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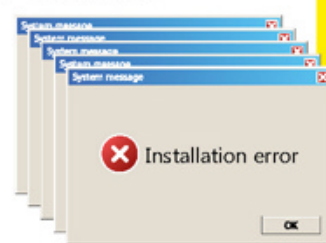


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What to do when software won't install **p50**



WEB MYTHS

EXPOSED

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- ☒ 5G caused the coronavirus pandemic
- ☒ Clearing your cache boosts browsing speed
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Don't believe the hype!

The rapid spread of the coronavirus has triggered a flood of misinformation about the disease, especially on social media. According to the World Health Organisation, some of the sillier myths claim that adding pepper to your soup prevents COVID-19, houseflies can spread the virus and taking a hot bath cures it, not to mention the more dangerous misadvice about injecting bleach and drinking ethanol.

But while the web is undoubtedly a breeding ground for such rubbish, there are also plenty of fibs, fabrications and falsehoods about the internet itself – most

recently exemplified by deluded people torching 5G masts over health concerns.

In this issue's cover feature, we round up the most common tech-related myths and reveal the facts behind them, to stop you falling for misinformation and spreading it yourself. From the wrong way to stay anonymous to the false security of public Wi-Fi and whether sharks could devour the web, we've got nothing but the truth!

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



Buying WebUser — during the lockdown —

IN THE SHOPS

Many outlets, including Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Morrisons, operating branches of WHSmith and independent newsagents, should be stocking *Web User* as usual. Keep an eye out while you're shopping for your essentials. Find stores that stock *Web User* in your area by entering your postcode at bit.ly/wustockists.

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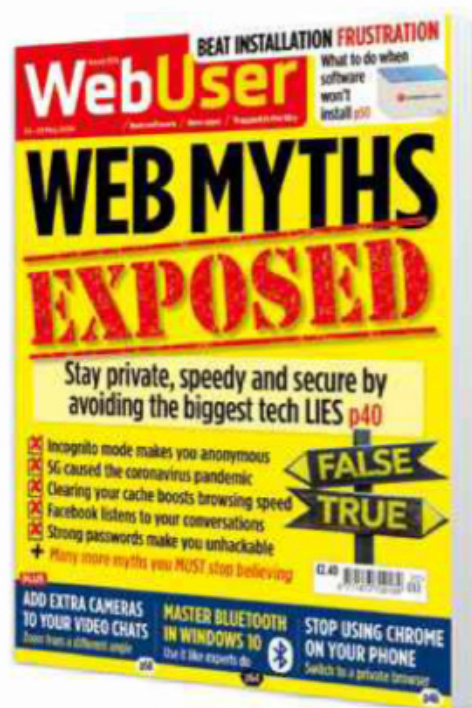
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Average sales, Jan-Dec 2019, 24,266 copies per issue



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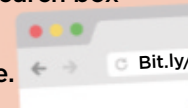


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We use Bitly links to shorten web addresses that would otherwise be too long to print in the magazine. Type these into the address bar of your browser – not the search box – and you'll be redirected to the relevant web page.





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Set



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by avoiding the biggest tech lies

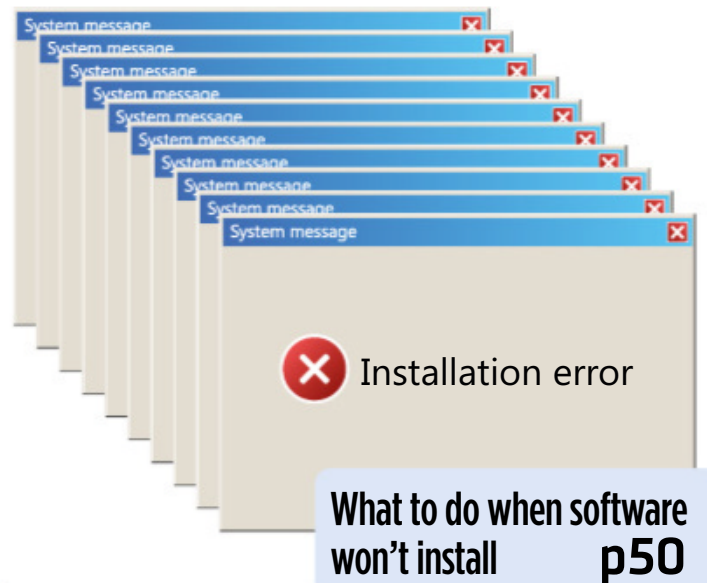


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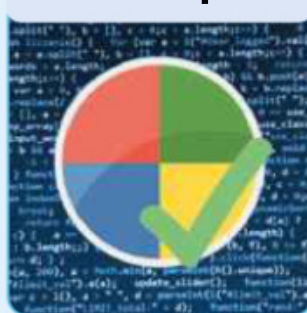
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Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

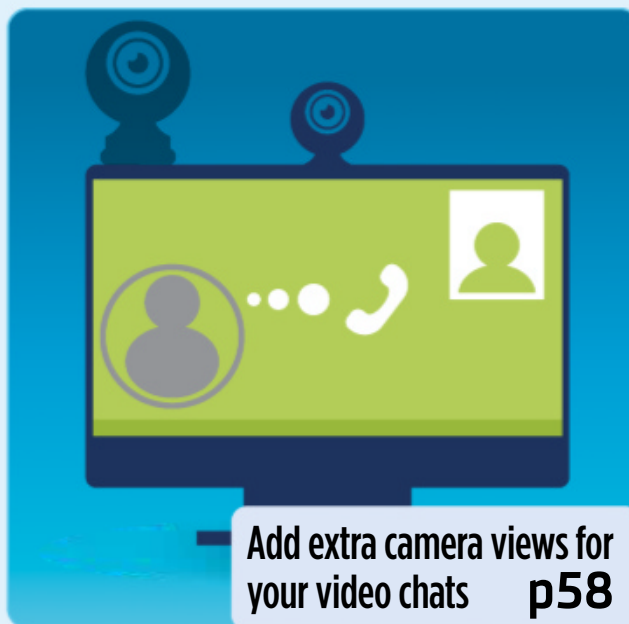
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What's New Online

Hold video chats in Messenger Rooms

Facebook has created a new video-call feature that lets you take part in a group chat with up to 50 people. Called Messenger Rooms, it works along the same lines as Zoom and Houseparty, providing an online space to drop in and out of. You can even invite people without a Facebook account to join the conversation.

Rooms can be created through Facebook's News Feed, Groups and Events, or by launching Messenger and selecting Create a Room at the top of your list of contacts. This generates a shareable link for others to select from their phone or computer. If you're using the Messenger app, you can also use augmented-reality effects, alter the lighting and place yourself in front of a 360-degree background.

To allay privacy concerns,



Facebook allows chat hosts to make Rooms easy or hard to find, and lets them determine who can join. Rooms can be locked or unlocked when calls begin, and unwanted participants can be removed. The social-media giant also promises never to view or listen to group calls.

As well as providing Rooms within Facebook, the feature will soon be



made available within Instagram Direct, WhatsApp and Portal, too. For now, WhatsApp group and voice calls can be held with up to eight people.

www.messenger.com

Enjoy a free digital comic

bit.ly/comics501

DC Comics has made more than 50 of its most iconic comics available for free. The US publisher is running a promotion called DC Essential Reads, offering digital issues featuring some of

its most well-known characters from the Caped Crusader and Superman to Wonder Woman and The Flash.

There are 37 first issues to devour including Scott Snyder's *Dark Nights: Metal*, and Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' superb *Watchmen*. You can download them from the Read DC website using a Comixology or Amazon account, or check them out via the DC Comics app for iOS and Android.

If you'd prefer a humour comic, you can download a free PDF copy of *Golden Beano*, drawing on content from DC Thomson's 80-year archive (bit.ly/beano501). Long-standing *Beano* contributor Lew Stringer has also created a 32-page collection of his own called *Barmy Comix* (bit.ly/barmy501). If you like what you read, consider popping £2 his way.



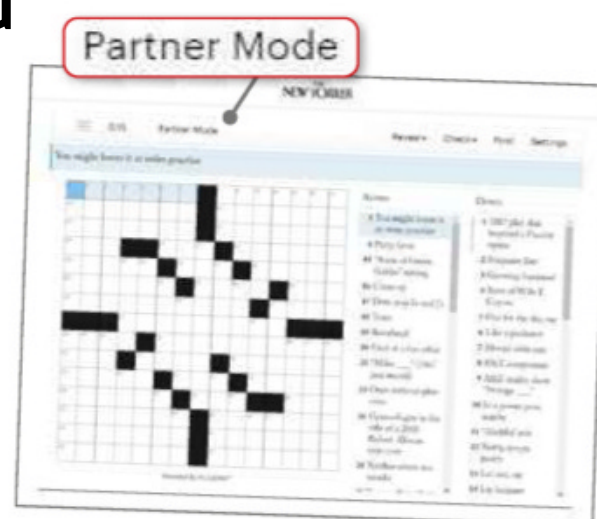
Complete a crossword with a friend

bit.ly/crossword501

Crosswords are a great way to pass the time and exercise your mind but they can also be an enjoyable social pursuit. To that end, The New Yorker has added cooperative play to its daily online crossword, letting you bring two minds together by inviting a friend.

Sign up for a free account and open a recent crossword. Then, before you get cracking, select the Partner Mode function above the puzzle to generate a shareable link that allows someone to join you.

The crossword is completed in real-time so, when one of you fills in an answer, the other person sees what is being entered – your solutions are coloured blue and your friend's are green. You can also play along on a mobile device, with free accounts giving you access to four crosswords per month as part of your monthly articles allowance (coronavirus news doesn't count) and a three-month trial subscription costing \$6 (£4.76).



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

Send a Quentin Blake rainbow e-card

bit.ly/rainbow501

Pictures of rainbows have been used to show support for the NHS during the coronavirus pandemic. But if you want to spread some positivity of your own, check out a new range of 10 free-to-send rainbow-themed e-cards illustrated by Quentin Blake, whose drawings have become synonymous with books by Roald Dahl and David Walliams.



See a birthday Hubble photo



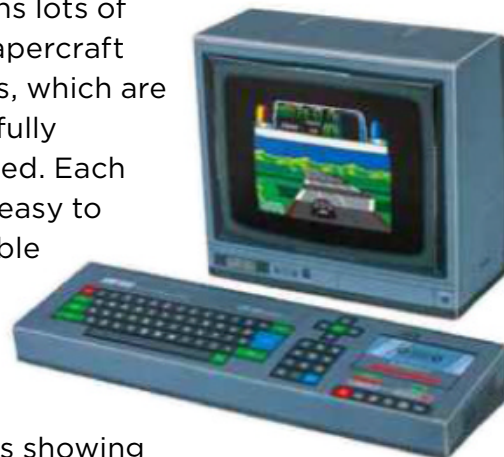
bit.ly/hubble501

The Hubble Space Telescope was launched into low Earth orbit 30 years ago and has, ever since, been taking deep-view photos of the universe, 24 hours a day. To celebrate its anniversary, NASA has collated 365 of its most stunning images and is letting you see what it snapped on your birthday. By entering the month and day you were born, you'll be shown a photo, along with an explanation of what it is displaying. You can then share it as a full screen image on social media or click to discover even more.

Create your own retro computer

bit.ly/retro501

Canadian artist Rocky Bergen is letting you create your own version of classic computers such as the Amiga 500, ZX Spectrum, Commodore 64 and Apple II. Simply print out the PDF patterns and get busy with some scissors and glue. Bergen's site contains lots of free papercraft models, which are beautifully designed. Each one is easy to assemble and many come with screens showing the user interface or a game. None of them will actually work, of course, but the attention to detail (including cassette recorders and manuals) is very impressive.



Explore the history of European cities

gnykka.io/timeline

This timeline charts the moment Europe's major cities were either founded or first appeared in chronicles. Visit the page and it'll run an animation, showing cities popping up in purple as the years roll by. The dates range from 770BC to 1323AD, and you can hover over any of them for more information.



NEW VOICE COMMANDS



Alter "Hey Google" sensitivity

Google is gradually rolling out a new feature for its Assistant devices which lets you customise voice-detection sensitivity. Look out for it in the Assistant app's settings.



Listen to Covid news

Say "Hey Siri, play Covid-19 news" for the BBC's latest bulletin. Content is drawn from the Beeb's Coronavirus Update 24/7 podcast.



Enjoy an Sherlock story

Audible has released a free interactive mystery starring iconic detective Sherlock Holmes. Start the eight-hour audio drama by saying "Alexa, open Great Game".



Hide Spotify playlist tunes

www.spotify.com/uk

As well as introducing curated podcast playlists, Spotify is letting Premium people hide songs they don't like in playlists created by other users. Available in the iOS and Android apps, simply find the song in a playlist, tap the three-dot menu and select Hide.

Take photos in Google Duo

duo.google.com

You can now take a quick snap in Google Duo and share the resulting side-by-side view. Turn the feature on by tapping More, Settings, 'Call settings', 'Duo moments'.

Use COVID-19 stickers in WhatsApp

www.whatsapp.com

WhatsApp has created a set of 21 stickers to reflect the coronavirus pandemic. Created in partnership with the World Health Organisation they include characters working in their pyjamas and social distancing. Tap '+' in a message and download the Together at Home pack.

Amazon cuts ebook prices after government scraps VAT

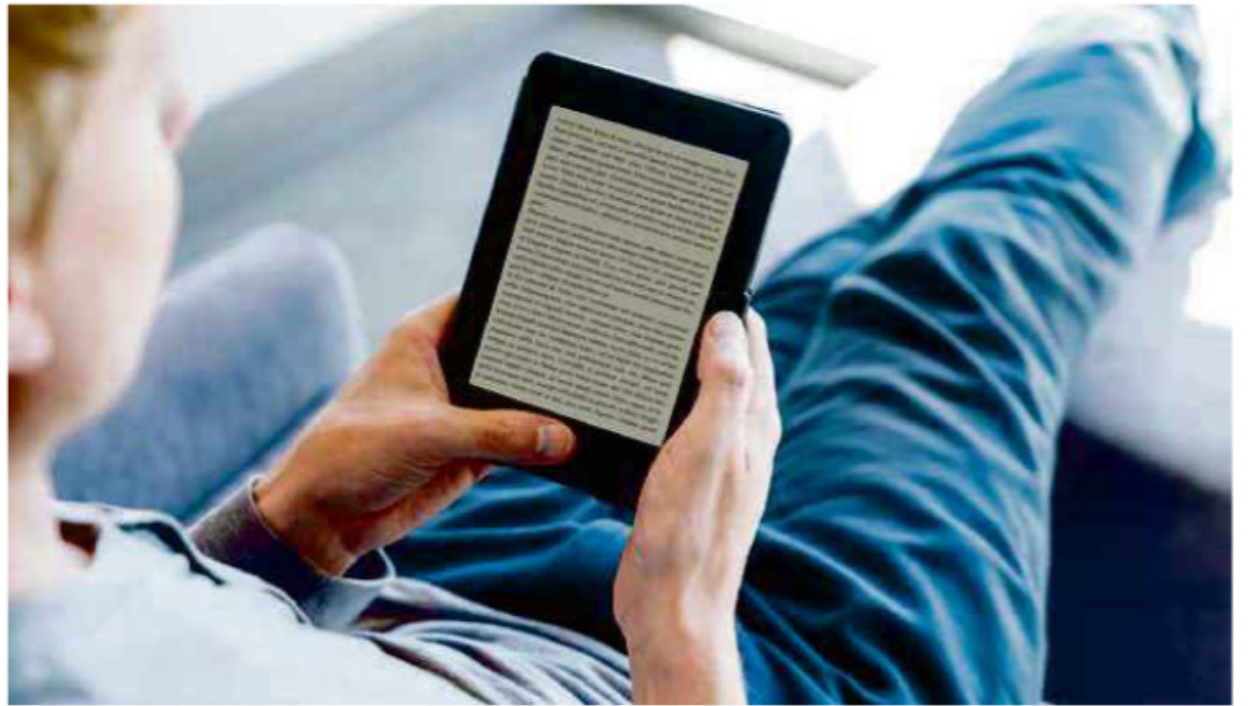
What happened?

Digital publications will no longer have VAT applied, in a move designed to help struggling publishers during the coronavirus outbreak. The tax reduction from 20% down to zero was initially planned for December, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, has brought the date forward to help cut costs for readers and boost sales for publishers.

“We want to make it as easy as possible for people across the UK to get hold of the books they want whilst they are staying at home and saving lives,” said Sunak. “That is why we have fast-tracked plans to scrap VAT on all e-publications, which will make it cheaper for publishers to sell their books, magazines and newspapers.”

Lockdown has already sparked a boom in reading, which is up by a third, according to a survey from World Book Night (bit.ly/books501). Publishers are reporting a 50% increase in sales, and magazine companies have revealed a doubling in subscribers – although that comes amid an increase in discounts being offered. The rate cut doesn’t only impact home readers but is estimated to save universities, libraries and the government up to £55m annually.

The change means ebooks should immediately become cheaper, as Amazon has pledged to start adjusting the cost for those books where it sets the price. Other products, such as digital subscriptions to magazines and newspapers, may take longer to fall or



will simply stay at the same price and only increase next year.

Scrapping the tax has been a long time coming. Printed books – made with ink and paper – are already zero-rated for VAT. But digital materials, be they books or magazines, are counted as ‘e-publications’ under EU rules, which means VAT must be charged.

While the change is good news for publishers and readers alike, audiobooks have been left out of the rate reduction, with a 20% charge still applicable. That means people who prefer listening or who have limited vision are still paying extra for books.

How will it affect you?

The VAT reduction came into play at the beginning of May, which means that a £12 book should now cost £10 – assuming that retailers adjust prices to match. Amazon has said it will pass on the cost savings by reducing prices in its Kindle ebook store, for those books where it sets the price or that aren’t already on discount.

Hopefully, other ebook providers and digital publishers will follow suit. However, News UK has suggested it won’t change its subscription costs, instead keeping prices lower for longer, while the Guardian said it would use

the excess to invest in its journalism.

What do we think?

It’s always felt illogical that paper books have no VAT applied while digital books cost 20% more. With most of us stuck at home, and unnecessary deliveries discouraged, this is a great time to boost the shift to digital books and magazines.

While there are plenty of affordable ebooks, they still aren’t cheap, and it remains frustrating that you can’t easily lend them. Amazon Kindles do have the ability to share digital copies of books, but there are many limitations. That’s why it’s worth remembering that British libraries let you check out books on an ebook reader, using systems such as Overdrive (www.overdrive.com). If you or your family are getting through a lot of books, it’s worth looking into what ebook system your local library offers.

But that reduced VAT will also cut costs on digital magazines and newspapers, hopefully making them more affordable for more people and helping publishers stay in business during these tough times. It’s a policy that’s good news for everyone.

We’ll be looking at ways you can get ebooks and audiobooks for free during lockdown in our next issue.



Overdrive lets you borrow audiobooks and ebooks from your local library for free

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

Chrome cracks down on spam extensions

What happened?

Google has admitted that its Chrome Web Store has a problem with dodgy, spammy extensions, and has rewritten its policies to specifically ban those add-ons that deceive and bother users.

Google noted that it already reviews third-party tools for the Chrome browser, but said this takes increasingly longer as more spammers and fraudsters misuse the extensions platform. To fight back, Google has tweaked its spam policy (bit.ly/spam501), banning multiple add-ons that duplicate tasks as well as those that mislead, manipulate their placement in the store

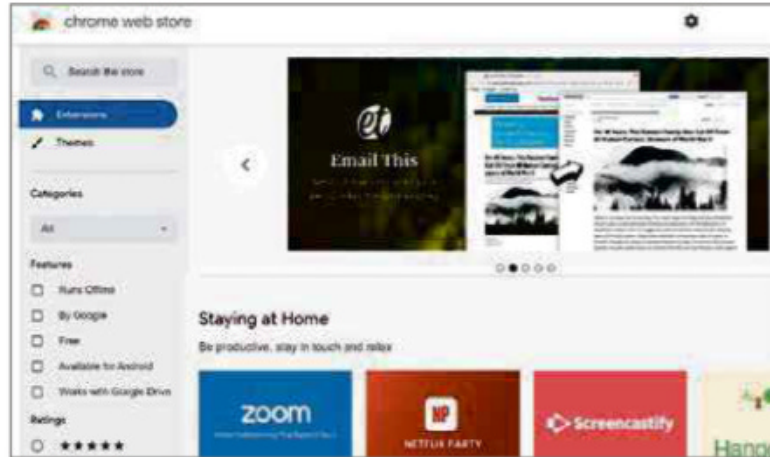
or have only a single use of launching another app, theme or web page.

There are more than 200,000 extensions in the

Chrome Web Store, Google added, saying that the aim wasn't to limit availability of useful tools, but to make it easier to find the best extensions and avoid copycats, fakes and other dodgy add-ons.

How will it affect you?

The tighter guidelines should make it easier for Google's



extensions that pop up unnecessary or unwanted notifications, or that send messages on behalf of users without seeking permission first.

What do we think?

Google is right to clean up the Chrome Web Store because

extensions are a convenient route of access for scammers and hackers, given their prominent use in the browser. Hopefully, Google will tread carefully and not remove any basic add-ons that are genuinely helpful. What looks like a pointless extension to some users may be an invaluable tool for others.

reviewing team to approve legitimate extensions while keeping the worst offenders out of the Chrome Web Store. The change comes into force at the end of August, and any extensions that don't meet the new rules will be removed and disabled. Alongside the aforementioned abuses, the new rules also ban any

Text scam plays on coronavirus fears

What happened?

Reports reveal that people on lockdown have been receiving text messages warning that they've been in contact with someone infected by the coronavirus, advising the recipient to visit a link for more information. Don't touch it, though – such texts are phishing scams that prey on panic during the pandemic and are nothing to do with the government's forthcoming contact-tracing app.

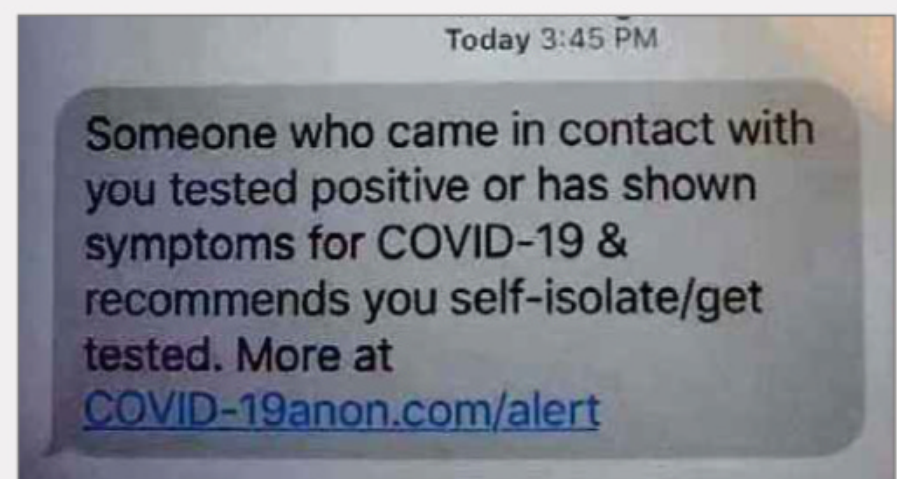
One example, from the US state of Maine, warns that the recipient needs to self isolate and get tested, but the link in the SMS leads to a malicious web page designed to steal personal data such as

credit card details, the local police warned.

How will it affect you?

Always be wary of opening a link in a text message, unless you're entirely sure of the sender. That can be difficult with SMS because it's easy to spoof sender details.

Indeed, using text messaging is a devious move by fraudsters, because the UK government has previously sent an official alert via SMS to inform the public of the lockdown rules. Furthermore, contact-tracing apps will soon be alerting users if they've been near an infected person, although these have to be downloaded and installed by the person using them, and notifications come via the app.



What do we think?

It's grotesque that scammers are targeting people by exploiting fears about the coronavirus, but hardly surprising. Such criminals will use any means they can to trick us into clicking dodgy links. That's why it's best to avoid them and search out the information online.

However, because the

government and companies still use texts to send official information, it makes it harder to tell the fake from the legitimate. It's likely that scams such as these will continue and catch out plenty of victims as this pandemic goes on.

See our FAQ on page 38 for more information about contact-tracing apps.

Credit: Thomaston Police Department/Facebook

Social-media scammers sell private data

What happened?

Social-media sites have been accused of failing to protect their users from scammers who are selling private data on the platforms.

An investigation by the consumer watchdog *Which* revealed that 50 profiles, pages and groups across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter were engaged in the scam, which provides a channel for other fraudsters to profit by using an unwitting user's credit card, account number and sort code. Netflix and Uber Eats account details are also up for grabs. Investigators say they discovered these posts simply by searching for slang terms for this type of fraud.

In one case, *Which* discovered a Facebook post detailing one user's full name, address, date of birth, phone number and full banking information. These details had remained live on the site for four months. When *Which* reported the problem, the social network removed the post – but not the scam-riddled page itself.

Twitter fared no better in the investigation. *Which* discovered a range of stolen credit card details – yours for the bargain price of £100 for one set or £200 for three. Fake passports were also found, selling for £300.

Jenny Ross, Money Editor at *Which*, demanded that the social sites work



with the financial industry and police to address flaws, “to prevent their sites becoming a safe haven for scammers”.

“It’s astonishing that social-media sites make it so easy for criminals to trade people’s personal and financial information, particularly as fraud is such a prevalent crime that can have devastating consequences.”

How will it affect you?

All the scam accounts reported by *Which* have now been closed. However, like cutting heads off the Hydra, you can be sure that another account will pop up soon enough. It’s best practice to change your passwords at regular

intervals – though it’s harder to do this with banking details. Vigilance is the best defence, so make sure you keep an eye on your statements and accounts, and contact your bank if you suspect anything is amiss.

What do we think?

The lack of action from social-media platforms is unforgivable. Issuing PR-friendly statements reiterating their commitment to banning fraudulent activity does nothing. If *Which* can locate these posts just by searching for the right terms, there’s nothing stopping the social-media sites doing the same – and taking swift action.



FIRST LOOK

Raspberry Pi High Quality Camera bit.ly/picam501

The Raspberry Pi High Quality Camera (or, as we’ve dubbed it, ‘Pi Cam’) is the latest power-up module for the pint-sized PC – and it’s very impressive.

It’s not the first camera for the Pi – that honour goes to the blandly titled Camera Module (bit.ly/camera501), an 8-megapixel add-on that, according to the Raspberry Pi Foundation, “is very popular in home security applications, and in wildlife camera traps”.

The new High Quality model is a significant upgrade. Specs-wise, the HQ Pi Cam is equipped with a 12-megapixel Sony IMX477R sensor. It’s also much larger, resembling a

professional camera lens, compared to the webcam stylings of the original. This allows you to attach additional lenses to the mount using the supplied adapter. You now also have the ability to adjust the focus – a feature glaringly absent from the previous model – allowing for perfect shot composition. Throw in a tripod screw mount and you have a much more versatile camera.

When we said ‘significant upgrade’, we weren’t kidding – maximum resolution clocks in at an impressive 4,056 x 3,040 pixels for images, so your photos will be sharper, popping with colour and visually distinct. Videos are slightly less impressive, however – while you’re able to get a solid 1080p out of the full HD camera, it’s best to stick with 30fps (frames per second) because capturing 60fps results in visual glitching. This won’t be a problem for



most people, but it does mean that video’s holy grail of 4K/60fps remains out of reach for Pi owners.

On the plus side, it doesn’t matter which Raspberry Pi computer you own. Attaching to the Pi’s camera connector via the 200mm ribbon cable, this high-definition module is compatible with all versions (though Pi Zero users will need an extra adapter).

The Raspberry Pi High Quality Camera is available now for the bargain price of just £50.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will your phone recognise your face mask?

Your phone's facial-recognition technology lets you unlock your device just by looking at it. But is it smart enough to unlock your phone when you're wearing a face mask? The short answer is: yes, and no.

As COVID-19 sweeps the globe, removing protective gear in order to unlock your phone seems unnecessarily risky (as well as a hassle). But, it seems, it doesn't have to be this way. According to iPhone users on iOS 13.5, Apple has quietly pushed out an update that lets the phone recognise when a user is wearing a face mask. Don't worry – your phone isn't suddenly equipped with X-ray vision to see past the cloth. Instead, when the iPhone detects a mask, it pushes users straight to the passcode screen.

No such luck for Android users, however. While facial recognition is clever enough to know when you've shaved your beard or you're wearing glasses or other facial accoutrements, face masks don't appear to be on the list. When questioned about the possibility of adding a similar solution to Apple's face mask recognition, Google's 'no comment' was deafening.

However, a team at Tencent Security Lab has shown that you can, with a little



dedication, train iPhones to recognise half your face – presumably, the half not covered by a mask.

LIKELIHOOD RATING



While we have no doubt that Apple and Google are capable of creating a facial-detection system that isn't confused by face masks, we're not convinced they'll be rolling it out any time soon. The security implications are just too great. We're impressed with Apple's clever solution to this problem, forcibly bypassing FaceID in favour of a manual input. Expect Google to add a similar update to compatible Android phones.

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Browse the British Museum online

The British Museum has updated its online collection (bit.ly/collection501) to make 4.5 million objects and 1.9 million images free to browse during lockdown. You can zoom in and pan over images, to see more detail than ever before.



Install new Android apps automatically

The Google Play Store is rolling out a feature that lets you install a new app or a game automatically by pre-registering for it. Tap the Pre-register button and select 'Also install when available' to get the app as soon as it's released.



WE DON'T LIKE...

Windows 10 May Update is delayed

Microsoft has delayed the release of its Windows 10 May 2020 Update, reportedly because a zero-day exploit needed to be patched. The latest update to the operating system was originally expected to be available from 12 May.



Android Trojan can steal bank details

A new Android Trojan has been discovered that's capable of bypassing two-factor authentication to steal user data from banking apps and read users' text messages. Named EventBot, it affects a number of apps including HSBC, Barclays and PayPal.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Deadswitch

bit.ly/switch501 | From £20

A dead man's switch is a mechanism that typically starts or stops a machine when pressure is released – you may recognise its use from movies such as *Speed* and *The Taking of Pelham 123*. Deadswitch uses this concept to protect and encrypt your data. Sign up and set a timer and, if it goes off without you terminating it, your data is discreetly passed to your selected contacts. With hosting based in Switzerland, the developers state that "any data we release via email is also protected by strict Swiss privacy laws". Pledges begin at £20 for priority access to new features.





Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Security flaws found in iOS Mail app

Two severe security flaws in Apple's iOS Mail app could allow hackers to run malicious code on iPhones without the victim having to download an attachment or click any links, according to new research.

Cybersecurity experts at ZecOps say hackers may have been exploiting the bugs in the built-in Mail app since January 2018, using them to steal, modify and delete emails.

To initiate the attack, a hacker would only need to send an iPhone user email messages that consume significant amounts of memory, to trigger a 'buffer overflow'. This means the attackers could fill a block of memory beyond its capacity and



overwrite areas that hold executable code with their own malicious code.

Apple said it has found no evidence that users were attacked. The company said: "We have thoroughly investigated the researcher's report and, based on the information provided, have concluded these issues do not pose an immediate risk to our users". However, Apple has since released a patch for the flaws.

bit.ly/iosmail501

Microsoft patches GIF flaw in Teams

Microsoft has patched a serious vulnerability in its Teams video-chat software. The flaw could allow hackers to take over Teams accounts by sharing malicious GIFs, and potentially affects every person who uses Microsoft Teams on their desktop or



in their web browser, according to security company CyberArk.

The hack is essentially a subdomain takeover, whereby attackers use a malicious GIF to scrape user data and gain control of Teams accounts as the GIF is shared through the service. Simply displaying the GIF would allow hackers to steal the victim's authentication token and provide them with access to the user's Team chats. The attacker could then control the victim's account and forward the same message to anyone in their group.

"The victim will never know that they've been attacked, making the exploitation of this vulnerability stealthy and dangerous," CyberArk explained in a blog post. The company informed Microsoft of the vulnerability on 23 March and a patch was issued on 20 April.

bit.ly/teamsgif501

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Attila Tomaschek,
Digital Privacy Expert
at ProPrivacy
(proprivacy.com)



Q Will coronavirus contact-tracing apps compromise our privacy (see FAQ on page 38)?

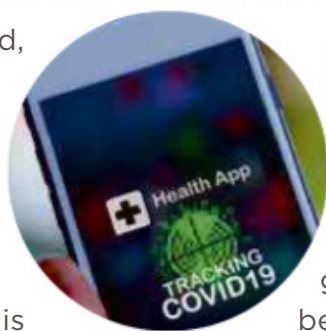
Brian Cheeseman,
Facebook

A A key privacy feature built into Apple's iOS mobile operating system prevents Bluetooth from constantly operating for apps running

in the background, which is why COVID-19 contact-tracing apps can't function on iPhones unless the user's device is left unlocked.

Now, the government wants to avoid a similar situation with the contact-tracing app it is developing, and has asked Apple to ease its Bluetooth privacy feature so the app can run in the background. Apple is already working with Google on contact-tracing apps and will reportedly lift the Bluetooth limitations specifically for those tools.

The bigger issue is that the data collected by the



“ The government's contact-tracing app has serious implications in terms of prolonged surveillance ”

government's app will be fed into a centralised server accessible by the government and health authorities. This runs counter to Apple and Google's decentralised approach, where data is processed strictly on users' devices.

Not only is a centralised approach less secure, leaving user data more vulnerable, but it has serious implications in terms of prolonged government surveillance that could potentially go beyond the scope and timeline of the current crisis.

Ultimately, the approach the government wants to take will limit users' trust in the system and will, in turn, severely limit user adoption of the app it is developing. It would do well to go ahead with Apple and Google's decentralised and more privacy-focused option instead of advancing with its proposed centralised system, which puts citizens at increased risk of mass surveillance and constitutes a general intrusion on personal privacy.



£499.99

Impulse

AMD IMPULSE (RYZ7)

AMD Ryzen 5 2600 - 6 Cores (O.C 4Ghz)

ASUS PRIME B450M-A

CORSAIR 8GB DDR4 3000Mhz

INTEL 512GB M.2 nVME 660P

AMD RX 560 2GB

GAMEMAX Expedition

MICROSOFT Windows 10 or 10 Pro



£599.99

mercury

INTEL i5 MERCURY (COF9)

INTEL Core i5 9600K (O.C 5Ghz)

ASUS PRIME Z390-P

CORSAIR 16GB DDR4 3000Mhz

INTEL 1TB M.2 nVME 660P

INTEL UHD 630 Integrated Graphics

KOLINK Stronghold

MICROSOFT Windows 10 or 10 Pro



£1249.99

NAVIGATOR

AMD NAVIGATOR (RYZ8)

AMD Ryzen 5 3600X (O.C 4.3Ghz)

ASUS TUF X570-Plus Gaming

CORSAIR 16GB DDR4 3600Mhz - RGB

INTEL 512GB M.2 nVME 660P

SEAGATE 2TB Sata3 HDD

AMD 5700XT 8GB

CORSAIR iCUE 220T RGB White

MICROSOFT Windows 10 or 10 Pro

palicomp

01270 898 104
sales@palicomp.co.uk

*Sales subject to our terms of sale available online - www.palicomp.co.uk - Configuration issues will be advised by phone - any alternatives will also be advised by phone before proceeding with the order. Systems Custom built then are tested 100% prior to dispatch - dispatched via courier for next working day delivery - other delivery options available online. 0% Finance upto 12 months only - terms online - early settlement fee just £29.00 - apply online or phone. Prices inclusive of VAT and free UK mainland shipping. Q-jump cut-off time 15.00pm.

★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

EDUCATION

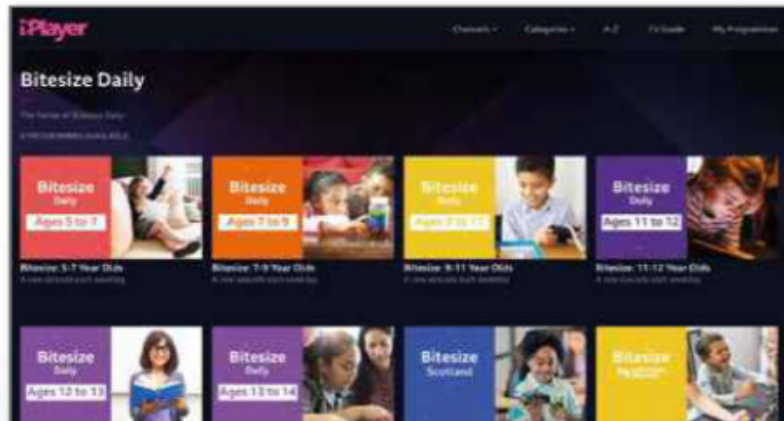
NEW

BBC Bitesize Daily

bit.ly/bitesize501

Struggling to homeschool a child? Then maybe it's time to reach for the stars. The BBC has launched an extended version of its Bitesize educational website with lessons provided by big celebrity names. Astronomer Brian Cox is giving a science lesson, Sir David Attenborough is teaching geography and Danny Dyer is fronting a lesson about Henry VIII – adding to a package that's already attracting millions of young minds. Other lessons are taught by non-celebrity educators, with videos split among age groups and the subjects clearly marked. New lessons are also being added daily, making it a perfect substitute teacher.

Our rating



RED BUTTON

Children can catch up with lessons via the BBC Red Button between 9am and 11am and on the iPlayer

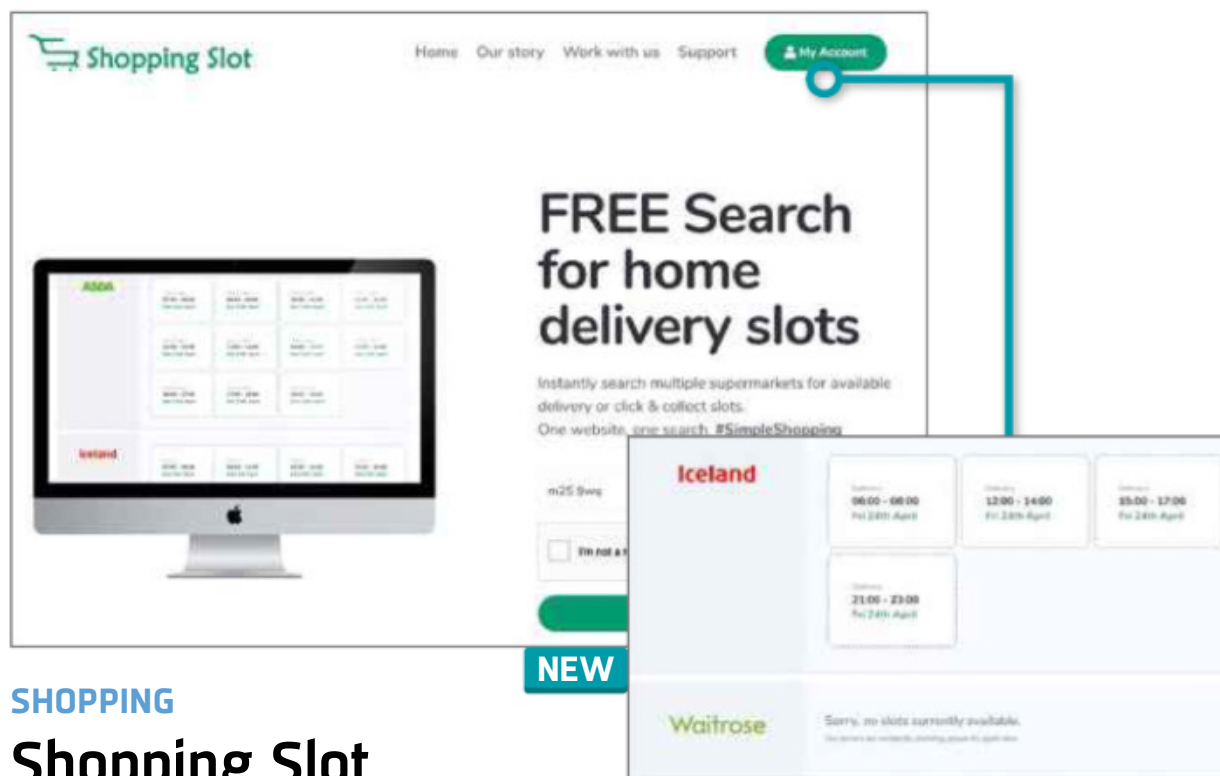
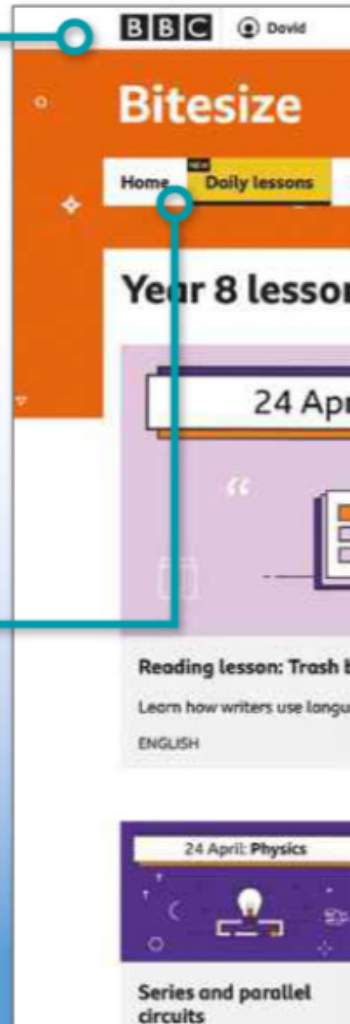
Pick your year and start homeschooling

You'll find daily lessons for homeschooling in Maths and English for every year group, as well as regular lessons in Science, History, Geography and more.



PICK A YEAR

Lessons are packaged by year, and cover English, Maths, Science, Geography, History, Music and Wellbeing



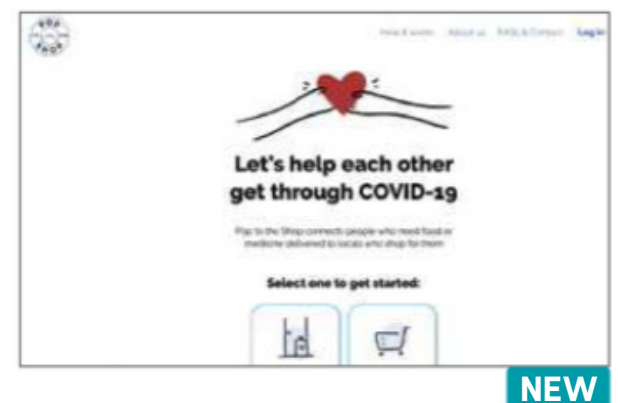
SHOPPING

Shopping Slot

shoppingslot.co.uk

Finding a supermarket delivery slot these days is as difficult as locating bottles of hand sanitiser. If you enter your postcode on this website, however, you can check which stores have availability and see when you'll be able to secure your supplies. Although it frustratingly forces you to complete a CAPTCHA to verify you're human, the results come through fairly fast and, while it currently concentrates on the main supermarket chains, smaller companies will be added soon. If there's no availability or if you want to be kept informed of dates, you can sign up for emails notifying you of future slots. This costs £3.99 per month, but searching the site is completely free.

