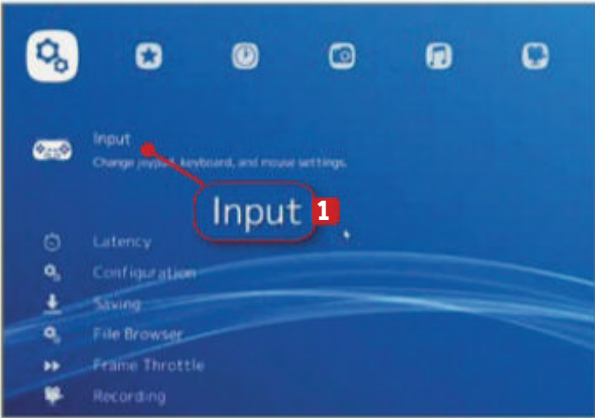
Are games hosted on the Internet Archive legal?

The Internet Archive ([archive.org](http://archive.org)) is a fantastic non-profit library containing millions of free books, games, software, movies, music, websites and more. You can easily spend days browsing its free, archived content, and new areas are added all the time. While most ROM sites let you download games whether you have the legal right to do so or not, the Internet

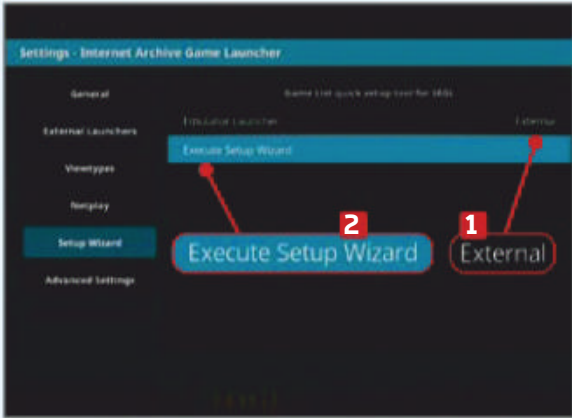
MINI WORKSHOP | Install and configure RetroArch



1 Download and install the program from the RetroArch website. Run it and click Load Core. 1 On the next page, click 'Download a Core'. You're presented with a very long list of gaming systems, sorted into alphabetical order.



2 Install any cores you require. We're adding MAME for arcade games and DOS (DOSBox) for older PC games. It's easy enough to add additional cores whenever you need them. You can configure a joypad in RetroArch under Settings, Input. 1 In Kodi, install the Internet Archive Game Launcher (IAGL) as described above.







3 Access IAGL's settings and hover over Setup Wizard. Click Emulator Launcher, select External 1 and follow the instructions 'Configure RetroArch in Kodi' (see box, above), then click Execute Setup Wizard. 2 Click No when asked if you have an Internet Archive account. The game list for external launching will be updated.



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	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1		TalkTalk: Fast Broadband	<b>£17.95</b> (£30 after 18 months)	<b>18</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>CHEAPEST</b> <b>£215.40</b>
2		Shell Energy: Fast Broadband	<b>£17.99</b>	<b>18</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>£215.88</b>
3		Sky: Broadband Essential	<b>£20.00</b> (£25 after 18 months)	<b>18</b> months	<b>11Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited*	<b>£240.00</b>
4		Virgin Media: Big Bundle + Fibre Broadband + Weekend Calls	<b>£33.00</b> (£54 after 12 months)	<b>12</b> months	<b>54Mbps</b> avg. speed	∞ unlimited	<b>£396.00</b>

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

\* Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by [www.broadbandgenie.co.uk](http://www.broadbandgenie.co.uk). Correct as of 6 January 2020.

**Ofcom**

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

**SNEAK  
PREVIEW!**

Computer  
**active**

- **DON'T PAY FOR 'PRO' SOFTWARE**

Use advanced tools FOR FREE!

- **CREATE A PANIC BUTTON FOR YOUR PC**

Block surprise malware in one click

- **ANNOTATE YOUR SCREENSHOTS**

Easiest way to add words and diagrams

- **PLUS:**

DON'T BLOCK SAFE SOFTWARE

Fine-tune your antivirus settings

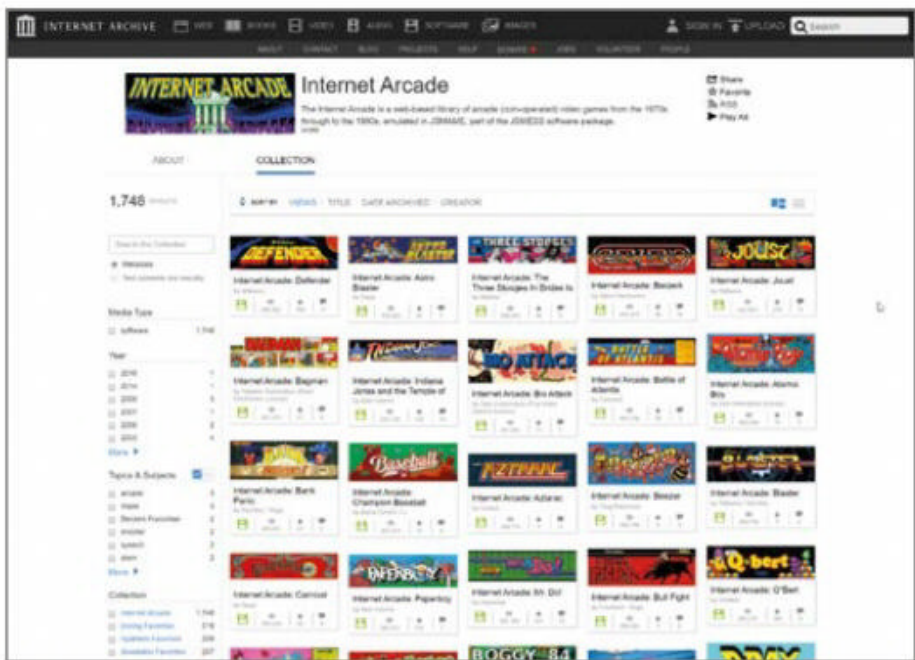
Subscribe at [www.getcomputeractive.co.uk](http://www.getcomputeractive.co.uk)

**On sale  
Weds  
29 Jan**





Not sure if a game is worth playing? View its trailer beforehand to see it in action



The Internet Archive is an excellent free resource - it even lets you play games directly in your browser

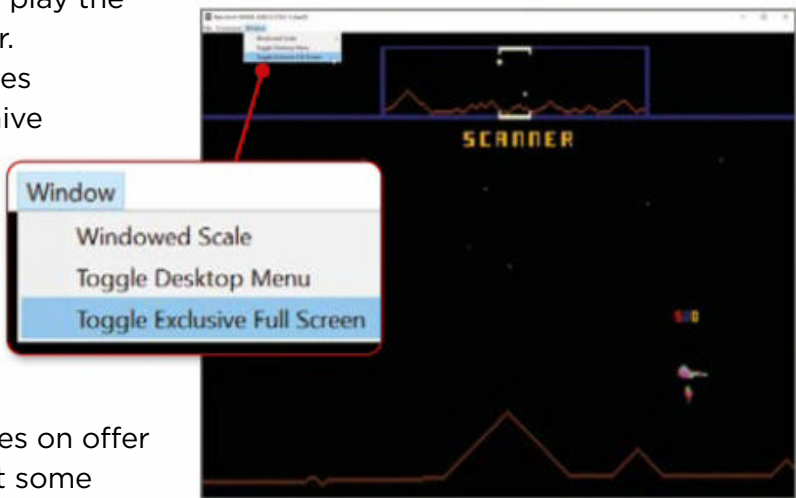
Archive has a DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act) Exemption which allows it to store vintage/at-risk software, and makes it available to use in a number of ways. This includes letting you play the games directly in your browser.

There are thousands of games available but the Internet Archive removes any titles if requested to do so by the original publisher or copyright holder, so not every game is present.

### Controller issues

Most of the thousands of games on offer play without any problems but some require a particular controller, such as a keyboard or joypad. If you're really

interested in retro gaming, it's worth getting a games controller. Unless you have a specific preference, we'd recommend an Xbox controller because



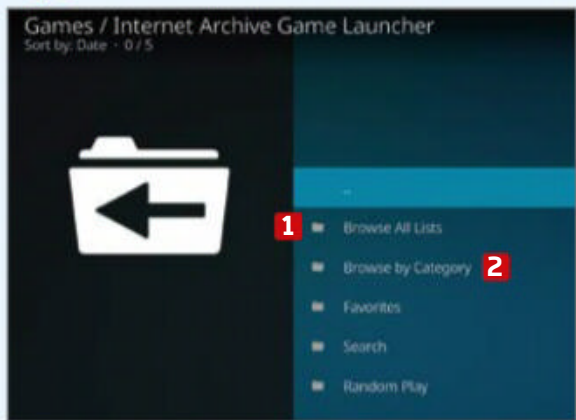
You can adjust the size of the RetroArch screen using the Window menu

you can effortlessly connect it to your PC wirelessly or via USB. Microsoft has instructions on how to do this at [bit.ly/xbox493](https://bit.ly/xbox493).

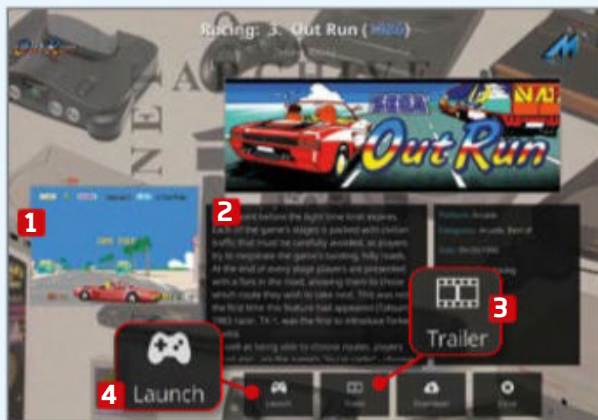
### Adjust the screen size

When you start a game, a separate RetroArch window opens. You can resize this as required by dragging one of the corners. You can also click the window's Maximise button if you want to play full screen. However, this leaves the menu bar at the top, which looks a little untidy. If you click the Window menu, you can choose a scale (from 1x to 10x) or enable Exclusive Full Screen, which lets the game take over your screen without any Windows menus in sight. To exit this mode, press F.

