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WebUser

Issue 502

27 May - 9 June 2020

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Best sites and apps for
reading your way
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*and many more modes! **p40***



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Get yourself in a good mode

My days at the moment seem to be divided into work mode, eat mode and sleep mode, with occasional forays into take-a-shower mode, get-some-exercise mode and dash-round-the-supermarket-as-quickly-as-I-can mode. I'm sure it's the same for most of you, as lockdown restrictions currently prevent us from switching to, say, party mode, holiday mode or country-dancing mode (and no, I haven't finished saying 'mode' yet).

Fortunately, there are plenty of interesting new modes you can discover without leaving your house, or even moving

from your PC, because they're tucked away in Windows. In this issue's cover feature, we lift the lid on the most useful modes that Microsoft mysteriously buries in its operating system. These include modes that let you access every Windows setting in one place, speed up your searches and run ancient software smoothly, plus many more. Please let us know if we've missed out any of your favourite modes!

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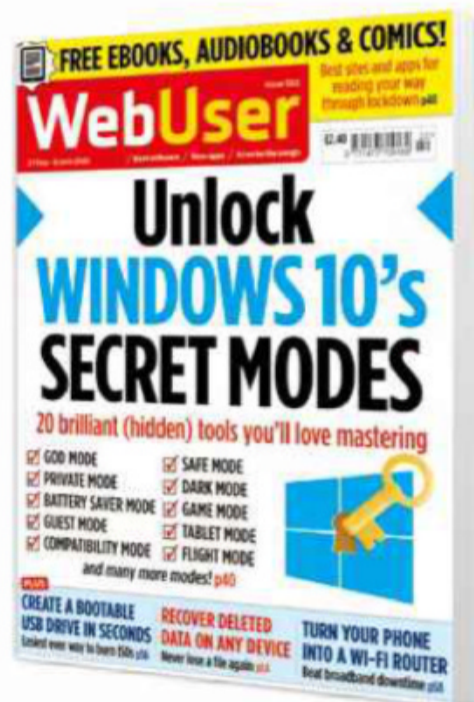
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Average sales, Jan-Dec 2019, 24,266 copies per issue



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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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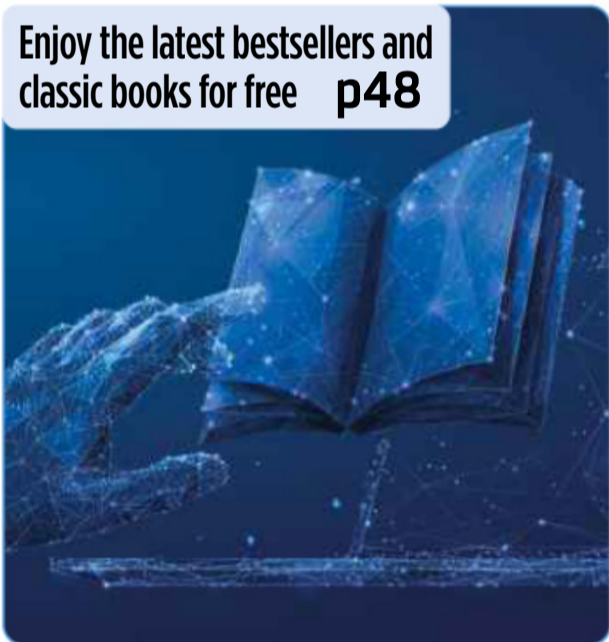
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What's New Online

Rediscover the wonder of Teletext

When the worldwide web was but a twinkle in Tim Berners-Lee's eye, many of us relied on teletext services for our news, weather, sport, entertainment and holiday bookings. But although these pages of brief text and rudimentary graphics were consigned to history, some of us remain staunch fans.

Archivist Jason Robertson has used specialist software to access teletext pages from old videotape recordings of TV shows, building an impressive library comprising some 80,436 screens. You can now search the collection by entering a search term, selecting a broadcaster or playing around with dates to unearth gems such as the Digitiser video-game pages, past breaking news and the hugely popular Bamboozle quiz, which you can even play!



To navigate the archive, click View next to a search result, then enter a specific page number. You can also use the colour-referencing links beneath the screenshots to access the Fastext feature or select Page Up and Page Down to cycle through the

pages. The archive works as well in a mobile browser as it does on your desktop.

Also, for the record, Teletext Holidays still exists (www.teletextholidays.co.uk) while Digitiser has been reincarnated online (www.digitiser2000.com). bit.ly/teletext502

Use video-chat tool Google Meet for free

meet.google.com

Google's premium video-conferencing tool, Meet, is now available to everyone for free. All you need is a Google account – which you can create using any email address, if you don't already have one – to use the service on your desktop or via the iOS and Android apps.

Most of the features designed for business and education will also be available to free users, including real-time captions, adaptable layouts for up to 16 people, screen sharing and simple scheduling. You can also start or join a Meet video chat straight from Google Calendar or Gmail, making it easier to get involved.

Currently, you can use Meet to chat away freely, but



meetings will be limited to an hour from 30 September. The service is being rolled out over a number of weeks so if you can't create a meeting at the moment, sign up to be notified as soon as it's ready.

Browse the British Museum collection

www.britishmuseum.org

The coronavirus has forced the British Museum to close, but its staff have worked hard to open its huge collection to online visitors. A further 280,000 digitised images have now been added to its website, bringing the total up to 1.9 million. You can also browse 4.5 million objects and 85,000 new records.

The art includes newly acquired pieces such as the Rosetta Stone and 73 portraits drawn by Damien Hirst on placemats. These can now be viewed on a phone or tablet with some scanned in super-sharp high definition, so you can zoom in to discover details you'd miss in real life.

The collection was originally due to be updated later this year, but the lockdown brought the plan forward. All the images are released under a Creative Commons 4.0 licence, so you can freely download, adapt and use them for non-commercial purposes.



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

Video chat from BBC TV shows

bit.ly/empty502

The BBC Archive has shared more than 100 high-quality photos of empty sets from TV shows for you to download and use as background images in video chats. Sets include the TARDIS, the Queen Vic pub from *EastEnders*, Fletcher's prison cell from *Porridge*, the Trotters' flat from *Only Fools and Horses* and the *Top of the Pops* studio.



Deliver vaccines around the world

quest.one.org

Life-saving vaccines are being delivered to some of the world's remotest communities, but how hard is it to get treatments to the people who need them? Find out by playing the retro-inspired game, Vaccinator Quest, created by the campaign group ONE, to see if you can complete three missions in the fastest possible time. Motor around in a car or on a bike, avoiding obstacles, crossing rickety bridges and collecting booster tokens. You can also scramble across a chasm, fly in supplies via a drone and challenge others to beat your score.



Remix copyright-free audio clips

bit.ly/remix502

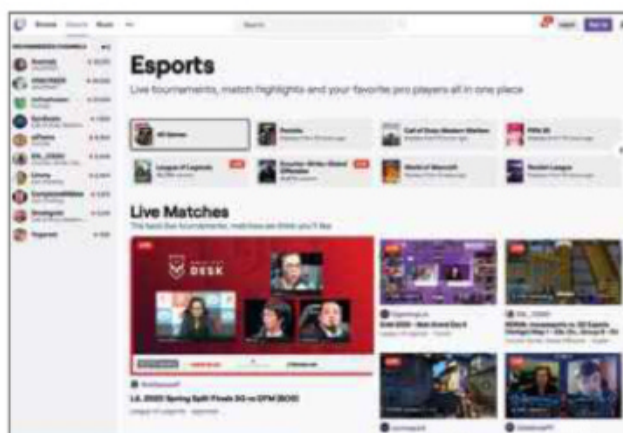
If you fancy flexing your musical talent as a DJ, then beat a path to this open-source hip-hop project created by New York artist and computer scientist Brian Foo. After choosing three different sounds from a collection of more than million copyright-free recordings from the Library of Congress archives, you can remix them in your browser, play around with the volume and clip duration, choose a beat pattern and a drum machine, and download the completed results. Listenable tunes can be created very quickly and it's a great way to explore the library's immense collection of sounds.



Keep track of esports events

bit.ly/esports502

Real-life sport is currently on hold, so many spectators are turning to esports to get their adrenaline fix. To make it easier to find tournaments, Twitch has created an esports directory showing live matches as well as replays and highlights, covering games such as Call of Duty, FIFA 20 and Fortnite, all of which can be viewed without signing up.



NEW VOICE COMMANDS



Launch Stadia games

With the Stadia app installed on your Android device, say: "OK Google, play [game name]" to start a full-screen gaming session. It works with Chromebooks, too.



Get hand-washing music

Search for Washing Hands Music in the Gallery tab of the iOS Shortcuts app and select Add Shortcut. Say: "Hey Siri, Washing Hands Music" to hear 20-second clips of your favourite tunes.



Search podcasts in Welsh

Alexa now lets you search for podcasts in Welsh, thanks to a skill commissioned by broadcaster S4C. Enable 'Welsh Language Podcasts', then use Cymraeg to ask away.



Guess a photo's location

bit.ly/guess502

This quiz from the University of St Andrews delves into a vast image collection, asks you to locate the image on an interactive map, then tells you how close you were.

Use recommendation filters in YouTube

www.youtube.com

Following their introduction in Android, YouTube has rolled out its recommendation filters to iOS and desktop users. They are located at the top of your feed in a series of bubbles, and make suggestions based on your viewing history.

Join a cyber school

bit.ly/cyberschool502

The government is offering free virtual lessons on cybersecurity for students aged between 13 and 18. Click Apply Now to access more than 200 online cyber security challenges teaching code-breaking techniques, coding and forensics.

Controversy continues over UK's contact-tracing app

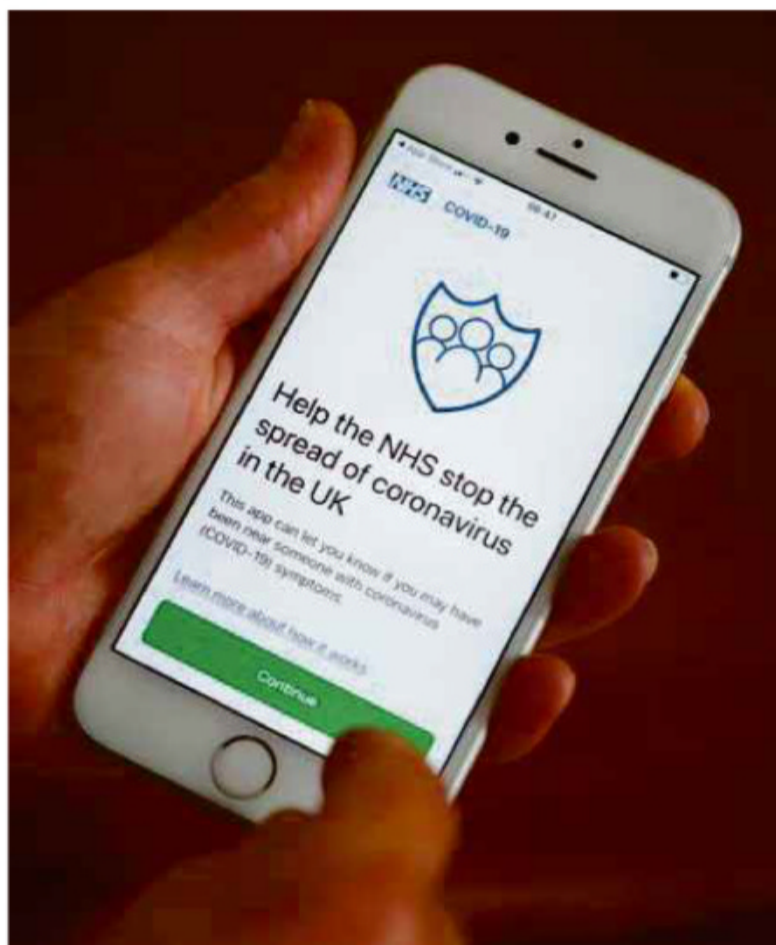
What happened?

The government's coronavirus contact-tracing app continues to be beset by problems ahead of its UK-wide launch. The app is designed to track people as they move around, notifying individuals if they've come into contact with someone who later discovers they are infected with the coronavirus. The aim is to encourage anyone exposed to the disease to self-isolate and avoid spreading it.

Similar apps have been trialled in other countries, with mixed results. The version designed by NHSX, the health body's digital team, is being tested on the Isle of Wight, where two-thirds of residents are reported to have downloaded the app.

However, reports reveal that the app's launch may be delayed due to technical issues – and it may even be dropped in favour of a system developed by Google and Apple.

The app will be backed by human contact tracers, and the government has already hired 21,000 people to help with this mammoth task. However, newspapers reported that the app was unlikely to be ready by the end of May as promised, and will instead arrive in mid June. That's if it arrives at all – the same sources revealed that the government was already looking at an alternative app. The Department of Health and Social Care said the report was incorrect and that the app wasn't



on hold, so we'll have to wait and see if it arrives on time.

As well as delays, the app has been hit by privacy concerns, and some doubt it will even work because it may need to be left running in the foreground on some phones. The alternative app from Apple and Google is due for release shortly, and adopting it could prove easier for the government than continuing to develop its own.

How will it affect you?

The version of the app being tested on the Isle of Wight relies on users self-reporting COVID-19 symptoms. It uses Bluetooth to determine who is nearby. However, Bluetooth can't measure distances and, according to critics, often reports incorrect information. This could lead the app to report that you've been in contact with your neighbour when in fact there's a wall between you.

Another concern is that the app requires a smartphone. While most Britons own a smartphone now, not everyone does – and those least likely to own one are older people who are most

at risk from COVID-19. One solution could be to give Bluetooth-enabled bracelets to those who don't have a smartphone, but the government hasn't revealed plans to do so.

Even for those with a smartphone, some two million homes in the UK don't have internet access, making it difficult and costly to install an app, while seven million have limited tech skills and may struggle to use it, according to the Good Things Foundation (www.goodthingsfoundation.org).

When the app is released, it's up to you whether you install it or not. If you do, it's worth offering your tech support skills to friends and family who want to install the app but find it confusing. Flawed though it may be, the app should be available to everyone who wants it.

What do we think?

The government is right to turn to technology for help with tracking the disease and stopping its spread. However, technology is rarely the magic solution people think it is. A well-designed app could be an essential part of a contact-tracing strategy, but it will also require COVID-19 testing to confirm cases and a team of human contact tracers to fill in the gaps.

It's worth remembering that the app won't protect you from infection. It merely tells you if you've been near someone who has developed symptoms or tested positive. By then, you may have been infected – and as symptoms can take days or weeks to appear, you may have infected others. However, by quarantining yourself at that point, you could help reduce the number you infect. Like wearing a mask, the app is about stopping the spread and protecting others, not yourself. Installing an app certainly isn't an excuse to break lockdown or stop social distancing.



The Good Things Foundation worries that many people won't be able to use the app

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

UK broadband speeds continue to improve

What happened?

The UK's broadband speeds have continued their steady climb, with regulator Ofcom reporting that the average across the country last year was up by 18%, from 54.2Mbps to 64Mbps ([bit.ly/ofcom502](https://www.ofcom.gov.uk/consult/condocs/broadband/broadband18/broadband18.pdf))

While people in rural areas still suffer from slower connections than their suburban and urban counterparts, Ofcom said that the proportion of homes enjoying superfast broadband increased from 44% to 56% at the end of last year. However, 22% of rural lines still can't get a decent connection during peak times.

The figures were recorded at the end of last year, but Ofcom also

included data from the beginning of lockdown, which showed that speeds fell by 2% as everyone turned to the internet for work and

entertainment. Ofcom said Virgin Media's speeds fell by 10% at their worst point, but that was against an increase in traffic of as much as 60% during the day.

How will it affect you?

Ofcom said that growing demand for data-hungry services such as video streaming, and increased



levels of home working and learning during the coronavirus lockdown, mean the need for fast, reliable broadband has never been greater. If you're experiencing slower speeds than expected, it may simply be because more users are on your Wi-Fi, so kick your family off the broadband and check your connection again.

It may also be worth connecting directly to the router if you have an Ethernet cable.

What do we think?

It may not always feel like it, but broadband in the UK continues to improve for most of us. Rural areas still see slower connections than the rest of the UK, and a crisis like the pandemic highlights the importance of broadband to modern life. Without a decent connection, rural families can't easily access online education, chat to colleagues via video calls or rely on streaming entertainment like the rest of us. Progress is happening, but not quickly enough.

Google to stop Chrome ads draining batteries

What happened?

The mobile version of Google's Chrome browser will soon target ads that drain your phone's battery. The search giant said it had noticed that a small fraction of ads have a large impact on device resources such as the battery and network data ([bit.ly/chromeads502](https://www.chromium.org/blink/ads/ads-impact-on-device-resources)).

From August, Chrome will cap the amount of resources ads can use, removing those that exceed its new limits on data downloads and processor use, and put unnecessary strain on mobile devices.

Google said ads will be limited to 4MB of network data and 15 seconds of

CPU usage in a 30-second period, or 60 seconds in total. The company added that only 0.3% of ads will be caught out by the new cap, but that this small number accounts for 27% of network data used by ads and 27% of ad processor usage.

How will it affect you?

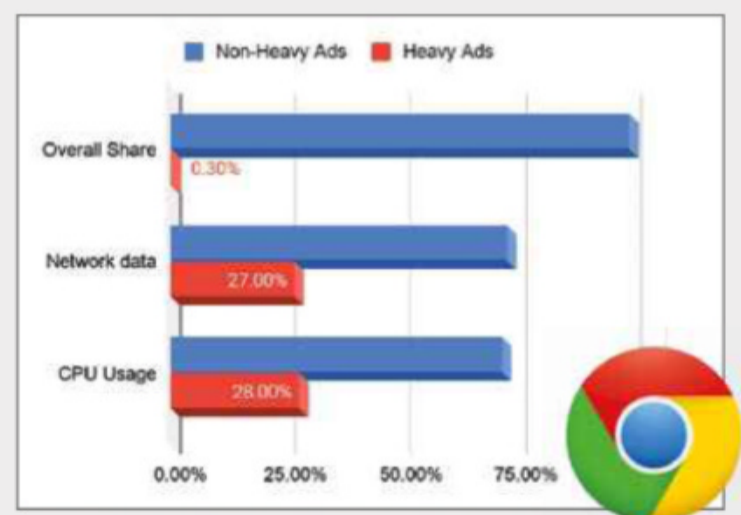
It's nigh on impossible for users to tell when an ad is chewing through battery life or data. Sometimes such ads are malicious and designed to use your resources to mine cryptocurrency, but often they're just poorly designed. Because they're difficult to spot, there's little you can do about them other than close your browser completely when you're not using it.

Once Google rolls out this system in mid August, it will tell you when an ad is draining your phone

battery or network data. When the ad hits a certain limit, Chrome will "unload" the ad and instead show a message explaining that it exceeded the resource caps.

What do we think?

Mobile ads are often annoying, but the ads Google is targeting with this change



may be costing you money by requiring you to recharge more often and chewing through your data allowance. Advertisers need to clean up their act online or risk more of us turning to ad blockers. Google is smart to address this problem before we're driven to such tactics.

Credit: blog.chromium.org

Microsoft abandons 32-bit Windows

What happened?

Say goodbye to 32-bit Windows 10 PCs. Microsoft is set to stop manufacturers installing this version of the operating system on new systems, which means all future Windows 10 machines must use the more powerful 64-bit architecture.

Rather than announce the move in a public statement, Microsoft quietly slipped it out in an updated version of its 'minimum hardware requirements' document (bit.ly/minimum502). The latest rules state that "beginning with Windows 10, version 2004, all new Windows 10 systems will be required to use 64-bit builds and Microsoft will no longer release 32-bit builds for OEM distribution". Version 2004 of the operating system is expected on 28 May, at which point manufacturers will need to shift gear.

Microsoft isn't the first company to make this move. In January, Google announced it would drop support for 32-bit apps by 2021, urging developers to move to more powerful 64-bit software. Apple followed suit with the release of its Catalina update to macOS.

We can expect a few exceptions, but in line with other firms, Microsoft just sounded the death knell for 32-bit PCs.

How will it affect you?

Ultimately, this change simply means you won't be able to buy a new 32-bit



Credit: Nor Gal / Shutterstock.com

computer in future. However, most modern PCs and laptops already run 64-bit Windows. Chances are, if you've bought a PC in the past few years, Microsoft's decision won't affect you.

Thankfully, Microsoft isn't about to drop support for existing 32-bit PCs. The company was keen to stress that "this does not impact 32-bit customer systems that are manufactured with earlier versions of Windows 10; Microsoft remains committed to providing feature and security updates on these devices, including continued 32-bit media availability in non-OEM channels to support various upgrade installation scenarios".

You can check which system type you

have by looking at your computer's specifications in Windows 10's 'About your PC' section.

What do we think?

While the announcement might have been a surprise, the change certainly isn't – this is clearly the direction of travel for the tech industry. It should also ease the burden on manufacturers and level the playing field for customers when choosing a new computer. While we're not typically fans of anything that limits consumer choice, it's hard to think of a good reason why this change isn't justified. Most people will want to run an operating system that's as fast and powerful as possible.



FIRST LOOK

Samsung Galaxy Tab S6 Lite

bit.ly/tab502

Apple's iPad and Microsoft's Surface currently dominate what remains of the fading tablet market. Anyone looking for an Android tablet, however, will find they're limited to the expensive Samsung Galaxy Tab. The Korean company wants to change that with the release of its Galaxy Tab S6 Lite. This pared-down mid-range rival to the iPad runs Android 10, which is ideal if you already use Google's apps and services.

Despite its reasonably low price, the device has the classic premium feel you'd expect from Samsung. It's just weighty enough, and more than comfortable to hold for extended periods. However, its real selling point

is the S Pen. Bundled free with the tablet – unlike similar products from Apple and Microsoft, which are sold separately – this stylus lets you make digital doodles and notes across built-in and third-party apps. And when you're not using it, the S Pen slips neatly along the top of the tablet, where it's held in place by magnets.

Naturally, Samsung has made a few compromises compared with its premium models. The S6 Lite replaces the original's AMOLED screen with a less impressive but perfectly serviceable 10.4in full HD IPS panel. It doesn't support high dynamic range (HDR), but for casual Netflix or YouTube viewing, its picture quality is more than adequate.

Powered by an Exynos 9611 mobile processor, with 4GB of memory and 64GB of internal storage, the tablet should perform well enough for general



use. We experienced great response times and no noticeable lag, thanks to the device's four 2.3GHz cores and four more clocked at 1.7GHz. An eight-megapixel rear camera and a five-megapixel selfie camera further cement the S6 Lite's status as a mid-level tablet.

The Galaxy S6 Lite comes in two colours, mystifyingly called Oxford Grey and Angora Blue, and costs £350 for the base Wi-Fi version and £400 for the LTE-compatible edition.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is WhatsApp launching a Zoom rival?

WhatsApp could soon become a major rival to video-conferencing services such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet, according to a report by WABetaInfo (bit.ly/wabeta502). The tech site recently discovered a new feature in an as-yet-unreleased beta version of WhatsApp Web that lets users make group video calls using Facebook Messenger Rooms.

The feature, which WABetaInfo spotted through one of the shortcuts in WhatsApp Web's 2.2019.6 beta update, would enable users to make calls with up to 50 people – a significant increase over the eight-way video calls WhatsApp introduced in its most recent update.

As we reported in last issue's What's New Online section, Facebook launched Messenger Rooms at the end of April in an attempt to capitalise on the growing demand for group video chats during the coronavirus lockdown. As well as allowing video calls with up to 50 participants with no time limits, Facebook's free service lets up to 16 people share the same screen.

The move to expand WhatsApp into the video-conferencing market can be



seen as the latest effort from Facebook – which owns WhatsApp – to win users from Zoom and Microsoft Teams, both of which have seen record-high usage over the past few months. “The feature is not available yet because it’s under development,” said WABetaInfo. “There isn’t a known release date [but] it will be available in future for iOS, Android and, obviously, WhatsApp Web”.

LIKELIHOOD RATING



With video-chat services all the rage, it seems highly likely that WhatsApp will follow the trend by increasing the number of people who can participate in video calls. Facebook's integration of the new chat feature with Messenger Rooms will create a significant threat to Zoom and Microsoft Teams, because WhatsApp and Messenger have nearly three billion users between them.

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Download retro desktop themes

Hundreds of Windows desktop themes from the 1990s have been uploaded to the Internet Archive (bit.ly/desktop502) and are available to download for free. Options include *Star Wars*, *Winnie the Pooh* and (bizarrely) *Rising Damp*.



Try Spotify free for three months

Spotify has extended the free trial of its ad-free Premium subscription from 30 days to three months for new users who sign up before 30 June. Rival music-streaming service Apple Music already offers UK users a three-month free trial.



WE DON'T LIKE...

False COVID-19 videos on YouTube

More than a quarter of the most viewed YouTube videos about the coronavirus contain misleading information, according to a study by BMJ Global Health, including claims that pharmaceutical companies already have a vaccine but are refusing to sell it.



Android users hit by Mandrake spyware

A prolific form of Android spyware hid undetected in the Google Play store for four years according to researchers at Bitdefender. The snooping malware, dubbed Mandrake, is likely to have affected hundreds of thousands of users since 2016.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Zeus – The King of Wallets

bit.ly/zeus502 | From £63

Hailed by its creators as the king of wallets, the Zeus is a stylish beast. Its compact magnetic design resembles a deck of playing cards, with multiple layers that you can fan out to retrieve your credit or debit cards. The layers are made of hard-wearing aluminium alloy, and because the Zeus is modular, you can add or remove layers as required. It's more than just a card case, though: the Bluetooth-enabled Zeus is equipped with an anti-loss tracker alarm and an RFID blocker to protect you against contactless scammers. Pledges start at £63, up to £192 for the full-featured twin pack.



Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Hackers target video-chat services

Criminals are registering domains and creating URLs that appear to link to group chats in Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet, according to a new report from security firm Check Point.



As more people turn to video-conferencing services during the coronavirus lockdown, hackers are using misleading domains to fake official links, potentially tricking users into downloading malware and sharing their personal data.

Check Point researchers found that nearly 2,500 new Zoom-related domains were registered in just three weeks, 1.5% of which were malicious, while another 13% were suspicious. Teams victims fell prey to phishing

emails with the subject line "You have been added to a team in Microsoft Teams", which included a malicious URL. Hackers have created fake Google Meets domains such as Googelmeets\com, too.

Check Point noted a 30% increase in coronavirus-related attacks and warned that as the pandemic has progressed, so have the domains and phishing scams that exploit it.

bit.ly/checkpoint502

Thunderbolt flaw puts laptops at risk

Hackers can read and copy all data on Thunderbolt-equipped laptops built before 2019, according to a security researcher at the Eindhoven University of Technology.



Although attackers need physical access to a Windows or Linux computer

with a Thunderbolt port to exploit the flaw, they could in theory access all data in around five minutes, even if the laptop is locked, password-protected and has an encrypted hard drive. The entire process can be completed with portable hardware costing just a few hundred pounds, and a screwdriver to remove the laptop's backplate, according to security researcher Björn Ruytenberg.

All laptops equipped with Thunderbolt-based USB-C ports made between 2011 and 2019 are vulnerable to the flaw, said Ruytenberg, including Macs that offer Thunderbolt connectivity.

Ruytenberg has developed a free tool called Spycheck (thunderspy.io) that can tell you if your system is at risk. If your laptop is found to be vulnerable, Spycheck offers recommendations on how to protect it.

bit.ly/thunderbolt502

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Fiona Fernie, partner at Blick Rothenberg
(www.blickrothenberg.com)



Q Are cybercriminals exploiting the government's schemes to support workers during lockdown?

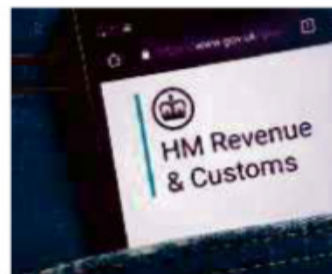
Alan Madden, Facebook

A Within hours of the government launching its Coronavirus Job Retention

Scheme (CJRS), cybercriminals were trying to cash in on it – mostly through emails purporting to be from the government or HMRC.

The wording most commonly used is: "Dear customer, we wrote to you last week to help you prepare to make a claim through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. We are now writing to tell you how to access the COVID-19 relief. You will need to tell us which UK bank account you want the grant to be paid into, in order to ensure funds are paid as quickly as possible to you".

Most scams focus on obtaining the recipient's bank details either by



suggesting they can claim some kind of financial benefit, such as a tax refund from HMRC to help them during the coronavirus outbreak, or that they have to pay a fine as a result of some misdemeanour, such as leaving the house more than once a day during lockdown.

It's imperative that you treat any email or text that appears to come from an official body with extreme caution. If you're taken in,

“ Treat any email or text that appears to come from an official body with extreme caution ”

your mistake could be a very costly one.

Cybercriminals send messages through WhatsApp and social-media, too, so these should be treated with similar caution.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has launched a reporting service, and urges the public to forward any questionable emails to report@phishing.gov.uk.



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★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

GAMING

RELAUNCH

The Oliver Twins

www.olivertwins.com

The Oliver Twins have a Guinness World Records entry for being the “most prolific 8-bit video-game developers”, and one glance at their revamped biographical website backs up that accolade. There are dozens of games for the Spectrum, Commodore 64, Amstrad CPC and others, from BMX Simulator to the Dizzy series. Each entry is accompanied by screenshots, articles and, best of all, the games themselves, playable in the browser via emulation. Many entries include maps, personal insights and playthrough videos hosted by Philip and Andrew themselves, along with original sketches, fan art, music, news and more.

Our rating



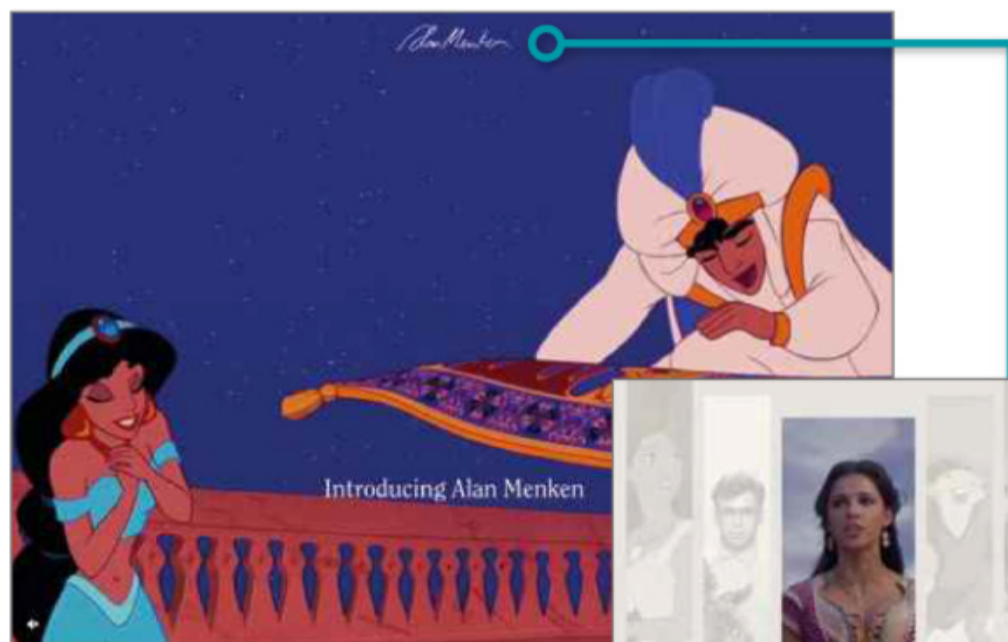
HISTORY

Read The Oliver Twins' biography and watch them replay their own games in fun videos



GAMEOGRAPHY

All the developers' games are listed in order of creation, displaying their original box art



MUSIC

Alan Menken

www.alanmenken.com

As well as working in musical theatre, US composer Alan Menken is the talent behind numerous scores and songs for Disney films including *Aladdin* and *The Little Mermaid*. This polished website, encompassing 42 productions, lets you listen to snippets of Menken's tunes and learn more about the scores through written insights and brief explanatory videos. Footage of the accompanying action fills the screen, and you can view supplementary material such as photographs to storyboards. Elsewhere, there's a comprehensive biography, list of awards and a hidden gem of a video within the FAQ. The site builds into a slick and impressive record of Menken's work.

Our rating



NEW

EMPLOYMENT

Jobcentre Plus

jobhelp.dwp.gov.uk

An increasing number of us may soon be looking for new employment so it's pleasing to see a new site for JobCentre Plus. Focused on filling critical roles in logistics, food retail, agriculture and care, it offers plenty of advice for jobseekers while helping people come to terms with redundancy. The guidance is spread across a series of articles covering topics such as remote interviews, creating a CV and using LinkedIn, as well as advice about working safely. Navigation is a bit clumsy and the job searches are still conducted through the Find A Job section of Gov.uk, but it's still helpful.

Our rating



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



ARTWORK

Browse original maps, character artwork, sketches, screenshots and magazine articles

PLAY GAMES

Game pages have a button that lets you play the title in your browser



FOOD

Ye Olde Oak

www.yeoldeoak.co.uk

Proving that there's life in the old (hot) dog yet, canned-meat maker Ye Olde Oak has us salivating over its redesigned site. The company has been around since 1949, and a mix of tasty photos, bold colours and knowing nods to its vintage past provide the right ingredients for a site worth visiting. Take a gander at its full range of hot dogs (including a new Peri Peri flavour), but the main attraction is its range of recipes, organised like entries on an American-style diner menu with appetising photos. More recipes can be enjoyed, alongside regular offers, by signing up to the mailing list.

Our rating



BOOKS

RNIB Library

bit.ly/rnib02

The relaunched Library service from the RNIB isn't the prettiest of websites but it provides a vital service for the visually impaired. As well as allowing increased access to Talking Books, making more than 26,000 titles available, it offers e-braille and fully digitally accessible audio titles, as well as publications using giant print and musical scores. Searching is easy – you can browse by category – but the results can be messy, partly because of the overwhelming number of filtering options available. The site can be viewed in high contrast and you can increase the text size, too.

Our rating



FAMILY

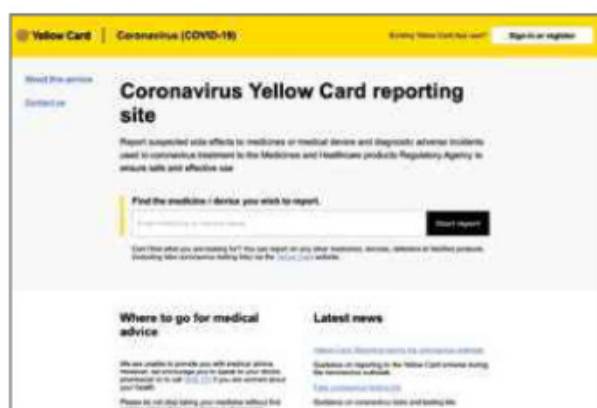
Relationship Matters

relationshipmatters.org.uk

Some relationship problems can go on to affect a couple's wider family and this site, launched by 15 local authorities, provides tips and advice for dealing with arguments and disagreements. It also highlights key triggers and offers advice on how to stay calm, work things out and get help if needed. There are links to useful organisations and helpful videos that explain behaviours and challenging situations from the viewpoint of different people. The clear design and intuitive navigation makes finding relevant information easy and we'd love to see more councils get involved.

Our rating





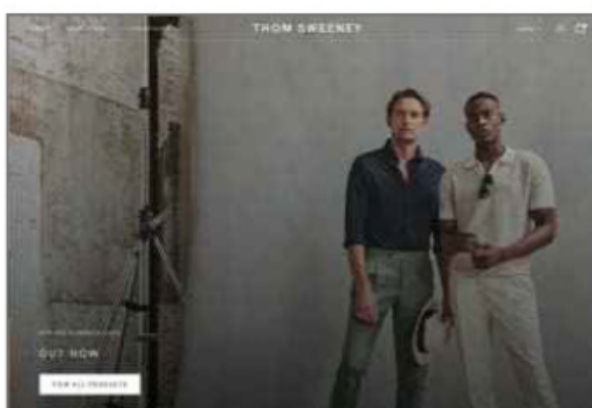
NEW

HEALTH

Coronavirus Yellowcard bit.ly/medic502

New and repurposed drugs are set to be trialled in the treatment of COVID-19, but these could cause unknown side effects. To help identify potential risks, patients, carers and healthcare professionals are being asked to use this new website to detail any coronavirus-related problems. Start a report by entering the name of a medicine or medical device, enter some personal information and describe when and where treatment was administered, along with details of any other medication being taken. This will be vital for discovering emerging complications, but you can also stop by to read the latest medical news and guidance.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

FASHION

Thom Sweeney www.thomsweeney.co.uk

As well as helping you spruce up your wardrobe with an elegant new collection of clothes, British menswear brand Thom Sweeney is now showing them off in style. The relaunched website better highlights its selection of classy knitwear and clean-cut jackets, trousers and shirts using attractive photography and clear bullet-listed descriptions, while making it easy to select the right size and colour. Checkout is simple and intuitive, with express payment options, and the FAQ covers most bases. The history of the tailor could be more comprehensive, but we like the addition of a downloadable PDF Lookbook.

Our rating



NEW

HEALTH

Germ Defence germdefence.org

There's been a lot of conflicting advice about tackling COVID-19 but researchers from Bath, Bristol and Southampton hope their guidance will prove clear and concise. They've tailored suggestions to suit different scenarios, packing the site's pages with information which, they claim, will help people become less prone to infection. The presentation is a bit lacklustre, but it's certainly worth a visit: it takes about 10 minutes to digest the details, including the time taken to complete a survey for tailored advice. There's also a great section about handwashing, as well as tips for reducing the risk of catching colds and flu.