Our rating



NEW

SHOPPING

Pop To The Shop

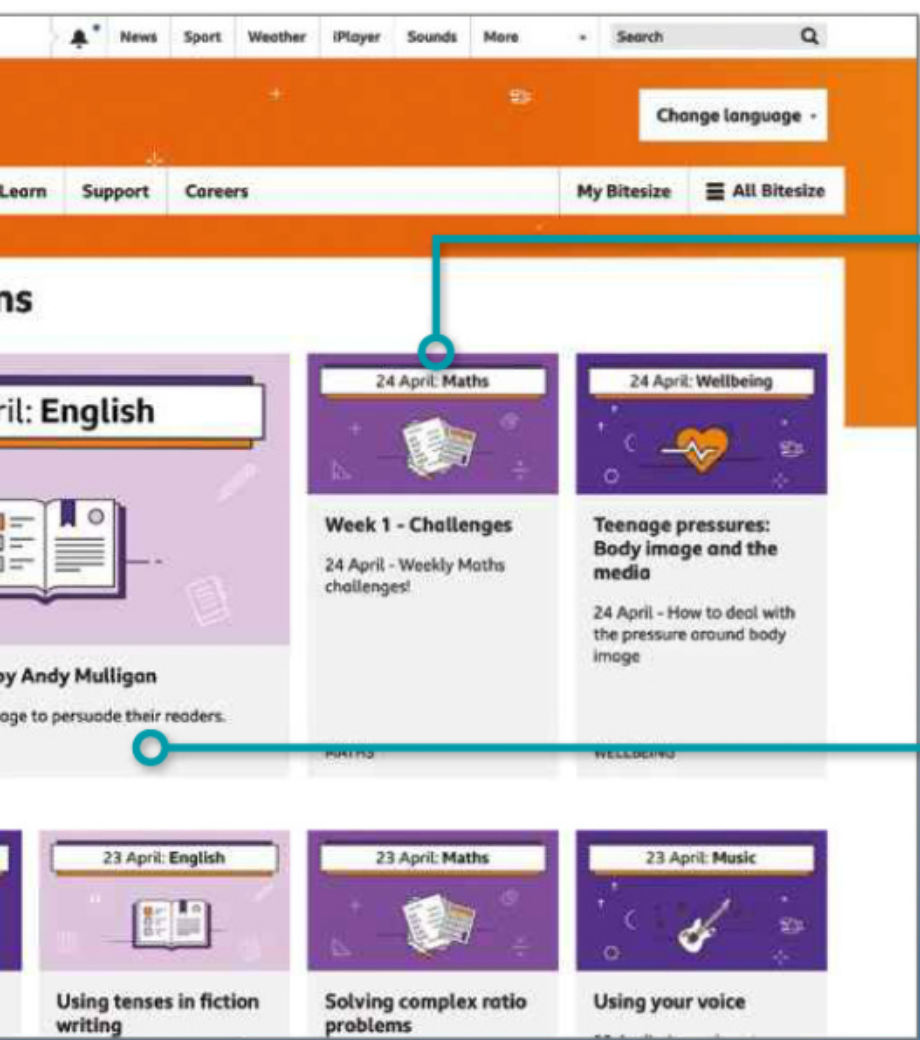
www.poptotheshop.org

Supermarkets and pharmacists are working hard to deliver food and medicine to vulnerable people, but additional help is always welcome. By connecting people needing supplies with friendly neighbours, Pop To The Shop bridges the gap, but it'll need plenty of volunteers to be effective. Sign up with the site to find people willing to do your shopping in a particular area, then set a maximum price, create a list and enter your card details. Shoppers are reimbursed after delivery and uploading their receipt, and there's a Community Support function in case of disputes.

Our rating



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



WEEKLY CHALLENGES
Activities, quizzes, animations and fun games are also used to encourage learning

BITESIZE SHOWS
The objective of each lesson is clearly laid out and the videos last for 20 minutes each

Learn
Watch TV presenter Anika Rankin read this extract from 'Daisy and the Trouble with Lily'. Whilst it's playing try to make a list of the things Daisy did last week. You can pause the video at different points if needed.



NEW

SELF DEVELOPMENT

Inspirational Stories

www.inspirationalstories.com

This site aims to lift your mood during lockdown, providing a melting pot of positivity to help you lead a healthier life mentally, physically and spiritually. It does so through inspiring stories, poems, quotes and proverbs, drawn from homespun proverbs, celebrities and some of the world's greatest thinkers. Whether or not this raises your spirits depends on how receptive you are, but you can't fault the effort and diversity of material here. It's all wrapped within an easily navigable design, but the headlines and blurbs could be more descriptive to prevent unnecessary clicking.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

THEATRE

The Stage

www.thestage.co.uk

Providing a backstage pass for the theatre industry, this long-running news hub is keeping the show on the road by providing readers with a change of scenery. Its modern redesign makes finding content easier, directing the latest news and jobs to the left and right wings of the screen, while placing highlighted articles centre stage. There's an impressive number of reviews, some great podcasts and fun cartoons, and a wealth of opinion from some of theatre's biggest names. You can read three pages per month for free or pay £3.32 for unlimited access, which isn't bad value.

Our rating



NEW

JOURNALISM

Lacuna Voices

www.lacunavoices.com

This digital magazine aims to cover real-life stories without falling into the tacky and exploitative pitfalls common to the genre. Avoiding clickbait and sensationalist headlines, its articles take in family, health, careers and world stories, with a dedicated section for men who, it claims, are largely ignored by this kind of media. Positives include insightful articles, clear layouts and moderated comment threads with a kindness-first policy, though images could be stronger (there's an over-reliance on stock photos) and it'd be nice to get a preview of articles before clicking through.

Our rating





NEW

MATERNITY

NI Maternity

www.ni-maternity.com

COVID-19 has disrupted many hospital services, including those aimed at pregnant women and new parents. To help with worries and concerns, the Public Health Agency has created a new maternity site for Northern Ireland to deliver the latest info and advice. The site provides plenty of detail and is packed with links to numerous services, offering insights into what's happening at specific maternity units. There are useful videos and explanatory graphics, but many sections feel overwhelming, with most crying out for clearer presentation. Given the speed at which the site has been created, however, that's to be expected.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

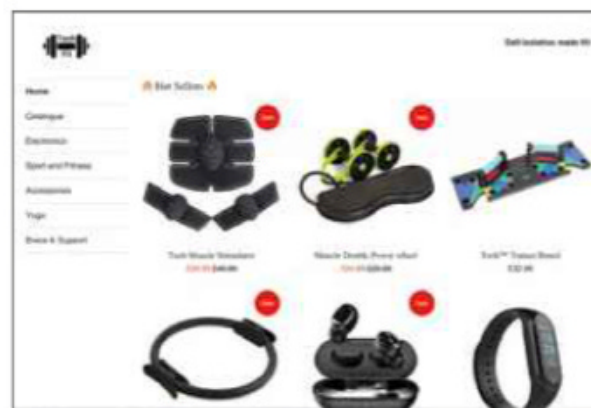
FOOD

The Scotch Kitchen

www.scotchkitchen.com

There's plenty to sink your teeth into with this collection of recipes from Quality Meat Scotland. Bringing together more than 100 searchable beef, lamb and pork dishes, it's tasty-looking images aim to sate your appetite by serving up clear instructions complete with tickable lists of ingredients and how-to videos. Finding a suitable dish is easy since the filters let you narrow down by protein, preparation time, cuts, season, occasion, meal type and cuisine. You can also use this well-designed website to read some top meaty tips, discover how to cook a steak, learn about perfect pairings and explore the different cuts.

Our rating



NEW

FITNESS

Tooh Fit

toohfit.com

In a bid to keep the nation fit and healthy, Ralf Footohi – this website's 16-year-old creator – is exercising his entrepreneurial and technological skills by selling a range of sports and fitness gear. Aiming to take his venture international, he's made a good start with a simple, clean design backed by strong e-commerce facilities. That said, there's room for improvement – we didn't like that shipping costs were only revealed after we entered our details and we found it odd that one product was being sent from Russia. But strong descriptions, good use of images, fast searching and clear categorisation make Tooh Fit look promising.

Our rating



NEW

CHILDREN

Mattel Playroom

bit.ly/mattel501

Toy maker Mattel knows a thing or two about entertaining children and it's pulled out all the stops to keep them playing. As well as tips for parents and guardians, its new Playroom site is stuffed with regularly updated activities that not only riff on established games such as Uno but involve its large roster of characters and brands. There are stories to read, videos to watch, web games to play and suggested crafting and DIY projects to enjoy in a seemingly never-ending list of neatly categorised suggestions. You can also enjoy printable activities and sign up to a newsletter to stay informed of new additions, including ideas for both inside and outside the home.

Our rating



NEW

EMPLOYMENT

Pick for Britain

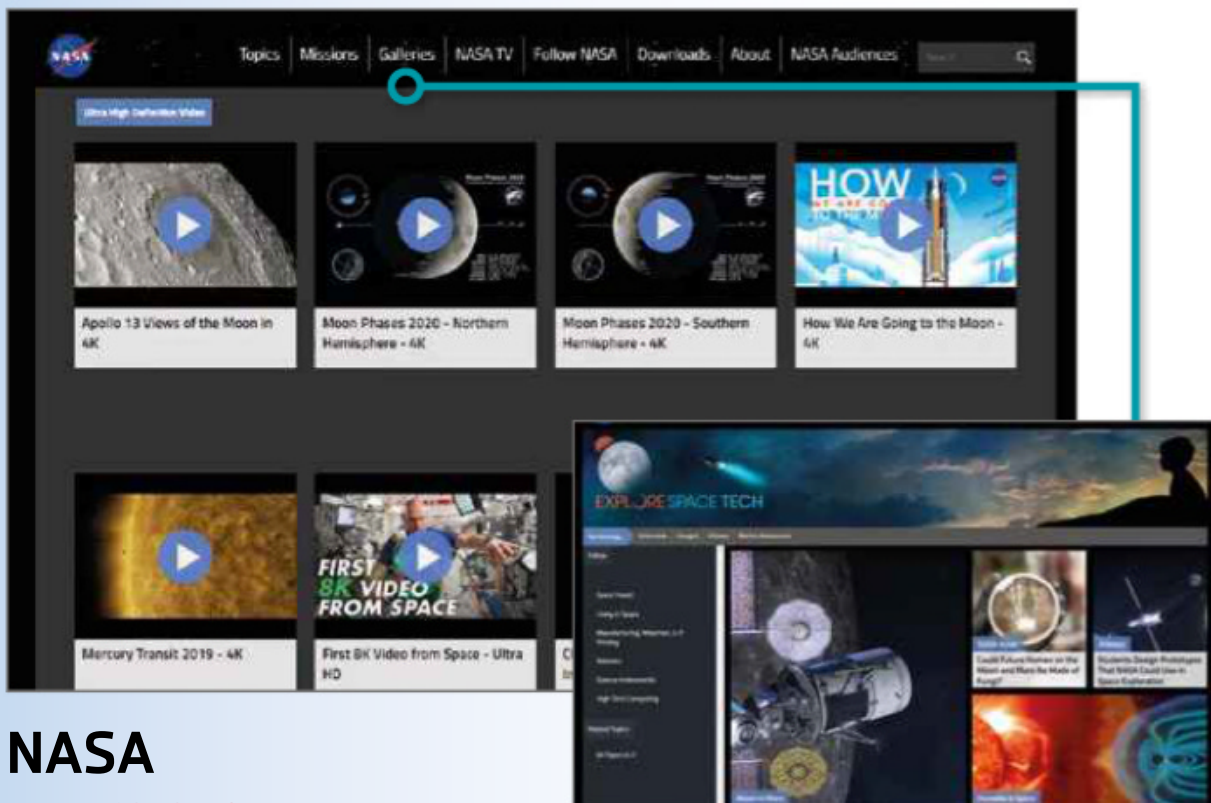
pickforbritain.org.uk

The UK's fruit and veg farms need pickers and packers during the harvest season, and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has created an employment hub to help people apply for jobs, but it could do with some nurturing. Clicking Jobs merely diverts you to the government's find-a-job scheme, as well recruiters and agencies, but there's little advice about specific opportunities. The answers to many questions in the FAQ are too short and snappy, but there's useful information about social distancing and working while furloughed.

Our rating



ESSENTIAL BOOKMARKS THIS ISSUE: Stellar stargazing sites



NASA

www.nasa.gov

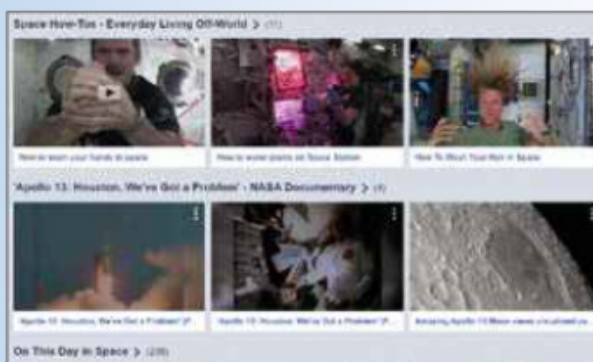
Fifty years on from the Moon landings, the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration is still the world's trailblazer on space and Earth science, and its site makes its discoveries free to blast through in fascinating detail, no login required. The huge library of free audio and video includes ultra-HD (8K) interstellar films; full-length ebooks, such as the gorgeous HD-illustrated 'Earth at Night' (ePub, PDF or Kindle); apps including new NASA Selfies (bit.ly/selfies501); and free podcasts and audio clips. If you fancy some ISS-spotting after Issue 500's tracking feature, see NASA's own tracker at bit.ly/issmap501. Also, bookmark the All Topics page (www.nasa.gov/tags) for everything from asteroid-spotting to live updates from the Zarya space module.



Stellarium Web

stellarium-web.org

In the 1970s, one of the few things visible from space was the queue for the London Planetarium. Okay, we exaggerate, but it was worth the long wait to gaze at the venue's breathtaking projection. Today's planetarium software is advanced enough to work on your own screen, and Stellarium's web version is the best free example. Permit the site location access to your browser to see an incredible map of the stars as they are above you right now, looking north (directions are overlaid, along with options such as grids and constellation lines). As with any good online map, Stellarium lets you zoom, pan and click to explore those glittering dots in detail.



Space.com

www.space.com

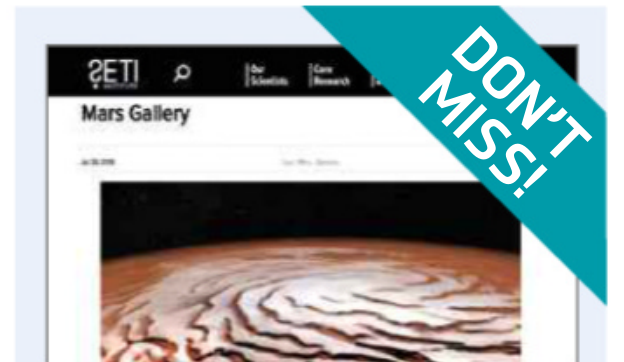
The Skywatching section of this free online magazine for stargazers has had a busy few weeks, thanks to the skies being clearer following the coronavirus lockdown, and April's International Dark Sky Week (bit.ly/darksky501). Check its up-to-the-minute news on visible meteor showers, satellites and comets, then peer skyward after dark and share your sightings on the site's busy forum. Don't miss the Videos section (videos.space.com), where new HD captures are added every day. You can also watch vintage Apollo mission videos, revisit notable events in 'On This Day in Space', view recordings from the Hubble and ISS, listen to music made in space, and watch how-to videos on using a telescope and brushing your teeth in space.



The Sky At Night

bit.ly/skynight501

After more than 60 years and nearly 800 episodes, the longest-running TV show of all time is still illuminating our screens. The BBC's *The Sky At Night* site has an excellent collection of clips going back to the early days of the show, with highlights including 'Stephen Hawking hopes for proof of his Black Hole Theories' and the intriguing 'Finding Pluto with a Teapot'. You can also watch several full episodes of the show; test your knowledge in quizzes on nebulae and UFOs; learn more about its most famous presenter, Sir Patrick Moore, who died in 2012; and have your night-sky photography published via the Photo Group section. For regular news and astronomical updates from the team, follow [@BBCStargazing](https://twitter.com/BBCStargazing) on Twitter.



SETI Institute

www.seti.org

If there's life on Mars, SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) will be first to tell you. This is a serious body of scientists, so don't come here expecting conspiracy theories about little green men. The Core Research section is neither boring nor bonkers, and offers fascinating (and scientifically sound) articles on potentially habitable worlds ('exoplanets') and Martian water, while the Education section has the latest ET videos and podcasts. The site's brilliant Stuck At Home Survival Guide (bit.ly/stuck501) will help relieve your lockdown lethargy, with links to citizen science projects, virtual space tours and sci-fi stories.

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FOR
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Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Create a CSS background

When designing your website, you should allow plenty of space so it doesn't look cramped. However, acres of white space can look boring, so try using CSS to give blank areas some texture without resorting to data-hungry images. Pattern.css (bit.ly/pattern501) is a tiny CSS file you can add to your site to apply a range of designs in colours that match your existing scheme.

Download the CSS file, upload it to your site and use the documentation at bit.ly/pattern501 to create the code.



Design layouts with CSS

CSS can also be used to help you design the layout of your site, particularly if you use the CSS-Grid to create table-like structures. Working it out can be a bit of a headache but there's an excellent beginner's guide from Nick Schäferhoff on the Torque website at bit.ly/cssg501 that will get you started.



Deal of the Fortnight

Hostinger (www.hostinger.co.uk) is offering its Single Web Hosting plan for 96p per month, down from £11.19 per month.

Web-building Helpdesk

Q Google Analytics (analytics.google.com) lets me see what visitors to my website are clicking on. My monthly newsletter – sent to registered users – seems to increase my visitor count, but how do I tell if people click the links in it as opposed to coming from other sources?

Rod Farmer, via email

A You can add extra data to the URLs in your newsletter links. This won't change the page they direct to but can be used to filter the information in Analytics. To do this, you could essentially just add `?utm_source=newsletter` to the end of the URL, but there are full instructions at Wpbeginner (bit.ly/newslett501). Scroll down to the section labelled 'Method 2'.

Andy Shaw, Technical & Reviews Editor



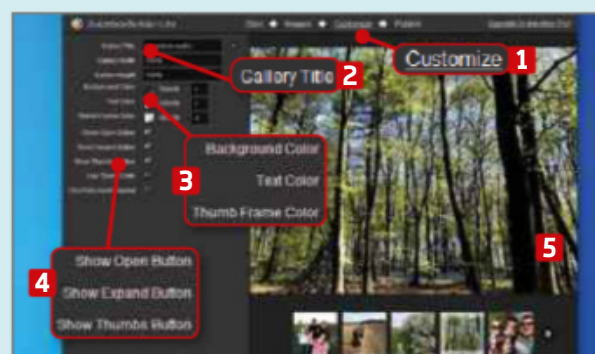
MINI WORKSHOP | Create a JavaScript photo gallery

Juicebox: juicebox.net |  10 mins | Requires Adobe Air (free from get.adobe.com/air)

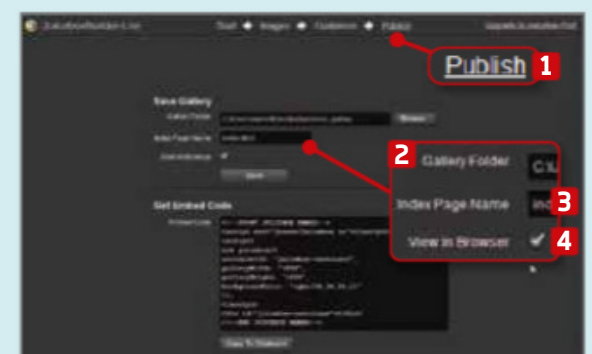
To have full control over how you share your photos online, it's best to host them yourself. Juicebox is a great free tool that lets you build HTML and JavaScript photo galleries offline for uploading to your website.



1 Click the New Gallery button and choose your image source (local photo files or Flickr). If you're using local images, drag them to the box **1** and they appear in the window to the right. **2** If any are incorrectly orientated, click to select them, then use the rotate icon **3** to correct the problem.



2 Click the Customize link **1** and give your gallery a title. **2** You can now make any other changes to its appearance, including the colour of various elements **3** and which buttons are available on the interface. **4** Changes are previewed on the right. **5**



3 Click Publish. **1** Choose where you want to save the page it creates **2** and what you'd like it to be called, **3** then tick the box to open it in a browser, so you can check it. **4** Upload the folder that's created to your website and link to the HTML page you've just made.



What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight

NETFLIX

Watch dystopian adventure *Snowpiercer*

From 25 May

Netflix's latest post-apocalyptic drama is adapted from the acclaimed 2013 film *Snowpiercer*, itself based on a 1982 French graphic novel, *Le Transperceneige* (bit.ly/transp501).

The project was on ice for a few years, which is fitting given its subject matter. It's set on board a high-speed, non-stop bullet train carrying the last few human survivors of a second Ice Age. It may not have reached our screens at all if Bong Joon-ho – who made the 2013 film – hadn't won four Oscars this year for *Parasite*. Suddenly everyone was interested in *Snowpiercer*, and Netflix snapped up the show's international rights.

Like *Parasite*, *Snowpiercer* is a smart comment on social inequality. Elite survivors (including the show's star, Jennifer Connelly) ride at the front of the train, while poor people are relegated to the back.

Ten episodes of *Snowpiercer* arrive on Netflix weekly, after airing on TNT in the US. Watch the trailer at bit.ly/snow501. The 2013 film, which stars Jamie Bell, Chris Evans and Tilda Swinton, is included with Prime Video at bit.ly/snowfilm501.



Watch a new season of Amazon's *Homecoming*

From 22 May

Season 1 of Amazon's psychological chiller was a triumphant TV debut for Julia Roberts in 2018. Now it's back with a new story and a new star, Janelle Monae (*Moonlight*), whose nameless character wakes up with total amnesia in a tiny boat adrift on a lake. Find out who she is and what's going on when 10 new episodes arrive on 22 May at bit.ly/home501, where you can watch the latest trailer and teaser for free. The *Homecoming* podcast, the show's original inspiration, is free to stream and download via bit.ly/homecast501.



Watch Vic Reeves host *The Big Flower Fight*

From 18 May

Vic Reeves may be best known for TV hijinks alongside Bob Mortimer, but he's also an accomplished artist (vicreeves.tv) and a smart choice of co-presenter for this *Bake Off*-style floral showdown.

The show sees 10 pairs of florists, sculptors and garden designers facing off for the chance to create a sculpture for London's Royal Botanic Gardens. Natasia Demetriou (star of sitcom *Stath Lets Flats*) hosts alongside Reeves, and florist Kristen Griffith-Vanderyacht (www.instagram.com/kristengvy) is judge. Watch all eight episodes from 18 May at bit.ly/flower501.



Cast your (unofficial) vote in Eurovision 2020

16 May

Global YouTube show *Eurovision: Europe Shine A Light* is essentially Eurovision without the live audience or TV vote. The [#Eurovision](https://twitter.com/Eurovision) hashtag will dominate social media as viewers worldwide watch all 41 songs and declare "the results from our living room jury". Stream the action live from 8pm on Saturday 16 May via the official Eurovision YouTube channel at bit.ly/euro501, and get updates from eurovision.tv at bit.ly/shine501.



The show will be on the iPlayer as well, but grudgingly. Unlike 46 other broadcasters across Europe and Australia, the BBC has demoted *Europe Shine A Light* to online-only, and given its Eurovision broadcast slot to a nostalgia show hosted by Graham Norton. Nul points, Beeb.

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



N Watch new British crime thriller *White Lines*

From 15 May

After Spanish drama *Money Heist* was a surprise hit, Netflix signed its creator Alex Pina to an exclusive deal. The result is an English-language thriller with a mainly British cast and a cracking trailer (bit.ly/lines501).

Ten-parter *White Lines* kicks off with the discovery of the body of a



Mancunian DJ in the Balearic islands, 20 years after he disappeared. His sister flies out to investigate, and finds herself

confronting murky demons alongside co-stars Daniel Mays and Angela Griffin.

Stream the box set on-demand from 15 May at bit.ly/whitelines501. The four-season show that started it all, *Money Heist*, is also on Netflix at bit.ly/heist501.

In case you missed it...

Something old...

BBC dramas *Doctor Foster* (bit.ly/foster501), *Taboo* (bit.ly/taboo501) and *Dracula* (bit.ly/drac501) are back on the iPlayer to entertain us under



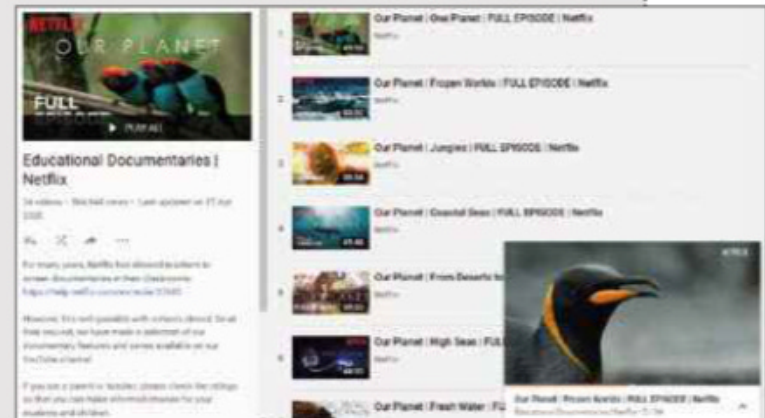
lockdown, along with long-running comedies *My Family* (bit.ly/family501) and *The Kumars at No 42* (bit.ly/kumars501). Both series of Peter Kay's *Car Share* (bit.ly/carshare501) return on 15 May.

Watch Netflix documentaries for free

Netflix has made some of its best documentaries available to watch for free during lockdown via YouTube, including Oscar-winning film *13th* and all eight episodes of David Attenborough's Emmy-winning show *Our Planet*.

Netflix has long allowed teachers to access documentaries for free, to watch in the classroom. But with schools closed, Netflix has made the shows and films free for all via its new Educational Documentaries YouTube playlist (bit.ly/docs501).

Other highlights of the playlist, which has 34 full-length films and episodes at the time of writing, include 2017 ocean documentary *Chasing Coral*, seven episodes of factual series *Explained* and Oscar-winning Syria documentary *The White Helmets*.



Stream a *Springwatch* like no other

From 26 May

Things are a little different for *Springwatch* 2020. As Chris Packham announced in a video on the BBC's *Springwatch* page (bit.ly/watch501), the team has a unique opportunity to document how the UK's wildlife has thrived while most of us humans have been made to stay indoors.

There'll be no outside broadcast, of course, but Packham, Iolo Williams and Gillian Burke will all present from their homes (no Michaela Strachan because



she's locked down in South Africa). You can stream episodes nightly via the iPlayer for three weeks from 26 May, and follow live webcams on YouTube at bit.ly/springtube501.

BritBox (www.britbox.co.uk) has added classic ITV children's shows *Press Gang* and *The Worst Witch*, plus 10 *Thunderbirds* episodes and the pilot films of *Captain Scarlet*, *Joe 90* and *Stingray*.

...And something new New on Netflix are Michelle Obama's film documentary *Becoming* (bit.ly/obama501); true-crime series *Trial by Media* (bit.ly/trial501); and an interactive *Unbreakable Kimmy*

Schmidt film special, 'Kimmy vs the Reverend' (bit.ly/kimmy501).

All 4 has added animated *Batman* spin-off *Harley Quinn* (bit.ly/harley501), plus new episodes of *Outlander* (Season 4, first shown on Amazon Prime) and *Rick and Morty* (Season 4b, bit.ly/morty501).

Star Wars: Rise of Skywalker is now on Now TV, with a Sky Cinema Pass, and also on Disney+. It arrived, inevitably, on "May the 4th".



Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

External SSDs

We've tested five robust, portable and affordable hard drives to add superfast storage to your PC

We usually think of SSDs (solid-state drives) as internal hard drives, permanently installed in our PCs to help Windows and other programs launch at lightning speed. However, as capacities have gone up and prices have come down, there's no reason why the technology can't be used to bring the same speed benefits to external devices, and these affordable portable SSDs are just the ticket.

The nippy, robust drives plug into a USB port on your PC, just like a regular external hard drive, and need no external power source, so you can use them at home or throw them into a bag and carry them around with you.

HOW WE TESTED

We tested the performance of the external SSDs with two standard benchmarking programs: AS SSD (www.alex-is.de) and ATTO (www.atto.com/disk-benchmark).

We also ran our own real-world speed tests to see each drive in action and discover which SSD performed best. This test involved transferring 500MB packages of different types and sizes of files to and from each device. You can see how each portable drive performed in our tables, opposite.

SanDisk Extreme Pro 500GB | £131.99 |
Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/sandisk501

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

WebUser
GOLD
AWARD

SanDisk's USB Type-C drive is made from aluminium, has a sturdy rubber exterior and includes a hook that can clip to a belt or bag. Its IP55 rating means it's protected from impacts, water splashes and dust. At 9mm thick and weighing 78g, it's very portable.

It's also extremely fast. Its AS SSD read and write speeds of 941MB/s and 861MB/s are the best in this group and it beat all the others in the ATTO test, too. In our real-world test, it performed just as well, taking between 13 and 15 seconds to read our challenging mix of files. Writing the same set of files took between 16 and 27 seconds. Again, these were the best results in the group.

The drive's price matches its performance, working out to 28p per GB, which is more expensive than all the others. However, we think it's worth it for the increased speed.

VERDICT

★★★★★

Robust, fast and reliable, the SanDisk Extreme Pro 500GB outperformed every other SSD in our tests. You have to pay a bit more per GB to get the performance but, if you can afford the best, then why settle for less?

Samsung T7 Touch 1TB | £193.99
Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/samsung501

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

WebUser
SILVER
AWARD

The T7 is the only drive we tested with AES 256-bit encryption. It has a fingerprint reader that works flawlessly to secure and unlock the device, and lets you store four profiles at once. Despite the extra hardware, it's the slimmest drive we tested at 8mm. It also looks sleek, with a robust and attractive metal case.

It's a good performer, too. Its AS SSD read and write speeds of 849MB/s and 678MB/s are top-notch, coming second only to the SanDisk Extreme Pro. The T7's ATTO benchmark results were close to SanDisk's, and it performed well in our real world tests, too. Its only weakness came when handling very small files. In both AS SSD and ATTO's relevant benchmarks, the T7's pace fell to middling. But this is a minor issue.

The 1TB drive costs £193.99, which works out to 21p per GB. While that makes it more expensive than the smaller Sandisk drive, it's significantly better value overall.

VERDICT

★★★★★

The Samsung external SSD is impressive: fast, sturdy and slim, with excellent security. Its built-in encryption is the best we've seen, but even if you're not bothered about security, this device offers excellent value for money.

Seagate One Touch 500GB | £106.26

Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/seagate501

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

**WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD**

The Seagate One Touch is available in a range of colours, including this bold camo design. It's compact, weighs 65g and is solid enough to survive travelling between home and office. The only drawback is its reliance on a micro-USB port, which is older and less useful than the USB Type-C ports used elsewhere.



The drive's speed results were in the middle of the table in most of our tests, including the ATTO benchmark. Its AS SSD read and write speeds of 414MB/s and 370MB/s outpace the weaker WD My Passport Go, but the read speeds were close. In our real-world tests of 500MB of files, its read times peaked at 17.5 seconds but its write times languished at 67.4 seconds. Only the WD drive was slower, but only in the read tests.

The Seagate One Touch's price works out to 23p per GB.

VERDICT

★★★★★

The Seagate may not have set our benchmarks alight but it's a worthy Bronze Award-winner, offering affordable, reliable storage. It's faster than the WD My Passport Go and more robust than the Adata.

WD My Passport Go 500GB | £77.48

Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/wd501

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

The My Passport Go may be the cheapest SSD in this group, but it looks good and has a rubber exterior to make it more resistant to being dropped. The full-size USB 3.1 connector is permanently attached, with a cavity on the back to store it, so you'll never have to hunt around for the cable. However, it means you can't connect it to USB Type-C ports without an adapter.



The WD's AS SSD read and write speeds of 412MB/s and 241MB/s lagged behind most of the other drives in this group, as did most of its other benchmark scores. It was also disappointing in our real-world tests. Read speeds weren't too far behind rivals but the write speeds dragged it down - it took between 75 and 97 seconds to write 500MB of files, with every other drive bettering 68 seconds.

VERDICT

★★★★★

The My Passport Go is an affordable external SSD with a practical and attractive design. However, its sluggish speeds make it hard to recommend unless you are on a tight budget.

Adata SC680 480GB | £97.76

Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/adata501

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

The SC680 is the lightest SSD and one of the smallest in this test. It costs more per GB than the larger Samsung device but is cheaper overall thanks to its reduced capacity. Conveniently, it comes with two cables, so you can connect its USB Type-C port to either USB Type-C or regular USB ports. However, there are no encryption features and its exterior is flimsy compared to the cases of its rivals.



In our real-world tests, it took less than 15 seconds to read 500MB of files, which is one of the best scores in this group, and its write speeds were close to Samsung's. It peaked when reading smaller files. It didn't perform so well in the benchmark tests, though, and in the AS SSD benchmark, it produced the slowest read speed of 343MB/s. Its write speeds put it in the middle of the group but we prefer to recommend SSDs that are consistently fast.

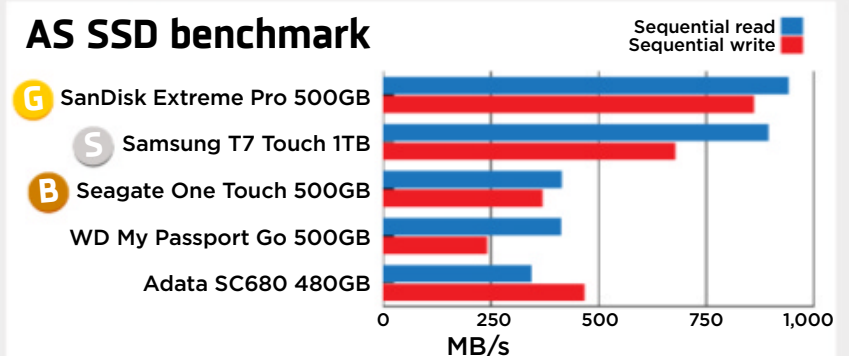
VERDICT

★★★★★

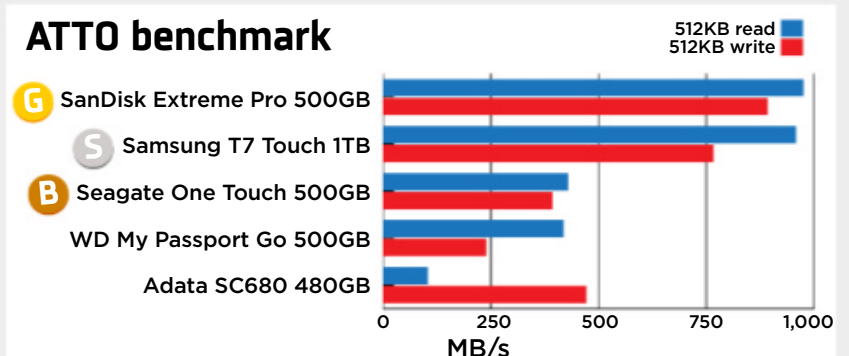
The Adata SC680 may not be the slowest drive in every department but its inconsistency across our tests placed it behind its rivals. We weren't fond of the enclosure, either, which feels less robust than the other drives we tested.

TEST-RESULTS CHARTS

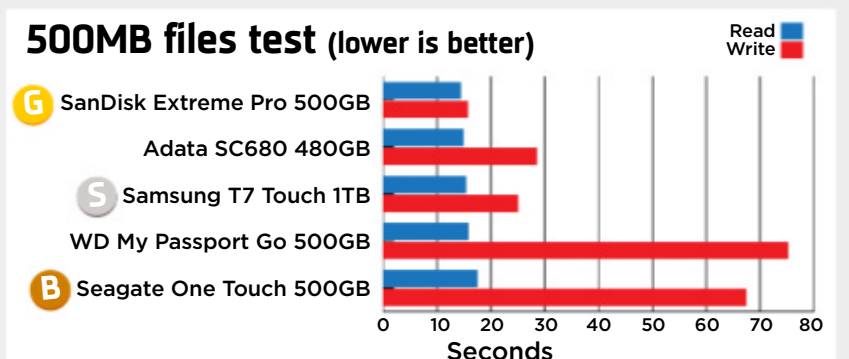
AS SSD benchmark



ATTO benchmark



500MB files test (lower is better)





Group Test External SSDs

	 WebUser GOLD AWARD	 WebUser SILVER AWARD	 WebUser BRONZE AWARD		
	SanDisk Extreme Pro 500GB	Samsung T7 Touch 1TB	Seagate One Touch 500GB	WD My Passport Go 500GB	Adata SC680 480GB
WEBSITE	bit.ly/sand501	www.samsung.com	www.seagate.com	shop.westerndigital.com	www.adata.com
PRICE	£131.99	£193.99	£106.26	£77.48	£97.76
BUY FROM AMAZON	bit.ly/sandisk501	bit.ly/samsung501	bit.ly/seagate501	bit.ly/wd501	bit.ly/adata501
FORMATTED CAPACITY	465GB	931GB	465GB	465GB	447GB
PRICE PER USABLE GB	28p	21p	23p	17p	22p
CONNECTION	USB Type-C	USB Type-C	micro-USB	USB 3.1	USB Type-C
OTHER CAPACITIES	1TB, 2TB	500GB, 2TB	1TB	1TB	240GB, 960GB, 1.92TB
DIMENSIONS	96 x 50 x 9mm	85 x 57 x 8mm	75 x 56 x 10mm	95 x 67 x 10mm	87 x 61 x 10mm
WEIGHT	78g	58g	65g	54g	35g
WARRANTY	Three-years return-to-base	Three-years return-to-base	Three-years return-to-base	Three-years return-to-base	Three-years return-to-base

OUR VERDICT

We gave our Gold Award to the SanDisk Extreme Pro 500GB. This superfast SSD drive outperformed every other device in our tests, as well as being robust and reliable. However, great performance doesn't come cheap and it was the most expensive drive we tested in terms of price per GB. We still think it's worth it, though.

For better value for money, look to our Silver Award-winner, the Samsung T7 Touch. Its superlative built-in encryption tools include a fingerprint reader, and the device came in the top half of our performance tests. It's truly superb value for money.

The Seagate One Touch won our Bronze Award. It's a more affordable 500GB alternative to the SanDisk drive but just as portable and robust, if not as fast. ■



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BuyaCar offers a free delivery and 2-year warranty service for key workers in light of the growing Coronavirus pandemic.



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24-Month Warranty – Worth £698

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Terms and conditions apply. To see full statement visit <https://www.buyacar.co.uk/cars/1730/buyacar-offers-free-delivery-and-warranties-to-key-workers> Dennis Buyacar Ltd, 31-32 Alfred Place, London, WC1E 7DP (GB09151058) (FRN:667368) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Dennis Buyacar Ltd is a credit broker and not a lender.



Web User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE, SOFTWARE & SERVICES

EXTERNAL SSD

SanDisk Extreme Pro 500GB

£131.99 from bit.ly/sandisk501

Tested: Issue 501

Robust, fast and reliable, the SanDisk Extreme Pro 500GB outperformed every other SSD in our tests. You pay a bit more per GB but, if you can afford the best, then why settle for less?

KEY SPECS

465GB formatted capacity ■ 28p per usable gigabyte ■ Also available in 1TB and 2TB capacities ■ USB Type-C connection ■ 96 x 50 x 9mm ■ 78g ■ Three-years return-to-base warranty ■ Sturdy and attractive design



NEW!

FITNESS WATCH

Xiaomi Mi Smart Band 4

£25.98 from bit.ly/xiaomi499

Tested: Issue 499

The Xiaomi Mi Smart Band 4's colourful screen and excellent battery life mean you won't need to charge it more than a couple of times a month. For the low price, it's extraordinarily good value for money.

KEY SPECS

Pedometer ■ Heart-rate monitor ■ Sleep tracking ■ GPS from phone (Android or iOS) ■ Waterproof to depth of 50m ■ 240 x 120 pixels resolution ■ 0.95in AMOLED display ■ 20-days battery life ■ 22.1g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty



INTERNET SECURITY SUITE

Bitdefender Internet Security 2020

£14.99 (1 year, 3 devices) from bit.ly/bitdef497

Tested: Issue 497

This superb security suite's one-stop all-round package can't be beaten. It's lightweight, easy to use, loaded with features and scored 100% for malware protection in our tests.

KEY SPECS

Malicious-website detection ■ Secure browser ■ Browser extension ■ Anti-ransomware ■ Parental controls ■ Firewall ■ Password manager ■ Home-network scanner ■ Secure file deletion ■ File encryption ■ VPN - 200MB of data per day



MONITOR

BenQ BL2780T

£209.97 from bit.ly/benq495

Tested: Issue 495

This BenQ monitor offers impressive screen quality, with excellent contrast and colours, for a reasonable price. It has a good selection of ports and is height adjustable. You can even rotate it by 90 degrees to use in portrait mode.

KEY SPECS

27in screen ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 5 milliseconds response time ■ 1 x DisplayPort, 1 x HDMI, 1 x VGA ports ■ 2 x audio outputs ■ 2 x 2W speakers ■ 547 x 512 x 231mm ■ 7.2kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty



MINI PC

Raspberry Pi 4 Model B

£34 from 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

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



Gold Award winners

The best from our software tests

EBOOK SOFTWARE

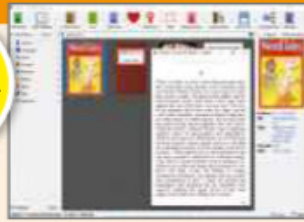
Calibre

Free from calibre-ebook.com

Tested: Issue 500

Calibre can import any ebook file, so whatever format your books are saved in, it can turn them into documents you can read on your PC screen.

NEW!



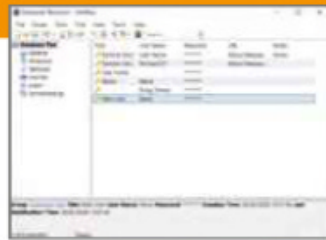
PASSWORD MANAGER

KeePass

Free from keepass.info

Tested: Issue 499

Available in desktop and portable versions, KeePass is a no-nonsense password-management and security tool for both casual and heavy web users.