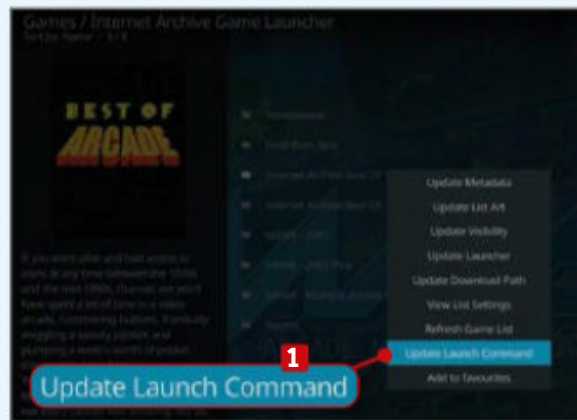
## MINI WORKSHOP | Play classic games in RetroArch



1 Once you've installed RetroArch and set it up in Kodi, you're ready to play some games. Hover over Add-ons (or Games), select Internet Archive Game Launcher (IAGL) and agree to the terms. You can choose to Browse All Lists 1 or 'Browse by Category'. 2 The Internet Archive Best Of sections are a good place to start.



2 Navigate through the various screens until you find a game you want to play. The old arcade classic Out Run seems like a fine place to start. Select it and the details screen appears with a screenshot, 1 information about the game 2 and a trailer to watch. 3 Click Launch. 4 The game downloads and opens in RetroArch.



3 If you have multiple cores installed in RetroArch, you can specify the one you want to use. Right-click a game category in Kodi ('Internet Archive Best Of - Arcade' in our case) and select Update Launch Command. 1 Select the emulator you want to use and the settings are updated for you.

## NEXT ISSUE

How To... Dual-boot Linux Mint and Windows

On sale  
Wednesday  
5 February



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- STEP 3** Choose whether to create an optional **PixelMags** account
- STEP 4** Enter your **Apple ID password** to confirm



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- STEP 3** Tap '**Subscribe**'



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# Web User Masterclass

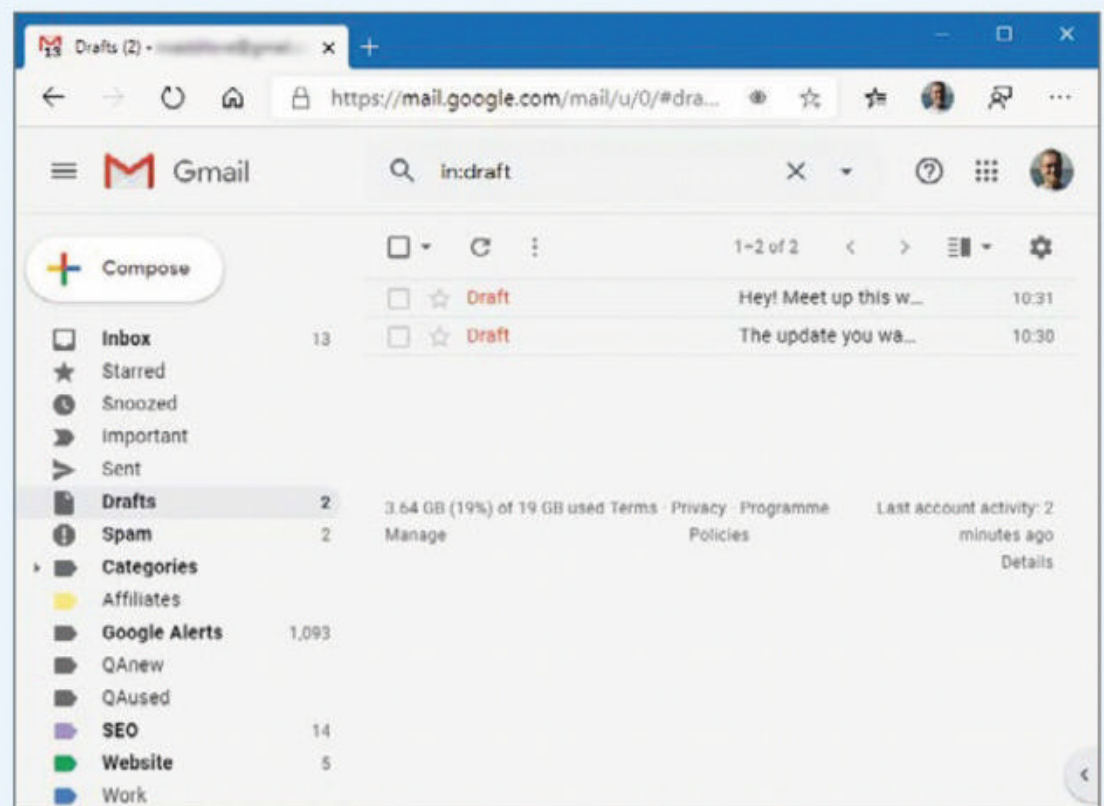
## Automate sending emails and text messages on your PC and phone

### Write an email to send later by saving it as a draft

If you want to compose an email now but wait until later to send it, simply create it and save it as a draft. All web-based email services and desktop email programs support drafts, and you can write as many emails as you like and save them to return to later. Look for a 'Save as draft' option or just close the compose window.

When you're ready to send one of your draft emails, just open the Drafts folder, then open the relevant email draft message and click Send. You can save drafts on your phone, then view and send them later on your computer, or vice versa. The only downside is you have to go back to your email when you want to send the message.

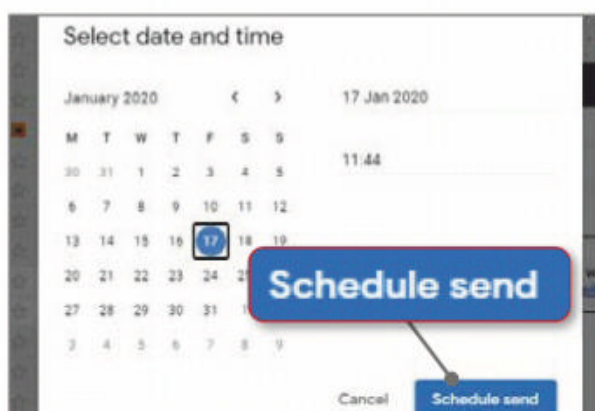
*When you close a Gmail message you're composing, it is automatically saved to Drafts*



### Schedule Gmail messages

Gmail lets you schedule a specific time and date for when you want an email sent. Compose an email, then click the arrow next to the Send button to reveal the option 'Schedule send'. Clicking this brings up a box with suggested days and times, such as this afternoon, tomorrow morning and more. If you click 'Select date and time', you can choose exactly when to send it by picking a date on the calendar, selecting your chosen time and clicking 'Schedule send' to finish.

Gmail on mobile devices offers the same scheduled sending tool but, instead of the Send button, tap the



*Choose a future date and time to send an email in Gmail's 'Scheduled send' tool*

three dots and select 'Schedule send' from the menu.

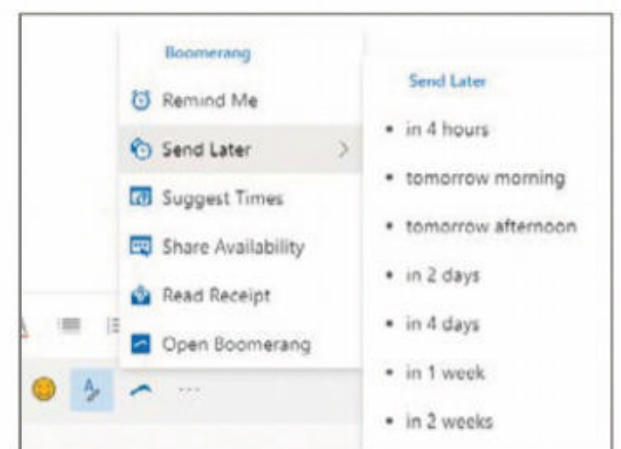
### Schedule Outlook emails

Microsoft's Outlook software has built-in tools for scheduling emails to be sent later. Compose the email but don't send it. In the Tags section of the ribbon toolbar, click More Options - the tiny button in the bottom-right corner pops out a panel with more settings and tools.

Look for 'Delivery options' and tick the 'Do not deliver before' box. Enter the date and the time you want the email sent, then click Close and Send. Your message will sit in the Outbox until the specified date and time it is sent.

Microsoft's Outlook.com webmail doesn't have as many features as its desktop software, but you can still schedule the sending of an email. Click New Message, then click the three-dot button to the right of the Send button and choose Get Add-ins. Type boomerang in the search box and install the add-in.

Return to your email message and you'll now see a boomerang icon on the right of the Send button. Click this and



*Use the Boomerang add-in to schedule emails in Outlook.com*

hover the mouse over 'Send later' to show a list of options, such as 'tomorrow morning', 'tomorrow afternoon', 'in 4 hours', 'in 2 days', 'in 2 weeks' and more. Click Custom to set

**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.**





a precise date and time for the email to be sent, such as 'Monday 9am'.

When you first use Boomerang, you're asked to authenticate it and give it permission to access your email. Feel free to go ahead – this is a popular and highly rated service – but take care with other less well-known add-ins because there is always a risk involved with letting them control your email.

