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Outsmart your smart devices

The novelty of my Google Home speaker has worn off somewhat. Occasionally, I ask it for the weather forecast or to play something on Spotify, or it springs into life when someone mentions Google on TV, but the rest of the time it just sits there waiting – and listening.

As we explain in this issue's cover feature, smart devices are cleverer and more devious than we think, particularly those from Google and Amazon. Their speakers, phones, doorbells and various apps aren't just collecting and sharing our data to tell us if it will rain later or who's at the door,

but to "improve their services" and, more importantly, target us with ads. Even when you don't speak aloud to them, these two companies are tracking where you go, what you watch and read, and even the things you type.

Fortunately, it's possible to prevent this unwarranted snooping, without giving up these useful tools, by following our writer Jane Hoskyn's expert advice.

Robert Irvine, Editor
editor@webuser.co.uk
[#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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Average sales, Jan-Dec 2019, 24,266 copies per issue



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How to use Bitly links

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.



STOP **GOOGLE & AMAZON** SPYING ON YOU

COVER
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What's New Online

Play Amazon's new online game

Amazon has launched its first original big-budget online game, which is designed to be as fun to watch as it is to play. The sci-fi-themed, team-based action shooter, called **Crucible**, has been in development for four years, with Amazon Game Studios hoping it will become as popular as **Fortnite**, **Overwatch** and **League of Legends** – particularly with fans of Amazon's game-streaming service **Twitch** (www.twitch.tv).

You can download **Crucible** for free from **Steam** (bit.ly/crucible503), provided you have an account and, ideally, **Windows 10**. There are some payable options that give you different character skins, in-game credits and **Battle Passes**, which may



help you pit your wits in multiplayer online battle arenas. Fortunately, they're not essential.

As well as playing as one of 10 colourful hunters, you have three main modes to pick from: a last-man-standing **Battle Royale** blast-em-up; **Heart of the Hives**, which involves two sets of four players capturing a trio of items; and **Harvester Command**, where

two teams of eight compete to drain each other's resources.

Interestingly, the developer, **Relentless**, consulted **Twitch** streamers about the design and feel of the game, and many users are already getting stuck in if you fancy taking a look.

www.playcrucible.com



Rediscover old PC game boxes

bigboxcollection.com

Downloading games digitally from the internet is convenient, but many of us feel nostalgic about the packaging that came with physical formats. **Benjamin Winner** has collected 653 big box games over the years and scanned them in 3D to display on his **Big Box Collection** website, so you can view the front, back and sides while zooming in for greater detail.

Classic titles including **Broken Sword**, **Doom**, **Elite**, **Flight of the Amazon Queen**, **Ghouls 'n' Ghosts**, **Puzzle Bobble** and loads more are displayed atop screenshots. In each case, you can export the boxes as a **GIF** and even download them to print as miniature papercraft models. There are boxes for

Wii and **Switch** games, too.

Benjamin also has a wishlist of titles he doesn't own but would like to scan (so if you have a copy, let him know).



Bulk-delete Instagram comments

www.instagram.com

In its efforts to tackle bullying, **Instagram** has introduced a new anti-trolling feature that lets users quickly remove multiple comments from their posts. This ensures that anyone faced with a flurry of negative interactions can easily delete them, starting with a tap of **View All Comments** below a post.

The **Android** version lets you select up to 25 comments before tapping the trashcan icon to delete them. In the **iOS** app, select the three-dot menu in the top-right corner, then tap **Manage Comments** before selecting and deleting the offending interactions.

In either version of the app, options exist to block or restrict accounts – and **Instagram** isn't stopping there. It's also rolling out controls that let you manage who can tag or mention you (including no one or only people you follow), and will eventually allow positive comments to be pinned to the top of a thread.

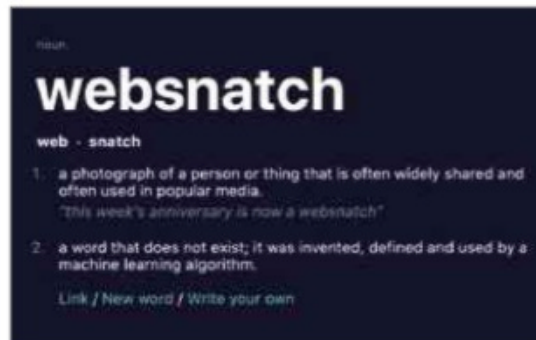


We pick the 10 best things you must do on the web this fortnight

Generate made-up words

www.thisworddoesnotexist.com

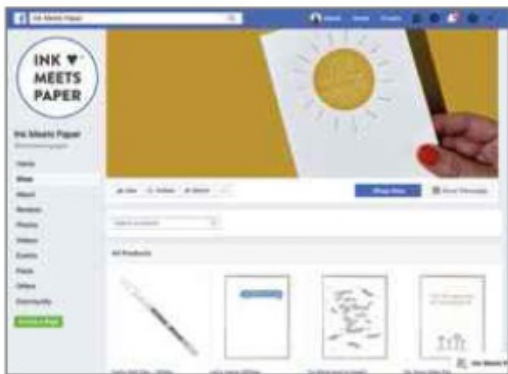
Language is constantly evolving, but what if artificial intelligence could help us add more words than ever before? This online tool trawls more than eight million web pages to generate new words and definitions using the predictive power of the language framework GPT-2. You can also write your own made-up words for instant definitions.



Buy goods from Facebook shops

www.facebook.com

As you scroll through your Facebook feed, you're soon going to see more and more businesses selling their



wares via stores created within the app. Look out for the Shop Now button on a

Facebook Page, story or advert. Items of interest can be saved, messages sent and deliveries tracked, but you're directed to the company's own website to place your order. If you have a business yourself, you can set up a shop for free using Facebook's new tools. Select Create Collection and add products manually or from an XML file. You can customise your shop with a cover image and accent colours.

Check when a TV series gets dull

tvchart.benmiz.com

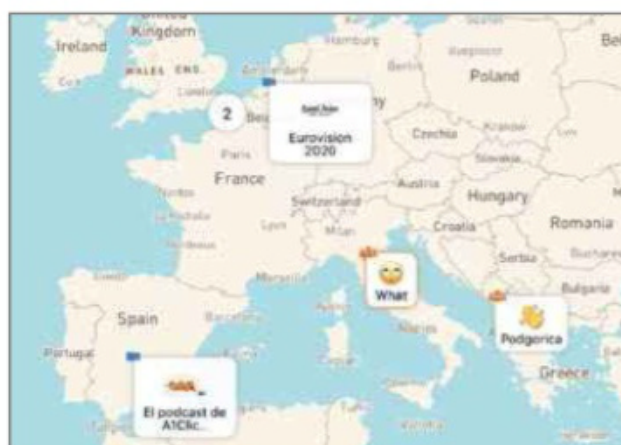
Many TV shows start promisingly but then become complacent, repetitive and boring. If you're about to embark on a boxset and want a heads-up on when things take a turn for the worse, search for it on TV Chart to get a full episode-by-episode lowdown as determined by IMDb. For example, it shows that *Game of Thrones* tails off from episode 68 and *The Good Place* goes out on a major high. You can colour-code series for greater clarity, add trend lines and view individual seasons independently. Hover over an episode to see its name and rating.



Search a map for video chats

besedky.com

They say you shouldn't talk to strangers, but at Besedky you're (intentionally) going to encounter a lot of them. Pan around the map, hover over a pin and click Enter to join a video conversation with a random person. Or select Add Card to start your own chat and allow anyone to join (or send an invite). Each room remains open for seven days.



NEW VOICE COMMANDS



Adjust Assistant's sensitivity

To adjust the sensitivity of the "Hey Google" wake command, launch the Assistant app, select 'Device settings', then 'Hey Google sensitivity' and use the slider to make it more or less responsive.



Dictate messages with Siri

Worried about transferring germs to your iPhone, but need to send a message? iOS 13 now tells recipients you dictated the message with Siri, so typos are forgiven.



Encourage kids to talk

Say "Alexa, enable Yak Talk Back" and this skill will encourage children to open up about their feelings by listening to funny stories and answering questions.



Go dark with Google's app

www.google.co.uk

Choose dark mode in Android 10 or iOS 13 and Google's mobile app will now automatically follow suit. Use the app's own settings to choose either light or dark (this is the only way to get dark mode for iOS 12).

Find random Twitch streamers

twittroulette.net

Twitch Roulette lets you find less well-known streamers. Pick a game you'd like to see someone play and "spin the wheel" to find a stream with less than a handful of viewers.

Enjoy world museum collections

bit.ly/museums503

Google Arts & Culture says 80 more museums – including the Beijing Contemporary Arts Foundation, Casa Buonarroti and the Parsons School of Design – have joined over 2,000 in sharing collections online.



Need to Know

Trump and Twitter go head-to-head over free speech

What happened?

US president Donald Trump has often raised eyebrows with his tweets, but Twitter has now sparked his outrage by putting a fact-check notice on one of his posts and a “glorifying violence” warning on another.

Amid conversations about how to manage the imminent US elections during the coronavirus pandemic, Trump tweeted: “There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-In Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent” (bit.ly/trumptweet503). Twitter annotated this tweet with a link saying: “Get the facts about mail-in ballots,” directing readers to a fact-checking resource that stressed there is no evidence that mail-in ballots are linked to voter fraud. In response, the president accused Twitter of “stifling free speech”.

Two days later, Trump addressed the protests against police brutality toward black communities with another tweet, which included the phrase “looting leads to shooting” (bit.ly/trumptweet2503). The president said his intention was not to direct police to target protesters, but Twitter hid the tweet behind a warning saying that it violated rules on glorifying violence. To see the tweet, followers had to click a button.

Trump retaliated with an executive order calling to review and repeal Section 230 – legislation that means websites aren’t held liable for content posted by their users – saying that it gave them too much legal protection and let them escape responsibility for



Credit: Evan El-Amin / Shutterstock.com

their actions. Section 230 can’t be repealed via executive order and would have to pass through Congress, but Trump’s likely rival at the next election, Democrat Joe Biden, has also criticised Section 230, albeit for different reasons. This suggests that internet regulation is set for a change in the US, regardless of the outcome of the looming vote.

Meanwhile, both Trump’s messages remain unaltered on Facebook, raising questions about the differences between the two leading social networks. Twitter has previously taken a light-touch approach to Trump’s tweets, and has only removed one message posted by another political head: Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

It’s more likely that rather than scrapping Section 230, it will be updated or replaced with new rules. It seems unlikely that Congress will pass legislation that instantly destroys an entire section of online business.

What do we think?

Free speech is important, but so too is responsible speech. And it’s worth noting that a private company has no requirement to publish everything that someone asks. Plenty of tweets and accounts get removed all the time because they’re judged abusive or otherwise damaging.

While it’s anyone’s guess why Twitter chose specifically to flag these tweets from Trump rather than any of his previous posts, by leaving the messages online, Twitter hasn’t impaired free speech. The first instance merely added facts, while the second warned about glorification of violence. There’s no question Twitter is making a political statement, but it’s hard to see how Twitter can police misinformation on its site without also applying its rules to big names with millions of followers.

That said, Section 230 has drawn much criticism over the years and is due for an update. We want to post freely while simultaneously enjoying protection against misinformation and online bullying. Balancing all of that – while keeping the president happy – is no easy task.

How will it affect you?

In the short term, little has changed. Twitter countered Trump, but the action may have lead to even more people seeing the message. However, the ensuing furore indicates that social media is likely to once again be a sticking point in the US election and, regardless of who is elected, that changes are imminent. If Section 230 is wholly revoked, social-media companies – and any other website that allows user comments – will suddenly be liable for anything posted. Sites would be at risk if they didn’t pre-moderate posts, and Twitter and Facebook would surely lose some appeal if users’ status updates didn’t show up for several days.



Twitter raised President Trump’s ire by flagging the content of two of his tweets



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

5G 'protection key' nothing but a USB stick

What happened?

Trading Standards is working to shut down the website of a company selling a 5G "protection key" for £283, saying the product is a scam and nothing more than a standard USB drive.

5GBioShield (5gbioshield.com) claims its key protects you from "harmful radiation, electro-smog and biohazard pollution" using quantum holographic catalyser technology. There is no evidence that the radio signal used by mobile phones causes any health concerns, nor is there any such thing as quantum holographic



catalyst technology – it's faux-science gobbledygook.

Even if there was merit to the research and the science – and there isn't – the product is merely a standard USB key worth a few pounds.

The complaint comes as 5G conspiracy theories run rampant, with Openreach

saying its broadband engineers have been assaulted and spat at while working on upgrades, and 5G phone masts have been targeted with vandalism.

How will it affect you?

5G is already available in the UK, and the only difference between it and previous generations of mobile coverage is the signal frequency. There's no evidence that 5G or any other mobile signal causes ill health, and we've had decades to establish any concerns.

If you know someone who has purchased one of these scam USB sticks, or any other anti-5G product, tell them to

contact Trading Standards (bit.ly/trading503).

What do we think?

People are right to consider the health impact of any new technology, but they also need to be wary of having their fears exploited by conspiracy theories and fake news. Companies like 5GBioShield are no different to health scammers who have long used the internet to shill their tech-themed snake oil, and conspiracy theories like the 5G fearmongering only make their work easier.

See Barry's column on page 74 for his views on 5G conspiracy theories.

Government seeks to secure smart devices

What happened?

The government has unveiled a £400,000 funding pot for the technology industry (bit.ly/funding503) to improve the security of smart devices and the wider Internet of Things. The aim is to set up an assurance scheme, which would see such devices tested and accredited, so consumers know they have a basic level of protection.

The funding comes as the government said it planned to bring into law new security requirements for smart tech. The rules, announced earlier this year, would require device passwords to be unique – rather than a shared default that hackers could discover simply by buying the device – and that

manufacturers must have a public point of contact for vulnerabilities to be reported, and state the length of time the item will continue to get security updates.

Smart devices have been hit by a series of security scandals, with connected cameras easily accessed using default passwords that people had forgotten to change. Such basic errors could have a big impact, as billions of web-connected devices are expected to come online in the next few years.

How will it affect you?

Once this assurance scheme is in place, you should be able to check whether a device complies with basic security protections, making it easier to choose the most secure product on offer. In the meantime, a quick



search online should bring up details of any flaws that have been spotted by security researchers.

If you have any smart home devices – such as connected lights, cameras or voice assistants – you should always ensure you set a new password and don't use the supplied default.

What do we think?

It's a shame the government

has to stomp up cash to fund such basic security protections, and pass legislation to force companies to be more responsible with their security settings. The technology industry can and should do better.

See our cover feature on page 40 to find out how to stop Google and Amazon smart devices invading your privacy.

Google launches scam-detection site

What happened?

Google has partnered with the Cybercrime Support Network to launch Scam Spotter (scamspotter.org), a website designed to help people detect and avoid online scams. According to the website, scammers are set to pilfer \$2bn this year alone. With that in mind, Google highlights three “golden rules” we should abide by to keep our money and data safe.

Rule number one, “Slow it down”, explains how criminals – both online and in the real world – often seek to pressure you with a sense of urgency that clouds your judgement. “Spot check” highlights the need to verify anyone claiming to be contacting you from apparently official sources, such as your bank. Finally, “Stop! Don’t send” reveals why you should be suspicious of demands for immediate on-the-spot payments (asking you to send money via gift cards and vouchers is a red flag). Each rule is accompanied by example messages, to help you recognise these scams out in the wild.

However, there’s more to Scam Spotter than just a set of rules. The website is also packed with tips on how to spot and swerve a whole range of scams – each one neatly laid out and divided into clear sections according to the three golden rules.

There are also tips for avoiding scams



related to the coronavirus, alongside evergreen classics such as the ‘Nigerian prince’ emails. Scams also feature a ‘share this tip’ button, so you can send them on to susceptible friends and family members.

How will it affect you?

No matter how impervious to online fraud you think you are, cybercriminals are always working hard to stay one step ahead, so, it’s worth visiting Google’s site if only for a refresher course. While you’re there, be sure to take the Scam Spotter quiz, which displays a series of potentially fake

messages (many will be familiar to anyone who’s been online in the last 20 years) and asks you to decide whether they are safe or a scam. We got them all right, of course!

What do we think?

While ‘stay safe online’ sites are nothing new, Scam Spotters is one of the best. Visually appealing, uncluttered and easy to digest, it’s ideal for all ages, though it is predominantly targeted at US web users (with references to dollars and IRS scams). We hope that with Google’s involvement, vast numbers of users will be drawn to the site.



FIRST LOOK

Evercade

www.evercade.co.uk

Retro games console Evercade is a gift for anyone keen to indulge in some gaming nostalgia. Looking like a cross between a Game Boy and a Game Gear, this dinky handheld console features a colour 4.3in, 480 x 272p screen that’s comfortable to hold, with control buttons that feel tight and responsive. Blaze, the company behind Evercade, has hinted that button remapping may come in the future – it needs to, because some games don’t fit the current layout.

There’s also the option to connect the portable unit to your TV via the mini HDMI port, though resolution is capped at 720p and playing in TV mode is also prone to the occasional audio drop-out and stutter. Battery

life clocks in at around 4 to 5 hours, which isn’t amazing but is certainly enough for a decent session.

True to the retro spirit of the Evercade, the system uses game cartridges. Official collections from some of the big names in the video game world, including Namco, Atari, Data East and Interplay, are available, with a catalogue totalling 122 titles.

Before you roll your eyes in expectation of the usual slew of fillers that make up many retro collections, we’re pleased to announce that there’s a serious amount of quality here. Look out for *Double Dragon*, *Asteroids*, *Pac Man*,

Earthworm Jim and *Dig Dug*.

Currently, there are 10 cartridges available at a cost of £15 each. For the full Evercade experience, you’ll want them all. More games are slated for release later this year, and we wouldn’t be surprised to see Sega join the ranks.

The Evercade went on sale on 5 June. A £60 standard starter pack comes with the 11-game Namco

Collection 1 cartridge, while the premium edition includes Namco, Interplay and Atari cartridges for £80. We’ve reviewed Evercade’s accompanying website on page 15.





WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is Apple about to launch AR glasses?

It's long been rumoured that Apple is beavering away at its California base to create augmented-reality glasses, to show the much-maligned Google Glass how it's done. We've caught glimpses of possible patents stretching back as far as five years. Now, one well-connected source has suggested the mysterious project finally has a name: Apple Glass.

In a YouTube video (bit.ly/appleglass503), Jon Prosser dropped tons of details about Apple's AR glasses – apparently much to the company's chagrin. Alongside the potential (and wholly unoriginal) name, the tech journalist also claimed the base model will cost \$499 (around £403) plus the cost of your prescription. That's expensive, but not nearly as bad as fans feared, given that Apple typically charges a grand for a smartphone.

Prosser also claimed that, like the original Apple Watch, the device will offload all processes to a connected iPhone. Mindful of legal ramifications, the YouTuber says images of a plastic prototype show a more traditional approach. Due to privacy concerns, there's no built-in camera, and the device is controlled via gestures or on your phone. It's believed the wirelessly charged release version will be metal. There are even whispers of a Steve Jobs-style legacy edition.

It's not known precisely when the



glasses will be launched. However, Prosser states that a 'One More Thing' announcement is set to be made at the iPhone 12 event, due to take place towards the end of this year or at the start of 2021, and that Apple Glass will hit the shelves the following year.

LIKELIHOOD RATING



Apple Glass seems very likely. Lately, Prosser has been spot-on with his leaks and Apple has, according to the presenter, been investigating him to find out how he's getting confidential information. The company has spent much of its post-Jobs era searching for a killer brand-defining app or device. If these rumours are true, Apple Glass could be it.

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Google Maps adds accessibility info

Google Maps has added a new feature for wheelchair users, called Accessible Places. This uses a wheelchair icon to indicate accessible entrances and tells you whether a business or point of interest has accessible seating, toilets and parking.



Spotify lifts library-size cap

Spotify has finally removed the 10,000-track limit on library sizes, which means that users can now save as much music as they want to their personal Liked Songs collections. The streaming service currently offers more than 50 million tracks.



WE DON'T LIKE...

More Windows 10 update problems

Microsoft asked Windows 10 users to avoid manually installing its May 2020 update while it investigated 10 major problems with the software. Three of the issues related to the update are said to trigger the infamous blue screen of death.



Racist language in Amazon listings

Amazon's UK store was flooded with racist abuse, which appeared in listings when users searched for Apple AirPods and other Bluetooth headphones. Amazon blamed a "bad actor" for the offensive language, which has since been removed.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Aware

bit.ly/aware503 | From £18

Aware is not a smartwatch, but it's definitely a product of its time. One of the risk areas for COVID-19 transmission is touching an infected surface, then touching your face – a gesture that's difficult to control. Aware tries to stop this by pairing its wristband with a badge that you attach to the collar of your clothing. When the wristband comes into range as you raise your hand, it'll vibrate to warn you off. The device lasts around 24 hours on a single charge. Pledges start at £18 for one band, while £72 nets you the family four-pack, available in two colours and two strap sizes.



Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

EasyJet to be sued over customer data breach

Budget airline carrier EasyJet fell victim to a hack that exposed the personal



details of nine million customers. The company admitted that “highly sophisticated” hackers had breached its systems, accessing email addresses and travel details held by the organisation. A “very small subset of users” – up to 2,208 – also had their credit card details exposed.

EasyJet said it has seen “no evidence” that the stolen data has been misused, but has contacted affected customers and asked them to be cautious of any unsolicited communications purporting to come from EasyJet or EasyJet Holidays.

Commenting on the data breach, EasyJet CEO Johan Lundgren said:

“We take the cybersecurity of our system very seriously and have robust security measures in place. However, this is an evolving threat as cyber-attackers get ever more sophisticated.”

The airline is now facing an £18bn class-action lawsuit, because although EasyJet announced the breach on 19 May, the incident occurred four months earlier in January. If successful, each affected customer could receive a payout of £2,000.

bit.ly/easyjet503

Beware of phishing emails containing Excel macros

Microsoft has warned of a “massive” phishing campaign that uses coronavirus-themed emails to deliver



attachments containing malicious Excel 4.0 macros. These malware-laced emails, which have the subject line “WHO COVID-19 SITUATION REPORT,” claim to

come from the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, according to Microsoft.

“The COVID-19 themed campaign started on May 12 and has so far used several hundreds of unique attachments,” said Microsoft’s Security Intelligence team in a series of urgent tweets. If opened, the emails’ attached Excel files show a security warning and graph purporting to display coronavirus cases. But if they’re allowed to run, the malicious macros download and run NetSupport Manager, a tool that Microsoft’s security team says “is known for being abused by attackers to gain remote access to and run commands on compromised machines.” The phishing attack then connects to a server that sends commands to the hacked PC.

Web users are advised to delete any such emails immediately and never to open unsolicited attachments.

bit.ly/excel503

Credit: Vytautas Kielaitis / Shutterstock.com

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Neill Lawson-Smith,
Managing Director of
CIS (www.cisltd.com)



Q How could EasyJet have been better prepared against its recent security breach (see story, above)?

Michael Henstridge,
Twitter

A Advancements in cyberthreats are constantly

evolving and one of the key issues that companies face in trying to deal with them is that threats can come from within an organisation itself or from a remote location, from unknown parties.

Locating the source of a cyberthreat is only half the battle because you also need to put into place prevention methods for the future, as well as implement damage control wherever possible.

Cyberthreats can be unintentional (caused by untrained or inattentive employees, software upgrades or maintenance and equipment failures) or intentional, with a specific function that is often critical.



“ Understanding cyberthreats helps companies avoid the costly repercussions of a security breach ”

Knowing what types of cyberthreats they might face helps companies better understand how to protect themselves, their customers and their data, and avoid the reputational damage and costly repercussions of a security breach.

The best way to protect data is to encrypt it, and companies should ensure they manage their encryption keys securely for all

encrypted devices. Ideally, data needs to be encrypted from a file level to a cloud level, with systems in place to prevent encrypted file transfer.

It’s important to remember that cloud solutions do not provide ultimate protection; they provide a further level of recovery, but data should always be further backed up through third-party cybersecurity software.



Laptop
BEST IN
SHOW

CES 2020



Reveal The True Power of 10th Gen Processors
SHARPER IN CORE BLACK



GS66 Stealth



300Hz



| Up to 10th Gen. Intel® Core™ i9 processor | Windows 10 Home / Windows 10 Pro | Up to NVIDIA® GeForce® RTX 2080 SUPER™ with Max-Q Design |

WHERE TO BUY

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www.scan.co.uk
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Currys PC World

Curry's PC World
www.currys.co.uk
0344 561 0000

OVERCLOCKERS UK

OVERCLOCKERS UK
www.overclockers.co.uk
01782 4444 55

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★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

FILM

NEW

Empire at 40 bit.ly/empire503

The *Empire Strikes Back* is now 40 years old and, to celebrate, the Star Wars franchise's official website has created a mini site packed with interesting content and fun features. As well as behind-the-scenes footage and exclusive interviews with the film's stars and creator George Lucas, there are videos of key scenes, dozens of photos and sketches, and a look at the original merchandise. You can explore illuminating facts, such as the changes made within weeks of the film's initial release, and browsing the site is as simple as scrolling down a single page. Despite the age of much of the site's content, the Force still feels fresh at 40!

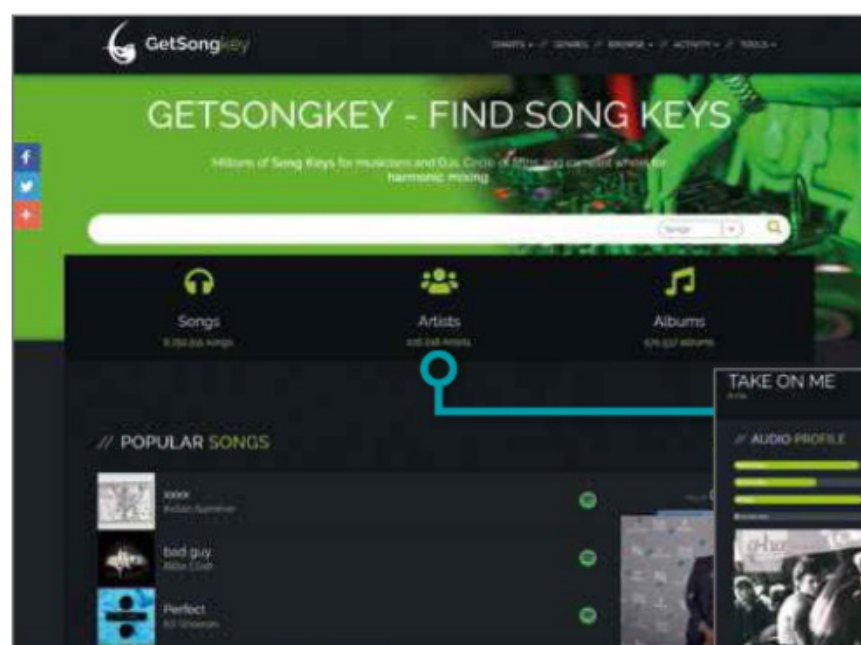
Our rating



BEHIND-THE-SCENES
Read interviews, watch featurettes, listen to insights and view images of the film-making process



NOSTALGIA
There are lots of opportunities to reminisce about the film's impact on wider popular culture



MUSIC

NEW

GetSongKey getsongkey.com

Musicians and DJs often need to know the key of a particular song, and this brilliant resource lets you sift through more than 6.7 million tracks by 226,000 artists across 570,537 albums. Simply click a song to find the key it's written in and discover which chords are used. It also suggests the keys to modulate to, rates each tune by criteria such as positiveness, danceability, energy and acousticness, and lets you hear 30-second clips on Spotify and submit any errors. Furthermore, there are three music theory tools: key notation converter, key transporter and key from chords. Combined with a user-friendly interface, GetSongKey is sure to have you dancing with joy.

Our rating



NEW

SHOPPING

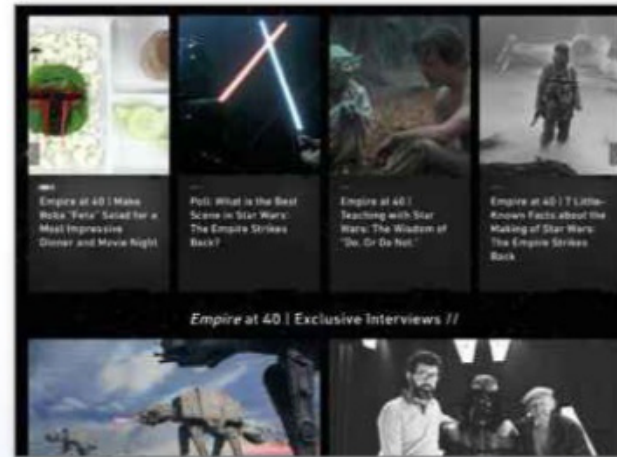
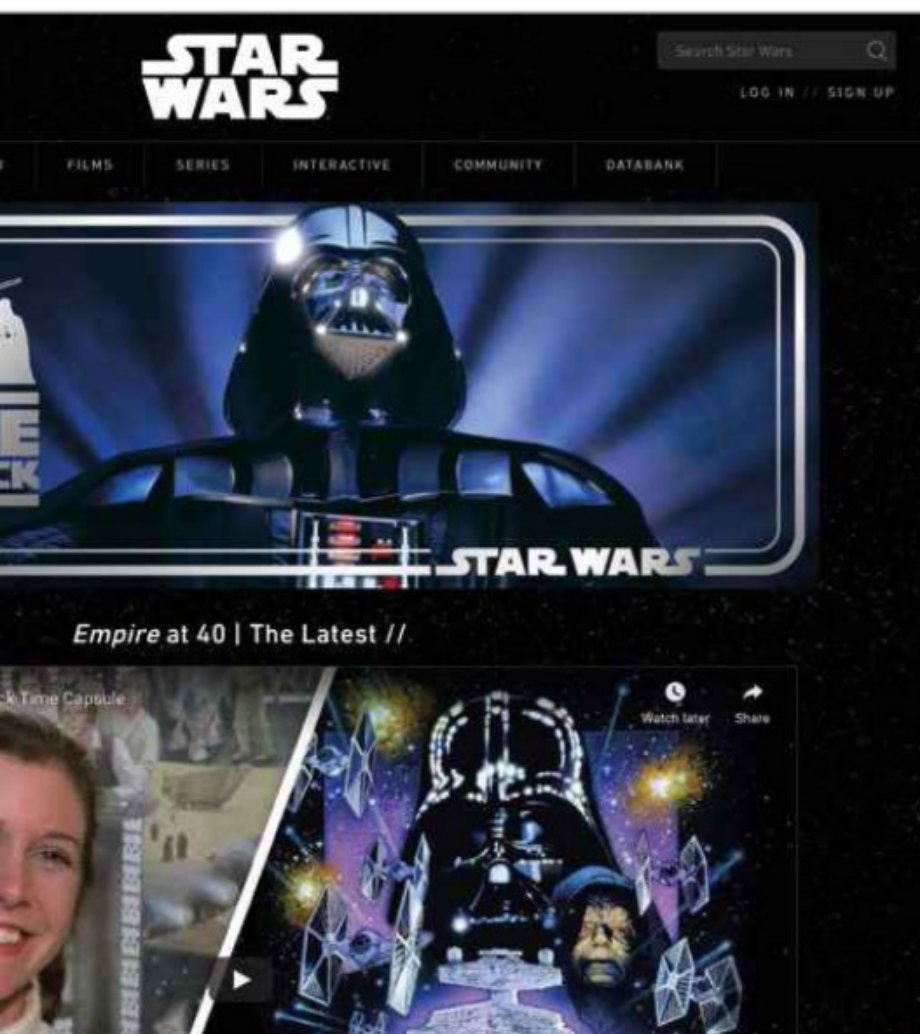
Foodboxes Asda foodboxes.asda.com

In an ongoing effort to ensure elderly and vulnerable shoppers are able to grab store-cupboard necessities, Asda has rolled out food boxes containing 31 essential items. Available via a new section of the supermarket's website, you can buy a box in just a few clicks, for £30, delivery included. While you get a flavour of what's inside the box, the list of pre-selected products varies and you have just 30 minutes to change your mind after placing an order. This is clearly explained on the site, with the FAQ answering most questions, and you can always pop back to check availability.