Our rating



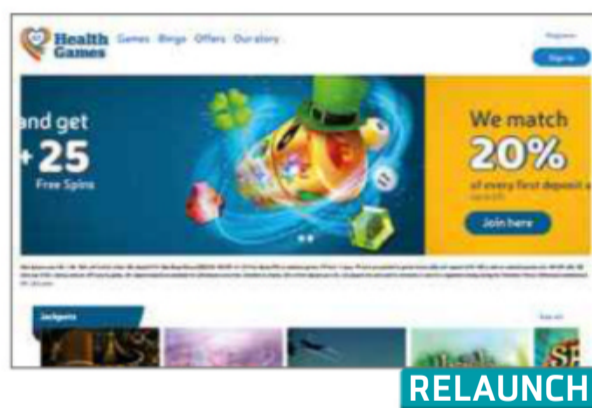
NEW

MUSIC

Spotify Listening Together listeningtogether.atspotify.com

According to Spotify, more than 30,000 people play the same song on the music-streaming service at any given moment. But what are they listening to and how far apart are they? To find out, visit the Listening Together site and drag around the globe, then click the various pins that keep dropping in real time. You'll see and hear the song that's playing, along with the location of the two people who have just started listening to it and the distance between them. The slick and engaging presentation provides a simple, effective way to discover new tunes and see just how globalised our tastes in music have become.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

GAMBLING

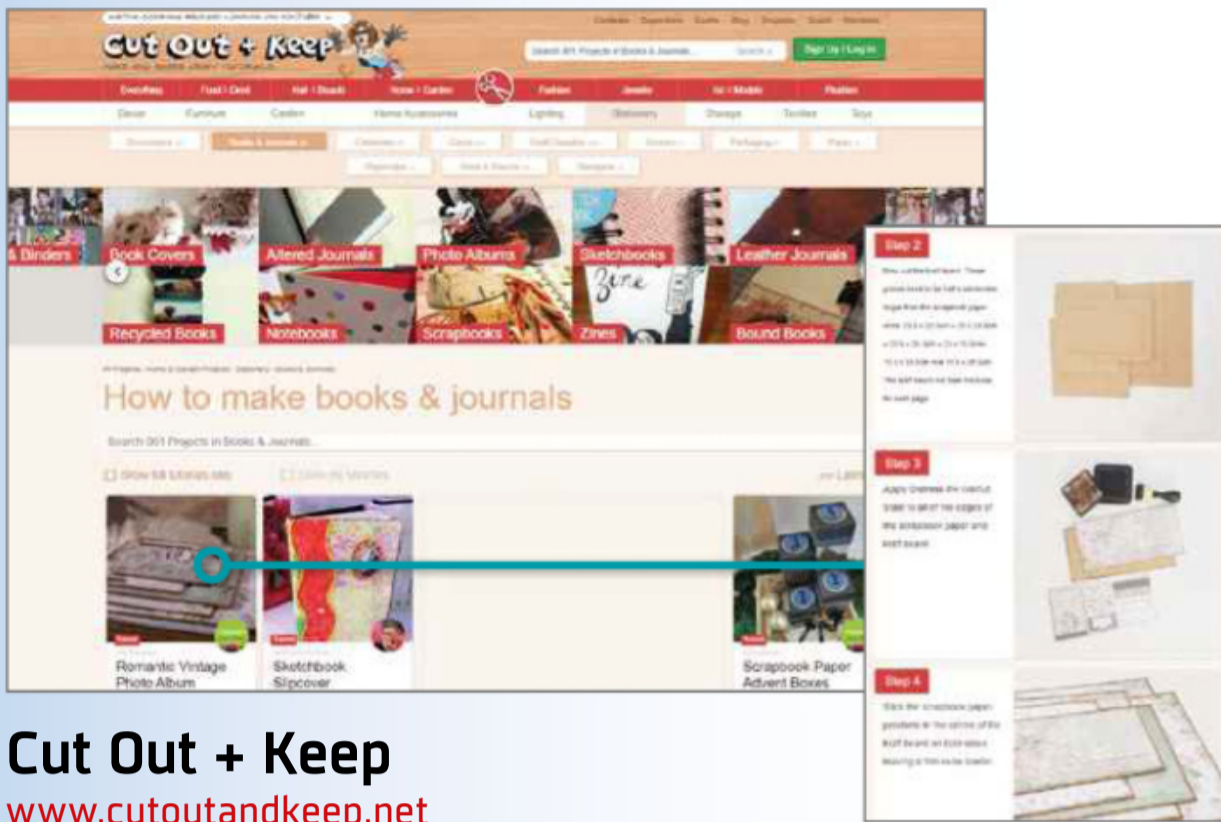
Health Games www.healthgames.co.uk

You may not hit the jackpot when gambling on this online gaming site, but health charities could certainly benefit. That's because 20% of all new customers' first deposits, up to a maximum of £5, is being matched and donated to UK charities. Meanwhile, you get 25 free spins and a bingo bonus. Of course, this means you're tied into having a flutter on the virtual slots, online bingo and instant wins, but there are 600 or so to choose from and these are neatly placed within well-organised categories on the homepage. Click Play on any of the icons to enjoy a game, but make sure you gamble responsibly.

Our rating



ESSENTIAL BOOKMARKS THIS ISSUE: Inspiring craft sites



Cut Out + Keep

www.cutoutandkeep.net

At first glance, this site may make you think you've stumbled upon amateur hour at the local bakery. However, beyond the photos of cupcakes and cheesy corn fritters lies a glorious rabbit hole of more than 2,700 step-by-step tutorials providing brilliant ways to repurpose any scraps you have cluttering up your home. Carve spoons from wood offcuts, make a pet bed from an old suitcase, construct a patio recliner from pallets, turn beer into bread and much more, spanning categories from Art & Models to Garden Storage. The ideas may be quirky but each guide contains solid crafting advice about the techniques involved, plus videos, photos and a printable tick-list of all the stuff you'll need. Although it's a US site, measurements are given in metric, too.



Hobbycraft

www.hobbycraft.co.uk

With its in-store workshops currently off the menu, this UK craft retailer is keeping the nation busy with hundreds of free online tutorials and templates. The site's Ideas section (bit.ly/ideas502) employs mix-and-match filters such as craft type (art, baking, sewing, papercraft and so on), project type (anything from garments to pyrography – yep, that's woodwork with fire), occasion, skill level, budget, time and theme. Elsewhere, there are beginners' guides to everything from cake decorating to making your own gift wrap; a product guide to help you buy the right kit; and a gallery of users' work, where you can upload images of your own masterpieces.



Stitch & Story

www.stitchandstory.com

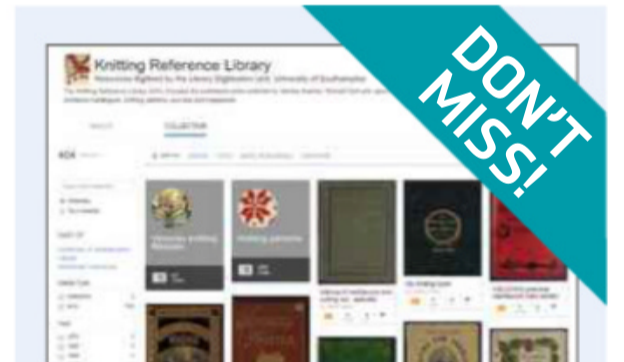
If knitting is the new rock 'n' roll, then UK site Stitch & Story is the School of Rock – with a wool shop attached. The three main how-to sections are Video Tutorials, Beginners' Hub and, hidden away, PDF Patterns (bit.ly/patterns502). Six of the patterns are free to download and, though they're the most basic of the lot, they guide you step by step through the process of creating nifty items such as a 'chunky weekend cowl' and 'cabin cable throw'. The video tutorials are the best place to start if you're a total beginner, since their use of enlarged needles and chunky yarn (along with still photos and instructions) makes them ideal for seeing exactly what you need to do with your hands when creating different stitches.



Drawabox

drawabox.com

The web certainly isn't short of 'how to draw' sites, but most are targeted at kids and don't go much further than cartoon animals. Drawabox, aimed at adults who want serious drawing tuition, offers a series of exercise-based lessons that push you to perfect your art by learning fundamental techniques. You start with the mechanics of making marks on paper and even how to position your arm, then progress through learning form, perspective and 3D. You can upload your sketches or just enjoy the inspiration (or wallow in envy) from fellow users' sketchbooks. Despite priding itself on its hard-work approach, Drawabox caters for everyone from beginners to lapsed artists, and it's completely free.



Knitting Reference Library

bit.ly/knitting502

Darn socks with the panache of your ancestral grandmother, crochet with silk thread, create your own *Starsky & Hutch* cardigan – and that's just page one of this fabulous collection from the Internet Archive. It contains more than 400 digitised vintage craft manuals, including knitting and sewing patterns dating from the early 1800s, all free to download in multiple formats including PDF, JPEG and Kindle. Many of the book covers are works of art in themselves, with the likes of *Beeton's Books of Needlework* and *The Stocking Knitter's Manual* boasting glorious hi-res jackets that deserve to be printed out and framed.

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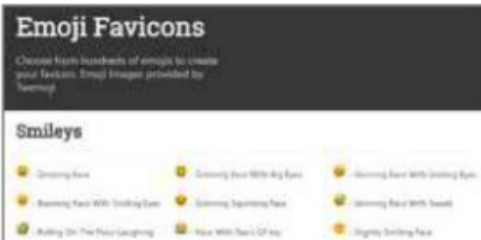
Top Tips of the Fortnight

Create CSS animations

CSS was originally introduced as a way of centralising the styling information for websites, removing it from HTML and placing it in a separate file to improve efficiency. However, it has since evolved into an incredible suite of design tools that can control much more than colours and typefaces. To get an idea of



its animation capabilities, check out Animista (animista.net), which shows off lots of the latest effects CSS can create. If you like what you see, click the 'Generate code' button to copy an effect for your own website.



Customise your favicon

Does your site have a favicon? These small images – originally 16 by 16 pixels – that appear in the corner of a browser tab have since evolved into larger images that often turn up in search results and other places, too. If you haven't got one, favicon.io is a great resource. It can build you a free favicon from an image, some text or even an emoji.

Deal of the Fortnight

Fasthosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk) is offering 50% off all hosting packages for the first six months, bringing its cheapest Ignite package down from £6 to £3 per month.

Web-building Helpdesk

Q When I see website code online, it's always well presented with neat indents. Mine is far less tidy, because I add bits, take bits away and litter it with comments. Is there an easy way to make it neat again?

Brian Follis, via email

A We've found a brilliant online tool that does what you want. Copy your scrappy HTML from your text editor, then go to Alchemize at alchemizeapp.com. Paste the code into the editor and choose HTML (or CSS or JavaScript) from the menu. Click the Prettify button and it arranges your code neatly.

There's also a Compress button that removes any unnecessary elements from your code, including comments and even spaces, although it renders it barely readable (unless you're a computer).

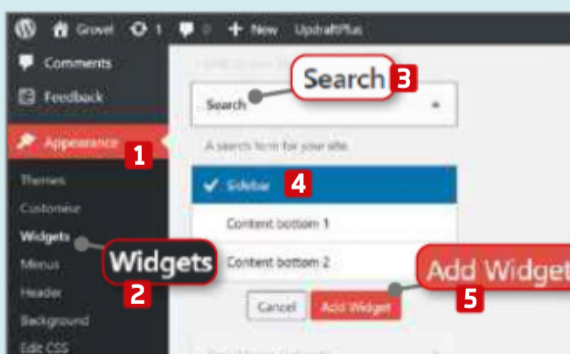
Andy Shaw, Technical & Reviews Editor



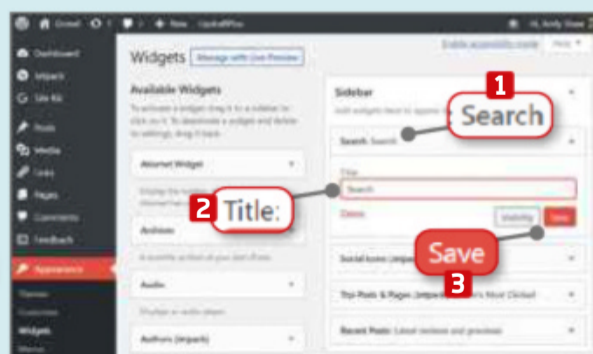
MINI WORKSHOP | Add search to a WordPress website

WordPress: www.wordpress.org | 5 mins |  A WordPress website

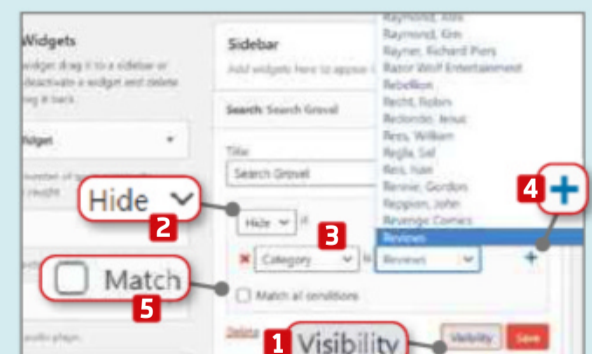
Your visitors might have used Google to get to your website, but what if they want to search for something else when they're there? Adding a search box to your WordPress site is easy – just follow the steps below.



1 From the WordPress Dashboard, click Appearance, **1** then Widgets. **2** Scroll down to the Search option **3** and click the arrow. Choose where on your site you'd like the search tool to appear. **4** Click Add Widget. **5**



2 Scroll back up to the top of the page. The Search box **1** appears in the section you selected in Step 1. Drag and drop the bar to order it among any other items you have in the same section. If you want to place some text above the search box, enter it in the Title box **2** and click Save. **3**



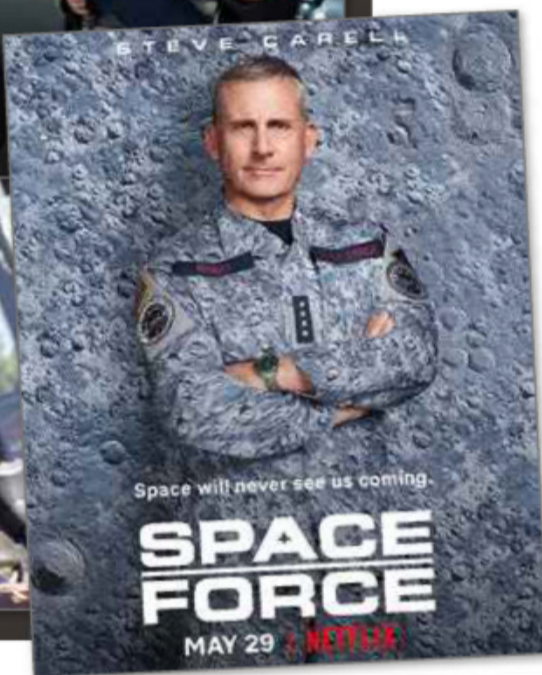
3 If you don't want the search widget to appear on every page, click the Visibility button. **1** You can choose to Show or Hide it, **2** and select particular conditions from the drop-down menus. **3** Add more conditions using the + button **4** and tick the box **5** if you want all conditions to be met. Click Save.



What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight

NETFLIX



Blast off with Steve Carell in *Space Force*

From 29 May

When Donald Trump announced the US Space Force, complete with its *Star Trek* style logo (bit.ly/force502), the general response was... less than awe-struck. But the announcement sparked an idea in the brain of Greg Daniels, creator of the smash-hit US version of *The Office*, who reunites with Steve Carell for this imagined glimpse into America's Moon-reconquering military branch.

You get the gist of *Space Force* from the first moments of its teaser trailer, which you can watch for free on Netflix at bit.ly/space502. As in *The Office*, Carell and an ensemble cast – this time including John Malkovich and Lisa Kudrow, plus US comedy favourites Jane Lynch and Fred Willard – portray a workplace that's unlike any other and yet somehow *exactly* like all others.

Watch all 10 episodes of *Space Force* on Netflix from 29 May. Then watch to see if a certain POTUS takes it all a little too seriously.

Watch *Citizen Kane*, *King Kong* and more RKO classics free

Available now

BBC iPlayer's Silver Screen Classics section has been around for a while (bit.ly/screen502), but until mid-May it was a pretty sparse affair, with just three vintage films on offer – including the original *Cat People* and its sequel. But the Beeb has now delighted a

housebound nation by adding no fewer than 23 classic RKO films. Among them are the biggest classics from Hollywood's Golden Age, including Orson Welles' legendary 1941 film *Citizen Kane*, Fay Wray in 1933 heartbreaker *King Kong*, and Cary Grant and Katherine Hepburn co-starring with a leopard in 1938 comedy *Bringing Up Baby*.

Also in the collection are Welles' *Kane* follow-up, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in screwball musical *Top Hat*, Alfred Hitchcock's 1941 murder mystery *Suspicion*, and John Wayne's 1940s Westerns *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* and *Fort Apache*. All are available now to stream on demand via the iPlayer.

Watch the final season of *13 Reasons Why*

From 5 June

Controversial Netflix drama *13 Reasons Why* bows out with its fourth season, whose 10 episodes arrive on 5 June. Season 1 was adapted from Jay Asher's novel about a teenager who finds a box



of tapes recorded by his late classmate (bit.ly/asher502), and it included a suicide scene that understandably upset many viewers. That scene has since been removed from the show (bit.ly/13rw502), and last year's Season 3 received praise for its handling of sensitive issues. However, the show won't continue beyond Season 4, which arrives in full on 5 June. Watch the latest trailer at bit.ly/reasons502.

Grab your skateboard for *Betty*

From 9 June

HBO's new show, which airs in the UK on Sky Comedy, follows a diverse group of skateboarding young women in New York City. Like *Skate Kitchen*, the



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



documentary film on which it's based (and which is included with Amazon Prime Video at bit.ly/skate502), *Betty* offers an exciting slice of NYC life – just the kind of escapism you may be craving at the moment. Many of the women from the documentary play fictionalised versions of themselves in the show, which arrives on Now TV as a six-episode box set on 9 June. Watch HBO's official *Betty* trailer at bit.ly/betty502.

Watch new BBC drama *I May Destroy You*



From 8 June
Like skateboarding show *Betty*, new 12-part BBC drama *I May Destroy You* is a co-production with HBO, and takes a frank and fearless look at the lives

iPlayer shows to stay for a full year

The BBC has finally signed a deal with TV producers' body Pact (pact.co.uk) that gives all commissioned programmes an automatic iPlayer window of 12 months, up from the current 30 days.

The deal, which follows months of negotiations, means "everybody wins", says BBC Director-General Tony Hall. "Not only have we reaffirmed our commitment to supporting independent UK producers, we have also ensured licence fee payers have access to the best content for at least a year on the BBC iPlayer" (bit.ly/pactbbc502).

An increasing number of shows, including *Killing Eve* and *Devs*, had been given iPlayer windows of more than a year in the run-up to the Pact announcement. The deal is now likely to transform what the BBC can offer through its on-demand service, letting it compete more effectively with rivals such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video.



of young women. Michaela Coel (who starred in *Black Earth Rising* and won a BAFTA for writing teen show *Chewing Gum*) plays Arabella, who negotiates a tricky modern landscape of dating and relationships. Watch the trailer at bit.ly/destroy502.

Watch new Japanese anime *Dorohedoro*

From 28 May
Netflix has become the place to go for thrilling anime and manga. Shows and films such as *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (bit.ly/neon502) and anime-influenced *Castlevania* (bit.ly/castle502) have earned superb reviews, and Netflix recently added several films by beloved Japanese animators Studio Ghibli (www.studioghibli.com.au).

Now comes *Dorohedoro*, a manga series written and illustrated by artist Q Hayashida (bit.ly/qhay502). The show, adapted from Hayashida's comic books (bit.ly/dorobook502), follows amnesiac lizard-headed Caiman as he seeks revenge on the sorcerer responsible for his reptilian curse. Watch the trailer at bit.ly/dorotrail502, then catch all 12 episodes from 28 May at bit.ly/doro502.



In case you missed it...

UKTV's on-demand service UKTV Play has added the first five series of classic London police soap *The Bill*, at bit.ly/bill502. The



show ran for 26 years from 1984 to 2010, so there's plenty more in the coffers – and UKTV says it will add more series later this year.

Black Mirror creator Charlie Brooker returned to the BBC iPlayer, albeit for 30 minutes only, for *Charlie Brooker's Antiviral Wipe*, a uniquely Brookesque look at the coronavirus pandemic (bit.ly/wipe502).

Celebrity Gogglebox USA, whose stay-at-home TV critics include actor Rob Lowe and Apple co-founder

Steve Wozniak, is now airing on E4. Stream episodes on demand via All 4 at bit.ly/goggleusa502.

Reese Witherspoon produces and stars in Amazon's new mini-series *Little Fires Everywhere*, based on Celeste Ng's 2017 bestselling novel. Stream all eight episodes now via Prime Video at bit.ly/fires502, where you can also see the trailer for free.



Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

Orbi WiFi System (RBK13) AC1200

Netgear's original Orbi is brilliant but pricey, so how does this new more affordable version compare?

We've been fans of Netgear's Orbi RBK50 mesh Wi-Fi extender system since it launched (we first reviewed it in Issue 415, bit.ly/issue415). However, at £265 (bit.ly/originalorbi502), it's pricey. You can save money by opting for the smaller RBK20 model (bit.ly/orbimid502) but at £180 for a router and a single satellite, it's still hardly an impulse buy.

Now, at last, there's an Orbi system that's more affordable. At £140 for a three-node kit, the Orbi RBK13 nearly halves the price of the premium system, while retaining many of its features. You could even plump for a two-node kit for just £110 (bit.ly/orbitwo502). The devices do the same job as all the Orbi models, stretching Wi-Fi around your home to eliminate dead areas.

Comparisons with other Orbis and rivals

Notably, the RBK13 runs almost exactly the same firmware as the other Orbi models, which means you get an extensive set of features.



However, there are some key differences – the nodes are smaller and more compact than those of other Orbi models, and the system reaches a smaller coverage area of 418m², compared to the standard model's 560m².

Also, while most Orbi systems operate

simultaneously across three radio bands, the RBK13 supports only two. This means your wireless devices have to share bandwidth on a single 5GHz connection, so you won't experience the huge boost in performance achievable by more expensive mesh gear.

There are several rival mesh systems you can buy in a similar price range. A triple-pack of the Linksys Velop Dual-Band can be yours for £150, while the TP-Link Deco M5 is £180 for three units. For £172, you can get the BT Whole Home Wi-Fi extender system, which has delivered excellent results in previous tests (Issue 419, bit.ly/issue419).

A few options manage to match or even beat the Orbi on price. The Tenda Nova MW6 currently sells for £150, while the D-Link Covr C1203

“ The system has a smaller coverage area of 418m² than the standard model's 560m² and supports only two radio bands ”



“ Nothing in this price range equals the Orbi RBK13’s combination of performance, features and user-friendliness ”

gives you three nodes for £135. It’s fair to say, however, that there’s nothing in this price range that equals the Orbi RBK13’s combination of performance, features and user-friendliness.

Design and features

Unlike the other Orbi units, the RBK13’s nodes are squat and square, with little moguls on top. At the front, a pinprick LED glows in various colours to indicate status and error conditions. The design is plain and boxy, but compact and unobtrusive, with a footprint of just 104mm².

The most expensive Orbi devices have four Gigabit Ethernet sockets per node but the RBK13 only has a single socket on the router unit (aside from the one that connects to your modem), and no Ethernet at all on the satellites. USB is absent, too, although each unit retains the small Sync button that lets you easily connect via WPS.

The good news is that the software is barely cut down at all. Whether you’re using the Orbi smartphone app or the slick and responsive web portal, almost all the key features of the RBK50 are reproduced here. All that’s missing – due to the lack of ports – are the options for USB file and printer sharing.

This means you get a built-in VPN server for securely accessing your

home network over the internet, along with support for basic voice controls via both Alexa and Google Assistant. You also get the option of subscribing to Netgear’s Armor security service, which for \$70 (around £55) a year gets you network-level virus detection and security monitoring for all the devices in your home.

You can sign up to the Circle parental control service, too, which for \$50 (around £40) a year gives you extensive control over time limits and schedules for kids’ devices, along with a breakdown of their internet usage. The catch is that the free parental controls provided for non-subscribers are very limited, with no device-specific scheduling options at all.

Inside, the Orbi RBK13 is equipped with respectable

Wi-Fi hardware, including a 5GHz radio that’s rated at 866Mbps – the same speed as the client radio on the premium version – and support for 2x2 MU-MIMO. However, as we’ve noted, that radio has to carry a lot more traffic than on the RBK50, leaving less bandwidth for your devices.

Performance

To measure performance, we carried out our usual test, setting up the Orbi’s router node in the living room of our test house and situating the other two nodes in adjacent rooms. We then walked around with a Microsoft Surface laptop, measuring the average upload and download speeds in a few specific locations to a NAS appliance, which was connected to the Orbi router unit by Ethernet.

The RBK13 had no problem delivering a strong wireless signal to the furthest reaches of our home but, as expected, it couldn’t keep pace with the more expensive Orbi mesh systems. It surprised us by outperforming the RBK50 at short range, though this dropped to half the RBK50’s speed when operating between different rooms.

Even so, given its price, the RBK13 system performed very well. It outpaced the D-Link and Tenda systems in every test, and while it was a whisker behind the TP-Link Deco M5 in two of our download tests, it pulled convincingly ahead in the other two, making the Orbi a stronger performer overall.

PRODUCT INFO

Netgear Orbi RBK13

Price: £139.98
Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/orbi502

SPECIFICATIONS

- 2.4GHz and 5GHz MU-MIMO Wi-Fi
- 2 x Gigabit Ethernet ports (router only, one reserved for modem)
- Supports Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant
- 104 x 104 x 69mm
- 268g

FOR

- ✓ Great performance for the price
- ✓ Same features as full-size Orbi
- ✓ Slick management interface

AGAINST

- ✗ Only one spare Ethernet port
- ✗ Limited parental controls, unless you pay extra

TWICE AS FAST

Netgear Orbi RBK50, £265
bit.ly/originalorbi502



EVEN MORE AFFORDABLE

D-Link COVR-C1203, £135
bit.ly/dlink502



OUR VERDICT



The Orbi RBK13 is a significant step down from the RBK50. Performance is halved over distance and it lacks its elder sibling’s physical connections. Parents, too, might well prefer to look for a system that comes with scheduling built-in, rather than having to pay extra.

However, it’s still fast

enough to distribute the full bandwidth of a 100Mbps fibre connection all around your home, which means it’ll breeze through jobs such as 4K video streaming, with bandwidth to spare.

For many households, the Orbi RBK13 is the perfect balance. It provides a strong and speedy wireless signal around your

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

home, with an impressive set of networking features and management options. It doesn’t hurt that it’s also one of the cheapest mesh systems around.

Apple iPhone SE

The iPhone SE gets an upgrade that makes it as powerful as the iPhone 11 – for a lot less money

The 2020 update to the iPhone SE follows the same trend of the original SE (reviewed in Issue 397, bit.ly/issue397), which squeezed the processor of an iPhone 6s into the case of an iPhone 5s. This time, you get the internal power of an iPhone 11, Apple's latest model, tucked into a case that's almost identical to the iPhone 8's, at an affordable £419 for the 64GB model.

By today's standards, however, the device looks dated. The miserly 4.7in screen doesn't stretch to the edges of the phone's body, and it has only one rear camera that lacks some of the

advanced features of more expensive models.

Screen, performance and battery life

If you're used to a larger phone, the screen feels small, and this is a noticeable disadvantage when watching videos. However, the compact size makes it easier to slip in a pocket and operate with one hand.

Despite its diminished dimensions, the new iPhone SE has an excellent screen. Its 336ppi pixel density – along with our measurements of 571cd/m² peak brightness, 1,427:1 contrast and 95.5% sRGB coverage – are impressive for the price.

With the same Apple A13 Bionic chip under the hood as its more expensive siblings (although half as much memory at 3GB), you'd expect good performance. This proved to be the case in our speed tests, in which the new iPhone SE was twice as fast as similarly priced rivals – namely, the Google Pixel 3a and Pixel 3a XL. Its raw performance was more than a match for phones featuring the latest Qualcomm Snapdragon 865 processor, such as the OnePlus 8 and 8 Pro.

Sadly, its battery life falls behind its competitors. With the same tiny 1,821mAh power pack as the original iPhone 8, the new SE only lasted 11 hours 35 minutes in our video-rundown test. On the plus side, Apple has added fast 18W charging, taking only 30 minutes to reach 50%. But most modern flagship phones last at least 20 hours in this test, so it's impossible not to be disappointed.



“Great camera, amazing performance – the cheapest iPhone by some distance”

Camera and video

The cameras are physically identical to those on the iPhone 8 but, with the power of the A13 Bionic behind them, image quality is much improved. Shots aren't as impressive as those taken on an iPhone 11, but proved significantly better than the Realme 6 – a cheaper model,

but one that punches above its weight in photo quality.

Perhaps even more impressive than this, however, is the high quality of the new iPhone SE's video capture. The A13 Bionic chip can apply image stabilisation to 4K footage recorded at 60fps, which looks sumptuous when played back on a 4K screen.

PRODUCT INFO

iPhone SE

**Price: £419 (64GB);
£469 (128GB);
£569 (256GB)**

**Buy from Apple:
bit.ly/iphone502**

SPECIFICATIONS

- Hexa-core Apple A13 Bionic processor
- 3GB of memory
- 64GB, 128GB or 256GB storage
- 4.7in IPS screen (750 x 1,334 pixels resolution)
- 12 megapixels/7 megapixels rear/front cameras
- 138 x 67 x 7.3mm
- 148g

FOR

- ✓ Compact and lightweight
- ✓ Impressive single camera
- ✓ As fast as an iPhone 11

AGAINST

- ✗ Small screen
- ✗ Only one rear camera
- ✗ Poor battery life

OUR VERDICT



On the face of it, the new iPhone SE is little more than a souped-up iPhone 8 – a hodgepodge of old and new parts, with a tiny display marred by unsightly bezels. Nevertheless, there are plenty of reasons to love it. Armed with a great camera and amazing performance, it's smaller and lighter than most

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

phones released today and, let's not forget, it's the cheapest iPhone by some distance. The fly in the ointment is its disappointing battery life.

WI-FI'S SECRETS

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- Mirror your phone & tablet screen
- Make Skype calls to family

+ Stream your PC videos to your TV

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PUT A 'CONDOM' ON YOUR USB!
The ingenious way to keep your devices 100% SAFE

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Work it out using hidden Windows data
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AUTO-SAVE YOUR PC FILES TO AN EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE
Close them, don't lose them! p35

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How one man lost it all p100

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE
How to help close the gap p100

SECURITY FOR FREE
Lock down your PC with these fantastic no-cost tools p20

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Best software • New apps • Avert, ye scoundrels!

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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



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

PRIVATE ANDROID BROWSER

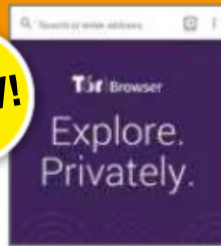
Tor

Free from bit.ly/tor501

Tested: Issue 501

Browsers don't come more secure and private than Tor. It's loaded with useful features and works in the background, automatically encrypting your data.

NEW!



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.



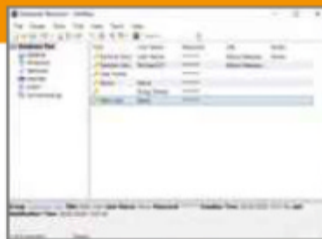
PASSWORD MANAGER

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.



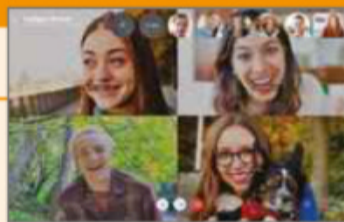
VIDEO-CHAT APP

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.



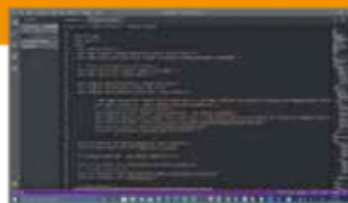
CODE EDITOR

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.



WebUser

BACK ISSUES DISC 2019



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

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Best Free Software

PRIVACY TOOL

PrivaZer 4

privazer.com

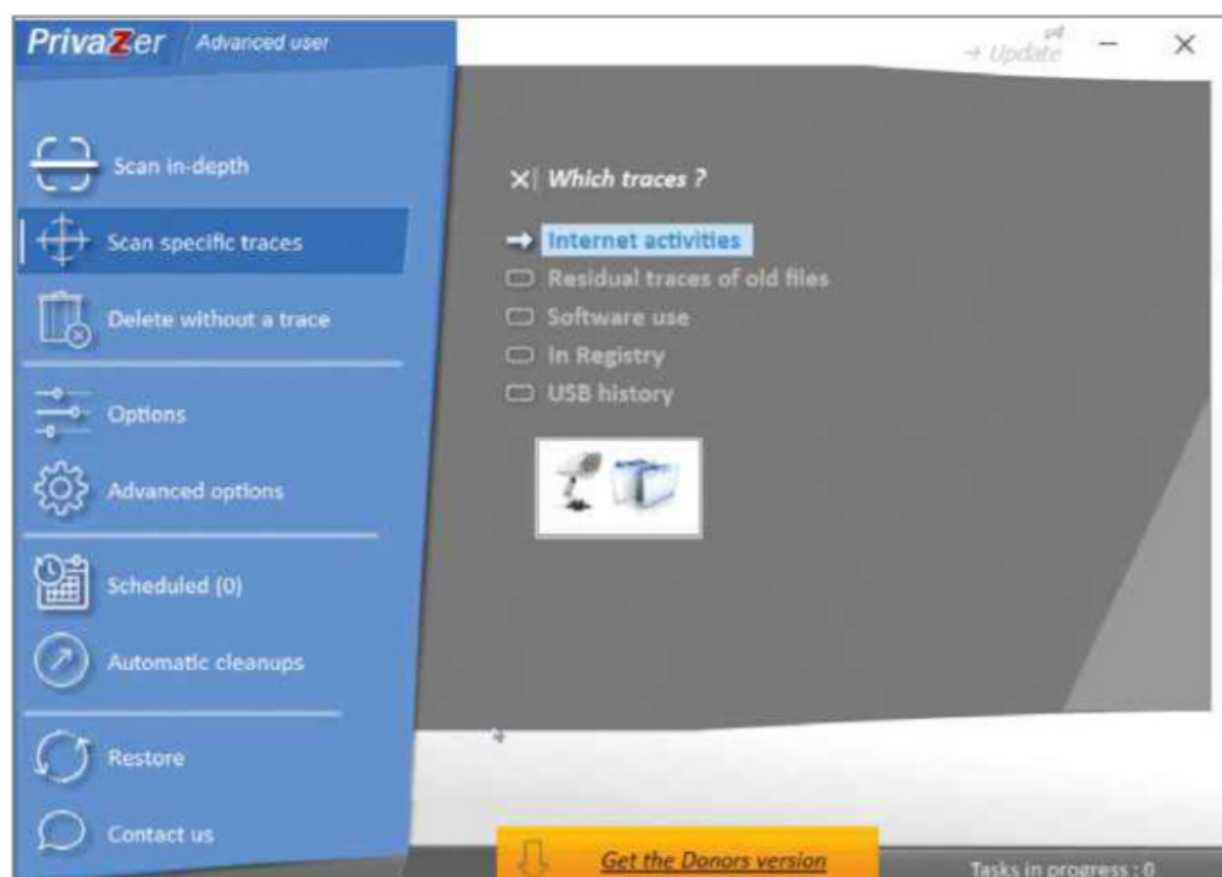
Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 18.7MB

PrivaZer is a comprehensive free tool that can remove all traces of private-usage data lurking on your PC. It offers more than 100 scans and cleanups, targeting web browsers, cookies, the Registry, RAM, Pagefile.sys and Hiberfil.sys, messenger programs, the Recycle Bin, free space and much more.

There are installer and portable versions available and, when you first run the software, you're given the option to adapt it to your particular needs. Just click Next and answer a few simple questions, such as the kind of computer user you are (basic or advanced) and what you want the program to clean or leave alone.

The software can remove previous versions of Windows and old Windows



updates if you ask it to, which can free up a lot of space. It takes under a minute to complete the wizard, so is well worth doing, though you can jump straight into using PrivaZer if you prefer.

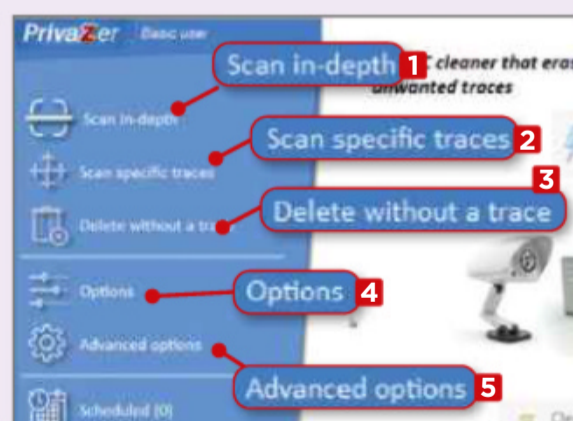
This major new release has an updated design (though it's not hugely different from the previous version) and gains two new features – automatic update downloading and automatic cleanup of Microsoft's new Chromium-based Edge browser.

Performance has been improved in this release, as has the scanning engine. PrivaZer now more accurately detects connected storage and cleanup of the major browsers is more thorough. It fixes a number of minor bugs as well.