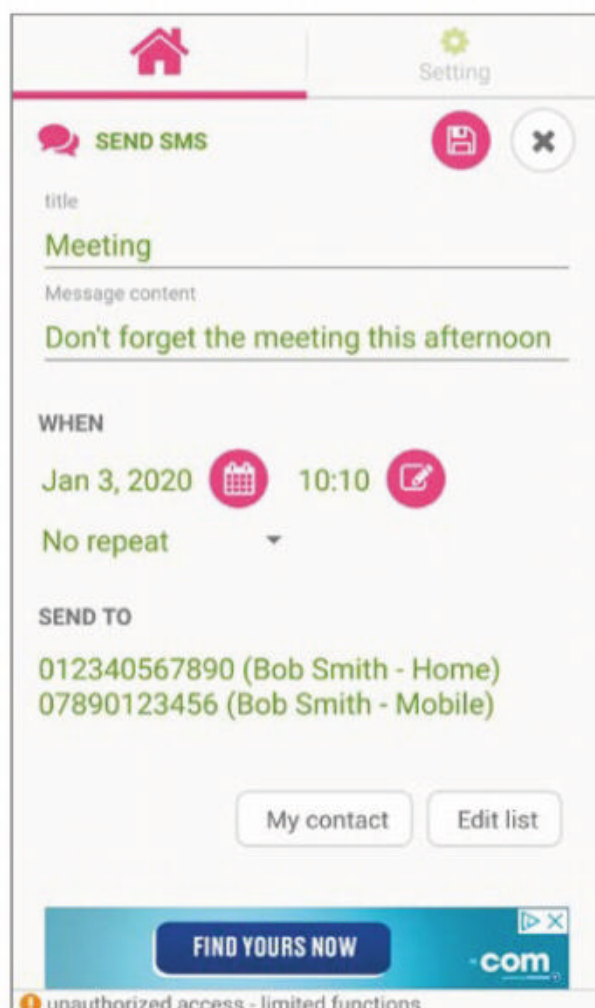
## Schedule Android text messages

If you have an Android phone, you can schedule text messages to send on any day at any time. Open the Google Play Store and search for 'Auto Message – automatic send and reply sms sender' ([bit.ly/auto493](http://bit.ly/auto493)). Install it and give it permission to access text messages and phone.

Tap the plus button on the home screen and tap Send SMS. Enter a title for the text message, then the message itself. Tap the calendar to select a day and tap the time to set the time. Under Send To, select contacts or phone numbers to send the message to.

Press the Save icon to add it to the home screen task list. This shows any scheduled messages and when they are to be sent. If you change your mind, press the three dots next to a message and choose the Deactivate option.

Auto Message is free, but you have to watch an ad before you schedule a message. The premium version removes the ads. There are many similar apps in the Google Play Store.



*Auto Message on your Android phone lets you queue and send texts later*

## TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

### Schedule iPhone text messages

You can use your iPhone to schedule the sending of text messages but the process isn't completely automated – instead, you get a notification at your scheduled time.

Open the Shortcuts app and tap the Automation tab at the bottom of the screen, then tap the plus button or Create Personal Automation. In the Events section on the next screen, press 'Time of Day', then select the time at the top and the day at the bottom. This defaults to every day, so you should deselect all but the day you want to send the message.

Tap Next, then Add Action and press '+ Contact' in the Send Message section (swipe left if you don't see it). A message template appears. Tap Message and type in the text message you want to send, then tap Recipients and enter a name from your contacts or a phone number. Finally, press Next, then Done.

When the day and time to send the message arrives, a notification appears on the screen saying that the Shortcuts app wants to send a message. Tap the notification and the message is sent. Shortcuts sends the same message every week on that day and at that time, so disable it once your message has been sent.

### Schedule sending an email from any service

If you use a different email system to Gmail or Outlook.com, you can still automate message sending. Install the Spark email app on an iPhone ([bit.ly/spios493](http://bit.ly/spios493)) or Android ([bit.ly/spand493](http://bit.ly/spand493)), or get the PC version from [sparkmailapp.com](http://sparkmailapp.com). Enter your email address and password, then tap the Advanced link and enter the incoming and outgoing server addresses and the ports. Your email provider's help pages will have the relevant details.

Create an email message in the usual way but, instead of pressing the Send button at the top of the screen, press the Send button with the clock in the toolbar. The options

are to send later today, this evening, tomorrow morning, this weekend or a date and time of your choice.

### Schedule emails in Google Sheets

You can use a script in Google Sheets to schedule sending as many different email messages as you like. Go to [drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com) and click New, then Google Sheets. Enter email addresses in the first column, the subject in the second column and the message body in the third column, so there is one email in each row – address, subject and body.

Go to Tools, 'Script editor' and replace what's there with the following:

```
function SendIt() {
  var sheet = SpreadsheetApp.
    getActiveSheet();
  var data = sheet.
    getDataRange().getValues();
  for (var i = 0; i < data.
    length; i++) {
    MailApp.sendEmail(data[i]
      [0], data[i][1], data[i][2]);
  }
}
```

Click Save, select Edit, then 'Current project's triggers' and click Add Trigger. Set the 'Event source' to 'Time driven' and set 'Select type of time based trigger' to 'Specific date and time'. Enter a time and date to send the emails, such as 2020-02-14 14:30, and click Save. Several security messages and warnings appear asking if you trust the developer to access your email account – just click through them to authorise the script.

That's it. You can change the email messages in the spreadsheet, add more, delete old ones and so on. New date triggers can be added to send the same or new emails.

	A	B	C
1	me@home.com	Test from Google Sheets	The email message goes here...
2	you@somewhere.com	Another Sheets email	The email message goes here...
3	bob@work.com	Last Sheets email	The email message goes here...
4			
5			

*Create a Google spreadsheet containing emails, then send them with a script*



# 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](mailto:webuser@webuser.co.uk)



## GENERAL PC

### Fix a persistent System Restore problem

**Q** Thank you for the reply in Issue 490 ([bit.ly/webuser490](http://bit.ly/webuser490)) regarding my problem with System Restore but, unfortunately, I still haven't found a solution. I followed your instructions until I got to System Properties but there were no drives displayed. A message said: "Could not re-scan the drives for the following reason: System Restore encountered an error. Please try to run system restore again. Ox18000203."

Is there anything else I can try?

**Kevin O'Brien, via email**

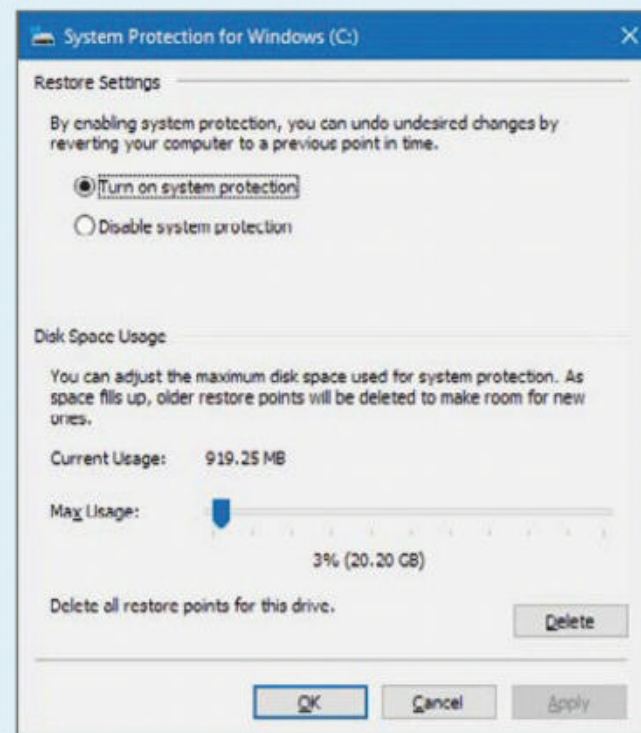
**A** There are a few other options. Press Windows+R and enter **services.msc**. Look for the following services: Microsoft Storage Spaces SMP, Volume Shadow Copy and Microsoft Software Shadow Copy

Provider. Double-click each one and click the Start button, then set the 'Startup type' to Automatic.

Go to the Control Panel and, in one of the 'icons' views, choose System, then 'System Protection'. Select the C: drive and click Configure. Give it at least 5GB of hard-drive space, then click OK. Now try creating a restore point by clicking the Create button.

Some people have found that Kaspersky Removal Tool accidentally deletes an important Registry key. Press Windows+R, enter **regedit** and go to: HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE \ SYSTEM \ CurrentControlSet \ Control \ Class \ {71a27cdd-812a-11d0-bec7-08002be2092f}

Look at the UpperFilters value. Ours



**Turn on System Protection and give it a few gigabytes of space for backups**

says 'volsnap EUBKMON EUBAKUP' but only the 'volsnap' word may be important. Double-click UpperFilters and type **volsnap** to see if that helps.

## LINUX

### Install software for Linux

**Q** I recently read the letters in Issue 489 ([bit.ly/webuser489](http://bit.ly/webuser489)) from Tony Franks and P Staniforth about using Linux on older machines. I have downloaded some software to Linux Mint on an old Acer Aspire 5733Z, but I can't work out how to install the program. The software in question is a simulated Radio Ham program from [www.hamsphere4.com](http://www.hamsphere4.com).

I managed to download the program to Windows 10 and run it, but Linux doesn't use the same EXE files to run software so I'm baffled about how to progress. I would very much appreciate any help as my computer really struggles with Windows 10.

**Don Phillips, via email**

**A** Linux is a completely different operating system to Windows, which means Windows programs won't run on it. You could try running the software in a Windows emulator for

Linux – there's one called Wine ([www.winehq.org](http://www.winehq.org)) – but, ideally, you should be running native Linux software on Linux and Windows software on Windows.

Go to the download page of the HamSphere website and you'll see downloads for Windows, Linux, macOS and Android. To run the program on Linux, you need to download the Linux version of the software.

The ease with which this program can be run depends on your version of Linux and what other software you have installed. Some Linux versions make the

process more complicated.