Our rating

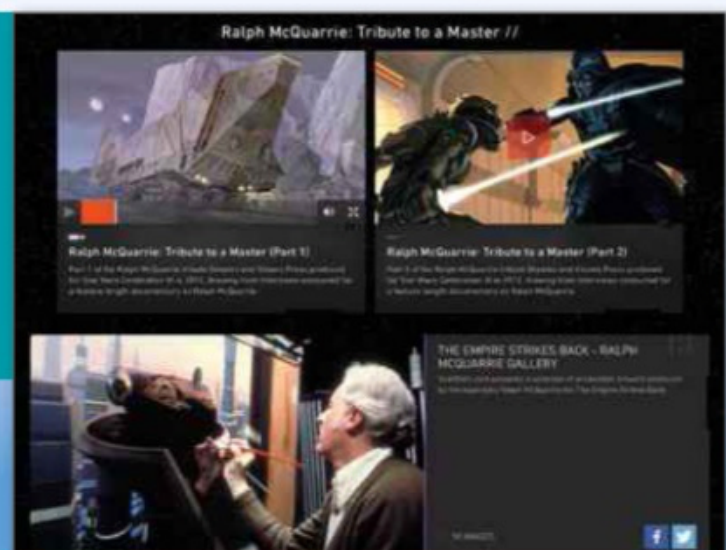


We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features



INTERACTIVE CONTENT
Take part in polls, follow recipes, make a Lobot bookmark and comment on enlightening articles

ARTWORK
Learn about the work of conceptual artist Ralph McQuarrie and view isolated frames from the film



NEW

HEALTH

Remember Me 2020

www.rememberme2020.uk

It's easy to become fixated by the number of UK coronavirus deaths, but it's also important to remember the individual lives behind the statistics. St Paul's Cathedral has launched an online book of remembrance for people to add names and photos of those who have died. Backed by Prince Charles – who has recorded a video message – you have to register to leave an entry, and only one entry can be made per person. Anyone can view the messages, and you can read about the proposed physical memorial at the cathedral and support the project with a donation.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

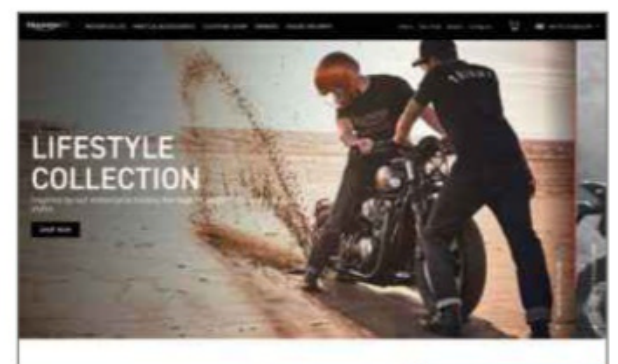
GAMING

Evercade

www.evercade.co.uk

Evercade is a new handheld games system using cartridges stuffed with classic titles from yesteryear. This promo site lets you explore the device and its key features via images and annotated visuals. You can also view the box art for each game collection alongside large screenshots and, in some cases, video trailers. Of particular note are five videos comparing the device with original hardware and modern retro consoles, and there's a section dedicated to hardware updates and fixes. Sadly, you can't buy directly from the site, but there are links to the product pages of UK retailers.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

CLOTHING

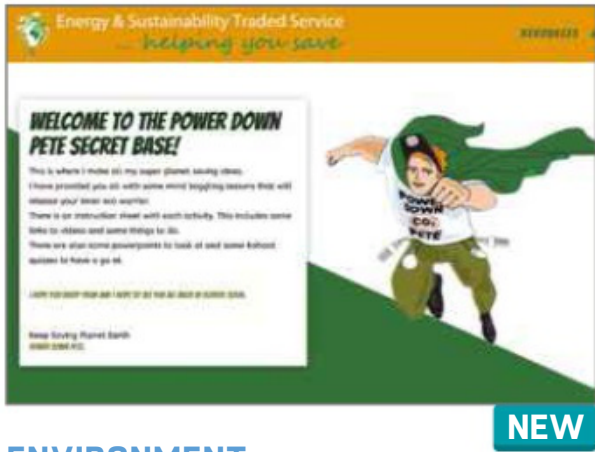
Triumph Motorcycles

bit.ly/triumph503

British motorcycle manufacturer Triumph has launched a new online clothing shop. Equally appealing to both riders and anyone after some cool clobber for everyday wear, the goods are not only split by gender but categorised according to the bike you ride, such as modern classic, roadster and adventure. Use the seven filters to narrow your search, check out the rugged, well-lit photos and read the explanations of any built-in tech. The main technologies – D30 and Gore-Tex – are also covered in great detail, making for an online triumph in both name and nature.

Our rating





ENVIRONMENT

Eco Education

nyorks-eco.education

Energy-reduction officer Peter Bell is known in North Yorkshire as Power Down Pete and, after a decade visiting schools in the area, he's spread his wings online. Pete's green-caped cartoon superhero spearheads lessons for children aged between seven and 11, covering eco-issues such as carbon footprint and pollution problems. This site uses a mix of videos, presentations and activities, with some content pulled from sources such as YouTube, the BBC and National Geographic Kids. While the design could do with some work and lessons can feel inconsistent, with fun quizzes and a friendly tone, there's plenty to enjoy.

Our rating



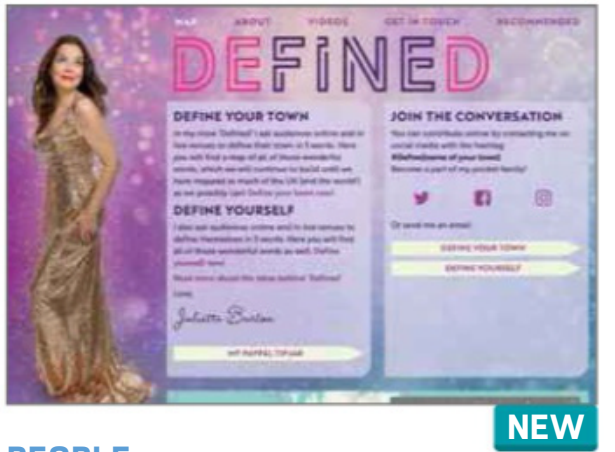
OUTDOOR

LDSAMRA

ldsamra.org.uk

Lockdown has led to fewer safety incidents in the Lake District, but its Search and Mountain Rescue Association has used the time well, creating a new website featuring its 12 autonomous member teams while giving visitors a flavour of what they do. You can check out the incident logs, including an archive of PDF reports dating back to 2003, make a donation or simply admire the photos. If you fancy a trip to the Lakes yourself, be sure to read the advice section which includes details of how to best contact the rescue association should you get into trouble. A link to Adventure Smart provides extra tips.

Our rating



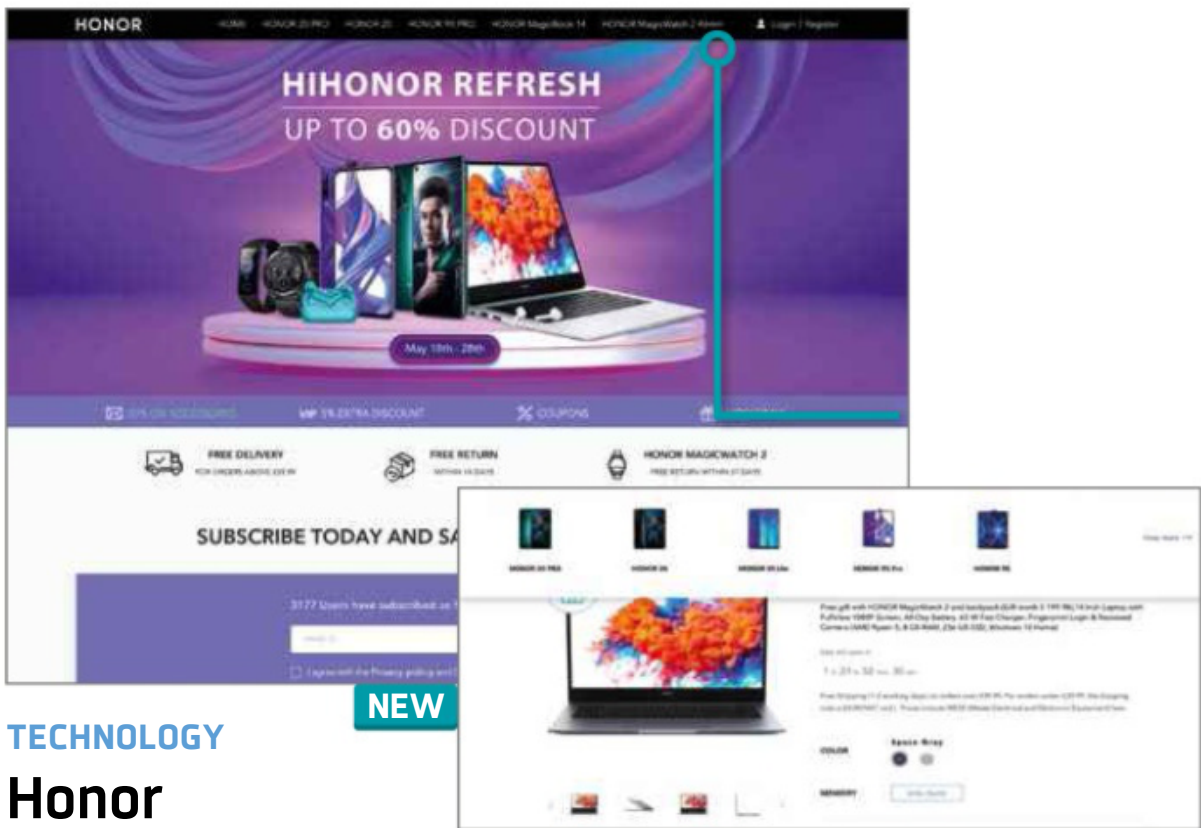
PEOPLE

Defined

defined.julietteburton.co.uk

During her recent tour, comedian Juliette Burton asked audiences to come up with five words to describe their town (Cambridge: "Too expensive, move to Ely") and themselves. She's now taken the idea online, encouraging people to use a hashtag or send an email through this site. Juliette collates the responses and plots the towns on a map that you can click to see the definitions. You can watch videos to get a flavour of her performances or check out book, website, podcast and app recommendations related to mental health. It's an insightful project that's produced some surprising results.

Our rating



TECHNOLOGY

Honor

www.hihonor.com

Huawei's smartphone brand Honor offers affordable technology aimed at younger consumers, and there are plenty of handsets, wearables, laptops and accessories to peruse on its new UK website. Descriptive product pages, dynamic colour options, close-up images and videos make browsing a pleasure, but Honor seems a bit too keen to get your personal details – whether to be notified of product availability, claim a coupon, enter a lucky draw or register for the VIP program's discounts and benefits. It's certainly worth heading over to the bustling community section for its tips and tricks, tutorials, news and discussions, though navigation feels more clumsy here.

Our rating



SOCIAL MEDIA

Throwbackly

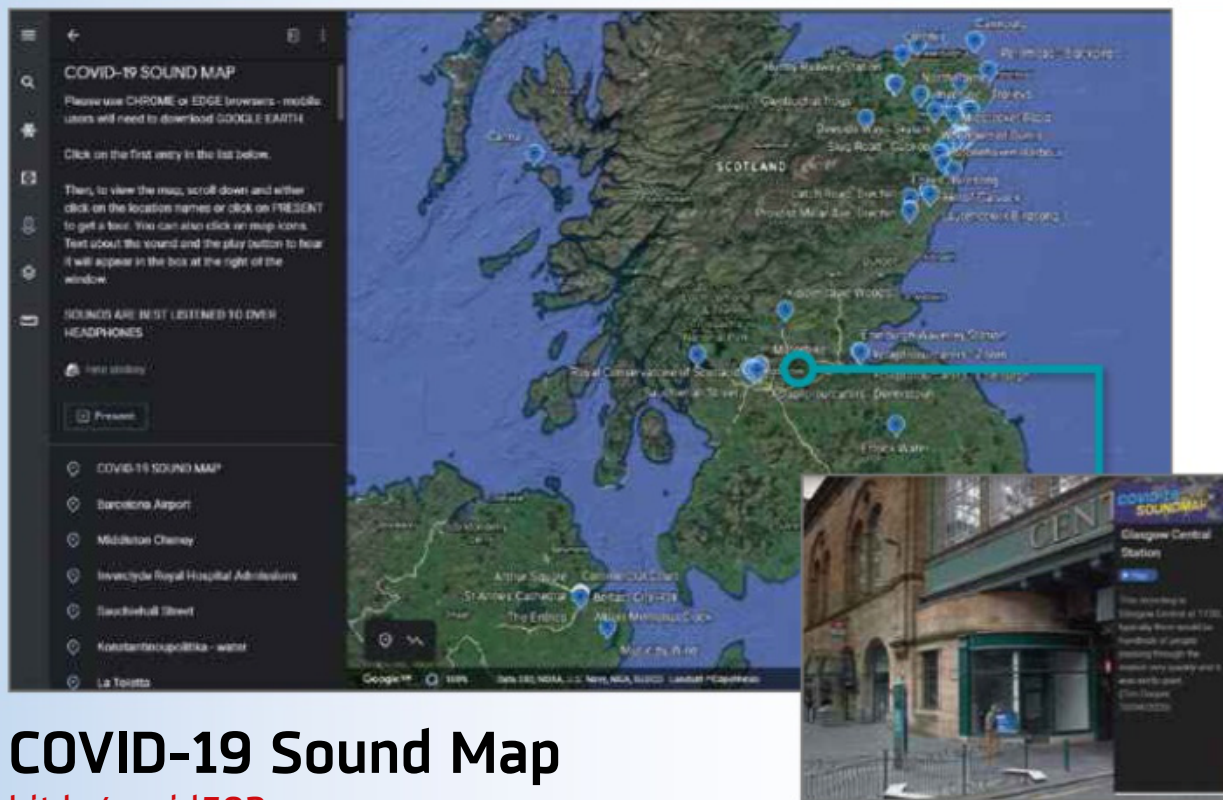
bit.ly/throw503

Endlessly scrolling through social-media feeds in pursuit of something new and fun? How about all the great stuff from the past that you may have missed? Throwbackly lets you revisit older content: just pick a platform and time, then sit back and enjoy what enthralled us a few years ago. Unfortunately, it's not the most intuitive or best presented site – little more than a forum, really, relying on others to find past social-media posts before either creating or adding to a discussion. Some posts aren't very descriptive so you're left unsure about what you'll see.

Our rating



ESSENTIAL BOOKMARKS THIS ISSUE: Amazing audio sites



COVID-19 Sound Map

bit.ly/covid503

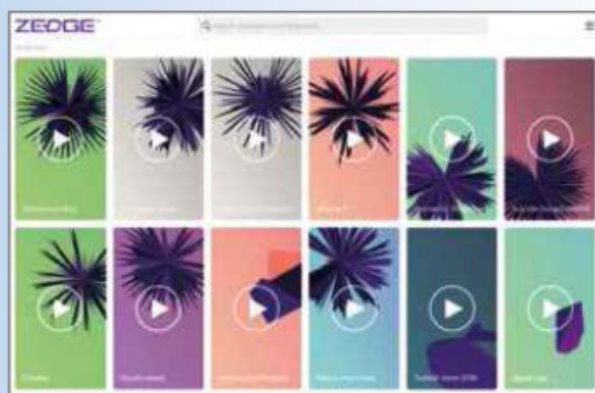
The coronavirus lockdown has had a striking effect on our audio environment, with muted traffic giving way to birdsong. This marvellous Google Earth map by Professor Pete Stollery captures the COVID-19 soundscape by gathering recordings from across the world, from empty city centres to tannoy announcements and the weekly [#clapfourcarers](#). Click a location name or map marker to zoom in, hear a place's sound and read a summary of where and when it was captured. Alternatively, click Present for an audio tour of the 168 recordings and submit your own through the Sound Scotland website (bit.ly/sound503). You need to use Chrome or Edge on your desktop, or the Google Earth app on your mobile device to access the sound map.



BBC Sound Effects

bbcfx.acropolis.org.uk

Need a specific sound effect to use in a personal or educational project or just fancy a sonic diversion? Then delve into the BBC's brilliant online archive of more than 16,000 audio snippets you can play in your browser and download for free, ranging from a few seconds in length to several minutes. The esoteric categories span everything from Air Raids and Building Site to Volcanoes and Weddings, with such descriptively titled delights as 'mixed crowd in a busy tea tent', 'oily massage' and 'three pigs, grunting occasionally in yard'. The effects are available as uncompressed, lossless WAV files but are easily converted to other audio formats, such as MP3.



Zedge Ringtones

bit.ly/zedge503

Personalised ringtones have thankfully come a long way since the mid-2000s, when the maddening Crazy Frog generated sales of more than \$400m (£323m), and they're no longer as tacky or expensive as they used to be. To enhance your Android phone or iPhone with some sonic character, head to Zedge, where you'll find more than a million free, good quality ringtones to download via its website or app, as created and shared by the Zedge community. You can search what's on offer by keyword or category tag, and get your chosen ringtone in MP3 format. It's not all current pop hits, either – we found duck quacks, heavenly choirs and the theme from *Man About the House*!



NASA Audio & Ringtones

bit.ly/nasa502

There may be no sound in space but there's plenty to enjoy on NASA's Audio & Ringtones site, which offers a collection of noises from the space agency's historic space flights and current missions. As well as famous audio snippets such as Neil Armstrong's "That's one small step for (a) man..." and John Swigert's "Houston, we've had a problem", the free downloads include strange beeps and blips, lift-off samples and countdowns, and spooky Martian winds and "dinks" recorded by the InSight Lander. The audio files are available in MP3 and M4R format, and there's a link to NASA's excellent Soundcloud page (soundcloud.com/nasa), where you'll find podcasts, documentaries and much more.



Radio Garden

radio.garden

Lots of sites let you listen to radio stations from around the world but few are as comprehensive or fascinating as Radio Garden. Use your mouse to spin the globe on the homepage and tune into thousands of stations in virtually any country by zooming in and clicking the green dots. The audio streams directly in your browser and you can easily switch from one broadcaster to another or have Radio Garden change stations automatically as you explore the map. Interesting stations can be 'favourited' and you can click through to visit their websites. It's a great way to expand your audio horizons during lockdown.

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Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Prepare for the next Google rejig

Google has announced a significant shake-up of its search results, though not until next year. This gives us plenty of time to get up to speed and adjust our

websites to prepare for the change. According to the official Google Webmaster Central

Blog post at bit.ly/google503, a new metric called Core Web Vitals is going to feature heavily. This is a combined measure of a variety of elements that Google believes users want from websites, such as fast page loading and mobile-friendliness. Helpfully, you can already check your Core Web Vitals at Google's Search Console

(search.google.com/search-console). We'll go into more detail on this in future issues.

goMobi shuts down

Site-building tool goMobi (gomobi.info) is being shut down from 31 July and any sites built on the platform will be lost. goMobi sold its service to hosts to offer their customers, so if your site was built using your host's site-building tools, check it's not a version of goMobi. Hosts that used the service include Fasthosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk), Bluehost (www.bluehost.com) and HostGator (www.hostgator.com).

Deal of the Fortnight

Tsohost (www.tsohost.com) is discounting domain names, with '.co.uk' down to £2.39 per year, '.com' down to £3.59 and '.xyz' to £1.19.

Web-building Helpdesk



I've seen a font on a website that I'd like to use on my own. How do I find out what it is?

Kenneth J, via email



Open the site in Chrome, click the menu button and choose 'More tools', then 'Developer tools'. In the top box, use the arrows to select the section containing the font you're looking for – it should highlight in blue on the left when you hover over the correct bit of code. Click the Styles tab, scroll down to the 'font-family' section and search for the first font listed to see if it's freely available. Google has created and published lots of fonts that are completely free (fonts.google.com).



Andy Shaw, Technical and Reviews editor

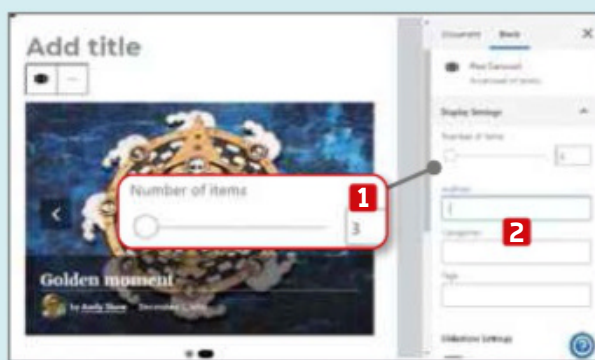


MINI WORKSHOP | Keep visitors to your site interested by adding a carousel of content
Post Carousel Block: wordpress.com |  10 mins | [WordPress.com](https://wordpress.com) hosted website

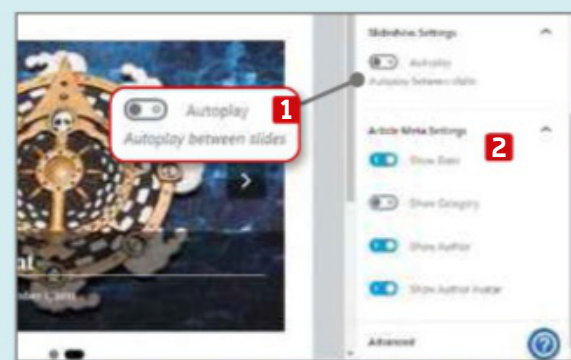
If your site is hosted on WordPress.com, you can use the new Post Carousel block to guide your readers to a curated selection of pages that will keep them interested enough to stay



1 Start a new post or find an existing one you'd like to add a carousel to. Click the 'Add block' button **1** and use the search tool **2** to find the Post Carousel block. **3** Click to add it. You can only choose from existing posts that have a Featured Image assigned.



2 With the block selected, you can configure what's displayed from the Block panel. Choose how many posts you want to include **1** and filter posts in or out by choosing Authors, Categories or Tags. **2** Changes are automatically updated in the block preview on the left.



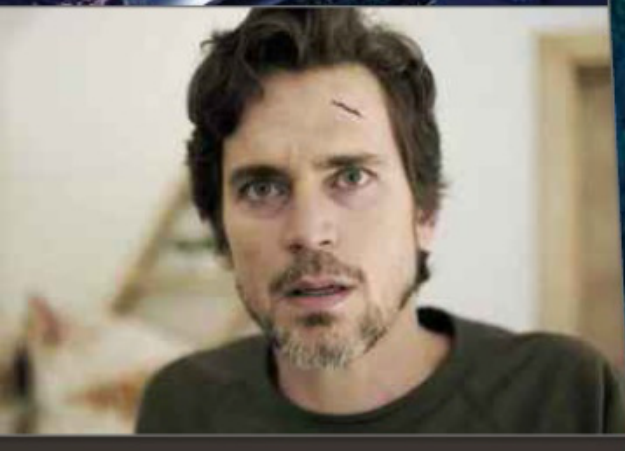
3 Scroll down to choose whether the carousel should automatically rotate through its slides. **1** Also choose what's displayed in the lower information bar, from Date, Category, Author and Author Avatar. **2** The Advanced options let you tinker with the CSS code.



What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight

NETFLIX



Solve a new crime riddle in Season 3 of *The Sinner*

From 19 June

Bill Pullman is back as Detective Harry Ambrose in Netflix's excellent mystery series *The Sinner*, whose first two seasons kept viewers wondering right up to the final minutes. Pullman is the only returning member of a cast led this time by Matt Bomer (*Magic Mike*). The story begins with Ambrose being called to the scene of a car crash, which looks like an open-and-shut case: Jamie (Bomer) is the passenger and sole survivor, and the driver, Jamie's best friend, is dead. But was it an accident or something more sinister? As ever, Ambrose has to unravel the truth.

The new season earned rave reviews when it aired in the US in February, but be warned not to read too much because this is definitely a spoiler-sensitive show. The first two seasons of *The Sinner*, starring Jessica Biel and *Fargo*'s Carrie Coon, are both still available on Netflix at bit.ly/sinner503 - and are highly recommended. All eight episodes of Season 3 join them on 19 June. Watch the latest trailer at bit.ly/sintrail503.



Watch Sky's new documentaries *Hawking*, *Lancaster* and *Tyson Bruno*

Sky had a surprise treat for factual TV lovers at the end of May: three new channels - Sky Nature, Sky History and Sky Documentaries - all with a generous line-up of original films and TV shows at launch, and all now available to stream on-demand via Now TV and Sky Q.

The channels cover topics including sport, music, wildlife and true crime, and offer content from US networks HBO, Hulu and Showtime, as well as a brace of new Sky Originals. The Originals include

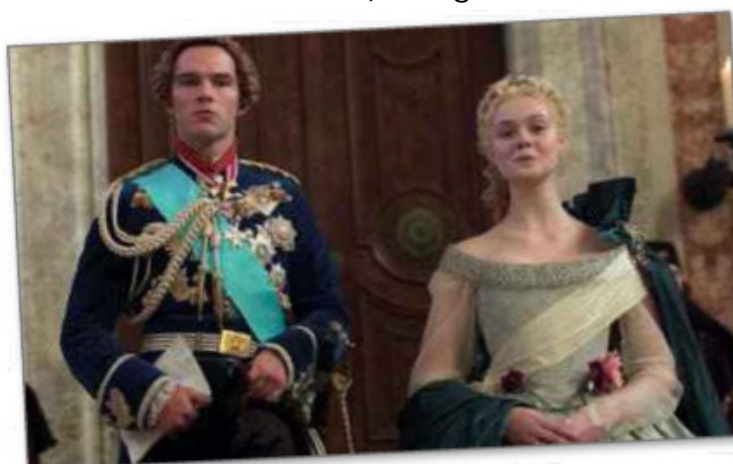
Hawking, a documentary film featuring family videos of the late Stephen Hawking; *Lancaster*, part of the Spitfire World War Two trilogy of films, telling the story of the Dambusters bomber; and *Tyson Bruno*, a thrilling account of the rivalry between the two boxers.

All the new channels are included with a Now TV Entertainment Pass.

Watch Catherine the Great comedy-drama *The Great*

From 18 June

The late 1700s were a ridiculous and sublime time for overseas royals. While Marie Antoinette partied in the French court, Russia saw the reign of Empress Catherine the Great, brought to vivid life



here by former child star Elle Fanning. British actor Nicholas Hoult co-stars in Hulu's 10-part production, which dispenses with historical accuracy and goes straight for sumptuous, satirical entertainment value instead.

The show debuts in the UK on StarzPlay from 18 June and will soon come to Channel 4's free streaming service All 4. Watch Hulu's exhilarating trailer at bit.ly/great503.

StarzPlay, whose other shows include *Mr Mercedes* and *Pennyworth*, costs £4.99 per month after 7 days free (www.starz.com/gb/en, or via Amazon Prime bit.ly/amstarz503).

Watch virtual racing from Le Mans

13-14 June

The 24 Hours of Le Mans race is the world's oldest active sports-car endurance event, held in France every year since 1923. Naturally, the Covid outbreak has scuppered things this year, so the organisers are staging a virtual race, in which star racers including Red Bull's Max Verstappen and McLaren's Lando

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



Norris compete in a simulated version of the 24-hour event. You can stream all the action live and on-demand for free via Motorsport.tv at bit.ly/lemans503, starting at 2pm on Saturday 13 June. Find out more about the race and its drivers at bit.ly/virtual503.

Unravel more mysteries with *Agatha Raisin*

From 9 June

Ashley Jensen's likeable British crime-fighting comedy-drama *Agatha Raisin* was picked up by US streaming service Acorn TV, after being dropped by Sky One following its first series. Jensen now returns for a third series as PR guru turned amateur sleuth Agatha, and Acorn has already commissioned Series 4.



iPlayer launches 'watch with friends' tool

Nipping round to the homes of friends and family to watch a film or TV show together still feels like a distant dream. To help you stay connected, the Beeb has followed Netflix in launching a tool that lets you watch films and shows "together" while apart, anywhere in the UK.

BBC Together, part of the Taster collection of experimental features, is available now and free to use via bit.ly/together503. It's effectively a beta, but it works well: enter the web address of any iPlayer or BBC Sounds content, then send the specially-generated link to loved ones. As host, you can pause, skip or switch shows, and your changes sync automatically with everyone else.

Unlike Netflix Party (www.netflixparty.com), which only works as a Chrome extension, BBC Together is website-based and doesn't require installation.



Stream three new 90-minute episodes on-demand via Acorn TV at bit.ly/agatha503, and watch the latest trailer at bit.ly/agtrail503.

Ad-free service Acorn TV is designed for US viewers who love British telly, but it's also available in the UK and costs £4.99 per month after a free 30-day trial (bit.ly/acorntv503).



in an underground battle between werewolves and sorcerers. There's no Season 2 trailer at the time of writing, but you can watch Season 1 on Netflix at bit.ly/order503. Ten new episodes arrive on 18 June.