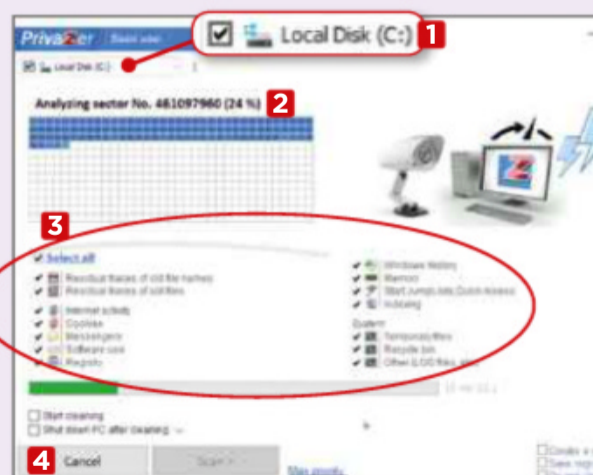
Although the software is free, there is a Donor's version of PrivaZer that supports the project and gives you access to new updates earlier. You can pay whatever you like for this, from £10 up to £10,000!



MINI WORKSHOP | Remove all traces of your PC activity with PrivaZer



1 Once you've completed PrivaZer's setup wizard, you can run your first scan. You can choose an in-depth one, **1** scan for specific traces **2** or fully delete files and folders. **3** If you need to restart the setup wizard, you'll find it under Options. **4** There are further settings to play around with under 'Advanced options'. **5**



2 Click the 1-click 'Scan in-depth' option, then choose the disk to target. **1** Click the Scan button and the software will go to work analysing your system. **2** You can use the tick boxes **3** to change which items PrivaZer should target. The process can be cancelled at any time. **4**



3 PrivaZer scans can take a while to complete. When the process is finished, you can choose the cleaning options you require. Click 'See cleanup options' **1** to change the number of overwrites to make – the more overwrites, the less chance there is of data recovery. Click the Clean **2** button to start wiping all traces.

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



FONT MAKER

Birdfont 4

birdfont.org

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10, macOS or Linux **File size:** 42.5MB

If you've ever wanted to turn your handwriting into a typeface or design a unique font from scratch, then you should try Birdfont. This free, open-source font maker/editor lets you create vector graphics and export fonts (in colour or black and white) in TTF, OTF and SVG formats. This update makes kerning and spacing of your fonts easier to manage, and reduces the file size for OTF fonts. The underlying engine has had a number of improvements made to it, too.

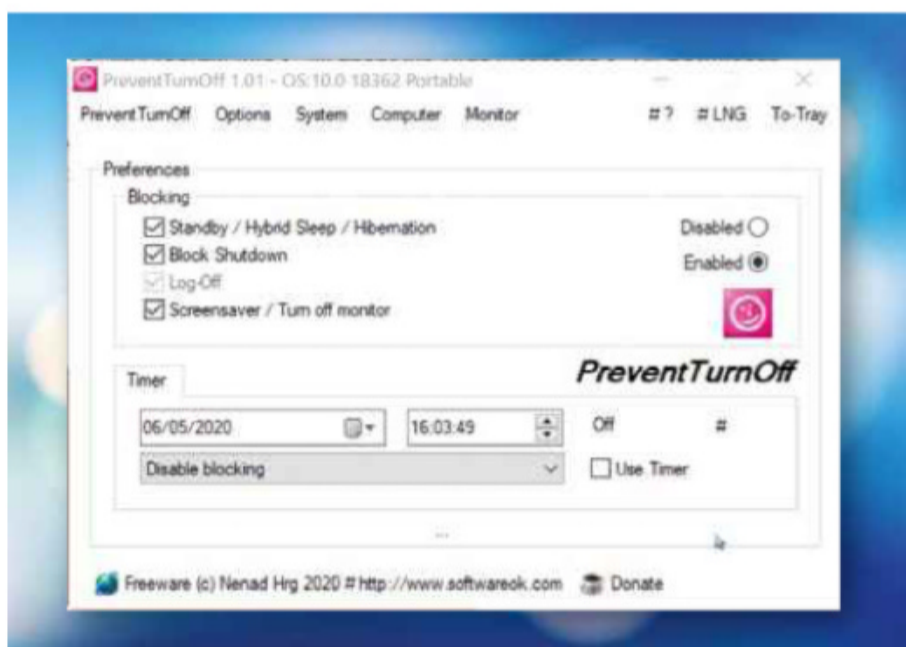
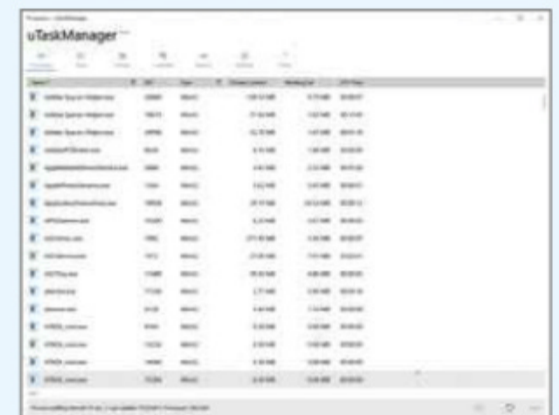
New Windows 10 App

uTaskManager

bit.ly/utask502

File size: 26.86MB

Windows comes with its own built-in task manager, and this free tool provides much of the same functionality but in the form of a UWP (Universal Windows Platform) app. You need to grant it permission to view running software. Tabs along the top let you view processes, Windows 10 apps, details on any selected app, system information and more.



SYSTEM TOOL

PreventTurnOff

bit.ly/ptoff502

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 99.5KB

You should power down your PC when it's not in use, but there may be occasions when you need it to stay on. PreventTurnOff is a simple, portable tool that stops your computer and/or monitor from shutting down or going to sleep or hibernation. It also provides quick access to Windows' power options, and you can configure it to shut down or restart your system at a set date and time.



SYSTEM CLEANER

WinSysClean Free 20

bit.ly/wsclean502

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 20MB

WinSysClean can fix problems with Windows, boost performance, remove junk files and more. This update adds support for the latest versions of Windows 10, and the newest builds of Chrome and Firefox. It increases the number of apps it can clean up after and introduces a new System Restore screen. Various features have been improved, and the interface now displays better on high-resolution screens.

VIDEO CONVERTER

500th Video Converter 2

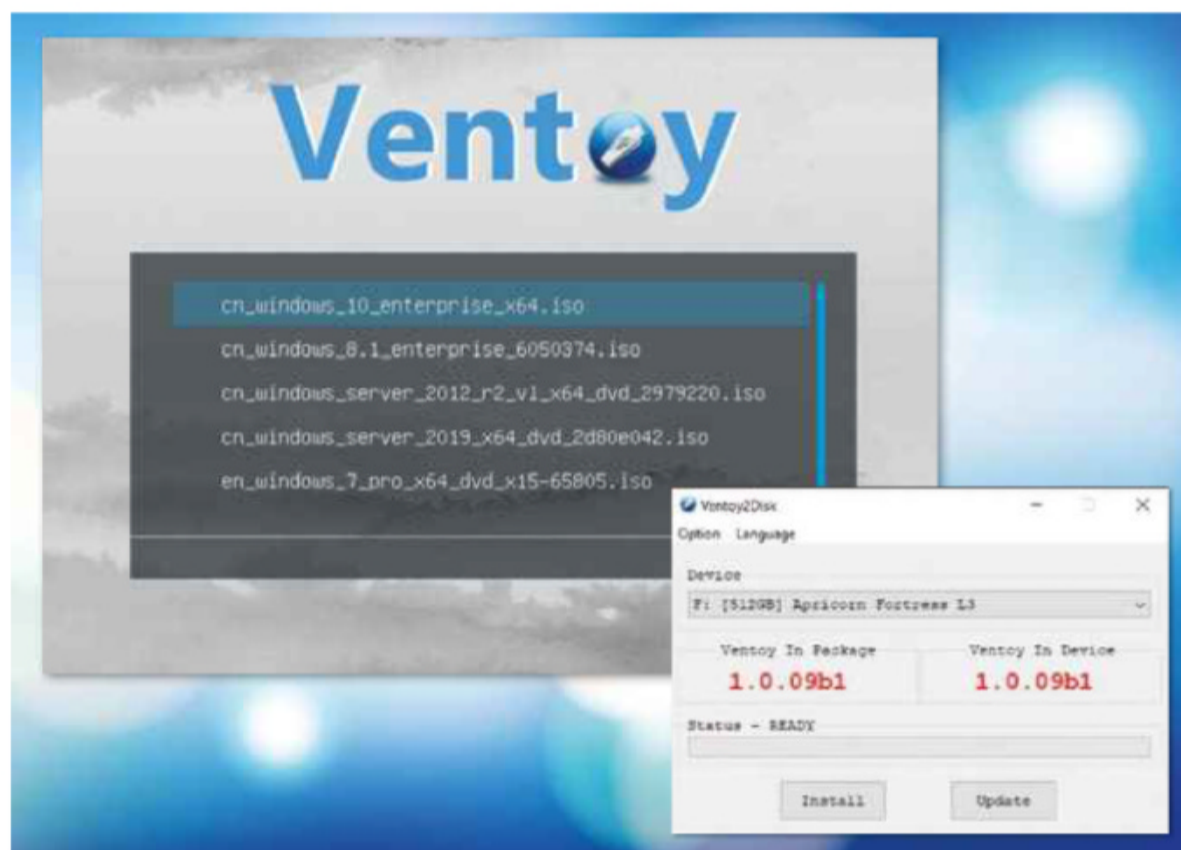
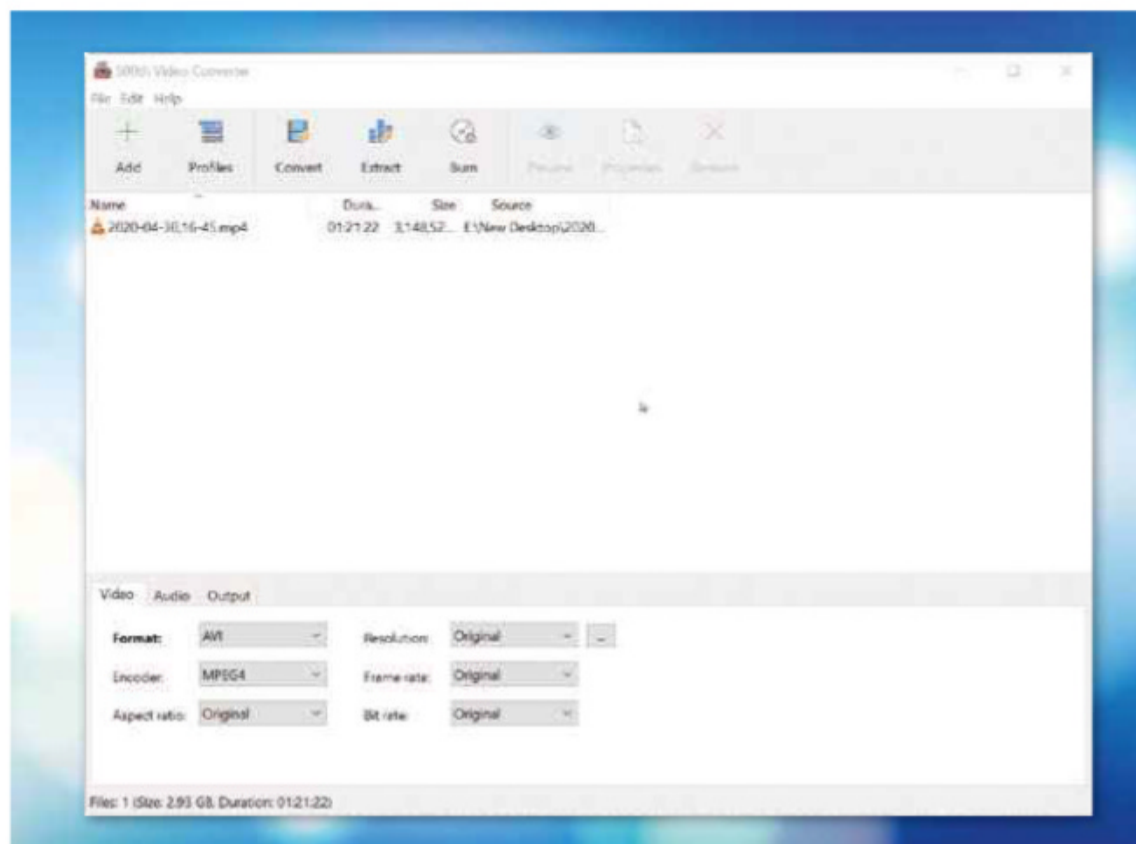
bit.ly/500th502

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 14.7MB

This probably isn't actually the 500th video converter (though, admittedly, we haven't counted), but it's easier to use and lighter than most. It can convert videos to all the major formats, such as AVI, MOV, MKV, WMV, VCD and MP4, and extract audio to MP3, WAV, OGG, FLAC and WMA formats. It can also burn videos to CD, DVD and Blu-ray, and supports batch conversion and extraction.

This latest release comes with an improved interface with better support for high-DPI screens and new icons. It also updates the video conversion and DVD/Bluray burning elements. Just be sure to decline the bundled junk during installation.



ISO MANAGER

Ventoy

www.ventoy.net

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 3.7MB

If you have a spare USB drive, you can use Ventoy to store multiple operating systems on it – Windows 10 and different Linux distros, for example – and then directly boot into whichever one you require. You don't need to worry about formatting the drive, just copy one or more operating system ISO files to it and boot into the one you want.

You can add as many ISOs as you have room for – the developers have tested it with over 200 ISO files. It's fast, easy to use and completely open-source.

See our workshop on page 56 to find out how to use Ventoy.

DRAWING TOOL

InkScape 1.0

www.inkscape.org

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10, macOS or Linux **File size:** 88.3MB

After being in development for more than 16 years, InkScape has finally hit its 1.0 milestone. This open-source scalable vector graphics program can be used to design and create technical diagrams, web graphics, creative art and more. It offers a broad selection of drawing, shape and text tools.

This new release promises smoother performance, a reorganised toolbox, new and improved Live Path Effect (LPE) features and a searchable LPE selection dialogue. When drawing freestyle, you can now mirror and rotate the canvas, and use X-ray and split-view modes. There's a new PowerPencil mode and the extensions system has been overhauled.





GAME

Samsara Room

bit.ly/sroom502

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 or macOS **File size:** 59.4MB

This short, hand-drawn point-and-click adventure game has a spiritual aspect – Samsara is a term from Indian religions referring to the cycle of death and rebirth. You start in a strange room and use the odd items – a grandfather clock, a mirror, a rotary-dial telephone – to escape. The game isn't too challenging but its haunting and otherworldly atmosphere will keep you intrigued.

✓ Install this program...

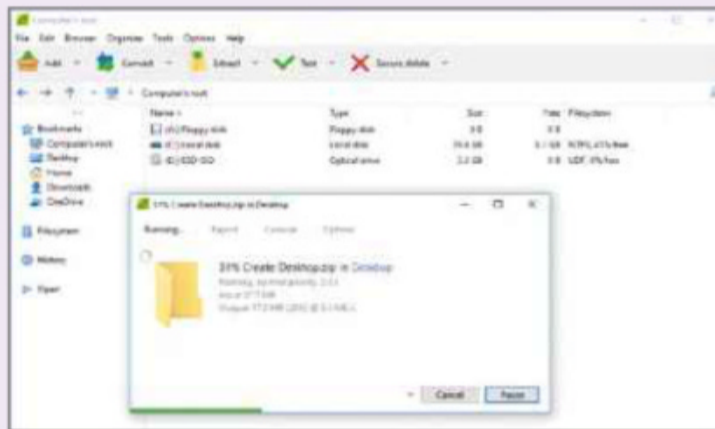
PeaZip

www.peazip.org

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10

File size: 8.1MB

PeaZip is a powerful but easy-to-use file-and-archive manager that lets you create, convert and extract compressed files in all the popular formats. It's particularly useful for opening RAR files for free (though it can't create them). The latest version of the program has updated its themes and icons, and tweaked the interface to scale and display better on hi-res screens. PeaZip now automatically open TAR archives and makes it easy to detect duplicate files and analyse folder contents from its file manager. Be sure to decline any bundled junk during installation.



...Not this one ✗

FreeArc

freearc.org

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 6.2MB

FreeArc claims to combine the best features of rival compression tools 7-Zip and WinRAR, and offer "fast but effective compression", which sounds promising. Sadly, it was abandoned by its developer several years ago and its website was taken down, though it's still available to download from many other sources.



OTHER OPERATING SYSTEMS What's new for Linux and macOS



LINUX DISTRO

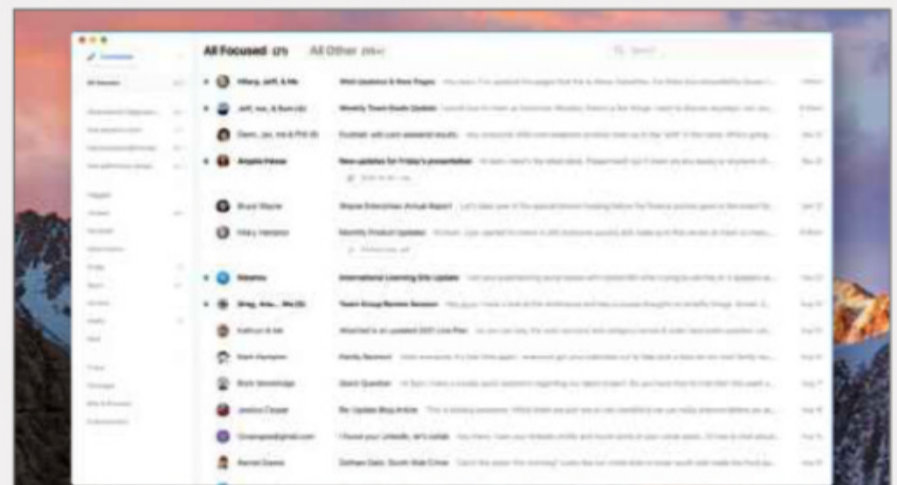
Fedora 32

bit.ly/fedora502

Min requirements: 8GB hard drive space, 64-bit processor

File size: 1.8GB

Fedora, arguably the best Linux distro for advanced users, comes with the latest version of GNOME (3.36), which adds several improvements including a new lock screen. There are other desktop environments available, too, including KDE Plasma, Cinnamon and MATE, as well as a version of the OS for Raspberry Pi. You can download the operating system in ISO format or, if you're a Windows or macOS user, use the Fedora Media Writer to get started.



EMAIL CLIENT

Edison Mail

bit.ly/edmail502

Min requirements: macOS

File size: 190.6MB

Edison Mail has been available for iOS and Android for a while. At the start of the year, it got ported over to the Mac and is now available in the Mac App Store. It gains some new abilities including Focused Inbox, which lets you check only emails that matter to you, and Today Folder, which only shows messages that arrived in the past 24 hours. The app also now lets you mute notifications, so you can silence the email addresses you don't want to receive alerts for.

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Best New Browser Tools



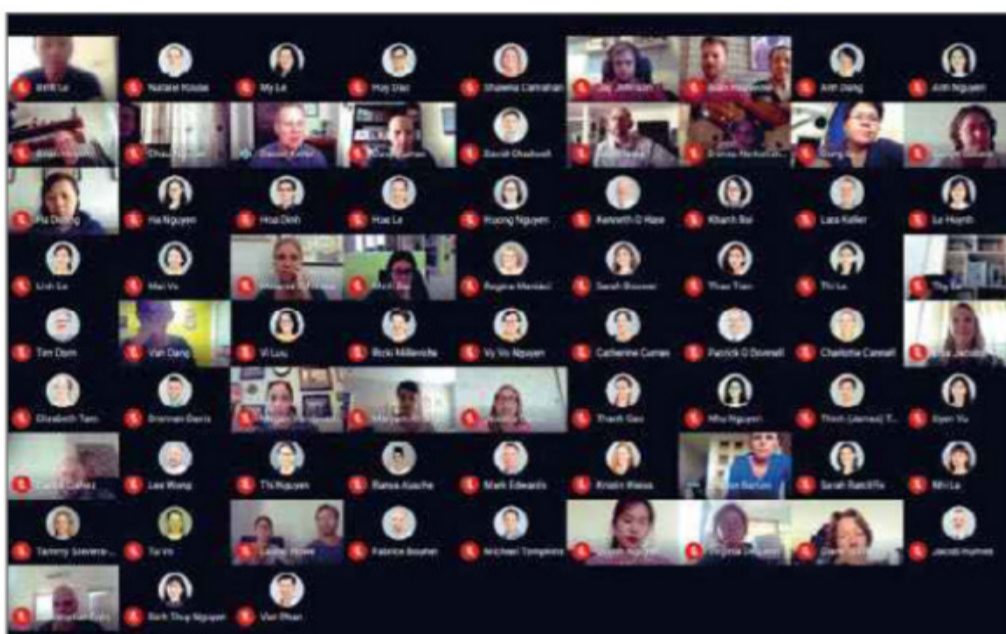
CHROME

Improve your Google Meet video calls

Before the world entered lockdown, Google Meet was a relatively unloved product that few people bothered to use. Keen to compete with rivals such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, however, Google has recently started pushing the service more enthusiastically. If your friends, family or work colleagues are using Meet, you can improve the service using Chrome extensions.

By default, Meet gives dominance to a primary speaker, which is fine if one person is running a meeting or you're on a one-to-one call. For a more egalitarian setup, install Google Meet Grid View (bit.ly/meetgrid502), which gives equal screen space to everyone in the chat, Zoom-style.

Push to Talk (bit.ly/meettalk502) is another must-have Meet add-on. Whenever you need to speak, just press the spacebar to mute or unmute what you're saying without fumbling for your mouse. Alternatively, hold down the spacebar to talk, and release it to mute automatically.

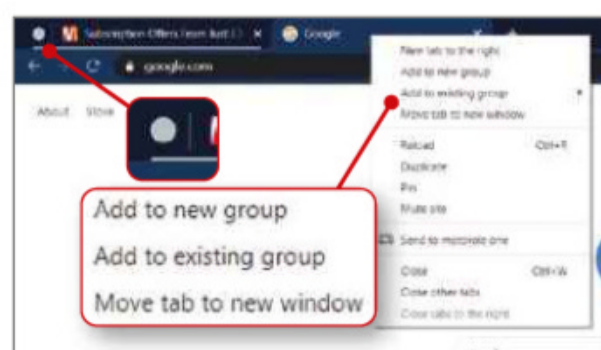


Manage tabs with Chrome's Tab Groups

The Tab Groups feature has been around in one form or another for a while, and we're no strangers to extensions that offer this function (see our tab-managers round-up on page 46). Now Google has finally started adding it to stable versions of Chrome.

When you have multiple tabs open, right-click one to see an 'Add to new group' option. Choosing this marks the tab with a red circle, and you can then add further tabs to the group or create a new one – each with its own colour. To manage a group, click its circle.

If you can't see the Tab Groups option yet, click the browser's menu button, go to Help, About Google Chrome and make sure you're using version 81. If it's still not available, visit <chrome://flags/#tab-groups> and select Enabled to turn it on.

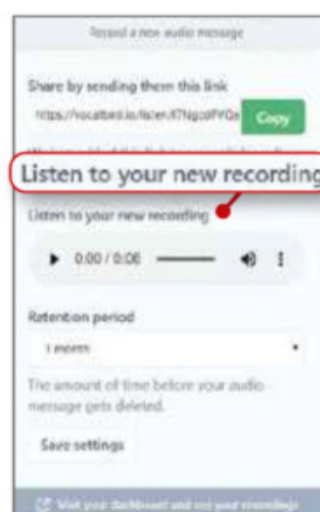


Record and send voice messages

VocalBird (bit.ly/vocalbird502) is a quick and easy way to send recorded voice messages from your browser. Simply click the toolbar icon, make a recording and the extension generates a URL that you can copy and share in an email or on social media.

Click the browser's toolbar button to create an account. The free option limits you to 100 recordings a month, which you can keep for up to a month. If you want more than that, you can upgrade for a monthly subscription of around £8.

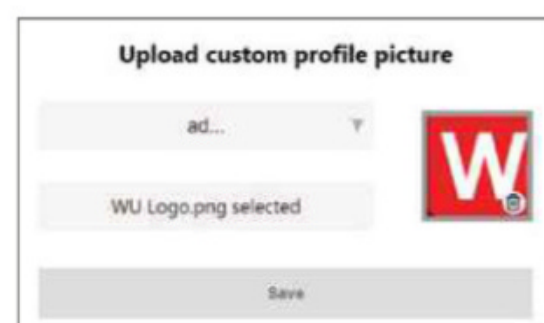
Sign in, and you can start recording straight away. When you open the tool, it helpfully tells you how many of your monthly recordings you have remaining. Record your message, and VocalBird gives you a link to copy and share, as well as the option to play back or download your message and set how long you want to keep it.



Customise your Netflix profiles

Netflix may be generous in the sheer quantity of movies and TV programmes it offers, but when it comes to customising your account, its profile system is rather stingy. Sure, you can add multiple profiles to a single account, but the platform limits your profile pictures to a select few images – typically from Netflix-owned films and series.

Now you can personalise your accounts using Custom Profile Picture (bit.ly/profile502) – a browser tool that's absolutely not endorsed by Netflix, we should add. Log into your Netflix account on your computer and open the extension. Use the drop-down menu to select a profile, then upload an image of your choice. Click Save, and when you next visit Netflix, you should see your new profile picture.



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



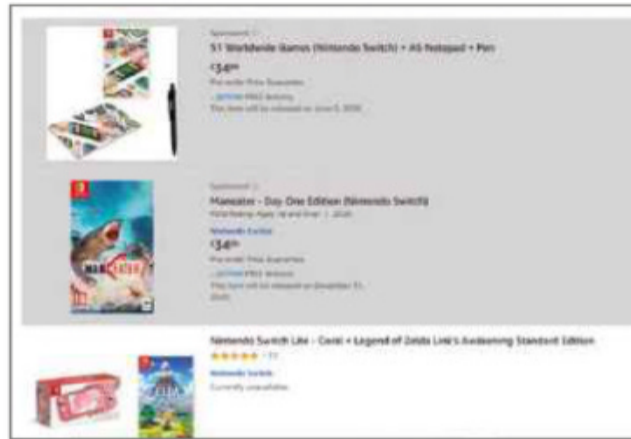
FIREFOX

Highlight sponsored Amazon products

Advert-highlighting tools are never around for long (we can't imagine why), so grab this one while you can. Amazon Unsponsor (bit.ly/unsponsor502) highlights the sponsored ads that appear in Amazon's search results, so you can focus on products that companies haven't paid to be there.

When you load the page, a quick notification at the bottom of the screen tells you how many sponsored adverts the tool has 'colorized'. It then helpfully places sponsored products inside an unmissable grey box.

If you still find yourself aggravated by sponsored products, dip into the add-on's Options menu, where you can click the drop-down menu to switch between 'colorize' and 'remove'. We'd have liked to see a few more colour settings – a big red warning, for example. But we're happy for any help in making informed buying decisions without being tricked by sneaky sponsored adverts masquerading as genuine product listings.



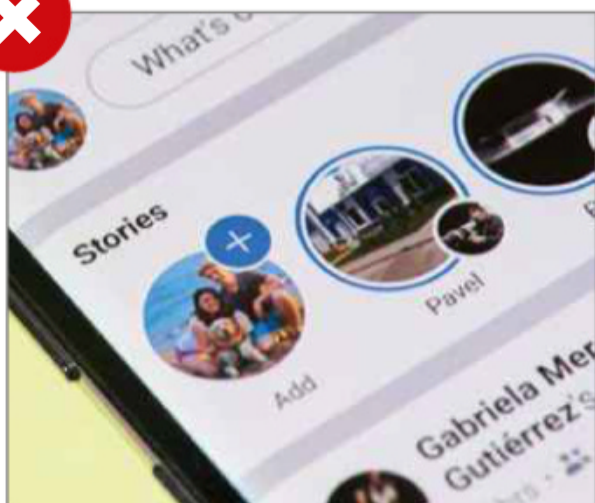
Remove Stories from Facebook

Facebook wasn't shy about pinching Instagram's most popular feature, Stories, which lets users upload a series of related photos or images. That's great for those who use it, but Stories take up a fair amount of space at the top of Facebook's already busy News Feed.

If you don't want to see all those 'What I did on my holidays' posts, install 'Hide new Facebook 2020 stories' (bit.ly/fbstories502) in Firefox. This add-on checks whether or not Facebook is displaying Stories and, if it is, eliminates them from the page. It doesn't read or transmit any other data.



Credit: PixieMe / Shutterstock.com



Create burner emails in Firefox

We're great advocates of burner emails, because they let you sign up for newsletters and create accounts without handing over your real email address. Now Mozilla is getting in on the action with Firefox Private Relay (relay.firefox.com). At the time of writing, the official add-on is still at the invitation-only alpha stage, but the company will be adding a waiting list in the near future, so keep an eye on its website.

We expect Private Relay to work like the many similar extensions available. According to the team behind the privacy tool, you'll be able to "generate unique, random, anonymous email addresses that forward to your real address" with just one click. Promisingly, Mozilla also claims you can "disable or destroy" your fake email addresses when you've finished with them to stop junk mail sneaking through to your inbox.



OTHER BROWSERS



Try the new tools in Opera 68

The latest Opera update brings a wealth of new additions. First up is Instagram integration, which means you no longer have to open the app on your phone or visit [instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com). Click the Insta-button in the browser's sidebar and a pop-out box lets you browse the social-media site from wherever you are on the web.

Even more useful is the new 'Search in tabs' tool. Click the magnifying glass icon in the top-right corner to search through your open tabs. Alternatively, use the Ctrl+Space keyboard shortcut.

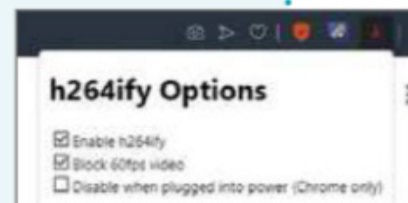
To check that you're using the latest version of the browser, click the Opera icon and select Help, About Opera.



Make YouTube videos smoother

YouTube can wreak havoc on lower-spec computers. You need a bit of buffering and a lot of luck to make it through even one video without the stuttering and lag ruining your viewing experience – and that's before your processor starts struggling and your battery fades.

Which is where H264ify (bit.ly/smoothtube502) – or SmoothTube, as we've dubbed it – comes in. The extension lets you override YouTube's default video streams to the more friendly H.264, which ensures smoother playback. You can also stop videos running at 60fps, which can cause problems on less powerful computers.



Best Free Apps



App of the Fortnight

AUDIO

Dolby On

bit.ly/dolbydroid502

bit.ly/dolbyios502

7 11

Your smartphone is a powerful audio recording tool. It has a built-in microphone for picking up sounds and a speaker or headphone connection for monitoring your recordings – pretty much all you need to record everything from voice memos, musical instruments, podcasts, live streams, sound effects and more. There's just one problem: the default sound recorder app that came with your device probably won't do a particularly good job.

There are lots of professional sound recording apps available, but most of us won't need the advanced tools (or the complicated interfaces) they offer. If you just want a straightforward set of recording and editing tools that deliver best sound possible, Dolby On is the app you need.

Given Dolby's expertise in noise-reduction technology, it's no surprise that audio enhancement is the main

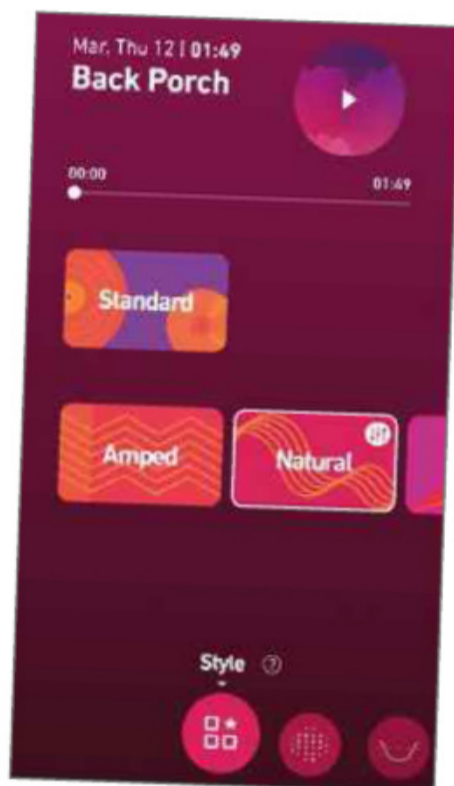
attraction. Recording is easy, and all your recordings benefit from a series of automatic enhancements, including noise reduction, stereo widening, de-essing, normalisation, volume maximisation and more. You can trim and enhance your recordings further using the simple editing tools, then share them directly from the app.

Dolby On is new to Android – in fact, it's still at the Early Access stage (although it worked perfectly during our tests). The iOS version was released a few months ago but was recently updated with support for more live-streaming services, including YouTube and Loola TV. The app is free, with no ads

or in-app purchases,

but if you're concerned about privacy, you may wish to opt out of data collection during setup – see our Mini Workshop on the right.

NEW



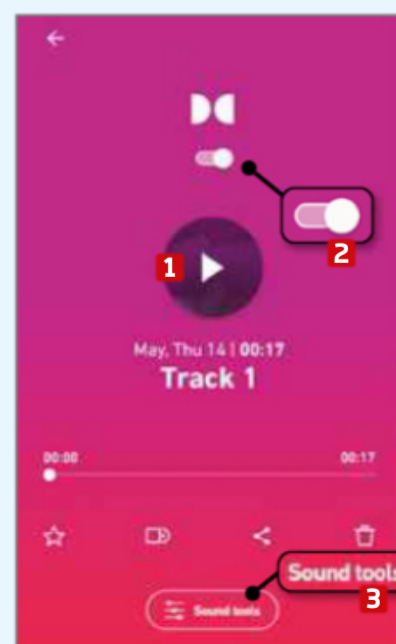
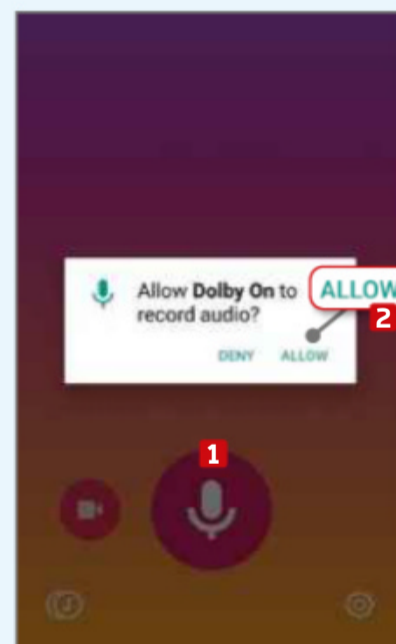
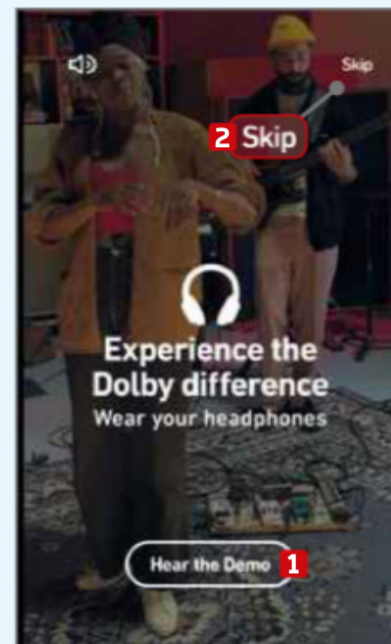
MINI WORKSHOP

Record and edit audio with Dolby On

1 When you launch Dolby On for the first time, it encourages you to pop on a pair of headphones for a better experience. Press 'Hear the Demo' **1** to listen to some examples of what Dolby On can do (or just tap Skip **2** if you prefer), then press the arrow button. The app then asks for your date of birth and your email address, but you can opt out of the latter by tapping 'Not now'.

2 If you'd rather Dolby didn't collect data about your device and usage, tap 'No thanks' when prompted. You'll be taken to the main recording screen. Here you can press the big microphone button **1** to start recording – if it's your first time, you'll need to choose Allow **2** to give the app permission to record audio. Press the stop button when you've finished. Dolby applies noise reduction and other effects automatically.

3 Press the musical note icon (bottom left) to view your recorded tracks, then select the track you just recorded. Tap the play button **1** to listen to the track – use the Dolby switch **2** to hear it with or without Dolby's effects. Choose 'Sound tools' **3** at the bottom for some editing options. Here you can choose a preset style, make manual adjustments to the treble and bass levels, trim your track and more.



Our rating



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

SECURITY

Google Authenticator

bit.ly/authdroid502
bit.ly/authios502
 (varies) 

Google's authentication app really only has one purpose – to generate single-use codes for logins that require two-factor authentication – so we wouldn't expect it to be updated very often. That said, Authenticator has just received its first update since 2017 – on Android, at least. The most significant change is a useful new tool that lets you transfer your account to a new device using a quick QR code, which is much easier than disabling and re-adding each account manually. The main interface has received a minor refresh, too.



Our rating



PHOTOS

PopTag

bit.ly/poptag502
 5

Facebook, Instagram and other social networks offer handy tools for tagging your friends and family in the photos you upload. But what if you want to tag people who appear in your photos without uploading them to a privacy-invading social-networking app? PopTag is your answer. It works just like Facebook's equivalent, allowing you to add tags and customise the font, colour or background of your text. Once you've done that, you can save and share your tagged photos any way you want.



Our rating

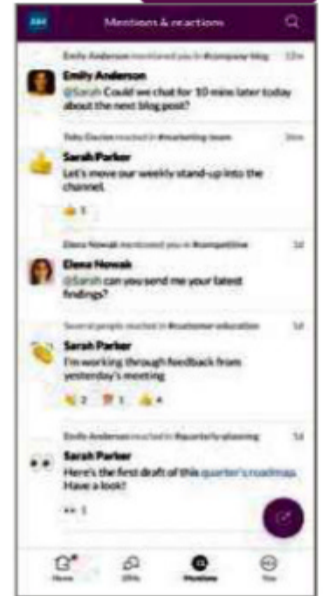


COMMUNICATION

Slack

bit.ly/slackdroid502
bit.ly/slackios502
 5  11.1

With so many of us working from home for the foreseeable future, apps such as Slack are fast becoming the standard way to communicate with colleagues, so it's good to see that its developers are supplying us with a stream of improvements. The mobile versions of Slack have been radically redesigned, with a tab-based navigation bar at the bottom of the screen that makes the app easier to use in one hand. A new floating compose button crops up in various areas, making it easy to type a quick message.