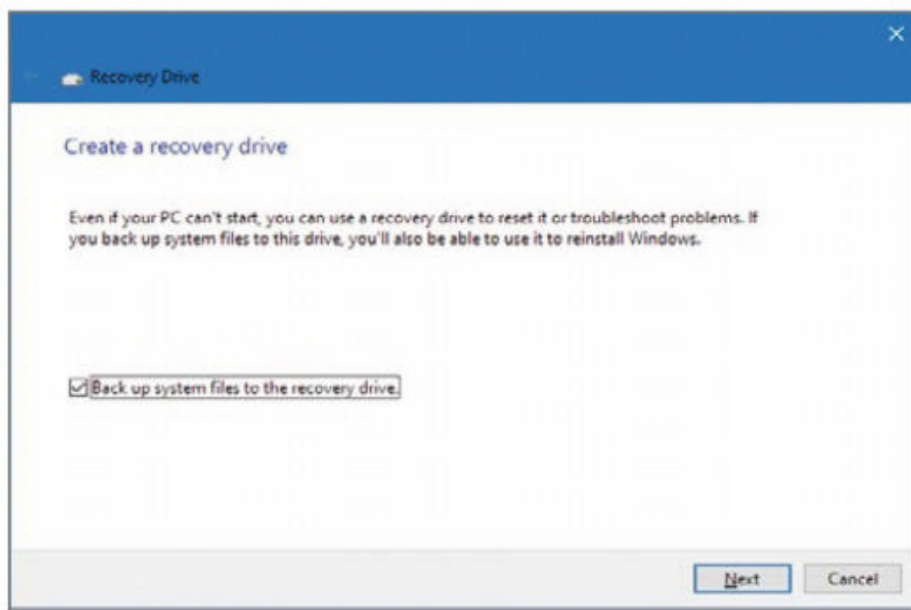
The download is called something like 'hamsphere\_4.010-setup.tar.gz' and it will probably end up in your Downloads folder. Open the Terminal window, then change to the Downloads folder by entering **cd Downloads**. The program is in a compressed archive and must be extracted. At the Terminal command prompt, enter **tar zxvf hamsphere\_4.010.setup.tar.gz**.

The setup file must then be made executable by changing a flag. Enter **chmod +x hamsphere\_4.009\_setup**. You can now run the setup program by

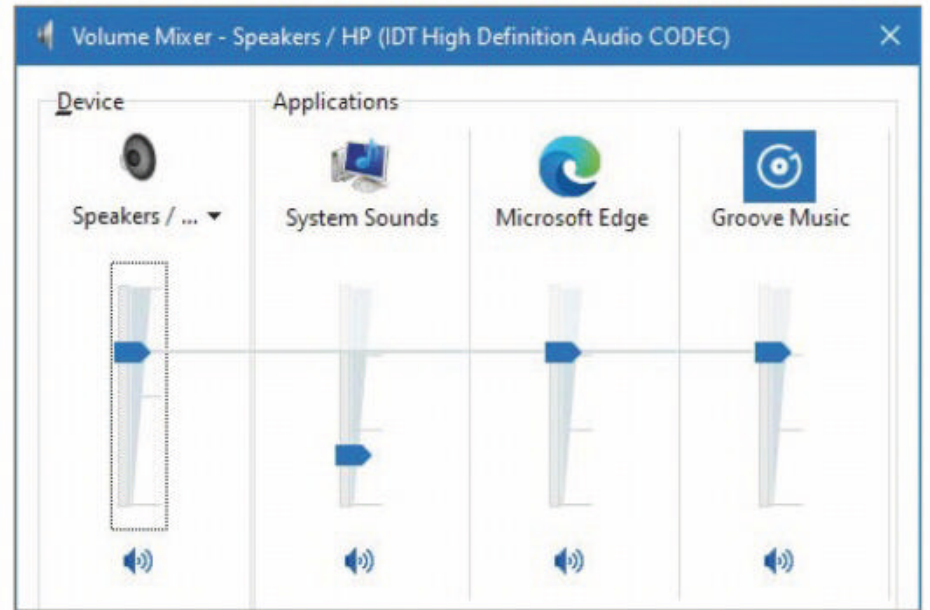


**HamSphere is a virtual radio-ham rig for Windows, Linux, macOS and Android**





**A Windows recovery drive only saves Windows, not your files, so a full backup is better**



**Every program has its own volume control so make sure the sound is turned up in the ones you can't hear**

entering `sudo ./hamsphere_4.009_setup`. You'll be asked which directory you want to install it to. Give it a name, such as `hs4`.

When installation is complete, change to the folder with `cd hs4` and run the program with `sudo ./hamsphere_4.010` or whatever the version number is. It uses Java, which some Linux users don't have, so you may need to search for Java and install it before running HamSphere.

If you're planning to run a lot of these kinds of programs, it may be worth bearing in mind that the process is much simpler in Windows where you just click the EXE file to install and run the software.

## GENERAL PC

### Create a recovery drive

**Q** I am running the latest version of Windows 10 and have noticed that it contains an item called Recovery in the Control Panel. Clicking this lets me create a recovery drive, to start the computer when it won't start normally. What are the requirements for this? Is it a good idea?

**Jon Brennan, via email**

**A** Creating a recovery drive requires a second drive, such as a USB memory stick, with at least 16GB of space. Essentially, it stores a bootable copy of Windows, but bear in mind that it does this by wiping the device, so don't use one that contains files you might need. If your PC fails to start from the hard drive, you can plug in the recovery drive to launch Windows and either repair or reinstall it.

While a recovery drive is useful, it is limited to only fixing Windows – it won't replace your software, documents, music, videos, photos and other files, so you could potentially lose everything that's not backed up elsewhere.

We would advise buying a USB hard

drive that's at least the same size as your internal drive, then creating a full disk or system backup to it. Free software such as EaseUS Todo Backup ([www.easeus.com](http://www.easeus.com)) copies everything on your computer's hard drive to a compressed archive on an external USB drive. If disaster strikes, you can restore whatever you like from your backup – whether that's a single file or folder, or the entire hard drive and all its contents.

You still need to create a boot CD or USB stick to be able to fix any problems and reinstall your files. Rather than containing Windows, however, this would include software for starting the computer and restoring the backup to your PC – thus doing away with any need for a Windows recovery drive.

## GENERAL PC

### Fix program-specific sound problems

**Q** I have an intermittent problem with the sound on my computer. If I run a music program, the sound plays every time, but when I visit a website that includes audio, or video with sound, I don't hear anything. Could this be a problem with an audio driver?

**Daniel Stephens, via email**

**A** It's a good idea to check the drivers when problems like this occur but, before you start searching for and downloading updates, investigate some of the more obvious possibilities. Make sure the volume control isn't set too low or switched off by clicking the speaker

## MOBILE

### Use iPhone tips on iPad

**Q** Can you tell me whether your advice for iPhones applies to the iPad as well, or are they different?

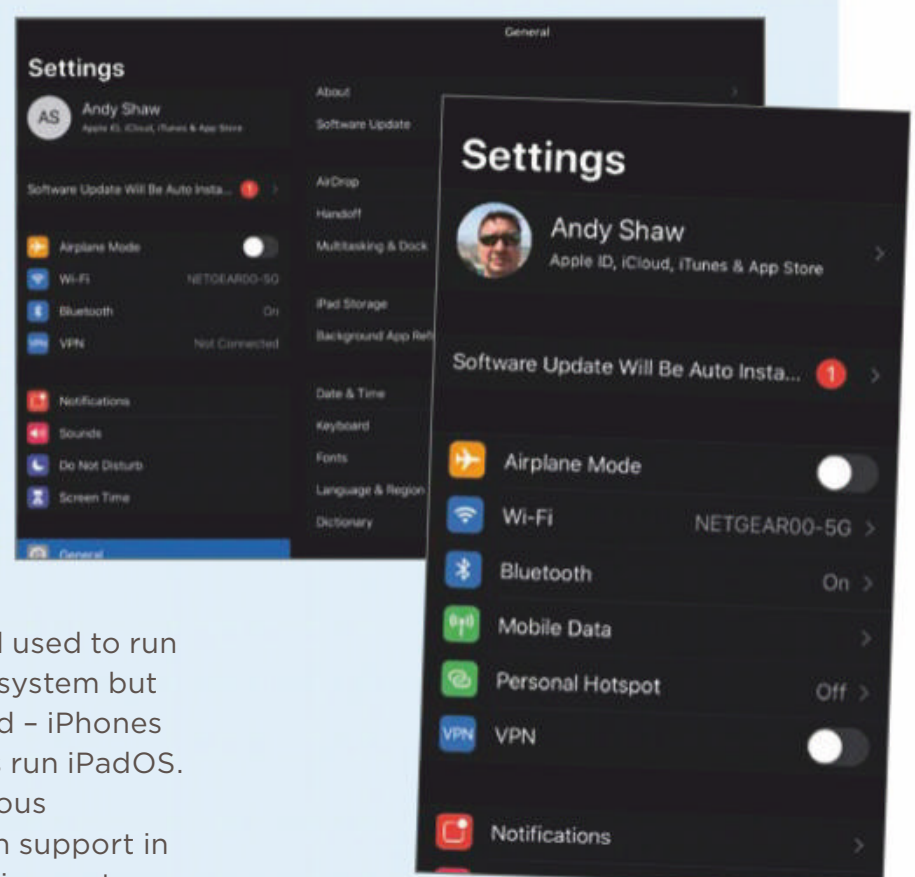
**Edward Hogan, via email**

**A** The iPhone and iPad used to run the same operating system but they've recently diverged – iPhones now run iOS, while iPads run iPadOS.