A day later, Ben Platt returns as student campaigner and US President wannabe Payton in *The Politician*, with Gwyneth Paltrow as his mum. Watch eight new episodes of Ryan Murphy's show from 19 June. Again, there's no trailer but you can catch up with Season 1 at bit.ly/polit503.

Welcome back *The Order* and *The Politician*

From 18/19 June

Two teen protagonists return to Netflix for second seasons. First comes Jake Manley in Season 2 of fantasy drama *The Order*, in which Manley finds himself stuck



In case you missed it...

Intriguing murder mystery *Little Room* was created and filmed during lockdown



from its stars' own homes. Brian Cox and Claes Bang star in the 30-minute pilot episode, written by Dolly

Wells. You can watch it for free on the independent film website, Pinpoint Presents (pinpointpresents.com).

Vicky McClure stars in new Amazon Prime show *Alex Rider*, based on the popular Anthony Horowitz teen spy novels. Season 1 is available now,

and you can watch the trailer at bit.ly/alex503.

New on the BBC iPlayer is *Celebrity Supply Teacher*, in which Gary Lineker, Geri Horner and others deliver lessons to CBBC viewers in lockdown, while Now TV has Season 2 of Sky Atlantic's *Das Boot*, based on the acclaimed German film, at bit.ly/dasboot503.



Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

Mesh Wi-Fi

With your household locked down and everyone at home all day, you need strong Wi-Fi in every room. We test 19 mesh Wi-Fi systems to find the best kits for a stable connection

Most ISP routers manage to provide a Wi-Fi signal that's strong enough to reach from one room to another. However, if your telephone socket isn't positioned in a conveniently central spot in your home, your router may be relegated to a far corner or distant hallway, scuppering the signal in some areas of your property.

In these situations, mesh Wi-Fi provides a solution. This clever system connects to your existing modem or router and creates its own network of devices to extend your Wi-Fi signal to distant places it previously failed to reach. You can add more units to the mesh to create a powerful lattice of Wi-Fi signals that always provides exceptionally good reception.

HOW WE TESTED

We connected the base station of each system to our existing router, then added the nodes in appropriate places around the house to provide good coverage. We then took a test laptop to four rooms and recorded the average transfer speed when downloading a series of 100MB files from a NAS appliance, connected directly to the main router via Ethernet. You'll find the results for all 19 in our chart on the opposite page.

Netgear Orbi RBK50 | **£299.99** | Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/orbi503

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

Netgear offers a whole family of Orbi systems and this original model has been available for more than three years. Despite its age, we think the RBK50 is the best of the bunch, unless you're desperate for next-generation 802.11ax (aka Wi-Fi 6) – in which case, be prepared to pay a king's ransom (see review, opposite).

The simple design of the units makes them more attractive than many rivals. Each unit has four Gigabit Ethernet ports, allowing plenty of scope for wired expansion, but the USB port is only there for maintenance, so you can't use it to share devices over the network.

Performance is excellent – in our tests, the Orbi RBK50 averaged lightning speeds of 30MB/s, placing it third overall in our performance tests. This is partly down its tri-band capability, which provides a dedicated 'backhaul' radio channel for the units to communicate with each other.

The RBK50 has fewer features than the Silver Award-winning Asus ZenWiFi, but manages to include all the key network-management tools you're likely to want. The web portal is clean and easy to navigate, with an impressively responsive smartphone app, and offers a handy fingerprint login option. You can also tweak your DHCP, DNS and port-forwarding settings to your heart's content and adjust the wireless channels for



WebUser
GOLD
AWARD

2.4GHz and 5GHz radios, though you can't split them off into separate networks.

The system comes with a built-in VPN server, which lets you connect to your home network from anywhere on the internet using the OpenVPN standard. There are also optional paid-for services, such as Armor (£60 per year), which enables router-level scanning and blocking of malicious sites, and includes a Bitdefender Total Security licence for all your computers and mobile devices. The parental-control tool Circle lets you filter sites by appropriateness, but you have to pay £46 per year for its scheduling tools.

VERDICT

★★★★★

The Orbi RBK50 is a brilliant package. Its power put it in the top three performers in this group, the units are more attractive than most and plenty of thought has been put into the design of the interface. It's pricey, particularly with the add-ons, and it's worth noting that it has been cheaper in the past. Prior to lockdown, this two unit pack had dropped to around £250, but we suspect that demand for better Wi-Fi has pushed it back up again. It's worth the high price, though.

Asus ZenWiFi AC | £279.99 |
Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/asus503

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



The ZenWiFi AC is an exceptional mesh system. It's even cheaper than the Gold Award-winning Orbi, which is doubly impressive because it's also faster. In fact, it was the fastest 802.11ac kit in this group in all four of our test locations, topping 30MB/s downloads in every room.

The Asus mesh kit comes with plenty of features, including three guest networks, a visual traffic analyser showing which devices are using the most bandwidth and a network-level firewall. There are four Gigabit Ethernet ports and a USB port, into which you can insert and share a hard drive, printer or mobile modem. You can also set up a VPN on it. The only downside is that all this extra functionality could be daunting to casual users.

VERDICT

★★★★★

The strength of the signal created by the ZenWiFi mesh system should effortlessly power through your walls, and the fast backhaul channel – used by the units to communicate with each other – will have minimal impact on your Wi-Fi. However, setup is a little tricky, so it may be best left to advanced users.

BT Whole Home Wi-Fi | £171.99 |
Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/bthome503

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



Most mesh systems are designed to replace your old router but, uniquely in this group, BT's Whole Home Wi-Fi kit works alongside it. You hook up one of the three nodes to your current router via Ethernet, then position the others around your home.

They work together as a mesh of wireless access points for your existing network. As a result, setup requires just a few taps on the smartphone app.

These devices only use dual-band radios, so there's no dedicated frequency for the backhaul. However, BT makes up for it with 2.4GHz and 5GHz hardware that's rated twice as fast as other dual-band systems. This played out in our tests, where it proved its ability to outpace other dual-band systems. Its download speeds of almost 20MB/s across our house is impressive – a 4K Netflix stream only needs 2MB/s.



VERDICT

★★★★★

The price of mesh Wi-Fi can be prohibitive but, because these dual-band models don't have a third radio or extra router tools, they're a brilliant budget option. With this excess fat trimmed off, these lean machines are an affordable alternative to flaky Wi-Fi.

Netgear Orbi WiFi 6 | £700 |
Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/orbi6503

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

If you glance over to our performance charts on the right, you'll notice the Netgear Orbi WiFi 6 sitting resplendent at the top of the pile, around 25% faster than its next-nearest rival. This mesh system supports the 802.11ax standard, colloquially known as Wi-Fi 6, which is theoretically twice as fast as the previous best standard, though it's worth bearing in mind that your devices will also need to be Wi-Fi 6-compatible to get the full benefit. However, the Orbi Wi-Fi 6 held its own with 802.11ac equipment, too, keeping pace with our Gold Award-winner.

Have a look at the price, though. That's not a typo – a pair of these devices will cost you as much as a new laptop. It certainly makes the other Orbi and Asus devices look like superb value for money.



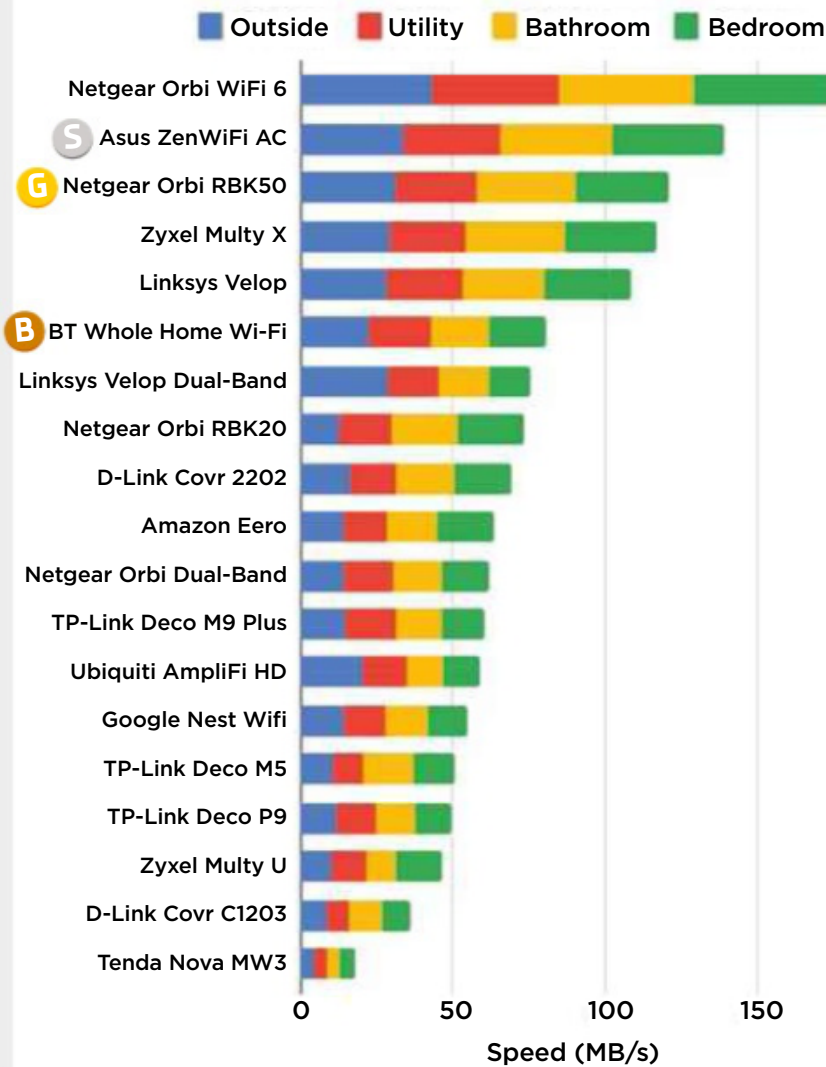
VERDICT

★★★★★

If you want the fastest devices around, you'll have to pay for the privilege. There's no denying that this Orbi pushes Wi-Fi further and faster, which may just be worth paying for if you have chronic Wi-Fi problems. For most people, however, you can get a good chunk of the benefit for a fraction of the cost.

TEST-RESULTS CHARTS

Download speeds around the house





Group Test Mesh Wi-Fi



	Netgear Orbi RBK50	Asus ZenWiFi AC	BT Whole Home Wi-Fi	Netgear Orbi WiFi 6
WEBSITE	www.netgear.co.uk	www.asus.com	bit.ly/btshop503	www.netgear.co.uk
PRICE	£299.99	£279.99	£171.99	£700
BUY FROM AMAZON	bit.ly/orbi503	bit.ly/asus503	bit.ly/bthome503	bit.ly/orbi6503
NODES (as reviewed)	2	2	3	2
RADIO TYPE	Tri-band 802.11ac	Tri-band 802.11ac	Dual-band 802.11ac	Tri-band 802.11ax
MIMO CHANNELS	2x2 (4x4 on backhaul)	2x2 (4x4 on backhaul)	2x3	4x4
ETHERNET PORTS PER NODE	4	4	1	5 on router, 4 on satellite
ROUTER MODE	✓	✓	✗	✓
WPS	✓	✓	✓	✓
APP OR WEB MANAGEMENT	Both	Both	Both	Both
GUEST NETWORK	✓	✓	✓	✓
PARENTAL CONTROLS	✓ (advanced controls extra)	✓	✓	✗
ALEXA OR GOOGLE ASSISTANT COMPATIBLE	Alexa, Google Assistant	Alexa	✗	Alexa, Google Assistant
NODE DIMENSIONS	203 x 162 x 79mm	162 x 160 x 75mm	165 x 165 x 77mm	254 x 191 x 71mm
WARRANTY	One-year return-to-base	Three-years return-to-base	Three-years return-to-base	One-year return-to-base

ALSO REVIEWED

Amazon Eero (★★★★☆)
D-Link Covr C1203 (★★★★☆)
D-Link Covr-2202 (★★★★☆)
Google Nest Wifi (★★★★☆)
Linksys Velop (★★★★☆)

Linksys Velop Dual-Band (★★★★☆)
Netgear Orbi Dual-Band (★★★★☆)
Netgear Orbi RBK20 (★★★★☆)
Tenda Nova MW3 (★★★★☆)
TP-Link Deco M5 (★★★★☆)

TP-Link Deco P9 (★★★★☆)
TP-Link Deco M9 Plus (★★★★☆)
Ubiquiti Amplifi HD (★★★★☆)
Zyxel Multy U (★★★★☆)
Zyxel Multy X (★★★★☆)

OUR VERDICT

We spotted the potential of Netgear’s Orbi system from the day it was launched and it still hasn’t been toppled from the Gold Award position in our Group Test. Netgear’s networking know-how, coupled with simple setup and an easy-to-use interface, has kept this pioneer of mesh technology at the top of the tree.

If you’re willing to sacrifice the looks and the ease-of-use, then you can eke a bit more speed from Asus’s ZenWiFi AC system. We gave it our Silver Award because we were deeply impressed by the hardware. However, the overall package needs to be improved if it’s going to beat the Orbi.

If our top two options are beyond your budget – and there’s no denying they are far from cheap – you can still boost a single-router system with BT’s Bronze Award winner. This doesn’t have the router tools of its rivals but it does all the most important Wi-Fi boosting, and comes with more nodes for a lot less money. ■



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

HARDWARE, SOFTWARE & SERVICES

MESH WI-FI SYSTEM

Netgear Orbi RBK50

£299.99 from bit.ly/orbi503

Tested: Issue 503

NEW!



The Orbi is a brilliant mesh Wi-Fi package. It's powerful, the units look good and it has a well-designed interface. It's pricey, particularly with the add-ons, but we think it's worth it.

KEY SPECS

Two nodes ■ Tri-band 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ 2 x 2 MIMO system ■ 4 Ethernet ports ■ Router mode ■ WPS ■ Guest network ■ Parental controls ■ Alexa and Google Assistant voice control ■ 203 x 162 x 79mm ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

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

Gold Award winners

The best from our software tests

CHROME TAB MANAGER

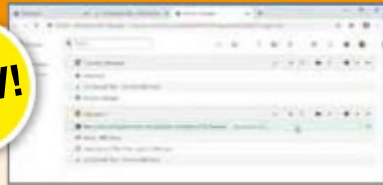
Cluster

Free from bit.ly/cluster502

Tested: Issue 502

Cluster pulls all your Chrome tabs together in one place and offers lots of useful features, such as saving your browsing sessions for later and pausing inactive tabs to save memory.

NEW!



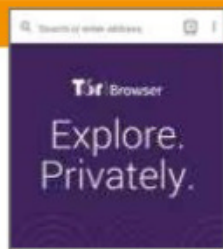
PRIVATE ANDROID BROWSER

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.



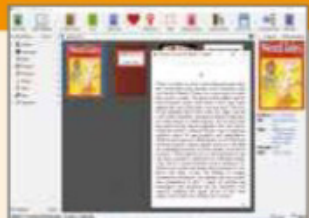
EBOOK SOFTWARE

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.



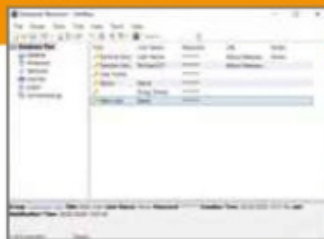
PASSWORD MANAGER

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.



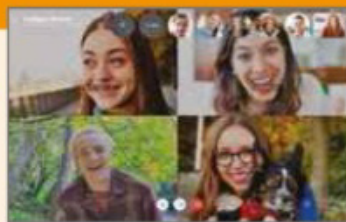
VIDEO-CHAT APP

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.



WebUser

BACK ISSUES DISC 2019



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

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

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



Best Free Software

ANTI-MALWARE TOOL

IObit Malware Fighter 8 Free

bit.ly/malware503

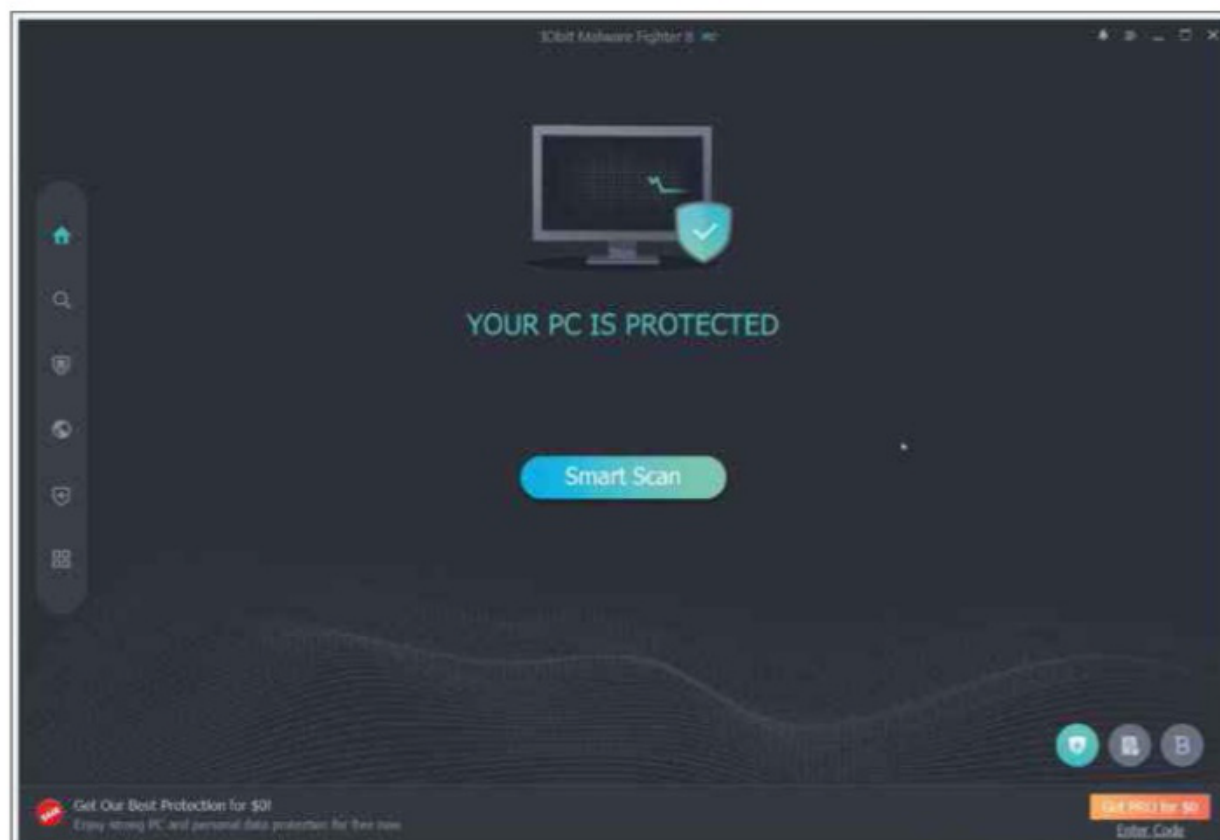
Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 63.3MB

Many Windows 10 users rely on the operating system's built-in Security suite to keep their systems safe, but there are several equally good free third-party alternatives available, such as the recently updated Malware Fighter 8.

This anti-malware tool from IObit offers real-time and on-demand protection from a wide range of threats, including spyware, adware, Trojans, hijackers and ransomware. Unlike many similar programs, it works well with other security software so you can run it as a second line of defence without it clashing or getting in the way.

Malware Fighter offers a choice of scan types: Smart (checks the critical



sections of your system), Full or Custom (drag and drop a file or folder to the window and it will check it for you).

Furthermore, the software can make your web browsing more secure using its Home Page Advisor, Download Protection, Plug-in/Toolbar Cleaner, DNS Protect and the new Surfing Protection & Ads Removal feature.

The Security Guard section offers four modules to defend your system from malware tampering: Network Guard, File Guard,

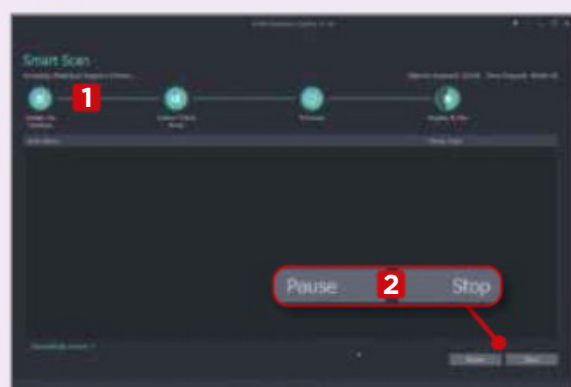
Startup Guard and Process Guard. The last two are enabled by default.

This new version of Malware Fighter offers up to 50% faster scans, a new anti-malware engine, better threat detection and an improved interface.

The free edition will suit most people's needs, but upgrading to the full paid-for edition adds Bitdefender's scanning engine to the software, as well as additional features such as ransomware and webcam protection. A year's subscription to the Pro version costs £20.49 for up to three PCs.



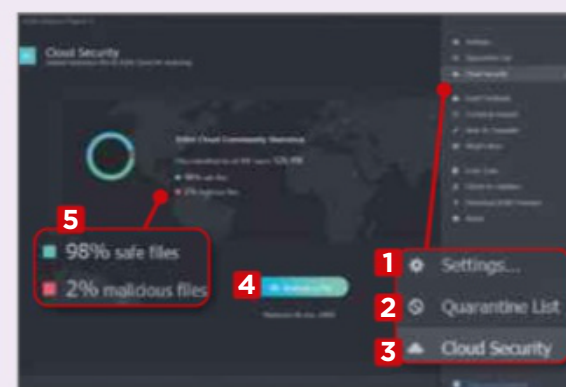
MINI WORKSHOP | Keep your PC safe with Malware Fighter 8



1 To check for malware with Malware Fighter 8, click the big Scan Now button in the centre of the screen. A Smart Scan will initialise **1** and you can pause or stop it at any time. **2** If a threat is found, you'll be able to use the drop-down menu to take appropriate action, such as removing or ignoring it.

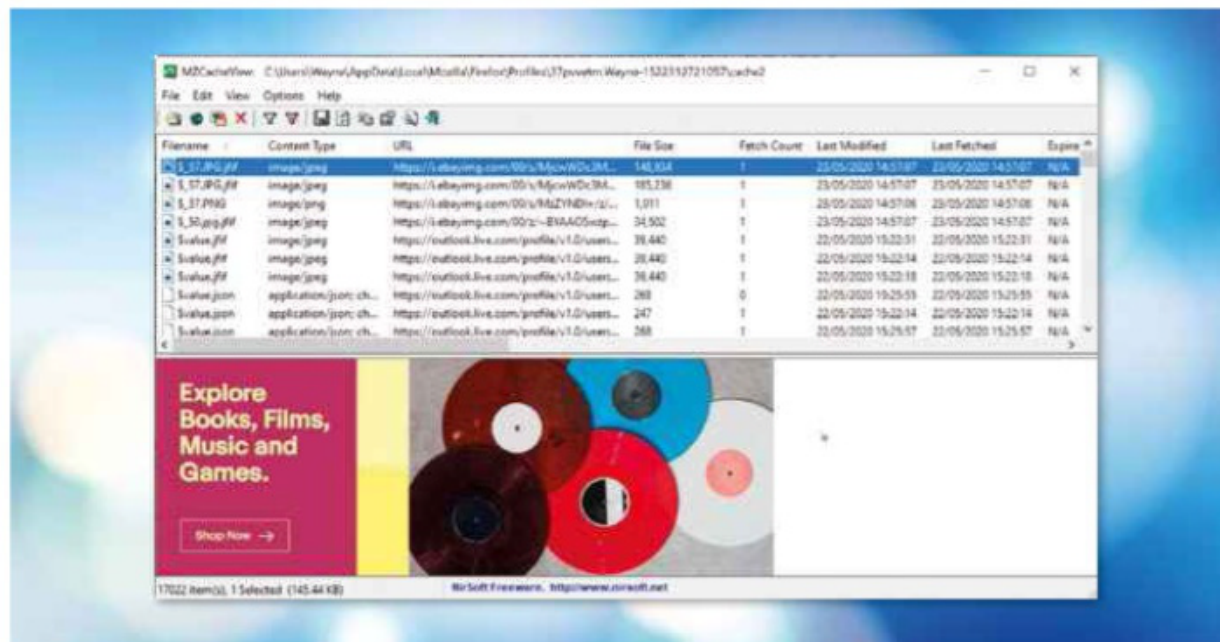


2 Click the Scan button in the bar on the left **1** to choose which type of scan you want to run – Smart, Full or Custom. Click the Browser Protect button **2** to secure your web browsing. Clicking the Security Guard button **3** lets you toggle on or off the modules you require. **4**



3 Clicking the Options button in the top-right corner lets you access the program's Settings, **1** explore any quarantined files **2** and open the Cloud Security module. **3** Click the 'Analyze a file' button **4** to upload a suspicious file to IObit Cloud. You can also view community statistics in this section. **5**

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



FIREFOX CACHE VIEWER

MZCacheView 2

www.nirsoft.net

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10, Firefox **File size:** 162KB

MZCacheView, from prolific software developer NirSoft, is a tiny but handy tool that reads the contents of Firefox's cache folder and displays a list of all of the files it finds. This latest version comes with a new preview pane that lets you view images (in GIF, PNG and JPEG format) and text-based files (HTML, CSS, JSON, JavaScript). To enable the feature, open the View menu and select 'Show Preview Pane' or press the F8 key.

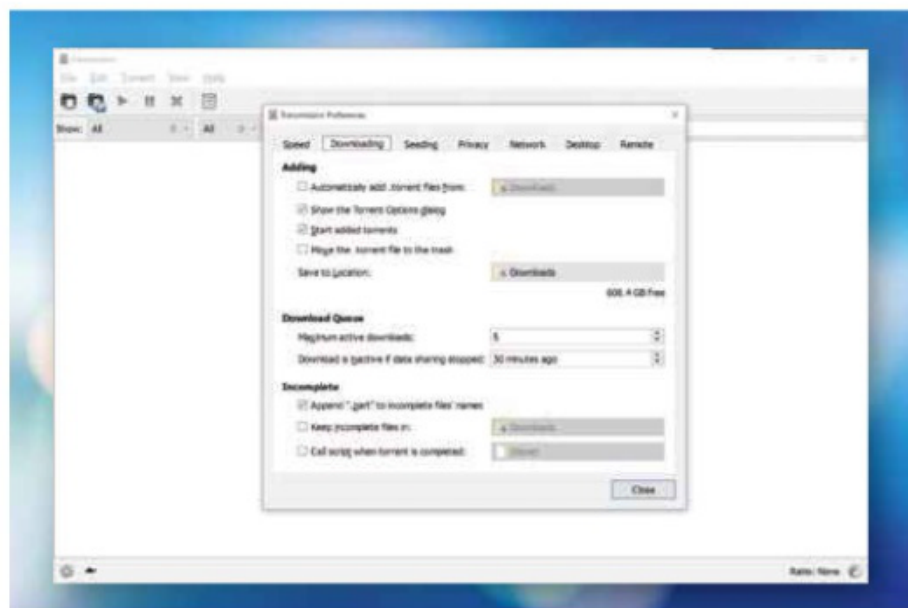
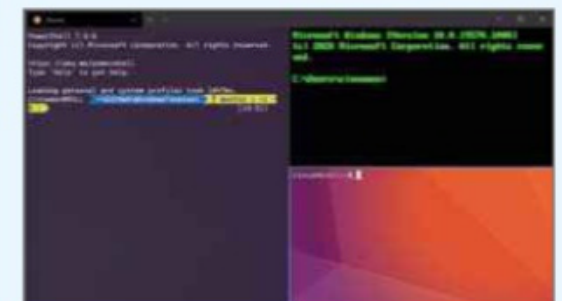
New Windows 10 App

Windows Terminal

bit.ly/terminal503

File size: 20.84MB

After a year in development, Microsoft's Linux-inspired Windows Terminal finally reaches the 1.0 milestone. The app lets users access the Command Prompt, PowerShell, and WSL (Windows Subsystem for Linux) in the one place and offers multiple and duplicate panes, tab reordering, mouse support and cool retro-style CRT effects. The Windows Terminal documentation can be found at bit.ly/termdocs503.



BITTORRENT CLIENT

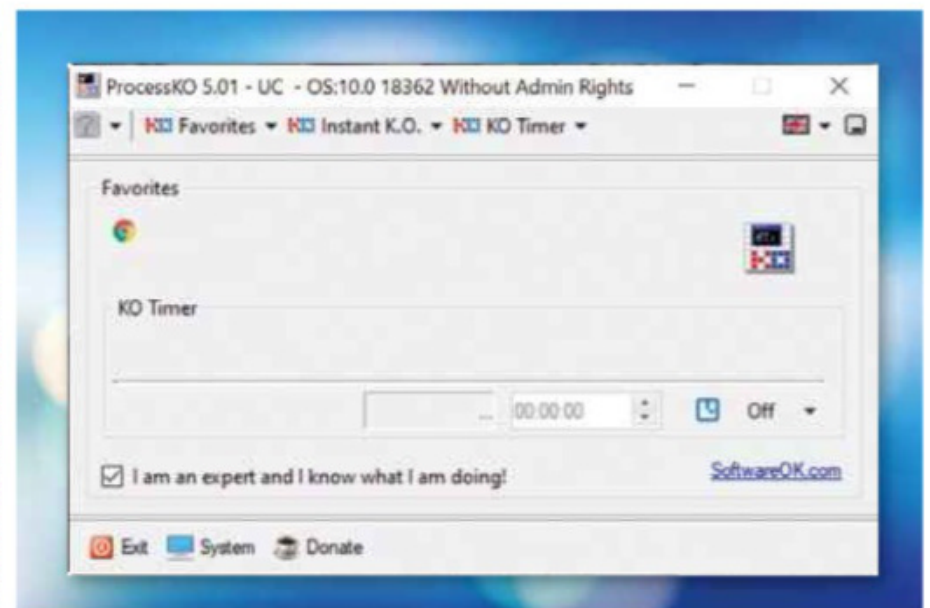
Transmission 3

transmissionbt.com

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

File size: 15.6MB

Transmission is a fast and easy-to-use open-source BitTorrent client that's available for Windows, macOS, Linux and the web. This new version is the first major update in two years. It fixes various performance and security problems, and introduces the ability to allow the RPC (Remote Procedure Call) server to listen on an IPv6 address. There's a dark mode for Mac users and the interface has been updated to display better on high-res screens.