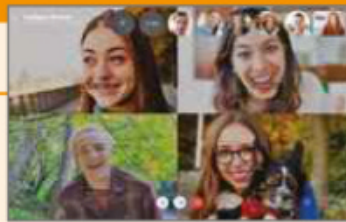
VIDEO-CHAT APP

Skype

Free from www.skype.com

Tested: Issue 498

Skype is still the best solid all-rounder for video chats. It's easy to find and add contacts, and you can send written messages and make free voice calls.



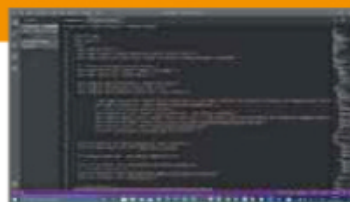
CODE EDITOR

Visual Studio Code

Free from code.visualstudio.com

Tested: Issue 497

Visual Studio Code offers amateur developers everything they need to get a project off the ground, regardless of coding experience. A clutter-free design makes it very easy to use.



DRIVER UPDATER

IObit Driver Booster Free

Free from bit.ly/driboo496

Tested: Issue 496

IObit's slick-looking driver updater makes it simple to root out ageing drivers, and install new ones individually or in one go. If anything goes wrong, it's easy to roll them back again.



IMAGE VIEWER

FastStone

Free from bit.ly/faststone495

Tested: Issue 495

FastStone Image Viewer is a streamlined, incredibly capable tool that's easy to use but surprisingly sophisticated. You'll want to use this portable image viewer wherever you go.



WebUser

BACK ISSUES DISC 2019



Our **2019 Back Issues Disc** containing all 26 issues from last year is now on sale from Amazon

For more information, visit bit.ly/webuser2019 or search for 'webuser disc'

You can still buy our 2014-2018 Back Issues Discs
Search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon



Best Free Software

FAMILY-TREE CREATOR

My Family Tree 10

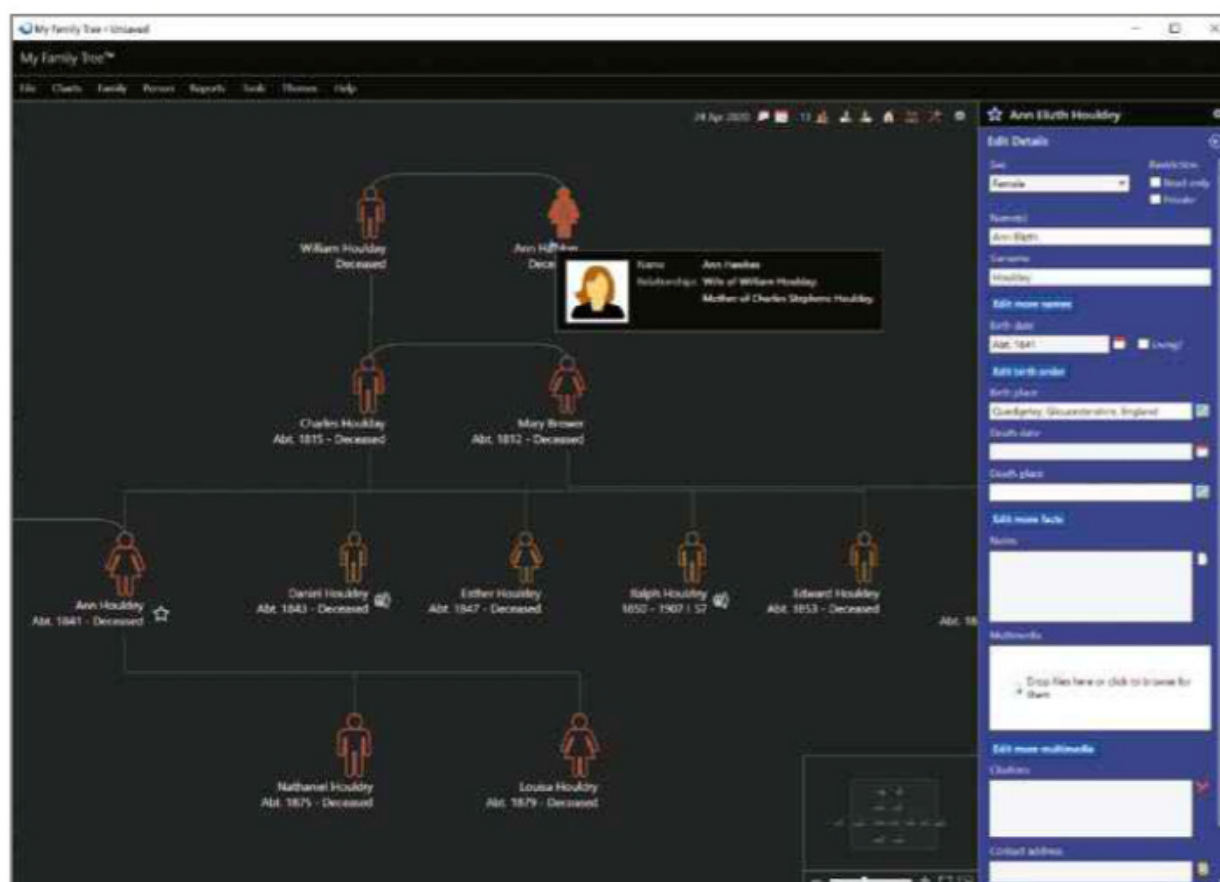
chronoplexsoftware.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 7.2MB

Tracking down ancestors and compiling a family tree can be a hugely rewarding pastime. While you will certainly take wrong turns and run into dead ends as you go further back in time, discovering exciting new ancestors and unexpected branches of your tree can be a thrill.

My Family Tree doesn't have any tools for researching your history – you'll need a service such as Ancestry.co.uk for that – but it does include everything you need to build your tree, check for possible errors and add notes, photos, videos and audio clips for each family member. The software also includes tools for sorting and browsing through family data, and for exploring graphs



showing details such as your ancestors' age, sex and living status.

This latest version of My Family Tree includes a number of new features and improvements, but the headline addition is the interactive Fan chart (see Step 3 of our Workshop, below), which is accessed via the Charts menu and provides an interesting and attractive new way to explore your tree.

The updated software also adds support for other kinds of family relationships and types of marriage, and

lets you merge duplicate entries.

There's also a new progeny report, which displays an ancestor and their descendants in a list; and you can add relationships directly from the charts and build a skeletal tree using placeholders when in either the Fan or Ancestors view. Finally, My Family Tree 10 can handle additional GEDCOM (Genealogical Data Communication) extensions.

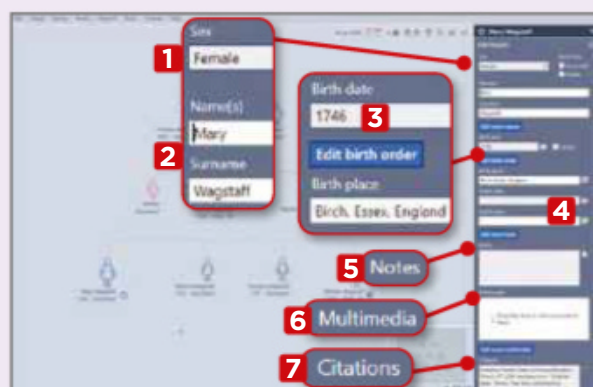
There are 32- and 64-bit versions of the program available.



MINI WORKSHOP | Build a family tree with My Family Tree 10



1 Run My Family Tree and you'll be presented with options for starting a new family tree, opening an existing one or importing a tree in GEDCOM format. To add a new family member to a tree, select any existing person **1** and use the drop-down menu to create a relationship. **2**

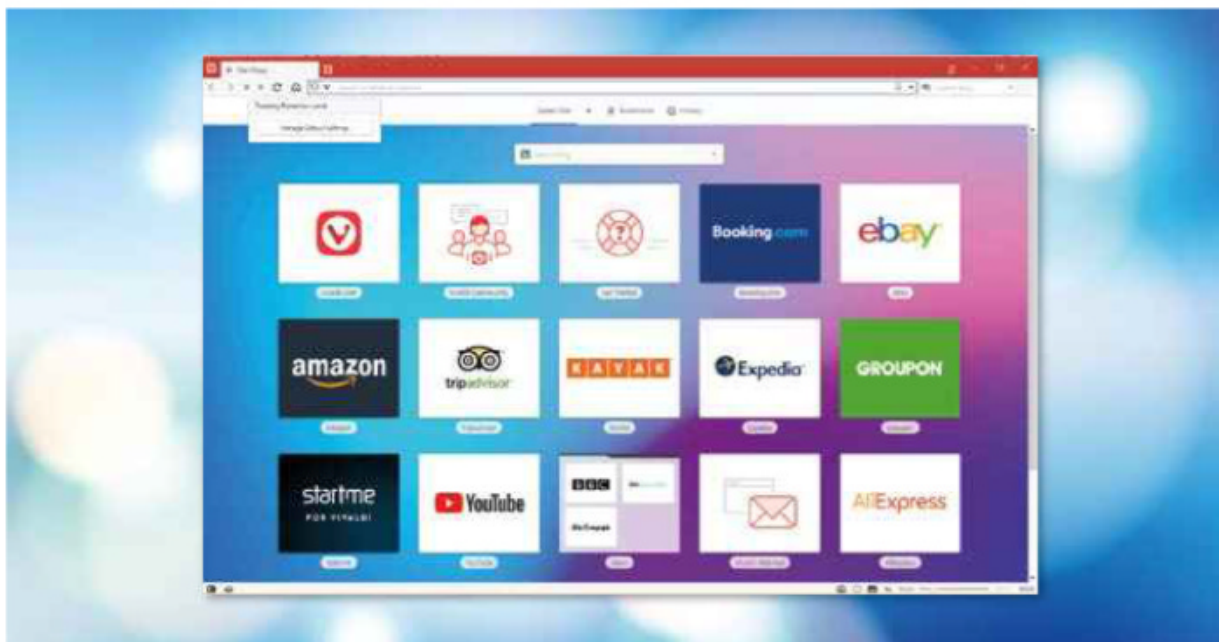


2 Fill in details about each person in your tree. This can include their sex, **1** name(s), **2** birth date and place, **3** and death date and place. **4** You can also add notes **5** and multimedia files. **6** Adding citations **7** will help you know where each piece of information was sourced from when checking back.



3 The new Fan view can be found under Charts. **1** The family member you're focused on appears in the centre, **2** with previous generations occupying concentric rings moving outwards. **3** Hover over any ancestor to see information about them. **4** You can add spouses and parents by clicking a plus sign, **5** and zoom in and out with the slider. **6**

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



WEB BROWSER

Vivaldi 3

vivaldi.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 60.3MB

Vivaldi is a Chromium-based web browser, developed by the former CEO of Opera, that's rapidly growing in popularity. This major update comes with a built-in ad blocker and a tracker blocker (from DuckDuckGo) to stop you being followed on the web. There's a customisable clock in the status bar and the pop-out video (picture-in-picture) feature gains extra functionality. Navigating links on a web page using your keyboard (which Vivaldi calls spatial navigation) has been improved, too.

New Windows 10 App

Windows Notepad

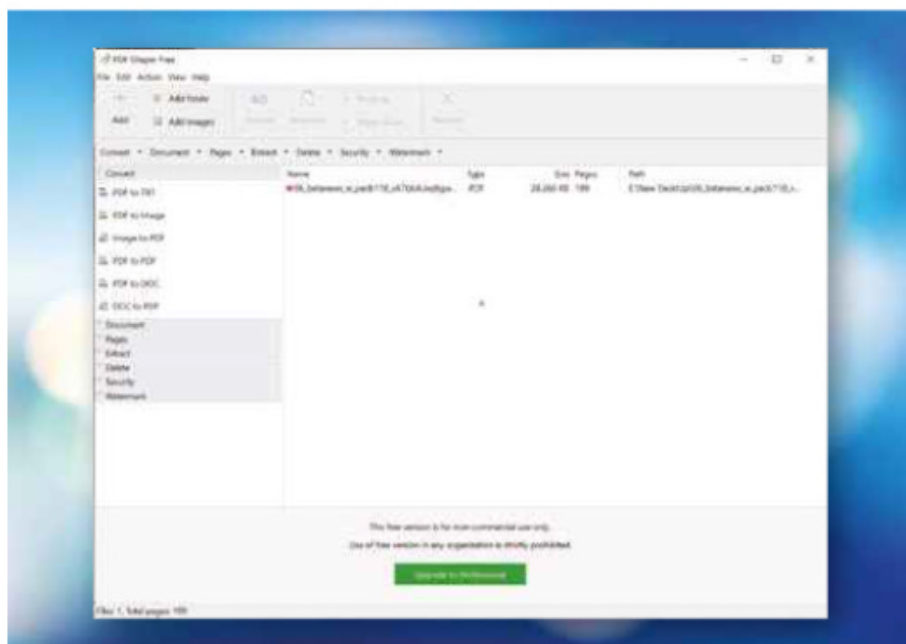
bit.ly/notepad501

File size: 3.2MB

Microsoft added an app version of Notepad to its online store last August, then mysteriously pulled it. Now, the text editor is back in the Microsoft Store and



adds a number of new features, such as wrap-around find and replace, text zooming, line numbers with word-wrap and improved performance when opening large files. It also supports the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+Backspace to delete the previous word, and correctly displays lines that don't fit entirely on the screen.



PDF TOOLKIT

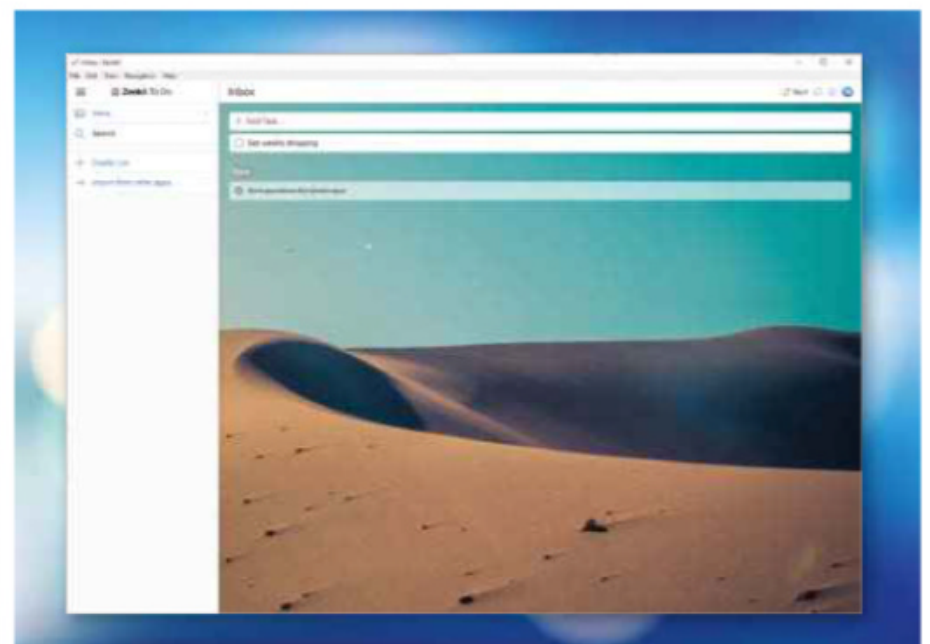
PDF Shaper 10

www.pdfshaper.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 6MB

PDF Shaper's collection of tools lets you split or merge PDF files, rotate and crop pages, extract text or images, edit metadata, add a watermark and convert PDFs to JPEGs (and vice versa) or to text. The latest version introduces two tools – Rename and Extract Text (CSV) – and a new Menubar view style. There's also an option to place the sidebar on the left. Make sure you decline the bundled junk during installation.



TO DO MANAGER

Zenkit To Do

zenkit.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10, macOS or Linux

File size: 34.4MB

Microsoft has shut down Wunderlist, but if you don't fancy switching to its To Do app, one alternative is Zenkit To Do. Available for all the major platforms, it makes it easy to add and import tasks, favourite and share items, set due dates and reminders, and more. The free version includes 500MB of attachment space and limits you to 80 lists, 20 folders and 2,400 tasks. The powerful Plus version costs £3.26 a month.

SYSTEM CLEANER

BleachBit 4

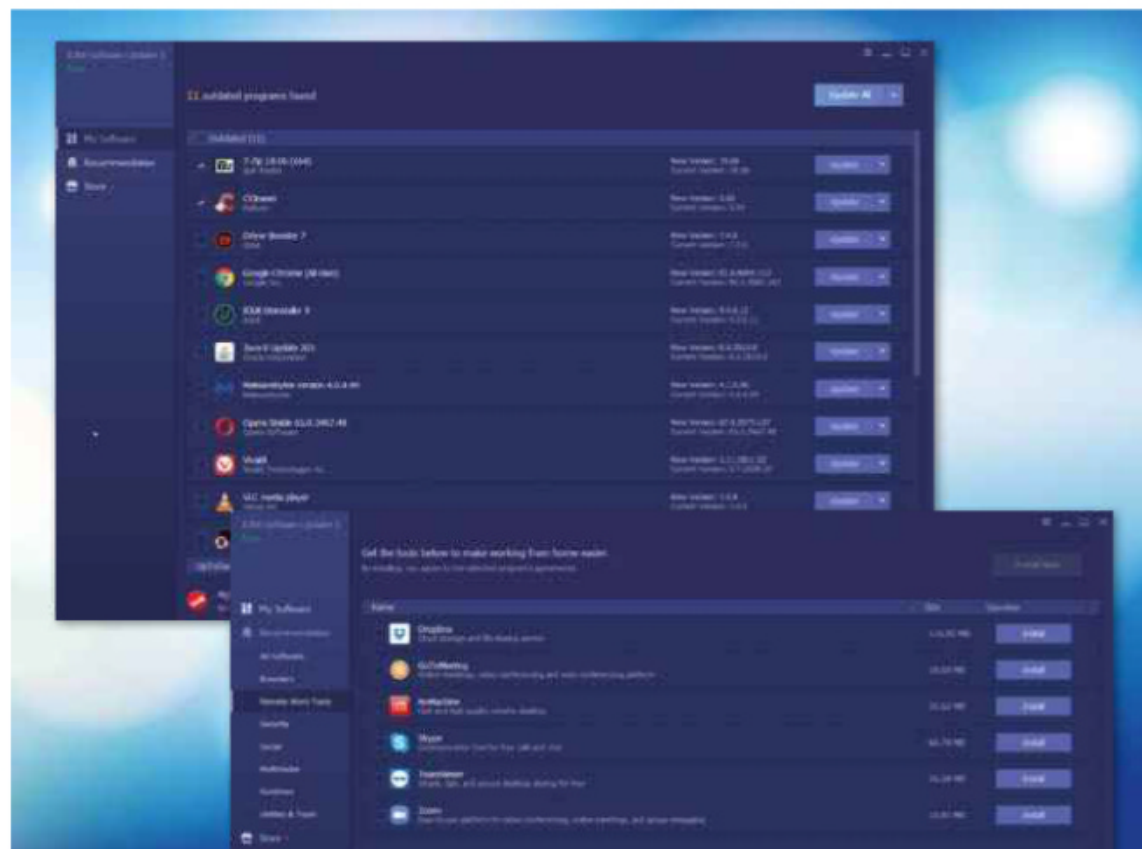
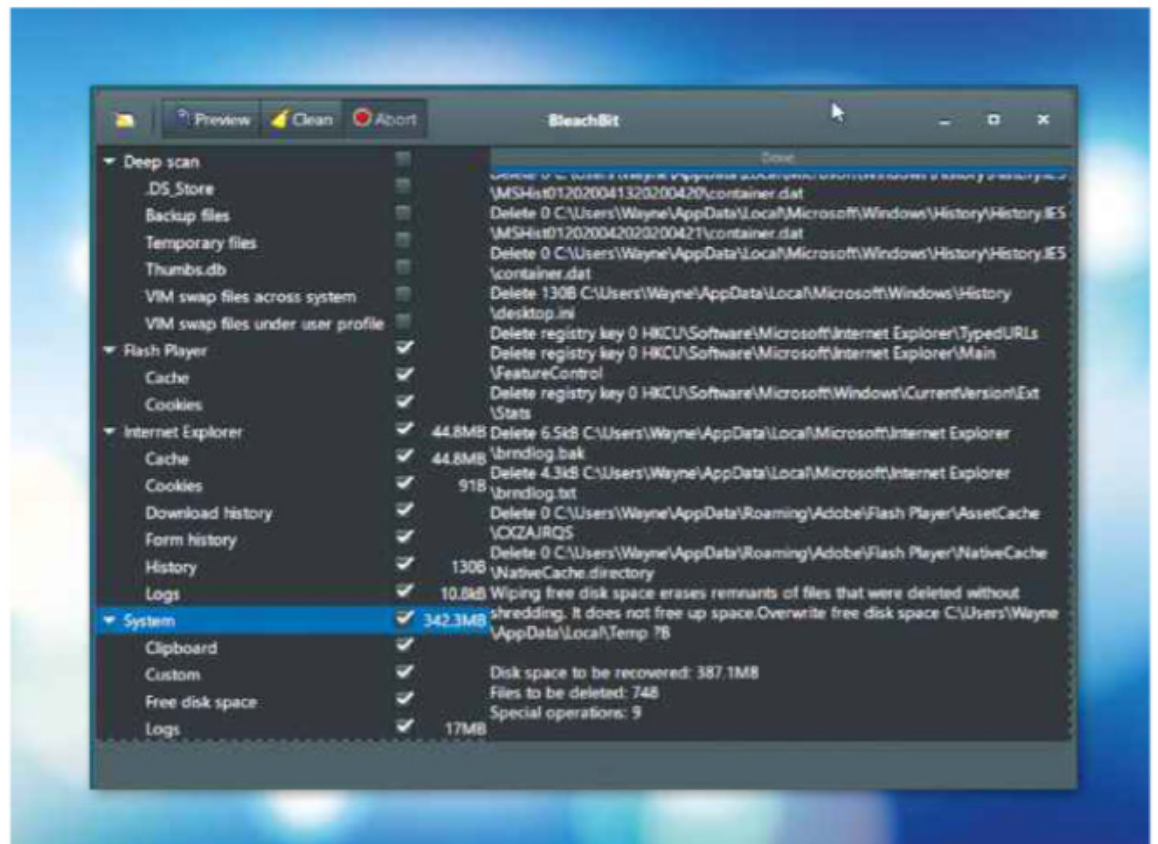
www.bleachbit.org

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 or Linux

File size: 12.2MB

BleachBit is an excellent open-source system cleaner that removes junk files from your PC, frees up space and protects your privacy by securely shredding personal files to prevent them from being recovered. To use the free tool, simply select some areas of your hard drive to target (deep scan, system, Windows Defender, Windows Explorer and so on), click the Preview button to see the results and click Clean to remove the selected items.

This new release runs on Python 3 (instead of Python 2) and can clean more areas of Chrome, Firefox, Opera and other programs. There are optional Windows 10 dark and light themes, too.



SOFTWARE UPDATER

IObit Software Updater 3

www.iobit.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 11.8MB

It's important to keep your installed software up to date so you have access to the latest features and can get fixes for certain bugs and security issues. IObit Software Updater saves you having to update programs manually by listing any applications that have a new version available. You can update them all with the click of a button or just choose individual ones to download. You can also install a range of popular applications from scratch. This new release has a much larger program database and includes a Remote Work Tools section that updates Dropbox, TeamViewer, Skype and Zoom, for people working from home.

SYSTEM TOOL

SharpApp

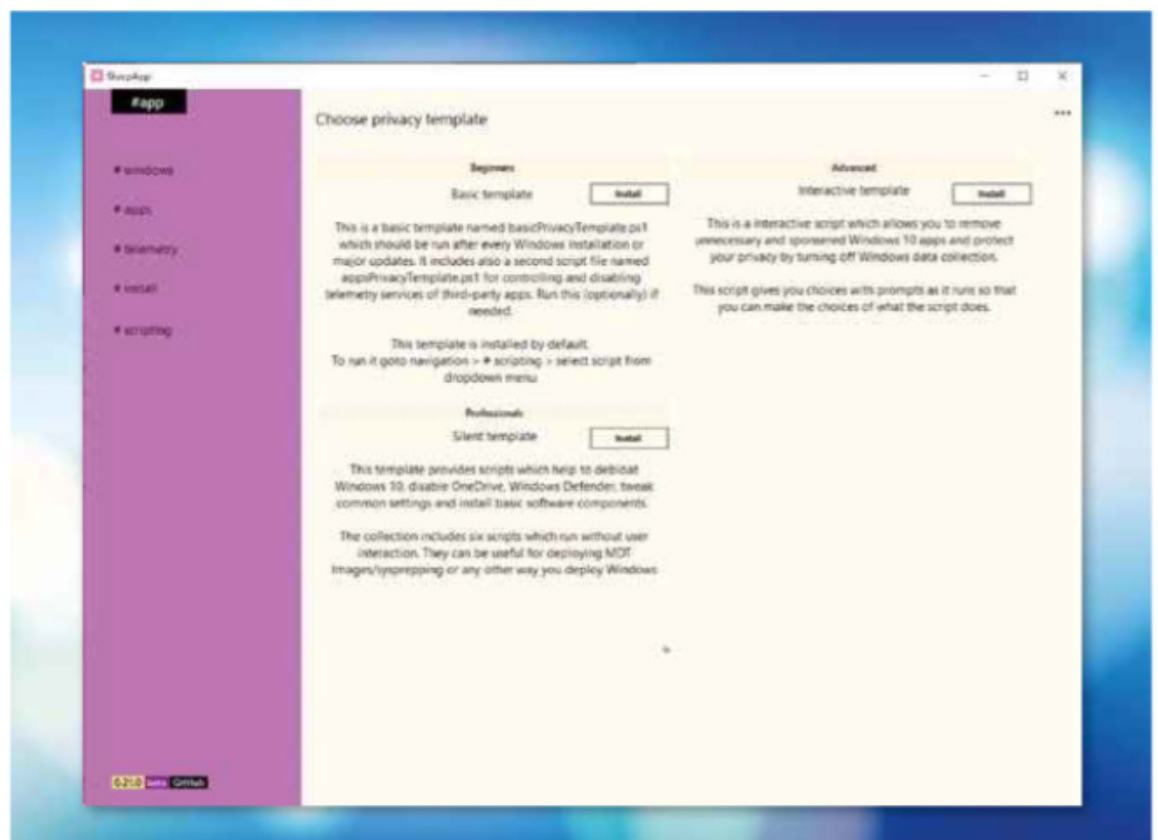
bit.ly/sharp501

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 1.2MB

Debotnet (see our workshop on page 54) is a free tool for managing Windows 10's many privacy settings. SharpApp offers a user-friendly interface that provides access to various tweaking options. Select one of its three privacy templates – Beginner, Advanced or Professional – to launch various community-powered scripts that block data gathering and uninstall unwanted apps.

Alternatively, you can manually choose which apps to remove, block IP addresses used for gathering telemetry and run PowerShell scripts. Support for Ninite (ninite.com) lets you install more than 70 popular Windows applications.





GAME

VHS 1986

bit.ly/vhs1986-501

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 52MB

This short but spooky horror game involves you watching a series of VHS tapes. Choose a tape to view from the shelf and then drop it into the VHS player. Tapes can be played, paused, fast forwarded and rewind. Regular phone calls advance the plot, and there's a mysterious poster on the wall that you can interact with, which provides clues that link to the footage.

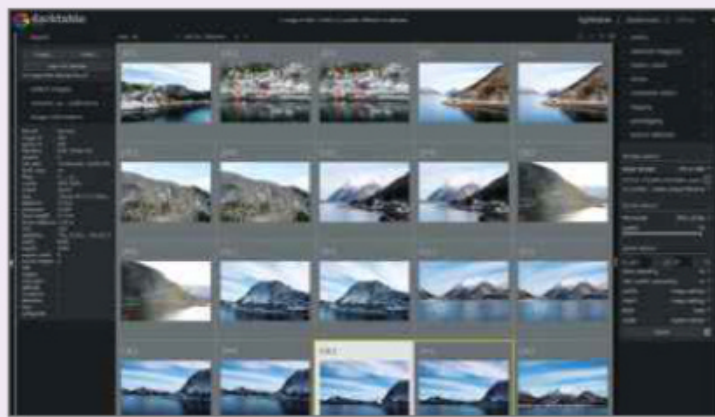
✓ Install this program...

Darktable

www.darktable.org

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10, macOS or Linux **File size:** 69MB

Darktable is a sophisticated photo editor and manager, similar to Adobe Lightroom but open-source and entirely free. It offers RAW processing, non-destructive editing (so you can make changes to a photo without overwriting the original), professional colour-management, 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 use Darktable's 'tethered shooting' to see shots from certain models of camera on your screen before you press the button to take them.



...Not this one ✗

Photo Ninja

picturecode.com

Min requirements:

Windows 7/8+/10 or macOS

File size: 20.7MB

Like Darktable, Photo Ninja offers processing of RAW images, features lots of useful editing tools, has an attractive Lightroom-style interface and is available for both Windows and macOS. The main difference is that it will set you back a whopping \$129 (£103) after a two-week trial, whereas Darktable is completely free.



OTHER OPERATING SYSTEMS

What's new for Linux and macOS



LINUX DISTRO

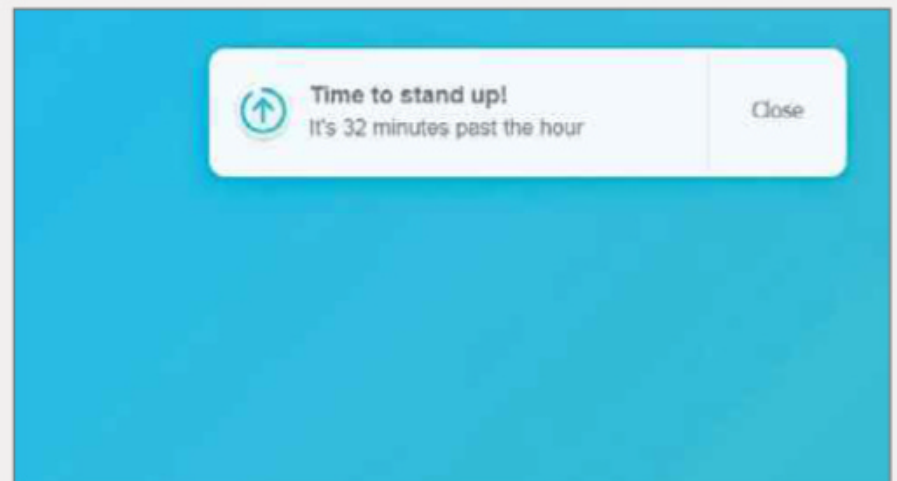
Ubuntu Linux 20.04 LTS 'Focal Fossa'

www.ubuntu.com

Min requirements: 4GB RAM, 25GB drive space

File size: 2.5GB

It's always big news when Canonical releases a new version of Ubuntu, one of the world's most popular Linux distros. Ubuntu 20.04 LTS (Long Term Support) will be supported for the next five years and comes with a refreshed theme, updated applications, kernel self-protection measures and Secure Boot to protect against low-level attacks and rootkits. It also supports Fast ID Online (FIDO) for universal multi-factor and passwordless authentication.



REMINDER APP

Stand 2

getstandapp.com

Min requirements: macOS 10.15+ Catalina

File size: 2.55MB

It's easy to lose track of time when you're using your Mac - whether you're working, browsing the web or just messing around, a few minutes can quickly turn into a couple of hours. Stand 2 is a simple app that reminds you to stretch your legs once an hour. Choose a time, and the app will remind you hourly when you should take a break.

Stand 2 runs in the background, offers built-in notifications and includes full support for dark mode.

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Best New Browser Tools

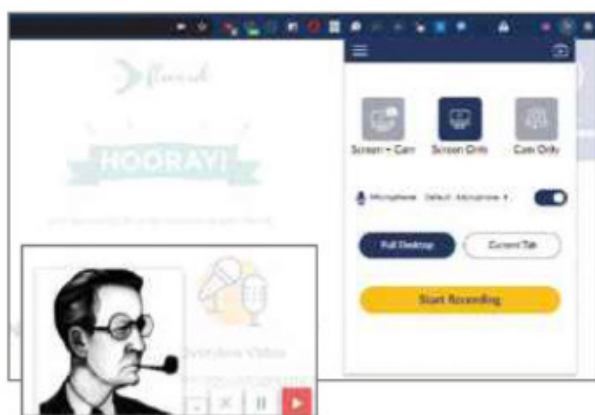
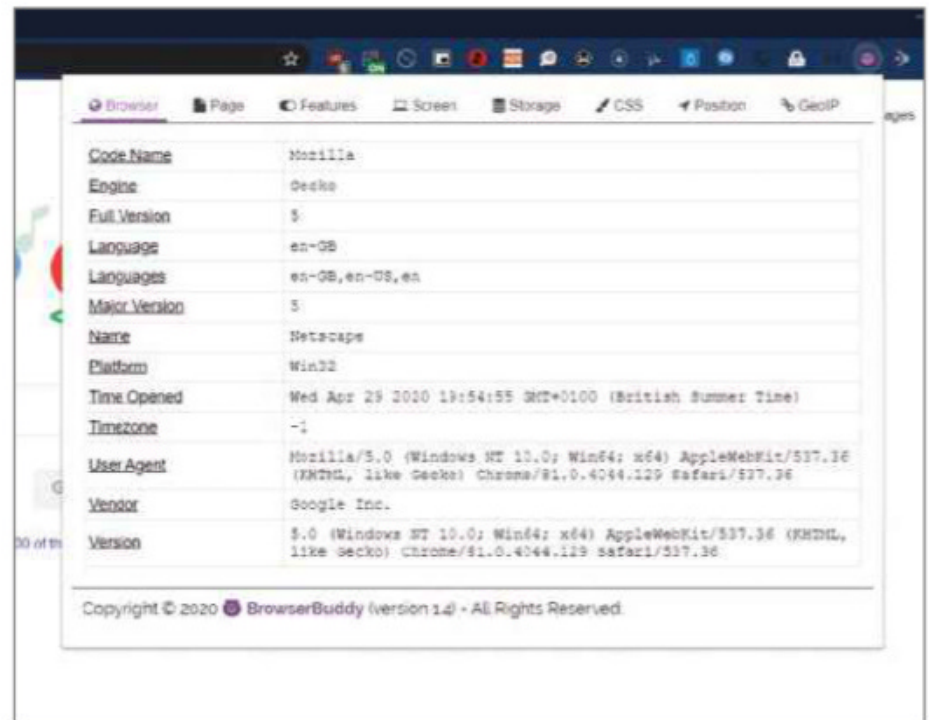


CHROME

Discover what data you're leaking online

The moment you open your browser, you're leaking data, which means companies such as Google have access to all kinds of information including your location, the device you're using and your IP address. Naturally, there's not much you can do about this without applying stringent security measures, but you can at least see exactly what information is being drip-fed through your browser by using Browser Buddy (bit.ly/buddy501). This extension requires absolutely no setup and, with one click, you can instantly check "all the data available about you when you browse a page".

Click Browser Buddy's toolbar button to view the basic data, such as languages and times, then click each of the other seven tabs for details of other leaked information, including browser features, your device's screen resolution and much more. Some of the data leans more towards the technical, but Browser Buddy gives a clear overview of your information (and shows how plentiful data leakage is).



Record your screen, webcam and audio

Fluvid (bit.ly/fluvid501) offers a simple way to capture what's on your screen, with no technical wizardry required. Get started by signing up with either your Gmail or Facebook account, then granting the browser tool access to your microphone and camera.

Next, click the add-on's toolbar button to prepare your recording. Here, you can select to capture your screen and camera, or either the screen or camera separately. You're also free to toggle between mics, cams and whether to record the full desktop or only your current tab, and you can manage your videos by clicking the boxed Play button. It's as easy as that.

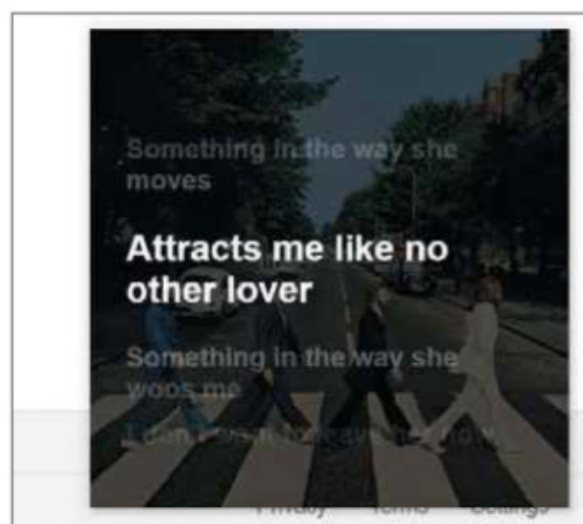
Add lyrics to Spotify songs

Long-time Spotify subscribers may remember that the service used to

include lyrics with its songs. Later, the company removed these, replacing them with VH1 Behind the Music-style 'fun facts'. This always seemed like an odd decision, so we're pleased to see Spotify Lyrics (bit.ly/slyric501) bringing the words back.

The feature, which only works in the Spotify Web Player (sorry, app users), lets you pick your top tracks, then select Spotify's picture-in-picture mode. Traditionally, this mode offers album artwork and playback controls, but Spotify Lyrics adds text in a karaoke style, displaying the next few lines in advance.

The developer admits that not every song is covered, and that some lyrics may be incorrect. However, in our tests, the add-on was bang on.

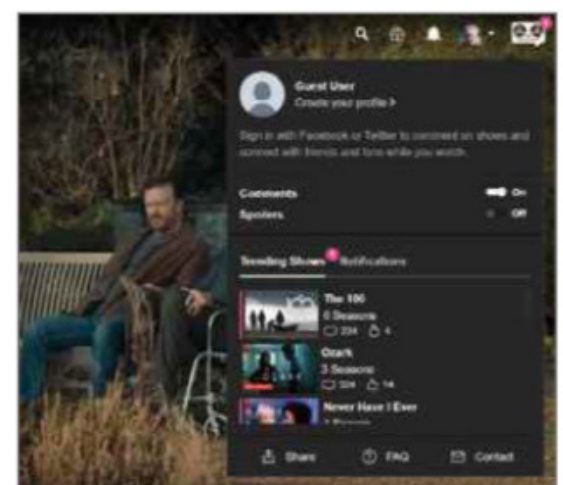


Get social with Netflix

Here's an interesting idea: imagine Netflix, then tack on social media-style elements, such as likes, dislikes and comments. This is what Wiretap delivers (bit.ly/wiretap501).

With the add-on installed, head to netflix.com. An introductory pop-up box shows the most popular shows and movies to comment on. You're free to switch comments on or off as you please. Even more welcome is the ability to toggle spoilers on and off, too.

Once you're signed into both the extension and Netflix, press Play on anything and, to the right-hand side, you'll see a comment box to provide your opinions and observations, or read those of other users. It's like having a watch party with strangers.



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



FIREFOX

Enlarge pictures by hovering

The Photo Show (bit.ly/photoshow501) add-on for Firefox is an absolute must-have for anyone tired of squinting at tiny images on their screen. Just visit a site containing photos and hover your mouse over an image. The picture will pop out, displaying a larger version, so you don't have to open it in a new tab or a dedicated photo viewer to get a good look.

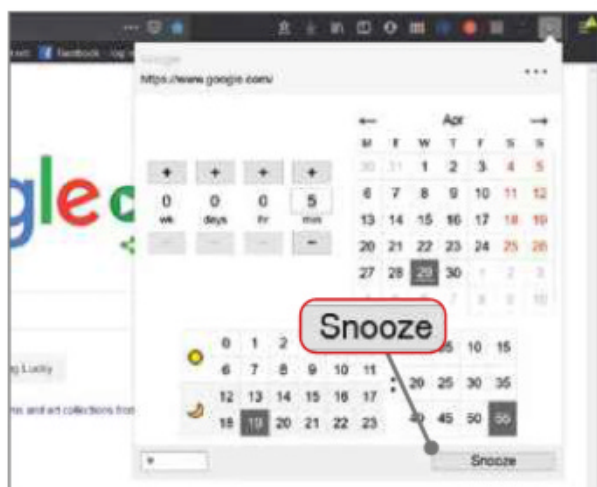


We tested it on Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia and a handful of random websites, and got good results. However, the extension didn't work on Google Images, although it did on Bing Images. The previews vary depending on the original size of the image, but as a simple tool with no setup or signup required, it did the job admirably. It's surprising that this feature isn't built directly into browsers.

Snooze tabs for later

Extensions that attempt to block distracting websites can be a mixed bag. While some are too lenient to be effective, others feel overly restrictive, locking you out of key sites. Snooze Master (bit.ly/snooze501) is a slightly different beast. It doesn't auto-block websites and pages but, instead, lets you 'snooze' tabs. This makes it more useful than a standard distraction killer because it can also be used to remind you to revisit a tab later – such as when you've finished working or are ready to prepare for an upcoming birthday.

Clicking the add-on's toolbar button opens a handy timer that spans minutes, days, weeks and even years. You can also snooze multiple tabs. Once set, watch the tab disappear, only to return after the allotted time.



Add word games to Wikipedia

Wikipedia is a site of a million lost hours that lets you plunge down rabbit hole after rabbit hole in pursuit of knowledge (or, at least, general trivia). Now, you can spice up your browsing with WikiCros (bit.ly/wikicross501). This add-on uses any Wikipedia page as the basis of a series of word games. So, if you've ever wanted to play a word search based on, say, the Kakogawa Steel Works, you can.

The main event, however, is the Wiki-crossword, which works in exactly the same way. Head to a Wiki page and press the crossword button to generate a grid, then click the boxes to see clues based on your current page. Now, show your smarts as you fill in the blanks.

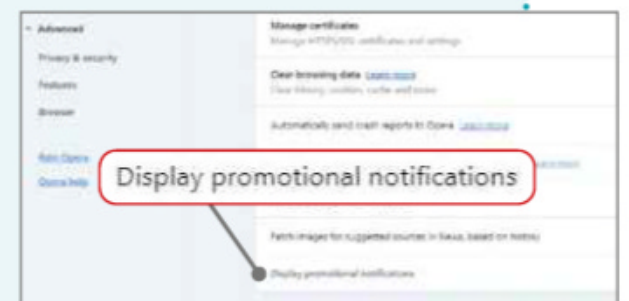
You can activate the browser tool whenever you're on Wikipedia or click the add-on's toolbar button elsewhere to choose a random Wiki page.

OTHER BROWSERS



Switch off Opera's notifications

Opera, while being one of our favourite browsers, isn't shy about pumping promotional messages at you about its latest products and services – useful for some people, massively annoying to the rest of us. Thankfully, there's a simple way to turn off these distractions. In the address bar, type `opera://settings/privacy` (or go via the menu button to Privacy & Security). At the foot of the 'Privacy and security' section, you'll find 'Display promotional notifications'. Toggle this setting to Off to banish these irritations for good.



Skip tracking redirects

Intercept Redirect has been available for Chrome for some time, and now Opera users are finally getting the chance to stop websites using tracking redirects (bit.ly/intercept501). These types of redirects typically just waste your time – you click a link and are redirected through various sites before eventually being shown the page you want. The extension works across a number of popular sites, including Facebook, Steam and a host of Google services. The developer has asked users to inform him of any unsupported sites, so this add-on should get even better with age.