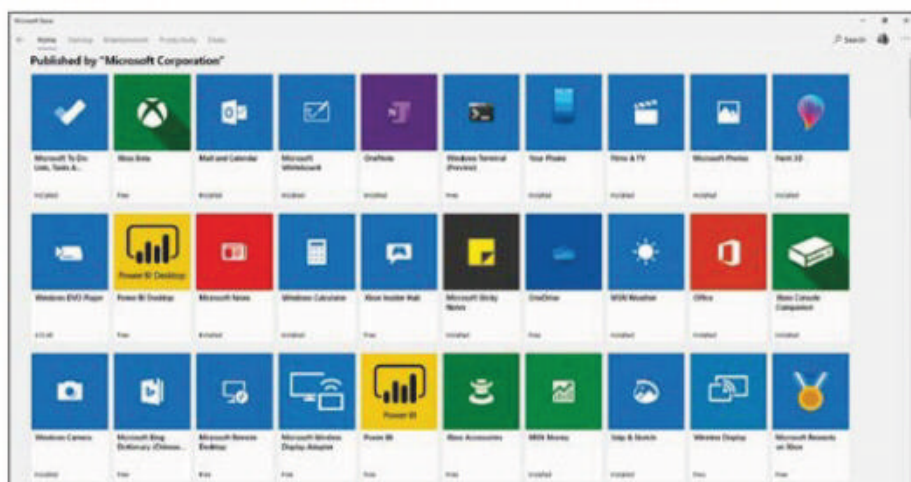
Apart from a few obvious differences – such as pen support in iPadOS – the two operating systems are still very similar and what is true for one device is often true for the other. Many general iPhone tips and tweaks work equally well on the iPad, unless they are specifically concerned

**iOS and iPadOS are fundamentally the same and many tricks work in both**

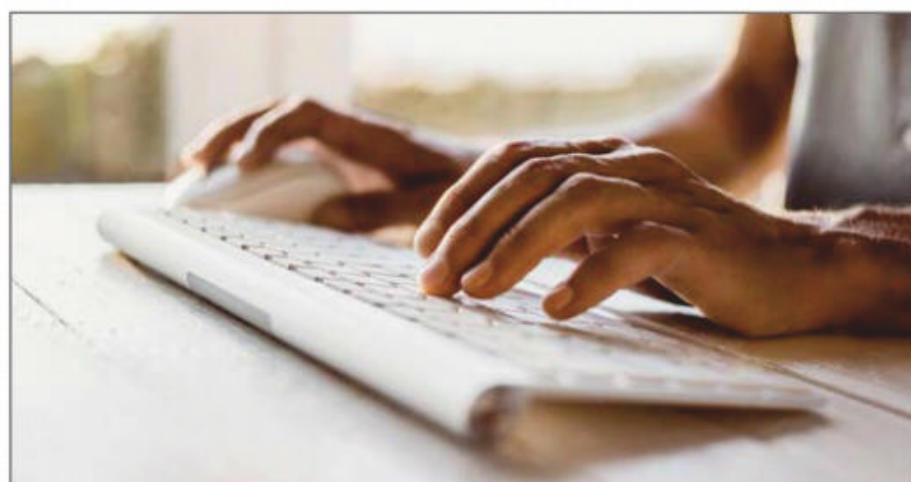
with features that are only found on smartphones.







**You can install any missing app for Windows 10 from the Microsoft store, including Mail and Calendar**



**Laptop keyboards can be difficult or impossible to replace – if all else fails, get a USB or Bluetooth model**

button in the notification area to the right side of the taskbar. This controls the master volume, and you'll also find other hidden volume controls you may not be aware of.

Right-click the speaker icon and select 'Open Volume mixer'. You'll see two volume controls – one for speakers and one for system sounds. If you open a program and play audio, a new volume control appears in the Volume Mixer panel. Open another program and play some other audio, and you'll see another volume control appear. In other words, every program has its own volume control, so you should check whether

the volume is down for the programs you are running that play no sound. Run the problem apps, open the browser, set them playing audio and check the volume levels.

If none of this helps and you come to the conclusion that it's a driver problem, open the Control Panel in an 'icons' view and click Device Manager. Expand 'Audio inputs and outputs', then right-click each item that's listed and select 'Update driver'. Sometimes the PC manufacturer's audio driver is better than the Windows driver. You can usually find these by searching the manufacturer's website.

### GENERAL PC

#### Where are missing apps?

**Q** A friend recently upgraded my old Windows 7 computer to Windows 10. Everything is running fine but I can't find the apps for Mail and Calendar.

**Alan King, via email**

**A** It's possible that they're installed but, for some reason, haven't been added to the Start menu or were accidentally deleted from it. To find and run an app, click the search box on the taskbar and enter its name – such as **mail**. If the app is already installed, it will appear in the search results and you can run it from there. When it's running, right-click the app's icon in the taskbar and pin it. In future, you'll be able to run the app by clicking its taskbar icon.

If the Mail app doesn't appear, open the Store app and search for **mail**. Mail and Calendar is actually one app, so you get both when it's installed.

### HARDWARE

#### Fix a failing laptop keyboard

**Q** A couple of the keys on my laptop barely work and I have to bang them several times until they register. What can I do to fix this?

**G Ward, via email**

**A** Hopefully, it's a simple matter of some debris making the keys stick. Cover the end of a vacuum cleaner's hose attachment with a thin sock and use it to Hoover out any debris, or use a canister of compressed air to blow it clear.

If that doesn't work, your laptop's keyboard may be failing. Replacing a laptop keyboard is a complicated job but you may find instructions by searching YouTube for 'replace keyboard for XX' – substituting XX with your laptop's make and model.

A simpler solution may be to buy a replacement USB or wireless keyboard.

### EMAIL

#### Recover a locked Gmail account

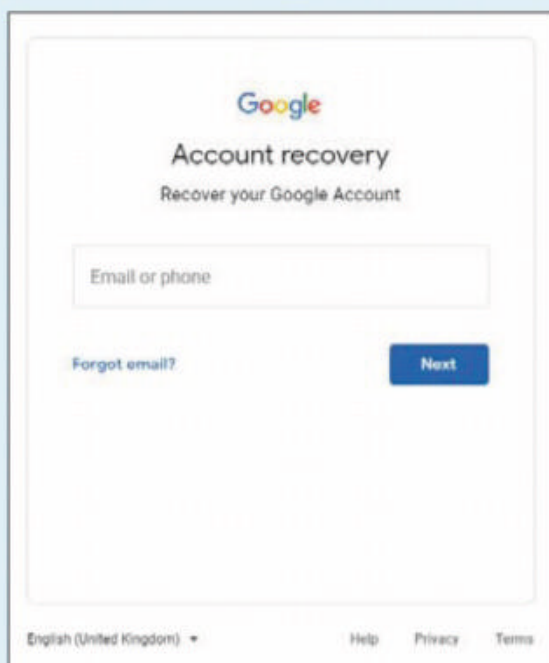
**Q** Are you aware of a problem where a Gmail account suddenly stops working and displays the message "Device not recognized?". Going through the account retrieval process becomes an endless loop of getting codes from Google via the backup email, typing them in and getting another failure. This seems to have affected a lot of people.

**Terry, via email**

**A** You're not alone with this problem but, unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be a reliable way to fix it. Here are a few methods that have worked for some people.

Use a computer, web browser and location where Gmail worked previously and go to [bit.ly/recov493](https://bit.ly/recov493). Don't use a VPN and don't use incognito or private mode. Follow the instructions and answer the questions.

Try using a phone – or at least giving a phone number as a recovery



**The only one way to recover a Google account is via its own recovery tool**

option. Some people found that once a phone number had been given, they got into their account.

The recovery procedure is the only way you will get access to your account. If the process doesn't work, Google's advice is to create a new account. That's not particularly helpful, given that it means you lose everything contained in that account, but it is, sadly, true.



**This fortnight Roland has been focusing his work with the Pomodoro technique but the bells are driving everyone potty**





# Readers' Helpdesk

Can you help your fellow readers with their computer problems? Send your questions and answers to [webuser@webuser.co.uk](mailto:webuser@webuser.co.uk)

## BROWSERS

### Import bookmarks and settings to Brave

**Q** After years of using Firefox, I read your issue about 'Browse the web with Brave' and decided to give it a try. All went well except that the drop-down menu for importing passwords and bookmarks from your old browser doesn't list Firefox, only Internet Explorer. I've tried uninstalling and reinstalling Brave but Firefox is still absent.

**Merv Deeley, via email**

**A** This is an odd glitch but one possible cause is that Brave can't 'see' Firefox because it's been installed in a different place. Visit <brave://settings/importData> or click the browser's menu

button and select Bookmarks, 'Import bookmarks and settings'.

If you still don't see additional browsers in the drop-down menu, you'll need to import via HTML. Open Firefox and press Ctrl+Shift+B, then click 'Import and Backup' and select 'Export Bookmarks to

**Export bookmarks and other data from Firefox Brave**

HTML'. Save the file, then re-visit Brave's 'Import bookmarks and settings' section. In this drop-down menu, choose Bookmarks HTML File and open the file you've just saved.

For passwords, try Nirsoft's excellent PasswordFox (search for it at [www.nirsoft.net](http://www.nirsoft.net)). This also creates a file that can then be imported into Brave.

**Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User**

## WEB BUILDING

### Create Bitly links for your website

**Q** Thank you for your excellent magazine, which I buy every

## READERS RESPOND

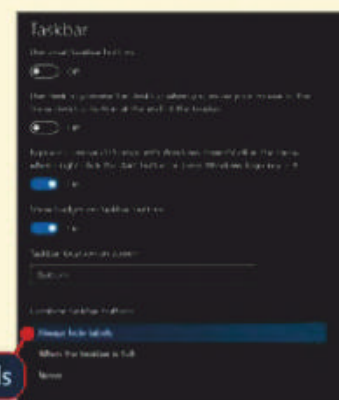
### GENERAL PC

### Remove text from taskbar icons

**A** In Issue 488 ([bit.ly/webuser488](http://bit.ly/webuser488)), Scott asked about resizing "elongated icons that include the name of the app or program". To remove these names, right-click the taskbar and click 'Taskbar settings' to open the Settings app. Under 'Combine taskbar buttons', click the drop-down menu and choose 'Always hide labels'.

**Giovanni Gesugrande, via email**

*Use the Taskbar settings to change how icons are displayed*



**Back Issues disc winner**



## CAN YOU HELP?

[webuser@webuser.co.uk](mailto:webuser@webuser.co.uk)

You can seek help or suggest solutions to other readers' problems by emailing [webuser@webuser.co.uk](mailto:webuser@webuser.co.uk) or via [www.facebook.com/webusermagazine](https://www.facebook.com/webusermagazine) or [twitter.com/webusermagazine](https://twitter.com/webusermagazine).

## GOOGLE

**Q** The Google Home Hub I got for Christmas keeps telling me about my 'commute' to Kentish Town. I don't commute there, nor have I set my workplace on any Google or Android device. Why is this happening?