SYSTEM TOOL

ProcessKO 5

www.softwareok.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8.1

File size: 137KB

ProcessKO is a portable tool that helps you identify and quickly kill any hanging or misbehaving processes. Although you could use the Windows Task Manager for this, ProcessKO is a better tool for the job and lets you 'favourite' any apps you need to close on a regular basis.

This new version lets you uninstall the software through the main menu, and makes various tweaks to its performance and behaviour.

DISC-AUTHORING TOOL

AnyBurn 5

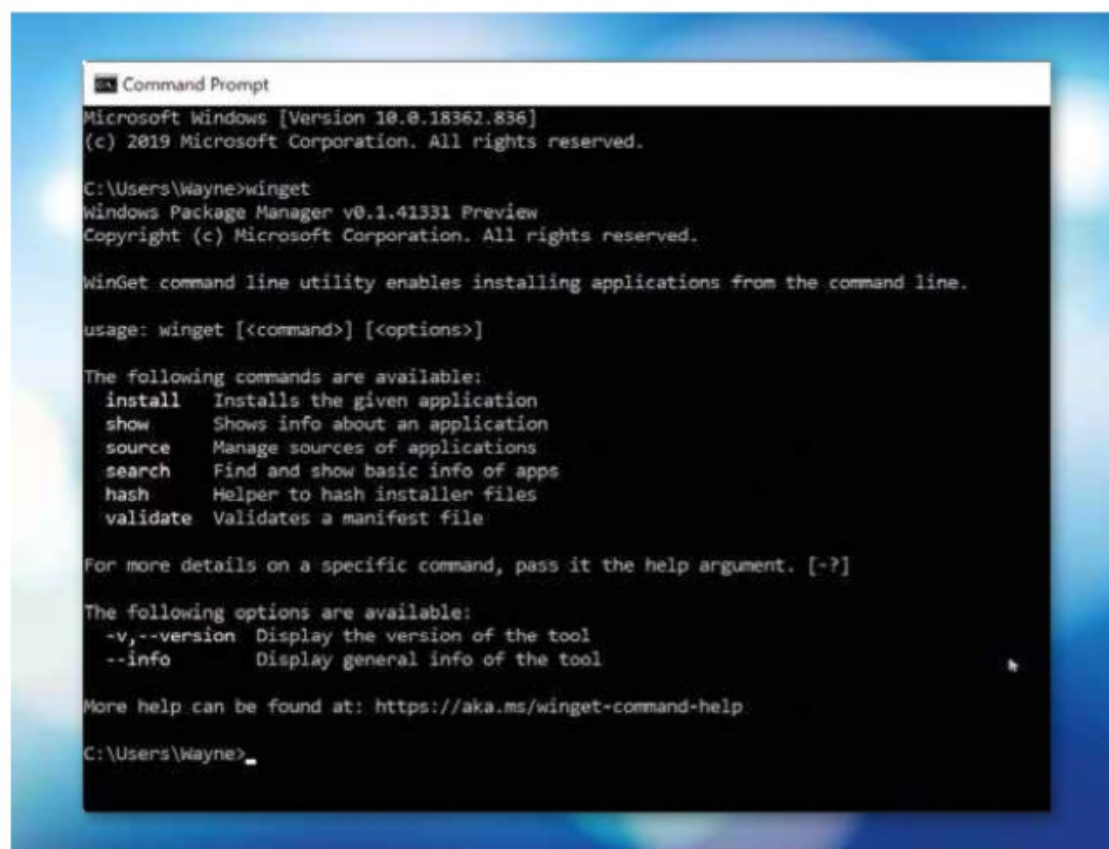
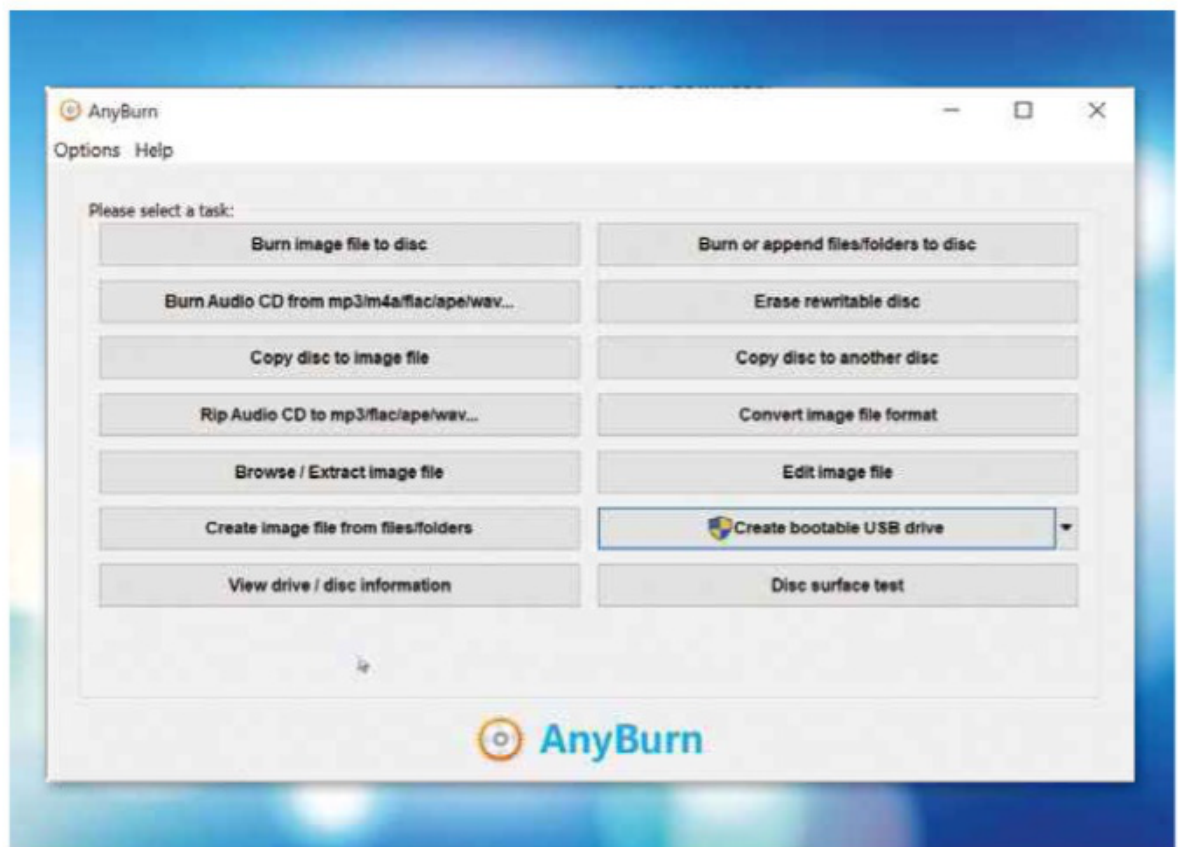
www.anyburn.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 1.8MB

This lightweight authoring tool can write files and folders to disc, create audio CDs, generate and write image files, and copy discs in a jiffy. It can also create image files from CD or DVD, convert between image formats, erase rewritable discs and rip audio CDs. It supports writing to Blu-rays too. The various tasks on offer can be selected from the single-screen menu.

The latest release of the program introduces support for cleaning USB memory sticks, as well as making a number of bug fixes and general enhancements. There are 32- and 64-bit versions of AnyBurn, as well as a portable build.



SOFTWARE MANAGER

Windows Package Manager Preview

bit.ly/winget503

Min requirements: Windows 10 **File size:** 5.7MB

At its recent (virtual) developer conference, Microsoft launched a new open-source software manager for Windows 10 (1709, or newer). Windows Package Manager essentially provides a Linux-style way of searching for and installing new software from online repositories. You type in some commands and it goes away and does everything you ask of it.

Once the program is installed, open the Command Prompt, Windows Terminal (which was also recently updated) or PowerShell, then type `winget`. The software will suggest the options and commands to use. If you need further help, there's documentation for the tool at bit.ly/wingethelp503.

SYSTEM TOOLS

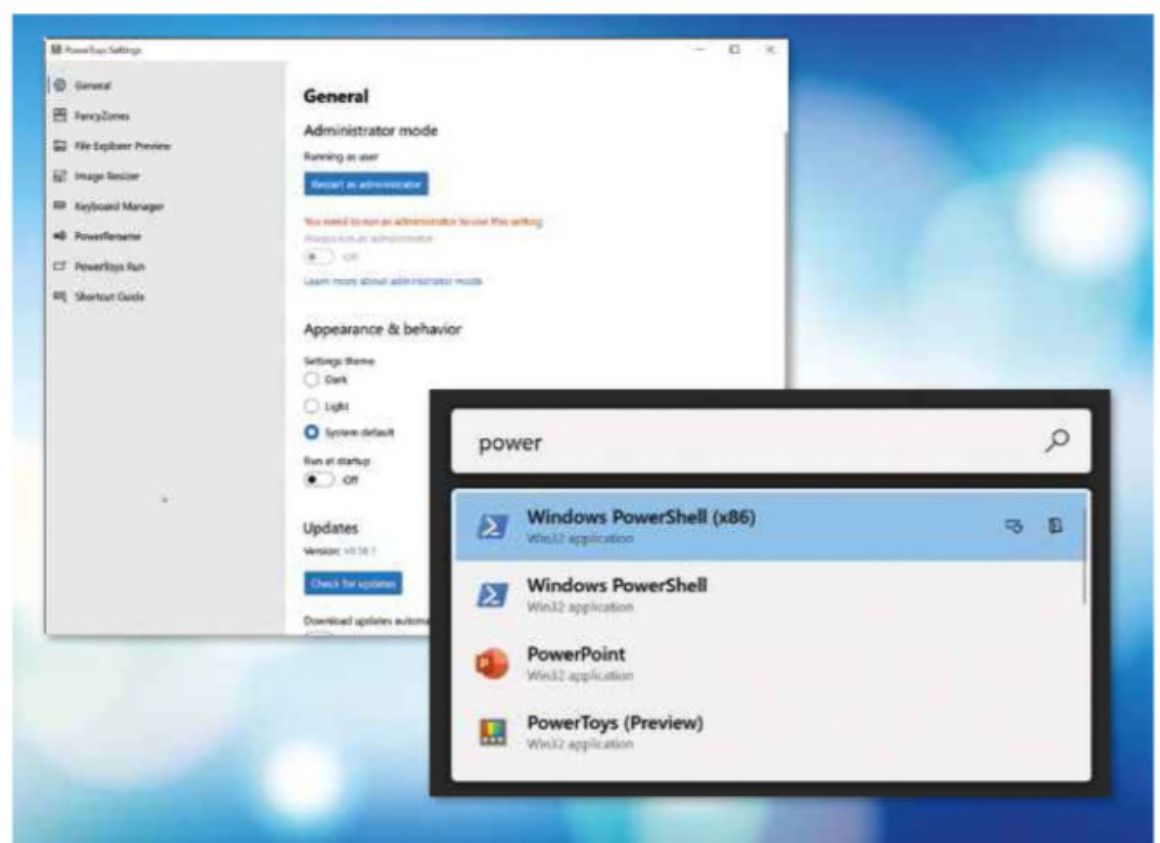
PowerToys 0.18

bit.ly/ptoy503

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 22MB

PowerToys provides a selection of essential tweaking tools. Microsoft first introduced them in the days of Windows 95/XP, then brought them back again last year, providing additional functionality for Windows 10 users. Since its initial release, the software has been updated several times with new features. This latest version comes with a handy keyboard remapping tool and a new Run launcher that provides a more flexible way to access apps, files, command-prompt commands and system shortcuts. By default, you open it with Alt+Space, but this can be changed. The performance of the FancyZones tool has been improved in this release, too.





GAME

Spectacle

bit.ly/spec503

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 186MB

Spectacle is a retro-style point-and-click adventure game set in a magical desert kingdom. Use the buttons below the main screen to select an action, then click items in the location window. There's also a map to help you find your way around. If you find that the game window is too small, you can use the options to increase the size (up to four times as large) or switch to full screen.

✓ Install this program...

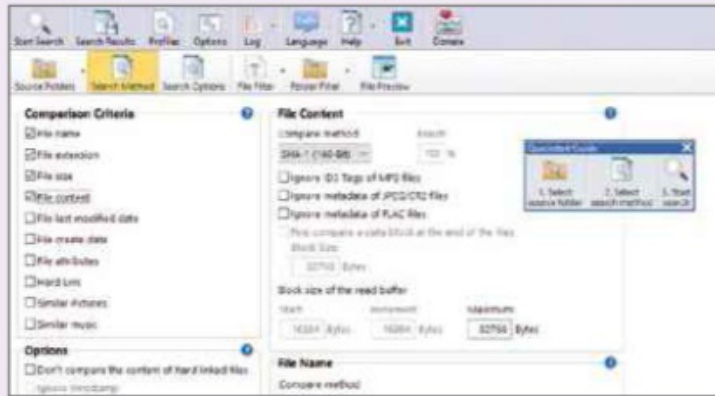
AllDup

bit.ly/alldup503

Min requirements: Windows 7/8/10

File size: 14.9MB

AllDup finds and removes duplicate images, documents and other clones that accumulate on your PC over time. You can choose which drives (including external drives) and folders to scan, and identify matches by name, size, content, file extension and modified date. The program also roots out similar images and audio files. AllDup lets you preview duplicates without opening the files in other programs, then lets you permanently delete copies or move them to the Recycle Bin. You can also scan folders for duplicates simply by right-clicking them. AllDup is completely free and offers a portable edition, too.



...Not this one ✗

Anti-Twin

bit.ly/anti474

Min requirements:

Windows 7/8/10

File size: 0.9MB

Anti-Twin is a speedy duplicate finder, and we especially like its pop-up preview pane – although it can get in the way when you're trying to mark files for removal. The trouble is that the software hasn't been updated since 2010, and its default setting limits you to finding up to 1,000 duplicates.



OTHER OPERATING SYSTEMS What's new for Linux and macOS



LINUX DISTRO

RetroPie 4.6

retropie.org.uk

Min requirements: Raspberry Pi

File size: 807MB

RetroPie is a Debian Linux-based operating system designed to let you play classic games on an old PC or barebones system, such as the Raspberry Pi. This new release is the first in a while, and the headline addition is (beta) support for the Raspberry Pi 4. The distro is now based on Raspbian Buster, and the core and packaging system have all been updated in this release, too.



PRODUCTIVITY APP

Meeter

trymeeter.com

Min requirements: macOS

File size: 9MB

Aimed at Mac users who are spending their days working from home and taking part in a lot of virtual meetings, Meeter is a simple app that sits in your menu bar and lets you manage all calls and meetings stored in your macOS calendar. It also lets you connect directly to friends and colleagues through Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet and more.

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Best New Browser Tools



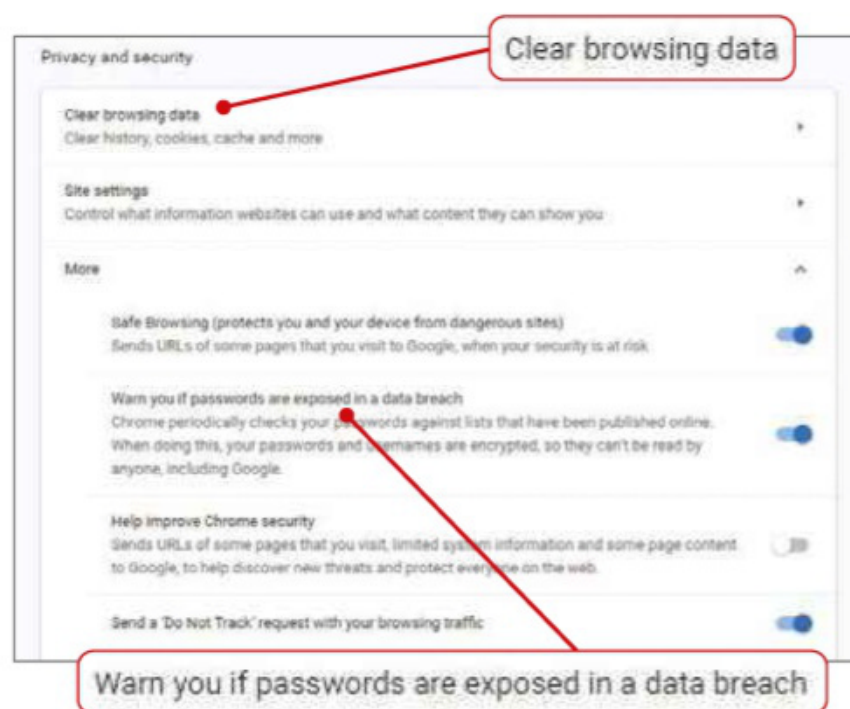
CHROME

Take control of your privacy and security

“Keeping you safe and secure online is part of Chrome’s DNA,” said Google as it rolled out improved security and privacy options to its browser. In a major overhaul that makes existing options more readily accessible, it’s now easier to manage cookies, permissions and how your data is shared. Head to <chrome://settings> to begin exploring.

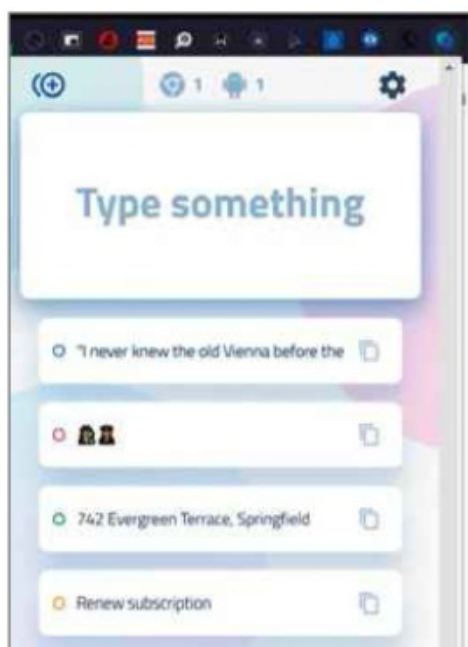
The ‘You and Google’ section now houses better account sync controls, and the browser also features opt-in Enhanced Safe Browsing and Secure DNS settings, but it’s the ‘Privacy and security’ section that sees the biggest redesign. ‘Clear browsing data’ is placed within easy reach at the top of the page, and there’s a new Safety Check feature that flags dangerous websites and extensions, and compromised passwords, and helps keep Chrome up to date.

Other extras include the ability to block third-party cookies in Incognito mode and a new home for extensions, which keeps your address bar tidy. We’ll be taking a closer look at the new privacy features in our next issue.



Copy your clipboard across devices

Clipboard Paste Anywhere (bit.ly/clipboard503) saves you having to email notes and reminders to yourself when you want to get information from your computer to your phone (and vice versa).



You can copy anything from a web page, then click the extension’s toolbar button to view the clipboard.

There’s a space to type or paste information, which is also stored in your clipboard.

To copy an entry, click its overlapping-pages icon or choose Send to share content with other, connected devices.

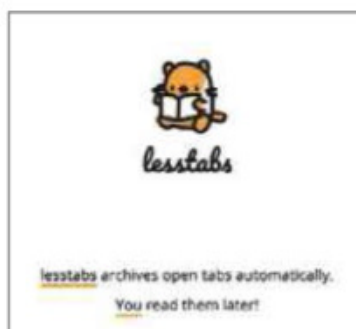
To set this up, download the app for iOS or Android, then click the plus sign on the extension. This generates a time-limited code that you can type into the app to access the copied content instantly.

Archive your dormant tabs

The more tabs you have open, the more power Chrome saps from your computer to keep them active – draining the battery and slowing your computer to a sluggish dawdle.

Lesstabs (bit.ly/lesstabs503) is a handy browser tool that automatically shuts down and archives tabs if you haven’t opened them for a while. You can then retrieve them by opening a new tab to view archived web pages, ordered by date.

Unfortunately, there’s currently no way to alter how long a tab must stay inactive before Lesstabs kicks in, but this is a minor misstep in an otherwise useful extension that should save your computer from meltdown. We’ll even overlook the



fact that it should really be called Fewertabs!

Switch Netflix’s lights on

Dark mode has become ubiquitous and where it’s not built in, there are plenty of browser tools that do the job for you. Netflix Light Mode (bit.ly/netflixlight503) flips this trend on its head.

Install the extension and you’ll find netflix.com’s usual black background replaced with off-white instead. Text colour, as you’d expect, is also inverted, but no other swaps are made; it’s still the same old Netflix you know, love and can’t stop watching. The choice of background colour is a stroke of genius – it brightens up the streaming site while remaining easy on the eye.



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



EDGE

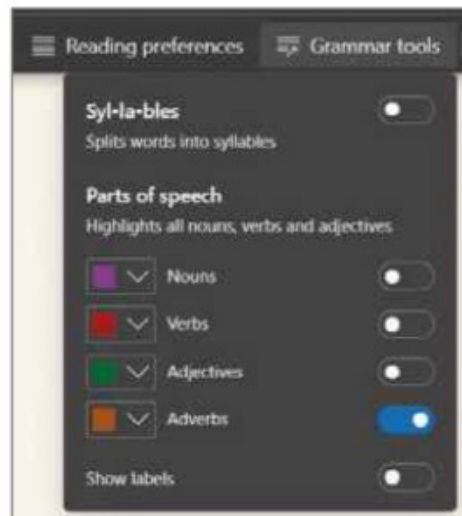
Meet Edge's excellent new tools

Microsoft Edge version 83 is out now, and this latest update brings plenty of new features. First up is extension syncing. If you've been running Edge on multiple different devices, your extensions will now be available across all of them – just be sure to switch on Sync in the browser's settings.

Edge's Collections feature adds the ability to drag and drop sites and place multiple websites into your collections by right-clicking a tab, then selecting 'Add all tabs to a new collection'.

On the security side, Microsoft's Defender Smart Screen sees minor improvements. Notably, you can now stop cookies from being deleted from certain websites when closing the browser by visiting <edge://settings/clearBrowsingDataOnClose>.

Meanwhile, Immersive Reader now supports adverbs under 'Grammar tools', and lets you easily switch between your home, work and school profiles.



Share tabs quickly in Edge

'Group tabs & share' (bit.ly/group503) is Microsoft's answer to the question 'How can I send website URLs without using email?'. The name is a little misleading because this isn't an Edge

Surf the web (literally) in Edge

Edge finally has a game to rival Chrome's low-res dinosaur jump-and-runner where you tap the spacebar to avoid obstacles

Known as the Surf Game, you cruise across an obstacle-laden sea using only the arrow keys and spacebar. It's not an original idea – the developers openly admit it's based on SkiFree, an old Windows game from 1991 – but it's highly addictive. It's also not above inducing moments of (admittedly slight) panic when you find yourself chased by the Kraken.

Brightly coloured, with a familiar retro pixel style, Surf Game lets you choose from seven different surfers and three distinct game modes. Change game types and check your high scores by clicking the menu button on the startup screen. To play, just visit edge://surf. Hang ten!



substitute for Google's recently added Group Tabs feature. The focus here is on sharing.

Using the extension is easy. Websites are listed in the upper pane, where you

can use tick boxes to select individual pages or click the Select All button. You can then copy these to your clipboard or click the WhatsApp, LinkedIn and Microsoft Teams icons to share the links to each service.

At the bottom of the extension window, you can tweak your format preferences. In addition to titles and URLs, 'Group tabs & share' lets you export pages in HTML, CSV and JSON format.



FIREFOX



Add predictive text

It's odd that computers have yet to properly implement predictive text – Google has made a stab at it in Gmail and Docs, but elsewhere examples are hard to come by. Thankfully, Fluent Typer (bit.ly/fluent503) is on hand to help speed up your typing. Start typing and the extension begins to guess which word you're likely to want next – just as it would on your phone. Cycle through this list using the arrow keys to select a predicted word, then click Enter to accept. The tool won't suggest missing words like Google Docs does, but elsewhere it works a treat.



Turn Twitter into Instagram

Twitter, as one internet wit put it, is like screaming into the void – and having the void scream right back at you. If that sums up your feelings about the social network, install Twitter No Text (bit.ly/twitter503). As you might've guessed, this quirky browser tool removes almost every bit of text from the site, leaving only a timeline of pretty pictures and GIFs. Now you're free to speak your mind through visuals alone, as if you were using Instagram – and you don't have to read replies explaining why you're wrong.



Best Free Apps



App of the Fortnight

TOOLS

Action Blocks

bit.ly/actionblocks503



Google is always looking into clever ways to improve the accessibility of its products and, to mark this year's Global Accessibility Awareness Day (bit.ly/global503), the company updated a number of its Android apps with new accessibility features, and released a new Android app called Action Blocks that's designed to simplify complex tasks.

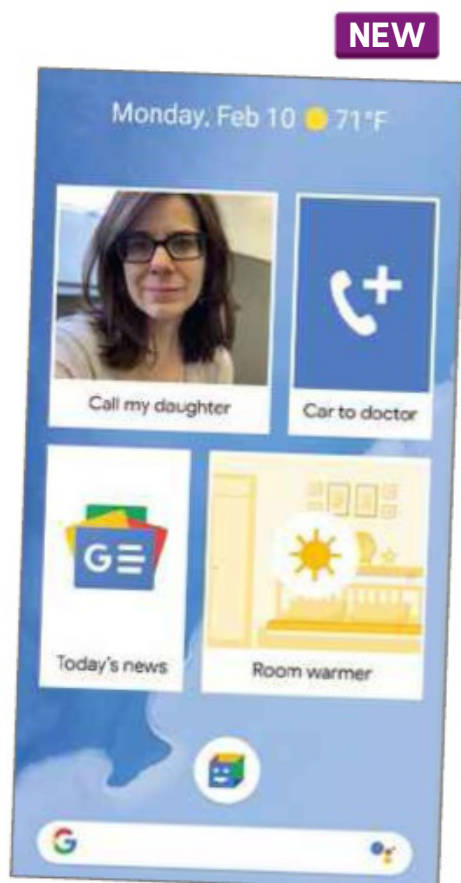
Aimed at users with cognitive impairments, such as dementia and Parkinson's disease, Action Blocks leverages the power of Google Assistant to create quick, single-tap shortcuts for various tasks – anything from calling a loved one to controlling your lighting via a home-automation system. Google Assistant can, of course, carry out all these tasks for you anyway, via voice commands. But the difference here is that Action Blocks' shortcuts are non-verbal and are represented by a widget on your Home screen that you can add a custom image to, as a visual cue for the task it represents.

As well as being ideal for those with disabilities, Action Blocks is a great way for anyone to create handy Home-screen shortcuts for frequently used Google Assistant tasks. Shortcuts are easy to set up, too – just check our Mini Workshop, right.

Google has blogged about its work on Action Blocks, describing how one employee developed the prototype for the app as a way to help his disabled brother interact with Google Assistant last October (bit.ly/actionblog503). Now, the full app is available for anyone to download for free.

Other accessibility apps recently updated by Google include Live

Transcribe (bit.ly/livedroid503), which includes new features such as a useful vibration alert when someone mentions your name; and Sound Amplifier (bit.ly/soundamp470), which now works with Bluetooth headphones.



NEW



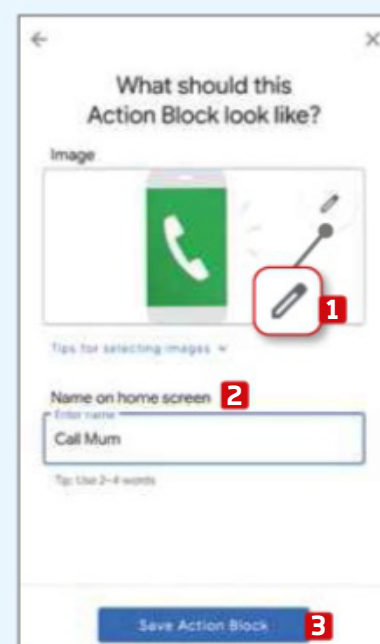
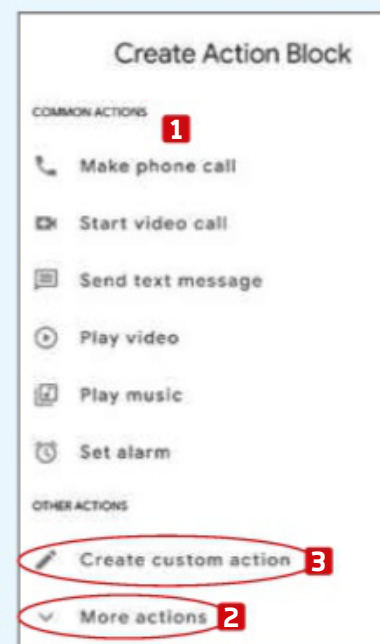
MINI WORKSHOP

Simplify Android tasks using Action Block shortcuts

1 When you launch Action Blocks, you can tap 'How it works' to see a brief description of the app's functions and requirements. When you're ready to generate your first shortcut, select Create Action Block. You're presented with a list of common actions – 'Make a phone call', 'Send a text message' and so on. **1** If you're looking for something else, tap 'More actions' **2** or 'Create custom action' **3**.

2 On the next screen, type the action you want to carry out – for example, 'Call Mum's mobile'. **1** You can untick 'Always speak action out loud' **2** if you're concerned about privacy. Choose 'Test action' **3** to see what happens – it's likely that Google Assistant will prompt you to further define your action – for instance, it may ask you to confirm which contact or number to call. Return to Action Blocks and tap the Next button. **4**

3 Tap the preselected shortcut icon **1** for more options – for example, you could choose a photo of the person you want to call from your photo library, take a picture with your camera or select an alternative icon. Under 'Name on home screen', **2** enter a name for your action – for example, 'Call Mum'. Tap the Save Action Block button, **3** then press and hold your Action Block to place it where you want on your Home screen.





Our rating



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

PRODUCTIVITY

Notion

bit.ly/notiondroid503
bit.ly/notionios503
 5  11

Notion is a very useful app that blends note-taking and task management with wiki editing and lets you sync everything across all your devices. If we had any issues with it in the past, it was because the free version of the app imposed a strict storage limit on users. Now, however, Notion has made its app completely free for personal use, with no storage restrictions. Other improvements include a performance boost for both iOS and Android versions, new collaboration features and layout enhancements for iPad users.





Our rating



UPDATED

GAME

Scrabble Go

bit.ly/scrabbledroid503
bit.ly/scrabbleios503
 5  10

It's safe to say that not everyone is a fan of Scrabble Go – a rather flashy, modern mobile take on the beloved board game, which induced a certain amount (to put it lightly) of ire in Scrabble fans when it replaced EA Games' original Scrabble app. In response, developer Scopely has updated the app with a number of changes aimed at appeasing veteran players, including a new Start Game screen that makes it clearer how to launch the generally preferred 'classic' version of the game. There are also a number of other layout improvements.