Our rating

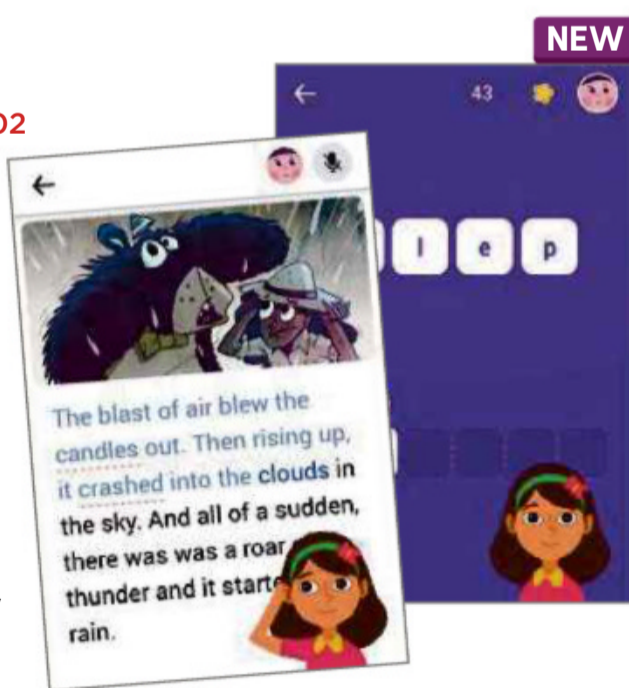


EDUCATION

Read Along

bit.ly/readalong502
 4.4

Last year, Google launched a tool in India called Bolo (bolo. withgoogle.com), which was designed to help younger users practise their reading skills. Now the company has rolled out the app to international users under the name Read Along. Available in nine languages, the app works like a personal reading tutor, listening to children read aloud and offering assistance when they need it. There are hundreds of stories to read and a game-like reward system for achievements. Currently available for Android only (and still at the Early Access stage), Read Along is completely free, with no adverts, and you can use it without a Wi-Fi or mobile data connection.



Our rating

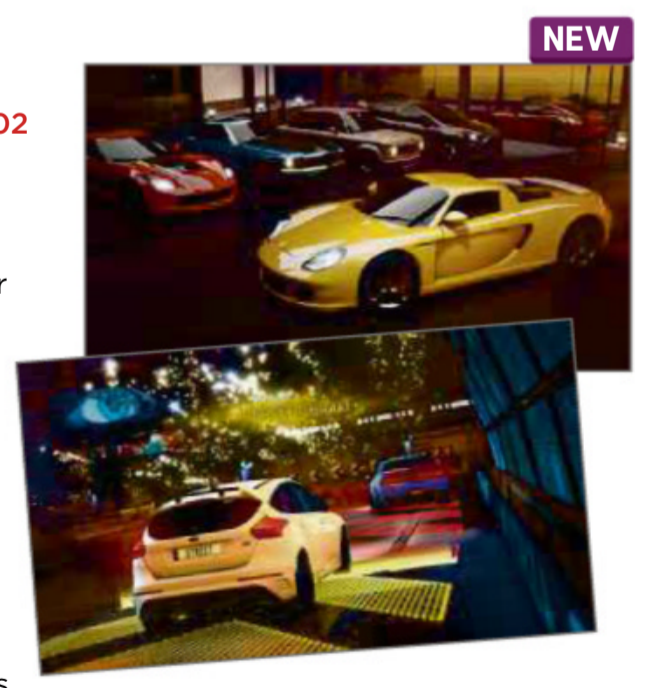


GAME

Forza Street

bit.ly/forzadroid502
bit.ly/forzaaios502
 5  10

Microsoft's popular racing franchise finally hits mobile devices with this free-to-play iOS and Android street-racing game. Forza Street is as much about collecting and upgrading cars as racing them – as you play, your garage fills up with a selection of classic and modern racing vehicles. The actual racing looks great but is somewhat simplistic. You never actually steer your vehicle – just tap and hold to accelerate, and release the gas at the right moment to brake perfectly, or hit nitro when it's available for a speed boost. There are in-app purchases, of course, but it's possible to unlock plenty of content with persistence alone.



Our rating



5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

CARS

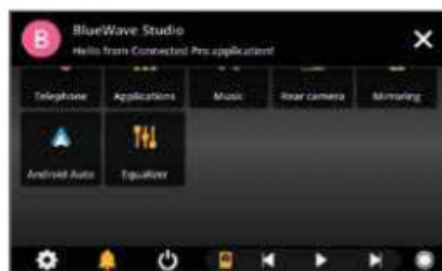
Connected Pro

bit.ly/connectdroid502

Price: £8.99



This app lets you pair your Android phone with a Raspberry Pi-powered OpenAuto Pro car head unit (see bluewavestudio.io) to show notifications, enable tethering, play music and more.



SOCIAL

Heart and Brain Sticker Pack

bit.ly/heartdroid502

bit.ly/heartios502

Price: £1.59 (Android), £1.99 (iOS)



Fans of The Awkward Yeti will love this app – a selection of 39 colourful stickers featuring characters from the cult web comic, along with an in-app comic feed and access to the online store.



GAME

Deathtrap Dungeon

bit.ly/dddroid502

bit.ly/ddios502

Price: £4.99



This interactive take on Ian Livingstone's classic 1980s Fighting Fantasy adventure book has actor Eddie Marsan narrating the tale as you navigate your way through the labyrinth of Baron Sukumvit.

ENTERTAINMENT

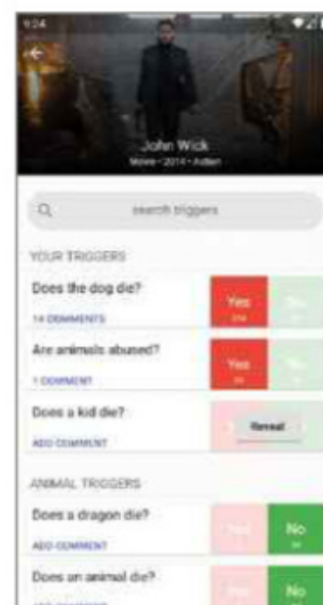
Does the Dog Die?

bit.ly/dogdie502

Price: £3.89



This app helps prevent emotional scarring by telling you whether a film you're about to watch features dog death, jump scares, homicidal clowns, plane crashes and other upsetting elements.



GAME

Levelhead

bit.ly/leveldroid502

bit.ly/levelios502

Price: £6.49 (Android) £6.99 (iOS)



If you've ever played Super Mario Maker on the Nintendo Switch, this is the next best thing. Build your own game levels and publish them online for others to play.



Connected Pro



Heart and Brain Sticker Pack



Deathtrap Dungeon



Does the Dog Die?



Levelhead



✓ Install this app...

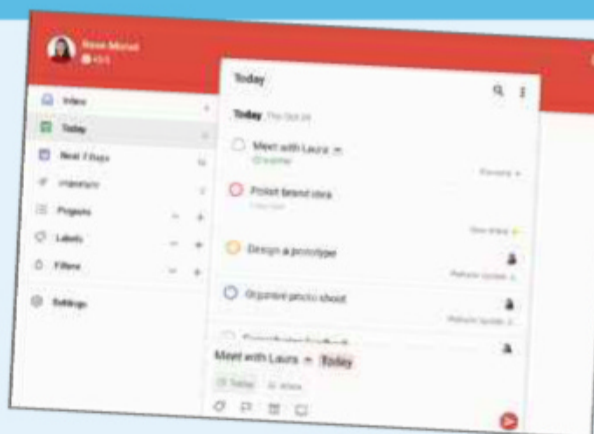
Todoist

bit.ly/tododroid502

bit.ly/todoios502



Organising your life can be a challenge, but whether you're trying to keep on top of busy work assignments or you simply want to ensure your household runs smoothly, Todoist is the app you need. For a start it works on every major platform, which means you can plan and sync tasks across all your devices – even Apple Watch and Android Wear devices. You can collaborate on anything from a family shopping list to a business project, track your progress and more. The app connects to other services, too, such as Google Calendar and Dropbox. Our only gripe is that some of its features, including reminders and file sharing, require a £3 monthly subscription.



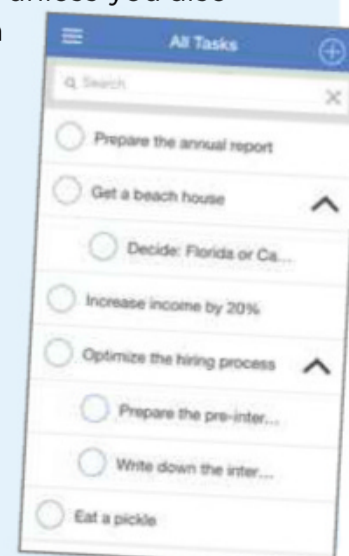
...Not this one



Swift To-Do List

bit.ly/swift502

Here's a good example of how not to do a multiplatform app. The Android version doesn't really do anything unless you also have the Windows version installed on your PC. And it just so happens that the Windows version costs £82. Even then, lots of Google Play users are complaining of sync problems and other issues. Could it be anything to do with the fact that the developers haven't updated the app since January 2017?





Take a Screen Break

Take a rest from your browser with our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you solve our Disney-film 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 DISNEY FILMS FROM THE EMOJI?

1		2	
3		4	
5		6	

NEW!

GUESS THE WAYBACK MACHINE YEAR

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

WayBackMachine



COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 4 CHERRY MX Board 1.0 Backlight

In this competition, we're giving away the 'brown switch' version of Cherry's MX Board 1.0 keyboard. This keyswitch is quiet with tactile feedback, making it perfect for accurate typing. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'CHERRY' in the subject line. For more details, visit www.cherry.co.uk and follow [@org_cherry](https://twitter.com/org_cherry) on Twitter.



**WORTH
£76
EACH**

WIN 1 OF 6 KitSound Accent 60 headphones

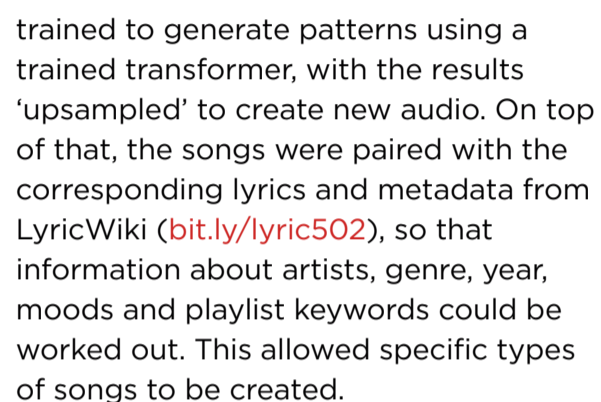
KitSound's Accent 60 headphones have a built-in amplifier to deliver a fuller, richer sound, so you feel like you're sitting in the best seat of the house. When fully charged, they last for 35 hours, letting you enjoy music wherever you are. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'Accent 60' in the subject line. For more details, visit www.kitsound.co.uk and follow [@KitSoundUK](https://twitter.com/KitSoundUK) on Twitter.



**WORTH
£39.99
EACH**

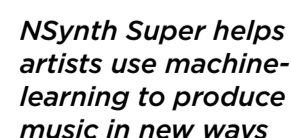


Will artificial intelligence soon be writing the songs that make the whole world sing? **David Crookes** listens to the sound of the future



Not quite. Although the nine hours it takes for AI to render just one minute of music seems excessive, it's arguably a lot faster and more efficient than writing, recording and mixing a track with all the songwriters, performers and producers that usually involves. However, Jukebox's current crop of songs isn't likely to set the charts alight. That's not to say they are without merit. OpenAI has listed dozens of samples, categorised by genre, collection and artist, highlighting songs in the style of talents such as Frank Sinatra, Shirley Bassey, Ed Sheeran and Ariana Grande. Sure, these are clunky in places and the generated lyrics are often nonsensical, but the results sound familiar and have discernible tunes.

According to OpenAI, the tunes currently lack “familiar larger musical structures such as choruses that repeat”, but they do boast traditional chord patterns, melodies and solos across a diverse set of styles. OpenAI doesn’t want Jukebox to replace the talents of musicians, though. It regards its work as the beginning of a new approach to song creation, just as



Manufactured pop acts have for decades prioritised the commercial success of songs, but AI-generated music looks set to take this down another, potentially more lucrative path. By tuning into a wealth of tracks across a host of genres, artificial intelligence can create familiar-sounding music without the need for singers, instruments and, crucially, songwriters, turning computers into the musical stars of the future. But at what cost to human art?

Most AI algorithms draw on past songs.

using collected data to discover underlying patterns. In the case of Jukebox (jukebox.openai.com), a particularly advanced open-source system developed by OpenAI, this relies on amassing huge cross-genre datasets to capture rhythm, melody, long-range composition and timbres for many different instruments. According to researchers, Jukebox also analyses the styles and voices of singers. It then uses all this information to generate fresh songs in the style of familiar artists.

It certainly is. OpenAI explains the process of its generative model in great detail in a research paper at [bit.ly/openai502](https://openai.com/research/gpt-4o-audio), which shows how 1.2 million songs worth of raw audio was encoded and compressed into a lower-dimensional space using convolutional neural networks. A model was then

Jukebox analyses the music of different artists to create its own songs in their styles

Google Creative Lab is continuing to use deep neural networks to create entirely new sounds with its NSynth Super project (nsynthesuper.withgoogle.com).

Are there any legal issues?

Much depends on how AI music is used. There was a recent legal case, for example, involving a YouTube channel called Vocal Synthesis (bit.ly/vocal502), which is dedicated to showcasing audio ‘deepfakes’ created using Google’s neural network text-to-speech system, Tacotron 2 (bit.ly/tacotron502). It allows artificial intelligence to impersonate the voices of individuals by training neural networks with a large amount of audio. However, entertainment agency Roc Nation LLC objected to a clip featuring rapper Jay-Z apparently reciting the “To be or not to be” soliloquy from *Hamlet* with an impressive hip-hop tone. “This content unlawfully uses an AI to impersonate our client’s voice,” said Roc Nation in its copyright strike against the video.



Vocal Synthesis impersonates the voices of well-known people to create new audio

Could musicians collaborate with AI?

Of course, and OpenAI is actively encouraging future human-computer collaboration. In truth, this has already happened – last year, the



Holly Herndon collaborated with an AI system for her most recent album

experimental composer Holly Herndon worked with AI expert Jules LaPlace to create an artificial-intelligence recording system called Spawn. This was used to produce her third 4AD album, *Proto*, and it allowed her to find fresh sounds. Meanwhile, Venezuelan musician Arca, who has collaborated with the likes of Kanye West and Björk, has been working with Bronze.AI (bronze.ai) to produce music for the lobby of New York’s Museum of Modern Art. The app says it allows music creators to “utilise AI and machine learning as creative tools for composition and arrangement”.

STOP COVERING YOUR EARS

Songs containing explicit lyrics are often flagged up by record companies, but some of the 40,000 tunes added to music-streaming services every day slip through the net without being identified, so Deezer is looking at using artificial intelligence to help identify potentially troublesome tracks.

The system, once it is approved by the company, will detect songs that may contain strong language or themes so that Deezer’s human team can review the lyrical content. Decisions will take into account cultural expectations and the intended audience. Read the methodology being explored at bit.ly/deezer502.



Entries in the AI Song Contest use AI to try and create the ultimate Eurovision-style hit

So some artists are really embracing it?

Absolutely. Recently there was even an AI Song contest (bit.ly/contest502), organised by the Dutch broadcaster VPRO. Billing itself as a Eurovision-style competition, AI-generated entries were submitted from across the world. The winning entry, ‘Beautiful the World’ by the Australian collective Uncanny Valley, was produced with Google’s Creative Lab in Sydney. It took inspiration from past Eurovision songs mixed with sounds of koalas, Tasmanian devils and kookaburras.

Could it help musicians overcome writer’s block?

Yes. In 1995, David Bowie designed a Mac program called The Verbaliser to help him write the lyrics for his album *Outside*. In April 2020, AI was used by ticket site TickPick (bit.ly/tickpick502) to scrape lyrics from genius.com that, after being fed into the text-generator GPT-2 (another tool by OpenAI), produced new sets of words. When tested on music fans to see if they could distinguish lyrics written by humans from those created by machine, 65% felt the AI was more creative than some of the most popular real-life musicians. However, just 17% believed the AI-generated lyrics were the best.

Will we see AI systems offered record deals?

Again, that’s already happened. The first pop-music album to be composed with the help of AI –

Warner Music has signed a record deal with a soundscape-generating app called Endel

SKYGGE’s *Hello World* (www.helloworldalbum.net) – wasn’t snapped up by a label. However, last March, Warner Music signed the soundscape-generating app Endel and called it the industry’s first ever deal with an algorithm. The major label harnessed Endel’s ability to use AI in the creation of sounds – based on the time of day, weather and other inputs – to place 600 short tracks on 20 albums in the first year alone. Significantly, the cost of producing this type of relaxing mood music is zero, which makes the collections very profitable – Endel’s developer and Warner Music enjoy a straight split of the proceeds.



Will AI music create novelty songs?

It’s likely that AI-generated earworms will be heading our way soon, and there are already some curiosities, such as a pastiche of The Beatles called ‘Daddy’s Car’ (bit.ly/daddys502). There’s also an AI-created composition based on the coronavirus – scientists at MIT assigned a note to the virus’ amino acid spikes, selected instruments and allowed an AI algorithm to convert the coronavirus’ sequence and structure into music. You can listen to the haunting, Eno-esque result at bit.ly/corona502.



Scientists have used AI to create a haunting piece of music based on the coronavirus

Unlock WINDOWS 10's SECRET MODES

**COVER
FEATURE**

Some of Windows 10's most useful features are mysteriously tucked away. **Wayne Williams** reveals how to find and make the most of the operating system's hidden 'modes'

If you only started using Windows 10 in January, when Microsoft ended support for Windows 7, you may still be getting to grips with its intricacies. But even those of us who have been using the operating system for the last few years can miss some of its most useful tools and settings, because many of them are mysteriously tucked away by Microsoft.

In this feature, we lift the lid on Windows 10's hidden 'modes' and explain what they do, where to find them and

how to make the most of them. Some modes are widely known – you've probably heard of Safe Mode, for example, even if you've never used it. But others – such as Immersive Reader in Edge – aren't even called modes, which makes them even easier to miss.

You won't find these modes unless you know where to look, but they are well worth exploring to see how they can enhance your Windows 10 experience and fix frustrating problems with the OS.



IMPROVE HOW WINDOWS WORKS

>> GOD MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: Microsoft introduced a useful hidden God Mode in Windows 7 that displays all the operating system's administration tools and customisation options on a single screen. Although the software giant has moved much of the configuration functionality to the Settings app in Windows 10, it has yet to remove the Control Panel from the operating system, which means God Mode still works and is a useful means of tweaking lots of settings in one place. Helpfully, the mode's hundreds of entries are organised into categories and sorted alphabetically.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: To enable the feature, right-click the desktop and select New, Folder. Highlight this folder, press F2 and call it:

GodMode.{ED7BA470-8E54-465E-825C-99712043E01C}

Note the full stop, curly brackets and lack of any spaces. You'll see a new God Mode icon (left) appear on your desktop.

You can create similar shortcuts for different sets of Windows settings by repeating the process above and using one of these alternative strings instead:

Default Programs.{17cd9488-1228-4b2f-88ce-4298e93e0966}

My Computer.{20D04FE0-3AEA-1069-A2D8-08002B30309D}

Network.{208D2C60-3AEA-1069-A2D7-08002B30309D}

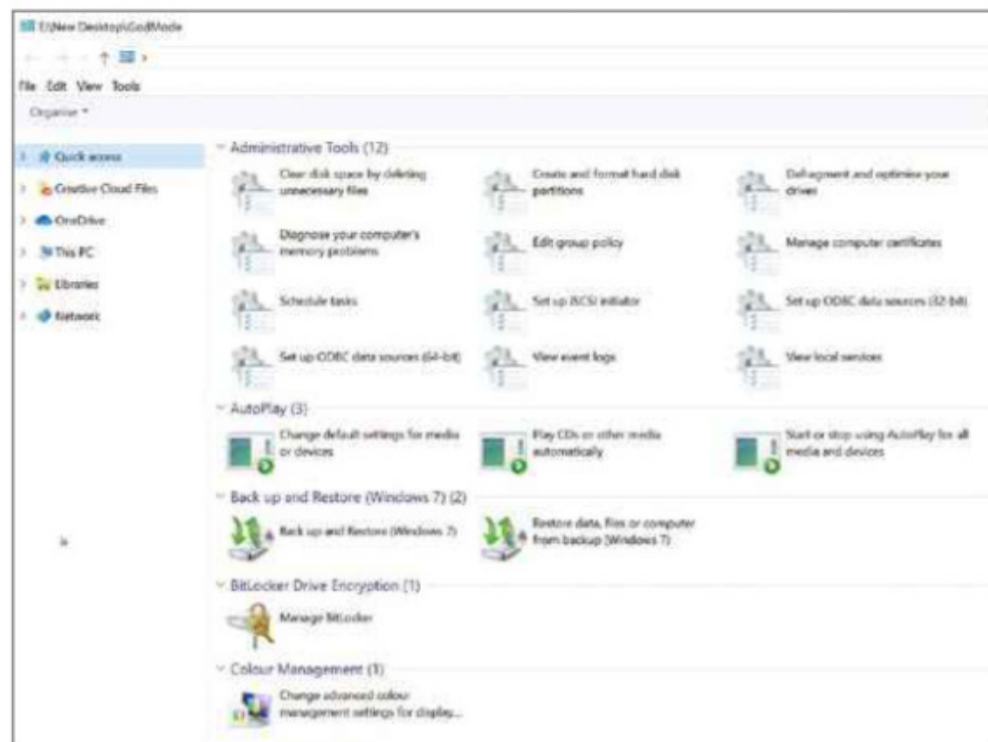
Programs and Features.{15eae92e-f17a-4431-9f28-805e482dafd4}

Power Settings.{025A5937-A6BE-4686-A844-36FE4BEC8B6D}

Icons And Notifications.{05d7b0f4-2121-4eff-bf6b-ed3f69b894d9}

Firewall and Security.
{4026492F-2F69-46B8-B9BF-5654FC07E423}

>> HOW TO USE IT: Once you've created your God Mode folder (or any of the alternatives listed above), you simply double-click it to access the



God Mode brings together all Windows 10's system settings in one place

system settings contained within. Double-click any setting to open it, so you can perform the relevant tweaks.

If typing all those characters seems like a hassle, you can get instant access to God Mode using the free tool God Mode Launcher (bit.ly/godmode502). Just be sure to decline the bundled junk during installation.

>> GAME MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: First introduced in the Windows 10 Creators Update, Game Mode is designed to intelligently manage system resources to prioritise gaming. This means that other applications won't be able to muscle in and slow things down, and Windows won't attempt to install updates at a crucial point midway through a game.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: Type gaming into the search box and press Enter to open the Game Mode settings page. The feature should already be enabled by default but, if it isn't, flick the toggle to On. If you don't play games, you can disable the mode.

>> HOW TO USE IT: Game Mode should kick in automatically when you start playing a supported game. You can



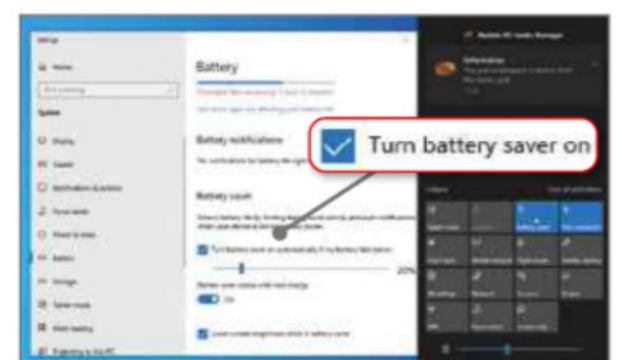
Game Mode optimises Windows 10's resources for fast and fluid gaming

open the Game Bar at any time by pressing Win+G, which presents a number of features you can enable, including telling Windows to remember that the application currently running is in fact a game (if it doesn't already know this).

>> BATTERY SAVER MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: Windows 10's 'Battery saver' mode extends how long your laptop or tablet can last between charges. You'll have seen something similar kick in on your phone when the battery gets low. It basically tweaks certain features to reduce the amount of power your device uses, such as lowering display brightness and throttling the resources used by apps you're not actively using.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: Click the battery icon on the taskbar and, in the window that opens, use the slider to set a balance between battery life and performance. You can also open the Battery settings page from here. This lets you set a trigger for 'Battery saver' to kick in (when battery life falls below X%). You can turn the feature on or off



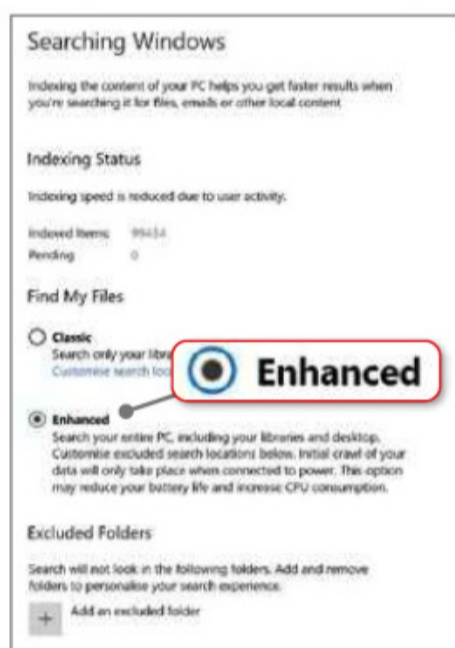
Battery mode lets you conserve power when your laptop is running out of juice

by opening the notification centre and clicking the button there.

>> HOW TO USE IT: In most cases, you'll only want 'Battery saver' mode to come into effect when you start running out of juice, but you can enable it any time. Say, for example, you left your charging cable at home, you might want to enable the mode from the start, to get as much power out of your device as possible, all day long. There's also a toggle on the Battery saver's' settings page that lets you keep it in this mode until the next charge.

>> ENHANCED SEARCH MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: By default, Windows 10 indexes your libraries and the desktop to make it easy to find content,



Speed up your searches in Windows 10 by activating the Enhanced mode

but you can expand this so that it searches your entire PC, or customise the search to exclude certain locations.

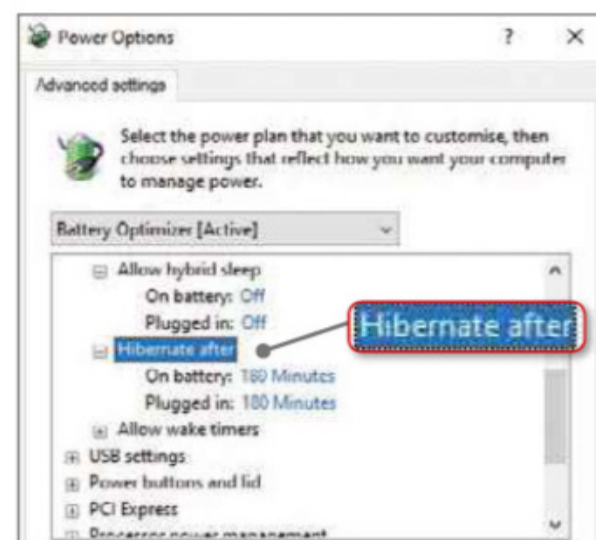
>> WHERE TO FIND IT: Click Start, open Settings and go to Search. Click 'Searching Windows' on the left, then select the Enhanced option on the right.

>> HOW TO USE IT: If this is the first time you've used the Enhanced search feature, Windows will need to index your files. You can track the progress of this under Indexing Status, above. Depending on how full your hard drive is, this will take some time. Use the Excluded Folders option to specify any folders you want the indexing process to ignore. By default, these will include system folders.

>> HIBERNATE MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: While it's best to shut down your PC when you're not using it, you also have the option of putting it to sleep or into hibernation. With the latter, Windows copies everything in the memory to a file on your hard drive (called Hiberfil.sys), then powers down properly. When you turn on your computer, Windows loads this saved file into the memory, bypassing the usual boot checks and allowing you to resume where you left off.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: Hibernation is primarily designed for use on laptops,



You can choose when Windows 10 automatically goes into Hibernate mode

so it's often turned off by default on desktop PCs. To enable it on a system running Windows 10, type `cmd` into the Windows search box, then press `Ctrl+Shift+Enter` to open a command-prompt window with administration rights. Type `powercfg /hibernate` on and press Enter. Type `exit` to close the window.

If there's no Hibernate option visible in the Shutdown menu, type `power options` in the Windows search box, press Enter and click the 'Additional power settings' link on the right. Select the 'Change when the computer sleeps' link on the left and choose 'Change advanced power settings'. Click the plus sign next to Sleep and turn off the 'Allow hybrid sleep' option. You can choose when Windows hibernates through the 'Hibernate after' setting.

>> HOW TO USE IT: Hibernate mode is very straightforward to use. Once it's enabled, click the Start button, then the Power button and select Hibernate. If you've just set up the feature and it's not visible, try rebooting your PC.

>> FLIGHT MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: You're probably familiar with Airplane mode on your phone, which essentially turns off all wireless communication methods on your device, including Wi-Fi, cellular, Bluetooth, GPS and Near Field Communication (NFC). It's so named because you can switch to the mode when on a plane during take-off and landing, to save you having to physically turn your device off and on again.

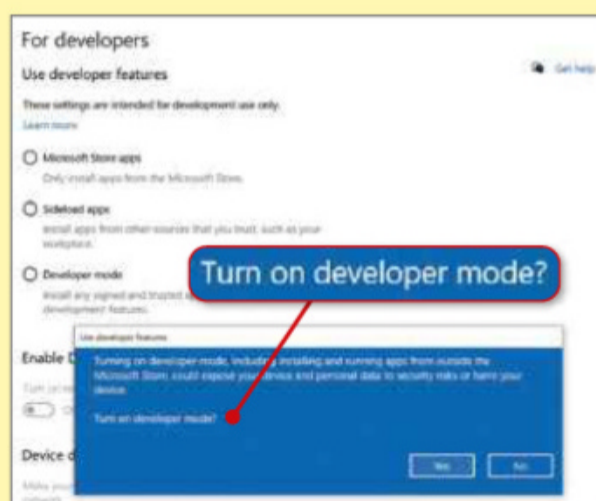
Flight mode can also be useful at other times, such as when you want to avoid accidentally using mobile data. Windows 10 has the exact same feature.

>> DEVELOPER MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: Developer mode, unsurprisingly, is a Windows 10 mode for developers. If you're writing software with Visual Studio, you'll want to enable it so you can install and test your creations.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: Type `developer mode` into the Windows search box and press Enter to open the 'For developers' Settings page. Click the 'Developer mode' button, then click Yes in the box that appears.

>> HOW TO USE IT: When you enable the mode, various features are installed that will help with app creation. You can also enable and manage features such as Device Portal and 'Device discover', which make File Explorer more developer friendly.



Software developers can test their apps by enabling Developer Mode



Activate the Flight mode in Windows 10 to take your laptop temporarily offline

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: Click the network icon on the Windows 10 taskbar and you'll see a 'Flight mode' tile, which you can click to activate the feature. This is called 'Airplane mode' on older versions of the operating system.

>> HOW TO USE IT: If you're travelling with a laptop and don't want it trying to connect to networks everywhere you go, Flight mode can be very useful and is easy to enable and disable. There's also a Settings page for the feature where you can turn it on or off, and choose whether to enable or disable Wi-Fi and/or Bluetooth.

>> GUEST MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: If people regularly ask to use your computer, you can create a Guest account that will keep them away from your private data.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: Windows used to have a Guest Account option, but that's no longer available in Windows 10. Instead, you need to create an account using the Command Prompt. Press Win+X and select 'Command Prompt (Admin)' – or 'PowerShell Admin', if that's what you see. You can't call the account Guest, so we'll call it Visitor instead. Type `net user Visitor *` and press Enter. You don't need a password, so just hit Enter again. Next, type `net localgroup users Visitor /delete` and press Enter, then type `net localgroup guests Visitor /add` and press Enter again. Close the window.

>> HOW TO USE IT: Once the Visitor account is set up, just reboot Windows or log out to see a Visitor option when you go to log back in. Select this for your guest and they'll be able to use your PC and programs, but not view or access your data.

MORE MICROSOFT MODES

There are useful modes to be found in other Microsoft tools including:

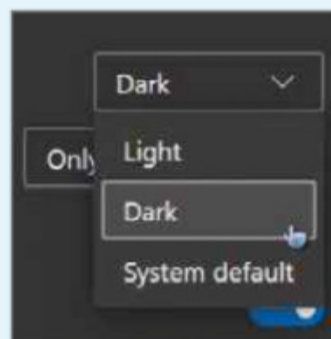


InPrivate mode in Edge

Edge, like other browsers, has an incognito, private-browsing mode, which it calls InPrivate. Using this mode prevents details of the sites you visit being stored on your computer. To switch to this, either click the three-dot menu button in the top-right corner and select New InPrivate Window or press Ctrl+Shift+N.

Light and Dark modes in Edge

Edge offers a choice of three themes – Light, Dark and 'System default'. To switch modes, open the menu, go to Settings, select Appearance on the left and choose a theme in the drop-down menu on the right.



Immersive Reader in Edge

You can make articles on the web easier to read by stripping out adverts and other junk. Just click the Immersive Reader button to the right of Edge's address bar or press F9. Immersive Reader isn't available on every web page.

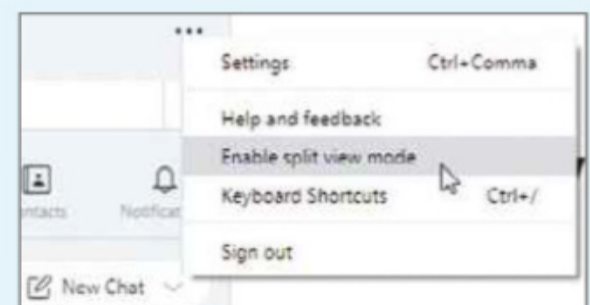


Internet Explorer Mode in Edge

Most people were more than happy to see the back of Internet Explorer, but if you need to view a particular site in Microsoft's old browser, Edge has a hidden IE mode. Type: `edge://flags/#edge-internet-explorer-integration` into the address bar and press Enter. You can enable IE Integration there.

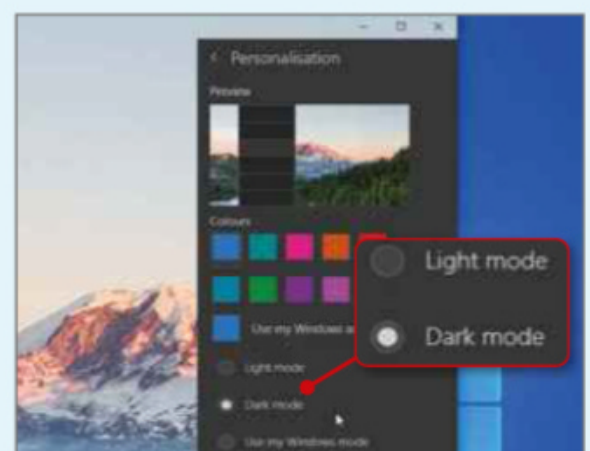
Split View mode in Skype

Skype's Split View shows your contact list in one window, and displays any conversations you open in a separate one. Open the three-dot More menu and select 'Enable split view mode'.



Dark mode in Mail

If you use the Windows 10 Mail app, you can switch to the Dark side. Click the cog icon on the left to open Settings, then click Personalisation and select Dark (or Light) mode.





FIX PROBLEMS WITH WINDOWS



>> SAFE MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: If Windows won't load or is being prevented from running normally, a rogue startup program or driver may be to blame. Before you do anything else, try running Windows in Safe Mode. This is a light version of the operating system in which only the bare minimum of drivers and services essential for Windows to run are loaded. It also uses a generic video-card driver, in case that's the cause of your woes.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: There are a few ways to access Safe Mode in Windows 10. If you can get into the operating system, type `msconfig` into the Windows search box and press Enter. Select the Boot tab and, under 'Boot options,' tick 'Safe boot' and OK it. Restart your PC.

The other option is to click the Start button, hold down Shift, click the Power button and select Restart. You can also hold down Shift and select Power, Restart from the Windows sign-in screen. When the Windows recovery menu loads, click Troubleshoot, 'Advanced options' and choose 'Start up Settings', then click Restart. Choose the boot option you require.

If you can't get into Windows at all, turn off your PC, restart it and, as it tries to load the operating system, restart your PC again. Do this three times and the Windows recovery menu will load.

>> HOW TO USE IT: There are two versions of Safe Mode – with networking and without. 'Safe Mode with Networking' adds the network drivers and services, so you can access other

computers on your network and – most usefully – the internet. If Safe Mode loads successfully, you can use System Restore to roll your computer back to when everything

was working, then uninstall any troublesome software or look for another solution.

Startup Settings

Press a number to choose from the options below.
Use number keys or function keys (F1-F9).