Best Free Apps



App of the Fortnight

MUSIC

Sterio

bit.ly/steriodroid501

bit.ly/sterioios501



You can group your friends and family members by the football teams they support or how they voted on Brexit. Now, there's a new way to divvy up the people you know – by their chosen music-streaming service.

If you've ever tried sharing a song or a playlist with someone, you'll know exactly what we mean. Unless you all use the same streaming platform, it's all but impossible to share tracks with each

other: Spotify users can share with other Spotify users, Apple Music users can share with other Apple Music users, but never the twain shall meet. Until now.

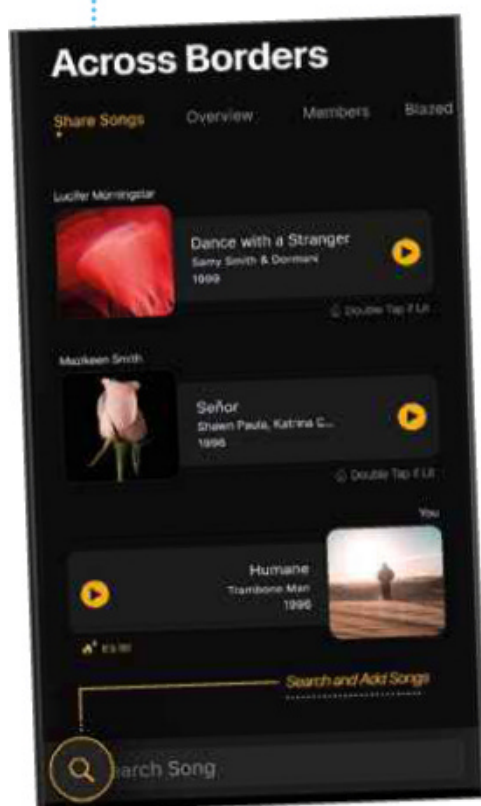
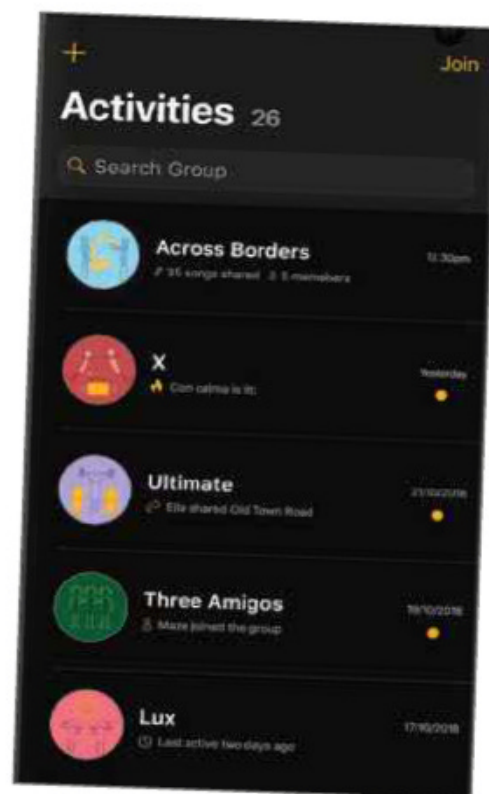
Sterio's developers have dared to cross the streams by creating an app that allows Apple Music and Spotify users to get together and share the music they love. It basically involves linking your streaming account to the app, then creating groups and inviting your friends. You can share songs or build playlists that everyone in the group can

listen to, regardless of which streaming service they subscribe to. There are plans to support further services, including YouTube Music, in the future, too.

It's clearly early days for Sterio and, while its concept is brilliant, in practice, we found that some things work better than others. At the time of writing, for example, support is sketchy for Apple Music subscribers who own Android devices – we couldn't even link our accounts when we tested this out. We also received an odd error message when we first launched the app. But wrinkles like these are to be expected with a brand new app – especially one that attempts to bridge the gap between

two rival services. For that, we applaud Sterio and look forward to future updates.

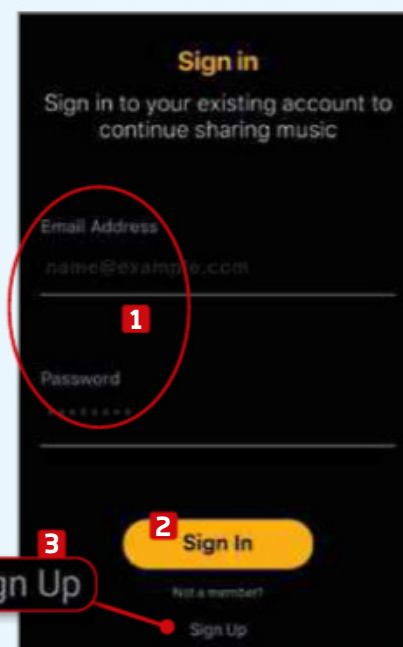
NEW



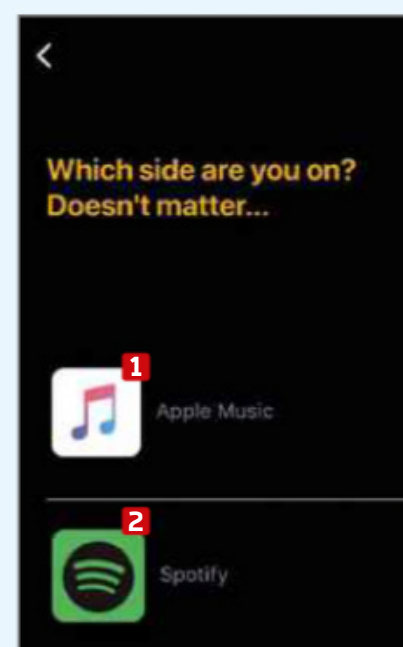
MINI WORKSHOP

Connect your streaming services with Sterio

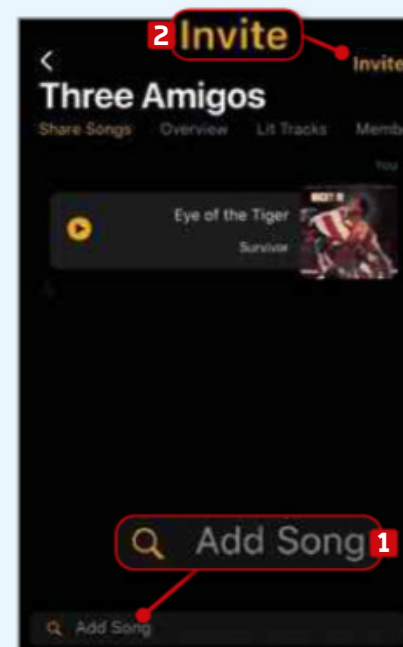
1 When you launch Sterio for the first time, you'll be presented with a short introduction screen – click Start Sharing Now. If you've already signed up for a Sterio account, enter your email address and password, **1** then tap Sign In. **2** Otherwise, tap Sign Up **3** to set up a new account and password, then check your mail app for a confirmation email and choose Verify Email Address.



2 Back in the Sterio app, tap Proceed and enter your name when prompted to continue setup. You'll be asked 'Which side are you on?' – tap either the Apple Music **1** or Spotify **2** icon, depending on which service you use. You'll be taken to an external web page to sign in with your chosen streaming service's login to link your account. Sterio may ask permission to access your account data.



3 Tap Start Sharing to continue. To create a group, press the plus (+) sign, top left. Give your group a name, when prompted, and tap Next. To start adding songs, tap in the bottom search bar **1** and type a song title, then select the one you want in the list of search results. Continue adding tracks as required, then tap Invite **2** to add friends and family to your group.



Our rating



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

GAME

NEW



Fortnite

bit.ly/fornitedroid501
bit.ly/forniteios501
 7.1  11

Epic's insanely popular battle royale game is newly available for Android users to download from Google Play. Fortnite is as addictive as ever and translates to mobile reasonably well, as you compete with others to shoot, loot and build your way to becoming the last player standing. Not all Android handsets are supported, though – Epic is currently testing broader support.



Our rating



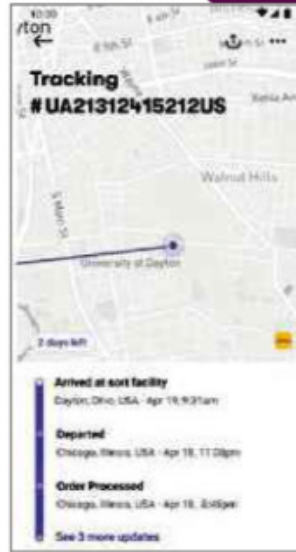
SHOPPING

NEW

Shop

bit.ly/shopdroid501
bit.ly/shopios501
 5  10.3

From the developers behind ecommerce platform Shopify, this new app is designed as a virtual shopping assistant that lets you browse your favourite shops, locate nearby stores, buy products and get full, real-time tracking for your deliveries. Sustainability is at the forefront, with the option to offset your delivery emissions, for free. However, it's clearly early days for this app because it currently feels somewhat unintuitive (there's no map view for finding shops, for example) and most of the stores are based in the US.



Our rating



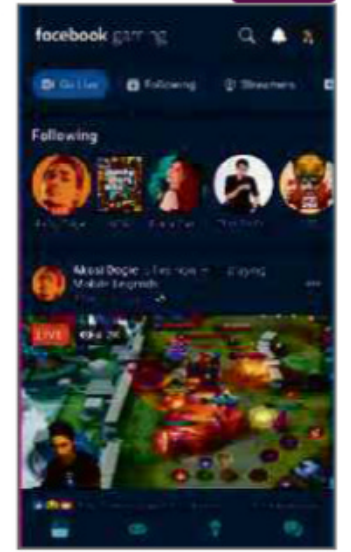
GAMING

NEW

Facebook Gaming

bit.ly/facegame501
 (varies)

Nope – this isn't a mash-up of Words With Friends and FarmVille. Instead, it's part of Facebook's continued push into other platforms, this time with its own take on Twitch and YouTube's game live-streaming channels. Currently only available for Android devices (though an iOS version is almost certainly on the horizon), Facebook Gaming does all the things you might expect – you can follow streamers, live stream yourself playing games and so on. Whether it draws people away from established gaming services remains to be seen.



Our rating

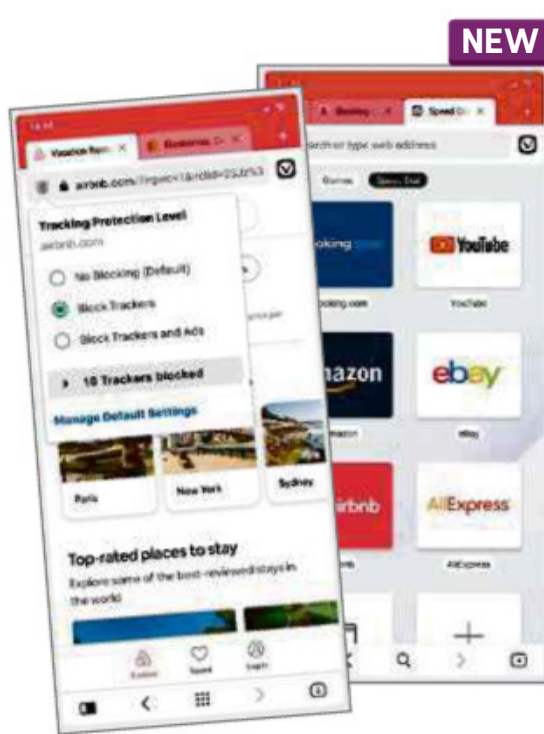


BROWSER

Vivaldi

bit.ly/vivaldi501
 5

After a beta phase that seemed to go on forever, the final version of Vivaldi's privacy-focused web browser has been released for Android devices. The browser blocks trackers from snooping on your activity and stops adverts from getting in the way. It has a flexible interface that lets you switch between desktop-type tabs and a full-screen view. In addition, Vivaldi offers some interesting extras, such as a built-in note-taking tool and a screenshot function that lets you capture full length screens of any website. Vivaldi is an excellent alternative to Chrome and Firefox, and you'll find further recommendations for private mobile browsers in our feature on page 46.



Our rating



EMAIL

ProtonMail

bit.ly/protondroid501
bit.ly/protonios501
 5  10

Despite the fact that so many of us use it every day, email isn't the most secure means of communication – which is precisely why a group of CERN scientists decided to create an email app that used encryption to ensure messages remained private and could not be intercepted by third parties. Hence ProtonMail. You'll need an '@protonmail.com' email address to get the full benefit of the app's security advantages, but you can send password-protected messages to non-ProtonMail addresses, too. Though it has been around for a few years, ProtonMail recently announced that all versions of the app – including the Android version – are now officially open-source.



Our rating



5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

WALLPAPER

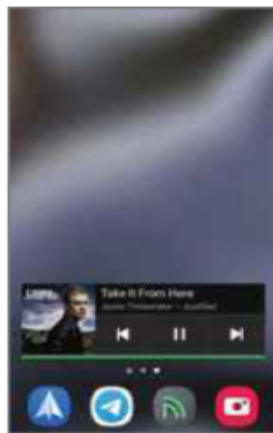
Diffuse

bit.ly/diffuse501

Price: £1.89



This app provides a live wallpaper that's taken from the album art of whatever you happen to be playing on Apple Music. It also works with Spotify, SoundCloud and YouTube Music.



HOBBIES

Mobel

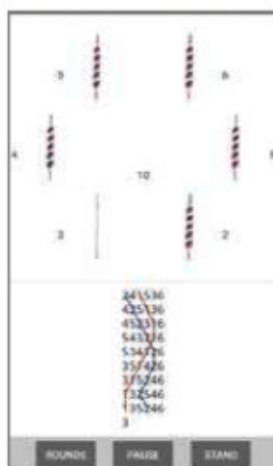
bit.ly/mobeldroid501

bit.ly/mobelios501

Price: £5.99



Whether social distancing is preventing you from enjoying your campanology or you're just interested in improving your skills, this bell-ringing simulator is a great place to start.



GAME

Hyperspace Delivery Service

bit.ly/hyperdroid501

bit.ly/hyperios501

Price: £3.79 (Android), £3.99 (iOS)



Trade with aliens, battle robot pirates and manage your spaceship with this recreation of 90s space exploration games, complete with pixel art graphics and retro-inspired soundtrack.

NOTES

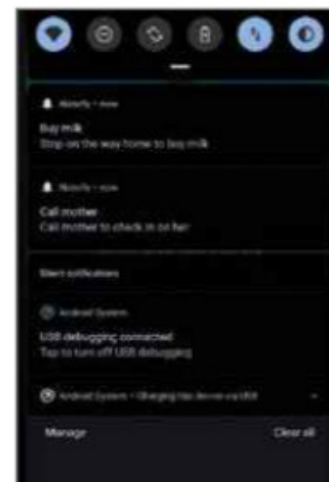
Noteify

bit.ly/noteify501

Price: 59p



Noteify is a simple alternative to the often bloated note-taking apps available elsewhere. It lets you set reminders, save notes as notifications and more, via a pleasingly pared-back interface.



GAME

Mr Pumpkin 2: Walls of Kowloon

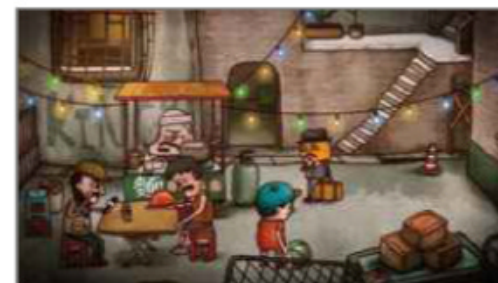
bit.ly/pumpdroid501

bit.ly/pumpios501

Price: £1.99



Part point-and-click adventure, part puzzle, this sequel to Mr Pumpkin Adventure sees the squash-headed hero exploring a cartoon version of Hong Kong's legendary Kowloon Walled City.



Diffuse



Mobel



Hyperspace Delivery Service



Noteify



Mr Pumpkin 2: Walls of Kowloon



✓ Install this app...

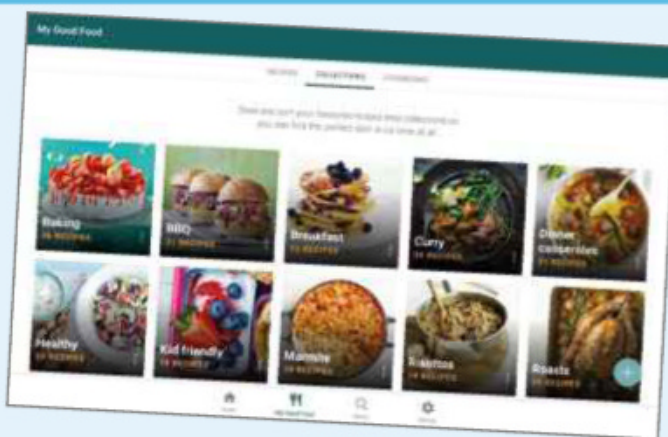
BBC Good Food

bit.ly/bbcgfdroid501

bit.ly/bbcgfios501



With the restaurant industry largely offline, home-cooking has taken off big time, and recipe apps are a great way to explore new dishes (and work out what can be cobbled together from random kitchen-cupboard contents). There are lots of great options – we like BuzzFeed's Tasty (tasty.co) – but many tend to reflect US tastes and ingredients, which is one of the reasons we keep coming back to BBC Good Food. The app isn't perfect (you can't read user reviews, for example), but there are thousands of excellent recipes to browse, and you can rate and save your favourites, and access your collection from any device.



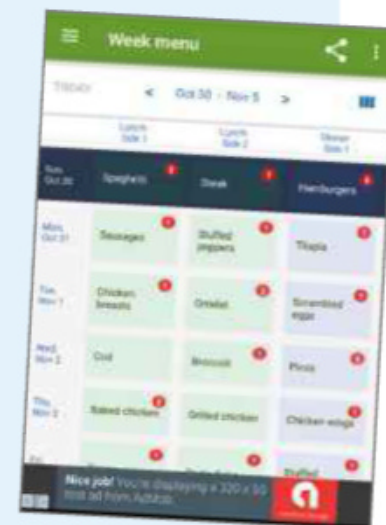
...Not this one



Easy Menu Planner

bit.ly/menu501

Easy Menu Planner sounds like a great idea – the premise is that the app helps you plan your meals throughout the week, automatically generating a shopping list to save you time and, potentially, money. Unfortunately, the app appears to have become a victim of its own update – the latest version is deeply unpopular with users, who report that the app has slowed down, while meals you plan have a habit of randomly disappearing.





Take a Screen Break

Take a rest from your browser with our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you solve our classic-album emoji and guess our Wayback Machine year?

WIN A WEB USER 2019 BACK ISSUES DISC!

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



CAN YOU GUESS THE CLASSIC ALBUMS FROM THE EMOJI?

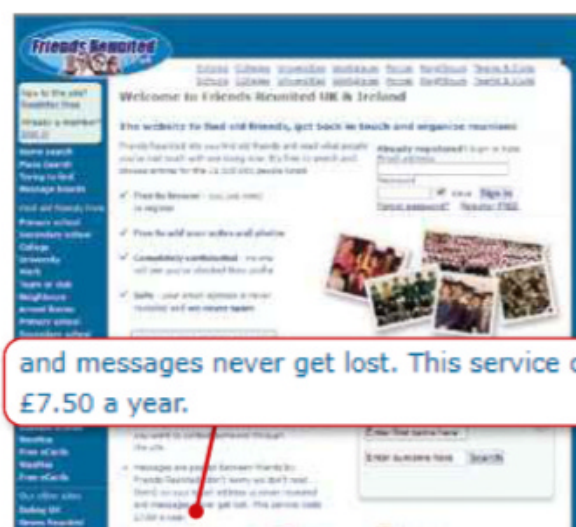
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NEW!

GUESS THE WAYBACK MACHINE YEAR

Can you work out which year the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine captured the following websites?

WayBackMachine



and messages never get lost. This service costs £7.50 a year.

COMPETITIONS

WIN CorelDRAW 2020 Graphics Suite

The 2020 version of CorelDRAW Graphics Suite uses new AI tools to expand your design capabilities and speed up your work. As part of this prize, you'll get the complete pro-calibre graphics suite, plus access to CorelDRAW.app Pro's all-new collaboration workflow. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'CorelDRAW' in the subject line. For more info, visit www.coreldraw.com and follow @corelDRAW on Twitter.



WORTH £599

WIN 1 OF 3 Nacon Asymmetric Wireless Controller

Nacon's Asymmetric Wireless Controller for the PlayStation 4 has two vibration motors, delivers a playing time of up to seven hours and can work from a distance of seven metres. It has a touchpad and an indicator showing how much battery is left. To enter this competition, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'Nacon' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.nacongaming.com and follow @Nacon on Twitter.



WORTH £59.99 EACH

? FAQ

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



Could our phones help to slow the spread of the coronavirus, and what will it mean for our privacy? **David Crookes** takes a close look

What are they?

Coronavirus contact-tracing apps are designed for use on mobile phones to identify people who have come into close proximity with someone infected by COVID-19. It's hoped that the apps will help slow the spread of coronavirus by sending out alerts. These will prompt anyone potentially infected to go into self-isolation or take other safety measures.

How do they work?

Once a contact-tracing app has been installed, it will attempt to log anyone the user comes into contact with for a specific amount of time. It will do so using Bluetooth, with phones sending signals to each other to build up a list. If an app user subsequently becomes infected with the coronavirus, or believes they have symptoms, they can access the app and fill in a questionnaire. The answers will be immediately assessed to determine how infectious that person may be. Alerts will then be sent to the phones of those who were previously logged, informing them of the steps they need to take, whether that means going into quarantine, taking a test or continuing to implement social distancing.

A screenshot of the NHS Coronavirus Status Checker app. The header says 'NHS Tell the NHS about your experience of coronavirus'. Below that is a question 'What is your current situation?' with the instruction 'Select all that apply'. There are seven checkboxes with corresponding text: 'I've used the 111 coronavirus service (online or by calling 111)', 'I think I have coronavirus symptoms', 'I think someone I live with has coronavirus', 'I have had a test that showed I have coronavirus', 'My GP or another healthcare professional has told me I have coronavirus', 'I am at high risk of complications from coronavirus, and am staying at home to reduce the chance of getting it', and 'I do not think I have any coronavirus symptoms. I am staying at home on government advice'. At the bottom is a green 'Continue' button.

The government's contact-tracing app is built on the NHS Coronavirus Status Checker

Who is making these apps?

Many countries around the world are developing contact-tracing apps independently of each other. In the UK, the task is falling to NHSX (www.nhsx.nhs.uk), the national health service's digital innovation unit. Aided by epidemiologists and ethicists, the app builds on the Coronavirus Status Checker (bit.ly/cvstatus501), which was created purely to aid the NHS to plan its response to the outbreak. Closed testing began at the beginning of April among

groups of critical workers, and the app is now being trialled on the isle of Wight. Apple and Google are also working together to develop contact-tracing technology.

How are Apple and Google helping?

One of the major issues with contact-tracing apps is that they have to run in the foreground, so the screen must be turned on with the tracker showing and no other app being used. To get around this, Apple (which released its own US-focused screening tool in March (www.apple.com/covid19)) and Google aim to roll out a software update in mid-May that will allow iOS and Android devices to communicate through these apps in the background. A further update will let users share their location without needing a contact-tracing app.

When users are in close proximity, their



Apple has already launched its own COVID-19 screening tool aimed at US users

phones will exchange anonymous cryptographic tracing keys using Bluetooth Low Energy, which will be stored locally on each device. If one of those users later develops symptoms of COVID-19, they can alter their status in the app. Any anonymous keys they have stored will be relayed through servers run by the health authorities and everyone the user has been in contact with will then be informed.

Will the government know who has been infected?

Apple and Google are adamant that the collected data will not be stored in a centralised database. Under their system, no location data will be shared and it won't be possible to track a user through an identifier because the key will be randomised every 15 minutes. This will help maintain privacy and allay fears that citizens are being put under surveillance.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock has mentioned the use of a centralised government database, and NHSX has confirmed that it will not be integrating the technology proposed by Apple and Google. This raises concerns about privacy and the effectiveness of the government's app.



Health Secretary Matt Hancock has been vague about how the UK's tracing app will work

So, will everyone be forced to install the app?

No. As it stands, you will have a choice. NHSX wants the app to be rolled out on an opt-in basis and the UK government is also in favour of a voluntary scheme. However, this causes its own problems:



Phone users in Singapore have been slow to install its TraceTogether app

according to experts, 56% of the population would need to install the app to make it effective – equating to some 80% of all current smartphone owners. Achieving that take-up is certainly going to be a big ask, especially when you consider that Singapore – a tech-savvy nation – has only seen 800,000

HOW EFFECTIVE WILL CONTACT-TRACING BE?

During the development of the NHSX contact-tracing app, a team at Oxford University created an epidemiological model which showed that the coronavirus could be controlled more effectively if action is taken early.

By simulating a model city of a million inhabitants, the team showed that a delay in tracing – even by a day – led to more deaths, more people in quarantine and a loss of epidemic control. Surveys also suggested that 73.6% of UK users were likely to install a contact-tracing app for coronavirus.



You can read the report at bit.ly/tracereport501 and view the algorithm at bit.ly/algorithm501.

downloads of its TraceTogether app (tracetogether.gov.sg), which equates to only 12% of the potential user base.

Is there a way around that?

Of course. The government could make the app mandatory or it could aggressively promote its potential benefits – the primary one being that lockdown restrictions could be relieved, allowing many people to go about their daily business unless they're sent an alert. It is certainly a much faster process than using manual detective work to trace everyone who has been in contact with someone displaying COVID-19 symptoms. But it is crucial that privacy concerns are addressed early on to alleviate fears that we're all being put under surveillance.

What does the government say about privacy?

As well as insisting that this is not a surveillance measure, Mr Hancock says: "All data will be handled according to the highest ethical and security standards, and would only be used for NHS care and search, and we won't hold it any longer than it's needed".

Elsewhere, the European Commission has also set out requirements that insist the identity of people infected will not be revealed and that the location of users will not be tracked. However, France and

Germany are building apps that rely on central servers, and both are also part of the Pan-European Privacy-Preserving Proximity Tracing coalition (PEPP-PT, www.pepp-pt.org), which wants contact-tracing to work across borders.

Won't there be false positives?

There is a good chance some people will be told they have been in close proximity to someone with the coronavirus when they were actually in no danger at all. Since the apps use Bluetooth, which can pick up another phone five metres away, you may have a situation where one person in an office develops symptoms that trigger a warning for someone in another office, because a signal has been detected through a wall. It's also possible that a person may meet a friend, keep a safe social distance of two metres and still get an alert if their acquaintance is positively diagnosed. Additionally, if someone falsely claims to have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or mistakenly believes their symptoms point to the virus, alerts are still sent out.

However, there is an argument that it's better to be safe than sorry, and developers are looking into ways to improve the data's accuracy. One solution is to determine the strength of the signal between devices and how long it's maintained for, and for the app to only use verified diagnoses.

What about people who don't own a smartphone?

Manual tracing will continue to protect those who do not have the relevant devices, though arrangements to provide the necessary technology may be made after the app is launched (which should be very soon). As with anything coronavirus-related, it pays to keep an eye on the news and the government's COVID-19 hub (www.gov.uk/coronavirus) for the latest advice and information.



The PEPP-PT coalition wants to track infection chains across national borders

WEB MYTHS

EXPPOSED

COVER
FEATURE

Don't believe everything you read on – or about – the web. **Wayne Williams** exposes the truth behind the most common tech myths, so you don't fall for them

Most of us realise that much of what we read online should be taken with a pinch of salt, as the tide of fake news, conspiracy theories and manipulated content continues to flow unabated. But there are also many examples of misinformation, misconceptions and misunderstandings about the web itself, and the tools and technology we use to access and enjoy it. Though you certainly won't find any such fabrications, fibs and falsehoods in *Web User*, where we ensure that our recommendations and reviews are reliable and honest, there are plenty of websites, social-media accounts and online forums that aren't so scrupulous.

In this feature, we round up the most common myths about using the web, explain why they're wrong (but people believe them anyway) and – where possible – recommend solutions that work. In some cases, these misconceptions are harmless but, in other instances, they could compromise your privacy and security, and risk you spreading misinformation to others.

GET YOUR FACTS RIGHT

Applying common sense to things you read on the internet should be enough to make you suspicious about misinformation, but that won't always be the case. Thankfully, there are several resources you can use for verifying tech-related (and other) stories and information, so you don't fall for and propagate myths yourself. Probably the best known of these is Snopes (www.snopes.com), a fact-checking site that tells you whether a story you've read is true or not.

It can also help identify so-called fauxtography – photos (and videos) that aren't real, or aren't from the story they've been attributed to. Have you seen that video of Chinese people pulling down a 5G tower to stop COVID-19? It's a real video, but nothing to do with 5G or the coronavirus, according to Snopes.

Full Fact (fullfact.org) is an independent UK fact-checking charity that aims to fight bad information on Facebook and the web, while Fake News Detector (fakenewsdetector.org) detects and flags fake stories, clickbait and extremely biased articles. You can paste suspicious links on the site, search using keywords or install the Chrome or Firefox fact-checking add-ons.



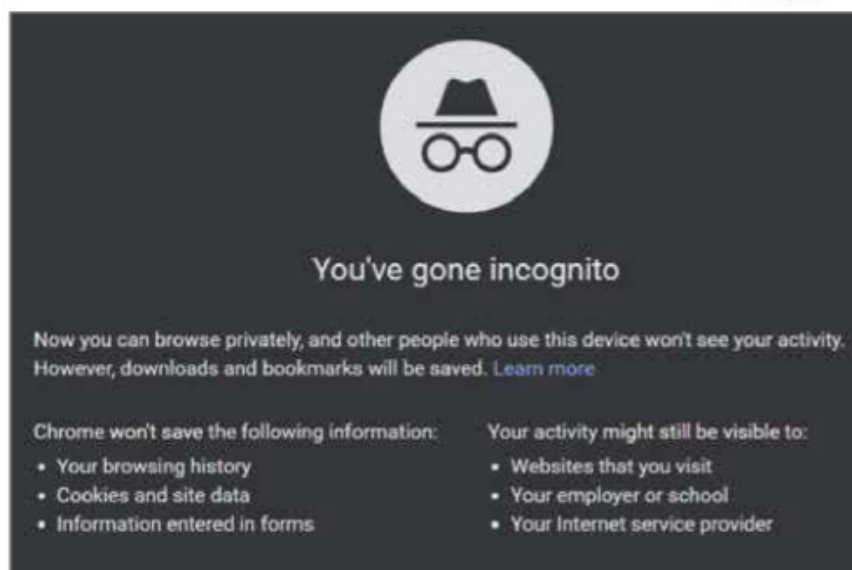
PRIVACY & SECURITY MYTHS

Incognito mode makes you anonymous

MYTH If you don't want anyone knowing which sites you visit on the web, you can use your browser's Incognito or Private Browsing mode to hide your online activities. This will let you browse freely without revealing the sites you've visited and the things you've searched for.

TRUTH Sadly, despite its name, that's not how Incognito mode works. The purpose of it is to prevent you from leaving behind browsing history, cookies and passwords on your device. For example, if you're buying a present for your partner, you could use Incognito mode to ensure there's no trace in your browser of the online shops you've visited. However, the shop you went to will know who you are

and where you're browsing from, as will your ISP, advertisers and trackers, and Google (if you're using Chrome). If you want full anonymity, you need to use a VPN or Tor (see Issue 499's cover feature).



Switching to your browser's Incognito mode doesn't make you anonymous online

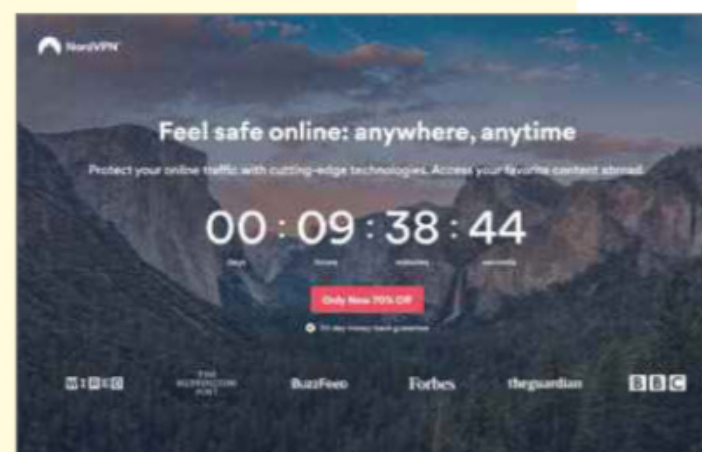
All VPNs protect your privacy

MYTH Virtual private networks protect your privacy on the web by routing your traffic through their own servers. This means that snoopers, advertisers and even your ISP will have no idea where you go online. Although free VPNs lack certain features found in paid-for editions – they will typically be slower, have fewer servers and limit the amount of data traffic – they will still be effective at keeping your identity safe.

TRUTH Not all VPNs – free or paid for – are created equal. While they generally do the location-disguising job you would expect them to, some keep logs of your activities, which they pass on to advertisers (this is especially true of free services). This data *should* be anonymised, but you can't be certain that it is.

Some VPNs that claim they don't keep logs have been found to record user activity. VPNs based in 'Fourteen Eyes' countries – United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Sweden and Spain – participate in international data sharing as part of the SIGINT Seniors Europe (SSEUR) intelligence alliance, and should therefore be avoided if you value your anonymity.

VPNs you *can* trust include the Panama-based NordVPN (nordvpn.com) and ExpressVPN (expressvpn.com), which is based in the independent British Virgin Islands.



Many VPNs share user data with intelligence authorities. Not NordVPN

Disabling your Wi-Fi SSID hides you from hackers

MYTH The Service Set Identifier (SSID) is used to announce a wireless network's presence. When a Wi-Fi-enabled device searches for a network to connect to, it's this information that it's looking for. For security reasons, you should always change the default

SSID, so hackers don't know you're on, for example, a BT router, but you can thwart snoopers much more effectively by turning off the SSID entirely in your router settings. This will make your wireless network appear invisible.



Disabling your SSID won't prevent hackers from finding your Wi-Fi network

TRUTH While this approach does actually offer a small, additional layer of security, it will only deter casual snoopers. Free tools such as inSSIDer (bit.ly/inssid501) can easily find networks hidden in this way. And hiding the SSID could cause you bigger problems and extra hassle because certain devices aren't able to connect to a network if its SSID isn't visible, and you'll need to enter the correct SSID manually to correct this.

Facebook listens to your conversations

MYTH If you're a Facebook user, you may have felt unsettled when a place, company or product that you mentioned in a real-life conversation with someone – either face to face or over the phone – resulted in a related advert appearing on Facebook a short while later. Facebook can't read your mind (can it?), so how does it do this? The obvious answer is that it is listening to your conversations through your smartphone's microphone. We all know the social network spies on you in lots of ways, so logic dictates that this is just another disturbing example.

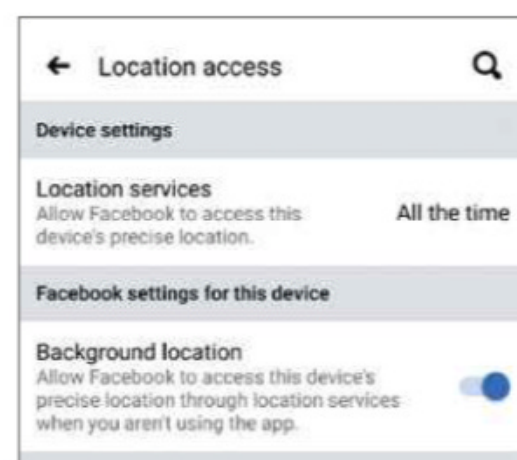
TRUTH If you've personally experienced this phenomena, then nothing we say will convince you that Facebook isn't

secretly listening to your every word. But it isn't. The social network knows you very well, and it pulls in data from lots of different sources to tailor ads that match your interests. If you search for, say, Bluetooth speakers in Google on your desktop PC, then Facebook will start showing ads for Bluetooth speakers in its mobile app.

This is both clever and creepy, but how do we know Facebook isn't listening in to what you say? Well, for one thing, sending entire recorded conversations to Facebook HQ would noticeably eat through your data plan, while listening out for and focusing on set keywords requires a lot of processing power, which would seriously impact on your phone's battery life.

If you find that Facebook is displaying

Facebook doesn't listen to you but it does track your location – unless you stop it



ads that are uncannily relevant to your recent activities, it may be getting this information from your location history. To disable this, tap the menu in the top-right corner of the Facebook app, choose Settings and select Location in the Privacy section. Here, you can disable location services and stop Facebook accessing your precise whereabouts, even when you're not using the app.

Password-protected Wi-Fi is always safe

MYTH Most people know that free Wi-Fi can be risky if there's no password safeguarding it. Anyone can access it, and there's the danger that you might be joining a rogue hotspot set up to steal your information. If you have to enter a password to access a hotspot, then it's obviously not a fake one and it will be much safer.

TRUTH A password for a Wi-Fi hotspot is no guarantee of security. Whoever set up the hotspot may not be trustworthy, and a password doesn't offer that much protection if

everyone using the network knows it. Now that HTTPS is so widespread, public Wi-Fi is much safer than it used to be, but there are still potential risks.

Make sure you only access HTTPS sites, and try to avoid entering passwords and

other personal details, just to be sure – shopping and banking online are best avoided altogether. Ideally, use a VPN to protect your browsing.



A Wi-Fi hotspot that's password protected isn't necessarily secure

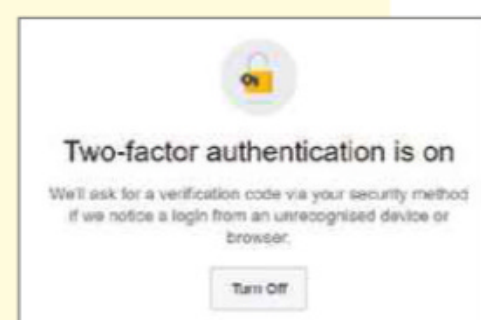
Strong passwords make accounts unhackable

MYTH Most of the accounts that get hacked use very basic passwords – such as 'password' or '12345678'. If you create a much stronger login – which is longer and made up of a mix of upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols – this will be almost impossible for hackers to crack.

TRUTH While a secure password will be less easy to guess than a simple one, a determined hacker will still be able to discover it using brute-force attacks and other methods. They may also be able to get your password through keyloggers, phishing attacks and social engineering, or from data-breach 'dumps'.

Some people think that if they have

a very good passphrase, they can reuse it on other accounts. The problem with this is if the phrase gets cracked or found out on one site, it will be shared or sold on, and hackers can then try it on other sites. Never reuse a password and, where possible, use two-factor authentication (2FA) to protect your really important accounts. This requires a code to be entered to access your accounts, which is sent to your phone or email address.



A strong password alone isn't enough to protect your accounts, so use 2FA

COULD SHARKS BREAK THE INTERNET?

Neither Kim Kardashian nor Wreck-It Ralph managed to break the internet, but could sharks? During Shark Week in 2014, a YouTube video of a shark biting a subsea cable went viral (bit.ly/shark501), and the International Cable Protection Committee (www.iscpc.org) confirmed that sharks have been biting such cables since as far back as 1985. However, cable designs have improved a lot since the 1980s, and the video that caused such concern appears to have been produced in 2003. The truth is that sharks rarely, if ever, bother with cables.

Rodents such as squirrels and rats do like to damage local lines, however. To counter gnawing attempts, cables are often protected with a corrugated carbon steel tape wrapper or conduits with a large outside diameter to make them too wide to bite through.



LEGAL MYTHS

You can stream non-BBC shows without a licence

MYTH We all know that the BBC is funded by the TV licence and you need one to watch BBC programming. You also need a licence to download or watch BBC shows on iPlayer – regardless of whether they are live, catch-up or on-demand. However, you don't need a licence to watch content from other channels because those are paid for through advertising or subscriptions. Save yourself £157.50 a year!

TRUTH You don't need a licence if you're watching TV shows on-demand or on catch-up through



You need a TV licence to watch live content on any UK television channel

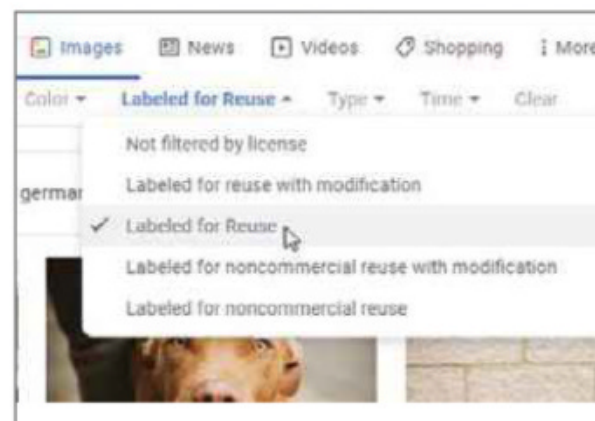
services other than BBC iPlayer, but a TV licence is required to watch and

stream *all* live content, regardless of what channel is broadcasting it. That includes ITV, Channel 4 and Sky. By 'live content', we mean anything being broadcast at the time you're watching it. This could be live football matches, game shows, soap episodes, dramas and so on. It doesn't matter how you are watching or streaming this content – via a set-top box or games console, or on your phone or tablet – you still need a licence. You also need a licence if you download or record a live broadcast to watch later. See the TV Licensing website (bit.ly/tvlicence501) for more information.

Fair use applies to reusing content

MYTH If you want to use copyright-protected material in your own projects, then you usually need to ask the copyright holder. However, fair use is a legal doctrine that allows you to use the material without having to seek permission first. If you credit the original work, don't profit from it, don't use too much of it or use it in something you've created yourself, then fair use applies.

TRUTH Fair use is a bit of a grey area but, when it comes to commercial music, things are much clearer. The creator and publisher control how and where the songs they own are used. Post a video on YouTube that features someone else's music and there's a fair chance you'll be hit with a Content ID claim. That could result in the music owner claiming all revenue made by your video, or it could result in your video being taken down. You can



Don't breach copyright by reusing other people's content on 'fair use' grounds

dispute the claim but if your reason isn't deemed valid – and 'fair use' probably won't cut it – you might end up with a copyright strike against your account. Three strikes and you're out. See YouTube's 'What is fair use?' page (bit.ly/fairuse501) for more information.

Likewise, if you reuse a photo you find on Google Images without permission, you could land yourself in trouble. Click Tools and select 'Usage rights' to filter image results by licence.

Torrenting content is illegal

MYTH The courts have clamped down on torrenting sites in recent years, banning access to many of them, and most people know that if you download an episode of, for example, *Westworld*, or a brand new movie using the likes of *µTorrent*, you are breaking the law. If you get caught using torrenting software, you could be arrested.