Our rating



UPDATED

ENTERTAINMENT

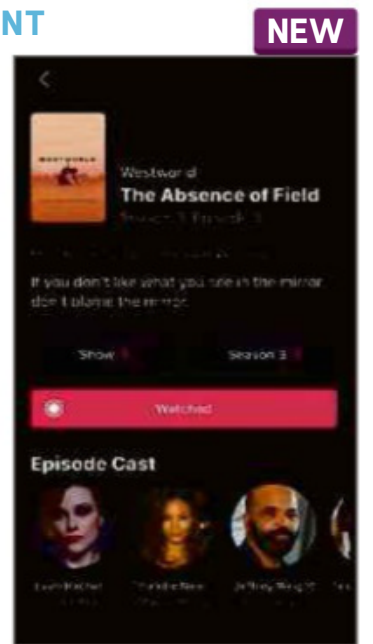
TV Forecast

bit.ly/tvios503
 13

With so many viewing platforms available these days, it's not easy to keep track of your favourite TV shows – which episodes you've seen and when the next series is on. TV Forecast provides a solution by letting you track your favourite shows. It's a great idea but, currently, the air dates appear to be US-based, which limits the app's usefulness for UK viewers. Additionally, you can only track up to five shows for free – any more than that and you'll need to pay an ongoing (99p per month) subscription.



Our rating



NEW

SECURITY

Microsoft Family Safety

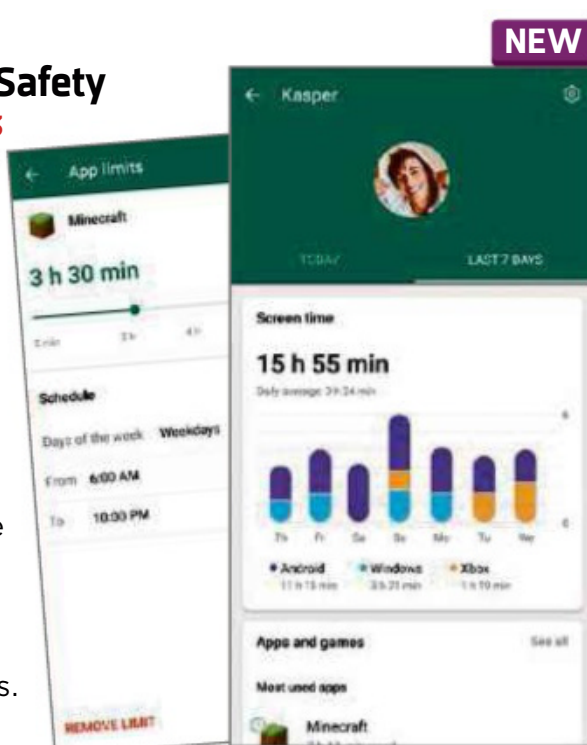
bit.ly/familydroid503
 (varies)

Microsoft has launched an early-access version of its new Family Safety app, designed to help parents manage their children's screen time across different platforms, including PCs, Android or iOS apps and Xbox games. You can set usage limits, filter content, locate your kids on a map and more.

Currently, the app is only available as a limited preview if you already have a Microsoft Family Safety group set up. To try it, head to bit.ly/family503 and fill out the survey to receive an invite. iOS users can sign up too, even though the app isn't publicly available on the App Store.



Our rating



NEW

MUSIC

Wavelet

bit.ly/wavelet503
 11

If you're a music lover, then you may have invested in a high-quality set of headphones. But are you getting the best from them? Wavelet offers a clever way to improve audio performance via equalisation that's tailored specifically to individual headphone models. The app offers 2,300 precalculated optimisations, as well as many customisation options. Just connect your headphones, start playing some music in any app and open Wavelet to refine your settings. There's a decent amount offered for free here, but if you're enjoying Wavelet, it's worth considering paying for its premium features, which include further audio effects and customisations.



Our rating



NEW

5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

MUSIC

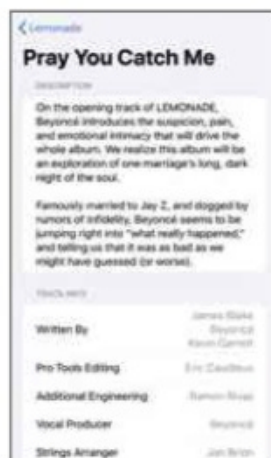
MusicSmart

bit.ly/musicsmart503

Price: £1.99

 13.4

If you miss the liner notes that you get with vinyl records and CDs, MusicSmart provides detailed info about tracks in your Apple Music library, including facts, trivia and credits.



been updated with lots of useful new features, including a files-based browser to open and manage files, improved support for mouse and trackpad control, and more.

HEALTH

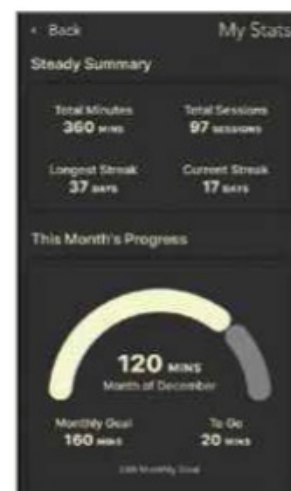
Steady

bit.ly/steady503

Price: £2.29

 5

Breathing exercises help relieve stress and this app aims to train you in how to tackle your anxiety, while also providing you with insights, encouragement for hitting monthly goals and more.



ENTERTAINMENT

My Movies 3 Pro

bit.ly/moviesdroid503

bit.ly/moviesios503

Price: £4.99 (Android), £9.99 (iOS)

 4.1  9

Many of us who still own physical media collections struggle to keep track of our extensive libraries. Binnerup's cataloguing tools, such as this DVD and Blu-ray library-management app, provide a welcome solution.



GAME

Alter: Between Two Worlds

bit.ly/alterdroid503

bit.ly/alterios503

Price: £2.99

 6  9

This atmospheric game sees you exploring parallel worlds as you puzzle your way through increasingly intricate levels. The Android version is free with in-app purchases to unlock the full game.



IMAGE EDITING

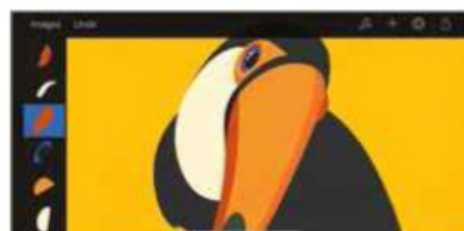
Pixelmator

bit.ly/pixelios503

Price: £4.99

 11

This iOS favourite has



MusicSmart



My Movies 3 Pro



Pixelmator



Steady



Alter: Between Two Worlds



✓ Install this app...

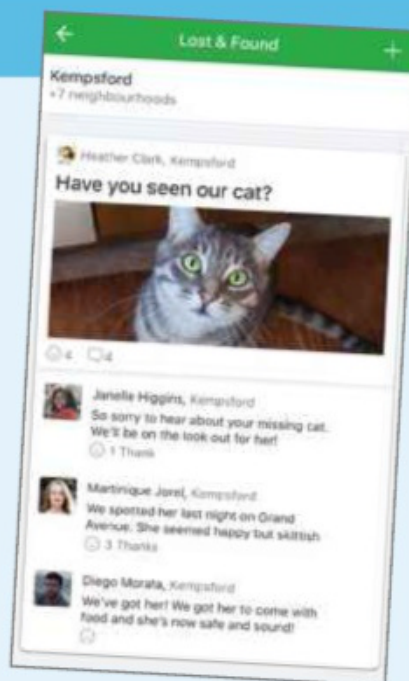
Nextdoor

bit.ly/nextdroid503

bit.ly/nextios503

 5  11.4

Lockdown has shown us just how much we rely on our neighbours and local communities for help and support, and Nextdoor is a brilliant way to improve your connections with the people who live and work near your home. Like a private social network for your local neighbourhood, you can use Nextdoor to introduce yourself to people who live nearby, keep up to date with local news, join groups, get crime and safety alerts, buy and sell household goods and much more. The app itself is very easy to use and you can turn off the background GPS functions if you're worried about draining your battery.



...Not this one

Neighbourhood

bit.ly/neighbour503

Neighbourhood has a similar ethos to Nextdoor – “to provide a trusted platform for neighbours where they work together to build stronger, safer, happier relations” – as well as a suspiciously similar design. But the chief difference between the two apps is that this one doesn't work. At least it didn't on either of the two handsets we tried, or the devices owned by all the irate reviewers on Google Play, many of whom couldn't even get the app to start.





Take a Screen Break

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

**WIN A
WEB USER
2019 BACK
ISSUES DISC!**

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



CAN YOU GUESS THE CLASSIC BOOKS 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 A... TP-Link Archer AX50 router

Offering next-generation Wi-Fi 6, TP-Link's Archer AX50 router can reach 2,402Mbps on 5 GHz and 574 Mbps on 2.4GHz band.

Four high-gain antennas and beamforming combine to extend strong, reliable Wi-Fi throughout your home. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'Archer' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.tp-link.com and follow [@TPLINKUK](https://twitter.com/TPLINKUK) on Twitter.



**WORTH
£169.99
EACH**

WIN A... Logitech Zone Wired headset

The Logitech Zone Wired is perfect for workers who spend their time taking calls and listening to music. Full-bodied bass and crisp higher frequencies create a great sound whether you're on a video call or playing your favourite tracks. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'Logitech' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.logitech.com and follow [@Logitech](https://twitter.com/Logitech) on Twitter.



**WORTH
£119
EACH**



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

Our guide to LiDAR

Augmented reality isn't just for games and silly photo filters. **David Crookes** looks at the technology that's taking AR to a new level

What is LiDAR?

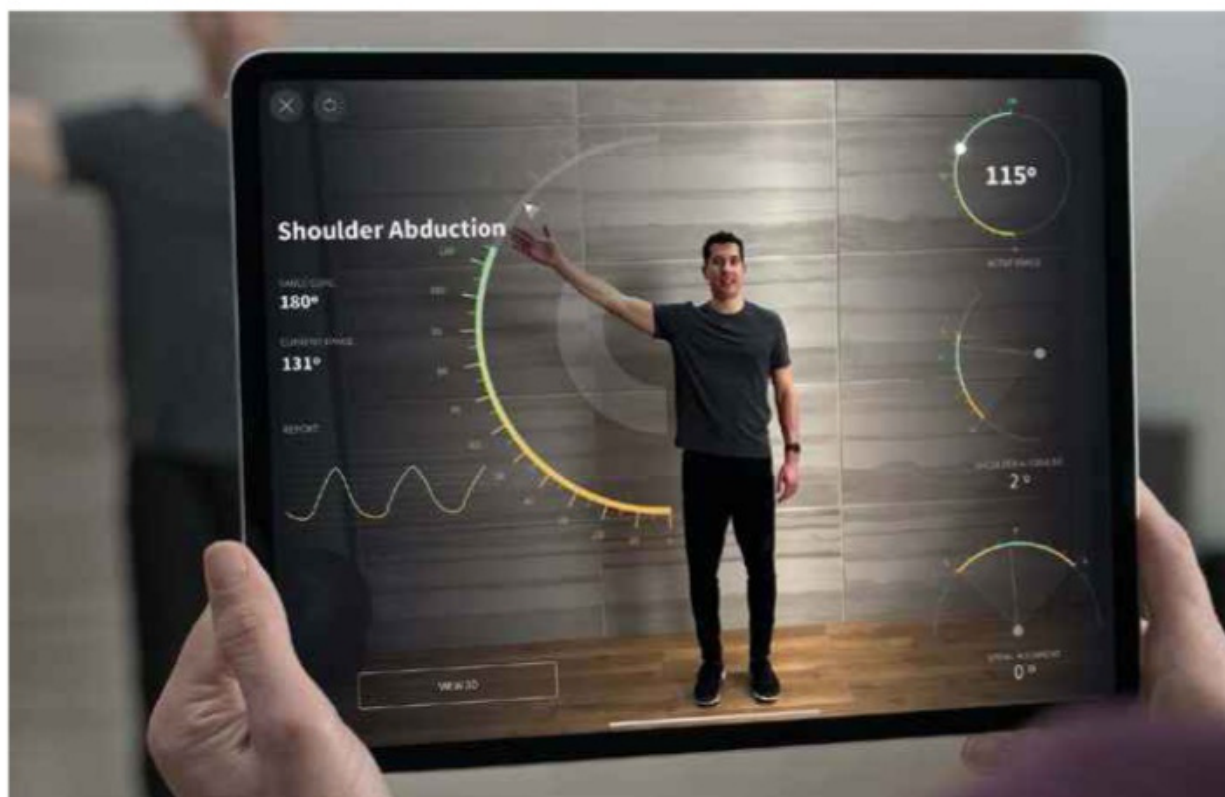
Dating back to the 1960s, LiDAR – which stands for 'light detection and ranging' – is a laser-scanning system that's capable of accurately measuring your immediate environment. It works by emitting a low-power laser light at a target, then recording the time it takes to bounce back – a technique that calculates the span between the sensor and the object to pinpoint the position of surrounding items. As such, the system is used to measure distances and create 3D maps, and will prove crucial in the next wave of augmented-reality apps.

How is it used?

When LiDAR was devised, meteorologists at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in the US used it to measure clouds by transmitting near-infrared laser beams from the bottom of aeroplanes. It's also been put to work creating topological maps and measuring water depth, and has had some high profile successes, such as mapping the Moon during the Apollo 15 mission in 1971 (in the guise of the Apollo Laser Altimeter). The resulting point-clouds (the 3D maps of the surrounding space) were made more accurate by teaming the measurements with GPS



LiDAR was used by the Apollo 15 mission in 1971 to map the topography of the Moon



data in the 1980s. It's led to great advances in science.

So it allows for groundbreaking research?

Oh, yes. Researchers have used LiDAR to delve deep into dense jungle to map hidden Mayan cities and, last month, experts from the University of Exeter used the technology to discover 30 prehistoric and Roman settlements, about 20 burial mounds and the remnants of hundreds of medieval quarries, farms and field systems in the South West of England. They did so by studying topographical maps and removing buildings and vegetation from the data to get a clearer picture of the shape of the land.

LiDAR has even been used to monitor daily mosquito activity in Tanzania in an effort to help prevent the spread of malaria. A scanning device situated between three and five metres above ground was able to observe 300,000 insects over a sizable patch of land.

Is this why we're talking about LiDAR now?

Actually, LiDAR has mainly been in the

news because Apple recently unveiled its new iPad Pro, which comes with a LiDAR scanner built into both its 11in and 12.9in models. According to the company, the tablet's depth sensors can measure the distance to surrounding objects located up to five metres away, and the scanner operates at the photon level at nano-second speeds. Calculations are made via the new, cutting edge 64-bit ARM-based A12Z Bionic processor, which combines the depth points gleaned from the scanner with data from the iPad's cameras and motion sensors. Computer vision algorithms enhance the details of a

The new Apple iPad Pro has a built-in LiDAR scanner for measuring distances



COULD LIDAR HELP US SOCIAL DISTANCE?

It's not easy to stay two metres apart from other people when you're out and about, not least because you have to estimate the distance while trying to keep safe (and alert). No surprise to learn, then, that some tech companies are figuring out ways to help. Quanergy (quanergy.com/products) is looking at a combination of LiDAR and AI-perception software to "anonymously track people flows" while measuring the distance between individuals. Created for use in retail locations, transport hubs and other public venues, the technology has been incorporated into a system called SafeDistance by motion-analytics company iinside (iinside.com). Sensors placed within a venue capture the necessary data and trigger alerts when there is the potential for overcrowding, so that venue managers can take action.



Credit: Quanergy

recorded scene, allowing for the fast and accurate generation of a 3D model.

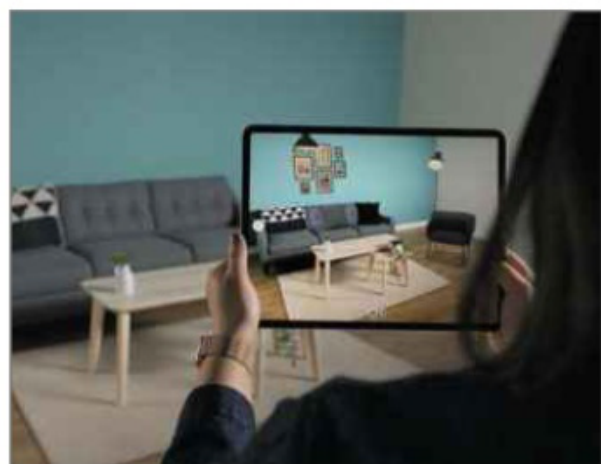
Will it be used in phones?

It's likely that Apple will include the LiDAR scanner in the iPhone 12, which should be released later this year (a leak of iOS 14 points towards the feature being available on the Pro and Pro Max versions of the phone). As with the new iPad Pro (which is out now), the technology will go beyond the depth sensors that are currently in the smartphones and put them on a par with professional mapping systems.

The LiDAR system also improves Apple's existing Measure app (bit.ly/measure503), which uses AR to turn an iPad or iPhone into a tape measure, to make calculating height, depth and length much easier and more accurate.

But why do we need LiDAR?

What we consider to be groundbreaking uses of LiDAR data today are likely to evolve over the coming years, but we can certainly expect to see more fluid AR games right now, as well as apps that let you visualise how a room will look with specific items of furniture in it (such as in the Studio Mode of the IKEA Place app). It will be possible to get speedy measurements and create 2D floor plans alongside 3D recreations of a room.



LiDAR could be used to see how IKEA furniture looks in your home before you buy

Apple has also highlighted an app called Complete Anatomy, which allows physiotherapists to measure the progress of their patients.

Will Android devices have LiDAR, too?

Some higher-end Android devices such as the Samsung Galaxy Note 10+ use a similar system called Time-of-Flight, in the form of a DepthVision Lens. This type of camera uses infrared light to measure the distance from the handset to any objects it can view. However, Time-of-Flight only uses a single wide pulse of light, whereas Apple's LiDAR scanner uses multiple beams for greater accuracy. This makes Apple's approach more suitable for advanced AR, although the Android system works well in adding depth to portrait photos, creating 3D images and background blurring when coupled with the right software.

Google has its own software development kit called ARCore (developers.google.com/ar), which allows virtual content to be overlaid on real-world visuals via an Android device's camera. However, it remains to be seen whether it will now create another system that uses LiDAR. Much is likely to depend on how successful Apple's involvement with the technology proves.

Will other consumer tech include LiDAR?

Most likely. In fact, you may have heard LiDAR mentioned in relation to

autonomous vehicles, as makers have been experimenting with the technology to see how effective it is at detecting and avoiding obstacles. By mounting a device on top of the vehicle, self-driving cars can use the 360-degree view of the surroundings to record the many thousands of laser pulses being emitted and reflected back as they trundle down the road. This builds into a 3D representation of the various points in rapid time, increasing safety and allowing

the vehicle to carry out crucial moves, such as braking or stopping when danger is sensed.

A LiDAR system developed by Luminar is being used by Volvo in vehicles set to roll off the production line in 2022.

Tesla boss Elon Musk, however, calls LiDAR "a fool's errand" and, at a press conference last year, said: "Anyone relying on LiDAR is doomed. Doomed!"

They are expensive sensors that are unnecessary." Tesla cars use radar, GPS, maps and ultrasonic sensors among other technology, as an alternative.



The Samsung Galaxy Note 10+ uses a LiDAR-like system called Time-of-Flight



LiDAR is being used to improve the safety of autonomous vehicles, such as Volvo cars

STOP GOOGLE & AMAZON SPYING ON YOU

**COVER
FEATURE**

Google and Amazon's apps and smart devices are getting cleverer by the day, but that's because they know so much about you. **Jane Hoskyn** reveals how to limit the snooping without giving up the tools you love



During the coronavirus lockdown, we've become more reliant than ever on the tech giants to help us stay informed and keep in touch with loved ones. Imagine spending all these weeks under house arrest without Amazon's online shopping, streaming video service and ebooks, or Google's search and messaging tools, and mobile devices.

But the more we use their apps, the more these companies know about us and our habits, tastes, movements and even our intimate conversations. They

exploit our personal secrets to shape their products, target us with adverts and even hobnob with government bodies – and hackers are always waiting to intercept the data.

So should we give up these useful tools? Of course not – they make life easier and just plain better. Instead, we can tweak their settings to stop them invading our privacy. In this feature, we show you how to view and delete the data your smart devices and apps have collected, then dramatically limit the information they can track and gather in future.

PREVENT SMART DEVICES FROM PRYING ON YOU



Stop Google's smart speakers spying on you

Google's Home and Nest AI-powered smart speakers let you control all manner of connected devices around your house. Your wish, spoken out loud and picked up by the speaker's built-in microphone, is the device's command. With a quick "OK Google" and a few words ('Actions'), you can change TV channels, dim your smart lightbulbs, check the weather, play music and even order a takeaway from the local Chinese.

The Google Home (newer devices are called Nest) is a brilliant innovation that's made life much easier for people stuck indoors, not only for lockdown reasons. But there's a clear privacy downside to having an always-on microphone in your living room, kitchen or – yikes! – bedroom. The speaker's mic doesn't magically switch on when you speak, it has to be listening out for you all the time. And it records what it hears, and sends it back to the company servers, where Google employees listen to the recordings (bit.ly/ghome503).

The official line from Google is that these recordings are essential for improving its products, but that doesn't make it any less creepy. And your Home

or Nest is recording more than it should, according to a recent report which found that smart speakers accidentally record up to 19 times a day (bit.ly/smartrec503). Sometimes it's triggered by TV dialogue, which is actually rather amusing, and sometimes by very private conversations, which is not funny at all.

To banish Google's eavesdropping without having to give up your smart speaker or disable the mic, go to your Google account's Activity Controls page on your PC or device (bit.ly/activity503) and untick 'Include voice and audio recordings'. This blocks voice recording via other sources, including Chrome, as well as via Home. Untick 'Include Chrome history and activity from sites, apps and devices that use Google services' to stop Google saving activity from right across your account.



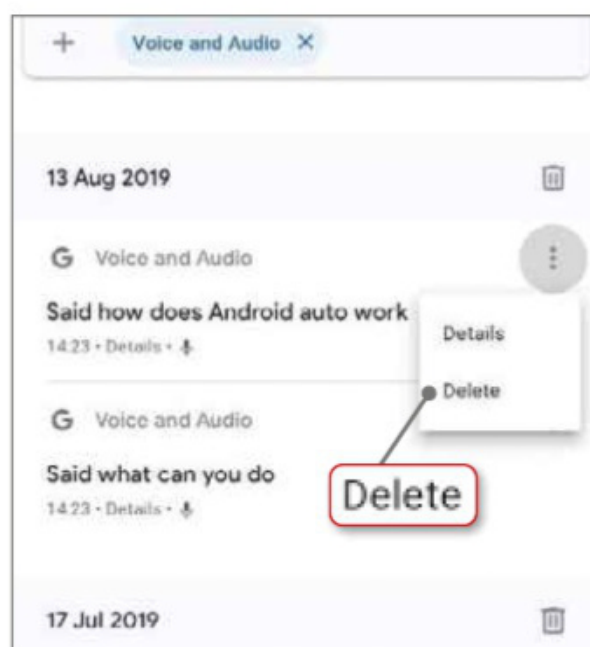
Delete all Google's recordings of your voice

You don't need a fancy smart speaker to find that your voice is being stored on Google's servers, because Google's voice-activated technology is already on your Android phone or tablet, in the form of Google Assistant. It's listening in case you ever say "OK Google" (or "Hey Google"), and may have been eavesdropping on and recording you for years.

To view and blitz these recordings, open Assistant and tap the compass icon to launch Explore. Tap your profile photo, then Settings and 'Your data in the Assistant'. Scroll down to 'Voice and audio recordings', 'See and delete activity'. This takes you to My Activity (bit.ly/myact503). Select 'Voice and



Keep conversations private by revoking Google's access to voice recordings



Delete Google's recordings of your voice via Assistant

Audio' from the list, then go through your recordings, clicking 'details' to play them and using the bin icons to delete.

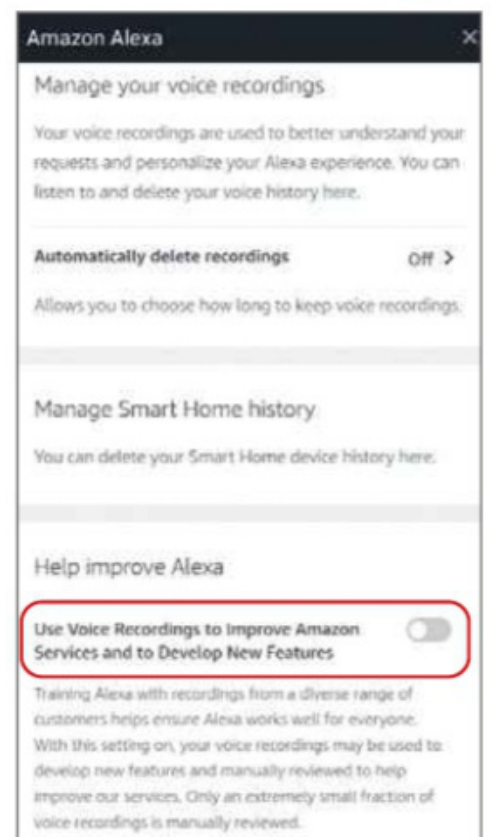
It's worth knowing that Assistant is no longer a compulsory feature on Android. If you don't use it, get rid of it. You can uninstall it via Apps in Settings. Also, go to Voice Match in Settings (under Google, 'Account services', 'Search, Assistant & voice') and switch off the Hey Google toggle, which is on by default.



Stop Amazon employees listening to your Alexa recordings

Amazon's Echo speakers respond to the word "Alexa" – which triggers the Alexa voice assistant – and then obey your commands. Alexa's app does the same thing on your phone and tablet (bit.ly/alexa503) and, as with Google, Amazon employees around the world listen to your voice recordings (bit.ly/listen503). The official reason is that this is to improve Alexa's speech recognition. Meanwhile Google and Amazon are evolving their smart speakers to glean data that's ever-more personal – and also happens to be valuable to advertisers (bit.ly/patents503).

You can minimise Echo's snooping with a couple of Settings tweaks in the Alexa app. Go to Alexa Privacy, Manage Your Alexa Data, then toggle off 'Use Voice Recordings to Improve Amazon Services and to Develop New Features' to block the corporate eavesdropping.



If you're not happy to 'Help improve Alexa' by letting Amazon employees eavesdrop on you, switch off 'Use Voice Recordings'

To hear and delete your voice recordings, go to Alexa Privacy, Review Voice History. On the same screen, toggle on 'Enable deletion by voice' to make Alexa delete the day's recordings when you tell it to do so out loud.

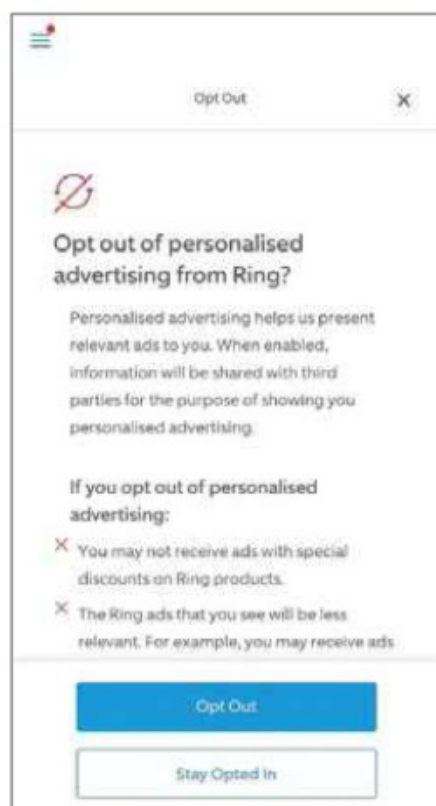


Stop your smart doorbell spying on you

Ring, the smart video doorbell owned by Amazon, works with Alexa to let you see who's at the door before you get off the sofa, or even while you're away from home. This is great for security but also a potential privacy risk. Amazon records every motion Ring detects, so it knows when you go out, when you get home, who visits, how long they stay for – and what you all look and sound like. Privacy campaigners are not impressed (bit.ly/doorbell503).

Amazon responded to the outcry by adding a new Control Centre privacy dashboard to the Ring app (ring.com/gettheapp) that lets you opt out of personalised ads (enabled by default), manage linked devices and accounts, and deadlock Ring with two-factor authentication (2FA), so strangers can no longer access your data simply by creating a second login. There's no option to prevent recordings from being stored and nothing about encryption.

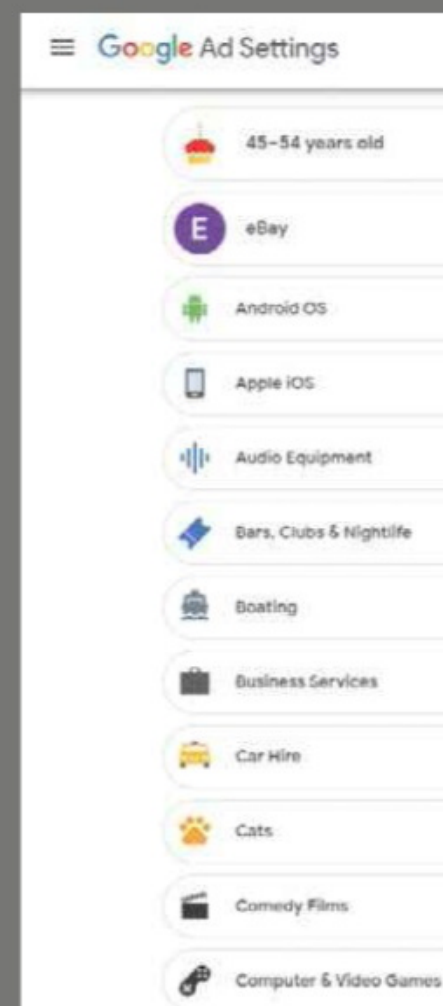
Google's Nest Hello smart doorbell (bit.ly/nesthello503) has better privacy credentials. Mozilla's 'Privacy not included' site gives Ring just 2 out of 5 for privacy (bit.ly/ringpriv503), while Nest scores 5 out of 5 (bit.ly/nestpriv503), not least because it comes with encryption and 2FA by default. The Nest app (bit.ly/nest503),



Amazon uses Ring data to target you with ads, and deliberately hides the setting that lets you opt out

REVIEW YOUR GOOGLE AND AMAZON DATA

- To order a file of all the data Amazon has gathered about you via all its products including Alexa and Kindle, go to bit.ly/request503. To remove any data, you must send a 'data deletion request' to Amazon via bit.ly/delete503.
- To see all the Google account activity Google has on you – every word you've searched, place you've saved in Maps, image you've stored in Photos and ad you've clicked – go to My Activity (bit.ly/myact503). Click 'Filter by date & product' to browse and delete items one by one, or by date, or all in one go.
- To see all the personal info linked to your Google account and stored on Google's servers, go to Google Dashboard (bit.ly/dash503). This info will include your home address and location history in Google Maps; your personal notes in Keep; and your Drive files. Click 'Download your data' to get a huge file for your records.
- To see what personal info Google shares with advertisers – including your age range, marital status, parental status and homeowner status – go to adssettings.google.com in your browser. This page also includes interests that Google has guessed from your activity. Click one, then 'Turn off' to banish it from your profile.



which also governs the brand's smart thermostats and smoke alarms, links to Google Activity Controls via Settings, so you can ban activity storage by unticking 'Include Chrome history and activity from sites, apps and devices that use Google services'.