- 1) Enable debugging
- 2) Enable boot logging
- 3) Enable low-resolution video
- 4) Enable Safe Mode
- 5) Enable Safe Mode with Networking
- 6) Enable Safe Mode with Command Prompt
- 7) Disable driver signature enforcement
- 8) Disable early launch anti-malware protection
- 9) Disable automatic restart after failure

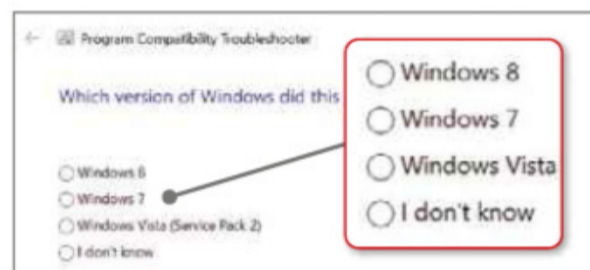
Safe Mode lets you fix problems with Windows if it won't start properly

>> COMPATIBILITY MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: If a program won't run in Windows 10, perhaps because it hasn't been updated for a few years, you can try using Compatibility mode to fool the software into thinking it's running on an older operating system, such as Windows 7.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: Right-click the problematic software's '.exe' file and select 'Troubleshoot compatibility'. You'll be given two choices: to try the recommended settings or troubleshoot the program – this will let you specify which version of Windows to mimic.

>> HOW TO USE IT: Select the option to troubleshoot the program, then tick 'The program worked in earlier versions of Windows but won't install or run now'. Click Next. You can choose which older version of Windows to try. If you aren't sure, tick 'I don't know'. Click the 'Test the program' button to see if Compatibility mode did the trick.



Compatibility mode helps you run old software that won't work in Windows 10

>> FOCUS ASSIST MODE

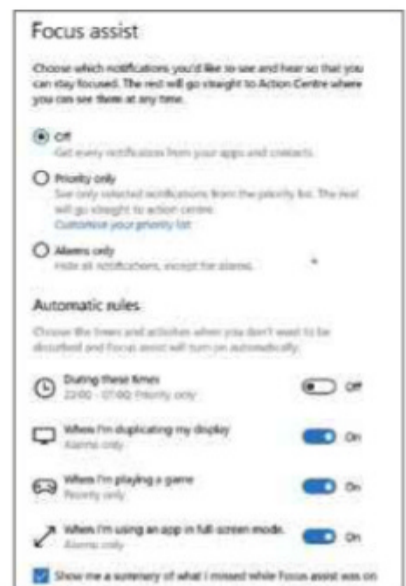
>> WHAT IT DOES: When you're playing games or running some other type of full-screen application, you may not want to be bothered by distracting notifications. Focus Assist automatically hides these notifications from you until after you've finished whatever it is you're currently doing. It can also hide notifications at specific times of the day.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: Type `focus assist` into the Windows search box and press Enter to open the feature's Settings window. Here, you can turn it on, choose which notifications you see or hide them all, except alarms.

>> HOW TO USE IT: The Settings window lets you configure the automatic rules. Choose the hours and activities when you want Focus Assist to run and silence notifications. The

Disable distracting notifications in Windows 10 using Focus Assist mode

feature will provide a summary of what you missed when you emerge from Focus Assist mode, though you can disable this option if it's not required.

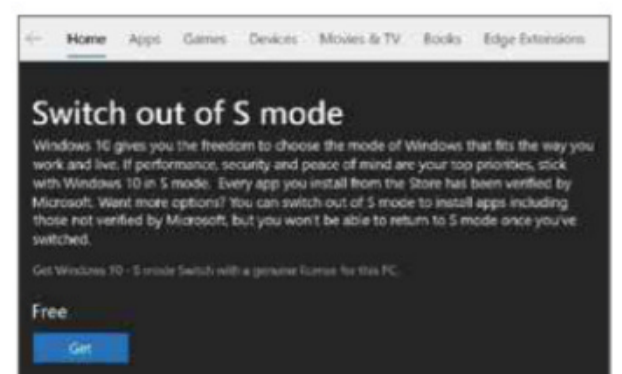


>> S MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: Windows 10's S mode locks down the operating system, ostensibly to keep your computer safe from possible threats. It's suitable for inexperienced PC users or those who need a faster, more locked-down system, such as in a business or school environment. You can only install apps from the Microsoft Store, browse the web with Edge and search with Bing.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: S mode comes installed on certain new PCs and tablets, such as Microsoft's Surface Go 2 (you can't buy the OS separately). If you're not sure whether you have it, go to Settings, System, About and scroll down to the Windows Specifications section. If it mentions 'S mode', then that's what you're running. Alternatively, try installing a third-party program from outside the Store or using a different browser. S mode won't let you.

>> HOW TO USE IT: Given S mode's limitations, you'd probably rather be using the full-blown Windows 10 operating system. However, this is a one-way process – once it's disabled, you can't re-enable it. To make the switch, go to Settings, select Update & Security and click Activation on the left. On the right, click the link under 'Go to the Store to switch to Windows 10 Pro'.



Exit Windows 10's S mode to install apps from outside the Microsoft Store



MAKE WINDOWS EASIER TO USE

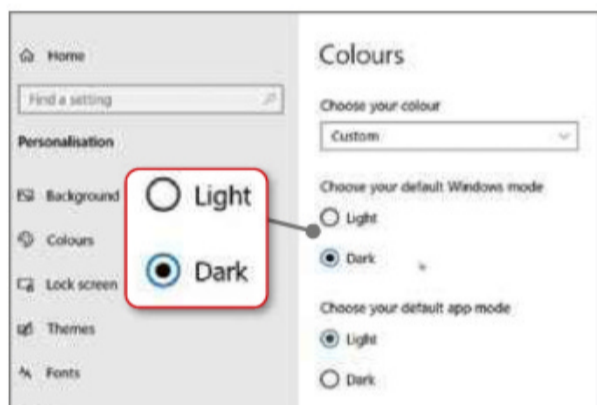


>> DARK MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: You've been able to customise the look of Windows for many years, but Windows 10 comes with a handy but hidden built-in Dark mode that not only looks good, but can save battery life and reduce eye strain.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: To turn on Dark mode, open the Start menu and select Settings. Click Personalisation and select Colours, on the left. Click the Dark option under 'Choose your default Windows mode'.

>> HOW TO USE IT: Once you've enabled Dark mode, it will change Windows 10's theme automatically (to change it back, select Light). You may also want to click Dark under 'Choose your default app mode', to have your apps take on the same theme. You can enable or disable transparency effects from this menu, too.



Enable Dark mode in Windows 10 to reduce eye strain and save battery life

>> TABLET MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: If you use Windows 10 on a tablet or a laptop with a touchscreen, interacting with the



Tablet mode makes it easier to use Windows 10 on a touchscreen device

operating system using your fingers can be fiddly. Tablet mode frees up screen space and makes it easier to navigate, replacing the Start menu with a Start screen like the one introduced in Windows 8.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: Type `tablet mode` into the Windows search box and press Enter. The Tablet mode settings screen will open. You can have Windows always open in Tablet mode when you turn on your PC, but this isn't always practical, so click the drop-down menu under 'When this device automatically switches tablet mode on or off' and select 'Always ask me before switching'. To activate Tablet mode, open the Notification Centre on the Taskbar and click the 'Tablet mode' button.

>> HOW TO USE IT: Once in Tablet mode, you can interact with the Start screen by pressing the tiles. There's also a three-line menu button in the top-left corner for accessing all apps and other settings. In addition, you can use gestures to control the on-screen action: swiping in from the right side opens the Action Centre, while swiping in from the left displays all

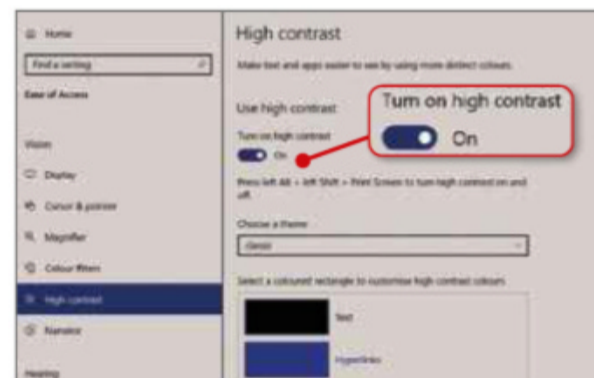
open apps in View, making it easier to switch between them.

>> HIGH CONTRAST MODE

>> WHAT IT DOES: If you struggle to read text, especially on websites with low-contrast colour schemes – blue text on black backgrounds being a prime example – Windows 10's 'High contrast' mode offers more distinct colour combinations, and even lets you create your own theme.

>> WHERE TO FIND IT: Type `high contrast` into the Windows search box and press Enter. The Settings page opens – flick the toggle to On and wait while Windows makes the change (it takes a while). To switch between 'High contrast' and normal views, use the keyboard shortcut left Alt+left Shift+Print Screen.

>> HOW TO USE IT: The drop-down menu in the 'High contrast' settings lets you choose a theme from Classic, High Contrast Black, High Contrast White and High Contrast #1 and #2. You can also create your own theme by choosing the colours to use for text, links, buttons and backgrounds. ■



Switch on 'High contrast' mode to make it easier to read indistinct text

NEXT ISSUE

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Best tab managers for Chrome

Andy Shaw's browser is a riot of tabs that gets progressively busier as the day goes on. Here he tests six free tab-taming tools to find out which is best at restoring order to Chrome



Cluster | bit.ly/cluster502 | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★☆

**WebUser
GOLD
AWARD**

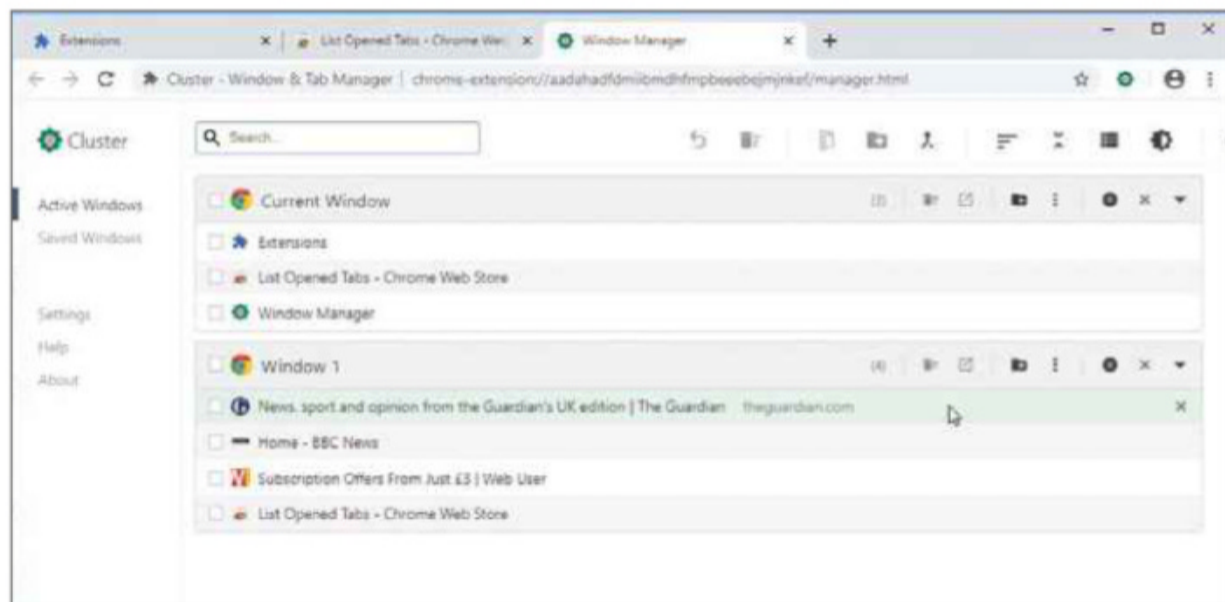
What we liked:

Cluster does everything the other tools we've reviewed can do, including managing open tabs, saving tab sessions for later and pausing tabs to stop them hogging

memory. This latter option is interesting because, unlike other similar tools, Cluster keeps the suspended tabs at the top of the browser but simply removes their content. It then reloads the tab when you click it, saving you time compared with most of its rivals, which require you to click a link or use a keyboard shortcut to reload the page.

Cluster's interface opens in a tab of its own, which may seem counterproductive for a tool that's supposed to stop you being overwhelmed by open tabs. Hold back your cynicism, though, because once you've got past that conceptual hurdle the system actually works very well. Some of its buttons and options may be confusing when you first start exploring the interface but stick with it, because it's worth getting to know what it can do.

Cluster captures the tabs of every browser window you have open, and its main interface groups them together



according to the window they're in. You can save these windows and reopen their tabs again later, although Cluster won't actually reload a tab until you click it, so it won't bog down your browser by prematurely loading things you don't need.

How it can be improved:

Our only complaint is that Cluster sometimes feels as if it's doing too much. It's crying out for a compact list of current tabs that lets you switch between them quickly. You can always use the main management window to do this, but because it opens in its own tab, there's a slight delay when

opening it, even if you use its handy Ctrl+M keyboard shortcut.

OUR VERDICT

Cluster is true to its name not only because it groups all your tabs in one place but also because it has gathered together the best bits of all the other tab management tools we've tested. This can make it feel a little overloaded, and we'd be grateful for a little more streamlining at times, but on balance we love the fact that it can do so much.

Tab Manager Plus | bit.ly/tabman502 | ★★★★★☆

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

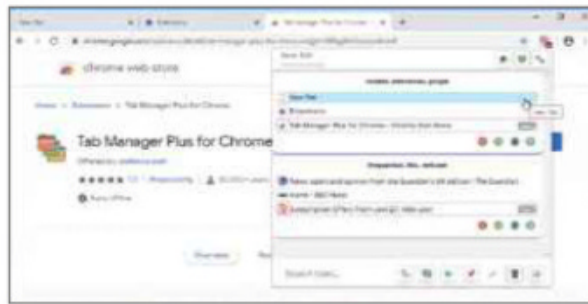
WebUser
SILVER
AWARD

What we liked:

Like all tab management tools, Tab Manager Plus installs an icon on Chrome's toolbar. Click this and you can see all your open tabs across multiple windows in a compact drop-down menu. Each tab is represented by its icon, and you can hover over each one to see its title. Every window has its own box so you can see at a glance which tabs are grouped together. Click an icon to go straight to that tab, even if it's in a different window.

That's how it works in its default mode, at least. One of this extension's strengths is that you can switch between several views. Most of these simply rearrange the icons in various ways, but some offer a more informative list view that shows both the icons and titles at the same time. Alternatively, there's a view with larger icons if you prefer big buttons.

You can close tabs with the click of a button, and control groups of tabs either in their existing windows



or by right-clicking individual icons to select them.

How it could be improved:

We found that right-clicking to select things felt counterintuitive, and the tool uses lots of icons that aren't self-explanatory.

OUR VERDICT

Tab Manager Plus is a more streamlined alternative to Cluster with its 'open everything in another tab' aesthetic. It's great for managing tabs, but its interface and often cryptic icons don't match up to Cluster's high standards. It also lacks the features of our Gold Award winner.

Tabli | bit.ly/tabli453 | ★★★★★☆

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

WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD

What we liked:

Click Tabli's extension button and it displays a neat list of all the tabs you have open, grouped by the browser window they're in. There's also a tiny box that you can click to save the contents of a tab group, allowing you to go back to it later. Hovering over a tab in the list reveals a cross you can click to close it, even if it's in a different window. You can also close an entire browser window if you wish.

If you find you use this extension a lot, you can set it to open in its own window rather than using its drop-down menu, which is really handy. There's also a search box to help you find a specific tab if you have a lot open.

Perhaps Tabli's cleverest innovation, however, is that it uses Chrome's bookmarks tool to save your tabs. This means they appear not only in Tabli's own interface but also in Chrome's Bookmarks tool, so you have more than one way to find what you're looking for.



How it can be improved:

With a few more features, Tabli could be a real contender. There's nothing flash about the interface, which is good in some ways, but it could do with a little more sophistication if it's to threaten our other award-winners.

OUR VERDICT

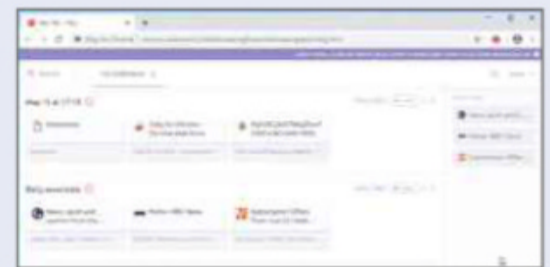
We liked Tabli's simplicity, flexibility and the fact that you can adapt it to the way you want to use it. It lacks features compared with Cluster, but its integration with Chrome's bookmarks is ingenious.

BEST OF THE REST

Toby for Chrome

bit.ly/toby453

Toby is a simple way to turn sets of tabs into groups that you can retrieve later. It has a sophisticated drag-and-drop interface, but you'll need to spend some time creating a system of folders that works for you and then dragging your tabs to the correct place. It's perhaps more of a bookmark replacement than a tab manager but if that's what you need, we'd recommend it.



OneTab

bit.ly/onetab502

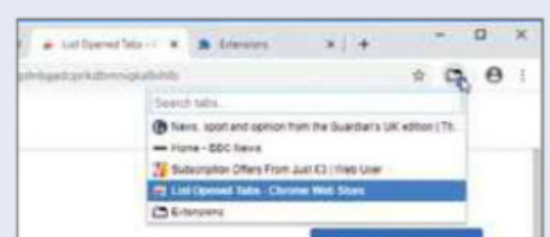
OneTab is a useful tool that quickly consolidates all your tabs into one single tab without losing anything. If your computer is starting to chug and you realise there's too much going on in your browser, it offers an instant memory release that's almost cathartic. This makes it a bit of a one-trick pony, but what a great trick it is.



List Opened Tabs

bit.ly/lotabs502

This basic tab manager simply helps you find your way around your open tabs. A number in the corner of the extension's icon shows you how many tabs you have open in the current window. Click this to see a list of them. This extension is only really useful if you're prone to opening so many tabs in a single window that they're squashed so small you can't see them.



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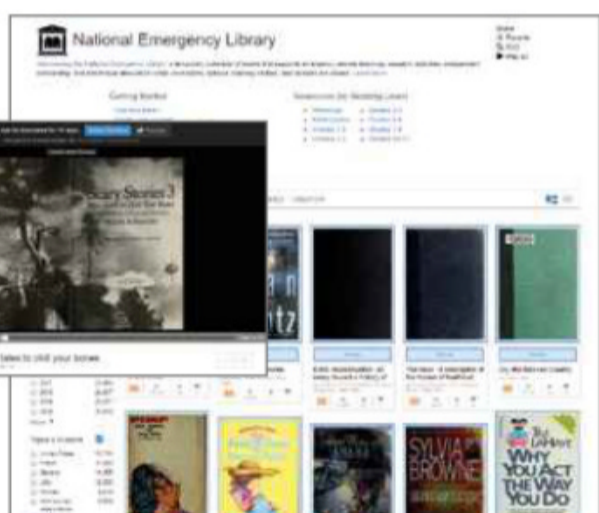
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The Archive's National Emergency Library (bit.ly/library502) contains everything from digitised back issues of *The New Yorker* to the collected works of Oscar Wilde, along with specialist texts on all manner of subjects from home furnishings to grizzly bears.

Click Borrow under a book to create an account – it's quick and free. You can borrow up to 10 books at a time, for up to two weeks each. Instant access is open until 30 June – or later, if lockdown continues.

The Internet Archive also has more than 2.5 million copyright-free ebooks to download and keep, at bit.ly/iabooks502.



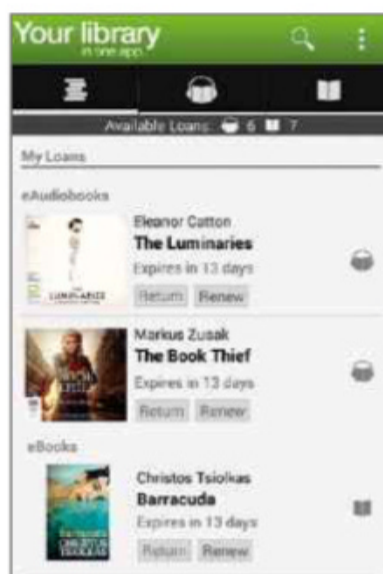
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To get started, you'll first need to get a borrower number by registering with your local library. Enter your

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postcode at bit.ly/local502 to find your library's website and sign up.

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Amazon's Kindle Unlimited is like Prime Video for ebooks, allowing unrestricted access to more than a million titles including the latest bestsellers, plus selected magazine subscriptions.

Amazon has generously extended the free trial from 30 days to two months during lockdown, even if you're already a Prime member, after which it costs £7.99 per month (bit.ly/unlimited502). Just remember to cancel before you're charged. You can read the books using the free Kindle app (bit.ly/kinapp502) if you don't have an e-reader.

Amazon also has a decent range of free Kindle ebooks (bit.ly/kindlefree502) and runs the Kindle Owners' Lending Library (bit.ly/kindlelib502), which lets Prime members lend each other ebooks for free. Loans can only be read on an Amazon device, not in the Kindle app.



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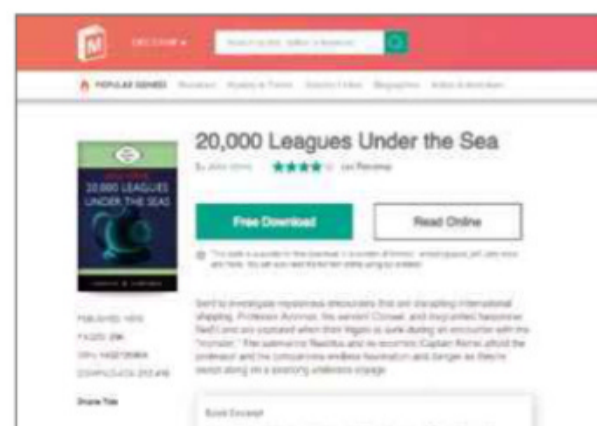
Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org) or its new beta site at dev.gutenberg.org has more than 60,000 free ebooks that you can read in your browser or download to any device. The focus is on older, copyright-free fiction, dating from the early 20th Century and earlier. You can borrow contemporary ebooks from the site, too, by signing up for an eLibrary Card at self.gutenberg.org. And if you have time to spare, you can help digitise, narrate and proofread books for the project via bit.ly/volunteer502.



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The web is brimming with free ebooks and audiobooks to keep us entertained at home and when we're eventually on the move again. **Jane Hoskyn** reveals where to find your new favourite reads online



the Free Mind (bit.ly/embassy502), has more than 2,100 digitised occult and paranormal books from the 19th Century and earlier, all of which are free to read in your browser.

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Google's Advanced Book Search (bit.ly/gbooks502) may look like a page of blank text fields, but it's your gateway to Google's collection of 25 million digitised books – many of which you can read in full in your browser and, in lots of cases, download to keep.

To find these full free books, type a word or phrase of interest (such as an author's name), select 'Full view only', then click Google Search. You can fill in the other fields if you want, but we found narrow searches failed to get many (or, sometimes, any) results.

Download free textbooks and scholarly journals

Keep your grey matter sharp with articles and journals from academic publisher JSTOR, which has expanded its Open Access Content collection for lockdown (bit.ly/opena502).

Polish your intellect with scholarly reads from JSTOR, which has made many titles free

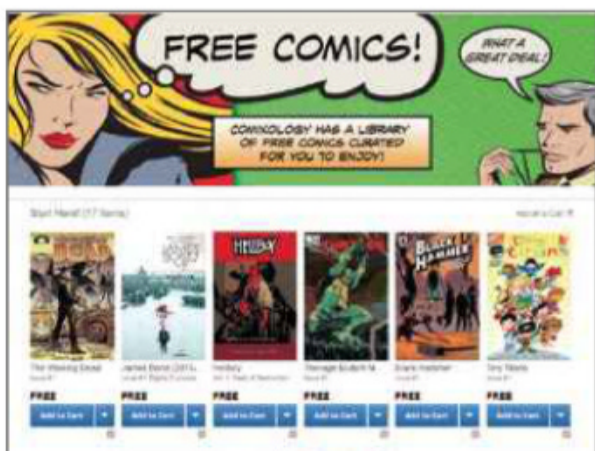


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FREE COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS FOR LOCKDOWN

Get classic comics for free from ComiXology

No fewer than 801 of the 25,000 e-comics on Amazon-owned ComiXology (www.comixology.co.uk) are now completely free. Scroll down the Free Comics section (bit.ly/freecom502) to explore the collection, which includes first issues of series including *The Umbrella Academy*, *The Walking Dead* and *Hellboy*. As with Kindle ebooks, you download your comics to the official ComiXology app for reading.



Read the best graphic novels and comic books of all time for free with ComiXology

VPN users may wish to know that US-only ComiXology Unlimited (\$5.99 per month, bit.ly/comixus502) has doubled its 30-day free trial to 60 days "for a limited time".

As we mentioned in last issue's What's New Online, DC Comics is also offering 50 of its most iconic comics for free, until 4 June (bit.ly/dccomics502). These include digital first issues of *Watchmen*, *V for Vendetta* and *Batman Rebirth*, with further free titles available in its permanent Free Comics section (bit.ly/dcfree502). You can download them from the Read DC website using a ComiXology or Amazon account or the DC Comics app for iOS and Android.

Download the web's best comics free

Image Comics is home to some of the most beautiful digital art ever created, and it's now made a large curated collection of first issues free to read in your browser. The collection of nearly 200 titles, which include sci-fi thrillers, superhero tales and fantasy adventures, is at bit.ly/image502. Comics site Vault

is also offering free first issues, this time to download and keep as PDFs via bit.ly/vault502.

UK comic-book writers have found other ways to share their work for free under lockdown. Some of the nation's top artists are posting daily comic strips under [#ComicsAndQuarantine](https://twitter.com/ComicsAndQuarantine) and [#QuarantineComix](https://twitter.com/QuarantineComix) hashtags on Twitter and Instagram. British comic-book writer Bryan Talbot is offering a free downloadable compilation of all the free comics published on his site over the years, including work by big names Alan Moore and Neil Gaiman, as well as by Talbot himself (bit.ly/bryan502).

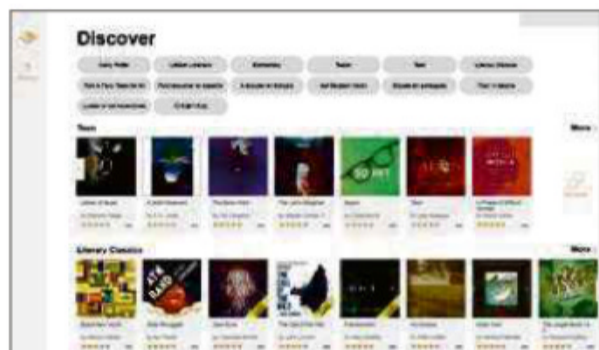


Enjoy stunning sci-fi and graphics in Image Comics' free First Issues collection

FREE AUDIOBOOKS FOR LOCKDOWN

Stream Audible audiobooks for free

Audible normally charges a hefty £7.99 per month to get a single monthly audiobook, plus a limited selection of free Audible Originals. But when lockdown was announced, Audible made hundreds of books free to stream online, via its new website Audible Stories (bit.ly/stories502).



There's plenty to keep you busy in Audible's free Stories collection

Stories is intended for stuck-at-home kids, with Audible declaring it would remain open "for as long as schools are closed". But the large selection of top-selling titles also appeals to adults, with titles from JK Rowling, Lewis Carroll and CS Lewis, as well as classics from *Jane Eyre* to *Brave New World*. And if you want to brush up your lingo under lockdown, many of the books are available in other languages including Japanese and Spanish.

Stories isn't available in the Audible app, but you can play the audiobooks on your device by loading the website in your mobile browser. The app itself is free for 30 days, so it effectively gives you one book for free (audible.co.uk).

Download copyright-free audiobooks

LibriVox (librivox.org) is a collection of 14,000 public-domain audiobooks, narrated by volunteers from all over the world and all free to download in MP3 format. Most classic books are here in



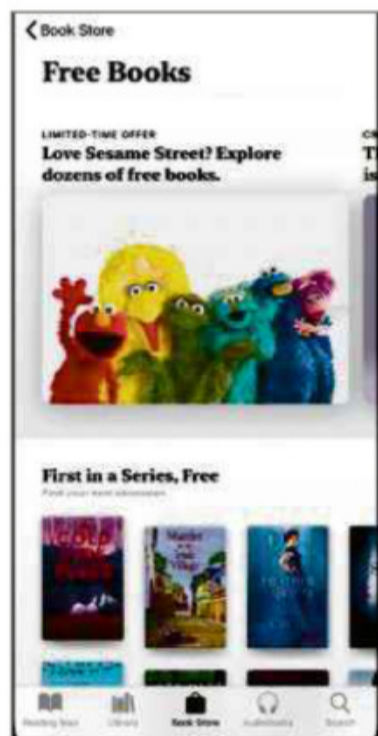
Listen to LibriVox's classic audiobooks read by volunteers, and become a narrator

some form – for example, a search for 'Brontë' returns numerous audiobooks of all the sisters' novels, along with books about the literary family.

Open Culture's impressive list of 1,000 free audiobooks (bit.ly/ocaudio502), mainly classics plus a few modern literary bestsellers (Zadie Smith, Alice Munro), offers links to various download sources and online streams.

Get free audiobooks and ebooks from Apple

Apple has expanded its Books app (bit.ly/apple502) to include a Free Books section, though it hasn't said how long the section will be available. At the

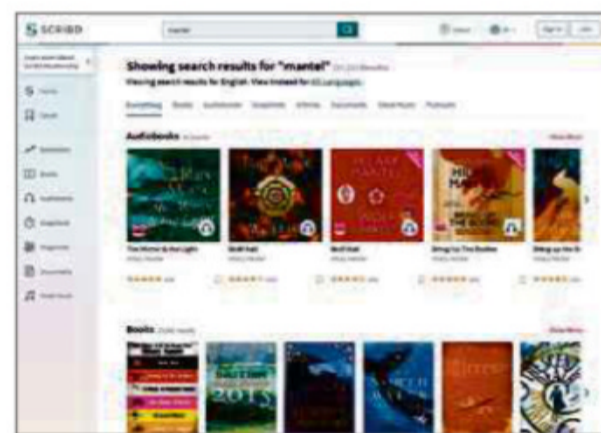


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time of writing, if you have an iPad or iPhone, you can go to Books, Book Store, Free Books to browse the freebies. Apple is also sending special 'stay at home' notifications to users, with offers including classic audiobooks and free read-alongs for kids.

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If you're a voracious audiobook and ebook reader, app-based Scribd (scribd.com) is likely to be better value for your money than Audible. For £9.99 per month, you get to read and listen to as many new and old digital books as you can wrap your eyes and ears around. It's free for the first 30 days, so you could potentially live out the rest of lockdown reading Scribd books 24 hours a day, without having to fork out a single penny. The library also includes articles, podcasts and even sheet music. ■



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A NATION OF LOCKDOWN BOOKWORMS

Bookshops and libraries are shut, but we're reading more than ever. Sales surged in the weeks before lockdown, with a 212% week-on-week boost for 'home learning' books and a 35% boost for fiction as Brits stockpiled reading fodder (nielsenbook.co.uk). Once lockdown began, UK bookselling giant Waterstones saw its online sales leap up by an amazing 400% week-on-week.

Hilary Mantel's 912-page *The Mirror and the Light* (bit.ly/mantel502) topped book charts in March, and classics also proved popular, with Stephen King revealing he'd finally read *Ulysses* (bit.ly/king502 – mind your language, Stephen!). Then in



April the novelists were edged out by *Little Book of Lists* (bit.ly/little502), by Instagram and Twitter cleaning expert Mrs Hinch (@mrshinchhome). Books on gardening, languages and musical instruments also surged as lockdown continued, coupled with what Waterstones calls "an unsurprising spike in sales of self-improvement books". Those hefty novels can wait!

Beat streaming OVERLOAD

Tired of endlessly flicking between streaming services? **Robert Irvine** reveals the quickest ways to find something to watch



Search across all streaming services

JustWatch (www.justwatch.com/uk) saves you constantly channel hopping by letting you search for TV series and films to rent, buy and watch for free across all the major on-demand and catch-up services. It spans dozens of streaming providers including Netflix, Now TV, Prime Video, iPlayer, Sky Go, Disney Plus and BritBox, and lets you search by title, actor and release date. You can create a watchlist of shows to view later and use JustWatch's Android and iOS apps to set up price-drop alerts for specific rentals and purchases. Apps are also available for Apple, Android and Amazon Fire TVs.



Get personalised recommendations

Streaming services tend to recommend content based on whatever they're trying to promote, but Flixix (flixi.com)

offers a more personalised approach. Install its Android or iOS app, specify your favourite genres, era and services, then swipe through the suggested TV shows and films, Tinder-style, rating them out of 10. Once you've rated enough, Flixix will provide



recommendations based on your tastes, tell you where to find them, let you bookmark series and movies to watch later, and notify you when new episodes are available. It can even predict what rating you're likely to give a specific title.

Track everything you watch online

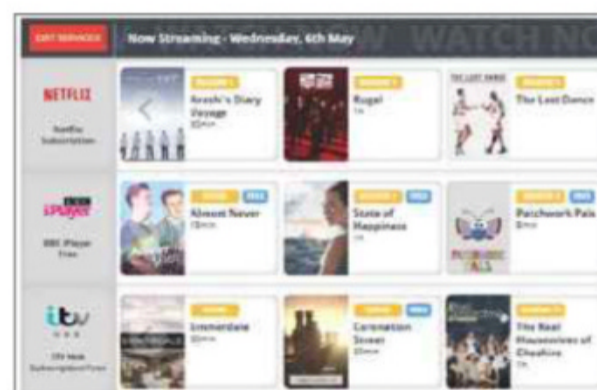
Ever get a few minutes into a TV show, only to realise you've seen that episode? Then you'll appreciate Trakt (trakt.tv), which makes it easy to keep track of everything you watch across all your streaming services and devices. Select the providers you use, then install Trakt's apps for Kodi, Plex, VLC and more, or the third-party apps for Android and iOS, to sync your viewing. You can create a watchlist of TV shows and films, get recommendations from the Trakt community and discover how much time you've spent streaming over the last 30 days. Trakt is free to use but



also has an ad-free VIP subscription with additional features, for \$2.50 (£2) per month.

Discover what's streaming tonight

TV-listings magazines such as *What's On TV* are handy for checking tonight's viewing on digital TV platforms, but not so great for streaming services. On TV Tonight (www.ontvtonight.com/uk) usefully covers both, with a dedicated Streaming section that tells you which TV shows and films have been newly added to services including Netflix, Apple TV, BBC iPlayer, ITV Hub, All 4 and more. This lets you easily plan your evening's viewing without navigating myriad apps, and you can also search for a specific series or movie, to see which service it's available on. On TV Tonight's mobile apps cover Freeview, Freesat, Sky and Virgin Media channels, but not streaming providers. ■



LIMIT YOUR STREAMING TIME

You can limit the amount of time you spend streaming TV each day – or restrict the viewing habits of a square-eyed family member – by using built-in 'digital wellbeing' tools on your phone or tablet. In Android 9 or later, go to Settings, 'Digital Wellbeing & parental controls' and tap Dashboard. Select a streaming app, tap App Timer and specify your time limit. In iOS, go to Settings, Screen Time, App Limits, select Entertainment and set your limits. Both Android and iOS also let you monitor your binge-watching habits by reviewing how long you spend streaming each day.

Set app timer

This app timer for NOW TV will reset at midnight

0 hrs 25 mins
1 hr 30 mins
2 hrs 35 mins



Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Create your own videos using YouTube's free Video Builder

Video Builder is a new online tool from YouTube that lets you quickly create videos using images, text and music. Here's how to use it

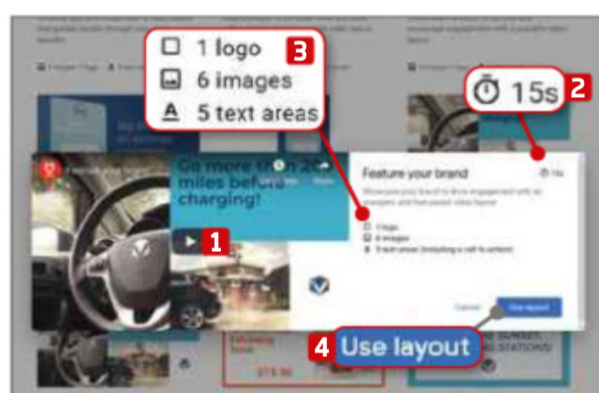
Video Builder: bit.ly/vidbuild502 | 20 mins | **Any browser**

YouTube's latest web tool lets you quickly create your own short videos. It produces great results and, although it's aimed at small businesses, anyone can sign up and use it for free – just choose a template, customise it, upload your media and add music from YouTube's library.

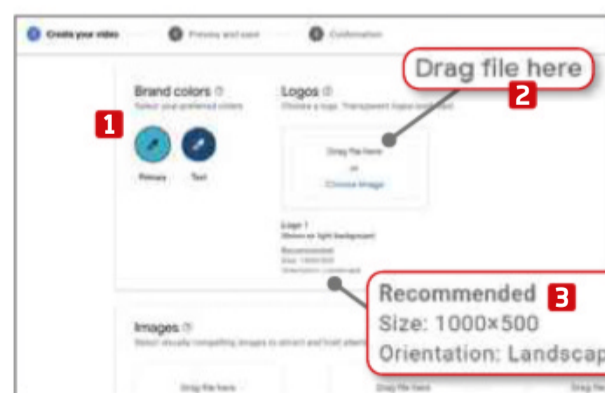
Video Builder is currently in beta and you need to register your interest to use it. To sign up, go to bit.ly/vidbuild502 and enter a Gmail address along with an optional Google Ads customer ID. Click Submit and wait for your invite. Access to the service typically takes around five days, depending on current demand.



1 Once you have access to Video Builder, click the link to open it and choose one of the layouts. The templates are designed for businesses but you can customise them to suit your personal needs. You can see how long the video will be **1** and how many images, logos and text slides it needs. **2**



2 On the next page, you can view the type of video you'll be creating, **1** along with the video's duration **2** and the elements included. **3** Provided you're happy, click 'Use layout' **4** to open the Video Builder.