**Mark Gosling, via email**

## STREAMING

**Q** As a subscriber to Netflix, Amazon Prime and Now TV, is Britbox worth adding to my ever-growing subscription packages? I'd really like to know what fellow Web User readers think before taking the plunge.

**Jack Ripley, via email**

fortnight. I have a website, Television Heaven ([televisionheaven.co.uk](http://televisionheaven.co.uk)), that reviews classic TV programmes. I like to use the full title of every show to make it easier to find in search engines. As a result, some of the URLs are quite long because they include the page's full title, which looks untidy when posting to social media such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. I am thinking of creating Bitly URLs ([bitly.com](http://bitly.com)) for posting on these platforms. How do I create them and will I still be able to retain the original link with the title in?

**Laurence Marcus, via email**

**A** Bitly links are ideal for trimming unwieldy links, and the service also lets you see how many clicks specific links get over a 30-day period.

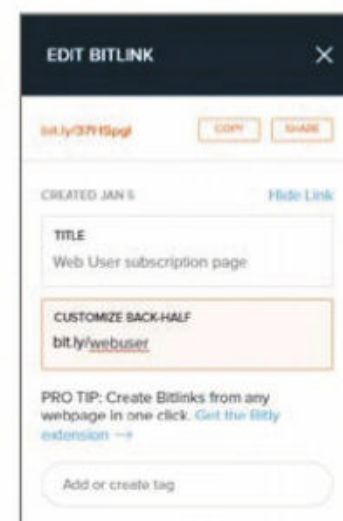
Creating a shortened URL is simple. Once you've signed up for an account

(which is free), click Create. Now paste your long link into the box, let the website process it, then give the [bit.ly](http://bit.ly) link a memorable, easy-to-type name that still describes where the link will take your visitors. The service lets you know if the URL you want is already in use, and gives you a chance to change it if that's the case. Finally, save your new URL.

Your original URL will still be operational, because Bitly just redirects visitors rather than replacing the link.

**Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User**

*Bitly lets you shorten cumbersome links*





# Your Top Tips

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



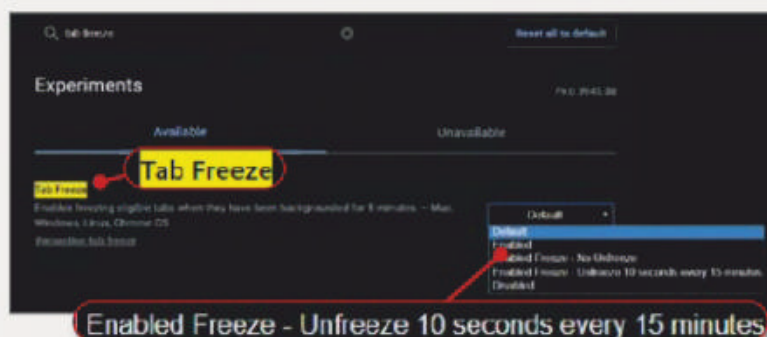
## TOP TIP

### BROWSERS

## Enable tab freezing in Chrome

I'm loving the new version of Chrome and thought that other readers might be interested in trying the tab-freezing feature, which is one of the experimental tools you can enable by going into the 'flags' menu. To get straight there, go to `chrome://flags/#proactive-tab-freeze`.

Once you've turned it on, tab freezing is a great way to speed up your browser, especially if you often run lots of tabs at the same time. It will 'freeze' tabs if you don't use them for five minutes, which saves memory.



*Switch on Chrome's secret tab-freezing tool*

I find the basic setup works fine but there are a few additional options. For example, if you want your tabs to refresh periodically, you can choose to have them unfreeze for ten seconds every fifteen minutes, which keeps the content up to date.

**Larry, via email**

Back Issues disc winner



is limited to restartable apps, so Windows 10 apps such as Microsoft Calendar, Microsoft Todo and a few others restart, but old-style programs don't. I also find they restart minimised in the taskbar. However, they open instantly because they are already loaded.

**Gary Murray, via email**

### BROWSERS

## Permanently zoom Chrome

My eyes aren't what they used to be and I struggle with very small text on my laptop. For anyone in the same boat, open Chrome settings and, in the appearance section, set the 'Page zoom' to 110%. This applies to all websites and won't change again unless you ask it to, but you can still zoom further in on individual sites if you prefer.

**Neil Walker, via email**

### SECURITY

## Automatically lock your PC

If you work in close proximity to other people and value your privacy, you should always lock your computer by pressing Windows+L whenever you leave it unattended. If you find you often forget to do this, you could use your phone as a proximity key, to automatically lock Windows when you step away from your computer.

In the Settings app, open Devices and select 'Bluetooth & other devices'. Turn on Bluetooth on the computer and your phone, and pair the two devices. Then go

to Settings, Accounts, 'Sign-in options' and scroll down to 'Dynamic lock'. Tick the box next to 'Allow Windows to lock your device automatically when you're away'. Your phone will then be added to the setup.

Assuming you always keep your phone on you, Windows will lock your PC when you walk out of Bluetooth range.

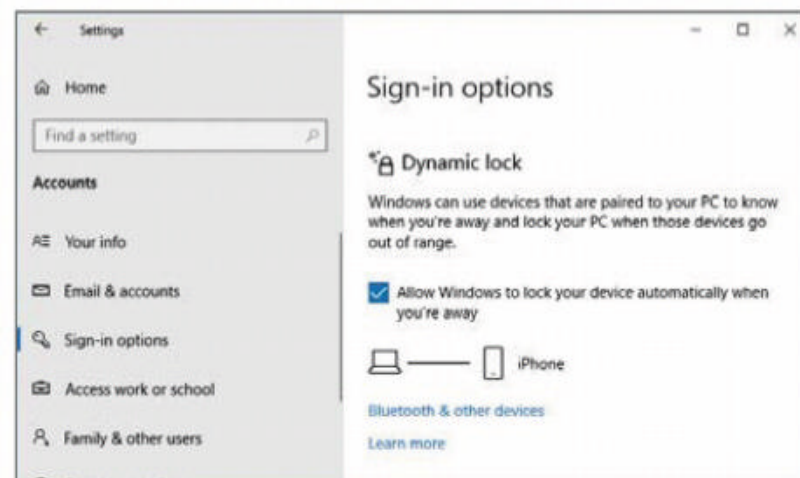
**Paul Roberts, via email**

### WINDOWS

## Start with your last-used apps open

If you use the Insider Preview version of Windows, as I do, you can get Windows to automatically open the apps you were using the last time you shut down your computer. In the Settings app, click Accounts, then 'Sign-in options'. Find 'Restart apps' down near the bottom and turn on the switch to automatically restart your last-used apps when you next log in.

It's not quite perfect and

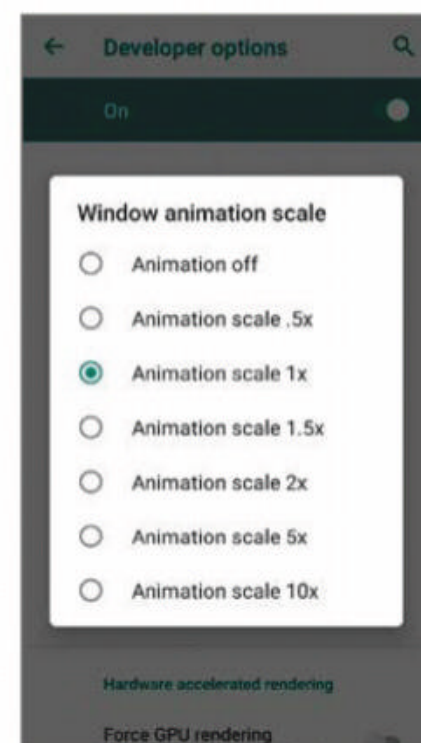


*Auto-lock your PC when you walk away with your phone*

### ANDROID

## Disable Android phone animations

Readers have recently mentioned using developer options, so I thought I'd have a play around myself and I stumbled across a way to make your phone run a little smoother by disabling Android's animations. Once you're in the Developer Options menu, you need to find and disable three different options: 'Window animation scale', 'Transition animation scale' and 'Animation duration scale'.



*Speed up Android by switching off animations*





You'll need to reset the phone for the changes to take effect.

There is a noticeable visual difference once you turn off animations, which you may find a little jarring. However, if your phone is noticeably lagging, this is a good way to speed it up, so it's got to be worth a try.

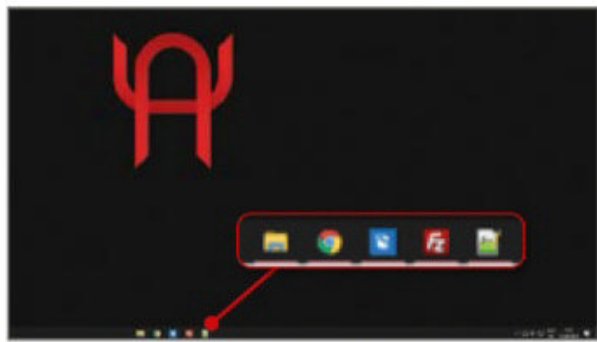
**Jonathan White, via email**

## WINDOWS

### Centre taskbar icons

I have a small tip that I think makes the Windows desktop look nicer, which is to customise your taskbar so that the icons all appear in the centre, rather than lined up on the left-hand side. To do this, download the FalconX application ([bit.ly/falcon493](http://bit.ly/falcon493)). It's easy to set up and there are a few different customisation options to get the taskbar looking just how you want, including setting the background style and adding an animation.