TRUTH Torrenting itself is perfectly legal. The BitTorrent peer-to-peer (P2P) protocol simply offers an alternative way to share files online. If you are downloading legal content – such as a Ubuntu Linux ISO file or videos you've shot yourself – then you have nothing to worry about. However, using a BitTorrent client to download copyrighted material – films, TV shows, music and so on – is definitely illegal.



Torrenting software isn't illegal but downloading copyrighted content is

You don't need to pay tax on eBay sales

MYTH Provided selling on eBay, Amazon or Etsy isn't your full-time job, you don't need to worry about paying tax on any profit you make from selling on those sites.

TRUTH If you regularly make or buy products with a view to selling them online and turning a profit, then you need to declare this

income and pay tax on it, via Self Assessment. However, under HMRC's Trading Allowance (bit.ly/trading501), you can earn up to £1,000 a year in online sales completely tax-free without even having to inform HMRC. If you only sell things occasionally – such as personal items you no longer have any use for – then you don't need to worry about tax.

TECH HEALTH MYTHS

5G caused the coronavirus pandemic

MYTH We've all heard the official explanation regarding COVID-19's origin (coming from a 'wet' food market in Wuhan), but isn't it just a little bit suspicious that the arrival of the virus coincided with the widespread proliferation of 5G, the new global wireless standard that is set to supersede 4G? Radio emissions from the new 5G antennas either cause the symptoms or lower the human immune system, making us more susceptible to viruses we would otherwise be able to fight off.

TRUTH While it's not too far-fetched to imagine that the radiation

emitted by 5G cell towers could cause cancer, the truth is that the levels are simply way too low to be of significance. As for 5G causing the coronavirus outbreak, that makes about as much sense as catching the 'flu from a microwave oven. 5G occupies the same wavelengths previously used by analogue TV and we never had a problem with that in the past.

Ofcom, the communications regulator, recently published a very blunt report ([bit.ly/ofcom501](https://www.ofcom.gov.uk/consult/condocs/5g/5g_000005.pdf)) in which it completely debunked the crackpot theory, explaining: "There is no scientific basis or credible evidence for these claims". The theory has been branded "the

5G causing the coronavirus outbreak is this year's biggest tech myth

worst kind of fake news" by NHS England Medical Director Stephen Powis.

Sadly, that hasn't stopped conspiracy theorists taking misguided action: over the Easter weekend alone, 20 5G masts were targeted in suspected arson attacks ([bit.ly/5gmasts501](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-56888888)).



Dark mode is better for your eyes

MYTH Lots of programs, websites and apps now offer a dark mode to make them easier on your eyes. This means you can keep viewing them for longer, especially at night, without straining your peepers.

TRUTH Although dark mode is undoubtedly preferable

for people who are sensitive to bright light or suffer other vision conditions, that doesn't make it the best option for everybody – indeed, white text on black can be harder to read than standard black on white. Staring at a screen all day isn't healthy for your eyes, no matter which mode you're viewing in, so it's more important to take regular breaks.

Wi-Fi radiation harms children

MYTH Public Health England (PHE) reports that "People using Wi-Fi, or those in the proximity of Wi-Fi equipment, are exposed to the radio signals it emits and some of the transmitted energy in the signals is absorbed in their bodies."

A ScienceDirect research article from 2018 ([bit.ly/sdirect501](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0167636918300000)) states that Wi-Fi is "an important threat to human health" and that Wi-Fi and other EMFs (Electromagnetic field) may be "particularly damaging to young people".

TRUTH The ScienceDirect paper is a worrying read and shouldn't be dismissed out of hand. PHE isn't too concerned, though. It states ([bit.ly/pheng501](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-health-england-researchers-warn-against-exaggerated-claims-about-wi-fi-radiation)): "There is no consistent evidence to date that exposure to radio signals from Wi-Fi and WLANs adversely affects the health of the general population. The signals are very low power, typically 0.1 watt (100 milliwatts) in both the computer and the



Wi-Fi routers emit radiation but have not been proven to harm children

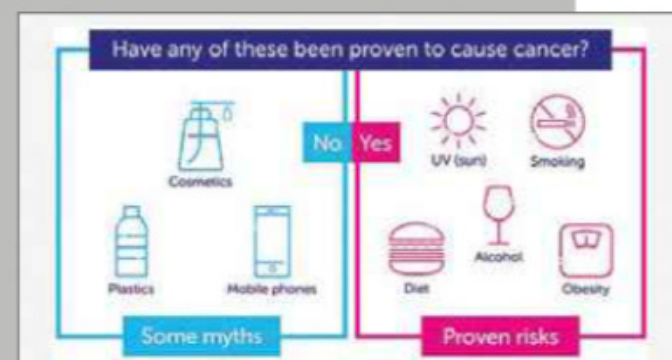
router (access point), and the results so far show exposures are well within the internationally accepted guidelines from the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). Based on current knowledge and experience, radio frequency (RF) exposures from Wi-Fi are likely to be lower than those from mobile phones".

While the risks are very low, there's a simple step you can take to err on the side of caution: avoid spending too much time next to your router. The greater the distance you put between yourself and it (we're talking feet not miles!), the less radiation you, or your children, will encounter.

Mobile phones cause cancer

MYTH Mobile phones transmit radiation and making an audio call requires to you place the device against your ear. This can lead to brain cancer, especially among heavy users.

TRUTH Cancer Research, which knows a thing or two about the Big C, says this simply isn't true. On its website ([bit.ly/cancerresearch501](https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-topics/mobile-phones)) it explains: "So far, the best scientific evidence shows that using mobile phones does not increase the risk of cancer. There also aren't any good explanations for how mobile phones could cause cancer. The radiofrequency electromagnetic radiation that mobile phones or phone masts transmit and receive is non-ionising and is very weak. This non-ionising radiation does not have enough energy to damage DNA and cannot directly cause cancer." That's pretty unequivocal.



Cancer Research finds no evidence that mobile phones cause cancer

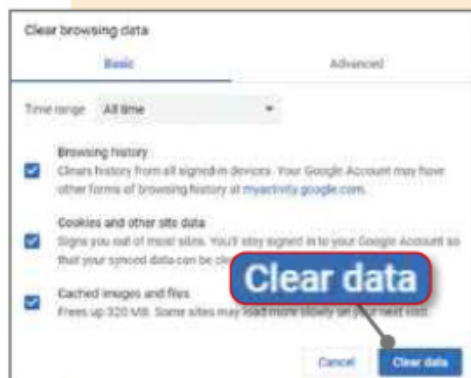
PC-OPTIMISING MYTHS

Clearing your cache boosts browsing speed

MYTH As you browse the web, graphics, videos, cookies and data from the websites you visit get downloaded and stored in a cache. Over time, this bloat causes your browser to slow down. Your browser can also cache malicious

content, so clearing the cache speeds things up and removes any downloaded malware.

TRUTH The browser cache stores local copies of websites so, when you revisit pages, it can load them from your hard drive. This is *much* faster than downloading them all from scratch. As a result, clearing the cache will actually slow down your browsing. More importantly, browsers automatically purge old data anyway, and the cache will never grow beyond a set size. The only reason to clear the cache is if you want to wipe all traces of sites you've visited.



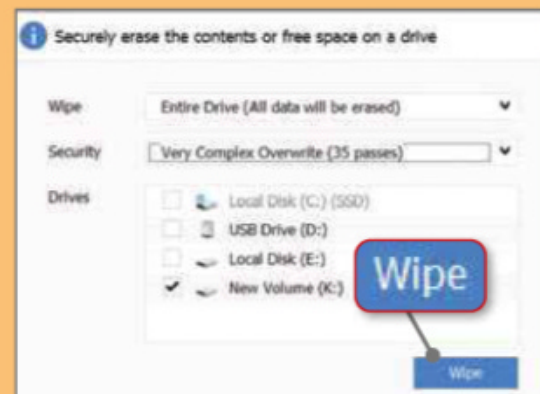
Emptying your cache is more likely to slow down rather than speed up your browser

Formatting a drive wipes the data from it

MYTH If you want to dispose of a hard drive filled with personal data – either by selling it, donating it or sending it to the local tip – formatting the drive is the best way to securely wipe all the data it contains.

TRUTH If you delete files or folders on your PC, all you are actually doing is removing the reference to them on the hard drive, not erasing the content itself. Anyone can easily restore this deleted data. Formatting a drive isn't much better, and recovering the data it contained is similarly straightforward.

To erase a drive properly, you need a tool that overwrites the drive multiple times. In CCleaner (www.ccleaner.com), for example, go to Tools, select Drive Wiper and change the Wipe type to Entire Drive. Select the number of overwrites (the more the better), then click the drive to erase it. Be sure to choose the right one! ■



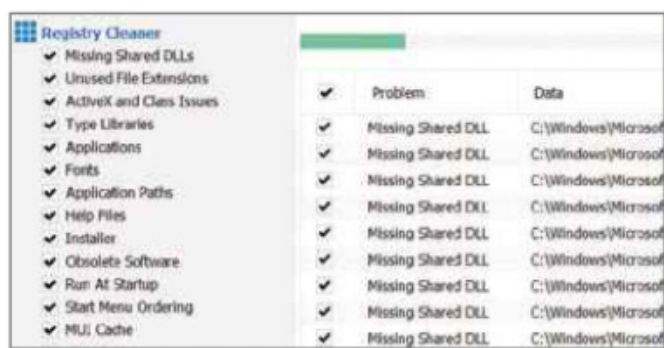
To properly erase data from a drive, you need to overwrite it multiple times

Cleaning the Registry speeds up your PC

MYTH The Registry is where Windows stores all the settings required for software to function properly. Unfortunately, over time, the Registry gets filled up with obsolete entries, incorrect locations, empty keys, redundant shortcuts and more. Giving the Registry a thorough clean will fix these problems and can be hugely beneficial.

Like your hard drive, the Registry can become fragmented over time, making it larger and slower than it should be. Defragging the Registry strips out any unnecessary spaces before rebuilding it to make it more efficient.

TRUTH If your PC hasn't had any care or attention for a very long time, then cleaning the Registry as part of a full maintenance service may be worth doing. However, modern PCs are so fast that even hundreds of incorrect and outdated entries in the Registry won't cause any problems, and cleaning and defragging the database will have a negligible effect. In fact, deleting a single important Registry entry in error can lead to far more problems and might actually slow Windows down – or worse.



Cleaning the Registry is unlikely to improve the performance of your PC

NEXT ISSUE

on sale Wednesday 27 May 2020

UNLOCK WINDOWS 10's SECRET 'MODES'

Discover the clever PC-boosting settings that Microsoft foolishly tucks away

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Best Android browsers for privacy and security

Staying anonymous and protecting your data on your phone requires more than Chrome. **Steve Clark** reviews six Android browsers that focus on privacy and security



Tor Browser | bit.ly/tor501 | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

**WebUser
GOLD
AWARD**

What we liked:

There are good reasons why Tor is the browser of choice for investigative reporters and political dissidents across the globe: its top-notch security and privacy are second to none, and its mobile app is just as good as the desktop version.

To get started, tap Connect to access the snooper-free Tor network. While standard browsers tend to connect your device directly to the websites you visit, Tor bounces encrypted data through random relays, making it harder to track where the initial request came from.

In every other respect, using Tor feels no different to any other mobile browser, with an address bar at the top, a tabs icon to the side and a settings menu. The clever technology works efficiently and unobtrusively to hide your data and block ads, and there's no need to switch between open and private tabs because every tab here is, essentially, already operating in incognito mode.

Visit the app's settings to sort out your privacy and tracking options, then check the separate Security Settings, where you can choose between three security levels that turn off particular

website features. Here, it's a trade-off between security and stability. Tor automatically handles the 'admin' side, too, deleting cookies as soon as you sign out of any website.

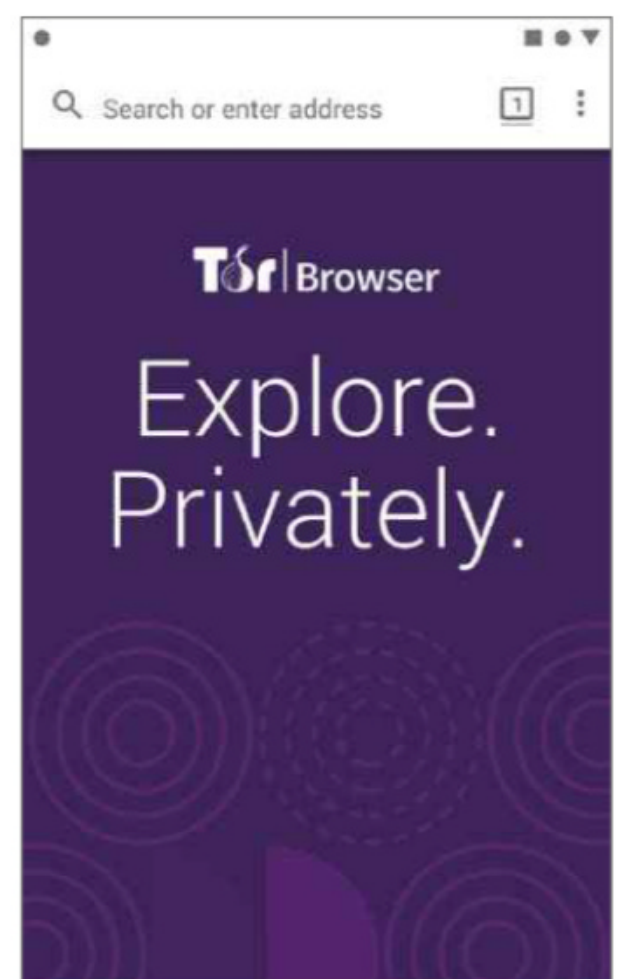
Tor includes two extensions that bolster its security further. The first is the Electronic Frontier Foundation's HTTPS Everywhere (bit.ly/https501), which automatically encrypts your data and forces websites to display their most secure version. NoScript is the second add-on, designed to prevent untrusted websites running potentially problematic elements, such as JavaScript, Java and Flash.

How it can be improved:

Tor is slower than rivals browsers because connecting to the network takes a few extra seconds. That might be a price worth paying for privacy, but if speed and instant browsing are your primary requirements, this may not be the browser for you.

OUR VERDICT

Mobile browsers don't come much more secure and private than Tor. It's loaded with useful features and settings to prioritise and optimise



your safety and anonymity, while it beavers away in the background, blocking ads and removing data the instant you don't need it.

Brave | bit.ly/brave501 | ★★★★★

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

WebUser
SILVER
AWARD

What we liked:

Brave provides a more traditional browsing experience – there's no

Tor-style relay network here – and, in a recent study, was crowned the most secure of the standard browsers (against the usual suspects, such as Chrome, Firefox and Edge).

Its attractive interface places navigation tools, such as the Home and Search buttons, at the bottom of the screen. Load a website, then press the Brave icon in the address bar to view the 'Blocking monitor', which displays the number of ads and trackers Brave has intercepted. You can toggle off this Brave Shield – though we're not sure why you'd want to – while, further down, there are manual controls for blocking or allowing specific elements. Like Tor, HTTPS Everywhere comes as standard, as does a third-party cookie blocker.

There's also an option to switch on



Brave Rewards – a points system that lets you send tokens to your favourite sites and content creators, which allows them to display 'privacy-respecting ads'.

How it can be improved:

There's little to dislike about Brave, which was designed from the outset to protect users from internet nasties. The Brave Rewards system is a great idea for supporting sites that

are reliant on ad revenue, although you may object to seeing adverts on the home screen.

OUR VERDICT

Brave provides security and privacy in a traditional browser format. It's an ideal halfway house between data-leaking culprits such as Chrome and the locked-down Tor.

Firefox Focus | bit.ly/focus501 | ★★★★★☆

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

WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD

What we liked:

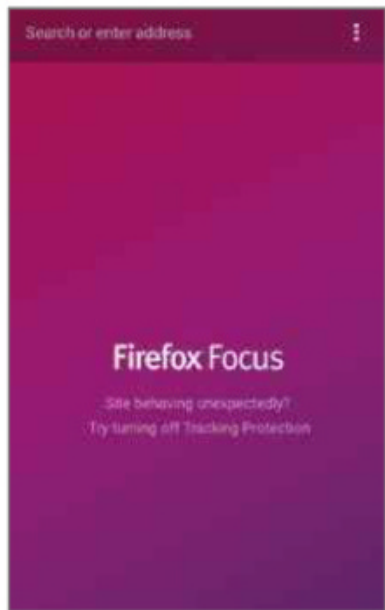
Firefox is well loved for its reliability and lack of dependence on Google, and

Focus is its next evolution, letting you, as the developers say, "browse like no one's watching".

Tap the menu button and you can turn trackers on and off at will – useful for when blocking tracking elements stops pages working correctly.

Diving into Settings, Privacy & Security reveals a more comprehensive roster of blockers. Ads, cookies and trackers get short shrift, as do web fonts and JavaScript, but not all of these are enabled by default, so be sure to set up the options from the start.

We found browsing to be satisfyingly zippy, just as developer Mozilla intended. In addition to deleting all data when closing tabs, there's also



an Erase button for on-the-fly removal.

How it can be improved:

Focus's interface is streamlined to within an inch of its life, which can make navigation a pain. Unlike other browsers, there's no tab icon, so while you can open as many tabs as you like and switch between them, you aren't able to

close individual tabs. Either you bin them all or leave them all open until you're done.

OUR VERDICT

Focus is an exceptional privacy browser that offers excellent privacy and security. However, the sparse user interface may put off some existing Firefox fans.

BEST OF THE REST

Ghostery

bit.ly/ghostery501

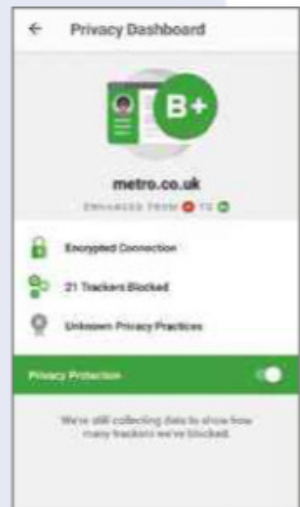
Ghostery's mobile browser is a simple affair. The clean home screen lets you swipe between Startup and News, History (easily banished by tapping the trash-can icon), Rewards and Favourites. Beneath the surface, the browser provides lots of control over your data. As with Brave, tap the address bar's Ghostery icon for detailed monitoring, with options to trust and restrict sites without too much hassle.



DuckDuckGo

bit.ly/duck501

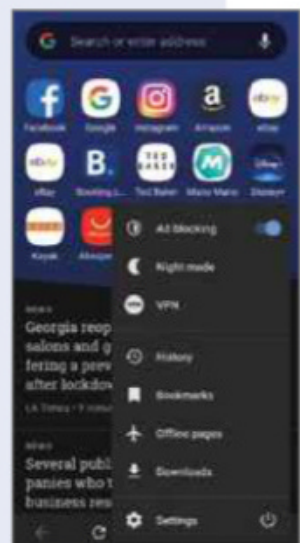
DuckDuckGo is easily the most user-friendly browser of this bunch. When it blocks trackers and ads, the culpable company icons are displayed along the address bar – expect to see a lot of Googles and Facebooks. One tap of the Fire icon quickly clears all tabs and data, and its Privacy Dashboard is an interesting concept that helpfully grades a site's privacy and security before and after the browser blocks trackers. We also love the chat-style tutorial that walks you through using DuckDuckGo.



Opera

bit.ly/opera501

While not, strictly speaking, a privacy-focused browser, Opera includes a couple of clever features that help you maintain security. For starters, there's a built-in ad blocker that can be turned on or off with a tap of the Opera icon. But far more useful – and unlike many mainstream browsers – is the inclusion of an excellent VPN that optimises your virtual location without any setup.



Block people... *without them knowing*



Social media and messages are a lifeline for many during lockdown, but we all have our limits. **Jane Hoskyn** reveals how to 'soft-block' people in a polite, British way

Soft-block someone in WhatsApp

If you ditch someone in WhatsApp by tapping Block on their profile, they'll

instantly know they've been blocked because they will no longer see your profile pic or status, and when they try sending you a message, they'll only see one tick ('sent'), never two ticks ('received'). Ouch.

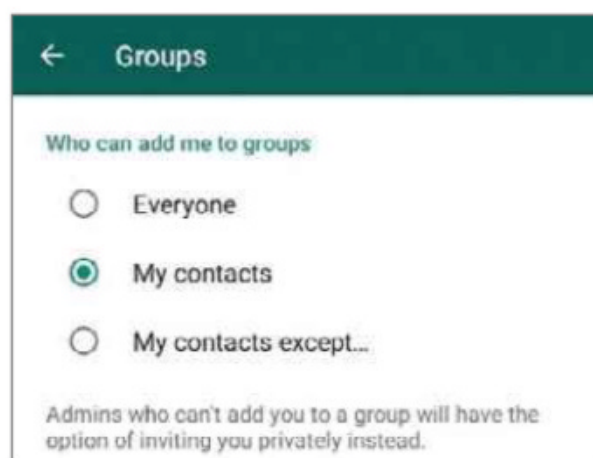
Muting a WhatsApp contact is less severe than blocking them

To avoid hurt feelings, 'soft-block' them instead by muting them. Tap their avatar, then 'Mute notifications' or long-tap the conversation, then tap the crossed-out volume icon. You can then hide the conversation by tapping the Archive icon. You won't hear a peep from that person again - unless they add you to a WhatsApp group.

Politely leave WhatsApp groups

By default, anyone - including strangers - can add you to a WhatsApp group, then flood you with messages and notifications. To block strangers from adding you, go to Settings, Account, Privacy, Groups, then choose 'My contacts' or 'My contacts except' and select anyone whose groups you want to swerve.

If you leave a group you've already been added to, your exit is announced

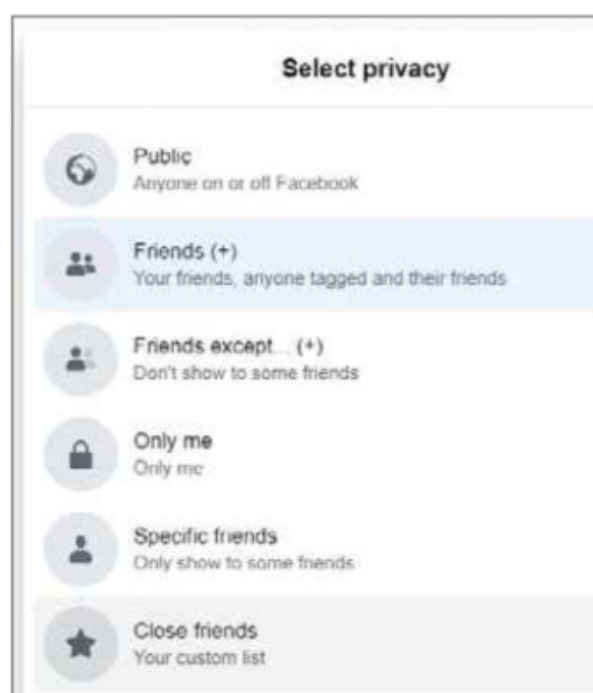


Prevent complete strangers from adding you to WhatsApp groups.

in blunt terms ('Jane has left the group'). For a more subtle exit, mute the conversation, then archive it.

Control who can see your Facebook posts

Facebook gives you plenty of control over who can (and can't) see your posts and photos, new and old. Click a post's

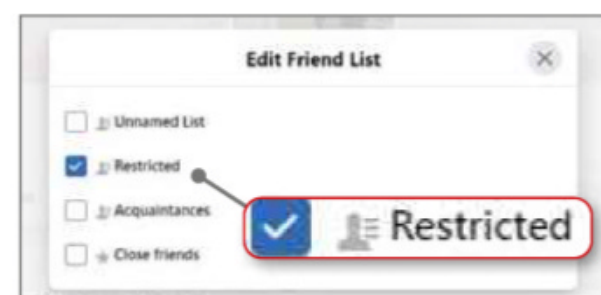


Don't want your mum seeing a Facebook photo? Then set it to 'Friends except'

'Audience selector' icon (globe for public; two figures for friends; padlock for 'only me'), then choose a new setting. For example 'Friends except' lets you exclude specific people. You can also set up a 'Custom list', such as family or close friends, so they alone can see your post. To set *all* your old Facebook posts to 'Friends only' with one click, go to Settings, Privacy, Limit Past Posts.

Add sensitive souls to a Facebook Restricted list

As soon as you block someone on Facebook, you only appear to them as 'a Facebook user', so they'll instantly know they're banned. For a more nuanced option, create a 'Restricted list' (bit.ly/restrict501) of friends you don't want to share everything with (your ex, for example), so they only see your Public posts, and posts you've tagged them in. To add a friend to this list, click the Friends icon in the top-right corner of their profile, then select Edit Friend List, Restricted.

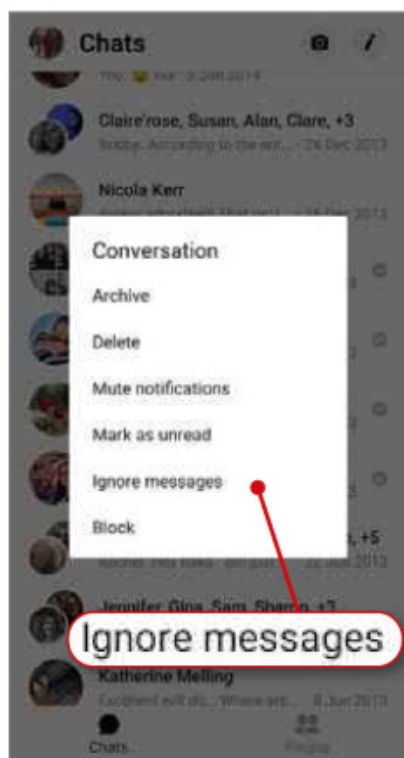


Add friends to your Restricted list to shield them all from certain posts

Secretly ignore Messenger messages

Facebook's Messenger app has a cunning 'Ignore messages' option that dodges the awkwardness of blocking

Block people *without them knowing*



Use Messenger's 'Ignore conversation' to avoid a confrontation

someone. On the Chats screen, long-press the person you want to avoid, then tap the menu icon and choose 'Ignore messages'. Their messages will now go to Spam, and they won't be informed.

What's more, they won't be able to see when you're online. To un-ignore them, go to 'Message requests', Spam and reply to their last message.

Stop a friend seeing your tweets

Twitter is much more public than Facebook. You can block people to stop them viewing your more colourful tweets, but they'll see a message saying they've been blocked. For a subtler approach, you can lock your account and secretly force the person to unfollow you. To do this, first set your account to 'protected' (see screenshot). This means only your followers can see your tweets, and you have to approve new followers (bit.ly/protect501). Next, block the person, then immediately unblock them to quietly knock them off your list of followers.

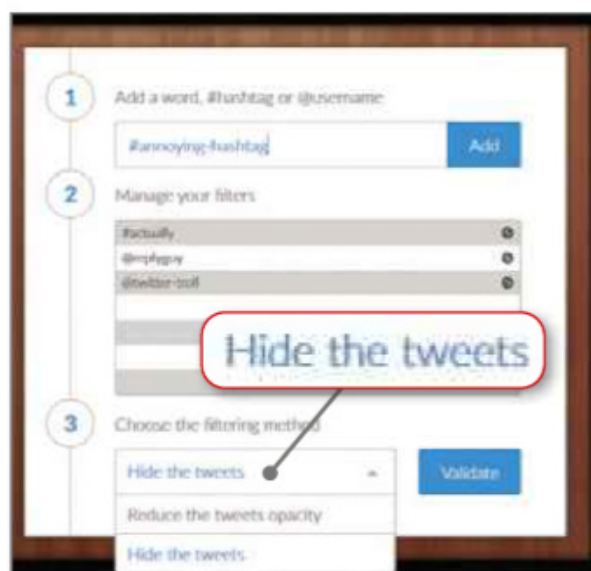


Avoid blocking someone by protecting your tweets and making them private

Muzzle annoying Twitter users

Twitter's 'Mute' option is a bit of a halfway house because you will still see the muted person's replies to your tweets, and they can still send you a direct message (DM). Solve the DM problem by unticking 'Receive messages from anyone' in Settings, then unfollowing the offender.

To quickly silence persistent "reply guys", block their usernames using the



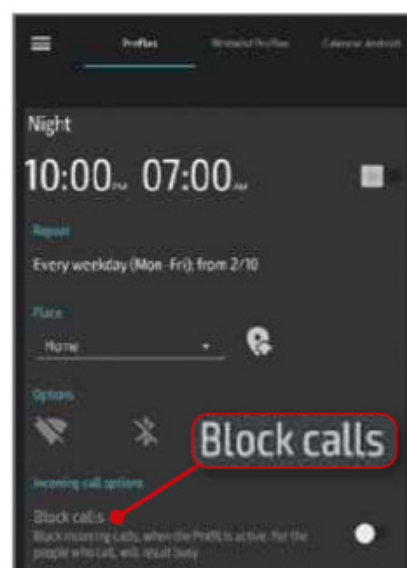
Larry Filter's 'Mute' button silences unwanted users, hashtags and ad tweets

Larry Filter extension for Chrome, Firefox and Opera (www.larryfilter.com). Larry Filter also automatically mutes all promoted tweets.

Quietly silence annoying callers

The process for blocking callers varies depending on the device but, on most Android and iOS phones, you can long-press an unwanted caller's number and tap Block. The offender will know something's up, because their calls will

Swerve unwanted callers by configuring blocks in Do Not Disturb



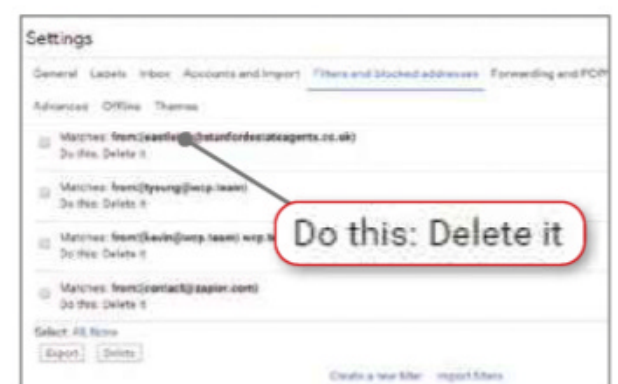
go straight to voicemail and their texts won't be marked as delivered.

Apps such as Do Not Disturb (Android, bit.ly/disturb501) let you configure smart blocking responses to specific numbers, times of day and even locations, but they demand a lot of permissions. Alternatively, create a silent ringtone (our favourite app for this is Ringtone Maker, bit.ly/ring501), then link it to the culprit. Your phone will simply ring out when they call.

Redirect unwanted Gmail senders

Blocking a sender in Gmail is easy: click 'Block (name)' under the three-dot menu in an email from that person. However, this could trigger a 'bounce-back' that confirms your email address, which isn't good privacy practice. So, instead, automatically filter the offender's messages to the bin.

To do this, click the three-dot button in their message, then 'Filter messages like this' and check their email address is in the 'From' field. Click 'Create filter'. Tick 'Delete it' to automatically bin their messages, or 'Skip the Inbox (Archive it)' plus 'Apply the label' to send them to a folder that bypasses your inbox. You can manage your filters via Settings at bit.ly/filters501. ■

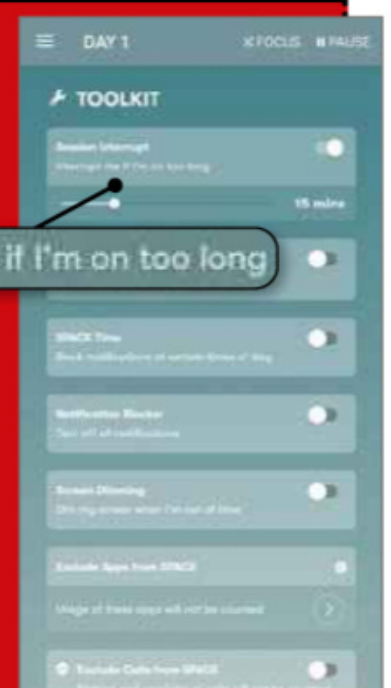


Send annoying Gmail senders straight to the bin by creating a 'Delete it' filter

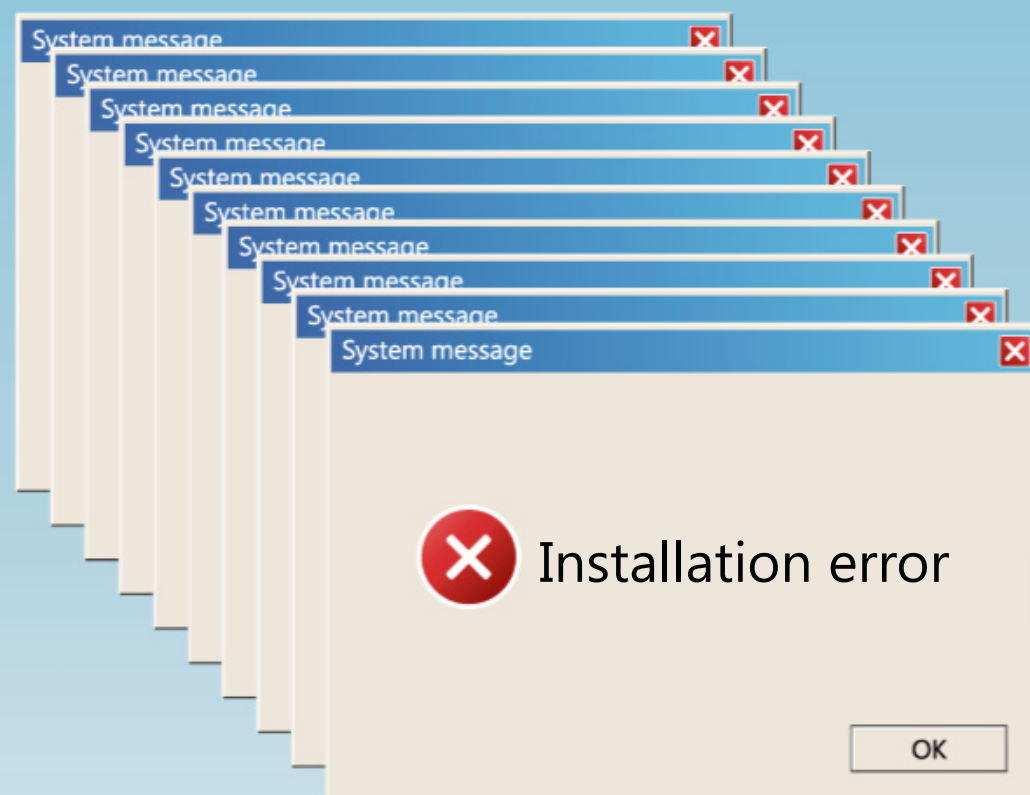
BLOCK YOURSELF FROM DISTRACTING APPS

Facebook has just made self-blocking easier with a new Quiet Mode (announced here: bit.ly/quiet501), which overlays the mobile app with a special lock screen for your chosen amount of time.

Several third-party apps apply similar self-control functions to your entire device: Space, for Android, iOS and Chrome (bit.ly/space501), has a Session Interrupt feature (see screenshot) that admonishes you if you've been using your screen for too long (the default is 15 minutes, which sounds a little mean to us) and also lets you block some or all notifications; Offtime (Android, iOS, offtime.app) lets you schedule selected app blocks, and offers a range of unlock modes for regaining access; while Flipd (Android, iOS, www.flipdapp.co) is even more aggressive, with a Full Lock Mode that totally blocks your device during a set time, even if you restart.



Fix your software installation problems



Sometimes Windows stops you installing programs for no obvious reason, which can prove very frustrating. **Robert Irvine** explains what to do when stubborn software won't install

Bypass Windows' SmartScreen protection

When you download a program and try to install it, the SmartScreen feature built into Windows Security looks it up in an online database of known good and bad software, and blocks anything from the latter category. However, to err on the side of caution, it may also block tools, especially newer ones, that it doesn't recognise. If you're confident that a program is safe, perhaps because you read about it in our Best Free Software section, you can bypass SmartScreen's protection by clicking 'More info' and choosing 'Run anyway'.



If SmartScreen stops a program installing, you can choose to run it anyway

If this option doesn't appear, SmartScreen may be set to block, rather than warn you about, unrecognised programs. To fix this, type `smartscreen` into the Windows search box, click 'App & browser control' and, under 'Check apps and files', select Warn. Alternatively, if you use antivirus

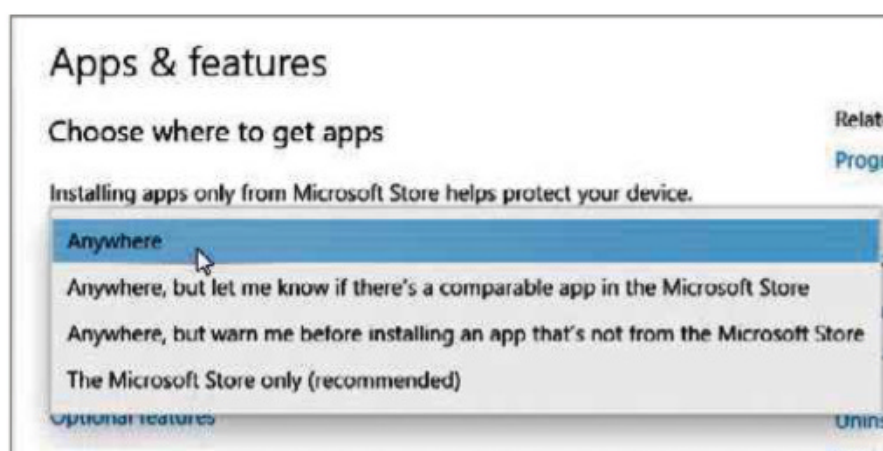


SmartScreen can be disabled if you have other antivirus software installed

software other than Windows Security, choose Off to disable SmartScreen's excess protection.

Install software from any source

If your new computer or fresh installation of Windows won't let you install software, it's possible the operating system is set to only install apps from the Microsoft Store. To remove this restriction, open the Settings app, go to Apps, 'Apps &



Check that Windows isn't restricting you to installing apps from the Microsoft Store

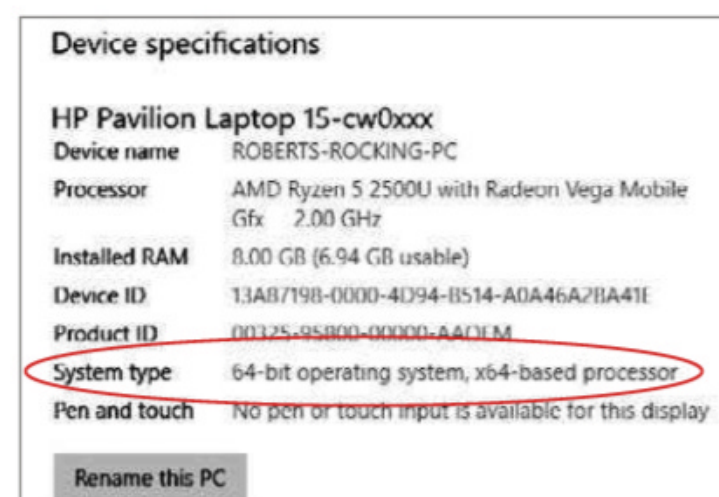
features'. Click the 'Choose where to get apps' menu and select Anywhere.

Next, go to Settings, Update & Security and click 'For developers'. Under 'User developer features', select 'Sideload apps' to allow the installation of third-party software.

These tweaks won't work if your PC is running the locked-down Windows 10 S Mode, which only lets you install apps from the Microsoft Store. To exit this mode (which is mainly used by schools and businesses), open the Store app, search for 'Switch out of S Mode' and follow the instructions.

Check your Windows version

Many developers offer 32-bit and 64-bit versions of their software, and their websites will either detect which one you need or include both in the download package. If you inadvertently download a 64-bit program to an older PC running 32-bit Windows, you won't be able to install it (although 64-bit



Check that your PC is running 64-bit Windows to install 64-bit software

systems happily run 32-bit software), so make sure you choose the correct file.

To check your Windows version, type **about** into the search box and select 'About your PC'. If, next to 'System type', it says '32-bit operating system, x64-based processor', that means your PC is running 32-bit Windows on a 64-bit processor, so you'll need to install the 32-bit versions of software.

✖ Run programs as an administrator

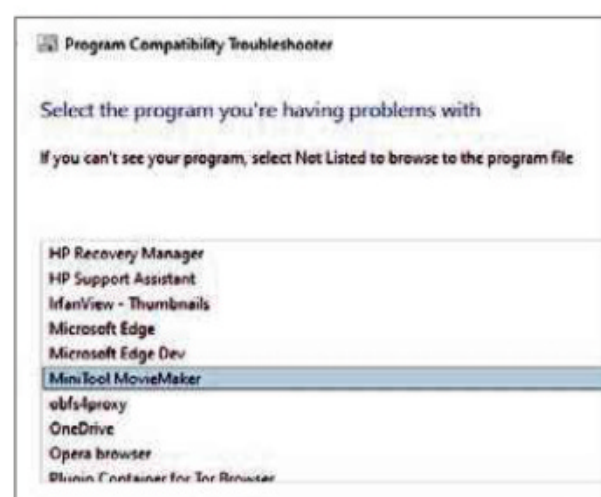
When you install a program in Windows, the User Account Control (UAC) feature usually asks if you "want to allow this app to make changes to this device?", and clicking Yes allows you to proceed. Sometimes, however, the software requires administrator privileges to run, as well as the standard permissions you grant through UAC, which can cause installation to fail.

To solve this problem, simply right-click the program's EXE installer file and choose 'Run as administrator', enter your password if required and click Yes at the UAC prompt.

✖ Run Microsoft's own troubleshooters

If Windows is preventing you from installing a program, you may be able to beat the block using Microsoft's built-in troubleshooter. Go to Settings, Update & Security, Troubleshoot, choose the Program Compatibility Troubleshooter in the list and click 'Run the troubleshooter'. Select the program you're having problems with, then try to solve any issues by applying Microsoft's recommended compatibility settings. The Troubleshoot screen also provides an option for fixing problems with Windows Store apps.

If that doesn't work, download the Program Install troubleshooter from the Windows Support site (bit.ly/trouble501), which fixes problems that stop new software being installed and mends corrupt Registry keys. Save the 'diagnostic cabinet' to your PC, then



Microsoft's built-in troubleshooter may help you fix installation problems

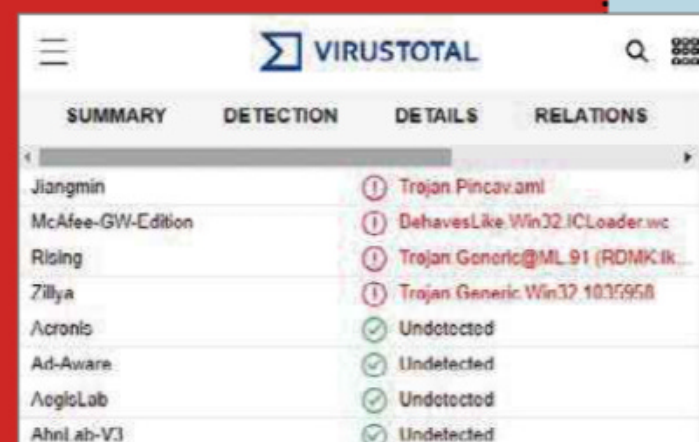
STOP YOUR ANTIVIRUS BLOCKING PROGRAMS

Antivirus software sometimes alerts you to a false positive – a benign program that it mistakenly thinks is a threat – which it then prevents you from installing. Usually, you get the option to override that decision and mark the 'threat' as safe, but occasionally the installation file is quarantined without explanation (or you may have turned off notifications).