3 Choose the 'brand' colours for your video. **1** Drag a logo to the target **2** or click the link and navigate to it. You can create your own logo or just add another image – it doesn't really matter. Note the recommended size and orientation. **3**



4 Now add the images you want in your video. **1** Pay attention to the size and orientation here, too. Scroll down to add some text to your movie. There are blocks linked to particular images **2** that work well as captions. Each text box has a maximum number of characters. **3**



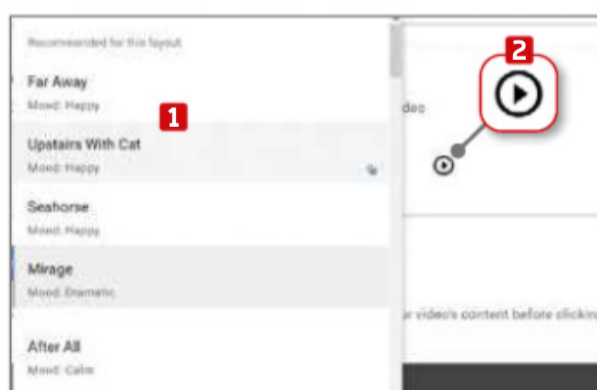
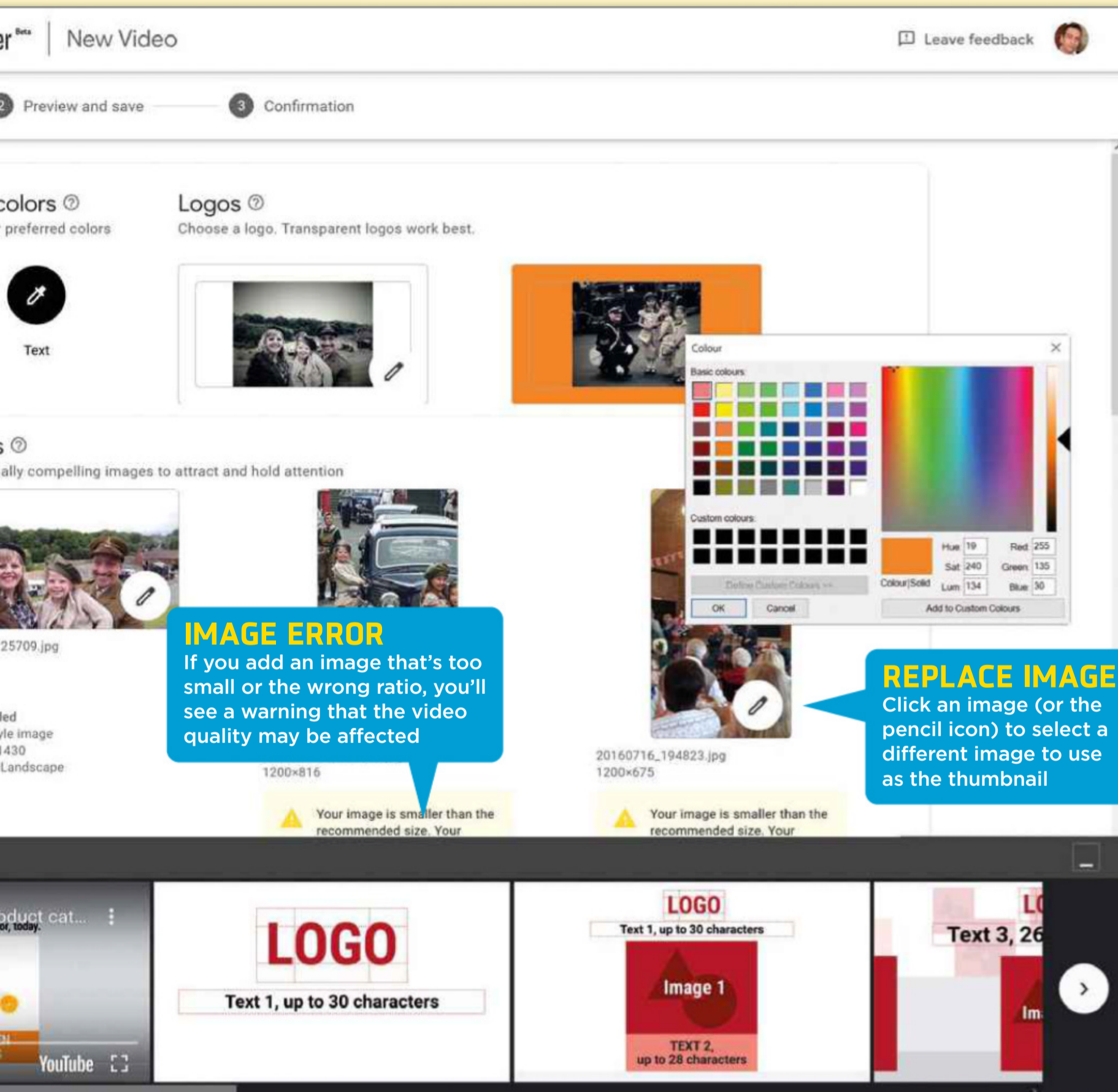
5 Scroll down further to choose a typeface from Google's Fonts catalogue that best suits your video. Click the link **1** and a page of fonts opens in a new tab. Find one you like, **2** then enter its name into the drop-down box. You can just select one at random if you like.

BRAND COLOURS

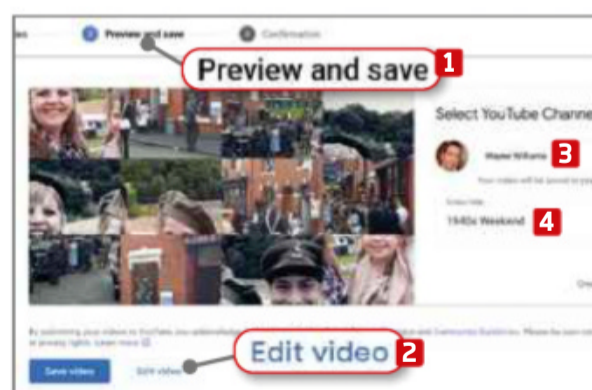
Click the Primary or Text buttons to choose the colours you'd like to feature in your video

STORYBOARD

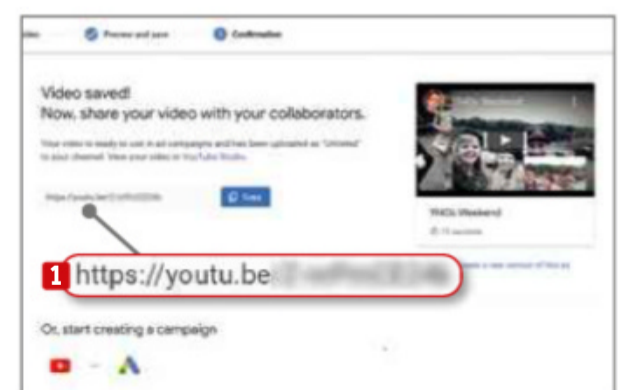
Displays a strip of thumbnails showing consecutive frames from your video. You can't change anything or reorder the titles, but you can hide it away



6 Finally, add some music. For copyright reasons, you can't upload your own choice of song, but click the drop-down menu to add one of Google's recommendations. **1** Click the Play button **2** to preview it. Finally, click Create Video and Video Builder gets to work.



7 Once the video has been created, you can preview it to check that you're happy with your choices. **1** If not, click the 'Edit video' button **2** to go back and make the necessary changes. Choose the YouTube channel you want to save the video to **3** and give it a title. **4**

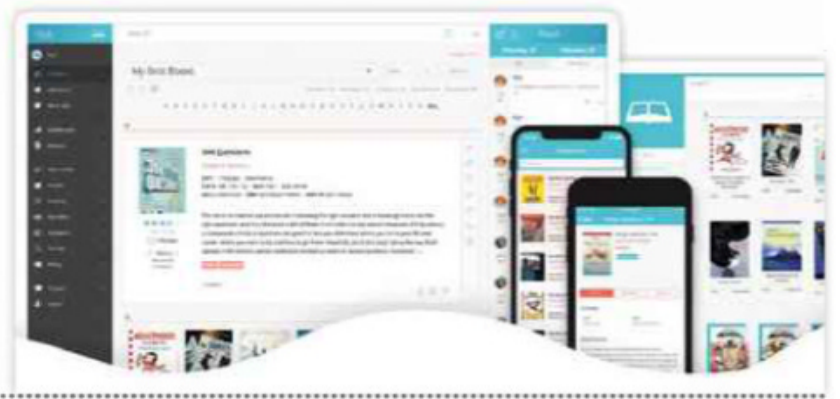


8 Click the 'Save video' button and wait a few minutes while Video Builder copies it to YouTube. Your film appears on your channel unlisted, which means that only you (and anyone with the link) can view it. The address for the video is displayed, **1** and you can share it with anyone.



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Libib: www.libib.com | 20 mins | All browsers



EXPERT TIP

Steve Clark says

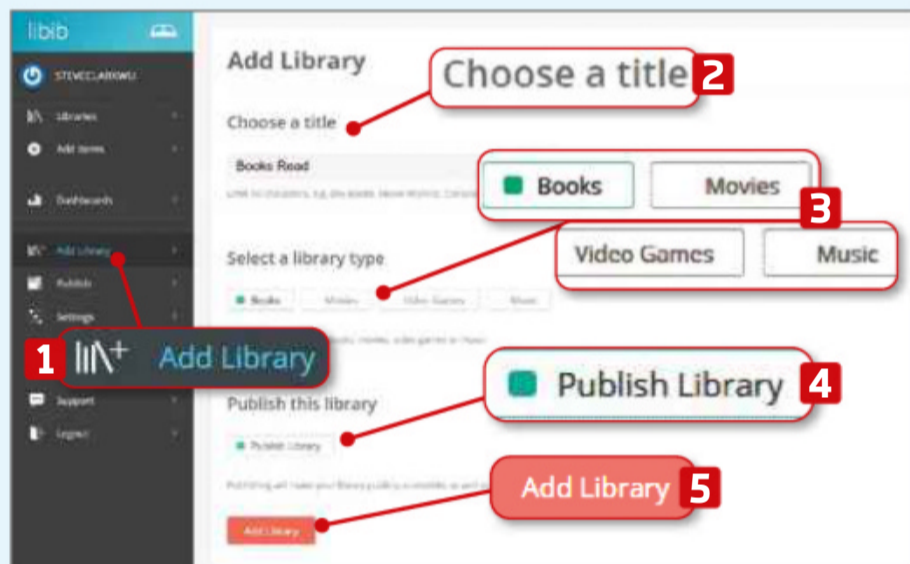
To avoid entering an item in the wrong list, visit Libraries before you add anything and click into the correct list. This 'activates' the current library. Now, when you choose to add an item, you'll see the name of the selected library at the top of the screen. If it's the wrong one, head back to Libraries. It'll save you a lot of deleting and re-entering further down the line.



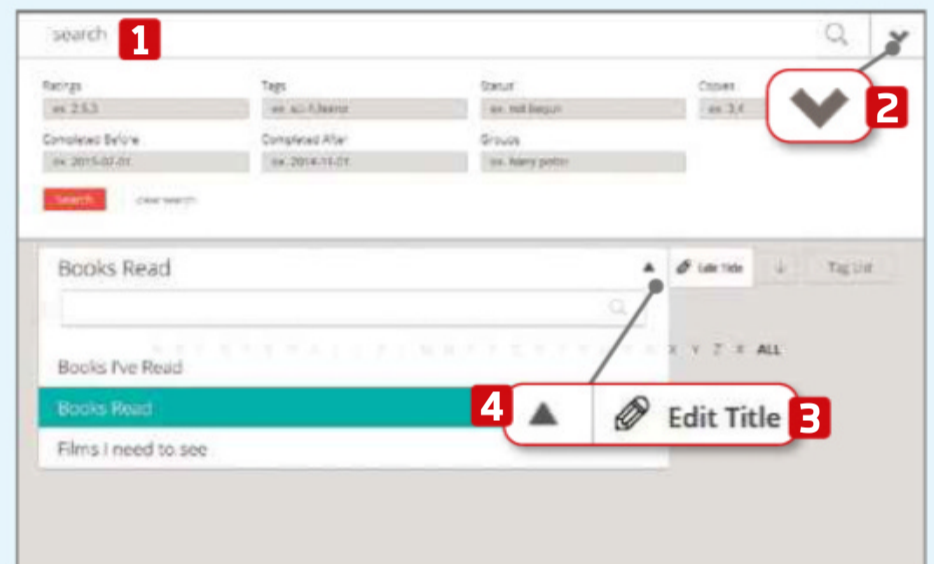
It's more difficult than ever these days to keep track of all the films, records, books and other media we've consumed, with our collections scattered across physical copies and various streaming services.

In Issue 498 (bit.ly/webuser498), a reader asked for advice about software that can catalogue these items, but the suggestion he received in reply involved several different apps and websites. Libib offers this functionality in one convenient location. Sign up for a free account and you can catalogue just about anything in a single place.

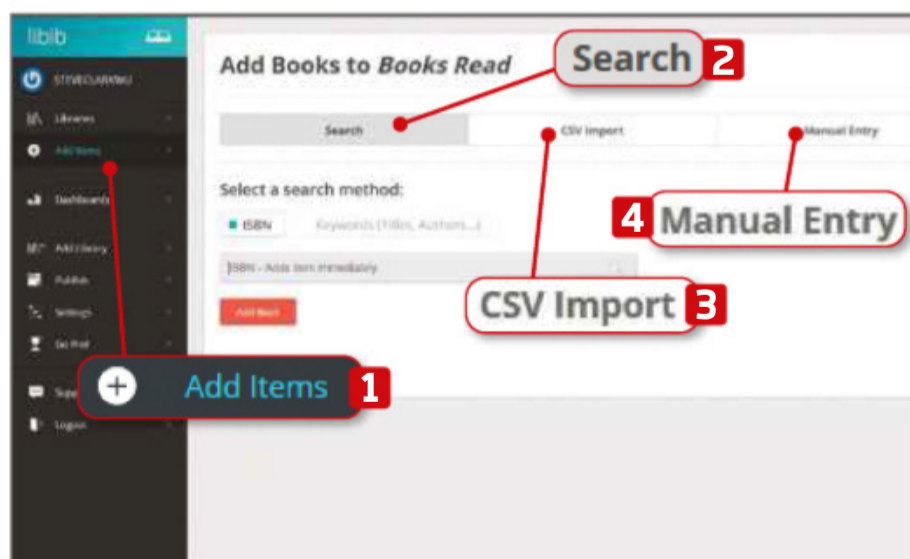
While the site is limited to books, films, music and games, there's nothing to stop you from creating a list using the manual-entry option to catalogue other items relating to your hobbies and interests.



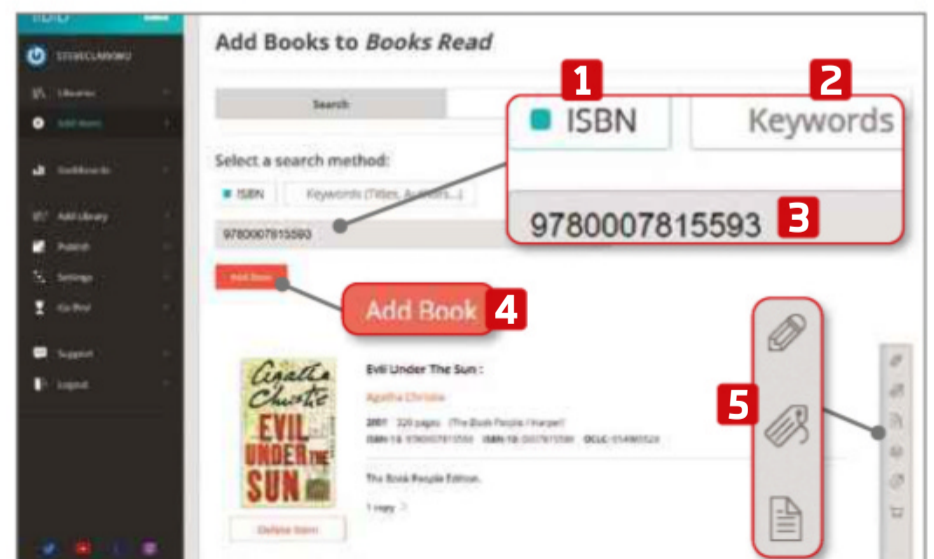
1 Once you're signed up and signed into Libib, get started by selecting Add Library. **1** Give your list a title, **2** such as Books Read. Next, select what it is you're cataloguing. There are four options: Books, Movies, Video Games or Music. **3** If you want to share your catalogue, leave Publish Library **4** switched on. Turn this off for a private list. Click Add Library. **5**



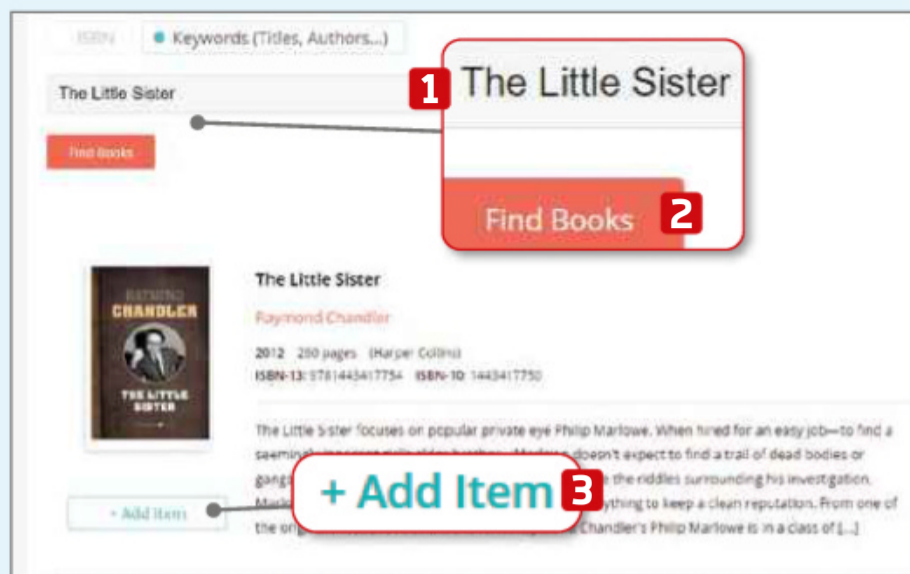
2 You now have a blank library. At the top of the screen is a search bar **1** - click the down arrow **2** to refine and filter search results. Hover over the name to edit the title, **3** or click the arrow **4** to switch to a different library. From here, you can also choose how your list is ordered.



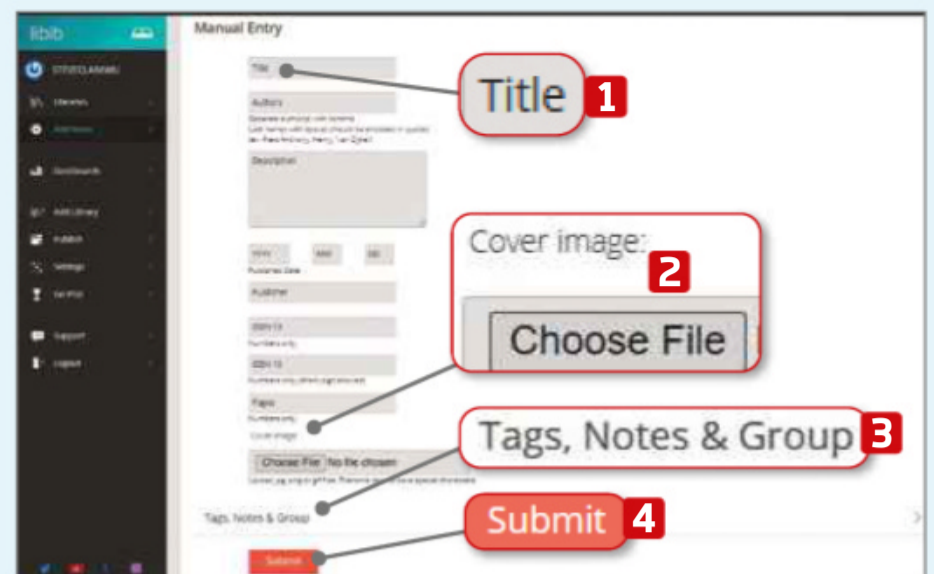
3 On the sidebar, click Add Items. **1** There are three options: Search **2** lets you find products by the ISBN or UPC number located above the product's barcode; CSV Import **3** is ideal if you have an existing spreadsheet on your computer; and Manual Entry, **4** which we'll look at in a moment, lets you type in the details of each entry yourself.



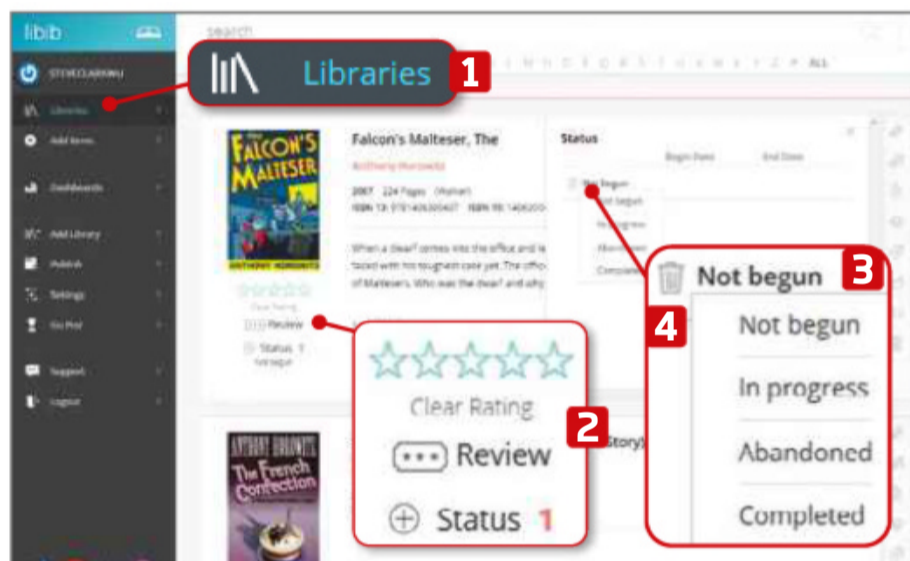
4 Choosing the Search option offers two methods: ISBN **1** and Keywords. **2** For other products, such as movies, ISBN is replaced with UPC. Type this code into the text field, **3** then click the Add Book button. **4** The item is instantly added to your library. Use the icons **5** to edit, tag and add notes.



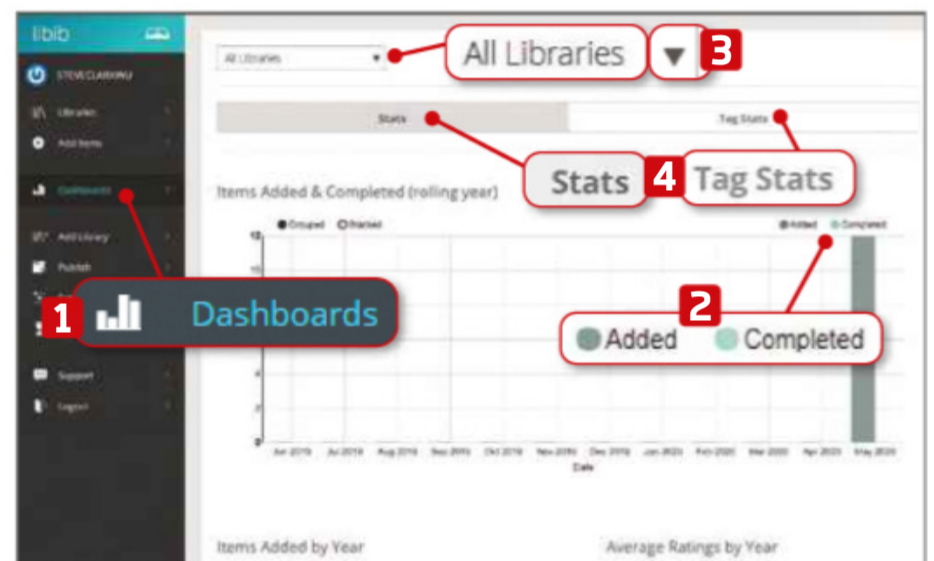
5 When using keyword search, type the title, partial title or author **1** and click Find Books. **2** Matching search results are displayed below, complete with various details. To place the item in your catalogue, click Add Item. **3** Be as precise as you can when using keywords to find the exact copy of your book or film.



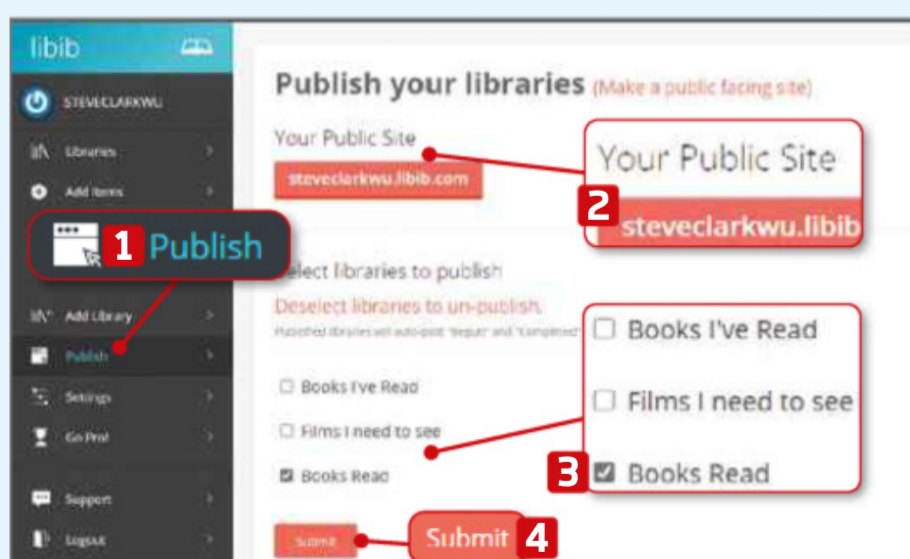
6 Manual entry is ideal for older titles or if you don't have product codes to hand. You need to add the title, **1** but author, description and publishing information are optional fields. You can also upload a cover image if you like. **2** Click Tags, Notes & Group **3** for even more options. When you're done, click Submit. **4**



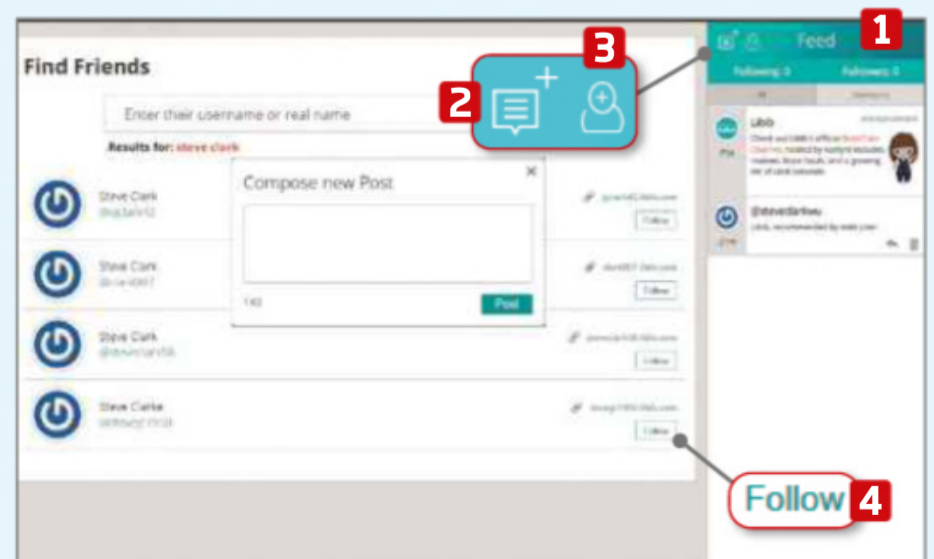
7 Now you've built your catalogue, click Libraries **1** to view it. In addition to editing any entry on your list, there are three new options: Rating, Review and Status. **2** Click Status, then hover over the default 'Not begun' **3** to update to 'In progress', Abandoned or Completed. Remove the status by clicking the bin. **4**



8 Click Dashboards **1** to see an overview of your list of items, including how many you've added and completed for each month of the year. **2** At the top of the screen, the drop-down menu **3** lets you jump between your individual libraries. Beneath this, you can choose to display Stats or Tag Stats. **4**



9 You will have selected to publish (or keep private) your list when you first set it up, but this can be changed by clicking the Publish button. **1** Libib offers a link to your 'public-facing site' **2** – click it to see it. This is also where you can choose which libraries, if any, are public, by placing or removing a tick in the box. **3** Click Submit. **4**



10 There's a social element to Libib, which is managed via the Feed. **1** The 'Compose new Post' button **2** is similar to a Twitter tweet or Facebook post. Click the friend finder **3** to search for pals using usernames or real names. Results display the user, a link to their published library and the option to Follow. **4**



Workshop 3

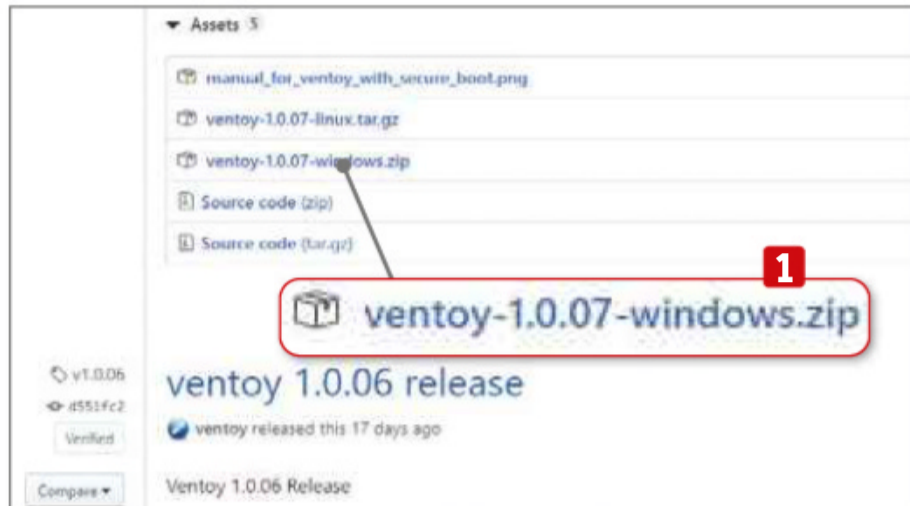
Make an easy-to-use bootable USB drive

We love using Rufus (rufus.ie) to make bootable USB memory sticks but we think we've discovered something even better. With Ventoy installed on a USB device, you can simply drag and drop your favourite

ISO files to it as you want to use them. Without any further installation, you can boot from the stick and choose an operating system from the menu.



Ventoy: www.ventoy.net | ⌚ 10 mins | 🌐 7, 8, 10 🐧 Linux

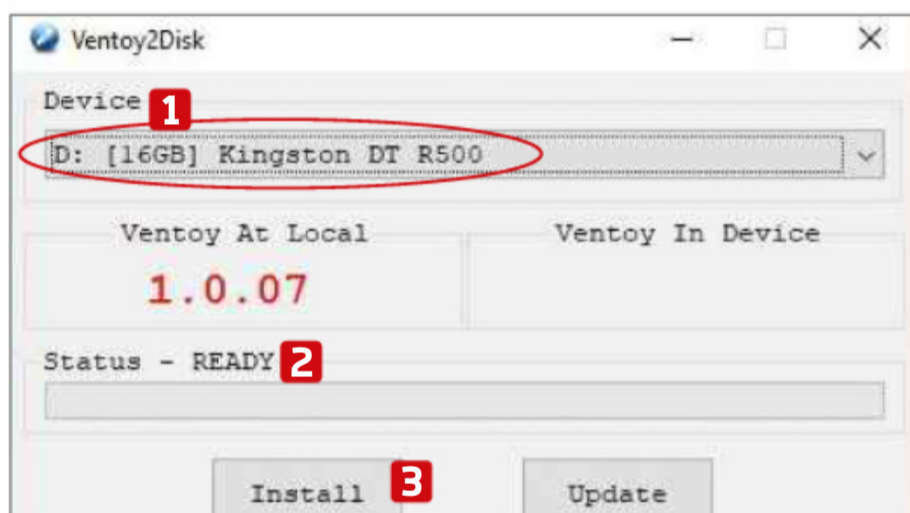


1 Download the software from bit.ly/ventoy502 and unpack the folder. We chose version 1.0.07 **1** because the newer version attracted more false positives in VirusTotal. All versions passed the test in our local antivirus tools and we're convinced it's safe, but make a backup, just in case.

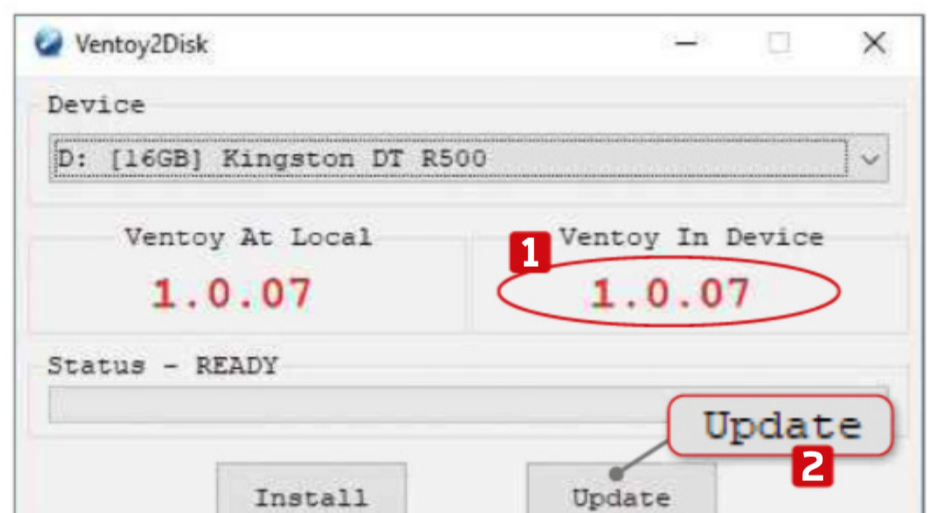
203 Tested ISO Files (Updating)

OS Series	ISO File 1	ISO Size	LEGACY	UEFI	Test Environment
Windows	cn_windows_10_enterprise_version_1511_update_feb_2016_x64_dvd_8378765.iso	4410316800	✓	✓	ThinkPad laptop
	cn_windows_8_1_enterprise_with_update_x64_dvd_6000374.iso	4317065216	✓	✓	ThinkPad laptop
	en_windows_8_pro_x64_dvd_9176599.iso	3486145408	✓	✓	ThinkPad laptop
	en_windows_7_professional_x64_dvd_x15-62605.iso	3224866592	✓	✓	ThinkPad laptop
	cn_windows_7_ultimate_with_sp1_x64_dvd_u_677408.iso	3420557312	✓	✓	ThinkPad laptop
	cn_windows_server_2019_x64_dvd_2080402.iso	4799084544	✓	✓	ThinkPad laptop
	cn_windows_server_2016_update_feb_2018_x64_dvd_11636703.iso	6294268866	✓	✓	ThinkPad laptop
	cn_windows_server_2012_r2_x64_dvd_2579220.iso	4453249024	✓	✓	ThinkPad laptop
	cn_windows_server_2012_x64_dvd_915088.iso	3626081792	✓	✓	VirtualBox VM
	cn_windows_10_business_edition_version_1909_x86_dvd_092909c.iso	3781249024	✓		QEMU KVM
	cn_windows_8_1_x86_dvd_2707495.iso	3088904768	✓		QEMU KVM

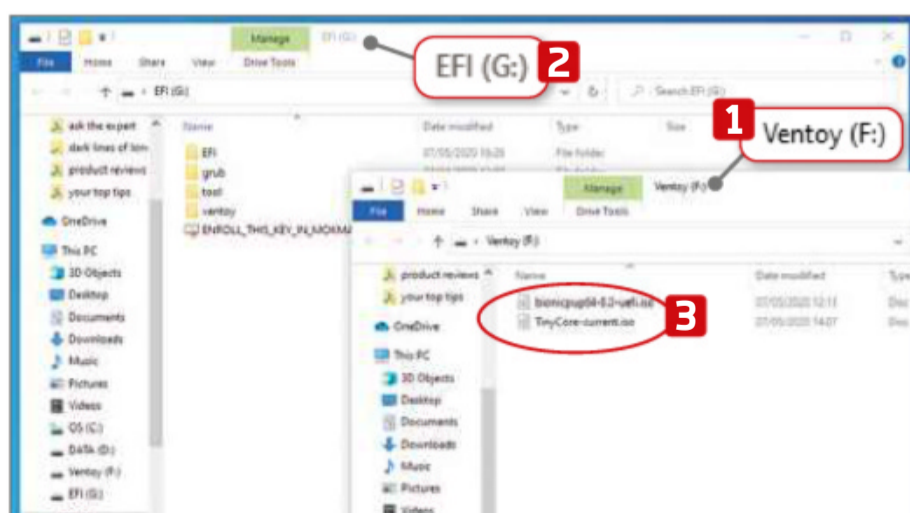
2 Unpack the software and run the Ventoy2Disk.exe file. Use a USB drive of at least 4GB that you don't mind wiping and reformatting. Also, download an ISO file or two. Anything will do but, for best results, pick something that's already been verified at bit.ly/ventoyiso502. **1**



3 Plug the USB drive into your PC and make sure that it's the one that appears in the Device box. **1** The Status should say that everything is Ready. **2** Click the Install button **3** to start the process. The USB drive is reformatted (you're asked to confirm this twice).



4 Once the software is installed, the version number should appear in the Ventoy In Device box. **1** Both numbers should be the same. If you download a newer version, you can safely upgrade a drive using the Update button **2** without affecting any ISOs already stored on it.