**Gopi Singh, via email**



*Arrange your taskbar icons so they are positioned in the middle of your screen*

## WINDOWS

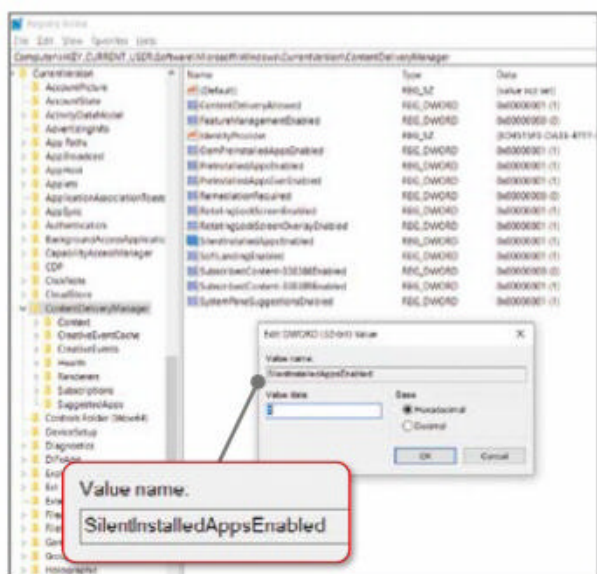
### Block app installation

Windows 10 is full of bloatware and Microsoft seems to think it's fine to force the installation of suggested apps that you neither need nor want. Luckily, it's not too difficult to block these completely using the Windows Registry.

Start by opening the Registry Editor. Go to:

HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ContentDeliveryManager

Now look for the Dword value



*Dip into the Registry Editor to stop Windows automatically installing apps*

'SilentInstalledAppsEnabled'. Click it and set the data value to '0'. To turn it back on again, set the value back to '1'.

If you can't find the Dword value in the list, create it yourself by selecting New, then 'Dword (32-bit) Value'. Name it `SilentInstalledAppsEnabled` and set it to 0 as before.

**Joey Parmenter, via email**

## GENERAL PC

### Add a drive shortcut to the taskbar

Do you have a hard drive that you need to get to frequently? I'm always surprised that more people don't know how to add these to the taskbar for easy access.

Go into File Explorer and find the drive you want, then right-click it and select 'Create shortcut'. A text box appears with a message stating that you can't create a shortcut here, and offers to place one on the desktop instead. Select Yes.

Now go back to your desktop and right-click the newly created shortcut. Select Properties, navigate to the Shortcut tab and type the word `explorer` in the Target box, in front of the drive letter. Make sure you leave a space between the two. The shortcut should now appear in the taskbar.

I find this provides much quicker access than hunting around the desktop every time I need to access the drive.

**Rachel Moss, via email**

## BROWSERS

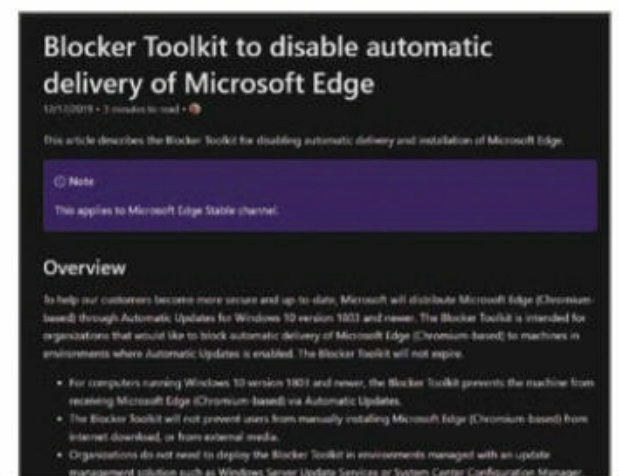
### Block the Edge Chromium update

Edge Chromium is shaping up to be a great new browser but I'm aware that not everyone likes to be forced into using new software, so I thought I'd share a tip for blocking its automatic installation if you don't want Edge on your computer.

First of all, you need to download the Microsoft Edge Blocker Toolkit, which does pretty much what it says on the tin - blocking the update from installing automatically but still letting you go back for it later if you change your mind and decide to go ahead with it. Download it from Microsoft ([bit.ly/edgeblocker493](http://bit.ly/edgeblocker493)).

Setting it up is a little bit fiddly but, if you follow Microsoft's instructions, then you shouldn't go far wrong.

**Liam Webb, via email**



*If you don't want the new Chromium-based version of Edge, Microsoft's tool blocks it*

## BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

## MESSAGING

### Avoid joining unwanted WhatsApp groups

I recently joined WhatsApp and made the mistake of letting other people know. While it's undoubtedly handy for staying in touch with my kids, I hadn't counted on the many different groups I'd be added to. Now I'm getting constant notifications and have even been added to work groups.

You can't leave a group without sending a notification to everyone in it so, to avoid appearing rude, it's better to avoid joining the groups in the first place. Go into the menu and select Settings, Account, Privacy, then open up the Groups menu. This lets you choose who can add you to a group. I've used the 'My Contacts



*Take control of which contacts can add you to WhatsApp groups*

except' option to block more or less everyone, just leaving it open for family members.

**Ralph Warren, via email**

**Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?**

If so, please send your story to [webuser@webuser.co.uk](mailto:webuser@webuser.co.uk)





## Star Email

### Impressed with the new Microsoft Edge

I swore to myself that after all the problems I had with Internet Explorer over the years, I'd never touch a Microsoft web browser again. However, after reading your main feature in Issue 492, I thought I'd give the new Chromium Edge a try, fully expecting to be disappointed.

Imagine my surprise at discovering that it's actually rather good. It loads quickly, has a nice, clean interface and although it shows lots of unnecessary



stuff on your homepage, such as news headlines, this is easy enough to hide.

As a Chrome user for the last eight years, I found the new Edge (which looks much the same) very straightforward to use, and it's great that you can install extensions from the Chrome Web Store. It's also easy to import your bookmarks and passwords from Chrome, to save you having to set them up all

over again. However, I do wish Microsoft had abandoned its insistence on calling bookmarks 'favorites', or at least learned

to spell the word correctly.

I haven't tried all the features yet - I'm still not sure what the point of Collections is - but my first impressions of the browser are very positive. I particularly like the 'Immersive reader' mode for removing the clutter from web pages and making them easier to print, and the 'Read aloud' option for listening to content - both features that Chrome would benefit from adding.

Like many people, I thought Microsoft switching to Chromium was an admission of defeat, but I think it's made the right choice and I would encourage anyone who still harbours bad memories of Internet Explorer to give the new Edge a go.

*Keith Tilbury, via email*

**Back Issues disc winner**



### Snail mail is worth keeping

Regarding Issue 488's Page 404 column, perhaps Mr Collins would care to consider the sizeable proportion of the population who do not have a PC or access to a mobile phone. Many elderly people who struggle to understand modern technology depend heavily on so-called snail mail and would be marginalised and even more alone if it were to be stamped out.

If Mr Collins reaches the grand age of 94, he too may struggle with the latest tech of the moment. Something that has survived since the time of the Pharaohs might just be worth keeping. Support it because you might need it in the future.

*Sam Ellis, via email*



program. Afterwards, the download completed successfully.

Is this a case of two alpha males locking horns, or is Kaspersky unable to see the difference between the premium and free versions of Malwarebytes? The former would run in parallel - hence a possible clash; the free one is invoked when required. The previous versions of Malwarebytes never upset Kaspersky on my PC.

Incidentally, Malwarebytes takes a couple of seconds to scan for rootkits

(just a few hundred files at the most), while Kaspersky takes a few minutes and scans over 2,000 files!

*J Zarach, Market Drayton*

### Thanks for the free Windows upgrade

I put off upgrading to Windows 10, fearing problems with my existing programs, but after discussing this with a friend - a computer security expert - I was persuaded to bite the bullet.

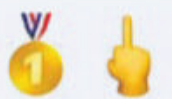
Seeing Nik Rawlinson's feature in Issue

### Malwarebytes *did* clash with Kaspersky

Your workshop on page 52, Issue 490, said the latest version of Malwarebytes wouldn't clash with any other security software. However, a few days ago, Kaspersky offered a download of an updated version of its software (not the routine database) and, after accepting the offer, I was told I would have to delete Malwarebytes as a conflicting

## Quiz Answers: Issue 492

1 **Goldfinger**



2 **Midnight Cowboy**



3 **Dr Strangelove**



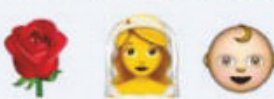
4 **The Good, the Bad and the Ugly**



5 **Planet of the Apes**



6 **Rosemary's Baby**



**WINNER!**

Well done to **Alan Gardiner** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



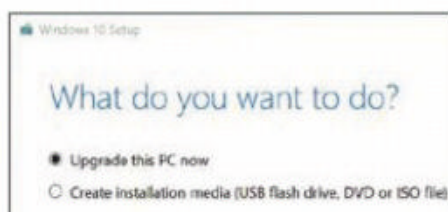
**WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE**

**Twitter**





491, 'What to do when Windows 7 dies', I followed the advice about upgrading to Windows 10 for free by downloading Microsoft's Media Creation Tool. The



process was seamless and saved me about £200. So thank you Nik and Web

User - I've just got the price of my subscription back in spades!

*David Raven, via email*

## eSIMs prevent SIM-swap fraud

Many thanks for your FAQ about eSIMs in Issue 492, and for your magazine's coverage of security issues in general.

However, your esteemed correspondent

David Crookes missed a trick in his eSIM article. One

additional advantage seems to be that eSIMs should,

hopefully, tackle

widespread

SIM-swap frauds

because it will no longer

be possible to apply for a new SIM card on someone else's behalf and receive it in the post.

*Dr Peter Lansley, via email*

## Who to trust with our data?

I found it alarming to read in Issue 492's news sections that add-ons from Avast and AVG have been banned by Google and Mozilla for collecting users' data.

Aren't these security companies meant to protect us online rather than invade our privacy? If we can't trust them, then who can we trust?

I used to have Avast Free Antivirus installed on my PC but I became annoyed with the number of pop-ups it displayed. I wonder if these had anything to do with data collection? In any case, I won't be using Avast software in future.

*Maria Keith, via email*

## CORRECTION

In our Best Free Apps section in Issue 492, we gave the wrong web address for the Microsoft Math Solver app for Android, which led to a completely different app! The correct address is [bit.ly/mathandroid492](https://bit.ly/mathandroid492). Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

## What you say...

### WHAT EXCITING TECH GIFTS DID YOU RECEIVE FOR CHRISTMAS?

I got a Google Nest Hub. I love it. I bought another one for my lounge.