If you suspect this has happened, open your antivirus software to review the programs it's recently blocked – in Windows Security, go to 'Virus & threat protection', 'Protection history'. From here, you can whitelist the item by marking it as an 'exception' or 'exclusion', or choosing Allow, so it won't be blocked again. To double-check that the program really is safe, first upload the EXE file to VirusTotal ([virustotal.com](https://www.virustotal.com)) to scan it with

dozens of antivirus engines and ensure it's free of malware.

If your security software continues to block the program, try disabling it while you carry out the installation. In Windows Security, click 'Manage settings' below 'Virus & threat protection' and switch off 'Real-time protection'. Just don't forget to turn it back on again afterwards!



Scan an installation file at VirusTotal if your security software has blocked it

open the file and follow the troubleshooting steps.

✖ Uninstall old versions of programs

The scary Windows error message – "Error 1603: A fatal error occurred during installation" – might simply mean that the program you're trying to install is already installed. You may have forgotten because a shortcut no longer appears on your desktop or in your Start menu. You can either search for it on your hard drive or, if you'd prefer to have the latest version, uninstall it by going to Settings, Apps, 'Apps & features', then click its entry and choose Uninstall. Reboot your PC if necessary, then reinstall the program – hopefully, this time, without the error.



Uninstalling an old version of a program can prevent installation errors

✖ Stop Controlled Folder Access blocks

Windows Security has a useful anti-ransomware feature called Controlled

Allow an app through controlled folder access

If controlled folder access has blocked an app you trust, you can add it as an allowed app. This allows the app to make changes to protected folders.



You can allow trustworthy programs through Controlled Folder Access

Folder Access, which prevents unauthorised programs from changing and locking files in specific folders on your PC. Although it provides an additional layer of protection, the feature can also stop you installing software in those folders, so you may need to adjust its settings.

To do this, go to Settings, Update & Security, Windows Security, 'Virus & threat protection' and click 'Manage ransomware protection'. Under 'Controlled folder access' (assuming it's turned on), click 'Allow an app through controlled folder access' and either select 'Recently blocked apps' to choose a program that's been denied installation or 'Browse all apps' to choose a tool you want to install to a protected folder.

Controlled Folder Access should alert you when it has blocked a program, so you can grant it access to your folders (provided you know it's safe). ■



Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Make your own video slideshows

4K Slideshow Maker is an easy-to-use tool for creating attractive slideshows from your own photos and music. Here's what you need to know

4K Slideshow Maker: bit.ly/4kslide501 | 🕒 20 mins

🖥️ 7, 8, 10 🍏 macOS 10.13+ 🐧

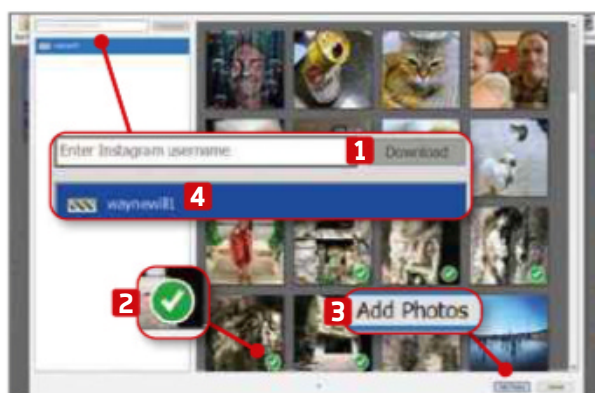
There aren't many opportunities to capture spectacular photos during lockdown, so why not go through your old images, weed out the rubbish and gather your best snaps into a slideshow? 4K Slideshow Maker can turn them into a video production that you can watch on your computer, share on

Facebook or upload to YouTube.

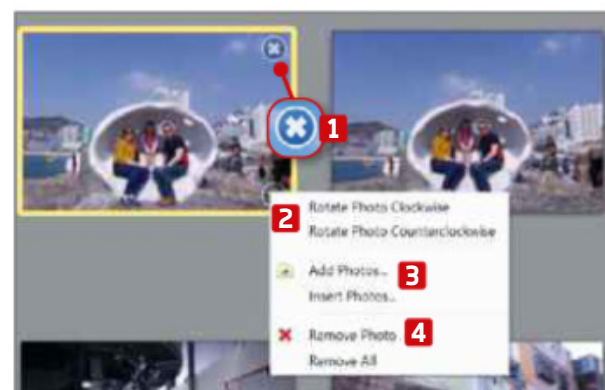
The intuitive design lets you pull photos from your computer or any Instagram account, add a soundtrack of your choice, and introduce effects and transitions to enhance your results. The free software supports a range of formats, and you can adjust the video aspect ratio and quality.



1 To get started, drag the photos you want to include in your slideshow to the main interface **1** or click the Add Photos button. **2** Add as many photos as you want. You can also pull images directly from an Instagram account. **3**



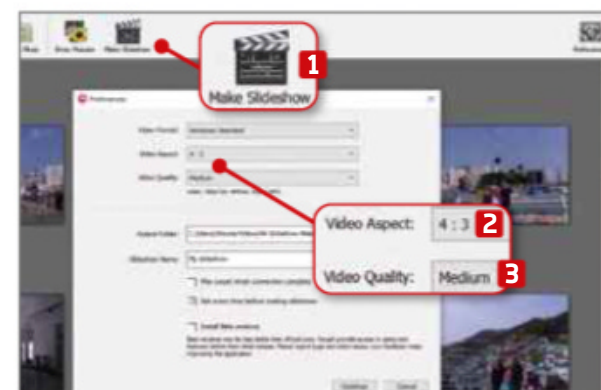
2 To grab content from Instagram, enter your (or someone else's) username and click Download. **1** You're presented with a grid of thumbnails. Select the images you want to include, **2** then click Add Photos. **3** You can add photos from more than one account. **4**



3 Thumbnails of all the photos you've added appear. You can remove any you don't want by hovering over the thumbnail and clicking the X button. **1** Click the arrow at the bottom-right of a thumbnail to rotate, **2** add **3** and delete images. **4**



4 You can reorder the photos by clicking and dragging them. To add a soundtrack, click Change Music **1** and navigate to an audio file on your hard drive. The Show Preview button **2** lets you see a preview of your slideshow. **3** The quality is slightly reduced but it gives you a sense of the finished result.



5 Once you're happy, click the Make Slideshow button. **1** In the Preferences box, select the video format – such as Windows Standard, macOS X Standard, iPhone, iPad, YouTube, Facebook and 4K Ultra HD. Some formats let you adjust the video aspect **2** and quality. **3**





CHOOSE PREFERENCES
Click the button to configure various settings, including the default video format and output folder

CHANGE DURATIONS
Use the sliders to adjust the length of time photos and transitions run for. You can choose to have the slideshow match the audio length

PAN AND ZOOM
With the Ken Burns option ticked, the camera zooms and pans around photos, detecting faces to focus the effect on people. Untick this to keep the photos static

WATCH SLIDESHOW
You can watch the completed slideshow in any media player. Videos created for YouTube and Facebook need to be uploaded manually

Preferences

Photo Duration: 6
Transition Duration: 1.2

☐ Make slideshow duration equal to the audio length
☒ Apply Ken Burns effect
☒ Use face detection technology

Video Format: YouTube Video
Video Aspect: 16 : 9
Video Quality: High
Video: 1280x720, H264, Audio: AAC

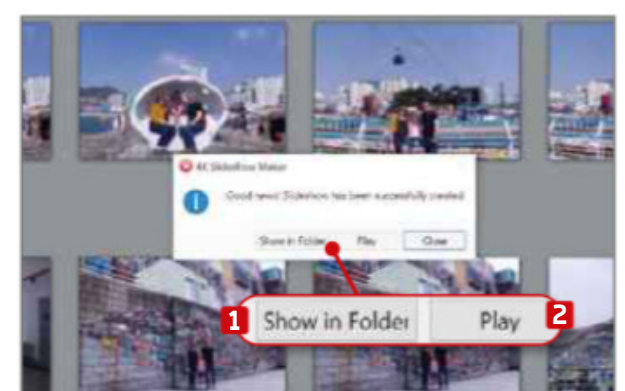
Output Folder: E:\New Desktop
Slideshow Name: South Korea

☐ Play sound when conversion complete
☒ Ask every time before making slideshow

☒ Install Beta versions
Beta versions may be less stable than official ones, though provide access to using new features before their initial release. Please report bugs and other issues, your feedback helps improving the application.

Language: System

24 photos, 65 - Liveliving.mp3



6 You can change the Output Folder, **1** where your finished creation will be saved, and give your slideshow a more descriptive name. **2** The software alerts you when your project is ready. **3** If you wish, you can choose to install beta updates from here. **4** Click Continue **5** and the program makes your slideshow.

7 The process takes time to complete, depending on the quality and number of photos. The bar shows you the progress, **1** along with the number of photos that have been processed so far, and the time remaining. **2** You can pause or cancel the process **3** at any time.

8 Once the slideshow is created, a message appears and you can view the video in the Save folder **1** or start it playing. **2** The quality of the finished show will be much higher than the preview and, depending on the number of photos, may be quite large. The slideshow we created came in at 483MB.



Run privacy fixes and other scripts from one handy tool

Debotnet: bit.ly/debot501 | ⌚ 20 mins | 🖥️ Windows 10



PowerShell lets you control all sorts of elements in Windows directly from the command line, including some options and settings that don't have configuration tools in the standard Windows interface. The trouble is that you need to spend hours learning all the commands and their nuances, otherwise it's difficult to know where to start.

Debotnet is a brilliant free tool that does all the hard work for you, providing a simple interface for a range of great scripts, explaining what they do and letting you action the ones you need. You don't need to install the software, just save and unzip the download to a folder on your PC, then double-click the Debotnet icon.

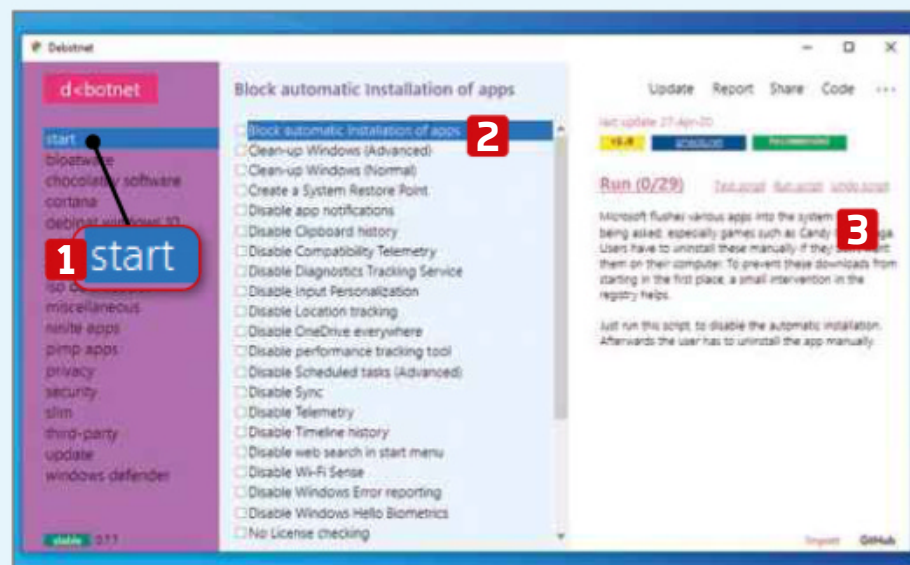
Although these scripts are all safe to run, we still recommend that you perform a full backup of your PC settings before running any of them.



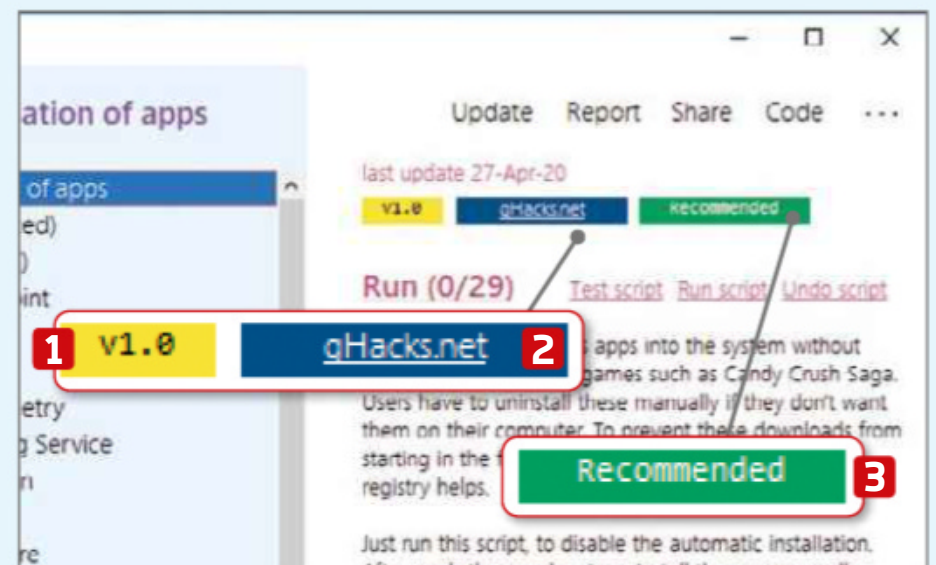
EXPERT TIP

Andy Shaw says

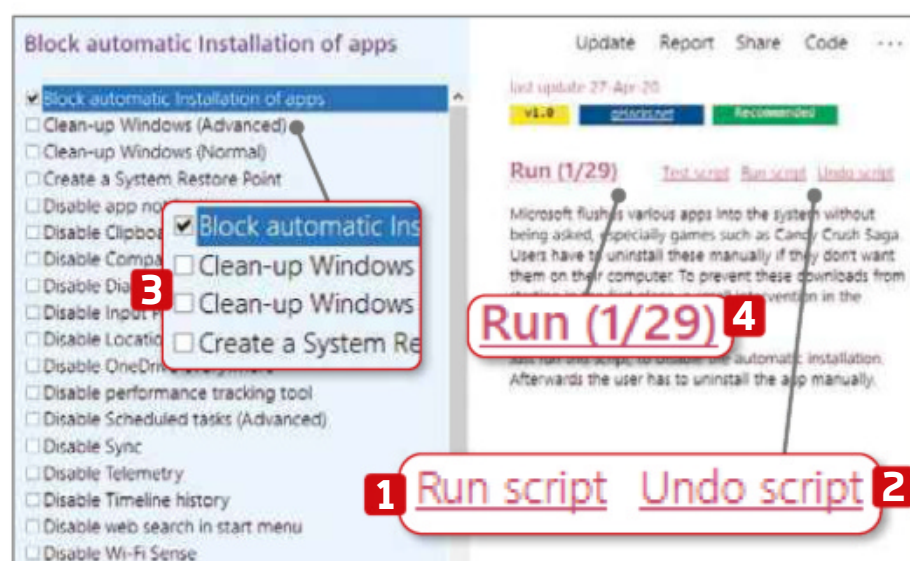
Microsoft isn't keen on programs that nip in and change its settings, but Debotnet runs completely under the radar – you don't even have to install it. However, you may find that your changes are undone by Windows updates, particularly the bigger spring and autumn ones. To keep on top of this, make sure you run your preferred scripts regularly.



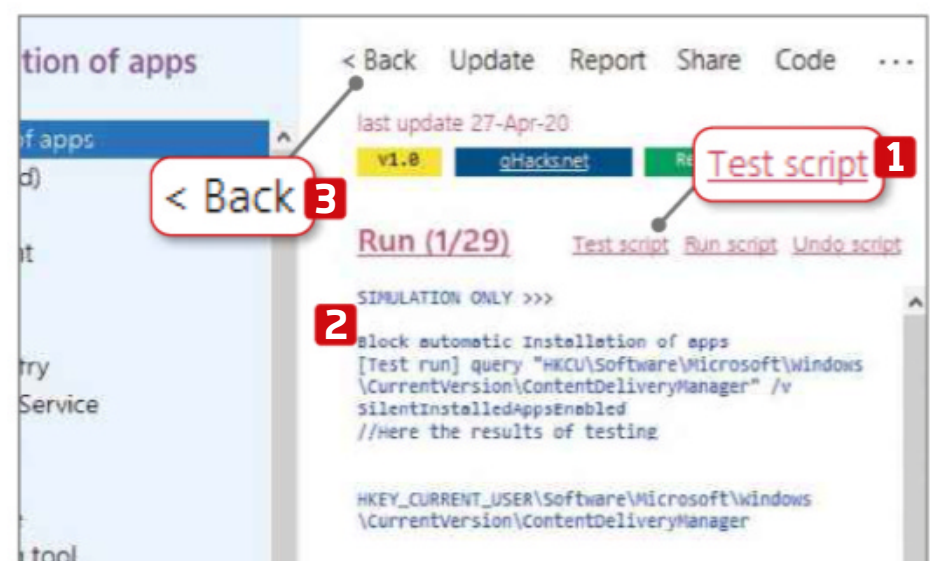
1 The menu running down the left-hand side of Debotnet's interface displays the list of categories the software can explore. Click the 'start' option **1** to open the middle menu, **2** which lists all the scripts available in that particular section. Click each option to see a description of what it does on the right-hand side of the screen. **3**



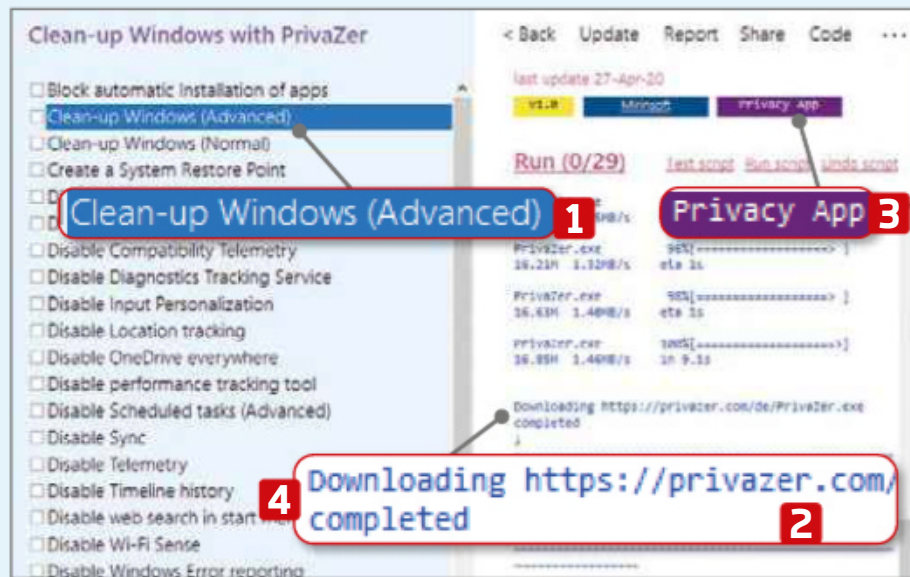
2 The right-hand panel showing a script's details displays its version number, **1** where it originates from **2** (which is often – but not always – Debotnet's developer, Mirinsoft) and whether the action is Recommended, **3** of Limited use (usually in specific situations) or Custom (make up your own mind).



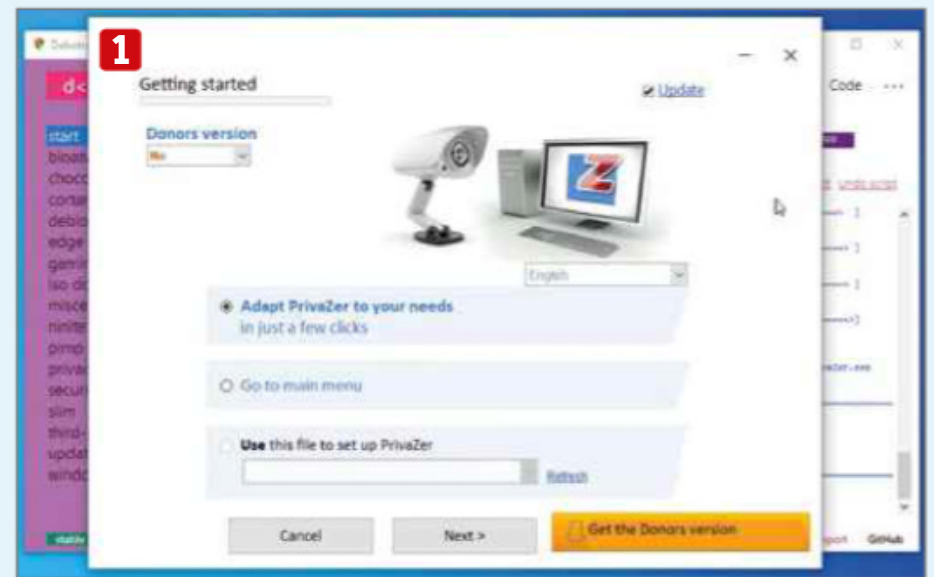
3 If you see a script you like the look of, click 'Run script' **1** to run it. If you experience problems, you can click 'Undo script' **2** to reverse it. If you're feeling brave, you could tick multiple options on screen **3** and click the 'Run (x/x)' link. **4** However, we'd recommend running one script at a time.



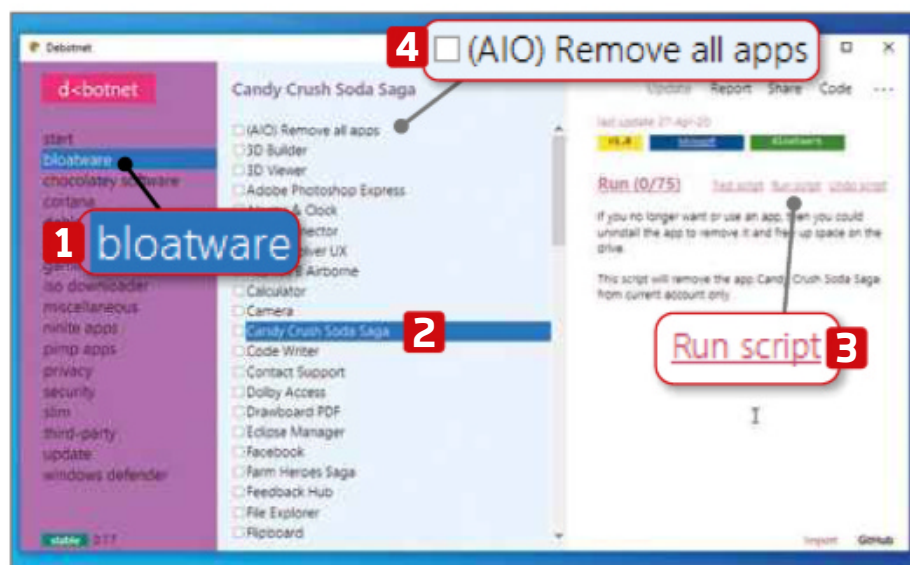
4 If you'd prefer to know what's going to happen before running a script, click the 'Test script' link. **1** This simulates the process to display what commands are run **2** but doesn't action them. Click the Back link **3** to return to the script's description.



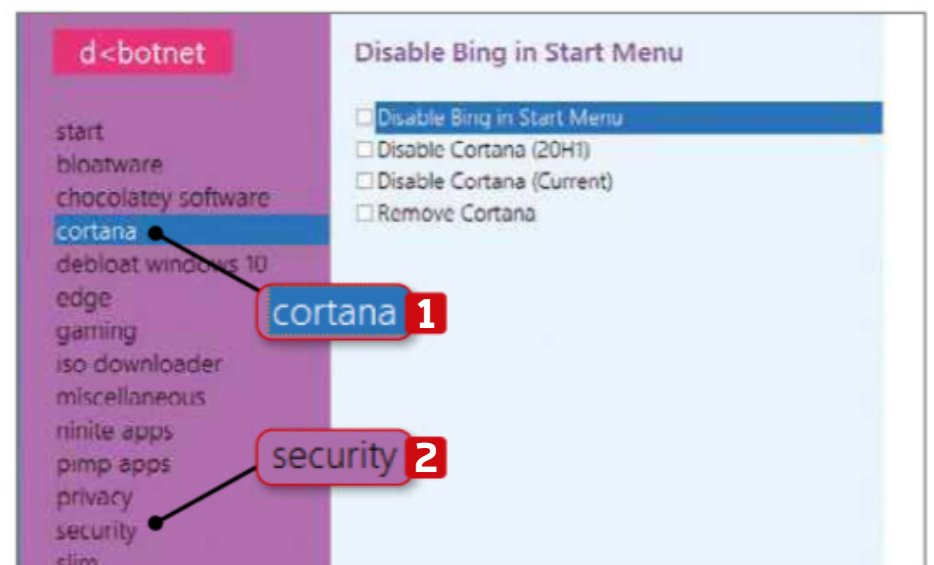
5 The 'start' section contains lots of handy scripts, including a wide range of privacy tools. The option to 'Clean-up Windows (advanced)' **1** is a good example of a script that launches another program – in this case, Privazer (privazer.com). **2** It's labelled as a Privacy App. **3** Click 'Run script' to download the portable version. **4**



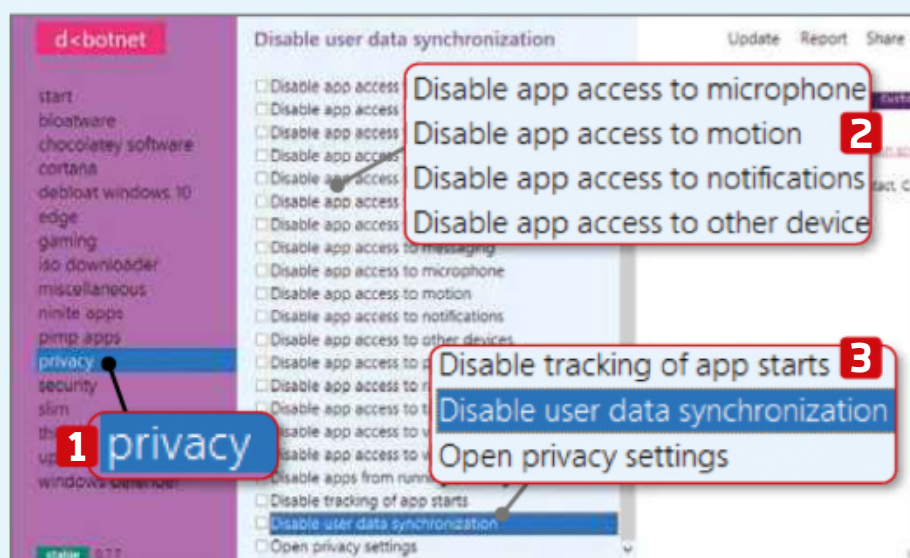
6 The software launches automatically. **1** The script doesn't make any further choices or customisations for you, so you will need to then configure and run the software's options yourself.



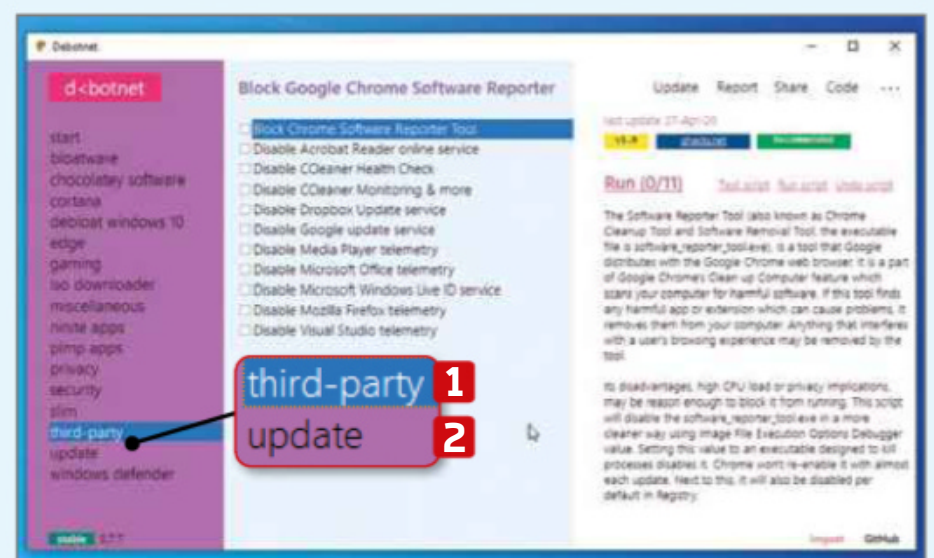
7 The 'bloatware' option **1** can be used to remove any preinstalled Windows 10 software you don't use. Either select the individual app **2** and click 'Run script' **3** or choose the '(AIO) Remove all apps' option **4** to take out everything listed below except for the Windows Store.



8 The 'cortana' menu **1** has some useful privacy settings, such as allowing you to stop your searches being sent to Microsoft and blocking Cortana, if you don't use it. It's also worth exploring the 'security' options **2** to hide passwords and block information leaking about your entertainment choices.



9 The 'privacy' section **1** has a long list of scripts, most of which block apps from being able to access information from other programs. **2** The final options block various reports from being sent back to Microsoft, either through syncing apps or other means. **3**



10 The 'third-party' section **1** blocks programs that may be sitting in the taskbar's notification area, checking your PC and reporting back to their owners. Use the 'update' section **2** to control Windows' updating tools, such as delaying feature updates, if you need to.



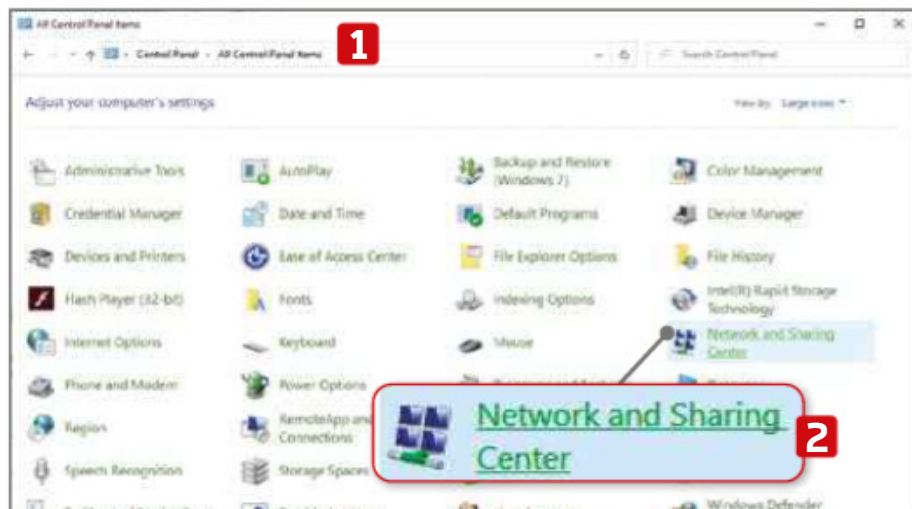
Block malware and adult sites automatically

Cloudflare's alternative DNS service, 1.1.1.1, has launched a version of its privacy-focused technology called '1.1.1.1 for Families'. This adds filtering to its existing DNS service, blocking known malware sites well before they get anywhere

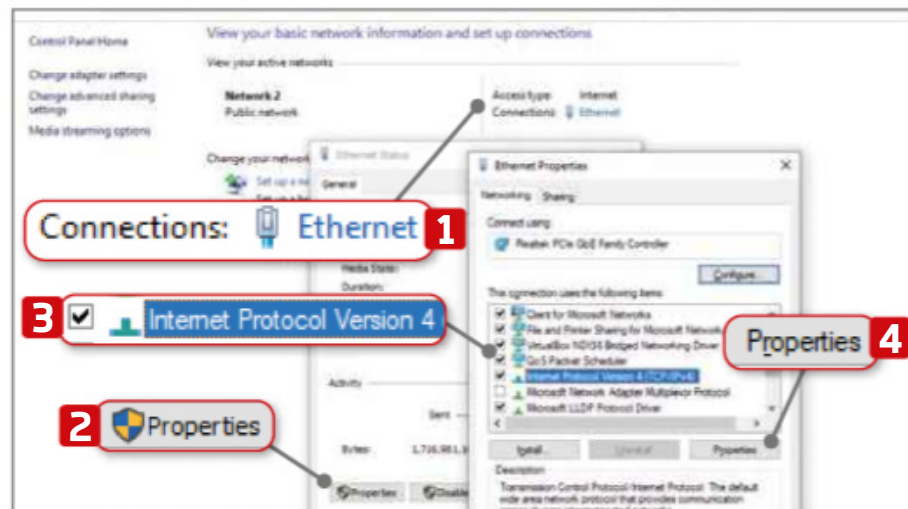
near your devices. There's also a further option to block adult sites, which is particularly useful for devices used by children.



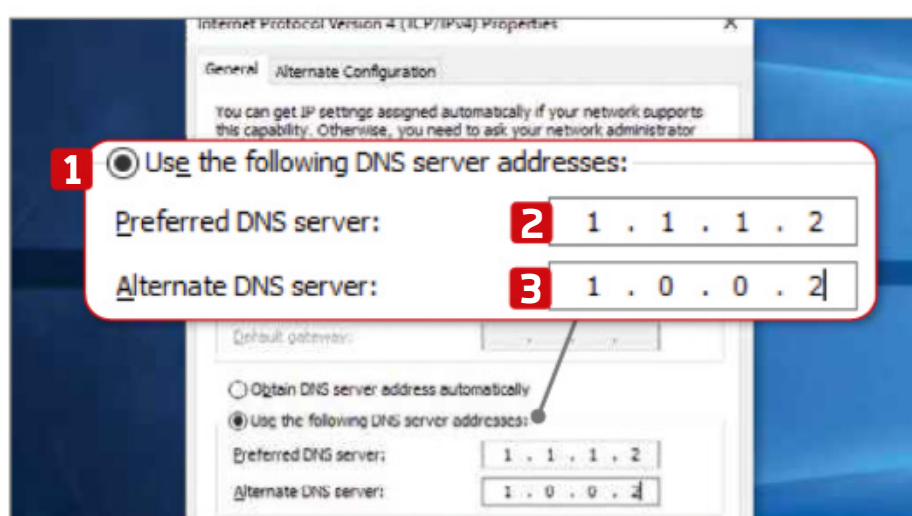
1.1.1.1 For Families: 1.1.1.1/family | **10 mins** | **Most internet-connected devices**



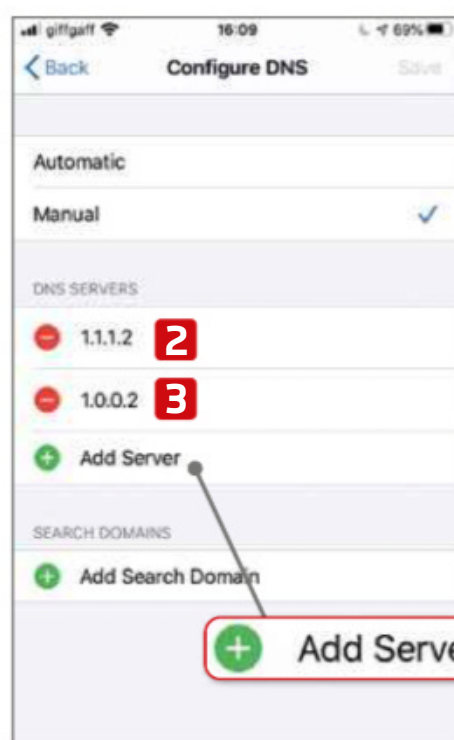
1 DNS (Domain Name System) is the online database that translates the URLs we know into the numbered addresses assigned to the servers where websites are hosted. To use 1.1.1.1 for Families on a Windows 10 PC, open the Control Panel **1** and open the 'Network and Sharing Center'. **2**



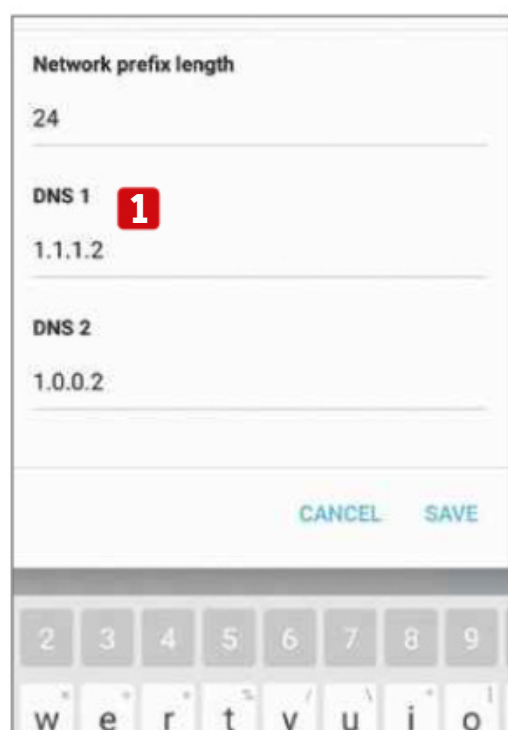
2 Click the link next to Connections. **1** In our case, this was Ethernet, but yours might be different if you're connected via Wi-Fi. In the window that opens, click the Properties button. **2** In the next window, highlight the Internet Protocol Version **3** and click Properties. **4**



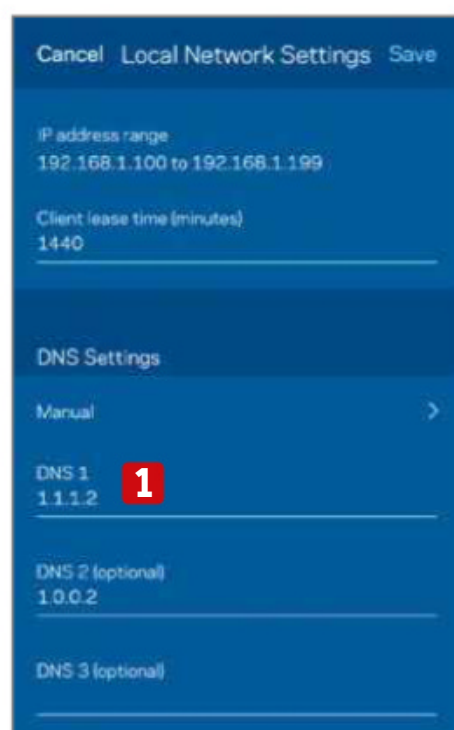
3 Click the radio button for 'Use the following DNS server addresses'. **1** To block malware sites only, enter the 'Preferred DNS server' as 1.1.1.2. **2** The 'Alternate DNS server' should be set to 1.0.0.2. **3** To also block adult sites, use 1.1.1.3 and 1.0.0.3 instead.



4 On an iPhone or iPad, open Settings, Wi-Fi and tap the 'i' next to the current network. Tap Configure DNS, then tap Manual. If there are any DNS servers already listed, make a note of them in case you change your mind, then delete them. Tap Add Server **1** and add either 1.1.1.2 or 1.1.1.3, as in step 3. **2** Also add the alternate server of your choice. **3**



5 The service hasn't officially launched for mobile devices, and Android 9 and above won't let you access DNS settings. In older versions of Android, you can change this. **1** However, you may need to know some other network settings. Access them by tapping and holding your network.



6 Many (but not all) routers let you change their DNS settings. Doing so means that all the devices connecting through your router will use your chosen service. Each router's configuration options will differ but in our Linksys app, for example, we were able to change the DNS in the Local Network Settings section. **1**

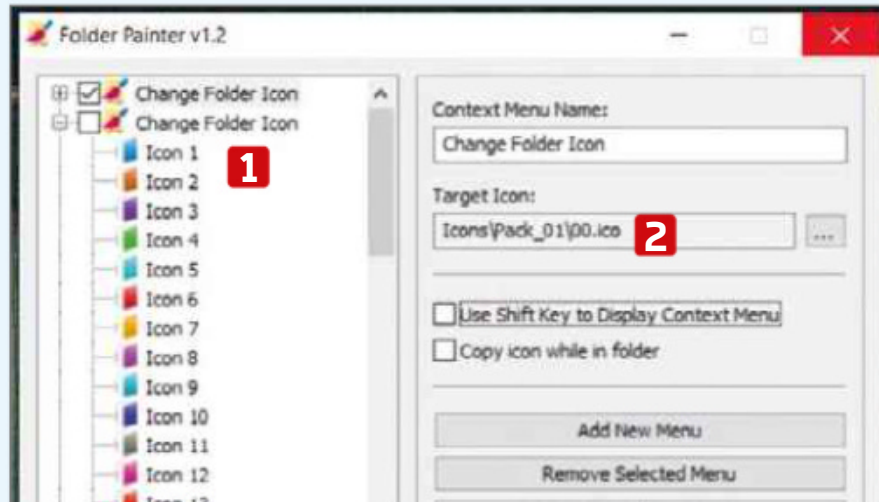


Colour-code your Windows files and folders

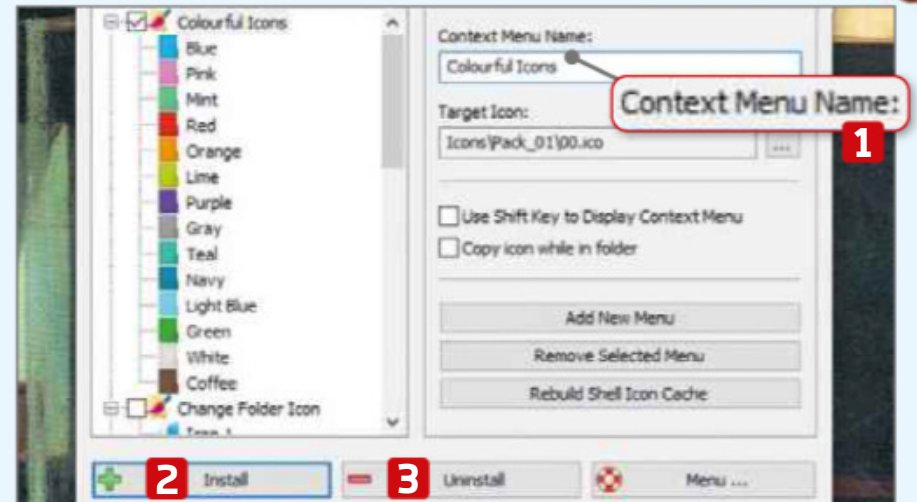
Folder Painter is a simple tool for jazzing up the folders on your computer. Its preinstalled icon packs let you add a drop of colour to your desktop or change the folder icon to a more appropriate image. It's also great for

organisation – letting you colour-code your folders so that work documents and family business, for example, are kept separate and can be identified at a glance.