5 The memory drive is formatted into two partitions. On our PC, these are labelled Ventoy (F:) **1** and EFI (G:), **2** though you may find that your PC has assigned them different letters. The Ventoy drive is the one you need to copy ISO files to. We've used Puppy Linux and Tiny Linux. **3**



6 You can copy as many ISOs as you can fit on the drive because, when you boot your PC with the device inserted, it builds a menu from what's available. **1** Just select the option you want to run using the arrow keys, then press Enter to select it.



Configure Vivaldi's ad and tracker blockers

Web browser Vivaldi has seen some big privacy and security changes in its latest update. Version 3.0 introduces built-in ad blocking and tracker blocking, powered by private search engine DuckDuckGo's

Vivaldi: vivaldi.com | 10 mins | 7, 8, 10

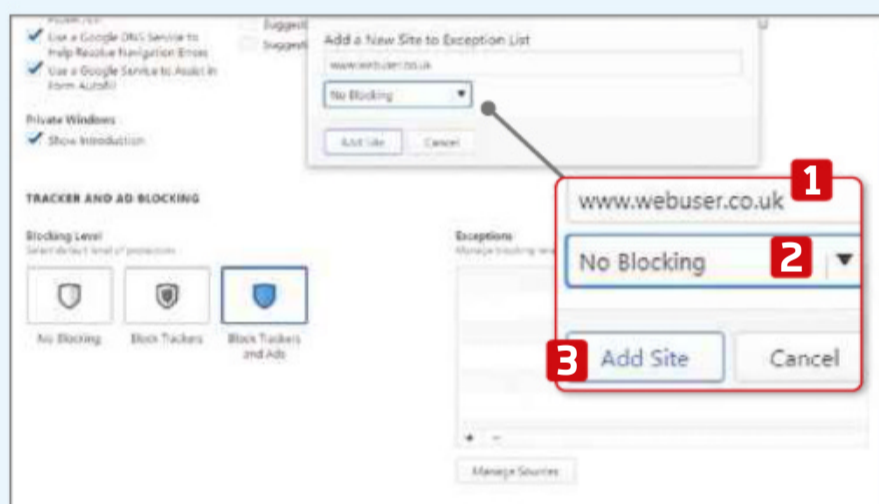
Tracker Radar blocklist. Existing Vivaldi users can check their version of the software by clicking the Vivaldi icon in the top-left corner and visiting Help, then 'Check for Updates'.



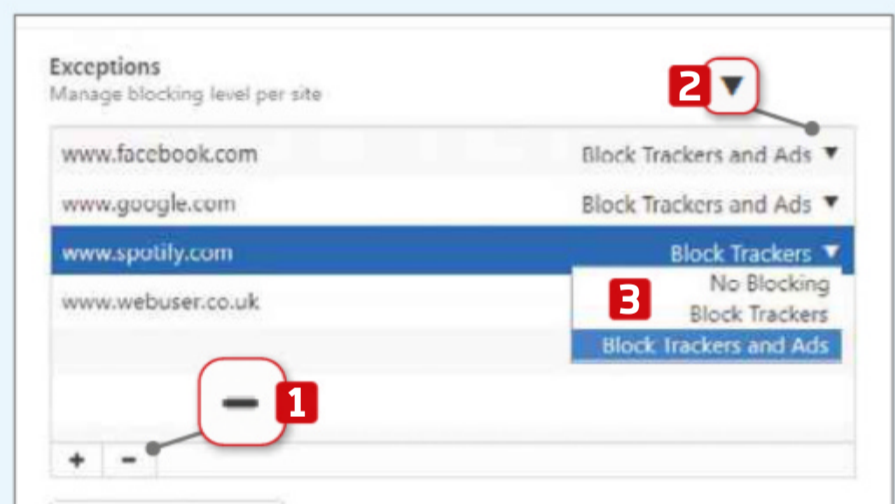
1 Your first port of call should be Vivaldi's Settings menu. Click the cog wheel **1** at the bottom of the sidebar. In the pop-up window, head to the Privacy section **2** and scroll down to the 'Tracker and Ad Blocking' section. **3** No Blocking **4** is switched on by default.



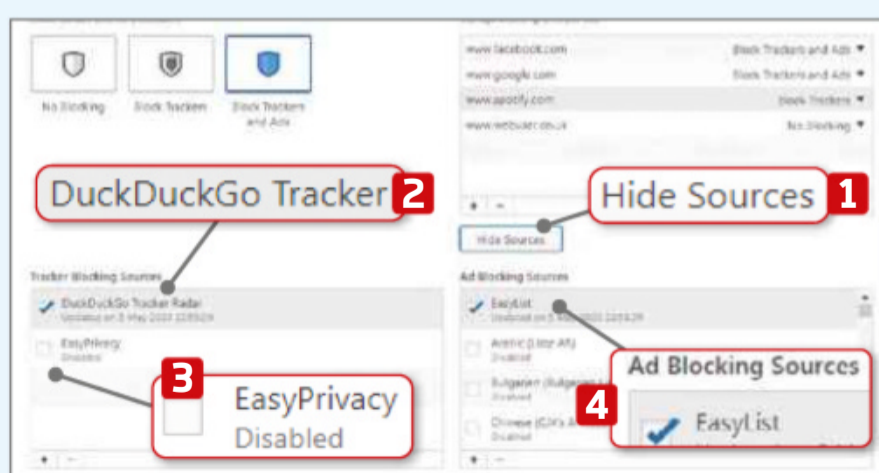
2 The two other options are Block Trackers **1** and 'Block Trackers and Ads'. **2** Make your choice - we're selecting the latter. The Exceptions box **3** lets you manage the level of tracker and ad blocking on specific sites. To add a website to this list, click the Plus sign. **4**



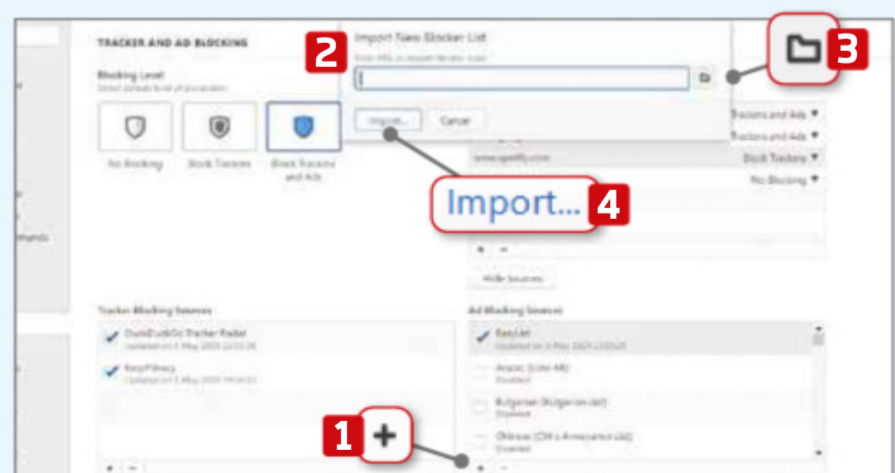
3 In the text field of the box that pops up, type or paste a URL. **1** The drop-down menu lets you specify the exemption type. **2** Regardless of your overall set-up, you can block nothing, trackers only or trackers and ads on any site. Once you're set, click Add Site. **3**



4 Manage websites within the exemptions list by highlighting them. To remove a site, click the minus sign. **1** To edit what's being blocked (or what's not being blocked), click the down arrow **2** beside the current exemption setting and switch between exemption types. **3**



5 Now, click the Manage Sources button, which changes to read Hide Sources. **1** The default tracker blocking is provided by DuckDuckGo. **2** To change this, tick the box marked EasyPrivacy. **3** The same goes for Ad Blocking Sources, **4** which offers a more extensive list.



6 To add your own tracker or ad-blocking list, click the plus sign **1** to open the Import New Blocker List box. **2** Make sure you already have the list downloaded, then click the Folder icon. **3** Navigate File Explorer and select it, then click Import **4** to add it to your sources.

Weekend Project

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



How to...

Turn your smartphone into a Wi-Fi router

If your mobile data allowance is going to waste during lockdown, **Wayne Williams** has some ideas to help you get your money's worth

According to new research from Uswitch (www.uswitch.com), British smartphone users who are currently housebound due to the COVID-19 pandemic are using 500MB less mobile data per month than they did before the lockdown – a fall of 21% on the average monthly usage of 2.4GB. That adds up to a whopping 165 million gigabytes of unused mobile data worth an estimated £165 million. While some providers let you roll over any surplus data to the following month, many don't. For this Weekend Project we'll show you how to put your spare data allowance to good use rather than letting it go to waste.



Access the internet if your ISP goes down

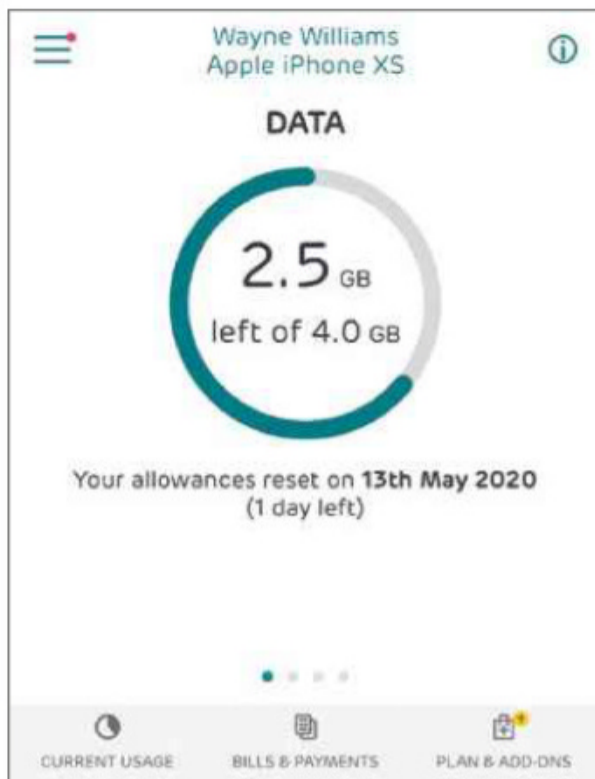
With so many of us working from home at the moment, as well as watching movies on Netflix, making video calls to friends and family, playing multiplayer games and generally amusing ourselves, the internet has never been more essential. Yet both Virgin Media and Sky have suffered serious disruptions to their service during the quarantine period, and

those customers who were able to get online have reported ongoing issues.

This is one area where your spare mobile data comes in handy. Of course, you can always browse the web on your phone when your ISP lets you down, but you can also turn your handset into a wireless router and connect other devices to it, including your computer. You wouldn't want to use your mobile data connection to watch an entire

Netflix or Disney Plus series on your TV or download massive files, but it's more than adequate for everyday browsing and email.

Turning your phone into a wireless hotspot is usually straightforward – we explain how in our Mini Workshop on the opposite page – but there are a couple of things to bear in mind. Perhaps the most important is to remember to switch off the hotspot when you're ready to use



Don't let your spare mobile data go to waste – use it rather than lose it

your Wi-Fi again. It's also worth keeping an eye on how much mobile data you're using. If you're used to an unlimited home internet connection, you may not have any idea how much data you burn through in a typical day. Thankfully, you can set data limits in Windows 10, which will help prevent any expensive penalties for breaching data limits.

Don't struggle with patchy Wi-Fi

Modern Wi-Fi standards such as 802.11ac and 802.11ax, coupled with ever more powerful routers (especially mesh models – look out for our group test in our next Issue) are steadily making the problem of patchy home Wi-Fi a thing of the past. However, if you don't have the very latest hardware, or you live in a building with impenetrable walls and floors, you



You can configure your iPhone's personal hotspot on the iOS Settings screen

may still struggle to get a reliable connection in certain rooms or at the bottom of your garden. Rather than trying to string together a series of range extenders or moving closer to your router, you could use your mobile data instead – either by browsing on your phone or creating a mobile hotspot and connecting other devices to it. Unless you live in the middle of nowhere, you should have access to a 4G network, and the quality of that connection should be much better than you'd get from a degraded Wi-Fi signal.



The iPhone's Control Centre offers quick access to the Personal Hotspot

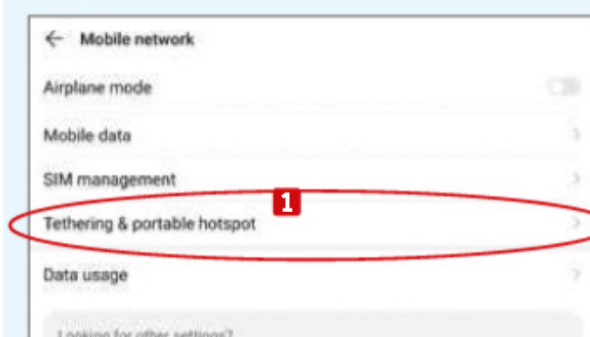
Create a wireless hotspot on your iPhone

Sharing your mobile data connection through an iOS device is easy. Open Settings, go into Personal Hotspot and enable the feature by activating the switch next to 'Allow Others to Join'. Your phone provides internet access to any device that's signed into the same iCloud account, such as your iPad, without needing a password.

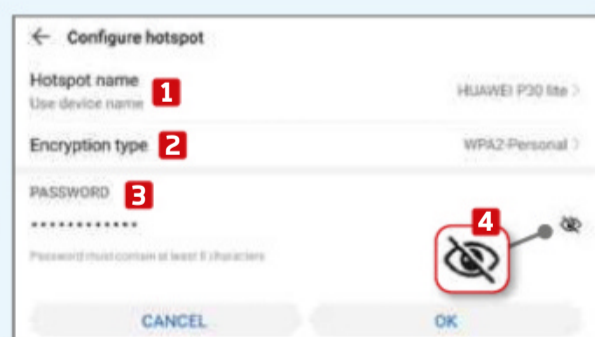
You can also connect other devices, such as a PC, but you need to enter the password that appears on the Settings



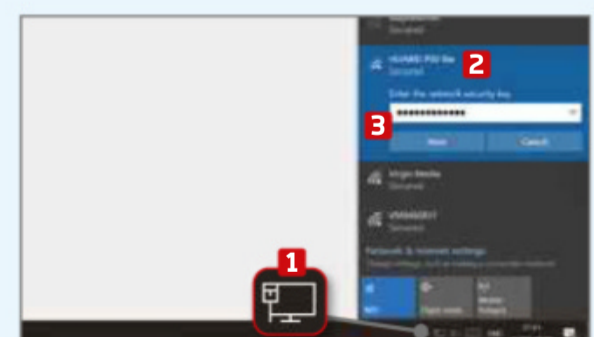
MINI WORKSHOP | How to turn your Android phone into a wireless hotspot



1 To enable a hotspot on your Android device, go to Settings, Mobile network and select 'Tethering & portable hotspot'. **1** The process can vary slightly depending on your make and model of phone and Android version, so you may need to hunt around for the exact menu locations.



2 Select 'Personal hotspot', then activate the switch next to your device's name to enable it. Tap 'Configure hotspot' to change the name of your network, **1** the encryption type **2** and the password. **3** The eye icon **4** lets you view your current password. You can also access advanced settings, change the wireless band and so on.



3 There may be a timer that lets you disable the hotspot after a set period of inactivity, which can help prevent unauthorised access. To join your mobile hotspot in Windows 10, click the Network icon in the notification area, **1** select your device's name, **2** click Connect and enter the password. **3**

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page when prompted. If you tap the password in Settings, you can copy it or change it to something different. It must be at least eight characters long.

A quick way to turn this feature on or off is to open the Control Centre and press down on the Mobile Data icon. A window with some additional options appears, including Personal Hotspot.

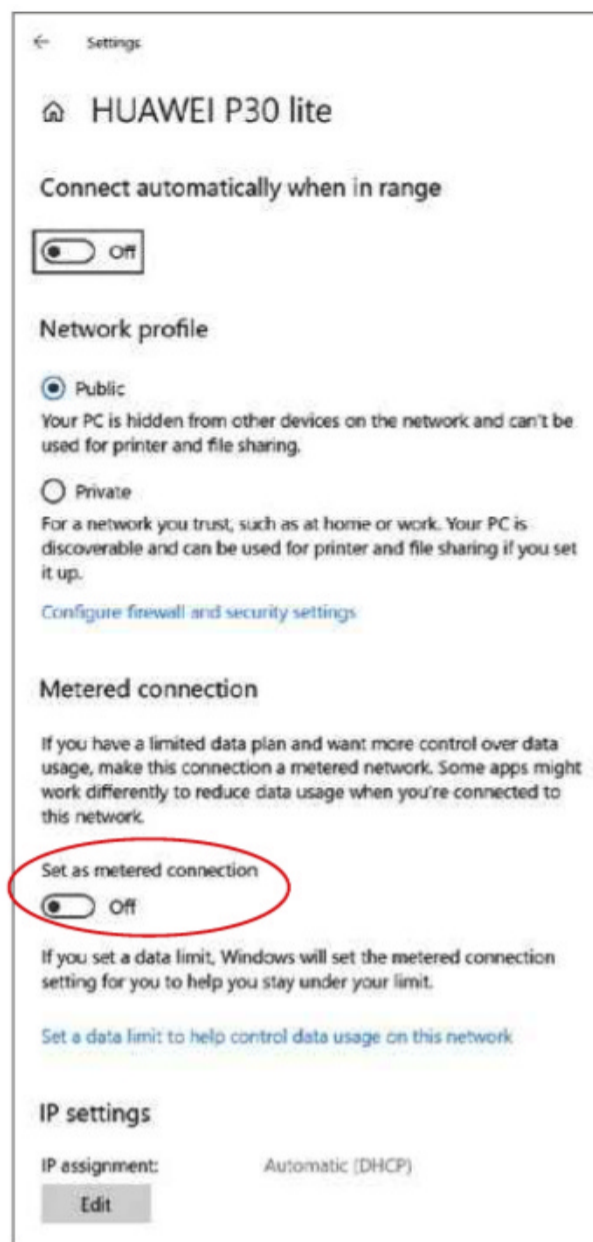
Configure your mobile hotspot in Windows 10

Once you've connected your PC to your phone's hotspot, you can configure it by clicking the Network button in the notification area, followed by the Properties link for your connection. This opens the relevant Settings page, where you can choose whether to connect automatically when in range, select a network profile (public or private) and specify that you're using a metered connection. This stops apps chewing through your data and Windows 10 won't attempt to download massive updates. You can also set a data limit to help control data usage, which is definitely a good idea.

If you need to configure your IP settings, you can do that here too – although this probably won't be necessary.

Add a mobile router

Using your phone as a wireless hotspot is sufficient for most purposes, but if you want to connect multiple devices, it may be worth buying a dedicated mobile router (also known as MiFi – Mobile



In Settings, set your mobile hotspot as a metered connection and add a data limit

Wi-Fi). This is a small portable router that turns a 3G or 4G mobile data connection into a wireless signal that can deliver a network connection to all your devices. We've found that a dedicated mobile

router offers a more reliable connection than a smartphone, and because it's portable, you can use it anywhere, such as in the car or on a park bench. To use it, simply pop your SIM into the device. The obvious downside here is that you won't be able to use your phone for calls and messages while your SIM is in your mobile router. If that's a problem, you can always get a second SIM just for the router. You may be able to link this to your account and use your existing mobile data (while you have some spare), or pick up a dedicated data-only SIM. Check with your provider.

As with a phone, you can buy a mobile router on a contract (which comes with a data allowance) or pay as you go (which doesn't). With the latter option, you pay for the device up front. EE's range of PAYG mobile broadband devices includes the 4GEE WiFi (£89.99) and 4GEE WiFi Mini (£59.99), both of which let you connect up to 20 devices, and the 4GEE Home Router (£129.99), which increases that to 32 devices.

Another option is to buy a 3G or 4G dongle either through your mobile provider or Amazon, where you can find unlocked versions for around £45. Insert your SIM into the dongle, then plug it into a spare USB port on your computer. You could also consider buying TP-Link's Portable 3G/4G Wireless N Router (bit.ly/tplink502) for around £25. Plug your dongle into the router and you can share your connection with other devices, such as tablets. ■



TP-Link's Portable 3G/4G Wireless N Router lets you share the connection from a 3G or 4G dongle



Create a mobile network for up to 32 devices using the 4GEE Home Router from EE

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Transfer everything to a new PC

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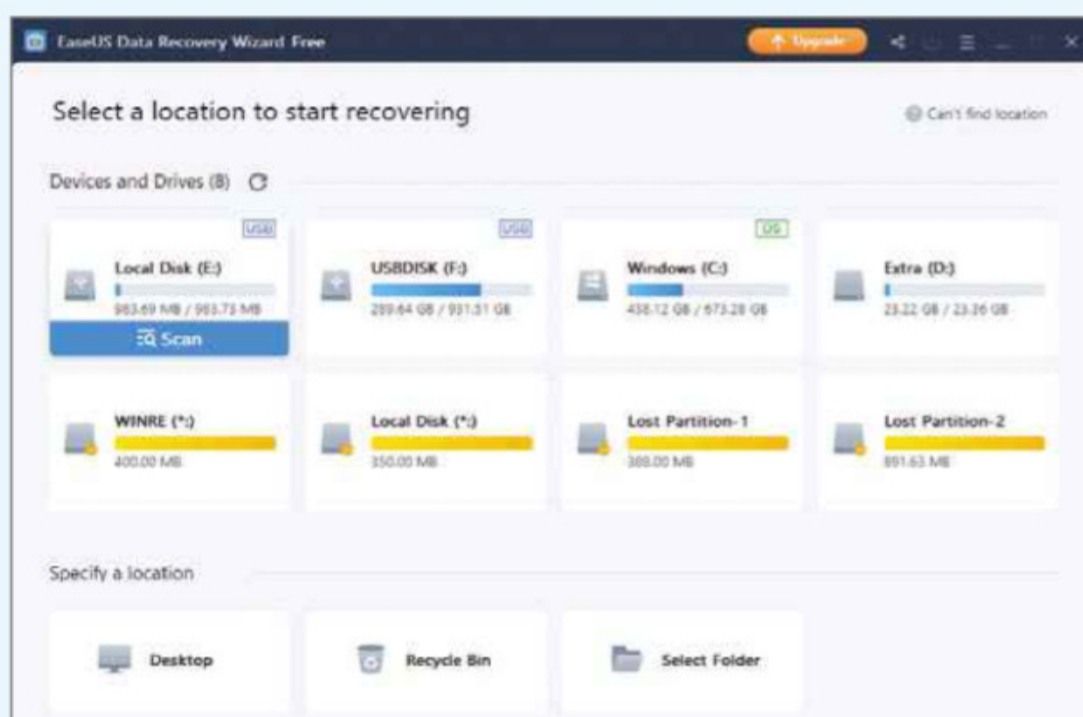
Web User Masterclass

Find and recover lost files on your PC and other devices

Be prepared – install backup and recovery software

The sudden disappearance of a file from your PC can be a minor inconvenience or a major problem, depending on how well prepared you are. To increase your chances of recovering lost or deleted files and folders, enable System Restore and File History, and install backup software and a file-recovery program such as Recuva (bit.ly/recuva502) or EaseUS Data Recovery Wizard Free (bit.ly/easeus502).

Don't wait until you've lost a file before downloading these programs because installing them may overwrite the very files you want to recover. Do it now, while your PC is working. As soon as you notice lost files, run one of these tools and scan for deleted files. You may find they can be recovered straight away. Leave it too long and they may be lost forever.



Don't wait for disaster to strike, install recovery software now

Undo Explorer actions

Suppose you are using Explorer to browse the files on your hard drive and you accidentally delete one or more files and folders. Don't panic – just press Ctrl+Z to undo the action.

There are multiple levels of Undo, so if you've been renaming, moving and deleting files, and only after several actions realise you binned something by accident, you can keep pressing Ctrl+Z to step back through each change you've made and undo it. Deleted files are restored, moved files are put back in their original location and renamed files revert to their previous title.

Check the Recycle Bin

Open the Recycle Bin and, in the View menu's Layout box, select Details. Click

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.

the heading of the Date Deleted or 'Date modified' columns (twice if necessary) to see the most recently deleted or modified files at the top. If you don't see these columns, right-click a column header and tick the missing options to display them. You can now look down the list for the date when you lost a file.

Right-click the Recycle Bin icon on the desktop and select Properties. Ensure 'Don't move files to the Recycle Bin' is *not* selected, and that the custom size has sufficient space to store several files. It should be at least 5,000MB, but you can assign more on a large drive.

Open Settings (Windows+i) and choose System, then Storage. If Storage Sense is on, click the 'Configure Storage Sense or run it now' link. Under 'Delete files in my recycle bin if they have been there for over', select the maximum of 60 days. This gives you more chance of recovering long-lost files from the Recycle Bin.

Check the other Recycle bin

Files deleted on your PC's hard drive are moved to the Recycle Bin on the desktop, but what if a file is not there or if you emptied the desktop Recycle Bin?

You may not realise that you have a second Recycle Bin online.

The OneDrive folder on your PC's hard drive is mirrored online, so a file removed from OneDrive on your PC is also removed online. Those online files are moved to an online Recycle Bin. Go to onedrive.com in your browser and open the Recycle Bin to see if it contains your lost file.

Restore previous versions

Windows automatically backs up some folders and, if you know which folder your lost file was in, you may be able to recover it. For example, open Explorer, right-click the Documents folder in the sidebar and select Properties from the menu. Select the Previous Versions tab and you may see older versions of the folder listed.

Select a folder and click the arrow next to the Restore button. Select Restore To and save it somewhere else. Opening the restored folder displays the same files that the original folder contained on the date shown in Previous Versions.

This feature requires File History or System Restore to be active. Open the



Windows saves previous versions of folders, where you might find lost files

Control Panel and click System, then the 'System protection' link. Select

Windows (C:) in the drive list and click Configure. Make sure it's switched on and increase the disk space usage to enable more restore points and previous versions of folders. This means you'll have more chance of finding lost or deleted files.

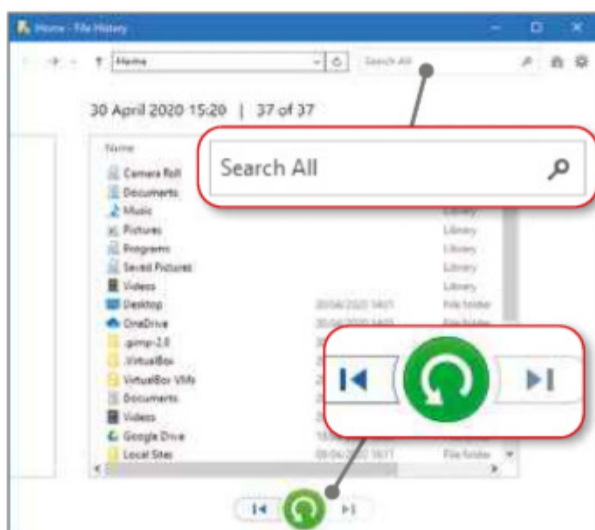
Use File History

Previous Versions is a rather inexact way to track down lost files. File History is better because it copies files every hour to a USB drive. If you have a USB drive, plug it in and open File History in the Control Panel (or open Settings, 'Update & Security', then Backup). Enable it and select the drive.

File History copies files in Documents, Pictures, Music and Videos, plus a few others – basically, most of C:\Users\Yourname. A lost file can be found by opening Explorer and browsing to:

[USB Drive]:\FileHistory\YourName\ComputerName\Data\C\Users\YourName

Clicking 'Restore personal files' in File History in the Control Panel opens a window that lets you browse backups by date. Deleted files remain in File History on the USB drive. You can use the Forward and Back buttons to browse backups by a precise hour and day, or use the search function if you know the filename.



You can restore lost or deleted files with File History, if it's enabled

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Recover with a backup

File History is useful for backups of common folders, but you may have files stored elsewhere that also need backing up. Tools such as EaseUS Todo Backup Free (bit.ly/backup502) and MiniTool Shadowmaker Free (bit.ly/minitool502) back up every file on your hard drive to a USB drive. You should create backups as often as you can.

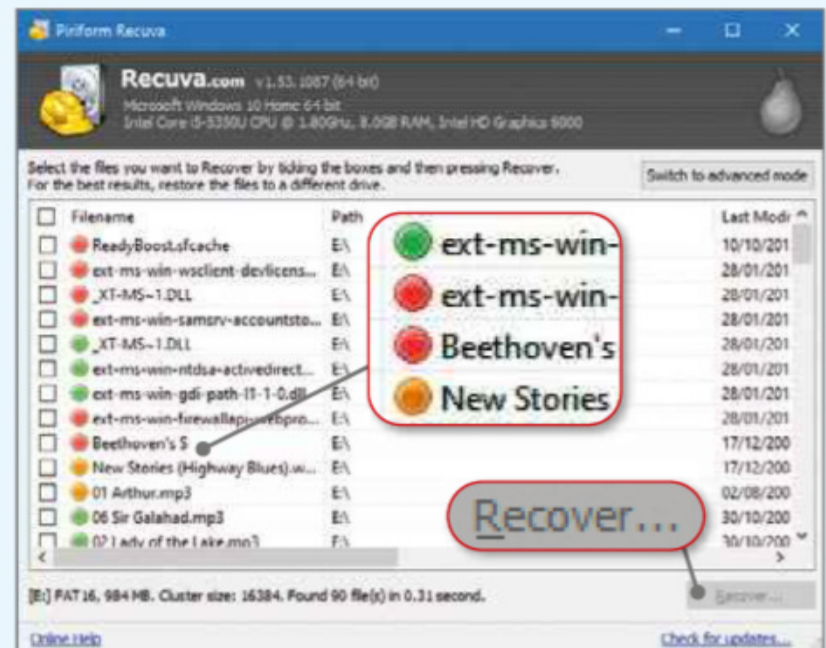
Both tools let you browse backups, find files that have been lost or deleted, and restore them. In MiniTool ShadowMaker, for example, go to the Tools section and mount a backup. It is added as a virtual hard drive that can then be opened in Explorer. You can then browse or search for your lost file and drag it to the C: drive to restore it.

Recover files on external devices

Many of our tips show how to recover files on the Windows system drive, but you may be using an external device, such as a USB drive or memory stick, or a phone, tablet, digital camera or memory card. Recovering files on all these devices requires the same three steps: attach the device, scan it, then browse the items found for your lost or deleted files.

Run Recuva, for example, and you are asked which type of files you want to recover. Select a type to filter the results or select All Files to find everything. Choose where to search, such as 'On my media card' or a drive letter. Recovery tools often provide both quick and thorough searches – the latter can take hours, so only use it as a last resort.

Browse the scan results for your lost files – the red, orange and green traffic



Recuva can find lost files on USB flash drives and memory cards

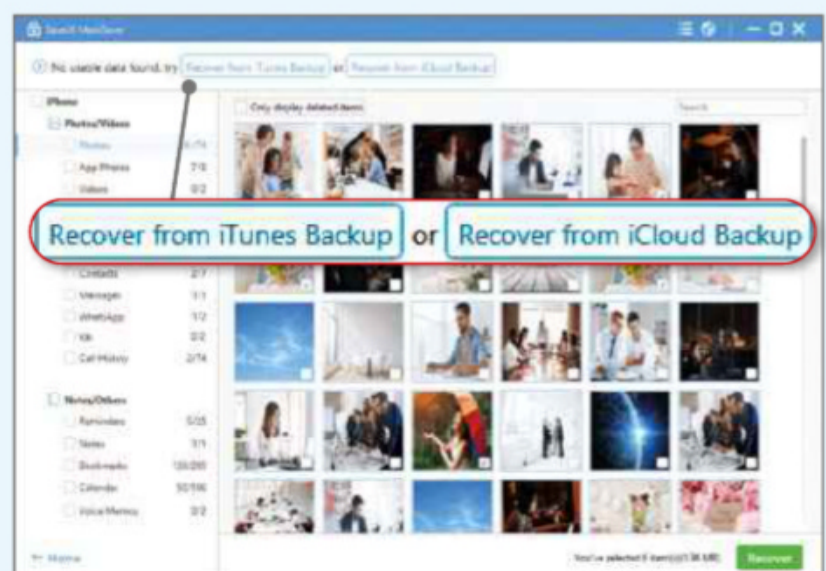
lights in Recuva show the likelihood of a successful recovery. Select one or more files, then click Recover. It's best to save these files to a different drive to avoid overwriting the ones you're trying to recover.

Sometimes, recovered files are perfect but, occasionally, they are corrupt. That's just the way it is.

Recover files on phones and tablets

EaseUS (www.easeus.com) offers free iPhone and Android phone-recovery tools. MobiSaver can find deleted files, contacts, messages, photos, music and videos on your phone, and the process is the same as elsewhere: attach the device with a USB cable, scan it for lost items, select them, then recover the items found.

Don't get too excited, though. Security on these devices often gets in the way and Android phones, for example, must be rooted.



EaseUS MobiSaver Free may be able to recover files lost on your smartphone or tablet

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



WINDOWS

Share Outlook data across two operating systems

Q Is it possible to use the same Outlook PST files on two different operating systems installed on the same computer? I have an Intel i5 PC with 8GB of memory that's running Windows 10 Pro 64-bit on the J: drive. On the C: drive, I still use XP Pro, which uses approximately 2 to 3GB of memory and runs like a dream.

On the latter drive, I have Office 2010 32-bit and use Outlook for my emails. I also currently have nine different browsers installed because I like testing software. I use EasyBCD (neosmart.net/EasyBCD) to boot into either operating system.

My question is: if I install Office 2010 32-bit on Windows 10 64-bit, then direct Outlook to the PST files on the C: drive, will I be able to use them the same as I would normally when running the operating system that's on C:? I know how to do it, I just haven't plucked up the courage to try it.

Maurice, via email

A When you install Office 2010 in Windows 10, you'll be asked for the product key, which needs to be activated online. To have Office



With the right software, you should be able to share files across Windows versions. However, this is best done via an external USB drive

installed on two separate operating systems, you need a multi-user licence – a single-user licence won't work.

Assuming you have the correct licences, Outlook 2010 stores most things in its PST file, which can be placed in any location – on the same drive or elsewhere, such as an external USB drive. While two different

operating systems can share a USB data drive, you shouldn't treat a boot drive the same way.

We've never dual-booted XP with Windows 10 but, back when we had XP and Vista, we remember warnings not to change files on the other OS. Be sure to make a backup of the PST file before you try anything.

GENERAL PC

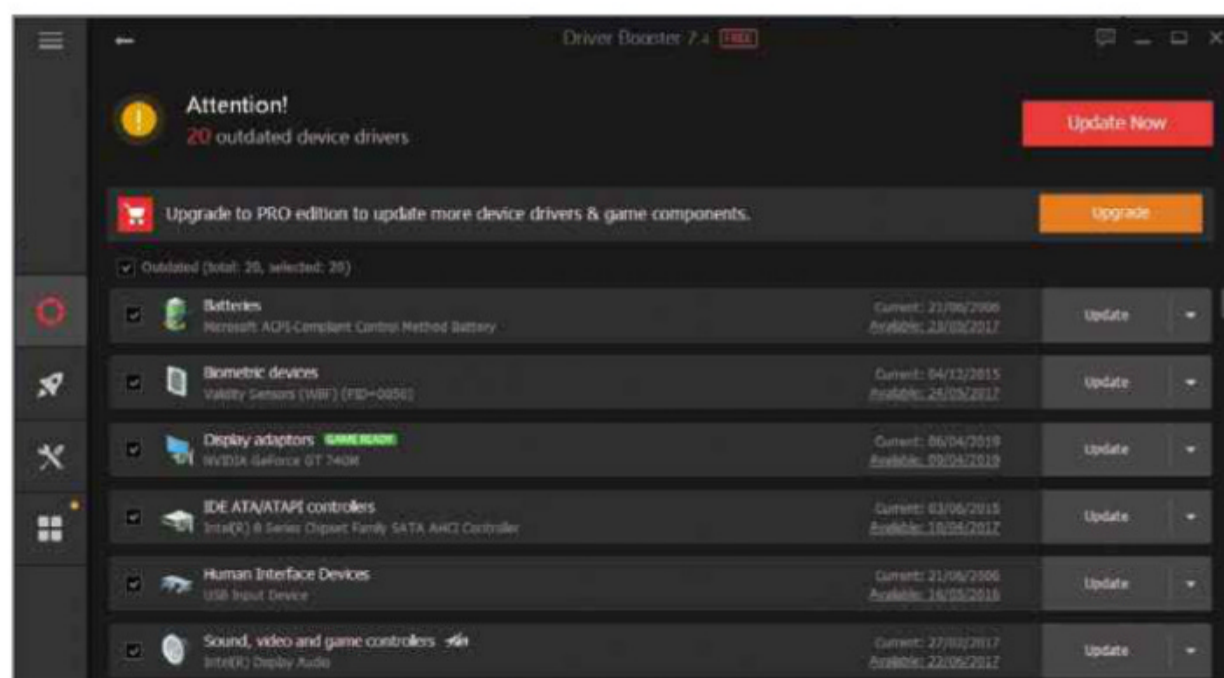
Escape a restart loop

Q A couple of days ago, my PC started to reboot every time I tried to shut it down. It's now running 24 hours a day!

I have followed all sorts of tips from the internet, with no success, and tried `sfc /scannow` but it reports no program violations. I have also tried `sysdm.cpl`, Advanced Tab, Startup & Recovery, Settings, 'System failure' and unticked the box next to Automatically Restart, but that didn't work either, nor has disconnecting my external drives.

Mike Mosedale, via email

A There is a way to override shutdown problems and turn off your PC but it



Updating drivers is often worth a try if you can't work out what's wrong with your PC



EMAIL

Transfer Outlook to another computer

Q How do I move Outlook files?
Rob Sedgwick, via email

A This is a different problem to Maurice's query, on the left, because it's not about sharing an Outlook file but just moving it to a new PC or folder. On a basic level, this is simple: you just need to drag the Outlook files to a new drive in Explorer, then add them to Outlook again. Over the years, however, Outlook has changed storage locations and file formats, so it depends on which version you have, and this makes it a bit more complicated.