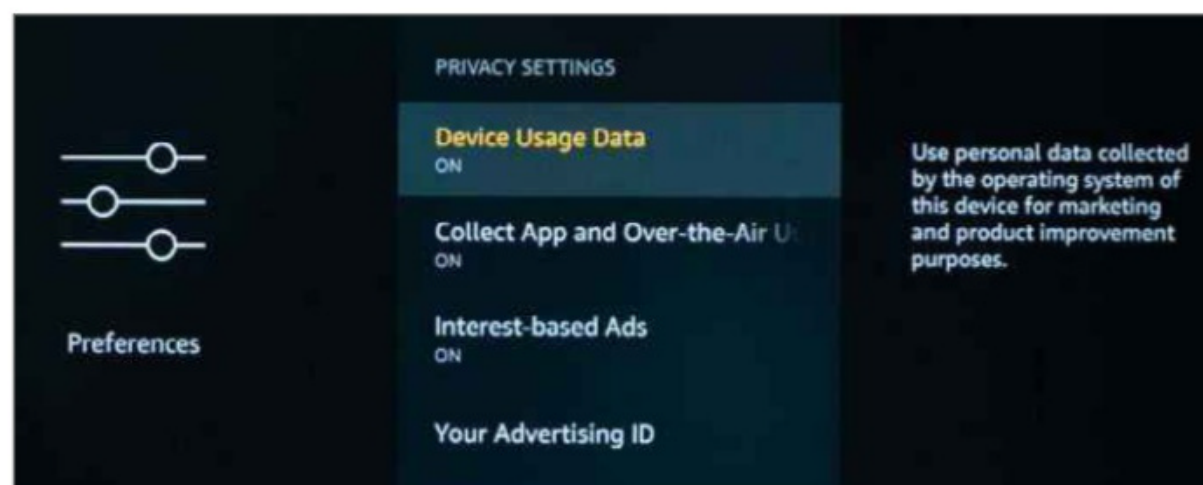
Stop Amazon spying on your TV habits

Amazon is watching you watch TV, and it's taking detailed notes. As Amazon admits in its Fire TV privacy settings FAQ (bit.ly/firetv503), the streaming device gathers data about when you watch, how you move around the home screen and what

language, display and internet settings you choose. The usual "improve services" justification is given, but it also mentions marketing uses.

Until a few months ago, there was nothing you could do to limit the snooping, but Amazon has now added two new privacy sections to Preferences in Fire TV Settings. First, go to Privacy Settings and turn off Device Usage Data, Collect App Usage Data and Interest-based Ads. Then go to Data Monitoring and tap to turn it off.

If you're a Prime Video user, you'll already know Amazon keeps note of everything you watch, and uses the info to persuade you to watch similar stuff. What you might not be aware of is that the data may also be shared with



Stop Amazon watching TV over your shoulder by switching off device-usage data collection in your Fire TV Settings

advertising partners. To clear your watch history, albeit one entry at a time, go to your Watch History (bit.ly/watched503) and scroll through the list clicking 'Hide this' to expunge items completely. To clear your video search history, open the Prime Video app (bit.ly/primeapp503) and tap My Stuff, Settings, Clear Video Search History.



Stop your Kindle spying on your reading habits

Amazon takes a lot more interest in your Kindle activity than

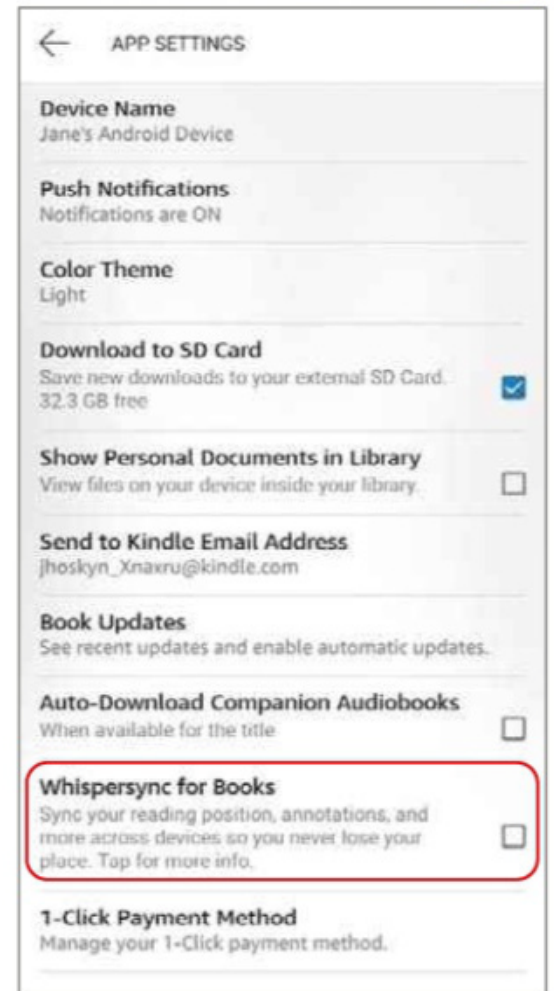
merely noting that you're browsing for books about garden sheds. The company also records, stores, uses and shares the location of your Kindle (or device with the Kindle app installed, bit.ly/kindle503); the times you start and stop reading; which books and

sections you share via other apps; and even which sentences you highlight and copy to your device's clipboard.

Amazon claims it doesn't share the insights gleaned from your reading habits with third parties, but the company recently signed a deal with the NHS that could have serious implications for your privacy (see box on page 44).

Some Kindle users have opted to download pirated books that bypass Amazon's approved file formats and hoodwink its monitoring, but there are safer ways to beat the spy system. If you only use Kindle software on one device, whether that's an Amazon device or your phone or tablet, then untick Whispersync in Settings. Whispersync keeps your reading position synced between devices, but it's also responsible for much of Amazon's reading over your shoulder.

Syncing your Kindle activity across devices leaves your privacy exposed, so switch off Whispersync



PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY FROM MOBILE APPS

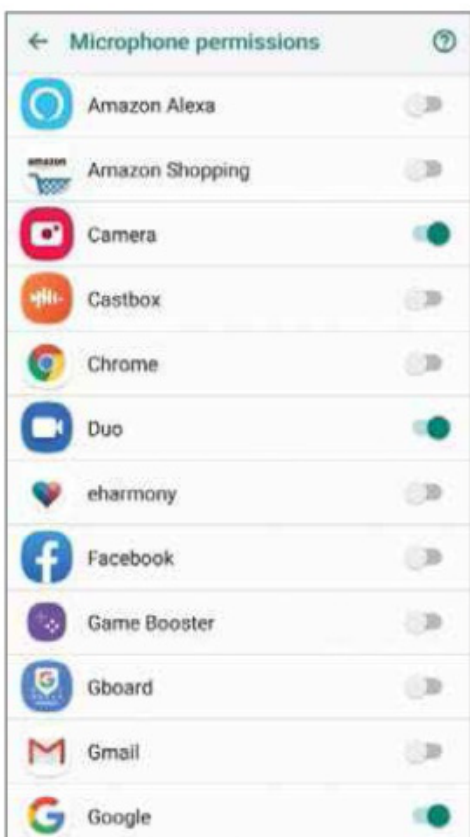
Block apps from using your microphone or camera

Revoking access to your device's microphone or camera (or both) dramatically limits snooping by Google, Amazon and their partner companies. In Android Settings, tap Apps then 'App permissions' or 'Permissions manager'. Select 'Microphone permissions', then toggle off the apps that don't need mic access to work properly. Most don't. Only your camera app and messaging apps need it, plus a digital assistant if you use one. Now tap 'Camera permissions', and only allow apps that

you use to take photos or record videos.

The 'App permissions' list also lets you revoke access to

Apps such as Amazon Shopping, Gmail and Gboard don't need access to your microphone, so switch them off



your location, call logs, calendar, body sensors and more. 'Additional permissions' reveals even sneakier spy strategies, including permission to read your instant messages and track your vehicle information.

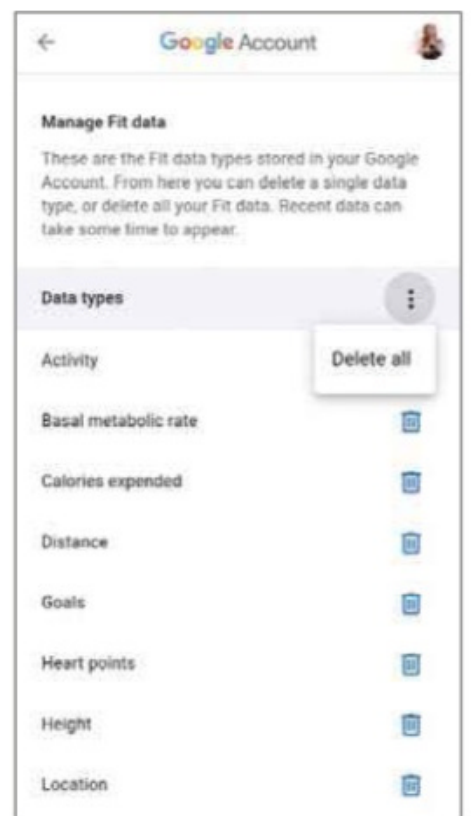
Stop your fitness tracker sharing your health data

Google follows you everywhere, literally, with its fitness-tracking app Google Fit (google.com/fit). This turns your smartphone into a powerful health monitor that stores basic data such as your height, weight and age; measures your steps, distance and expended calories; and links to third-party wearables to measure blood pressure, heart rate and so on. And it's set to get even more powerful, following Google's \$2.1bn purchase of fitness tracker Fitbit (bit.ly/fitbit503).

But do you really want all that data – plus the details of everywhere you've walked – added to the vast trove of info Google already holds on you? You could banish Google Fit's snooping by disabling activity tracking and mapping in Settings (tap Profile then the cog), but this would stop the app measuring your everyday movements. It's worth doing, though, if you value your privacy and want to use Fit only for measuring certain events, such as a long weekly walk in the countryside.

If you do want to use Fit every day, you can still limit Google's data-

Clear your tracks by removing some or all of the data Google Fit has stored to your account



gathering by tapping 'Configure diagnostics' in Settings, then switching off that option. You should also clear some or all Fit-measured data from your Google account. To do this, tap 'Manage your data' and go through the dozen measurements, including 'Move minutes', 'Basal metabolic rate' and 'Calories expended', tapping each bin icon to delete that data. Finally, tap 'Manage connected apps', then Disconnect to stop other apps accessing your Fit data.

To lock down Google's location-stalking even further, head for 'Privacy Check-up' (bit.ly/checkup503) and



switch off automatically enabled tracking such as App Activity and Location History.

Stop Amazon selling your shopping secrets

One day you're looking at hedge trimmers on the Amazon shopping app or website and the next, you're seeing ads for hedge trimmers on every single site you visit. To cut this commercial stalking, disable Amazon's 'interest-based' ads permissions via its website. Click Accounts & Lists under your name, then 'Advertising preferences', 'Do not show me interest-based ads provided by Amazon' and then Submit. You'll need to do this again whenever you clear your browser's cookies.

To rid your Amazon homepage of irritating (and potentially embarrassing) reminders about recent purchases, weed them out via the Improve Your Recommendations page (bit.ly/improve503).

Google offers a more wholesale opt-out of targeted ads. First, switch off the 'Ad personalisation' toggle at adssettings.google.com, then click Advanced and untick 'Also use your activity and information from Google services...'. Open your Android Settings app and go to Google, Ads, and switch on 'Opt out of Ads Personalisation'.

Untick Amazon's 'interest-based ads' setting to stop Amazon broadcasting the contents of your shopping basket



Go incognito when using Google Maps

Where have you been? Here's where: bit.ly/timeline503. Sign in as prompted, and Google will plot your movements on a Timeline map, in red dots, for all the months and years since you've had a device with Google Maps installed. It's wonderful and terrifying in equal measures.

You can pause Google's Timeline-building activities by launching Maps in Incognito mode, which stops any data being saved to your Location History.

Tap your profile photo in the Maps app, then 'Turn on Incognito mode'. To load your Location History map on your phone or tablet, tap 'Your data in Maps', then 'See and delete activity'.

Be aware that going incognito in Maps doesn't stop Google tracking your location, because Android has many system-wide location trackers. Go to Settings, 'Biometrics and security', Location to either switch off Location tracking completely or to check which apps have requested location access. If any of them make you uncomfortable, you can revoke access in Google Maps' Permissions in the 'Apps & notifications' section of the Settings app.

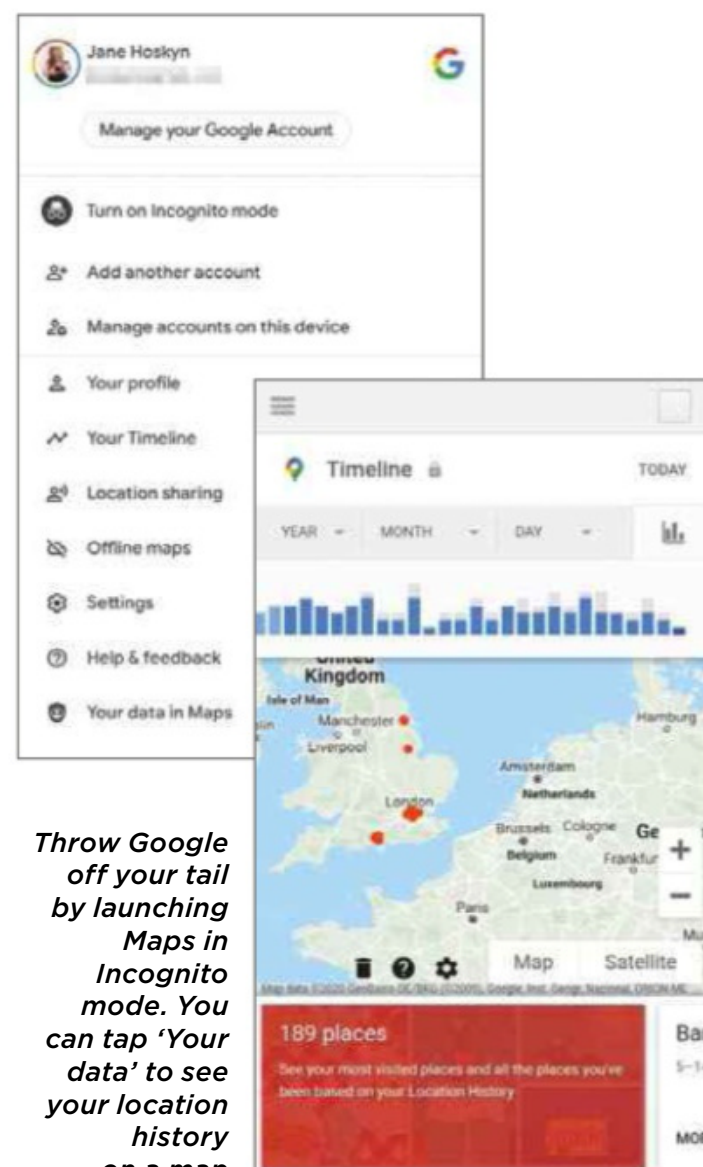
ARE YOUR HEALTH SECRETS IN SAFE HANDS?

Google and Amazon no longer just share your data with advertisers – they're now sharing it with the NHS. At the time of writing, the NHS hasn't confirmed if it will or won't use Google's coronavirus contact-tracing system. The government rejected the app in April and is trialling an independent tool, but it's reportedly conducting a feasibility study into Google's involvement (bit.ly/study503).

Amazon, meanwhile, has signed a deal to let the NHS and Alexa plunder each other for people's health data (bit.ly/alexanhs503). This is on top of Amazon sharing your info with other businesses and, according to privacy campaigners, the police (bit.ly/ampriv503).

Responding to complaints about the NHS deal, Amazon said: "Customer trust is of the utmost importance. Customers are in control of their voice history. They can review and delete voice recordings in the Alexa app."

Yes, but only if they know their data is being used in this way, which most people don't. Deals between vital government agencies and globally powerful tech providers will become the norm – the tech giants run the best digital services in the world, after all. So it has never been more important to understand how they collect and use your data, and how you can limit what they know and share.

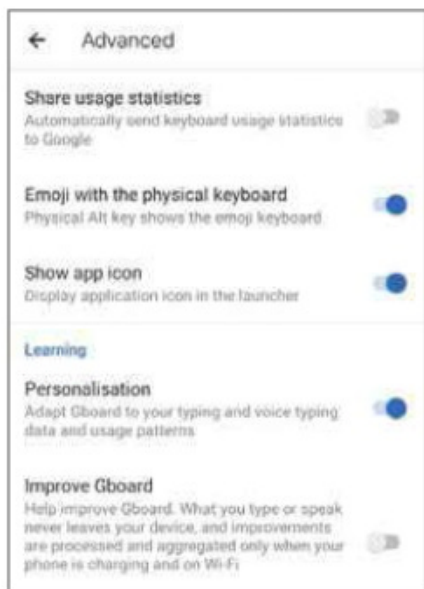


Throw Google off your tail by launching Maps in Incognito mode. You can tap 'Your data' to see your location history on a map

STOP GOOGLE TRACKING YOUR TYPING

Stop Google's keyboard logging what you type

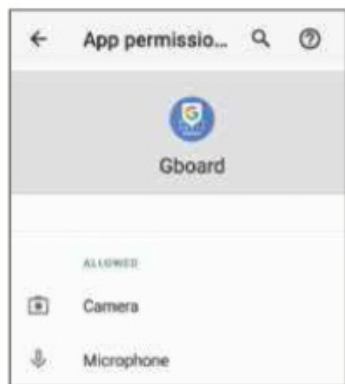
Google's Android keyboard Gboard (bit.ly/gboard503) is part keyboard, part new best friend and part privacy-



Personalisation is integral to Gboard but 'Share usage statistics' and 'Improve Gboard' can go

invader. This wonderful smart app gets to know you and your language habits over time, including your most-typed words, your friends' names and commonly typed info such as your email address. It inserts and corrects these automatically, effectively finishing your sentences for you. However, such close monitoring of your typing has led to accusations that it's effectively a keylogger – malware that records everything you type (bit.ly/keylog503).

Gboard is not a keylogger, but it does collect a host of data for Google. To limit this without making it less useful, go to Gboard Settings, Advanced and



Does your Android keyboard really need access to your phone's microphone and keyboard? We think not

Turn off Google's more intrusive Gmail innovations, including Smart Reply and Nudges

switch off 'Share usage statistics' and Improve Gboard. You could also switch off Personalisation, then tap 'Delete learned words and data' to clear everything Gboard has ever learned about you – though this would undo Gboard's more useful features.

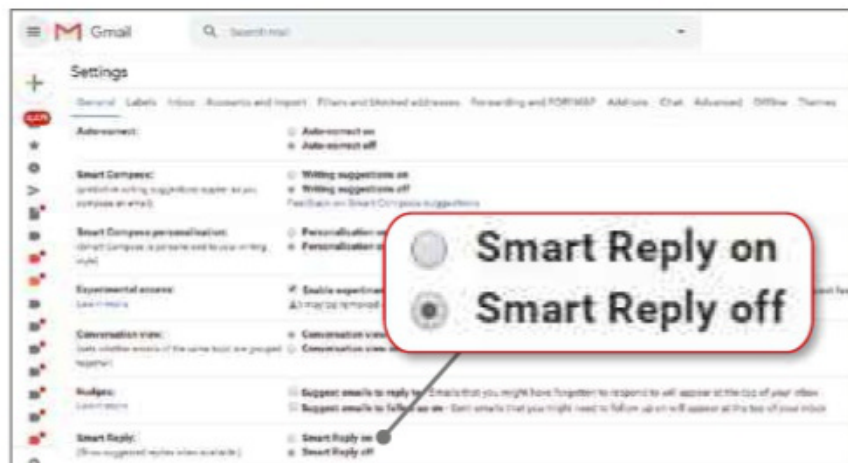
It's also worth stripping Gboard of a few permissions. By default, it has access to your contacts, location, microphone and more. Head to Gboard's Permissions in the 'Apps & notifications' section of the Android Settings app and switch these off.

Stop Google reading your Gmail messages

Google doesn't need keylogging software to know what you're typing, it just reads your Gmail messages. That was the gist of a 2018 *Wall Street Journal* exposé entitled 'Tech's Dirty Secret' (bit.ly/dirty503), which revealed that Google scans your emails for info about upcoming trips, recent purchases and more.

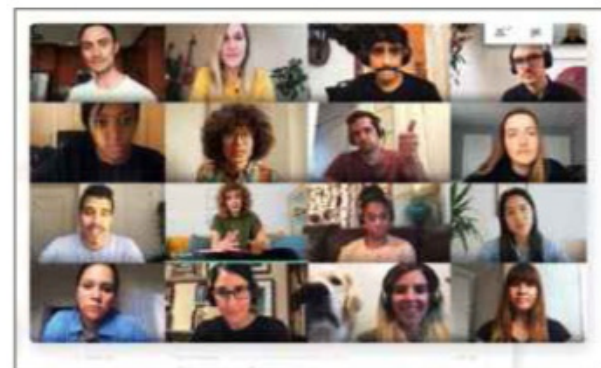
Google insists none of this info is used to target ads, but to improve Gmail. For example, it's how Google knows to add an Unsubscribe link above newsletters. Even so, Gmail is adding increasingly intrusive features such as 'Nudges', which remind you to reply to a message that Google judges to be important.

To disable these features, go to Gmail Settings, General, then switch off Smart



Compose (a kind of predictive text), Smart Reply, Auto-correct and Nudges. If you're still creeped out, you can delete Gmail completely (and download your entire Gmail archive) via bit.ly/dashboard503.

If you're a Gmail user, you may recently have noticed the appearance of Meet (meet.google.com), Google's Zoom-rivalling video-chat service, which is now integrated into the desktop version of Gmail. You can launch it instantly by clicking 'Start a meeting'. However, before you get carried away and reveal more than you bargained for to the search giant, click the three vertical dots in the video window, then Settings, General, and untick 'Report additional diagnostics' to prevent Google gathering information about your Meet usage. ■



Stop Google gathering info about how you use its Meet video-chat service

NEXT ISSUE

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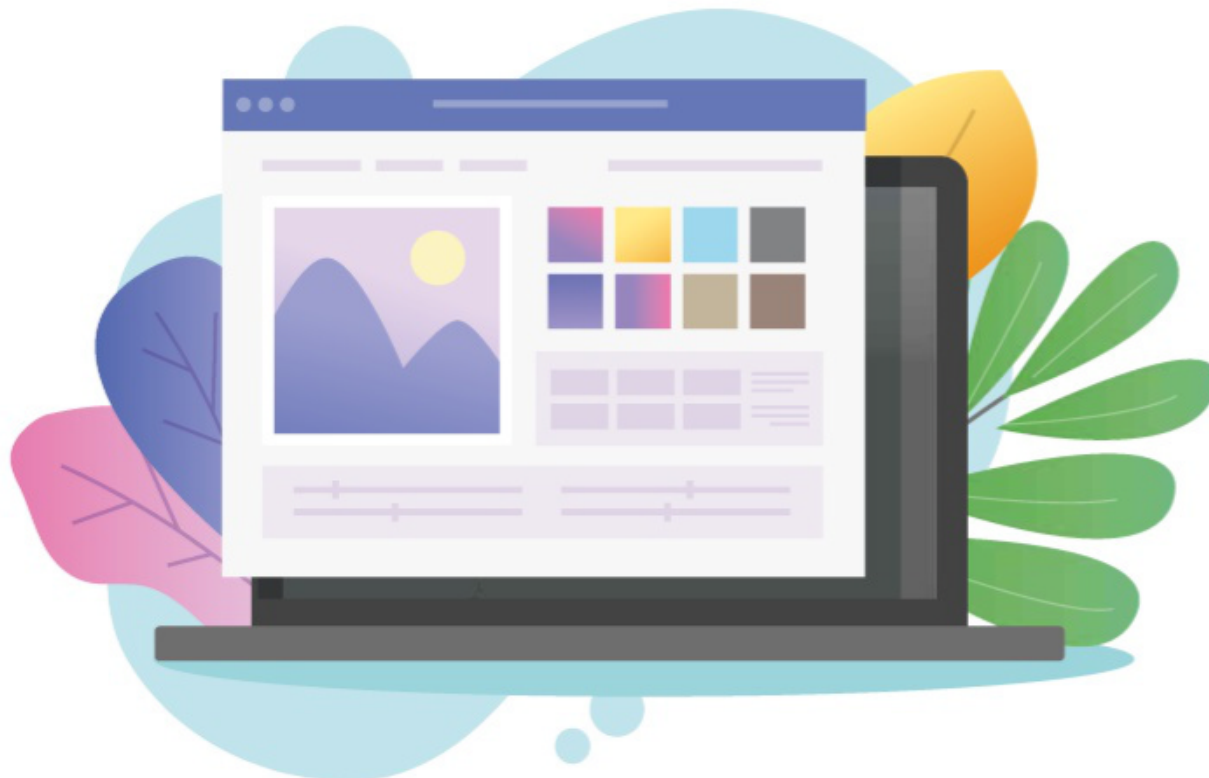
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Best free online image editors

You don't need to download expensive software to make professional tweaks to your photos. **Steve Clark** tests web-based tools that let you edit and enhance your images for free



Photopea | www.photopea.com | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★☆☆

**WebUser
GOLD
AWARD**

What we liked:

It's impossible to review Photopea without referring to Adobe Photoshop. They're essentially the same in all but name – minus those extortionate fees, of course.

Even the default save format is a Photoshop PSD file.

Depending on your skill level, those similarities are both good and bad news. At first glance, the layout looks nearly identical: image settings and options run along the top, with a bewildering number of tools on the left. If you're familiar with Adobe's august image editor, you'll feel right at home; if you're unversed in the art of Photoshop, you'll need time to experiment with these elements, even if it's just hovering over each tool to see what it actually is.

Understanding what Photopea can do is part of the fun, because it can do a lot – and that, too, is both good and bad news. Most people use online image editors for quick picture fixes and Photopea gives you those options, but it also bundles loads of expert tools, which can feel overwhelming. However, if you get to grips with this versatility, you'll find yourself producing impressively professional creations.

As well as

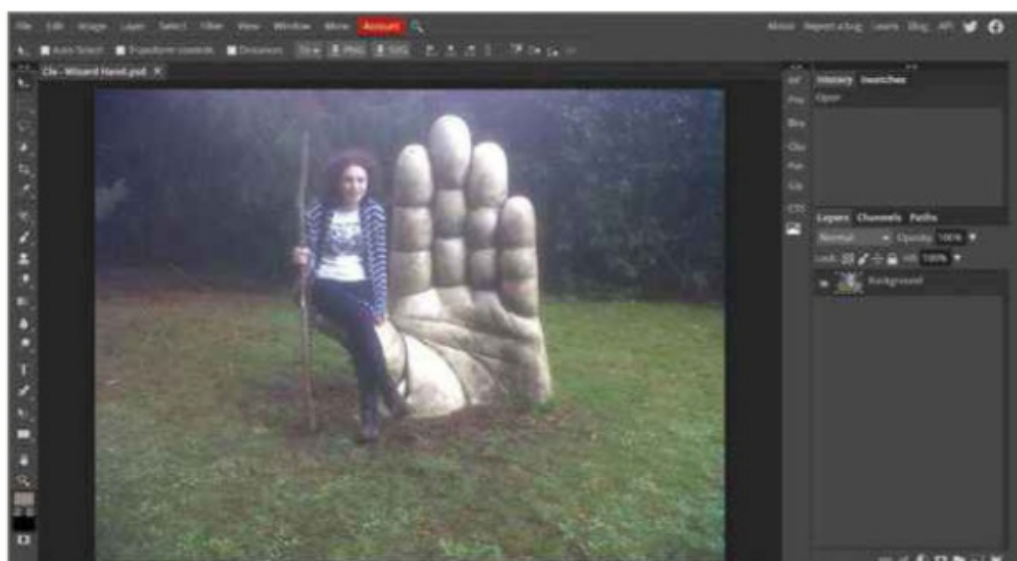
providing tools for standard image editing, Photopea also comes packed with a huge array of templates. You can even give your

social-media profiles a visual makeover by selecting specially sized canvases designed for different platforms. These can then be customised by switching out images and adding stylised text. You can open a massive range of supported file types, and the selection of export formats is just as vast.

Arguably, Photopea's best feature is that it offers a great Photoshop alternative for older, slower computers.

How it could be improved:

It may take some time to fall in love with Photopea. Given its similarity to Photoshop, there's a steeper learning curve than with the other online image editors in this Group Test. Thankfully,



there's a whole host of tutorials on the website (www.photopea.com/tuts), with new articles added regularly. The main drawback is that Photopea can fall between two stools: too oblique for regular users yet trying to attract Photoshop aficionados who may have no need for an online alternative.

OUR VERDICT

This stunning online image editor has all the tools with none of the cost. Photopea may overwhelm at first, but take time to learn its ways and you'll soon be doing far more than simply removing red-eye.

Pixlr X | pixlr.com/x | ★★★★★☆
FEATURES ★★★★★☆ **PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★☆ **EASE OF USE** ★★★★★

**WebUser
SILVER
AWARD**

What we liked:

Pixlr X – the personal counterpart to the more professional Pixlr E – is pleasingly minimalist. Its deceptively sleek design provides plenty to get stuck into without overwhelming the user. Hover over any of the sidebar tools to see one of Pixlr's best mini-features: the keyboard shortcut key.