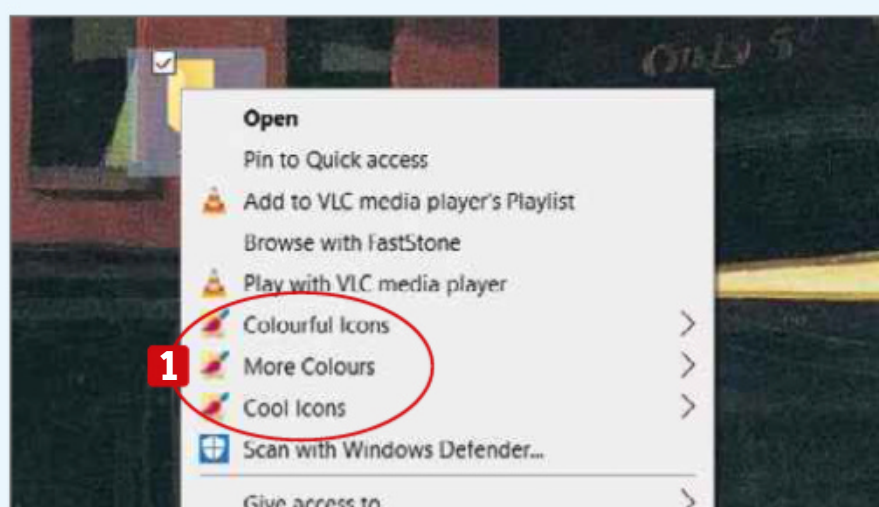
Folder Painter: bit.ly/painter501 | ⌚ 10 mins | 🖥️ 7, 8, 10



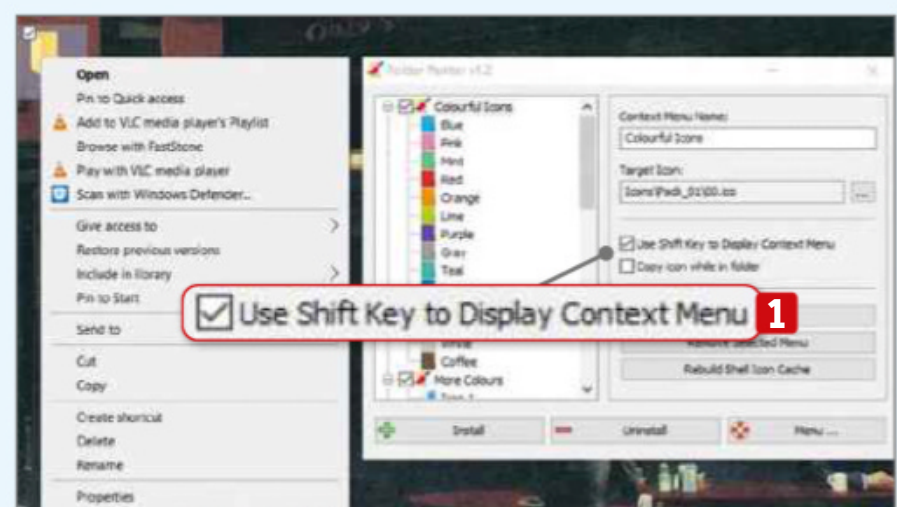
1 Start by choosing which icon packs you want. In the tree-view panel on the left, **1** use the tick boxes to choose different colours for folders, as well as new icons. A preview of each icon is displayed. You can view larger versions of each icon pack by clicking Target Icon. **2**



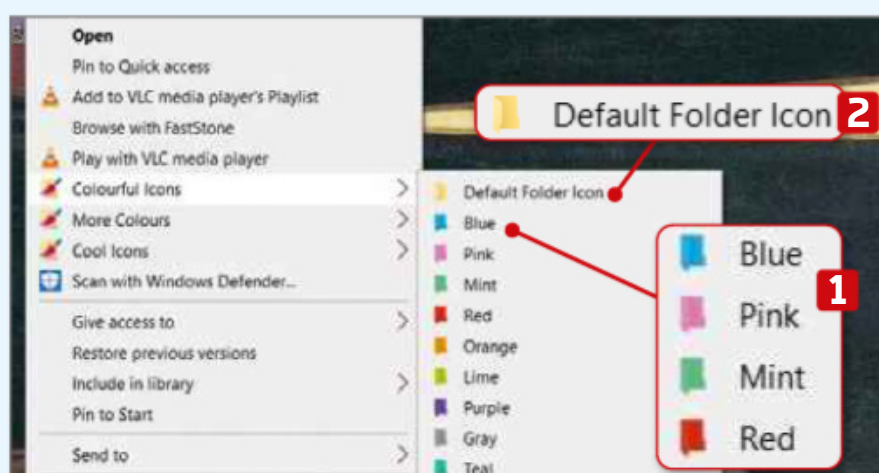
2 Be sure to highlight each parent name and, under Context Menu Name, **1** change it to something different, such as Colour Icons or Style Icons. Click Install **2** to complete the setup. Each change can be deleted by reversing the procedure and choosing Uninstall. **3**



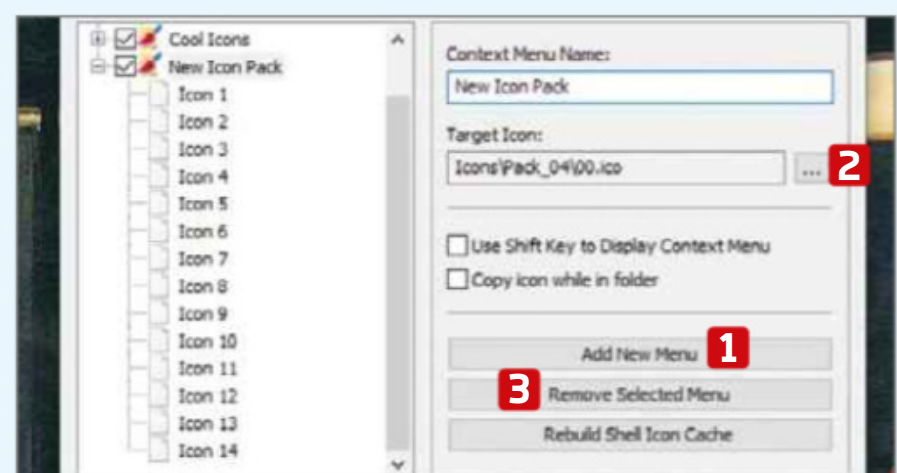
3 The installation isn't confirmed, so check it's worked by creating a test folder on your desktop and right-clicking it. The context menu should now display three new Folder Painter options. **1** If you didn't change the names in Step 2, all three will be named Change Folder Icon.



4 If you now find the context menu too cluttered, reopen Folder Painter and highlight each icon pack individually. Add a tick to 'Use Shift Key to Display Context Menu'. **1** and press Enter. This hides the icon change options. To reveal them, hold down Shift, then right-click your folder.



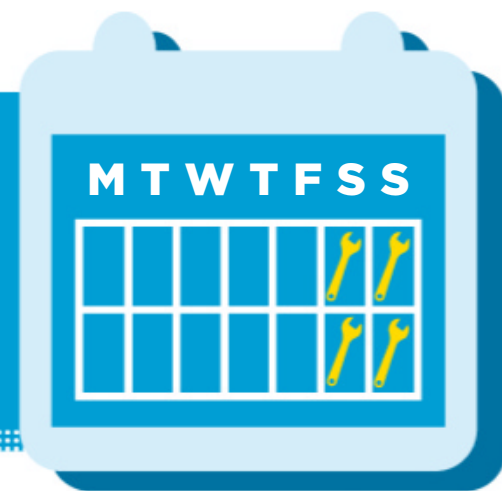
5 With the context menu open on your selected folder, hover across to choose a new colour or icon. **1** The change is instant. You can revert back to the original folder icon by repeating the move, then selecting Default Folder Icon. **2**



6 To add more icons, download and extract the pre-built icons from bit.ly/iconpacks501. Open Folder Painter and click Add New Menu, **1** then the three-dot menu. **2** Navigate to the icon packs and select one. To remove a pack, highlight the new menu and click Remove Selected Menu. **3**

Weekend Project

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



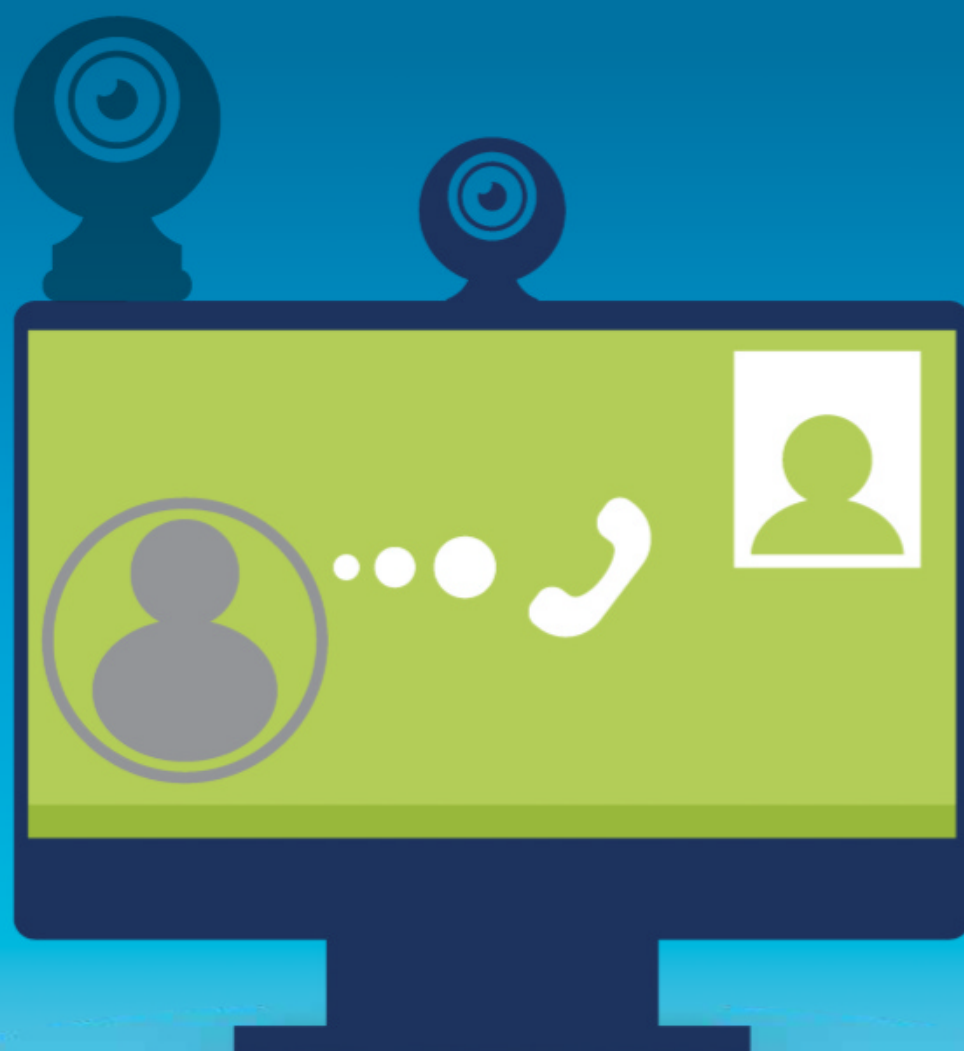
How to...

Create multi-camera video chats during lockdown

Wayne Williams explains how to use more than one camera for a new angle on lockdown video conversations

Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented number of people are working from home or have been furloughed from their jobs. Many of us have been turning to the likes of Skype (www.skype.com) and Zoom (zoom.us) to participate in company meetings or interact with friends and family we can't be around.

You may already have a preferred choice of video service that you've mastered but, if you fancy something different for your next video call, you could consider using multiple cameras so each member of your lockdown household can be seen, or to allow you to focus a camera on something else while you chat. It's fun and easy to do.



What you'll need

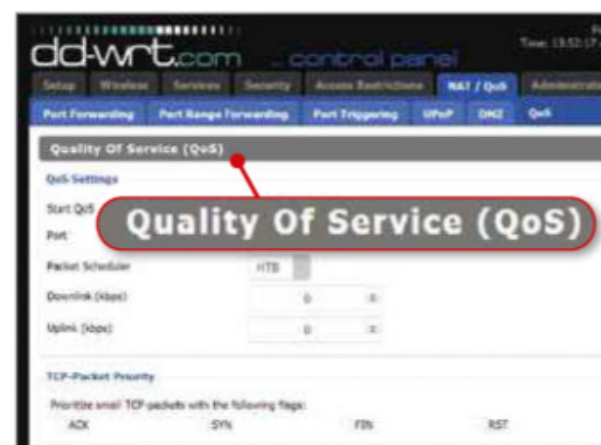
For this Weekend Project, we're using Skype because it's the service most of our readers will be familiar with. The official app doesn't let you use more than one camera during a call, but there are a couple of clever workarounds that we'll be exploring.

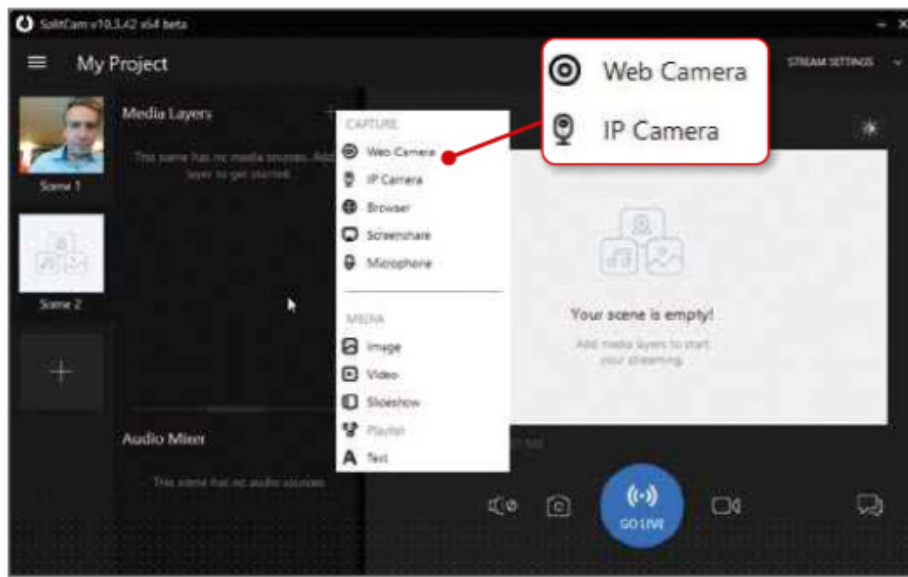
It would be remiss of us to ignore Zoom entirely, because the service has gained a massive audience following the

global lockdown, so we'll show you how to use the same clever tricks for that, too.

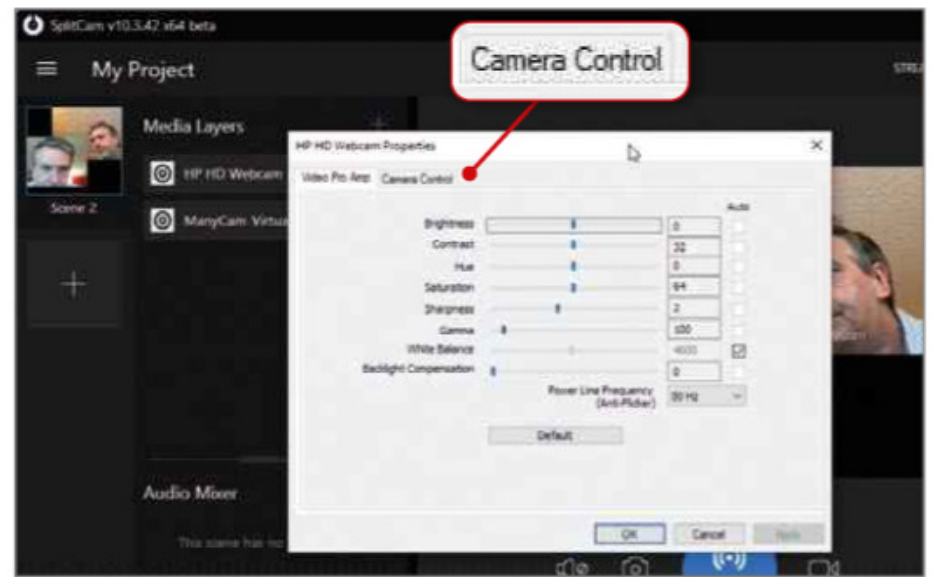
Depending on the method you opt for, you'll need two or more devices with built-in cameras, such as a laptop, phone, tablet or several webcams.

If your router has QoS tools, you can use them to prioritise Skype or any other video-calling service





You can add a number of video sources to SplitCam, including web cameras and IP cameras



SplitCam lets you adjust a camera's image brightness, contrast, hue, saturation, sharpness and more

Use different devices

The easiest – but, arguably, most inelegant – solution is to use multiple devices. Lots of gadgets have cameras that let you video conference. Laptops have webcams and usually have good sound and video quality, while smartphones are more portable and easier to position where you need them.

Since Skype doesn't let you use multiple cameras, our workaround involves creating individual Skype accounts for each device. You need a different email address for each Skype account, which takes a little time to set up, but once your devices are signed into their various Skype accounts, you can set them up to provide the angles you want, then connect each one to the meeting or group chat.

There are a couple of considerations to take into account. The first is that all your devices will be streaming video simultaneously, which will have a

noticeable impact on your home-network capacity. If you have a fast broadband connection, you probably won't notice, but if you live in a very isolated location or have limited internet capacity, you might suffer from low-quality video. If that's the case, consider limiting yourself to two cameras and make sure you prioritise traffic to Skype.

You should disable anything else that uses bandwidth (downloads and streaming in particular) and check your router settings for a QoS (Quality of Service) option. This lets you choose which services take priority when accessing the internet, such as your video-chat software.

The other thing to consider is sound. If you have, say, three devices connected to a chat, that's three microphones broadcasting what you say to everyone at the same time, including your other devices. Similarly, when someone elsewhere says something, you'll have

three (or more) speakers playing it back. Feedback caused by devices being too close to each other can also be an issue.

To overcome these problems, disable audio and microphone on all but one of your devices, and make sure they are placed far enough apart to avoid interference (think social-distancing for devices!).

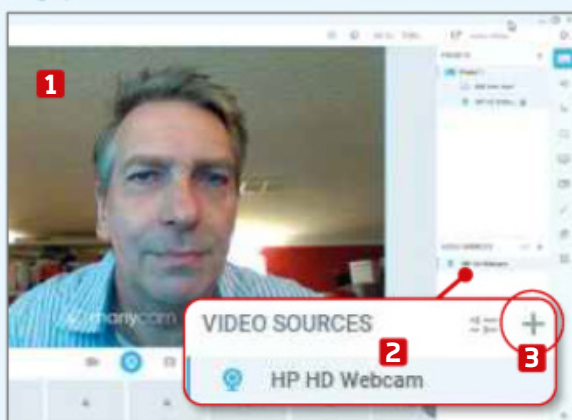
Use a webcam app

Another way to add multiple cameras to Skype is to use a free software tool such as ManyCam (manycam.com) or SplitCam (splitcam.com) as your Skype video input. You can then connect multiple cameras to the app. It's a quick and easy solution, but with some potential restrictions to be aware of.

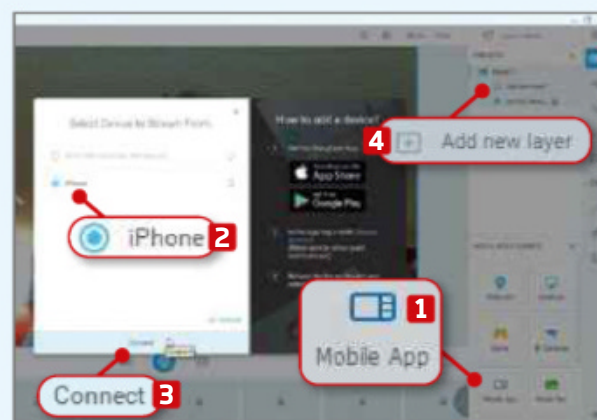
ManyCam is available for Windows 7 and upwards, macOS, iOS/iPadOS and Android. It lets you add multiple video sources – including other webcams, IP cameras and even mobile phones.



MINI WORKSHOP | Add your phone camera to ManyCam



1 Install and run the software on your computer, create a free ManyCam account and log in. Download the app for your phone and log in using the same account details. If your computer has a camera, the live image displays automatically **1** and the camera's name is listed under Video Sources. **2** Click the plus sign to add the second camera. **3**



2 Click the Mobile App tile **1** and, in the box that opens, select your phone **2** and click Connect. **3** Now go to your phone and tap Allow. Back on your computer, look in the right-hand sidebar under Presets. Click 'Add new layer' **4** and add the webcams. The second camera's image appears.



3 The final step is to open or switch to Skype. Log in, if you haven't already, and go to Settings, Audio & Video. **1** In the drop-down menu next to Camera, select ManyCam Virtual Webcam. **2** The dual-camera view is displayed. **3** Start a new video call or group chat. The people you are conversing with will be able to see the multiple cameras.

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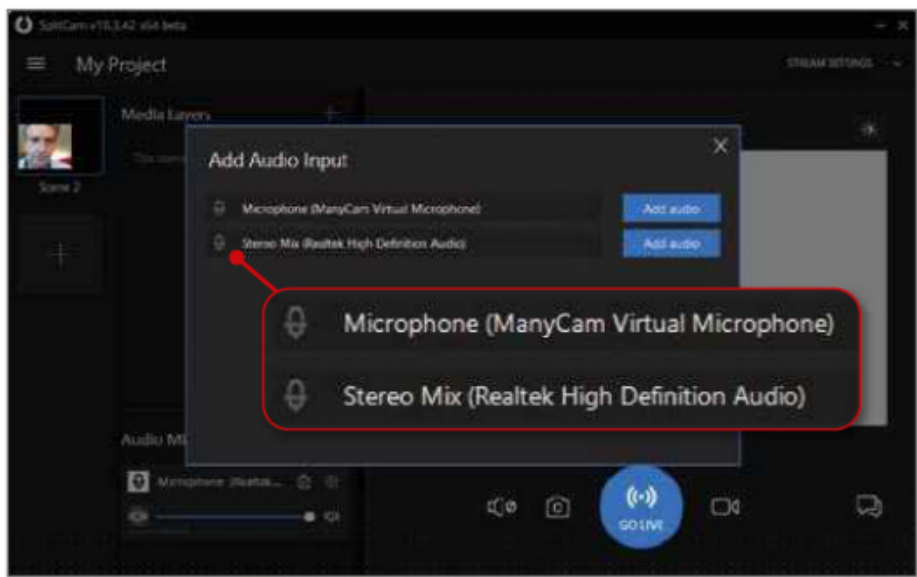
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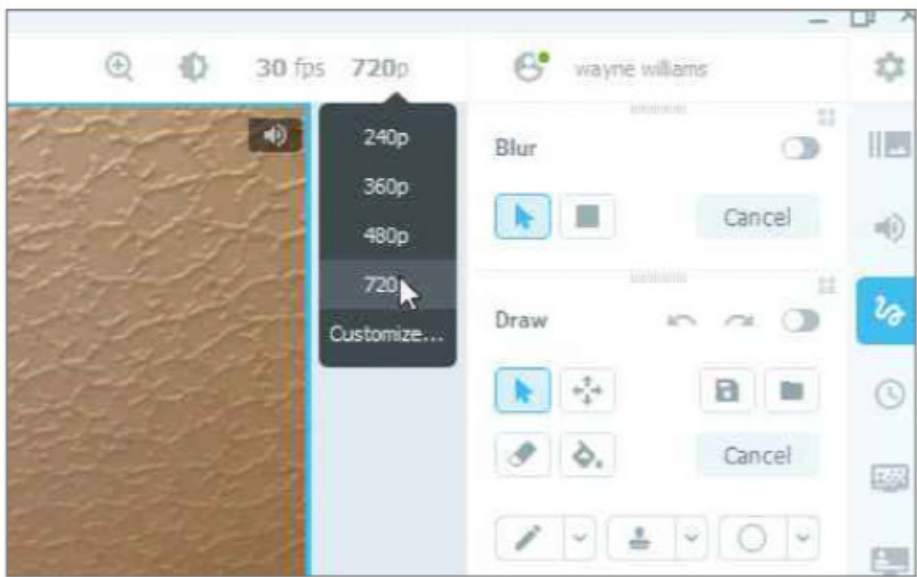
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To avoid a cacophony of sound, SplitCam lets you specify which audio source to use



Adjust the webcam resolution in ManyCam to ensure it displays as intended

We show you how to add a phone camera in our Mini Workshop on page 59.

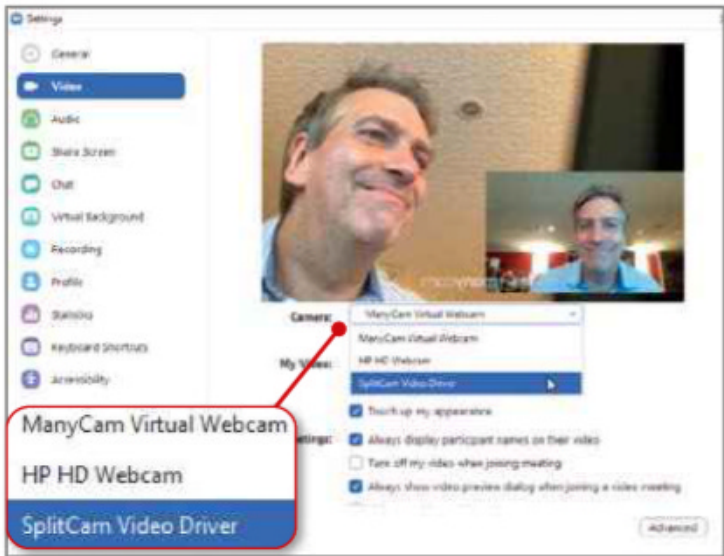
You can also introduce pre-recorded videos, images, web sources and more. However, there is one major limitation – the free edition limits you to just two camera inputs. If want more, you can sign up to the Standard plan for £28.20 a year (or £62.22 for a lifetime licence) to increase the number of video sources to four. There are also Studio and Premium plans available if you want to go the whole hog and add more sources and higher quality video (up to 4K).

SplitCam is another option to consider and is entirely free. As well as letting you combine multiple cameras in a single input, it can split your webcam signal so it's available in programs such as Skype, Zoom

and Facebook Messenger – all at the same time (though this is more relevant for broadcasting than chatting). It also lets you resize all the camera inputs,

which is something you can't do with the free version of ManyCam.

We show you how to get this working in our Mini Workshop, below.



Zoom, like Skype, lets you change your camera source, including choosing SplitCam or ManyCam

Connect your inputs to Zoom

We've shown you how to set everything up with Skype but the process isn't much different with the current darling of the video-conferencing world, Zoom. All you need to do is click the cog icon on the right-hand side of Zoom's interface to open the Settings screen. Click Video on the left, then click the Camera drop-down menu and select the multi-camera option (SplitCam Video Driver or ManyCam Virtual Webcam, in this example). That's it. You're all set to create or join a meeting, just as you would normally.

MINI WORKSHOP | Add multiple cameras to SplitCam

1 The process of adding cameras to SplitCam is much the same as in ManyCam, except it's slightly more flexible and you can add additional sources. Launch the app and, if you're using a laptop, you get a video preview from its camera. **1** Click the large plus sign **2** to create a new scene.

2 Click the plus sign next to Media Layers and select the type of camera to add. The available devices are shown. **1** You can adjust the resolution of a camera now **2** or change it later in Settings. Click the 'Add camera' button. **3** Repeat the process to add extra sources.

3 You can also add the ManyCam view to SplitCam (and vice versa). Drag the handles **1** to resize and change the position of the cameras until you have a layout you like. To add this view to Skype, go to Settings, Audio & Video. Now, click the drop-down menu next to Camera and select SplitCam Video Driver.

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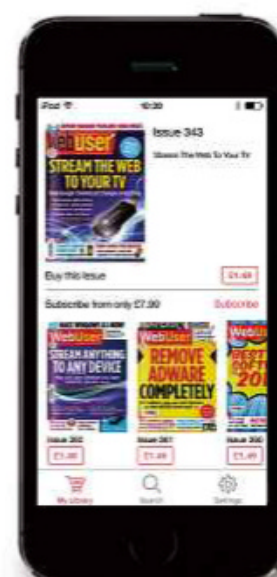
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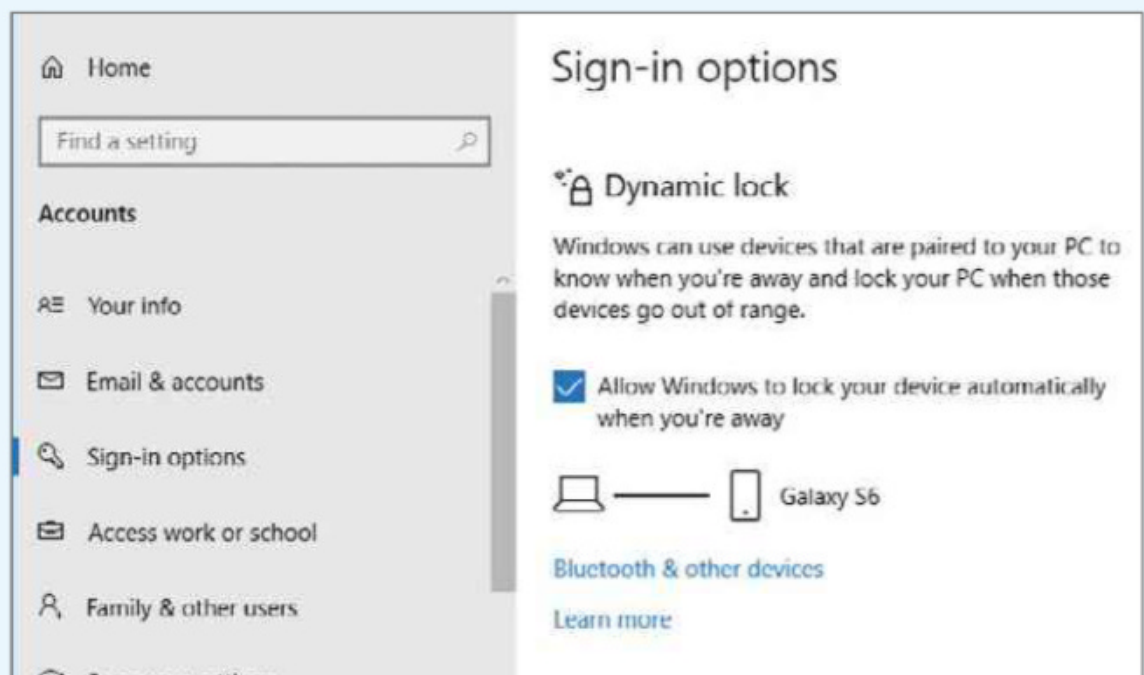
Web User Masterclass

Get more from Bluetooth on your PC, phone and other devices

Automatically lock your PC using Bluetooth

If you want to make sure that no one messes with your PC while you leave it unattended, you can set it to lock automatically whenever you step away. This security feature works by pairing your computer with a Bluetooth device, such as a phone or smartwatch. As soon as you walk out of Bluetooth range – which isn't very far – the PC locks itself automatically.

To set this up, open the Windows 10 Settings app and click Accounts. Select 'Sign-in options' on the left, then scroll down to 'Dynamic lock'. Tick the box next to 'Allow Windows to lock your device automatically when you're away' and the feature adds a paired device, such as your phone. To undo this action, just return here and clear the tick.



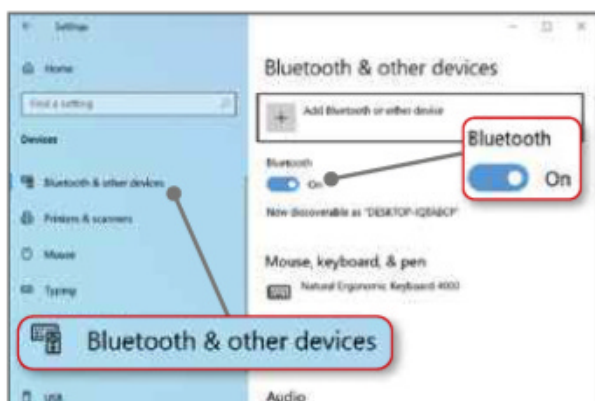
Use Bluetooth to set your PC to lock automatically when you walk away

Check your PC for Bluetooth

All smartphones have Bluetooth, even the most basic models. Old desktop PCs don't always have it, but most recent models do, and budget desktop PCs might sometimes have old versions of Bluetooth. Laptops are more likely to have newer versions.

To see if your Windows 10 computer has Bluetooth, open Settings, click Devices and you should find a Bluetooth section with a switch, along with some other information.

On any version of Windows, you can open the Control Panel and enter **bluetooth** into the search box. The results contain 'Add a Bluetooth device' and 'Change Bluetooth settings'.

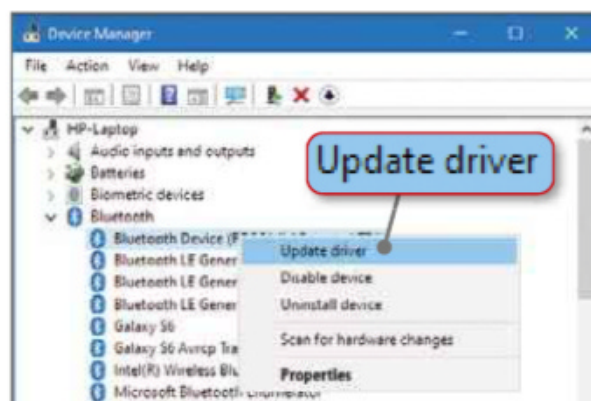


If your PC has Bluetooth, you'll find the details in Windows 10's Settings app

Update Bluetooth drivers

There are several different versions of Bluetooth – the first was version 1.0, but we're now up to 5.2. Because the hardware changes each time, you can't upgrade to a newer version. However, updated drivers may fix bugs and improve device compatibility, so it's worth checking for them. Open Device Manager in the Control Panel or by right-clicking the Start menu. Expand the Bluetooth category, right-click each item and select 'Update driver'.

In the unlikely event of an update causing problems, double-click the Bluetooth entries to open the Properties window, select the Driver tab and click Roll Back Driver, if it's available.



Device Manager can check for Bluetooth, update drivers and disable devices

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.

Save battery power by disabling Bluetooth

Bluetooth is a low-power wireless technology, so turning it off on a laptop or mobile device won't massively reduce battery drain, but it may help if you need to squeeze out a few more minutes of power.

On a laptop, open the Windows 10 Settings, click Devices, select 'Bluetooth & other devices' and turn off the switch. On an iPhone and iPad, go to Settings, Bluetooth. On Android devices, open Settings, Connections, then Bluetooth.

Make your device discoverable

You can set a Bluetooth device to be hidden or made public. Hiding it is useful when you're in public and don't



Allow your computer to be found when setting up Bluetooth devices

want other people trying to connect to your phone, because anyone could send you an unsolicited message or file. Conversely, broadcasting Bluetooth's presence is useful when setting up devices – such as connecting a phone or smartwatch to a computer.

Open Windows 10 Settings and click Devices, 'Bluetooth & other devices'. Turn on Bluetooth, then click the 'More Bluetooth options' link to open a new window. On the Hardware tab, you'll find 'Allow Bluetooth devices to find this PC'. Enable this when setting up new devices, such as a mouse, headphones, speakers and other peripherals.

Add a Bluetooth device

Bluetooth devices must be paired. This is a process by which two devices are authorised to communicate with each other. If both devices have screens, such as a PC and a phone or tablet, then go into Bluetooth settings on both devices and make sure they are discoverable.

A connection can be initiated on either device. On a PC, go to Settings, Devices, 'Bluetooth & other devices', then click the plus button next to 'Add Bluetooth or other device'.

On a phone, go to Bluetooth and tap Scan. A code is displayed on both devices. If they're the same, tap the button to authorise the pairing.

Headphones and earphones don't have screens, but they will provide some other method of activating pairing, such as a button. You can then click the plus button in the Bluetooth section of Settings on your PC and scan for it. Select the device to pair it.

Check the battery level

Some Bluetooth devices report their battery level to the computer, so you can check whether your Bluetooth mouse, keyboard or headphones are running out of juice. Support isn't universal and not all devices have the function, but try it and see. Open Settings, Devices and click the device in the Bluetooth section. There may be a battery-level indicator in addition to the Disconnect and 'Remove device' buttons.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Check the Bluetooth version

Some Bluetooth devices require a minimum version in order to work, which means a device that needs Bluetooth 5.0 won't function with another device that only has Bluetooth 4.1. Versions don't have to be identical, but they both need to meet the minimum required for a particular activity.

If you're having problems connecting two devices, make sure they both meet the minimum Bluetooth version. Headphones, earphones, speakers and other such devices will usually display specifications on the box but, failing that, you may need to find the specs on the manufacturer's website to see which version it's using.

On a Windows 10 computer, open the Settings app and click Devices. Select 'Bluetooth & other devices', then scroll down to the bottom and click 'More Bluetooth options'. In the next window, select the Hardware tab, then the Bluetooth device (not protocols or enumerators) and click Properties. Select the Advanced tab in the next window and look for the firmware version. It says LMP followed by a number:

LMP 6.x/7.x/8.x = Bluetooth 4.0/4.1/4.2

LMP 9.x/10.x/11.x = Bluetooth 5.0/5.1/5.2

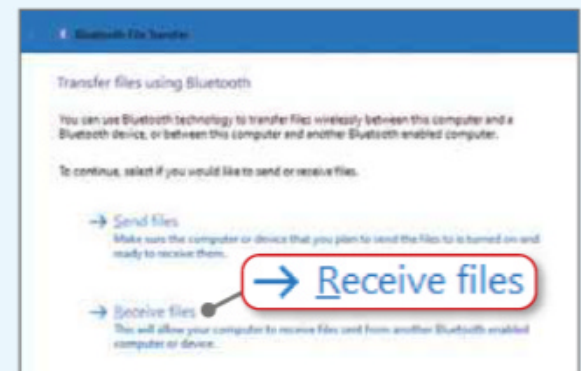
If you're buying a new PC, check the Bluetooth version in the specifications. Version 4.0 is nearly 10 years old and doesn't support as many uses as version 5.0. Make sure that at least 4.1 is available, if not higher, because that's the requirement for smartwatches and fitness-tracker bands, and they may not connect to your PC or phone with less.

Send and receive files

If your phone or tablet is paired with a computer, you can use the connection to transfer files, which is handy if you don't have a USB cable.

On your PC, open Settings, Devices, 'Bluetooth & other devices', then scroll down to the bottom and click 'Send or receive files via Bluetooth'. A window appears with the options to 'Send files' or 'Receive files'. Click Receive files.

On an Android phone, for example, open a photo in the Gallery app and



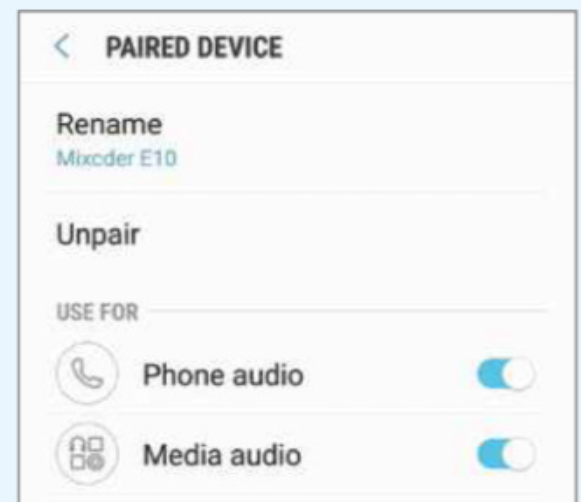
Click Receive files, then send them from your phone or tablet over Bluetooth

click the Share button. Tap Bluetooth, then select your computer as the device to send it to.

Back on your computer, a progress bar shows the content being received. When it's complete, you're asked where you want to save it.

Select an action

With some devices, it's possible to choose a specific action for a Bluetooth-paired device. For example, a phone could send music to headphones or make phone calls. On an Android phone, go to Settings, Connections, Bluetooth and tap the device it's paired with, such as headphones. Use the switches to choose 'Phone audio' or 'Media audio', as you prefer.



Choose what to send to a Bluetooth device: phone calls, media audio or both

Troubleshoot Bluetooth devices

If you're having problems connecting to or finding Bluetooth devices, or getting them to work together, use the troubleshooter. Open Windows 10 Settings, choose 'Update & Security', Troubleshoot, then Bluetooth (or 'Additional troubleshooters', if you can't see it). Alternatively, open the Control Panel, Troubleshooting, then 'View all'. You can then run the Bluetooth troubleshooter.

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



SECURITY

Unlock an encrypted drive

Q I'm currently wrestling with a double-whammy of PC problems, but I'm not particularly IT literate so I hope you can help. Three months ago, I bought an HP 17 Envy laptop. It recently decided to perform an HP BIOS update, which surprised me, particularly because my 12-year-old Asus laptop managed without ever doing one.

Everything seemed to be going well until the PC asked me for my BitLocker recovery key. It suggested I check my Microsoft account for this, and gave me a 30-odd character password to access this key.

To add insult to injury, I can't access the Microsoft account I set up when I bought the new laptop. My Microsoft account password works but the Privacy section won't accept the four-digit code Microsoft sent me by email when I set up the account. I'm using Windows 7 on my Asus laptop to access the account.

I gather that BitLocker is an encryption tool, and that sometimes

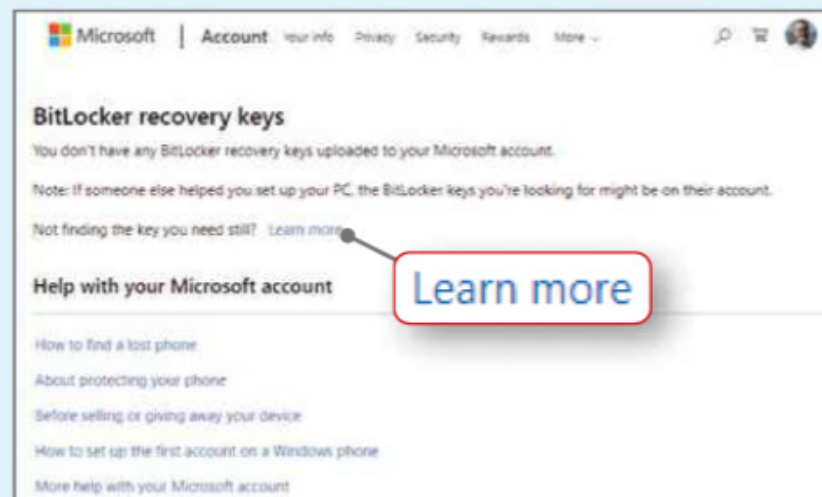
BIOS updates can confuse Windows. I don't know how to get out of this situation, so any help would be appreciated.