Old versions of Outlook used only PST files, but newer ones can also have OST



Find the location of your Outlook files in the Data Files section of your Account Settings

should only be used when all other methods fail. Hold down the power button on the computer for five seconds and the power is cut immediately. This type of shutdown is risky because it can sometimes damage open files, resulting in lost information. Although it's rare that this happens, it's best avoided, just in case.

The problem you are experiencing is most likely caused by a program, service or driver that's running in the background. Get rid of any software you don't need by opening 'Programs and Features' in the Control Panel and uninstalling any unnecessary programs.

Use a tool such as IObit Driver Booster Free (bit.ly/iodb502) to find and update drivers, but update only one or two at a time to check that they work, rather than updating everything in one go. Also, make sure you have a backup before starting.

Shutdown problems are often caused by startup software. These programs start with Windows and run in the background, then cause problems when you try to shut down.

Download and run Autoruns (bit.ly/autoruns502). Nearly all the items it shows are safe, and many are essential, so ignore them. Look for software that you've installed yourself that you know you don't use or isn't important. Clear the tickbox to stop it running on startup. Autoruns is a complicated tool that requires some technical knowledge, but it's well worth becoming familiar with it.

Press Windows+R and enter **msconfig**. Select the Services tab and tick the box 'Hide all Microsoft services'. See what's left and clear the boxes next to any software you know you don't use or need.

After all that, try shutting down the computer and see if it stays shut down.

HARDWARE

Fix typing problems in old software

Q My old Dell OptiPlex 755 PC is running the 32-bit version of Windows 7. I have installed SP1 and SP2 on it. I use it to run legacy software, such as PCFILE, that won't run under later versions of Windows. Everything worked just fine until recently, when it developed a really odd problem.

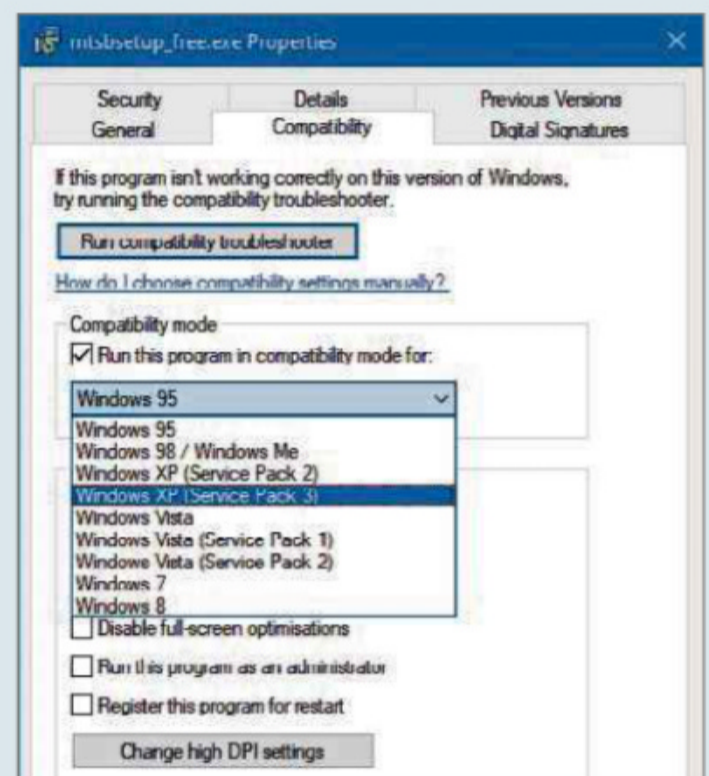
The keyboard won't print letters on the screen, although it is fine with numbers and symbols. Even the function keys are working normally. Only letters are affected, both upper- and lower-case.

I tried using a different keyboard but it made no difference. I also tried updating the driver to the latest version and running a virus scan, but that didn't help, either.

Ian J McGarrigle, via email

A Do you mean PC-File (bit.ly/pcfile502), the database program for MS-DOS that was created in 1982 and last updated in 1993? Windows 7 32-bit was the last version of Windows that could run such old software. This isn't a hardware problem, because using a different keyboard didn't help and you would have noticed the fault in other programs.

There are a couple of things you can try, but make sure you back up your program and data files first. One possible solution is to delete the program, then install it again. If you



Old software may run better with a newer version of Windows selected in Compatibility mode

don't have the original software, search the web for 'pcfile download' to find sites that still have it.

If that doesn't fix the problem, you could try experimenting with compatibility settings. Right-click the program file and select Properties on the menu. Select the Compatibility tab and tick 'Run this program in compatibility mode for', then try each of the options in the menu.

Whether this works or not, if you can access the menus, export the data and import it into a more modern database. EZ Database (bit.ly/ezdb502) is a simple database you could try. Alternatively, LibreOffice (libreoffice.org) has a powerful database tool. Both are free.





Ask the Expert

files. A clean install of Outlook 2013 or 2016 will create an Outlook Files folder in your Documents folder to store PST files, whereas older versions of Outlook used to store them in this folder:

C:\Users\YourName\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Outlook

If an old version of Outlook is upgraded to a new version, the old file location continues to be used and files are not moved. To fix this, open the File tab in Outlook. In the right-hand pane, click 'Account settings', then 'Account settings' again. Go to the Data Files tab and select a file, then click Open Folder Location. Here, you'll find the location of all Outlook's data files. There is also an Add button to add data files and, if you moved a PST file to another drive using Explorer, for example, you can click the Add button to add it again.

These files should all be backed up by copying them to a separate location, such as an external drive, before making any changes.

MOBILE

Remove the keyboard

Q I am having a problem with my Samsung Galaxy A tablet.

Following a recent upgrade, the keyboard keeps appearing. This only happens in Office 365 files, but it's a problem because it makes it impossible to read any text or files that I try to open.

Malcolm Brett, via email

A There are several ways to hide the Android keyboard when it's not being used. For example, tapping the on-screen Back button often dismisses it, or you might need to swipe up. On very old devices, you may need to press a physical button.

Some keyboards have a small button in the bottom-right corner to hide the keyboard. This may also be situated on the navigation bar, along with the Home and Back buttons. It is sometimes very small and may be barely visible, so look closely.



If the keyboard is in the way, press the Back button to hide it

HARDWARE

What to do when Epson ink pads expire

Q Yesterday, after printing a couple of pictures, my Epson Expression XP-605 printer displayed the error message: "A printer's ink pad is at the end of its service life. Please contact Epson support". It now refuses to let me do anything other than switch it off. It was working perfectly until then.

The fixes I have found online, including the SSC Service Utility to reset the counter, all rely on the PC being able to access the printer. It can't currently do this because it says it is either switched off or has a problem. Is there any way of resetting the printer, other than via the PC?

I don't want to take the printer to one of Epson's approved repair centres - which might be difficult anyway in the current environment - because I did that with a previous printer and they made it worse, so I ended up having to pay for the cost of the work as well as a replacement printer. I also strongly object to Epson's tactics of stopping a perfectly usable printer



The Epson Expression XP-605 has some parts that can't be replaced by the user

from working on a totally arbitrary basis - a ploy that seems designed to drum up business for their centres or make you buy a new printer. The reasons given on their website are, frankly, ludicrous.

Chris Simmons, via email

A Epson says that if the ink pads have reached the end of their life, it may not be worth replacing them because other printer components will similarly be close to expiry. It just isn't cost-effective. They also say the pads are not user-replaceable, and the printer is designed to stop operating when the ink pads need replacing.

Epson provides a reset tool (bit.ly/epson502), but doesn't recommend using it, although some people have reported that it works. However, it sounds like you already tried this but the tool was unable to communicate with the printer. The only thing left for you to try is to use a different USB cable and different USB port on your computer, to see if that works.

There are two reasons the pads reach end-of-life: one is because the printer is very old - "Nothing lasts forever", says Epson; the other reason is that you are a very heavy user. If you replace the printer, which may be your only option, choose a model designed for a higher workload.



This fortnight Roland has organised all the digital photos on his PC, starting with his first 320 x 240 shot from 1998



Readers' Helpdesk

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

HARDWARE

Dual-boot Windows and Ubuntu

Q I read the *Web User* review of the Honor Magicbook (Issue 500, bit.ly/webuser500). This laptop comes with Windows 10, so can I use it in dual-boot mode with, say, Ubuntu? I gave up trying to dual-boot my Lenovo IdeaPad 530s. The shop told me "it should be possible" but Lenovo deliberately blocked access to the network chip. Understandably, I don't want to be caught out again.

I need to have dual-boot because I use applications requiring one operating system or the other when I travel. Can you suggest an alternative please?

David Hewlett, via email

A Without testing the laptop for dual-booting, it's impossible to say for sure. All laptops 'should' dual-boot but, as your experience with Lenovo shows, that's not always the case. It's surprising that Lenovo doesn't allow it. However, if your IdeaPad is blocking access to the internet, a quick

workaround could be to pick up a Wi-Fi dongle, thereby side-stepping the internal network.

As for definitively dual-booting computers, we know from our own experience that HP laptops with similar specifications and price are capable of dual-booting, because we've done it many times for this magazine, with a number of different Linux-based operating systems. So, this could be an avenue worth exploring.

Steve Clark, Features Writer

SECURITY

Install a VPN on your smart TV

Q Can anyone offer a workaround for installing a VPN on a smart LG TV?

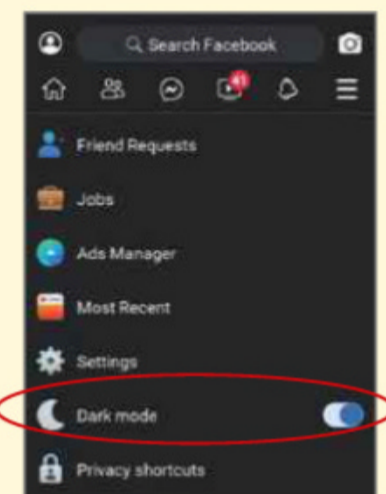
READERS RESPOND

SOCIAL MEDIA

Turn on Facebook's dark mode

A In Issue 498 (bit.ly/webuser498), Les Hague asked if there was a way to select dark mode for Facebook on his mobile. The answer is yes, but it's not as clear-cut as that. While Facebook has recently introduced a built-in dark mode for both its main website and Facebook Messenger, it's only available in app form in Facebook Lite (bit.ly/fblite502). Go to the settings menu and toggle the 'Dark mode' option to On. As far as I know, there's no word on when the proper Facebook app will get this.

George Palpas, via email



Only the Facebook Lite app offers a dark mode

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.

APPLE

Q I'm trying to transfer my music library to my iPod Touch but don't know how to switch off iCloud Music Library. I'm running macOS Catalina.

Raymond, via email

KINDLE

Q Does anyone know the best way to get PDFs and other non-Amazon ebooks on to a basic Kindle, not the Kindle Fire tablets?

Helen Garraway, via email



Can your laptop handle two operating systems?

I managed to connect a VPN-enabled laptop to my TV with an HDMI cable but it's a cumbersome solution. Since my smart TV has access to the internet, it would be good to have a VPN service installed on it.

Tom Sampson, via email

A There are a couple of ways to get a VPN on your smart TV. If your LG model can access the Google Play store, it means the TV can run Android. All the big-name VPNs have Android apps, so it's possible you can download and use a VPN this way.

Understandably, not all TVs have this ability. If that's the case, it's time to move to plan B: sharing your VPN connection from your Windows computer to your smart TV. This essentially turns your laptop into a Wi-Fi hotspot for your telly

using a virtual router. Head to Windows 10's Network settings menu to get started sharing your connection across devices.

Your final option is to install a VPN on your physical router. This may end up costing a bit more than your current setup because the router needs to be VPN-enabled. Once you've got a compatible router, though, it's the easiest way to run a VPN that can be accessed by any device on your network.

Steve Clark, Features Writer



Power up your smart TV by connecting it to a VPN

Your Top Tips

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



TOP TIP

VPNs

Speed up a VPN on your router

I've experienced the same problem that Ron O'Brien mentioned in Issue 500, regarding very slow internet when connecting to a VPN directly through my router. So, I wanted to share some tips for correcting this.

To avoid the massive speed drop, connect via UDP instead of TCP. Despite the theoretical unreliability of UDP when compared to TCP, I've not noticed any problems and the speed improvement has been significant. You can select this in your VPN's config generator.

As for stability, I have found NordVPN (nordvpn.com) to be less reliable than other VPNs. Sure, it works great, but when connected via OpenVPN, I would have to manually reconnect every couple of days and sometimes even reconfigure the router to use a new VPN server because it would just stop working. I find WindScribe (windscribe.com) much more stable and, with your



If your VPN isn't working to your satisfaction, try a different one

subscription, you also get R.O.B.E.R.T., its DNS-level ad and malware blocker, which filters out nasties on all devices connected to the router.

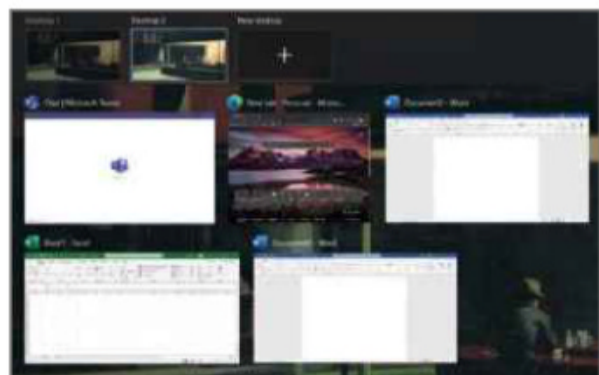
I've tried many routers over time and found the Synology RT2600AC to be by far the most stable and powerful. At around £200, it's quite expensive, but it offers split tunnelling which means your TV can bypass the VPN to avoid VPN problems with Netflix on your TV.

Vlad Schnakovszki, via email

GENERAL PC

Save screen space with new desktops

How many of us are currently working from home, struggling each day on a single laptop screen? Well, struggle no more! We all know that pressing Alt+Tab brings up a list of all your currently open windows. However, if you press Win+Tab instead, you can look at all currently



Quickly switch between your various desktops using keyboard shortcuts

open windows with an added option in the top-left corner to add a new desktop. This gives you a whole other desktop space to fill with as many spreadsheets as you like – there's no limit to the number of desktops you can create.

There's also a nifty shortcut combo that takes you to one of your other 'virtual desktops' – press Win+Ctrl+Left or right arrow, depending on which one you want to access.

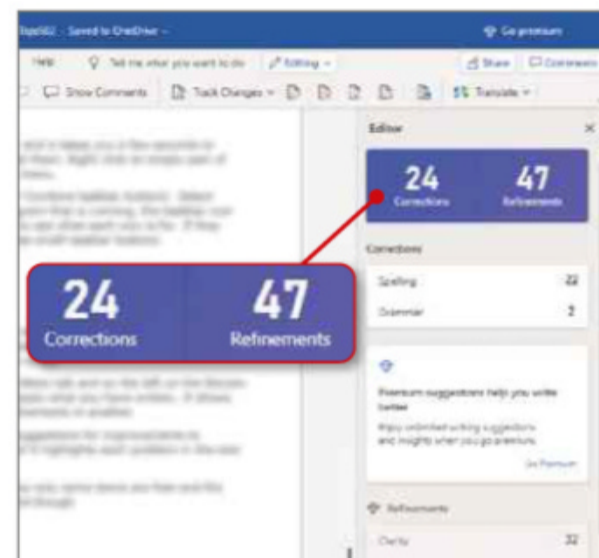
Simon Mellor, via email

OFFICE

Use Microsoft Editor online

I'm not a serious Microsoft Office user, so I don't need the full program. Following a recommendation by *Web User*, I use Word Online at www.office.com – it's good enough for me.

I recently noticed a new Editor feature that displays a blue icon on the right of



Use Microsoft Editor to check for errors and style problems in the Word web app

the Home ribbon tab and on the left on the Review tab. Clicking this opens a panel on the right that analyses what you've written. It shows spelling and grammar errors in one section, and refinements in another, with suggested corrections to improve your work. Click 'Spelling and Grammar' to highlight each problem in the text with a suggestion for fixing it.

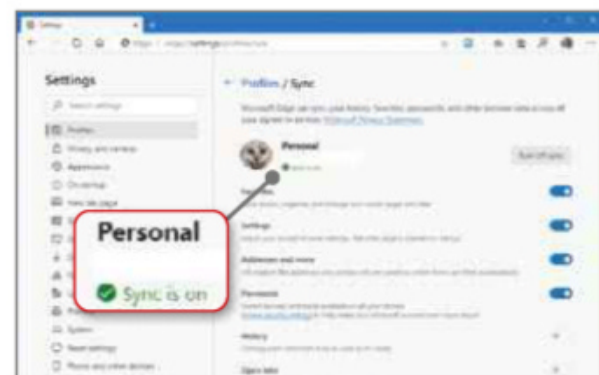
When the feature first appeared, it was completely free. However, now only some items are free and the rest are for Office subscribers. It's still useful, though.

Doug Baxter, via email

BROWSERS

Sync Edge between PCs

The new Edge browser in Windows 10 is light years ahead of the clunky old



Sync various settings and history between computers with Microsoft's Edge browser



version. I recently noticed a pop-up message with a simple yes/no option to sync between your PCs. If you missed this or have since changed your mind, open the menu and click Settings, Profiles, then click the arrow to the right of Sync. There is a master button at the top with eight switches below that let you choose which elements to sync between your various computers. The options include settings, favourites, passwords, history, extensions and more. Some options aren't yet available and say 'Coming soon'.

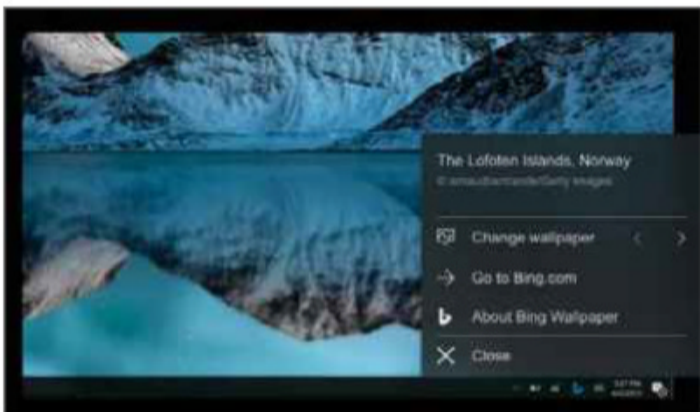
Ian Goodman, via email

DESKTOP

Add Bing wallpapers to your desktop

For all its faults as a search engine, I'm a massive fan of Bing's wallpapers. It displays an amazing array of high-resolution photographs, from quirky animals to stunning landscapes. While I'd previously only seen them in the browser and when using Android's Microsoft Launcher, readers may be interested to know of the Bing wallpaper app (bit.ly/bing502). Install this and you'll have access to tons of new and beautiful photographs that can be used as your desktop background.

J Jameson, via email



Brighten your desktop backgrounds with Bing

GENERAL PC

Customise your taskbar

If some of the icons on your taskbar look too similar and it takes you a few extra seconds to decide which one to click when switching apps, why not label them so they are easier to tell apart?

Right-click an empty part of the taskbar, then click 'Taskbar settings' in the menu. The Settings app opens in Personalization, Taskbar and you'll see an item on the right called 'Combine taskbar buttons'. Select 'When the taskbar is full'. Now, every program that's visible in the taskbar should have a text description next to it, which makes it easier to identify. If they now take up too much space, turn on the switch to 'Use small taskbar buttons'.

Don Tyler, via email

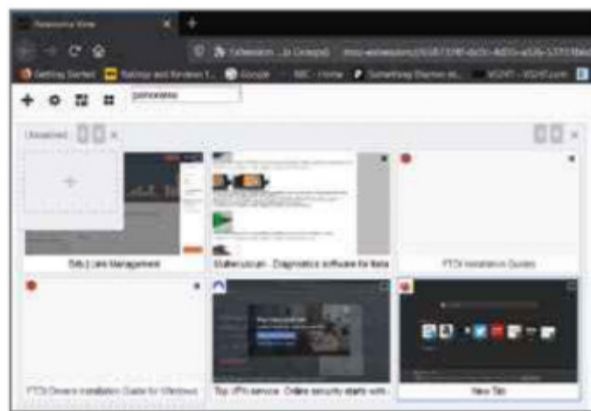
BROWSERS

Change tabs to thumbnails

I use a lot of tabs so I'm always scouting for good tab-management tools and I recently stumbled on a new add-on for Firefox that, to my mind, is one of the best. Panorama Tab Groups (bit.ly/panorama502) is, essentially, a remake of an old Firefox feature. When you click its icon in the address bar, you can view all your tabs as thumbnails. This makes it simple to locate the tab you need.

It also has a very useful search field for opening the right tab, and you can create new tab groups by pressing the Plus sign, then dragging and dropping existing tabs into different groups. It's a much cleaner way of ordering what is otherwise a total tab mess!

Mark Snowden, via email



Turn tabs into tiles of thumbnails in Firefox

OFFICE

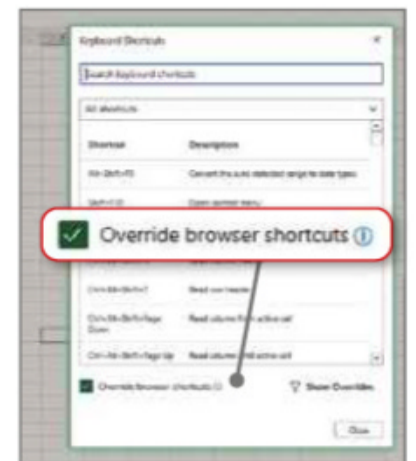
Override browser shortcuts in Excel Online

I frequently use Excel at work and have learned lots of keyboard shortcuts, but there are just too many to remember them all. If you use the free Excel web app in a browser at www.office.com, you may find that some Excel shortcuts clash with your browser's shortcuts and, instead of

performing an action in Excel, you end up doing something in the browser.

Click Help in the Excel web app's toolbar, then click Keyboard shortcuts. A panel appears, listing all the keyboard shortcuts, which is useful if you're not sure what to use. There is a tickbox at the bottom to 'Override browser shortcuts', which ensures that any keyboard shortcuts you perform are applied to Excel and not the browser.

Thomas Glen, via email



Excel Online's shortcuts let you override your browser's shortcuts

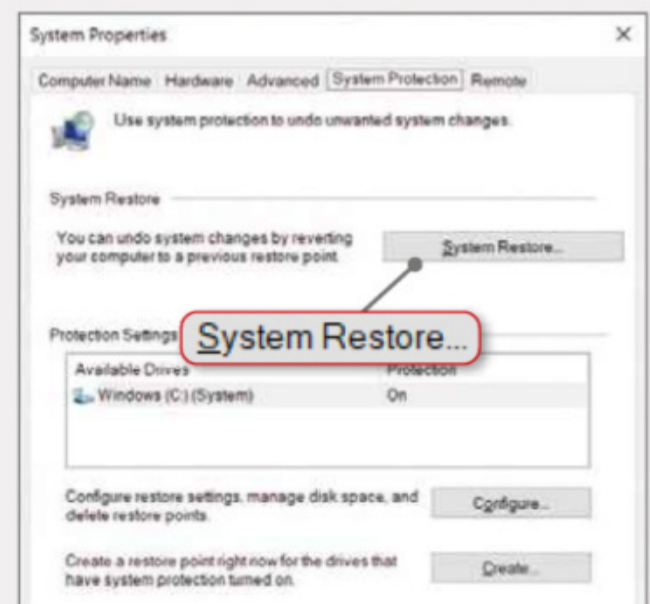
BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

HARDWARE

Create restore points on cloned drives

I recently cloned my hard drive because I wanted to fit an SSD as my C: drive. All went well and the PC runs fine. The old hard drive is now listed as the E: drive, and the SSD was automatically renamed to C:. I now run the old drive from a USB enclosure, but when I tried to create a new restore point, I got a message telling me that this wasn't possible because the E: drive is protected by a password, using BitLocker. This was a surprise as I am running the operating system from the SSD, not the old drive.

I was wondering if I'd have to install a new version of Windows 10. I looked into the System Restore options and disabled protection for the E: drive. I then discovered that protection for C: had been disabled, and E: was now missing from the list of available drives.



Create restore points from the System Properties window

I switched protection for C: back on and was able to create a new Restore Point for the C: drive. This seems to have solved the problem.

Mike Collum, via email

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



Star Email

Trawling our private data is unethical

I was delighted to read Barry Collins' column in Issue 499 (bit.ly/webuser499), 'Stop using our data to target us with ads'. At last I've found someone who thinks like me!

The trawling of our private data by large tech companies such as Google, Facebook, Apple and Amazon is totally unethical. I believe that these companies have no justifiable right to profit from our personal data. They seem to live under the illusion that we actually *want* annoying, resource-demanding advertising!

But what data are these companies actually trawling? They already know the IP addresses of our routers, which devices and software we use and the sizes of our screens. They know where we are at any time of day and even



where we're likely to be tomorrow and the next day, because they have access to our calendars and planners. They also know the names and telephone numbers of everyone in our contacts lists.

If we use Google Play or the Apple Store to download apps (because

they've set themselves up to be the sole distributors), we've no doubt given them access to our documents and images, too, which is the price we pay to use them. But what we don't know is what other data of ours they are gathering and what actually lies behind their 'Decline' and 'No' buttons. Can we really believe these choices are respected? I don't think so.

Friends tell me I'm paranoid and that we're 'living in the digital age', so I should get used to 'Big Brother' and accept it. But if the majority of web users don't give a damn about surrendering their once-private data to these tech giants, how on Earth can things change? Do we just let the greedy bullies win? It's time for action!

Geoff Grandy, via email

Back Issues disc winner



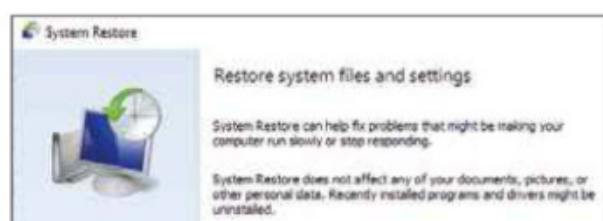
Windows update wiped my restore points

Regarding Ria's letter in Issue 500's 'Ask the Expert' section, 'Fix vanishing restore points', I've experienced a similar problem. I've only been using Windows 10 for a few months, but because I was having trouble loading old software, I got into the habit of using System Restore to minimise any errors the failures caused.

In my case, the restore points disappeared after a Windows update. I've just checked, and they've vanished again now. My keyboard reverts to the US version or some other country, too, and twice my system has failed to detect my two-monitor setup, which meant I had to reset my PC to rectify it. I have a second Windows 10 PC that isn't connected to the internet, and System Restore still works properly on that.

The update to Windows 10, which is due this month, should fill people with dread. Isn't it time Microsoft got a grip? What a shambles!

Barrie Pearce, via email



Problem with IObit licence code

I was excited to read your cover feature in Issue 500 about downloading £500 of software for free, especially the Pro versions of IObit programs. However, when I downloaded and installed IObit Software Updater using the link in the magazine (bit.ly/iobit500), I found that the licence code provided for the Pro version



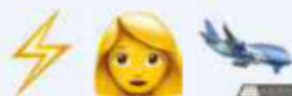
didn't work. The error said that the discount was for a previous version of the program, and that I'd have to pay for the latest version. Can you advise?

Richard Cartwright, via email

Web User says: Apologies for this. After we went to press with Issue 500, IObit released version 3 of its Software Updater Pro program. As you found, the licence code was for version 2, so didn't work

Quiz Answers: Issue 501

1 **Electric Ladyland**



2 **Bat Out of Hell**



3 **Pet Sounds**



4 **Born to Run**



5 **The Stone Roses**



6 **Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band**



WINNER!

Well done to **Linda English** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



WAYBACK MACHINE

2005



with the download available from the IObit Giveaway page (bit.ly/iobit500). IObit has now kindly provided us with a new licence code, which works with Software Updater Pro 3: B935E-7EC3E-D116D-1CDB3.

Cancelling Sky is an uphill struggle

I had a very similar experience to Barry Collins when trying to cancel my Sky TV subscription (Page 404, Issue 501). My emails received no response, and when I rang the customer support number I was left on hold for so long that I had to give up. I don't use Twitter or Facebook, so I couldn't get in touch with Sky that way, and had to keep trying the phone number until I eventually got through,

which was a real uphill struggle.

Each time I called, I heard a recorded message instructing me not to phone unless I was a "vulnerable customer" or a key worker, which was clearly intended to make me feel guilty enough to ring off.

Call me cynical, but I don't think the coronavirus should be used as an excuse for poor service, or to make it difficult for customers to cancel their subscriptions.

Nathan Blackburn, via email

Removing a partition proved calamitous

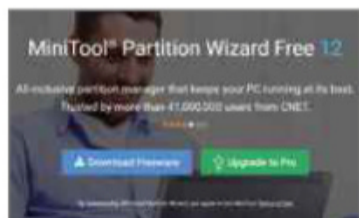
Over the past few years, I've installed a number of free programs from *Web User*. Recently, I got a 'hard drive full' message. With perfect timing, your Best Free

Software section in Issue 500 recommended the MiniTool Partition Wizard, so I thought I'd remove a partition

and resize the C: drive. Looking at the C: drive, I saw another small 'unused' partition that I thought I could convert. Little did I know that this had the boot program on it. I could have made a clone of the drive just in case, but what could possibly go wrong? The result? Calamity.

Fortunately, the same issue of *Web User* had the offer of Windows 10 Home for £30, so I was able to reinstall (and upgrade) Windows and rescue my files and programs. My top tip? Don't mess with what you don't understand.

Dave Mellor, via email



What you say...

WHICH GAMES HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING MOST DURING LOCKDOWN?

I've been playing Rummy and Penguin Isle on my phone, and Civilization VI on my PC. I'm very antisocial, though, and play all these games on my own rather than with anyone online.

Rich Grove

On my phone I play Cells, Numberzilla and Penguin Isle. On my Xbox, I'm still working through Assassin's Creed Odyssey.

Nat Grove

I've been playing Chuzzle 2. I'm addicted!

Jan Swanton

I don't play games, because I have enough to entertain myself with on other platforms of information.

Brian Brown

I got out my Nintendo Wii but found that the graphics are a bit wonky, which I think is because it hasn't been used for several months. If anyone can fix it, I'd very much appreciate it – it's my only source of games.

Elena Okharedia

I haven't been playing any games, but my neighbour seems to have discovered Fortnite, Call of Duty or something else that involves lots of shouting in the early hours!

James Hinton

Candy Crush Saga and Solitaire.

Pat Luke

HAVE YOU HAD ANY PROBLEMS WITH YOUR BROADBAND SINCE LOCKDOWN BEGAN?

Virgin Media has been absolutely shocking. Every day before 4pm, it

keeps dropping out, which makes working very hard.

Paul Feakins

Sky has always been flaky in Basingstoke. But in their defence, we are still connected via copper wire.

Daren Bavister

I've experienced occasional dropouts from Virgin Media. Usually in the morning.

Howell Rees

We had a slight wobble with Virgin Media last week, but with two people sucking up bandwidth by working from home, and the remaining four of us bashing Netflix and the Xbox pretty hard, it's holding up very well.

Richard Morgan

Apart from the day contractors cut through a cable, my Virgin Media connection has held up very well. The speed tests I've done show that I'm getting what I pay for in megabits per second most of the time.

Martin James

I've been having problems ever since I switched to Vodafone, and now I wish I hadn't. On the plus side, I receive the company's guaranteed discount every month. It's still fast, but not what I'm paying for.

Gary Olsen

We don't get the 100Mbps we're paying for from Virgin Media, but it's holding up pretty well. We can use Netflix and I can work from home if I use an extender – because the Virgin Media Hub is rubbish.

Caroline Chapman

I've had a couple of problems with Virgin Media, but nothing serious. The main issue has been the router struggling to cope with the whole family working on laptops and phones at the same time.

Pete Sherriff

My Sky broadband has been pretty good, although it gets a bit slower in the evenings.

Alan Madden

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Barry Collins questions the wisdom behind having two versions of Windows for laptops

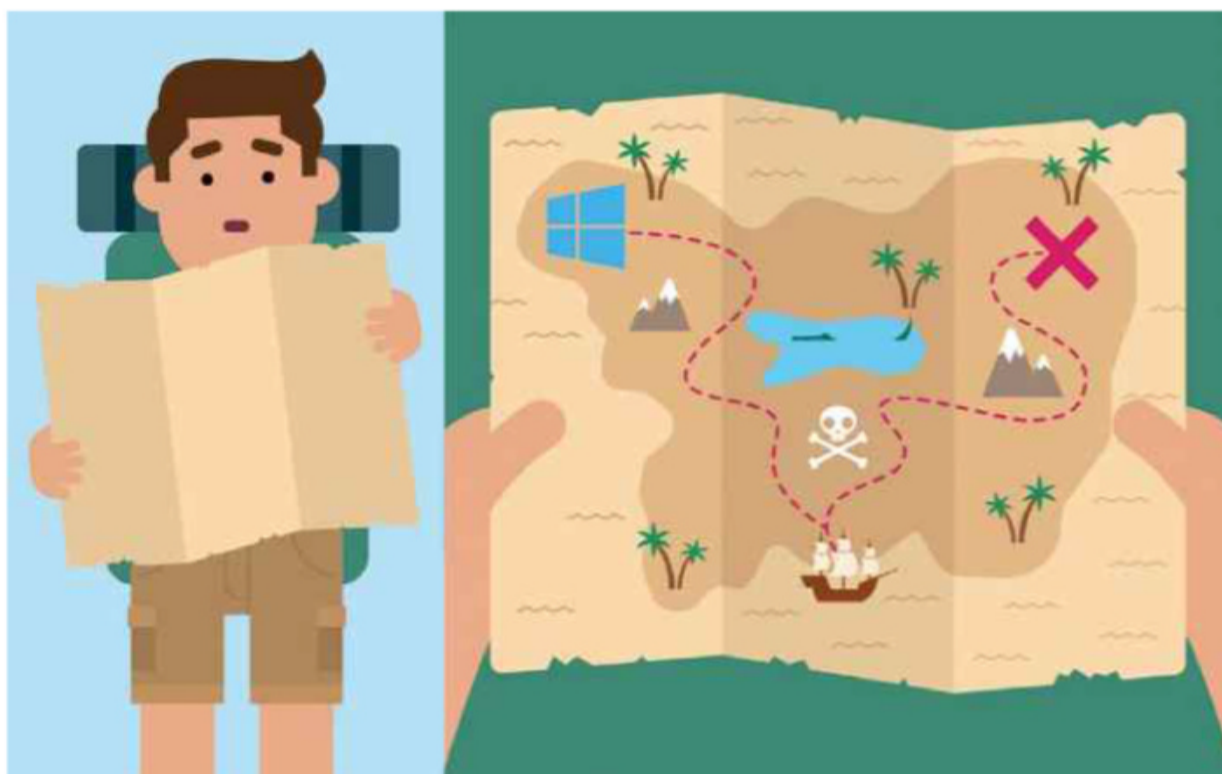
X marks the danger spot for Microsoft

You've got to take your hat off to Microsoft (although only if you're standing 2m away from anyone else while doing so and not sharing your headgear with others). Having walloped a couple of alternative versions of Windows straight into a brick wall in recent history, the company, undeterred by past failure, is giving it another shot with Windows 10X.

Windows 10X was announced last year, earmarked as a version of the operating system designed exclusively for a new range of dual-screen devices, which Microsoft was hoping to have on the market by Christmas. These double-display tablets could be used in a variety of configurations (book-like, laptop-like, tablet-like), which prompted a rethink of the operating system, such as a revamped Start menu, new taskbar and a full-screen software keyboard when required. So far, so sensible.

Then Microsoft dropped a little bombshell, buried midway through a blog on Windows 10 developments at the start of May ([bit.ly/msblog502](https://blogs.microsoft.com/blog/2020/05/01/windows-10-developments/)). "The world is a very different place than it was last October when we shared our vision for a new category of dual-screen Windows devices," Windows chief Panos Panay wrote, announcing plans to "pivot our focus toward single-screen Windows 10X devices".

In other words, Windows 10X is coming to laptops and, once again, consumers will be faced with a choice of Windows 10 or a slightly different version of Windows 10, but no clear indication of what those differences might be.



It's not like we haven't been here before. Windows RT – the version of Windows 8 that was designed to run on ARM-based processors instead of the regular Intel chips – was an unmitigated 50-car pile-up, because consumers thought they were buying regular Windows and, instead, found themselves saddled with an operating system that could run almost none of their Windows apps.

Windows 10 S was another variation on the theme, once again restricting Windows users to a fraction of the apps that can be found in the abject Windows

Store. It was largely rejected by PC makers and quickly became a face-saving "S Mode" that users could turn on and off if they wished. I've yet to see anyone using it in the wild.

So why would a laptop buyer choose

Windows 10X over regular Windows 10? On the plus side, the early interface designs look cleaner, with a more user-friendly Start menu (more akin to a smartphone/tablet app launcher) and less cluttered taskbar. But there are also factors that trigger my alarm bells.

Clearly wary of avoiding another RT/Windows 10 S-shaped disaster, where users can't run regular Windows applications on Windows laptops, Microsoft is planning to let customers run them in a "container" – a bit like a virtual machine. This insulates the apps from the rest of the operating system, so there's less risk of a virus or badly-coded app debilitating the entire laptop, but it's also likely to hamper performance. Good luck to the poor Saturday lad in PC World trying to explain that to my dad.

Having two versions of Windows serving the same category of devices is going to confuse buyers. Panay is right – the world has changed – but Microsoft's ham-fisted Windows branding sadly has not.

“It's not like we haven't been here before. Windows RT was an unmitigated 50-car pile-up, and I've yet to see anyone use "S Mode"”

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