Basic tools include altering contrasts and making images smoother or sharper. You can also apply a good range of filters. Slightly more advanced are features such as Cutout, which let you crop elements of the image or remove backgrounds. None of these are particularly tricky to use – they just require a steady hand.

When uploading an image, you're offered a choice of resolutions, from Ultra HD to the web-friendly 1,280 pixels. This should, according to Pixlr, help minimise lag when working on a project. Alternatively, you can also specify a custom size.

Exporting deserves a special shout-out: click Save and you're able to set the



image quality of your project with the easy-to-use slider.

How it could be improved:

Pixlr X covers basic and intermediate editing tools, with file types for saving and exporting limited to JPG, PNG, WEBP and PXD. That won't be an issue for most casual users, but this isn't the right choice if you want to make seriously advanced tweaks to pictures.

OUR VERDICT

Quick and dependable, Pixlr X has enough features to satisfy most users. Were it not for Photopea's impressive Photoshop clone, it would have won our Gold Award.

LunaPic | www.lunapic.com | ★★★★★☆
FEATURES ★★★★★☆ **PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★☆ **EASE OF USE** ★★★★★

**WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD**

What we liked:

We've long been fans of LunaPic, which offers basic photo editing in your browser and has all the classic tools to crop, rotate and toy with colour and contrast at will.

Upload your image to view key information such as file size, file type and image quality. Crucially, these can be modified simply by clicking the accompanying link – if you're after quick and simple edits, this is far simpler than wading through myriad menus.

Where LunaPic stands out is with its filters and effects, ranged across the top of the screen. Hovering over each of the seven options displays a long (arguably too long) list of additional effects, including an animation section for turning cherished pictures into GIFs or overlaying them with, for instance, an old time-y movie effect.

Once you've created your masterpiece, use the buttons at the bottom to either save it or instantly share it to your social-media accounts.



How it could be improved:

If you thought Pixlr X was too rudimentary, LunaPic isn't for you because it's inescapably simple in function, although it has an overwhelming selection of effects to choose from. These are text-based, with no visual cues, so you'll just have to experiment to see which ones you like.

OUR VERDICT

LunaPic is good for quick edits and great when you want to get more creative with your snaps. It's easy to use but requires some playing around with the hundreds of effects to find the perfect one.

BEST OF THE REST

Polarr

photoeditor.polarr.com

The more advanced Polarr is ideal for touching up images. That's not to say it's incapable of anything else, but exporting your photos is a mixed bag. On the one hand, you're limited to saving images as



JPG, PNG and TIF. On the other hand, there's support for batch saves, adding watermarks and removing metadata using the toggle switches. The stand-out feature is its facial recognition, which makes touch-ups super easy.

Fotor

www.fotor.com

There's a lot to like about Fotor, not least the '1-tap enhance', which turns editing into a quick-click process. Its provision of stickers



adds some fun to the proceedings, but we're less keen on its inclusion of premium options in among the free ones. Accidentally choosing one of these can be frustrating, since it plasters an unsightly watermark across your cherished photos. Even some basic editing tools are locked behind this paywall.

Sumopaint

sumo.app/paint

Sumopaint occupies a safe middle-ground between basic and advanced use – its layout is lacking in finesse but is intuitive to navigate. Many of Sumopaint's tools are variations on the same theme: draw on your pictures. Adding coloured stars or brushstrokes has never been so easy, though we question just how popular or necessary these are. Beyond that, there's a good array of filters and image adjustment is excellent.



SECRETS OF THE Internet Archive



The Internet Archive is an incredible source of vintage freebies, but it's also sprawling in design. **Wayne Williams** reveals the site's many highlights in our two-part A-to-Z guide

The Internet Archive (archive.org) started life back in 1996, with the ambitious goal of archiving the internet. Today, it contains copies of more than 430 billion web pages, accessible through its famous Wayback Machine tool. But that's just a fraction of what you'll find on the site.

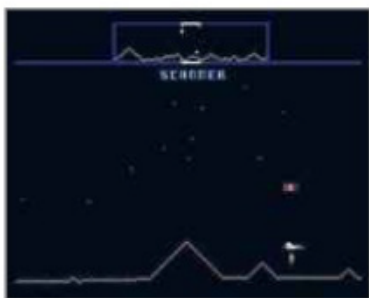
The archive features millions of books and texts, audio and video recordings, images, software and games, and

much much more, with most of the content available to access and even download for free. It's an amazing repository, but its rather dated and slow design is crammed with so much content that it can be a nightmare to browse.

In this two-part feature, we help you navigate the brilliant mess of the Internet Archive by revealing its best content and tools, all neatly organised alphabetically. Please let us know if we've missed any of your favourite finds.

ARCADE GAMES

The Internet Arcade (bit.ly/intarc503) has a fantastic collection of more than 1,700 arcade games from the 1970s to the 1990s that you can play directly in your web browser. Titles on offer include Defender, Paperboy, Tetris, Zaxxon and Pitfall II.



ARTWORK

You'll find images and art scattered far and wide across the Internet Archive, but there's also a specific collection (bit.ly/image503) of images uploaded by users. These include space images, artwork, maps and photos from Flickr.

AUDIOBOOKS

There are hundreds of free audiobooks to be found in the archive, including in the Audio Library and Talking Books collection (bit.ly/audlib503), which offers works by F Scott Fitzgerald, Leo Tolstoy, Agatha Christie, Frederick Forsyth and more. The LibriVox Free Audiobook Collection (bit.ly/libri503) features recordings made by volunteers.



BAD INFLUENCE!

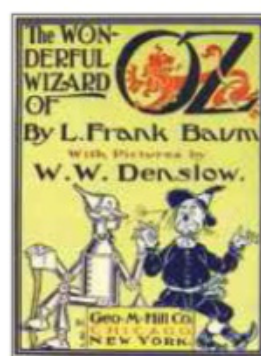
Described as 'Tomorrow's World for kids', *Bad Influence* was a technology-

based TV show broadcast on CITV between 1992 and 1996, presented by Andy Crane and Violet Berlin. The Bad Influence collection (bit.ly/badi503) contains 56 episodes of the show.



BOOKS

As you might expect, there are loads of free digitised books on offer in the Internet Archive, but the largest collection – comprising more than 4.3 million titles – is located at bit.ly/books503. Many are free to download, while others can be 'borrowed' and read via the Archive's online book reader.



CARTOONS

The Vintage Cartoons collection (bit.ly/cartoons503) includes early black-and-white animated cartoons from 1910 onwards, as well as newer colour ones, featuring a huge range of popular characters such as Tom & Jerry, Popeye, The Pink



Panther, Bugs Bunny, Felix the Cat, Betty Boop and Mickey Mouse.

CD-ROMS

In the early 1990s, CD-Roms took over from floppy disks as the main way to distribute software. The Internet Archive's CD-ROM Software Library (bit.ly/cdrom503) contains over 20,000 items covering operating systems, programs, coverdiscs and more. There's even an AOL CD-Rom Collection (bit.ly/aolcd503).



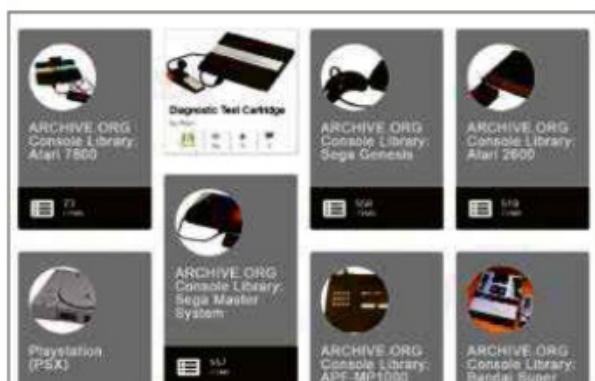
COMPUTER MAGAZINES

The Computer Magazine Archives at bit.ly/compmag503 includes thousands of issues of classic tech titles including *BYTE*, *Amiga Format*, *Amiga Computing*, *CU Amiga*, *Crash*, *Zzap!64*, *MacWorld*, *Sinclair User*, *Your Sinclair*, *Amstrad Action* and *PC Magazine*. You can read the magazines directly in your browser.



CONSOLES

The Console Living Room (bit.ly/console503) is a collection of games console titles you can play in your browser. Sorted into categories such as Atari 7800, Sega Genesis, PlayStation (PSX) and Amstrad GX-4000, the games on offer include Mortal Kombat, Sonic the Hedgehog, Golden Axe, Worms and Sensible Soccer. Nintendo is very protective of its copyright, so its titles are conspicuously absent.



DECENTRALISED VERSION

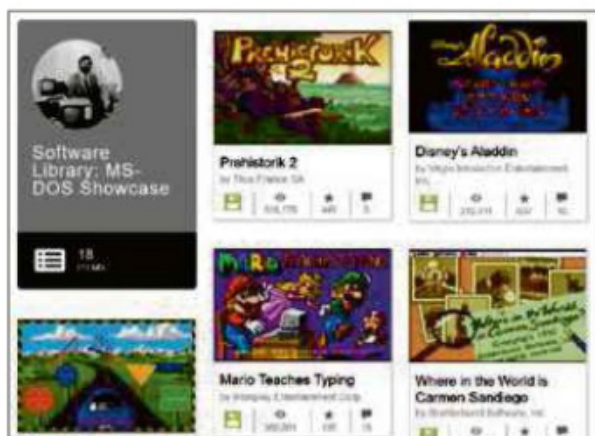
Although the Internet Archive has been around for many years, there's the danger that it could one day get taken down as a result of copyright claims, censorship or DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) attacks. For that reason, the developers have created a decentralised – or distributed – version of its site at dweb.archive.org. This is delivered using peer-to-peer connections, so it's much slower, but it provides a way to access content when the main site isn't available for some reason.

DOOM

Doom is the great granddaddy of the modern first-person shooter, and there's plenty of content related to the game (and Doom II) at the Internet Archive. Browse the Doom Level CD Collection (bit.ly/doom503) for levels, game editors, shareware releases and more.

DOS PROGRAMS

If you're seeking software from the 1990s, the Internet Archive has several fantastic collections to explore, such as Software Library: MS-DOS (bit.ly/msdos503), and spin-offs Software Library: MS-DOS Games (bit.ly/dosgame503) and Software Library:



MS-DOS Showcase (bit.ly/doscase503). The programs can be run in a browser.

ENCARTA

Pre-Wikipedia, the go-to encyclopaedia for your PC was Microsoft Encarta. The archive includes CD versions of Encarta 1994 (bit.ly/94enc503), Encarta 1997, (bit.ly/97enc503) and Encarta 1998 (bit.ly/98enc503), as well as other versions. The software comes in ISO format.

EPHEMERAL FILMS

Ephemeral films are non-fiction movies of their time, typically created for educational, industrial or promotional purposes. The collections in this category (bit.ly/ephe503) include Educational Films, A/V Geeks, Drive-In Movie Ads and British Government Public Information Films.



FILM NOIR

The 1940s and 1950s were the golden age for Film Noir – Hollywood crime movies featuring chain-smoking private eyes and double-crossing femme fatales. You can enjoy a number of these for free through the site's Film Noir collection (bit.ly/noir503). There's also a Film Noir Favourite section (bit.ly/noirfav503).



FIRMWARE

Firmware is essentially the software found on a hardware device's ROM. It's so called because it stays "firmly" in place. You can find ROMs, Firmware and chip dumps from a wide variety of sources in the Firmware Library (bit.ly/firm503).

GAMES

Whether you're looking for arcade games (see A), console games (see C), DOS games or PC or Mac games, you're spoiled for choice on the Internet Archive. A good place to start is the Classic PC Games collection (bit.ly/classicpc423) which includes freeware, shareware and demos.



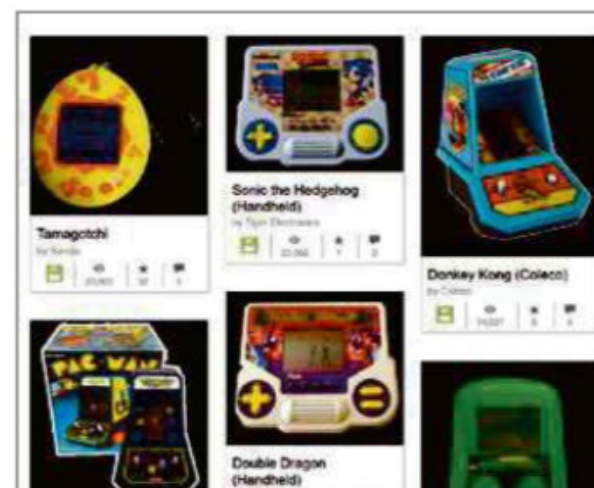
GAMESMASTER

Remember the Dominik Diamond/Dexter Fletcher-hosted *GamesMaster*? The Channel 4 programme ran from 1992 to 1998, and was the first UK TV show dedicated to computer and video games. If you fancy a hit of nostalgia (or want to experience it for the first time), browse the collection of episodes at bit.ly/gmaster503 and rediscover the joy of Patrick Moore as the squishy-headed title character.



HANDHELD GAMES

We've mentioned that the Internet Archive has a section for living-room games consoles, but it also has one for handheld games. The Handheld History page (bit.ly/hheld503) has dedicated games for Pac-Man, Donkey Kong, and Sonic the Hedgehog, but also includes Tamagotchi, Speak & Spell, Simon and Merlin. The games play in your browser.



HISTORY

Much of the archive is dedicated to history. Whatever you're looking for, there's likely to be a category covering it. If you're just interested in history in general, the Natural History Museum Library, London collection (bit.ly/nhml503) is a great place to start with journals, bulletins and books.

IRAQ WAR

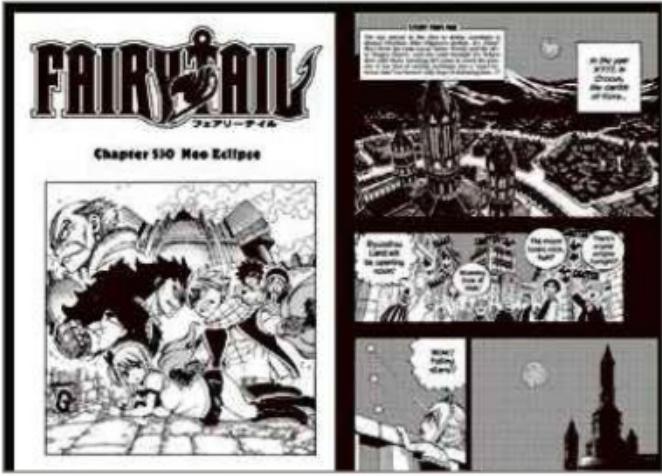
You'll find all sorts of media for most of the major wars in the archive. The Iraq War Collection (bit.ly/iraq503) is a compilation of videos, audio clips, text and images focused on the conflict and the events surrounding it.

JAPAN

There's plenty to learn about the Japanese Earthquake of 2011 (bit.ly/jquake503) and other disasters that have hit the country (bit.ly/japan503). If you're more interested in culture and art from the land of the rising sun, browse The Manga Library



Secrets of the Internet Archive – Part 1



(bit.ly/manga503), but note that it contains some adult content.

JAZZ

There's plenty of jazz content to be found on the Internet Archive. The David W Niven Collection of Early Jazz Legends, 1921-1991 (bit.ly/jazz503) is a great resource in particular and comprises 650 tapes, 1,000 hours and 1,378 WAV files, plus 691 scans of cassette liner cards and literature.



KIDS

There's plenty of content on the site for children to enjoy, including TV shows and magazines. The Children's Library (bit.ly/kids503) has books for kids from around the world although, admittedly, many of the titles on offer will have more appeal for nostalgic adults than children. We're not sure how captivated today's kids would be by 'Old French Fairy Tales' or 'Vasco da Gama, His Voyages and Adventures'.



LIBRARY

The Open Library (openlibrary.org), run by the Internet Archive, lets you read classic novels and 'borrow' books. Titles available include best sellers from Stephen King, Douglas Adams, Bill Bryson, Tom Clancy, Dan Brown and George RR Martin. You can take out up to five books in one go, but only one person at a time can borrow a book.



LINUX

There's lots of Linux content to be found in the archive, including magazines, books and guides. In addition, the Linux Distribution Archive (bit.ly/linux503) offers various Linux distros from the past 20 years, including Red Hat, Puppy Linux, Ubuntu, Debian and Fedora.

LIVE MUSIC

You'll find live music recordings in all sorts of places across the site, but one of the best collections is the Live Music Archive (bit.ly/livemusic503), which features more than 224,000 entries. You can browse the collection by all artists, this date in history, average review rating and more.

MAGAZINES

We've already covered the Internet Archive's libraries of computer mags, but it also has numerous other magazine collections to browse through in the Magazine Rack (bit.ly/magrack503). There are issues of *Starlog*, *Popular Mechanics*, *Sports*

Illustrated, *Smash Hits* and *Railway Modeller*, to name but a handful.



MAGAZINE COVER DISCS

In the olden(ish) days, computer mags came with a coverdisc attached, providing free software, games, demos and videos. The Internet Archive has just under 50 collections of magazine cover discs for titles including *PC Format* (bit.ly/format503), *Computer Buyer* (bit.ly/buyer503), *PC Review* (bit.ly/review503), *Amiga Format* (bit.ly/amigaf503), *Computer Shopper* (bit.ly/shopper503) and *Linux Format* (bit.ly/lformat503).



MANUALS

The Archive.org Manual Library (bit.ly/manual503) is a large collection of manuals, instructions, walkthroughs and datasheets sorted into categories such as computers (hardware and software), consoles, electronics, television, computer games, laptops, tractors, printers and US military.

NASA IMAGES

A search for NASA presents a wealth of results, including audio files and technical documents. Our favourite is NASA Images (bit.ly/nasa504), which offers more than 180,000 photos of space, the Moon, rockets and more.

NEWSPAPERS

The Internet Archive's Newspapers collection (bit.ly/newspapers504) is a mixed bag. There are various overseas publications, such as the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, as well as local UK newspapers including *Your Tunbridge Wells* and *Luton on Sunday*.



NEXT ISSUE:

Part 2 of our comprehensive Internet Archive guide takes you from O to Z.

LISTEN TO VINTAGE RECORDS

The Internet Archive's 78 RPMs and Cylinder Recordings (bit.ly/78rpm503) preserves all manner of digitised gramophone and cylinder recordings from the past. There are more than 230,000 audio recordings available to listen to and download, spanning a variety of genres from 1901 and 1966. Notable artists include Louis Armstrong, Glenn Miller, Dinah Shore, Peggy Lee, Noel Coward, Gracie Fields, Vera Lynn and Frank Sinatra.



Try **future** Chrome tools **today**



The Experiments page in Chromium browsers lets you try new tools that are still being tested. **Robert Irvine** rounds up the best hidden ‘flags’

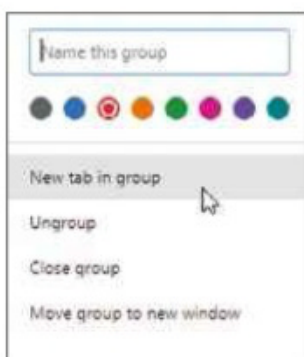
Tab Groups

#tab-groups

As mentioned in last issue's Best New Browser Tools, this ‘flag’ makes it easier to manage multiple web pages by

organising related tabs into groups. Right-click a tab, choose ‘Add to new group’ and assign the group a name and colour. You can then add further tabs and move the group to a new browser window. Tab Groups became a live feature in Chrome 83.

If you can't see it, enable it on the Experiments page. You can also activate the Tab Groups Collapse flag to quickly close and reopen your tab groups.



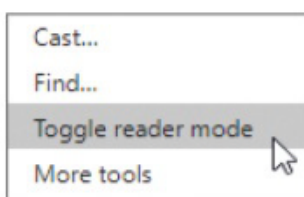
Enable Reader Mode

#enable-reader-mode

Most browsers now include the option to remove clutter from web pages to make them easier to read and print, but in Chrome this is (strangely) still an

experiment. Activate the flag and you can streamline web content on compatible pages by clicking the ‘Toggle reader mode’ button in

the address bar. Edge already offers this feature with its ‘Immersive reader’ mode.



Extensions Checkup

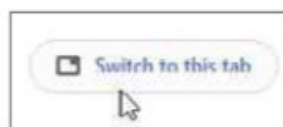
#extension-checkup

This new Chrome experiment prompts you to periodically review your extensions to ensure nothing dodgy is installed. Once enabled, a message will appear at the bottom of your New Tab page saying “Safety matters. Take a moment and check your extensions now”. Click this to perform the checkup. If you see an add-on you don't recognise or that's accessing your personal data, disable or remove it.

Omnibox tab switch suggestions

#omnibox-tab-switch-suggestions

If you often have lots of tabs open in Chrome or Edge, this flag makes it easier to find the one you want. Type the first few letters of the site's name in the address bar and click the ‘Switch to this tab’ button next to your browser's suggestion. Enable the ‘Omnibox suggestion button row’ experiment to place the ‘Switch’ button below it, too.



Parallel downloading

#enable-parallel-downloading

This Chromium flag speeds up your downloads by grabbing several parts of a single file simultaneously. Once

enabled, it kicks in automatically for every download that exceeds two seconds, which can make a significant speed difference with very large files.

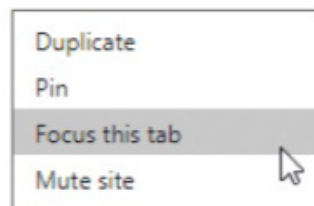
Focus Mode

#focus-mode

Prevent distractions when you're writing an email or performing other important tasks online by using this experiment to focus your attention on the current tab.

Right-click a tab, choose ‘Focus this tab’ and the page will open in a new, app-like window with no borders, tabs, address bar or other distractions.

Click the three-dot menu and select ‘Open in Chrome’ to restore the tab to the main browser.



Smooth Scrolling

#smooth-scrolling

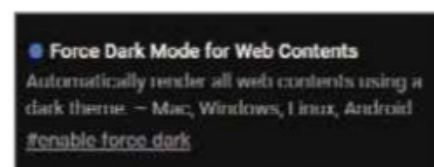
If your browser often feels jerky when you're scrolling through long, content-heavy web pages, try enabling the Smooth Scrolling experiment. This lets you scroll up and down web pages in a faster and more fluid manner. It's turned on by default in Chromium-based Edge.

Force Dark Mode for Web Contents

#enable-force-dark

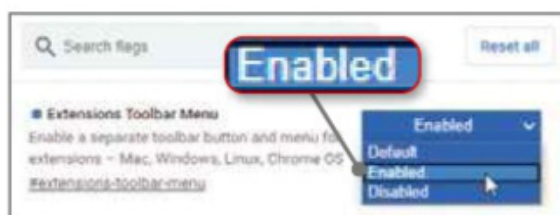
The Chrome app for Android now offers a dark mode (in Settings, Themes), but this is still confined to an experiment in the desktop version. Turn it on, relaunch your browser and the content of all web pages will now be displayed as white or grey text on a black background.

Annoyingly, there's no simple way to toggle the dark mode off again, other than disabling the flag and restarting. In Edge you're better off going to Settings, Appearance, Theme, Dark. ■



ENABLING CHROMIUM EXPERIMENTS

To access the Experiments page in Chrome, Edge or another Chromium-based browser, type `chrome://flags` in your address bar and press Enter. To activate an experiment, click its drop-down menu and choose Enabled, then click the Relaunch button at the bottom of the page. There are hundreds of experiments listed, so use the search box to jump



to the one you want. If you have any problems, disable the experiment or click ‘Reset all’ to return all flags to their default settings.



Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

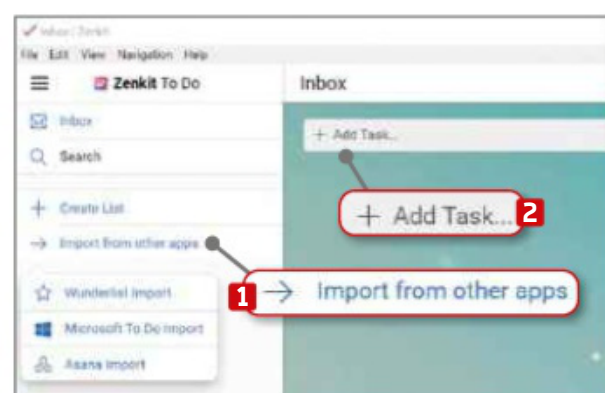
Manage your life with Zenkit To Do

Wondering how to replace the now defunct to-do list tool, Wunderlist? Zenkit offers the perfect solution. Here's what you need to know

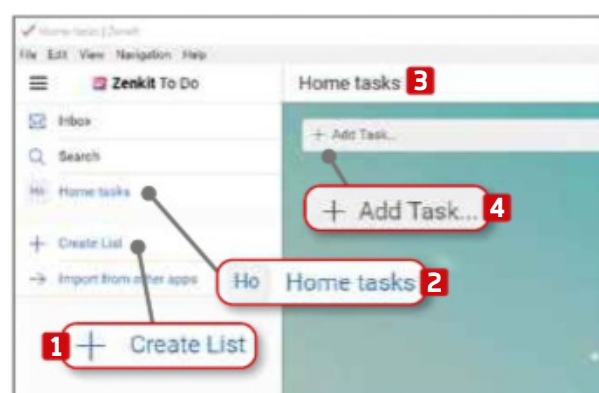
Zenkit To Do: zenkit.com/en/todo | 🕒 20 mins | Any browser

A to-do list app is a great way to manage the many tasks and must-remember events in your life. One of the most popular of these time-management tools was Wunderlist, which closed down in May. Sadly, its official replacement, Microsoft To Do (todo.microsoft.com), just isn't as good. Zenkit To Do is a much more appealing

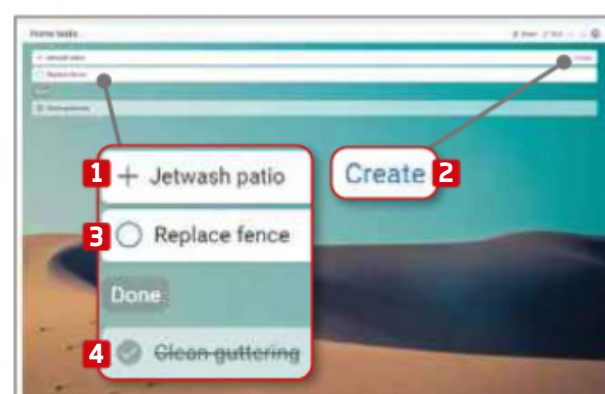
alternative. It offers many of the tools and functions included in the old Wunderlist, and is available for all the major operating systems and the web. The free version includes 500MB of attachment space and limits you to 100 lists, 20 folders and 10,000 tasks. The more powerful Zenkit To Do Plus version costs from £2.45



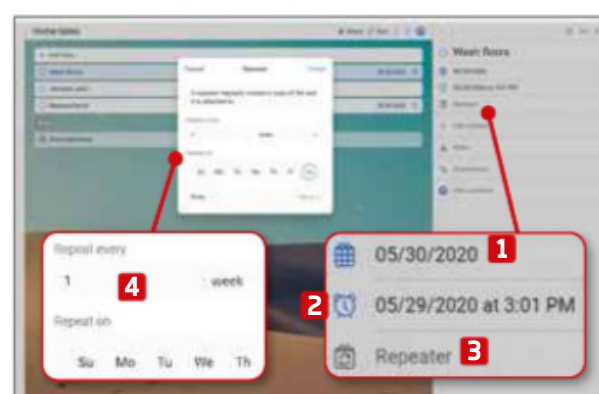
1 To create a free account, enter an email address and password or sign up with your Google, Microsoft, Apple or Facebook account. If you previously used Wunderlist, Microsoft To Do or Asana, click 'Import from other apps' **1** to copy over existing tasks. You can start adding individual tasks straight away. **2**



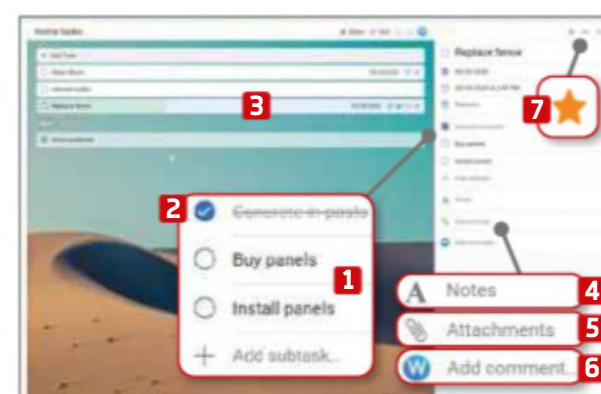
2 To create a list, click the Create List button. **1** Give your new list a name, then click Create. This new list appears in the panel on the left. **2** Click its entry to open it in the pane on the right. **3** To add a task to your list, click the Add Task bar. **4**