If and when I get everything back to normal, is there a way to stop HP updating the BIOS? It's not worth this much trouble.

David Wheeler, via email

A Not every version of Windows includes BitLocker disk encryption, but it's an excellent way to secure your files. However, if you lose your encryption key, there's no way to unlock the drive and no way to recover anything on it. That's how secure it is.

When you encrypt a drive using BitLocker, you can choose to save the encryption key to your Microsoft account, print it out or save it as a file to a USB memory stick. To see if the key is in your Microsoft account, go to



BitLocker keys are stored in your Microsoft account. Click 'Learn more' if you can't see it

account.microsoft.com/devices/recoverykey in a web browser and look for it there. If you can't see it – or you can't access your account and you don't have a printout or a copy of the file saved somewhere – you won't be able to unlock the drive.

The hardware itself is fine, so as a last resort, you can always erase the drive, reformat it and reinstall Windows from a DVD or USB stick. If you decide this is your best option, go to bit.ly/windows501 and use the Windows 10 Media Creation Tool on your old Asus PC.

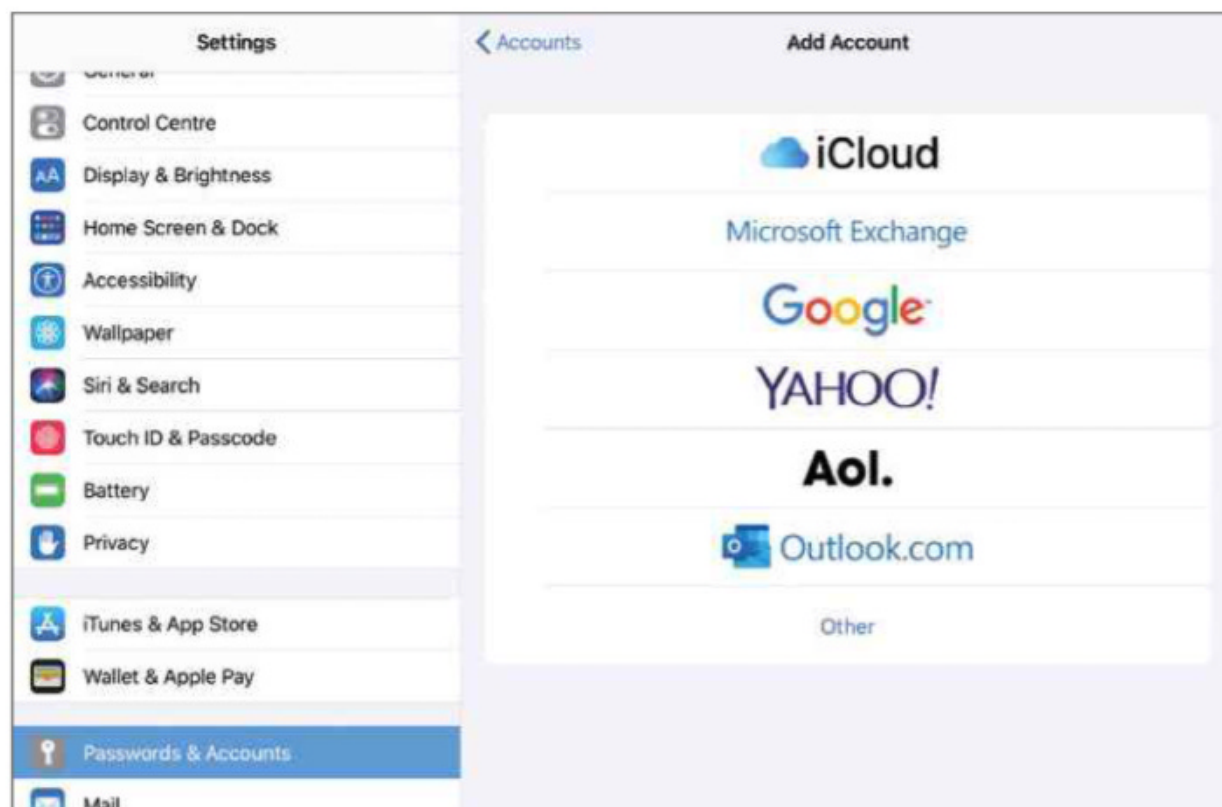
MOBILE

Stop multiple Outlook sign-ins

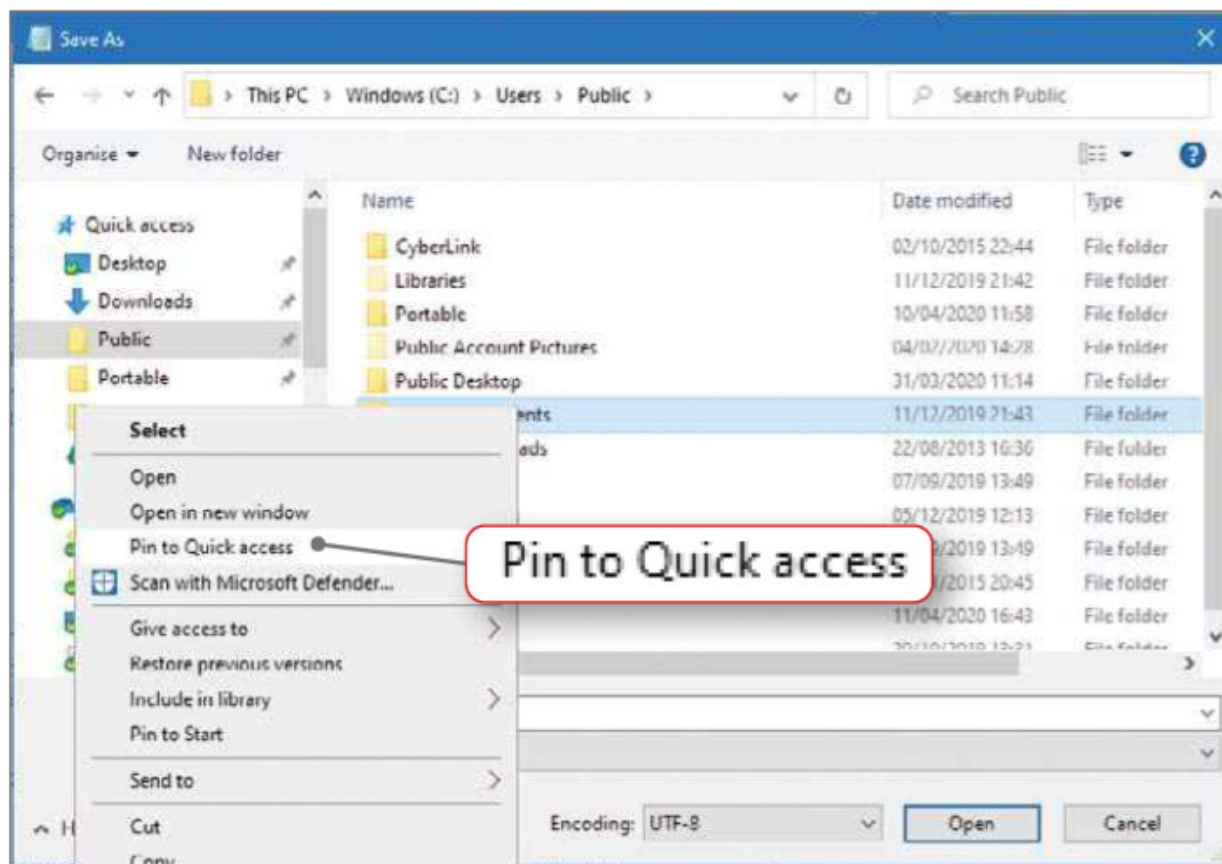
Q I've been using Outlook for ages but now, every time I open it on my iPad, it asks me to sign in. When I sign in, I tick the box to 'Keep me signed in', but it never does. Next day, same thing. I've checked that the username and password are correct in the iPad password settings. I also tried searching online for a solution, but nothing works – and Microsoft is noticeably quiet when others raise the same issue. I don't have the same problem with Windows 7.

Andy Jay, via email

A This problem has been going on for years, but the app is updated every few weeks, so there's always a chance that the next update will fix it. One trick that might work is to delete the Outlook



Fix Outlook problems on the iPad by deleting the account and creating a new one



Add folders you use the most to the 'Quick access' section of the sidebar

app (tap and hold the icon, then tap the cross that appears in the corner), and also delete the email account's settings if they've been added to Settings, 'Passwords & Accounts'. You can then reinstall the Outlook app and sign in, or add your Outlook account to the Mail app in Settings, 'Passwords & Accounts'.

Some people find that enabling two-step authentication on their Microsoft account solves the problem. On your computer, go to Outlook or OneDrive, click your picture in the top-right corner and select My Account. Go to Security, then click two-step verification at the top and follow the instructions.

To use this, you must install either Microsoft or Google's Authenticator app on your phone or iPad. Both work equally well. When you next log into a Microsoft service such as Outlook, you're asked for a code, which the authenticator app provides. This means no one else can access your Microsoft account, even if they get hold of your email address and password, so it's a great security feature.

GENERAL PC

Speed up Save As

Q I've just upgraded my work PC and it's running fine. However, on my old PC, which also ran Windows 10 Pro, I could save documents, photos and any other files to a different location with just one mouse click.

If I wanted to save a file, I'd click 'Save as' and use the option in the dialogue box to change where I wanted to save the file. I could then click into another open folder anywhere on the server, then click back into the 'Save as' box, and the

destination path would jump straight to that location. This feature saved me a lot of time.

Now, when I want to save a file to a new location, I have to browse to it manually, which on a server can be a lot of clicks away. Since I work on many files throughout the day, I waste a lot of time browsing for folders.

Tommy Smith, via email

A We're not quite sure what you mean, but here are some tips for making the 'Save as' window easier to use when saving documents, photos and other files. When the window appears, click Organise, Layout, 'Navigation pane' to make sure the Explorer sidebar appears in the window.

At the top of the sidebar, you'll see the 'Quick access' section. Navigate to a location you often use to save files, then right-click the folder in the 'Save as' window (it works in Explorer, too) and select 'Pin to Quick access'. This adds the folder to your 'Quick access' list in the sidebar. Repeating the process for other common folder locations means that choosing where to save a file is always just one mouse click away. One more click and the file is saved.

HARDWARE

Reformat a hard drive

Q I have a second hard drive in my computer that has always been formatted as an exFAT drive. Until recently, I was happily using it to install large - even enormous - games and other apps from the Microsoft Store. However, the Store no longer lets me install my apps on the exFAT drive, and says I must use an NTFS drive instead. Is there any way around this?

Kevin Davies, via email

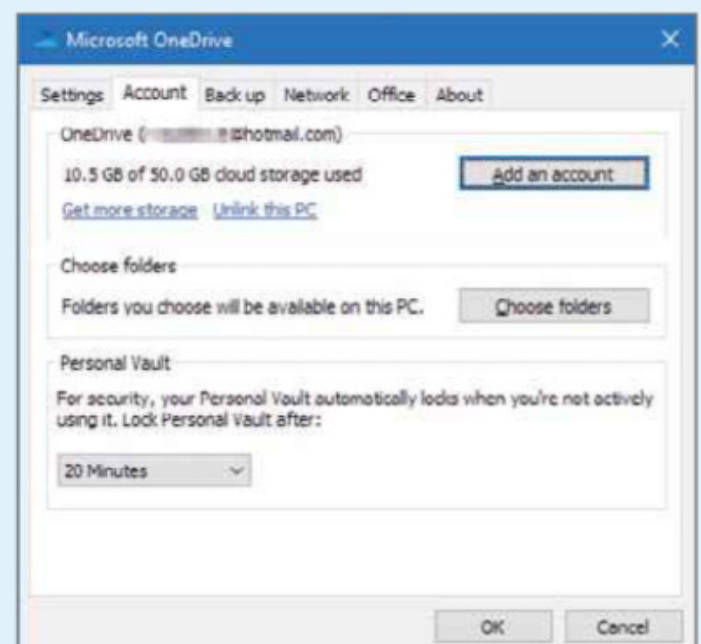
ONLINE STORAGE

Unlink OneDrive

Q I have OneDrive installed on my Windows 10 PC because it comes with the operating system. However, I use Dropbox rather than OneDrive, so I don't need it.

There is an option in OneDrive's settings to 'Unlink this PC'. What will happen if I do this? Will it remove OneDrive and delete any files in it?

N Callan, via email



Unlink the PC in OneDrive settings, then uninstall the app if you don't want it

A The OneDrive folder on your PC's hard drive is just a folder like any other. The OneDrive app merely ensures the contents of this folder are identical to those in the corresponding folder in your OneDrive online storage.

Unlinking OneDrive stops the app syncing between the folder on your hard drive and the online version. It won't delete anything - it just means that any changes you make to the

folder online or offline won't be synced, and the two folders will instead be completely separate.

You're free to keep the OneDrive folder on your hard drive, along with any files it contains, but if you don't need it, you can delete it by opening Settings, selecting Apps, then going to OneDrive and clicking the OneDrive Uninstall button.





Ask the Expert

A Windows prefers to use NTFS-formatted drives, and it's also a requirement for the boot drive and installing apps from the Store. You can convert FAT and FAT32 drives to NTFS without losing any data (see below) but, unfortunately, this doesn't work with exFAT-formatted drives.

You can still reformat your exFAT drive to NTFS as long as you back everything up to another drive first. Formatting the drive erases its contents, but you can then restore your backed-up data to the drive. To format the drive, right-click it in Explorer and select Format. NTFS is selected by default. The process will then wipe and convert your drive.

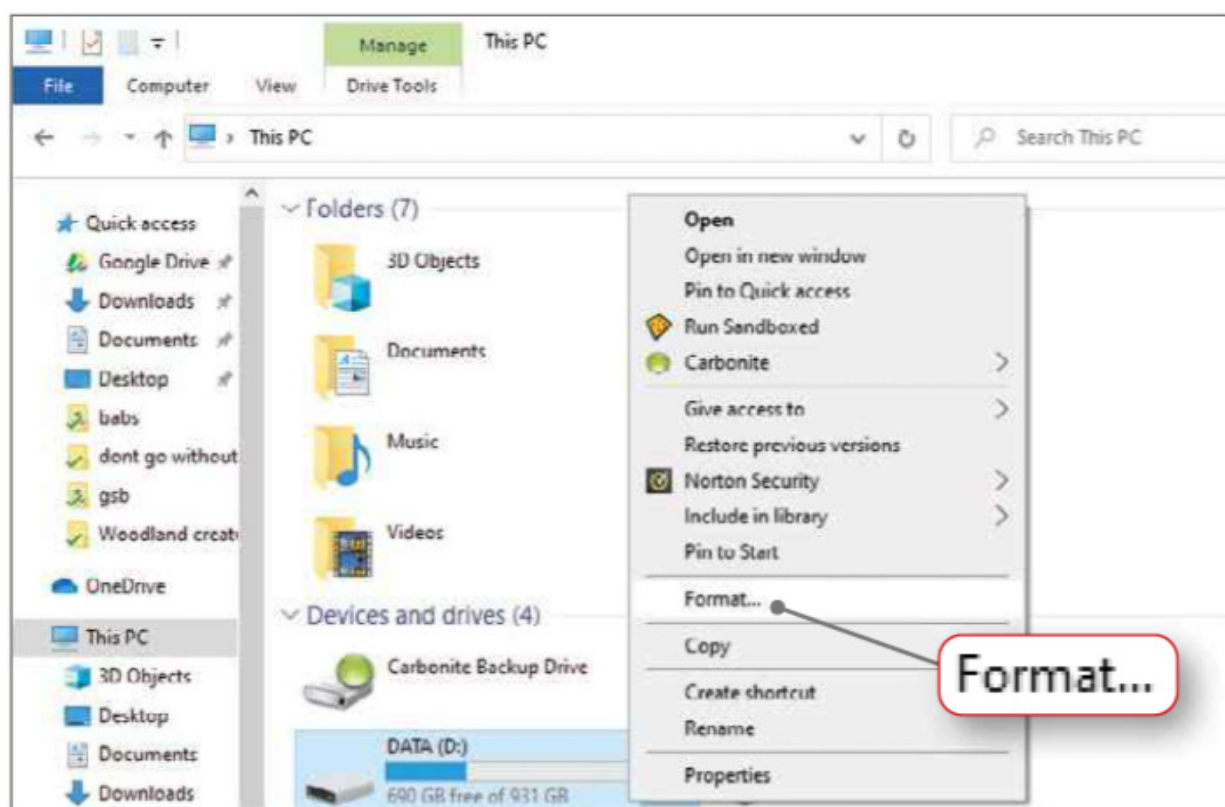
For other readers, here's the FAT or FAT32 conversion process we mentioned above. Press Win+R to open the Run box and enter `cmd` to open a command prompt window. Now type `convert e: /fs:ntfs` and press Enter. This converts the drive's format and retains all your files. Replace the 'e:' with the letter of the drive you want to convert.

BROWSERS

Clear form and credit card data

Q My wife has been using my PC to fill in forms online, purchase goods on her credit card and so on. Now, when I use the computer to do the same, it automatically fills in her details. How do I clear this and revert it to mine?

Richard Thomas, via email



You can change the format of FAT hard drives within Windows but be aware that it's likely to wipe them

A You don't say which web browser you're using but let's assume it's Chrome, because that's the most popular choice. Click the three-dot menu button in the top-right corner, then go to Settings and, in the 'Privacy and security' section, click 'Clear browsing data'. Select the Advanced tab, tick the 'Passwords and other sign-in data' and 'Auto-form fill data', then click the 'Clear data' button.

This removes all data from the browser, including any of your own information it has stored. Now, when you browse the web and fill in forms, auto-fill will remember your information,

so you can use it to complete forms automatically in the future.

To stop this situation happening again, click your picture in the top-right corner of Chrome, then the cog icon next to 'Other people'. Select 'Add person', then add your partner, children and anyone else who uses your computer. Tell them that when they use Chrome, they should click the picture in the top-right corner of the browser to sign out of your account and select theirs instead. This keeps their browsing data separate from yours.

To do the same in Edge, open the menu and click Settings. Select 'Privacy and services', then find 'Clear browsing data' and click 'Choose what to clear'. Select and clear Passwords and 'Autofill form data'. You can then add other users to Edge to keep their browsing history and data separate. Select Profiles in Settings, then click 'Add profile' in the top-right corner.

GENERAL PC

Restore the Recycle Bin

Q I don't know how it happened, but my Recycle Bin's icon is no longer on my desktop. I can still delete files but, without access to the Recycle Bin, I can't tell if they're really deleted or not.

I recently deleted some files by accident and need to recover them. Are they still somewhere on my hard drive?

Name withheld, via email

A The Recycle Bin is probably still active and storing your deleted files, but the desktop icon may be hidden. Open the Windows 10 Settings app and click Personalisation,



Choose the icons to show on the desktop from Windows Settings

then Themes. Click the 'Desktop icon settings' link and, in the next window, tick the box next to Recycle Bin.



Add extra users to Chrome and create a desktop shortcut for them



This fortnight Roland has been working from his car, to keep his engine ticking over and stop his battery going flat



Readers' Helpdesk

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

GENERAL PC

Fix broken JPEGs

Q I keep photos in various folders but some images won't open. To view a problem image, I have to click a nearby photo, then cycle through the pictures until I find the one I want. If I try to open that photo again later, it still won't do so. My solution is to transfer the problem photo to a USB stick, then replace it in the original folder on my PC. Please advise what is wrong, because this is happening with more and more photos.

C Vincer, via email

A Several people have reported this problem when viewing photos in Windows 10, particularly with JPEG files. Try opening the photo in Microsoft Paint,

then re-saving it as a PNG. If this is too time-consuming, because you have a lot of photos to convert, the issue

Some users have reported problems opening JPEGs in Windows 10

could be fixed by reinstalling the Windows Photo app.

Alternatively, try using a third-party photo viewer, such as IrfanView (www.irfanview.com). If you haven't yet backed up your photos up to the cloud – Google Photos and OneDrive are both good for this – now may be the time.

Steve Clark, Features Writer

WEBSITES

Retrieve and revive broken websites

Q Years ago, I downloaded a WordPress blog to read offline. At the time, it would open in Opera, but the author has since closed the blog and removed it from the internet. I still have the blog saved, but it now only opens as a text file without the pictures and style formatting.

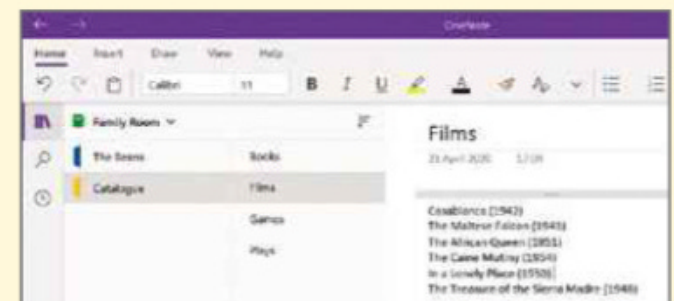
READERS RESPOND

SOFTWARE

Catalogue your hobbies

A In answer to Mr Kenilworth's question about cataloguing software (Issue 498, bit.ly/webuser498), I also found it tricky using spreadsheets to collate lists of books and films. Logging books on Goodreads (www.goodreads.com) and films on IMDb (www.imdb.com) was simpler but not very elegant.

The best solution I found was to use Microsoft OneNote. I set up a notebook dedicated to cataloguing and, within the notebook, created separate pages



Try using OneNote to catalogue your cultural experiences

for books, films, plays and so on. I could then pop the title into the notebook and retrieve the information at will. And because OneNote syncs across my devices, I can avoid clunky old software, too.

Mike Cullen, via email

CAN YOU HELP?

webuser@webuser.co.uk

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

SOFTWARE

Q I have been trying to find someone who knows how to produce a monogram in LibreOffice Writer (bit.ly/writer501). Can anyone help?

Joe Pester, via email

INTERNET

Q Do readers have any suggestions other than WhatsApp for video chats? Is Zoom worthy of the hype? Or is it best suited to businesses?

Garry Openshaw, via email

Is there a way to reassemble the parts so they appear as the original blog?

Colin M Baker, via email

A The old adage – the internet never forgets – is usually applied to embarrassing school photos and regrettable political statements, but it's also true of broken or dead websites. Try running a search in Google (preferably including the old URL). If you get any results, don't click the link because it probably won't work. Instead, look for a down arrow to the right of the URL, click it and select Cached to display a 'saved' version of the blog.

Alternatively, visit the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine (archive.org), type the blog's web address into the

search field and browse the history. You should see a selection of 'snapshots' of the blog, ordered by the date they were cached. Certain elements, such as images, may still be broken, but it should give a better approximation of the site.

Steve Clark, Features Writer



The Internet Archive's Wayback Machine lets you access saved snapshots of websites

Your Top Tips

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



TOP TIP

EMAIL

Get unlimited Gmail addresses

You may already be familiar with 'burner' emails that can be used when signing up to websites and newsletters, and then disposed of. They're useful for masking your real address or allocating different inboxes for professional, personal and spam emails. But did you know you can achieve the same effect using just one humble Gmail account?

This tip is similar to the punctuation trick, which lets you create a separate address by adding a full stop in a name – 'joe.bloggs@gmail.com', for example – and still have messages delivered to 'joebloggs@gmail.com'. When you're prompted to input an email address, type your usual one but, between your



Adding words to the end of your Gmail address gives you unlimited email addresses

username and the domain, add a '+' followed by a number or a word – such as 'joebloggs+4@gmail.com' or 'joebloggs+spam@gmail.com'.

These emails will still be sent to your primary account, but you can then set up filters to move them into different folders before they reach your inbox. It may not help if you want to keep your email completely free of chaff, but it's quicker and easier than repeatedly signing up for throwaway accounts.

Kenneth Phelps, via email

SOFTWARE

Schedule reminders

I rely on Microsoft's Sticky Notes to keep track of all the things I need to do when I'm on my computer or phone. It's just for little tasks, mostly – I certainly don't need anything more sophisticated.

However, I find it's missing one rather important function: a scheduler. Often, my tasks are time-sensitive and, being the old codger I am, I'm liable to forget about it until it's too late. I was over the moon, therefore, when I tried Alarm



Add an alarm to your sticky notes

Stickies (bit.ly/alarm501), which lets you create sticky notes with an alarm function. The only caveat is that you need to be the PC admin to install it.

Once it's running, right-click the icon in the taskbar's notification area and launch a new sticky. Any that require alarms should be on separate sticky notes. Once you've made your list, press F8. This starts the scheduler, and you can input a date and time for the reminder. When that time comes, the sticky note will pop-up in the centre of the screen. I certainly have no excuses for forgetting now! All scheduled stickies are also stored in a list, for easy viewing (and remembering).

R Black, via email

GENERAL PC

Stop unwanted interruptions

Whether you're playing games or working, notifications on your PC can be an irritation, so it's helpful to banish them when you are busy or having fun. There are useful controls to do this in the

Settings app.

Click System, then choose 'Notifications & actions'. It is easily missed, but there is a 'Focus assist settings' link. Click this and select Alarms only. This stops all notifications except those with an alarm set using the clock.

An even easier way is to click the icon at the right-hand side of the taskbar – if you don't see all the tiles at the bottom, click Expand. There is a 'Focus assist' tile that cycles when clicked, through 'Focus assist', 'Priority only' and 'Alarms only'. Select the mode you want to avoid being interrupted by notifications.

Len Grimes, via email

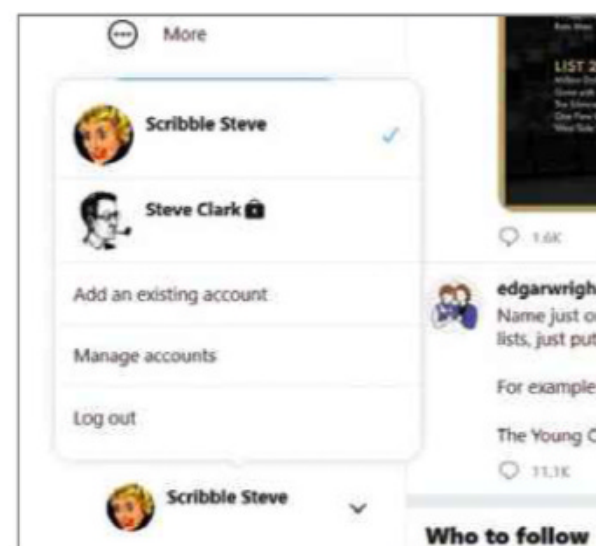
SOCIAL MEDIA

Switch Twitter accounts quickly

In Issue 497's Helpdesk (bit.ly/webuser497), a reader asked about how to switch between multiple Twitter accounts on the desktop. Well, it seems someone at Twitter must be a *Web User* fan because there's now a quick-switch button to hop between your accounts.

Go to twitter.com on your computer and you'll find it at the bottom of the page, beneath the left-hand sidebar. There are other account-management options here, too.

Joshua Chung, via email



Switching Twitter accounts is now much easier than it used to be

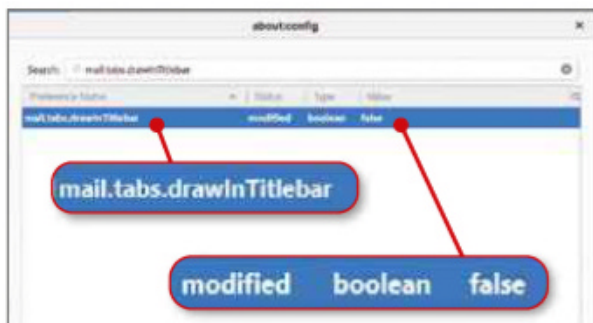


EMAIL

Send Thunderbird to the system tray

TBTray (bit.ly/tbtray501) is a clever tool that lets you quickly minimise the Thunderbird email program to the notification area, rather than let it loiter on the taskbar. To set it up, install the software as per the instructions in its readme.md file. You may have to change the 'mail.tabs.drawInTitlebar' setting in Thunderbird's Config Editor. Change the value of this Preference from True to False. That's it, you should now be able to quit your email but leave it running in the notification area.

Hans Waller, via email



Change this setting in Thunderbird to let TBTray minimise it to the notification area

MOBILE

Change your default browser

After my phone updated to Android 10, I noticed that instead of opening links in Edge – my preferred browser – it started using Chrome again. It seems that Google automatically changes the default to its own Chrome browser after this particular update. Remember to switch it back by going to Settings, 'Apps & notifications', 'Default apps', then choosing the browser you want to use.

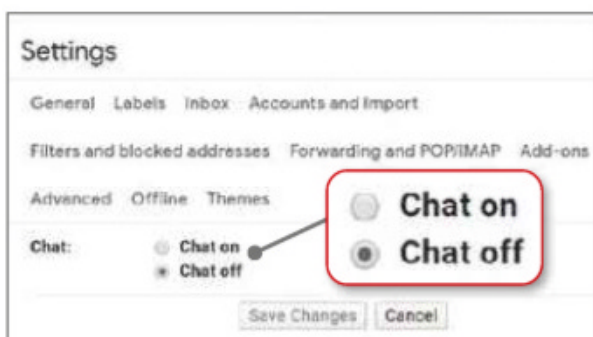
Joseph Van Der Linde, via email

EMAIL

Hide unused Google chat

Do you use Google Hangouts to chat online? I use a lot of different apps, mostly on my phone, but not Hangouts. It appears at the bottom of the left-hand panel when I'm in Gmail in a web browser and I find it just wastes space. Click the cog icon, select Settings, click the Chat tab and select 'Chat off'. Conversely, if you never knew you could chat within Gmail, this is where you turn it on.

Mark Hamilton, via email



Switch off Google Hangouts if it's cluttering your Gmail window

INTERNET

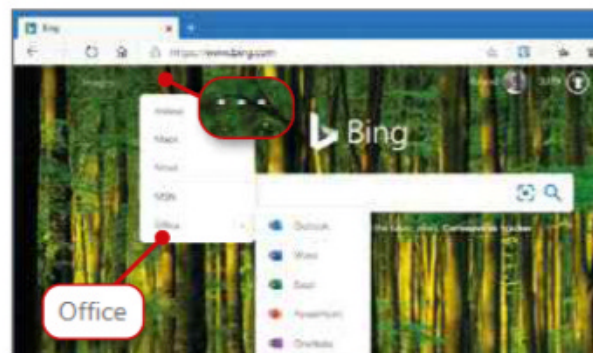
Access Office docs from Bing

I'm not yet completely won over by the latest version of Edge, so I still use Chrome occasionally. However, I use Edge a lot more now than I used to and I particularly like the way it lets me access my Office documents quickly.

To get this, set Bing as your Start page – open Settings, choose 'On startup' and then 'Open a specific page or pages'. Click 'Add a new page' if you need to. Find the three-dot button in the top-left corner of the Bing search homepage – it can be hard to spot on the photographic background. Click this and hover your mouse over Office to see a list of free Microsoft web apps, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote.

Select one, such as Word, and it shows your recent Word documents and lets you create new ones. The files are actually stored in OneDrive, but it's a great way to access them from your startup page if you don't mind setting this to Bing.

S Kline, via email



Access Microsoft Office web apps and Office files from the Bing search page

GENERAL PC

Use a second desktops as a panic button

You know the mad panic that hits you when someone comes into the room and you're doing something you shouldn't, such as playing a game or checking Facebook when you should be working? Windows has a panic button you can hit to clear your screen.

First, click the Task View button on the taskbar – it's on the left and looks like two overlapping rectangles. If you can't see it, right-click the taskbar and choose 'Show Task View button'. Click the plus sign at the top of the screen and create a new desktop, if necessary. You need at least two.

Now, when someone pops by and you're Candy Crushing when you should be working, press Ctrl+Windows+right arrow to switch to Desktop 2. You could put a spreadsheet or document on it so it looks like you're working.

Tom Jacobs, via email



Play games on a separate desktop so you can quickly switch and hide your activities

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

GENERAL PC

Turn off your touchscreen

I bought a laptop with a touchscreen – not because I actually wanted one, but because I needed to buy a PC in a hurry just before the lockdown and it was the best option left in the shop. Since then, my kids have been at the screen and it's smothered in smeary fingerprints. I have to take a baby wipe to the screen before I use it.

I've solved the problem, however, by disabling the touchscreen. Run Device Manager by starting to type it into the search box, then selecting it when it appears. Open the Human Interface Devices section and click 'HID-compliant touch screen'. Next, click the Action menu and choose 'Disable device'. Look for any other options



Switch off your laptop's touchscreen from the Device Manager

that might relate to the touchscreen and disable those, too.

Davey Matthews, via email

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?

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



Star Email

How I beat my Chromebook's expiry date

Back
Issues
disc
winner



I had been using an Asus C7 Chromebook for many years but stopped as soon as I was informed that the security updates would no longer be supported. Just recently, however, I found a way to continue using it for particular online tasks with no fear of viruses or other malware.

By logging into 'Guest Mode' instead of one's own personal account, hackers are prevented from causing mayhem. The downside to this procedure is that one has to manually log into individual websites, because Guest Mode cannot save any settings. I have also discovered that some websites will not work as they require the latest version of Chrome OS, plus you cannot use or save many of the familiar



functions such as passwords or autofill.

For my specific purposes (which are mainly Google Cloud services), however, it means that I am now able to use my Chromebook again for as long as the machine fires up.

Another discovery is that Google has a policy of limiting all Chromebook models to a six-and-a-half year planned obsolescence period, which Google calls an Auto Update Expiration date. This starts on the first day of the Chromebook's manufacture, which means that if you buy a machine that has been in production for two years, the lifespan will be reduced to four and a half years.

This begs the question as to why all computer companies are not made to advertise their products with an 'end of support' or 'end of life' warning notice, with an expiry date? Could the reason be that it is more profitable for them if we are all forced to purchase a new machine every so often?

R Thomas, via email

KeePass is the key to password security

As a long-term user of KeePass (10 years or more), I was pleased to see it receive your Gold Award in Issue 499. However, you missed out two key features in the review that make it even more useful.

First, there are different versions, some unofficial, for Linux, iOS, Android (KeyPass2Android) and other platforms.

Second, it has the ability to sync between multiple copies of the database. Combining these two features means your KeePass

database is always within reach.

I store my main copy of the KeePass database on my desktop PC. I can then synchronise this to a copy I store on Google Drive (other cloud storage systems are available). This copy is then available on both my Android phone and tablet, as well as my old laptop.

I've never had a problem with the synchronisation and, as long as I remember to initiate the sync, I always have the latest passwords with me. This

is useful when you want to log into Netflix or similar at a friend's house, especially if you use secure passwords you'd never otherwise remember.

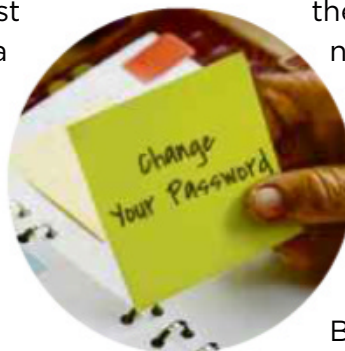
Martin Leist, via email

Simplicity is the key to password security

I was pleased to see Robin Window's email in Issue 499, stating that he uses a humble notebook to store his passwords. I've been doing the same for a couple of years. It's so simple: just keep the notebook in a secret place and all your passwords are safe from hackers.

Given the number of passwords required by websites and apps these days, it's nigh on impossible to remember them all. If you need to change a password, simply open your notebook to jot down the new details. In this instance, simplicity rules supreme.

Tom Palmer, Bramley



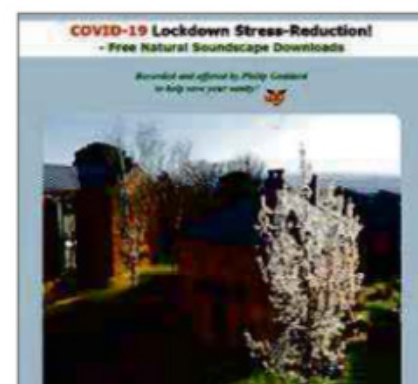
Save your sanity with soothing soundscapes

I recently put a page online to help people save their sanity during lockdown

and self-isolation. It presents a selection of my high-grade natural soundscape recordings, made during the last few years, mostly on hikes in wild parts of Devon and Cornwall (though the thunderstorm is from my bedroom window!). They're long recordings, but I've mitigated the download size by presenting them as 128Mbps MP3s.

The recordings include some entertainingly unfamiliar soundscapes, such as the weird experience of being on the (low) mountain-like tip of a headland near Perranporth, with a three-vent blowhole just below us emitting eerie 'breathing' sounds from a rock fissure close by the recorder. The sounds also include a beautiful, middle-of-night sea soundscape near Cape Cornwall and two recordings near Bellever Tor on Dartmoor, of birds' evening and dawn choruses, including nightjars and more cuckoos than I've ever heard before.

To benefit as many people as possible in this difficult time, I'm encouraging people to share the page's URL far





and wide. It's called COVID-19 Lockdown Stress-Reduction! – Free Natural Soundscape Downloads, and can be found at bit.ly/soundscape501.

Philip Goddard, via email

Why I've switched to Edge

I like trying new browsers but I gave up on Firefox because Mozilla kept making unnecessary changes, and I found Vivaldi too quirky and unfamiliar to get along with. I've used Google Chrome for many years, but I finally decided to try Microsoft Edge after Issue 492's cover feature and I haven't looked back since. Edge has all the features of Chrome, but with useful extras that make it – in my opinion – superior to Google's browser.

I particularly like the 'immersive reader'

function, which removes all the clutter from web pages to make them much easier to read and print. You can instantly switch to and from it by pressing F9 on your keyboard.

I also like having the latest news on my homepage, rather than Chrome's blank slate.

This is particularly useful at the moment when stories about the coronavirus are constantly breaking. And although I don't use Bing, it was easy enough to switch Edge's search engine to Google.

I have now made Edge my default browser and imported my bookmarks and other data from Chrome. Well done Microsoft, for finally getting it right!

Graham Franklin, via email



What you say...

WILL YOU INSTALL THE GOVERNMENT'S CORONAVIRUS CONTACT-TRACING APP (see page 38)?

No – there's enough doom and gloom from the news and social media and hardly any reporting on the good things, such as how many people have recovered from the virus.

Alan Palmer

I very much doubt it because, firstly, everyone will need to have the app installed for it to prove effective, and that won't happen. Secondly, Bluetooth can have a 10m radius on a smartphone so the app could provide you with incorrect information by saying you have been in contact with an infected person when you haven't.

The only way to know who has or hasn't come in contact with the coronavirus is to test the whole of the UK, which should have been done ages ago.

Kevin Gadget Man Benton

We only go out for necessary shopping and use disposable gloves when we do, so the app wouldn't be

of any use to us because we're not coming in contact with anyone else.

Gerrit Max

No, I'm fed up of all the negativity and hearing "stay at home" – most of us already are so it's wasted on us. Those who have ignored the advice aren't going to take any notice, are they?

John Hewett

Given the government's track record in managing data safely, not a chance.

Caroline Chapman

HAVE YOU BEEN USING VIDEO-CHAT APPS TO STAY IN TOUCH DURING LOCKDOWN?

No, most of my friends are happier with voice and text communication. The wife, however, has been on Zoom constantly. Her friends and family have seen more of her than I have!

Rich Grove

Yes, three or four times a week!

Nat Grove

No, I'm sticking with Signal (signal.org)

Jack Gold

Video-chat apps are the tool of the Devil. You're sharing your private conversations, your image, your voice and the interior of your home with God-knows-who. No thank you!

John Nabney

Quiz Answers: Issue 500

1 Apple iPad



2 Microsoft Windows



3 YouTube



4 BBC iPlayer



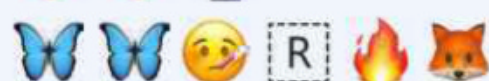
5 Facebook



6 DuckDuckGo



7 Mozilla Firefox



8 Adobe Photoshop



9 CCleaner



10 Paint.net



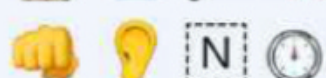
11 WinZip



12 Spybot – Search & Destroy



13 Nokia N-Gage



14 Sony PlayStation



WINNER!

Well done to **James Flynn** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



! Page 404

Barry Collins discovers that Sky isn't keen on fond farewells



Why Sky was the limit for me

You learn who your real friends are at a time of crisis, so the saying goes. Well, you also get to learn which companies deserve your custom, too.

I've seen tremendous acts of generosity from tech companies during this crisis. Software made free for the duration (Serif), data caps abolished (many of the broadband providers), games bundles where the proceeds have been donated to charity (Humble Bundle). And then there's Sky.

Sky's continuous price rises over the years have slowly converted me from a broadband and Sky Sports customer to merely a TV customer on the cheapest package possible. But when the company wrote to me a week after lockdown began to tell me it was putting up prices by £2.20 per month – just a day after emailing us with a promise to “look after” customers during the crisis – the camel's spine was well and truly snapped. I accelerated my plans to switch to

Freesat and kiss goodbye to Sky.

Alas, it seems Sky isn't keen on emotional farewells. My Twitter stream was already full of Sky Sports customers who were furious that Sky was making it so difficult for them to “pause” their subscription while live sport had come to a standstill, so I was braced for six hours on hold to the call centre. What I didn't expect, however, was Sky to use emotional blackmail to stop me cancelling.

Eager to avoid half a day of listening to “your call is important to us”, I tried to cancel my subscription via the Sky website. Silly me. Sky's not going to let customers walk off without doing eight rounds with its retention department, so I was invited to call instead.

However, when I clicked on the button

to get the customer service telephone number, I was greeted with a message saying Sky is “extremely busy right now and we're only able to deal with calls from our vulnerable customers and

those who are key workers, so please don't try to call us”.

Stuck between a rock and a Sky place, I reached out to the company on Twitter. “Want to cancel my Sky account. Can't

cancel online, website says don't call us, can't cancel by email or the messaging service. What do you suggest @SkyHelpTeam? Semaphore?”.

A reply came back within minutes. “Hi Barry... you can find a contact number that you can use at the end of the steps here,” it said, linking me back to the site that tells people not to ring.

“The number right below the message saying please don't call us, you mean?” I replied.

“Yes Barry [slightly smiling face emoji]. On this instance, call the team if you need to get this sorted.”

So, I rang the number and guess what? The line wasn't “extremely busy” – in fact, I was connected instantly. By far the quickest I've ever reached a human in my 15 years as a Sky customer. I fought off the begging to stay, managed to cancel, and I won't be going back.

Implying that you're going to inconvenience overworked nurses or the elderly just because you want to cancel your account is a low blow, and it wasn't remotely true. If Sky goes in search of a bailout, here's hoping the government is “extremely busy” helping the key workers and vulnerable instead.

“I was braced for six hours on hold to the call centre. What I didn't expect was Sky to use emotional blackmail to stop me cancelling”



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