*Kevin Gadget Man Benton*

I got an all-singing, all-dancing SAD light. Works a treat as a fill-in flash for my photography.

*Anne-Marie Miller*

My dad got a Google Nest Mini and has been using it upside down. He speaks to it through the base - none of us has the heart to correct him!

*Glenn D Booth*

Some Cambridge Audio Melomania 2 wireless earbuds. They are fab!

*Heather Husler*

My daughter got me socks with a Web User subscription inside.

*Kenny Hutchison*

I gave myself an Echo Show 8 while it was on special offer.

*Edgar Lapada*

None of your beeswax!

*Trevor Whitehead*

### DO YOU THINK FOLDABLE PCs LIKE LENOVO'S ([bit.ly/fold493](https://bit.ly/fold493)) ARE A GOOD IDEA?

I have had a foldable PC for years. It's called a laptop!

*Gary Olsen*

It seems more like a gimmick than anything - and a costly one, at that.

*Mark Chatham*

Yes, it's sort of a bridge between tablets and laptops.

*Surfing life's waves! @p\_banes*

It's a lovely idea but they seem so fragile. I'd want to see one after a year of use. And they're so expensive.

*Caroline Chapman @cantstopthesgnl*

I still like having a 17in laptop screen, so a foldable PC is clearly not designed for the likes of me. Besides, if you want portability, why not just have a tablet?

*Lynn Sharpe*

All these new innovations are things that no one is desperate for and yet they always cost a small fortune. I have no need for my PC to fold in half and, if I did, I would simply buy a laptop. £2.5k for a tiny screen. Just who is going to buy this?

*Rich Grove*

Daft, expensive, useless gimmick. I'd be embarrassed to be seen with one. You could get a high-spec gaming PC that does something useful for less money.

*Lance Parkington*

What's the point of a folding computer?

*John Hewett*

### DO YOU WELCOME TWITTER'S PLAN TO LET YOU CONTROL WHO REPLIES TO YOUR TWEETS ([bit.ly/twitter493](https://bit.ly/twitter493))?

It's about time. Currently, the biggest advantage to Facebook over Twitter is that you don't get random strangers and spambots replying to your messages. Being able to filter out the idiots will make Twitter much more pleasant to use.

*Chris Gaunt*

It might help to combat bullying but it will also stifle debate and means you won't be able to tell people such as obnoxious media commentators when you disagree with them.

*Anne Dimmock*

Good. Twitter has become a horrible place that's full of trolls and this might put an end to it.

*John Happenstance*



# ! Page 404



Forcing customers to brick trade-in speakers could destroy Sonos, argues **Barry Collins**

## Sonos speakers are environmentally unsound

**A**t the time of writing, an area the size of Belgium is burning in Australia and half a billion animals are estimated to have perished in the blaze. At the same time, the leaders of two UK environment agencies have warned that this year is our final chance to save the planet from an irreversible rush toward oblivion. You don't need to be Greta Thunberg to realise that the Earth is in dire trouble – and yet still some tech companies haven't got the memo.

Take Sonos, for example. The company – like many others – is offering a trade-in programme for its range of smart speakers. Hand over one of your old models and you can get up to 30% off the cost of a new one.

However, it seems Sonos isn't particularly bothered about getting customers' old speakers back. In fact, it positively encourages users to recycle their speakers locally, arguing that it's more environmentally friendly to dispose of your old speaker at a nearby

recycling centre than ship it back to Sonos HQ, which is undoubtedly true.

But if you were thinking of recycling in the most environmentally friendly way possible – by donating the speaker to friends, family or charity for someone else to enjoy

your unwanted device without inflicting any further environmental damage, Sonos

is having none of it. In fact, to qualify for the discount, you literally have to press a self-destruct button.

Before Sonos delivers your trade-in discount, you must use the Sonos app to put your speaker in what the company ironically calls Recycle Mode. This starts an irreversible 21-day counter, at the end of which all your personal data will be wiped and the device permanently disabled. "During the countdown and once the product has been deactivated, the product

cannot be re-added to any system or used to set up a new Sonos system, even if the product has been reset to its factory settings," according to the Sonos support page. Your perfectly functional Sonos speaker

will be turned into the planet's most high-tech doorstep – or, more likely, be hurled atop the giant pile of

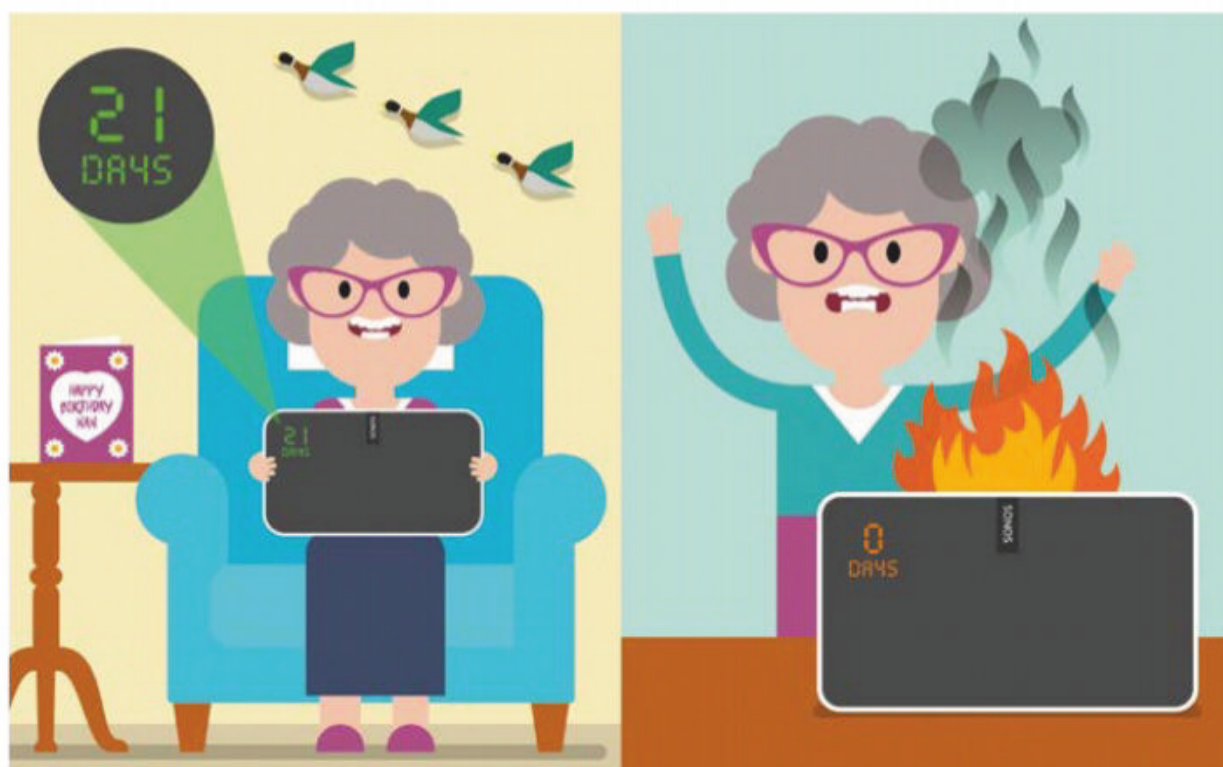
electronics waste at your local dump.

Why is Sonos forcing customers to decommission perfectly functional kit? A Community Manager on the Sonos support forums explains that "while we're proud of how long our products last, we don't really want these old, second-hand products to be the first experience a new customer has with Sonos. We hope that in upgrading to the latest and greatest, people will recycle responsibly, and we feel it's the right decision to make recycling a condition of this offer."

You don't need an MA in Cynicism to argue that artificially bricking those old speakers also reduces the second-hand Sonos market, which means the company can sell more new devices to keep its shareholders happy. Who cares if the planet's cooking as long as the profits keep rolling, eh?

Still, one other thing occurs to me about Sonos's speakers. If pressing a button in an app is enough to render a speaker impotent, it's probably not beyond the capabilities of hackers to brick customers' devices remotely. If an attack on Sonos's self-destructing speakers ends up destroying not only millions of devices but the company itself, you can't say Sonos didn't have it coming.

“Who cares if the planet's cooking as long as the profits keep rolling?”





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OFFER**  
FOR MORE INFO SEE PAGE 62

# ENJOYED THIS ISSUE?

## GET THE NEXT ONE EARLY!

**T**hank you for reading this issue of *Web User* – we hope you found the tips and advice useful. The good news is that you don't have to wait too long for the next issue. If you subscribe to *Web User* by **Monday 27 January (8pm)\***, you'll receive it through your letterbox before it's available in the shops!

**What's inside the next issue:**

**COVER FEATURE: DON'T CLICK THAT LINK!**

**PLUS:**

- Dual-boot Linux and Windows
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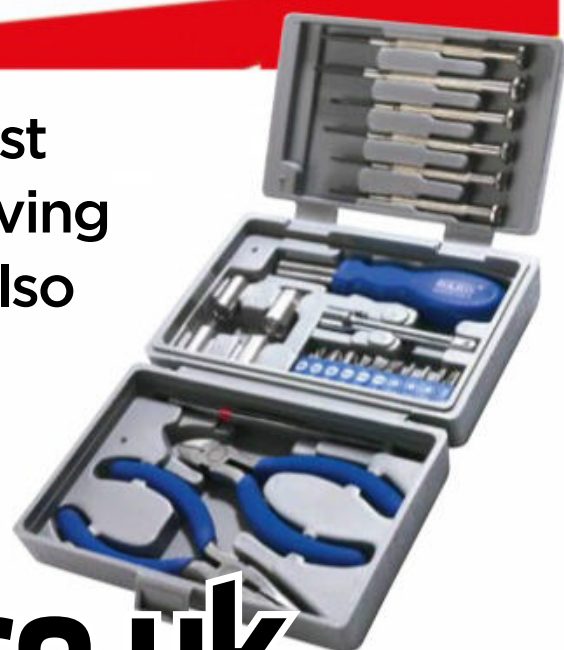
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