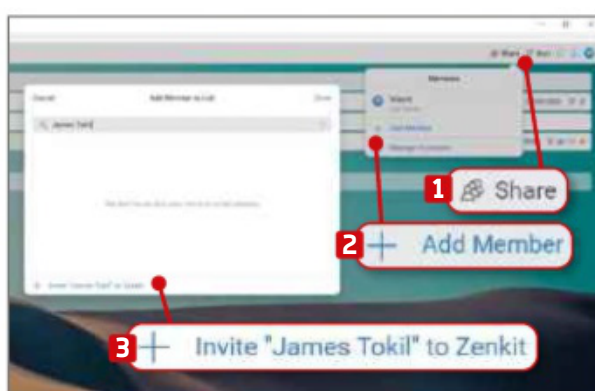
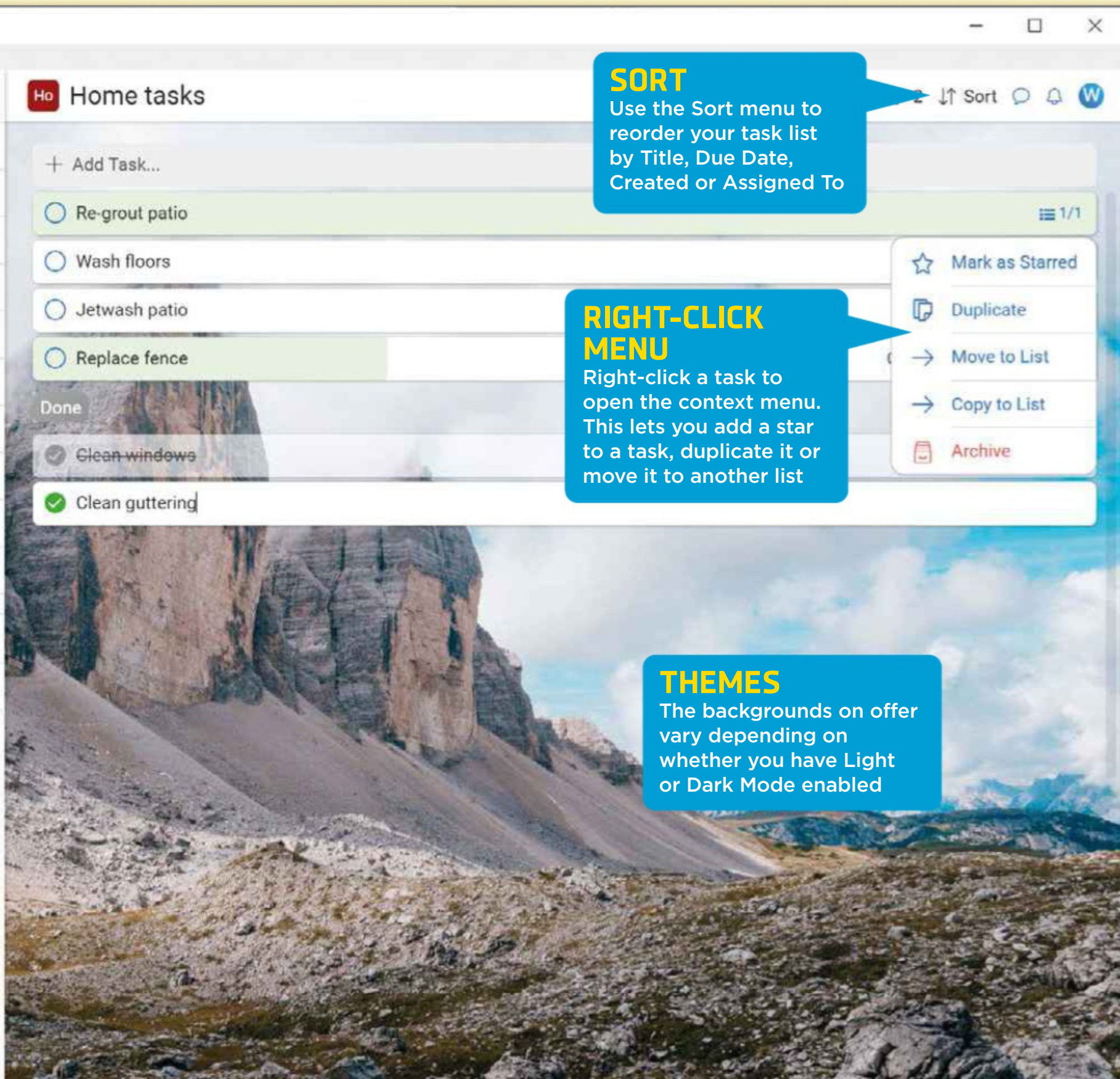
3 Give your first task a name **1** and either click Create **2** or press Enter on your keyboard. Add as many tasks as you like – each one appears in a list below. When you've completed a task, click the circle next to its name **3** to show that it's been carried out and move the task to the section marked Done. **4**



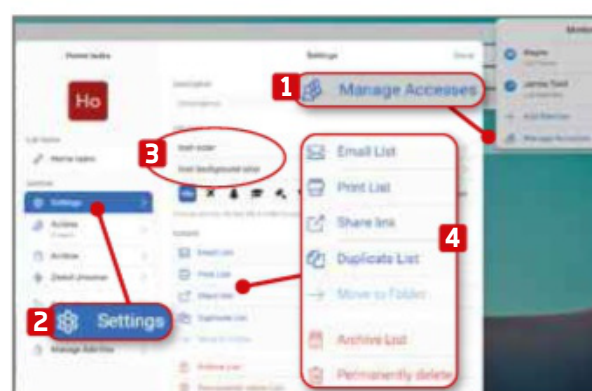
4 Click a task in the list to add some details. You can add a due date **1** and set a reminder, so you don't forget it. **2** If it's a task you do regularly – such as shopping – you can set it to repeat. **3** This creates a copy of the task at a frequency of your choice. **4**



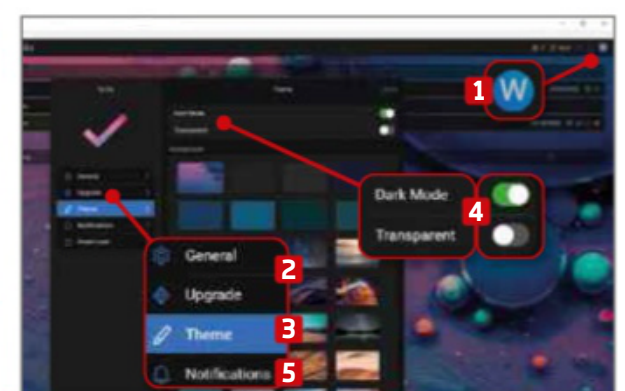
5 You can create any number of sub tasks for each main task. **1** As you mark them as done, **2** the entry in the main window changes colour to show the progress of the whole task so far. **3** You can also add notes, **4** include attachments **5** and write comments. **6** Important tasks can be starred. **7**



6 Some tasks require collaboration with friends, colleagues or family members. To add people, click the Share button, **1** then click Add Member. **2** Search for the person by name or email address. If they aren't already signed up to Zenkit, invite them to join. **3**



7 Click Manage Accesses **1** and click a person's name to transfer ownership of the task, change what involvement they have or remove them. Click Settings **2** to change the task icon colours, **3** and also to email, print, share, duplicate, archive or permanently delete the list. **4**

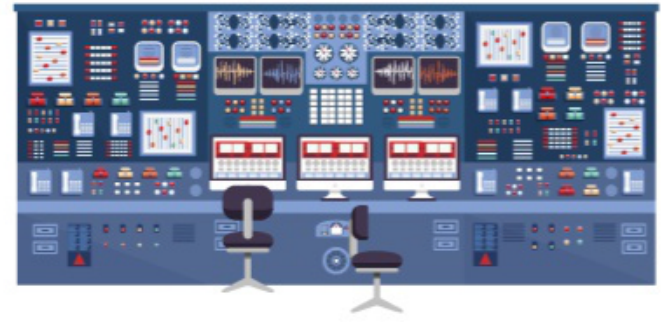


8 Click your account icon **1** and select Settings. Here, you can enable or disable sounds in General and switch to the paid-for version in Upgrade. **2** Theme **3** lets you change the app's look by applying Dark Mode or Transparent. **4** Alerts and subscriptions can be managed under Notifications. **5**



Tweak hidden Windows settings with one handy tool

Winaero Tweaker: bit.ly/winaero503 | 20 mins | Windows 7, 8, 10



EXPERT TIP

Andy Shaw says

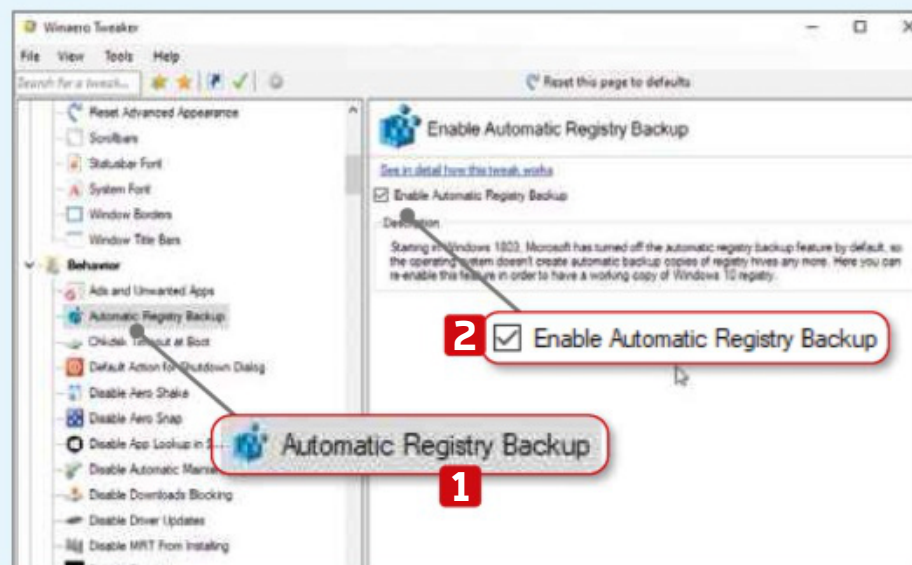
One of our favourite things about Winaero is that its developer, Sergey Tkachenko, writes about the tweaks he finds before he adds them to his software. By the time they're included, there's already a wealth of documentation available for each tweak. Look out for the question mark icon or information link.



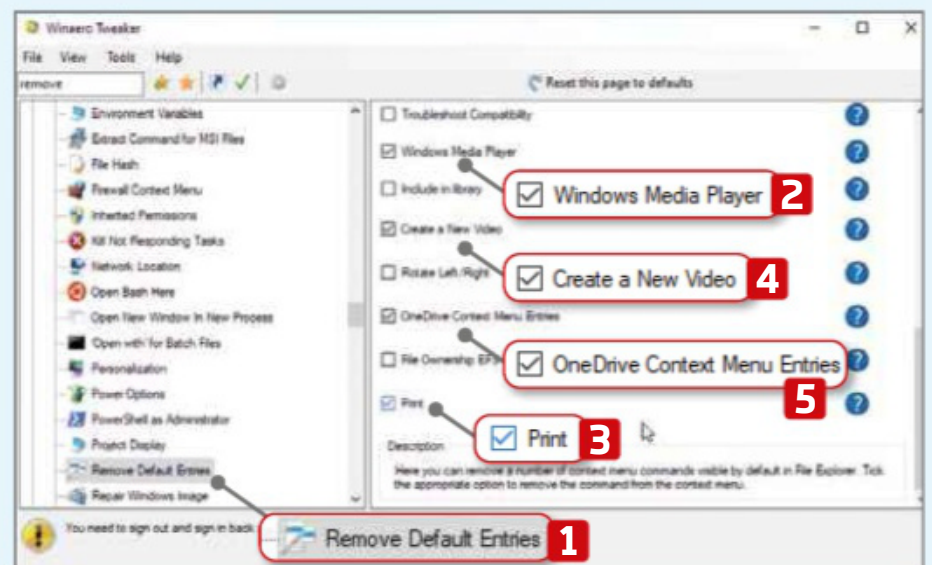
Back in Issue 462 (bit.ly/webuser462), we looked at how you could use Winaero Tweaker to configure the Windows 10 October 2018 update. Since then, Winaero Tweaker has been updated four times. In this Workshop, we look at the most useful new features that have been added since we last looked.

Winaero Tweaker is an all-in-one tool that provides easy access to Windows settings, which are often hidden away in sub menus, spread across the Settings app and the Control Panel, or even hidden away in the Registry where they're hard to find and access.

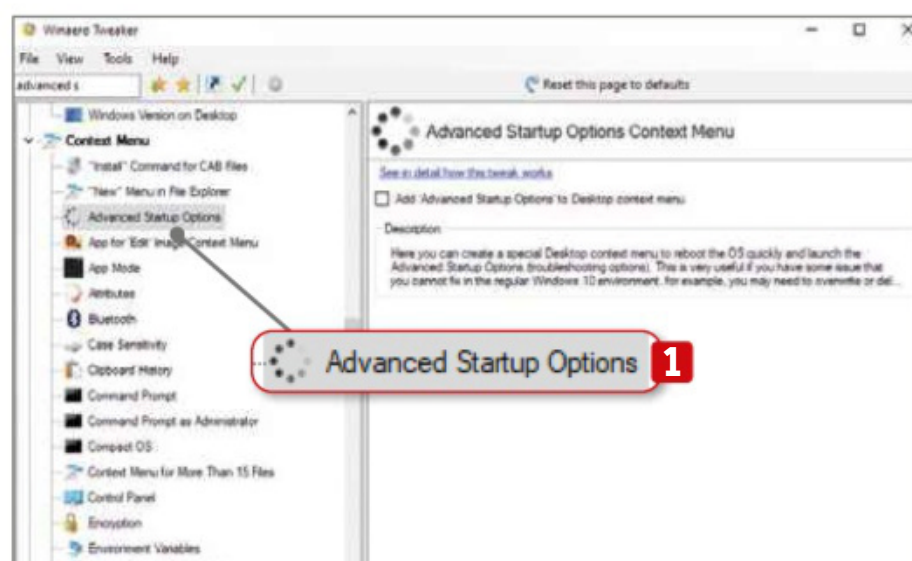
The software is available as a regular download that you can install, or as a portable tool you can keep on a USB memory stick and run on any PC.



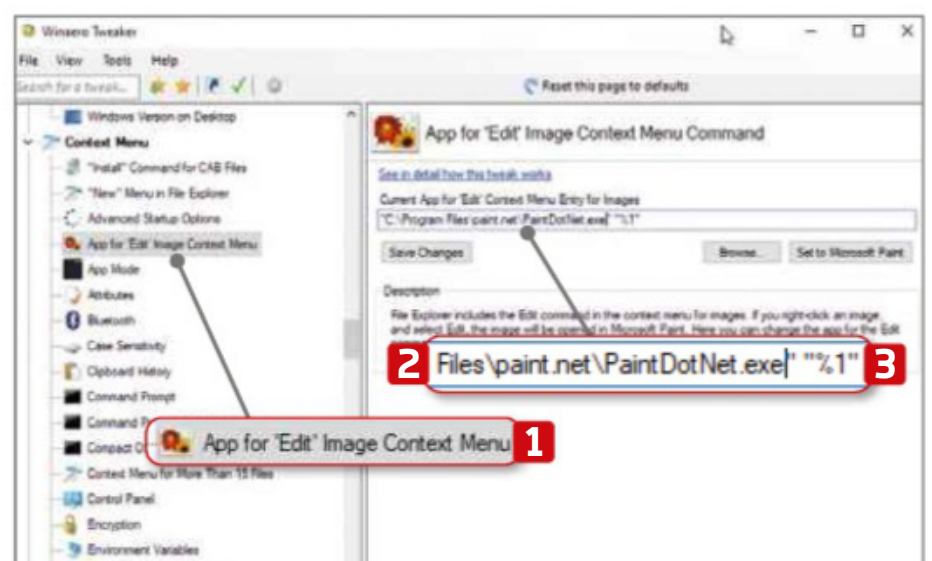
1 Microsoft stopped creating automated backups of the Registry a couple of years ago, supposedly to save space, though the files are generally tiny. To restart the process, go to Behaviour, then Automatic Registry Backup **1** and tick the box. **2** Backups are stored in C:\Windows\System32\config\RegBack.



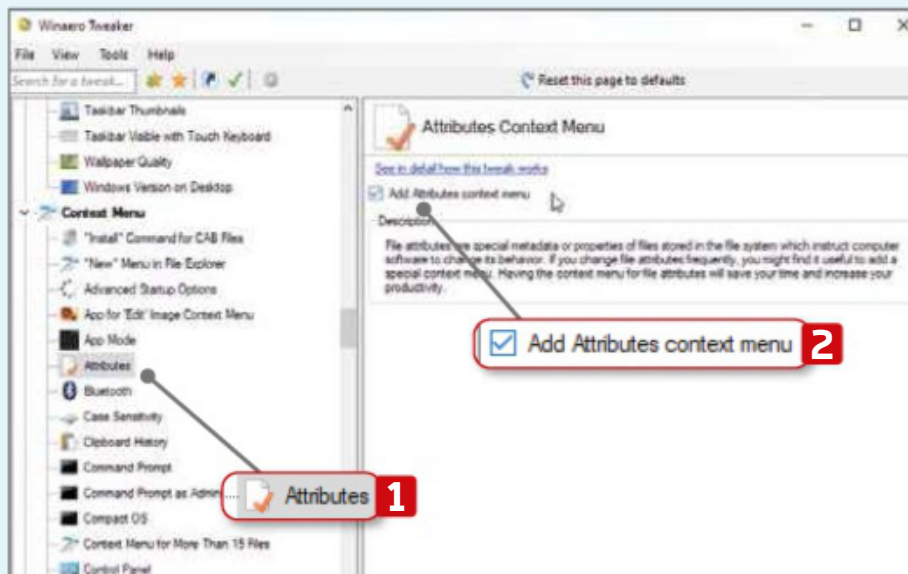
2 There are lots of tools for editing the right-click context menu. Open the Context Menu heading and find Remove Default Entries. **1** The latest options let you remove Windows Media Player, **2** Print, **3** 'Create a New Video' **4** and the OneDrive tools. **5**



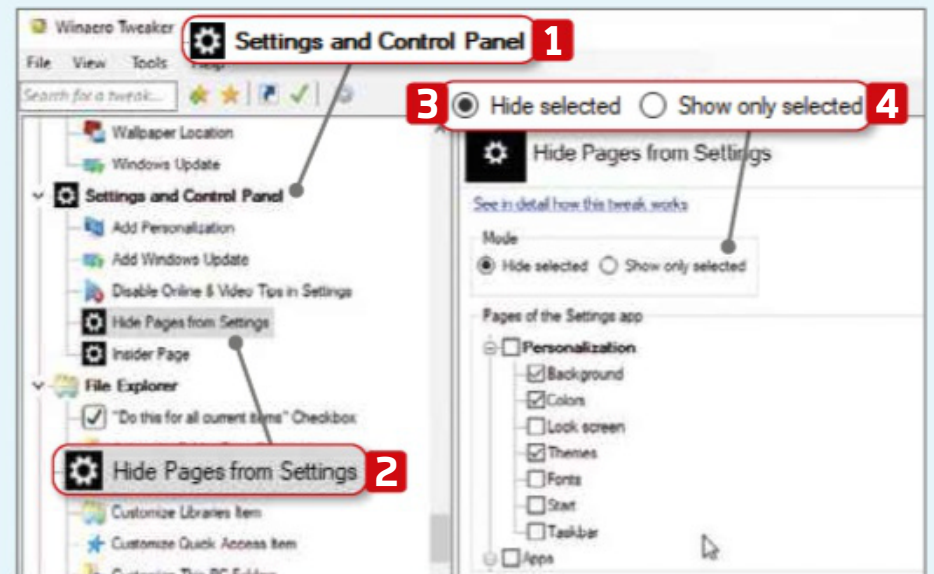
3 You can also add items to the context menu. Choose Advanced Startup Options **1** to add a shortcut that restarts your PC and takes you to the Advance Startup tools. This provides access to Troubleshoot and Startup Repair without the need to fuss about with function keys. Another good option to add is 'SFC /Scannow'.



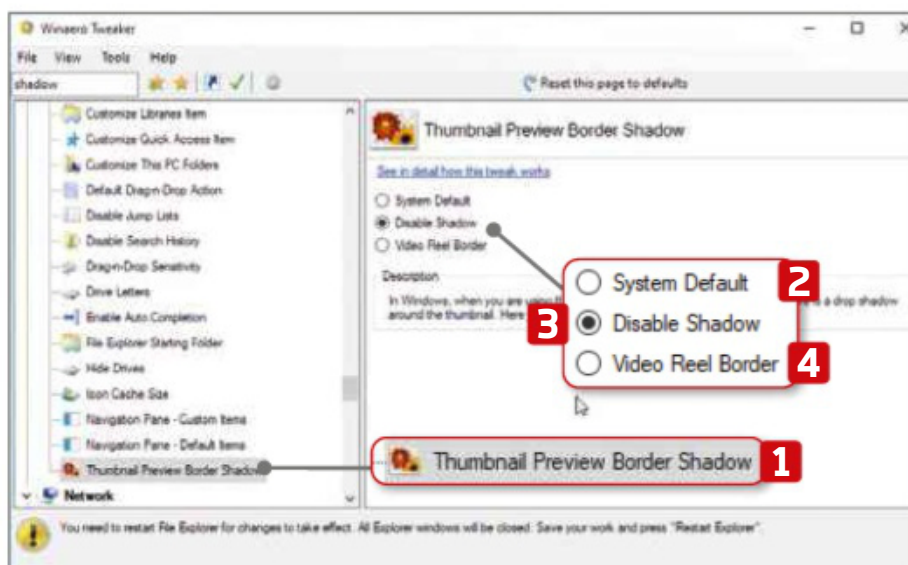
4 By default, right-clicking an image and choosing Edit takes you straight to Windows Paint. If you'd prefer to use a different program, choose "App for 'Edit' Image Context Menu", **1** replacing Paint with the location and file of your preferred image editor. **2** Be sure to leave the "%1" on the end. **3**



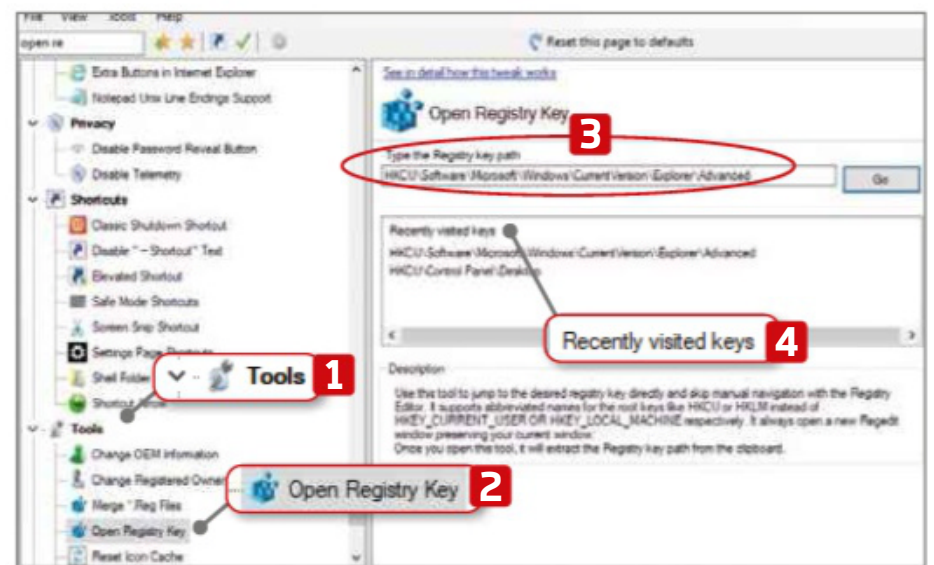
5 If you regularly change the attributes of files (to make them read-only, for example) you can add an Attributes option to the right-click menu. Look for Attributes **1** in the Context Menu section and tick the box. **2**



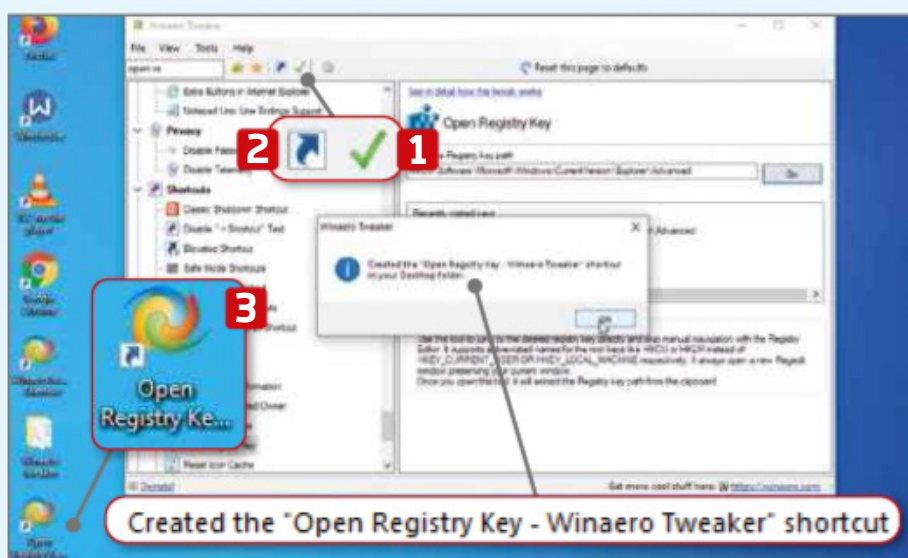
6 If you share your PC with other users and don't want anyone meddling with your settings, you can choose to hide certain pages of the Settings app. In 'Settings and Control Panel' **1** choose 'Hide Pages from Settings'. **2** You can choose whether to hide individual pages you select below **3** or hide everything except the selected pages. **4**



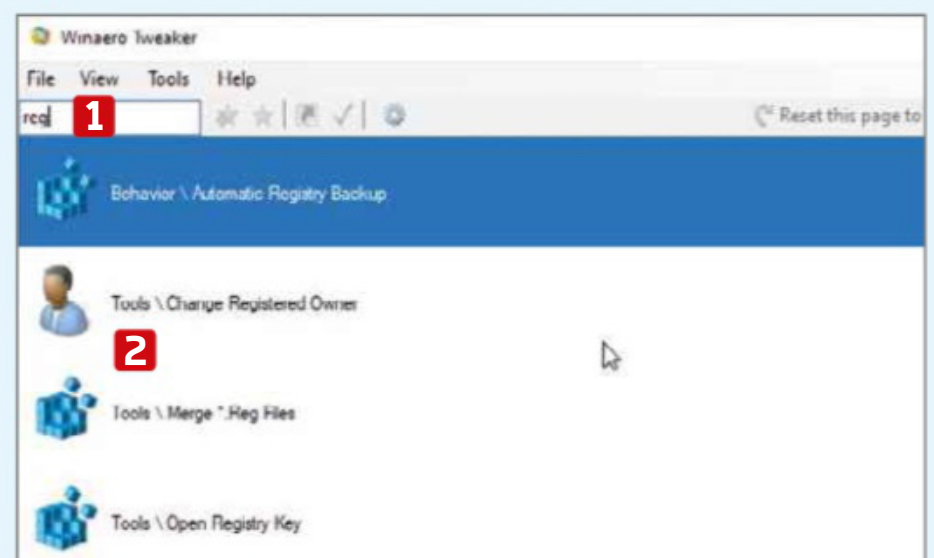
7 Windows puts a drop shadow around image thumbnails in File Explorer but you can remove them by going to File Explorer, then Thumbnail Preview Border Shadow. **1** You can either keep the shadow, **2** remove it **3** or add the film border you normally only see if it's a video clip **4** (not recommended).



8 Go to Tools, **1** then Open Registry Key. **2** Type the address of a Registry key, **3** such as one you've seen in Web User. Click the Go button and the software opens Regedit at the correct place. A list of previous places visited is stored **4** to save you typing them again if you need to go back. Use shortcuts HKCU and HKLM.



9 If there's a tweak you use regularly, you can set it as the home tool. Whenever you open Tweaker, it will start on this tool. Click the tick. **1** Alternatively, use the Shortcut arrow icon **2** to create a desktop shortcut that takes you to a particular page when you double-click it. **3**



10 If you're looking for a specific tweak, use the search box **1** (this has been improved in the latest update). Available options are displayed below as you type. The parent folder of each option is shown, **2** which might help you find the option you're looking for.



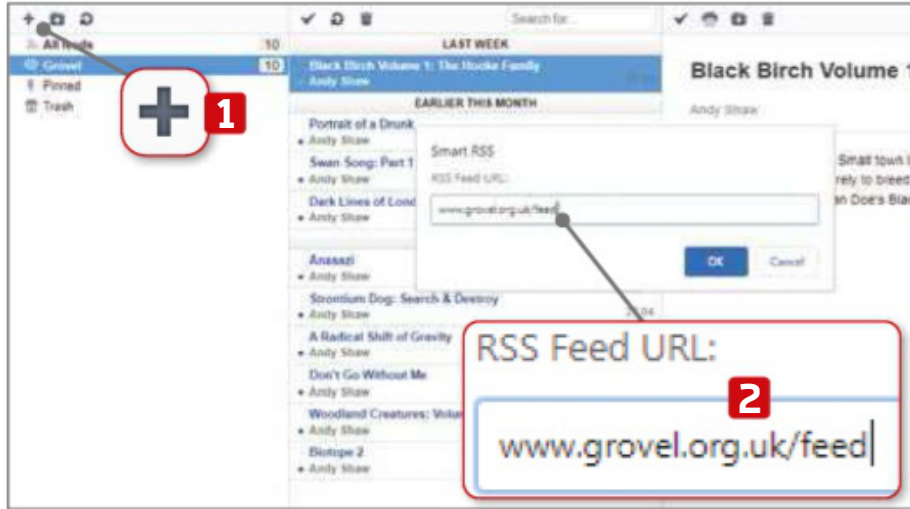
Follow your favourite websites from your browser

Websites are constantly publishing new content and a feed reader is a handy tool for managing your reading. Smart RSS integrates a feed reader into Chrome as an extension. It regularly casts an eye over your

favourite websites, keeping you informed of new content and compressing the information into headlines you can view at a glance.



Smart RSS: bit.ly/srss503 | 10 mins | Chrome



1 Install the Smart RSS add-on, then start adding your favourite sites. Click the Add RSS Source button **1** and type the URL in the box that pops up. **2** If you can't see a feed or RSS link on a site, try adding /feed or /rss to the end of its main URL.



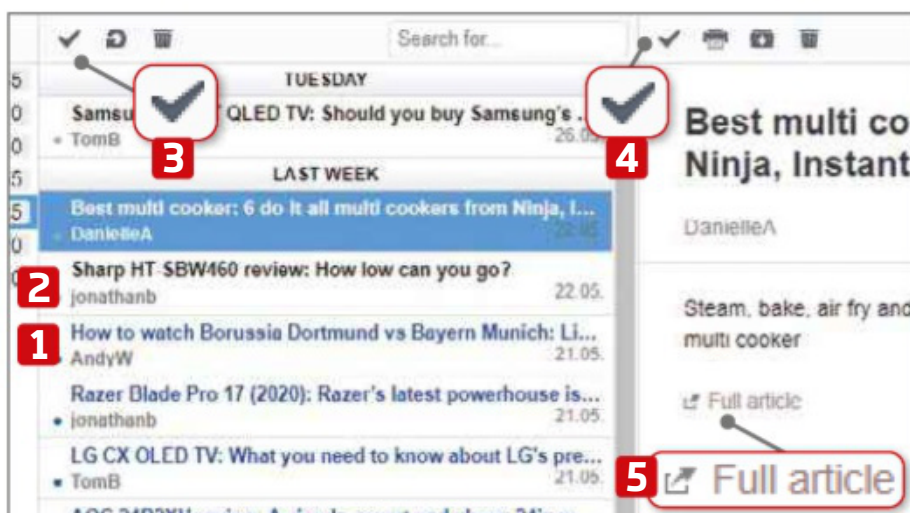
2 If you already use a feed reader and want to try this with your existing list, go into your current tool and find the option to export your feeds as an OPML file. Click the Settings button (a spanner) and scroll down to Import. **1** Click 'Choose file' next to OPML **2** and load the exported file.



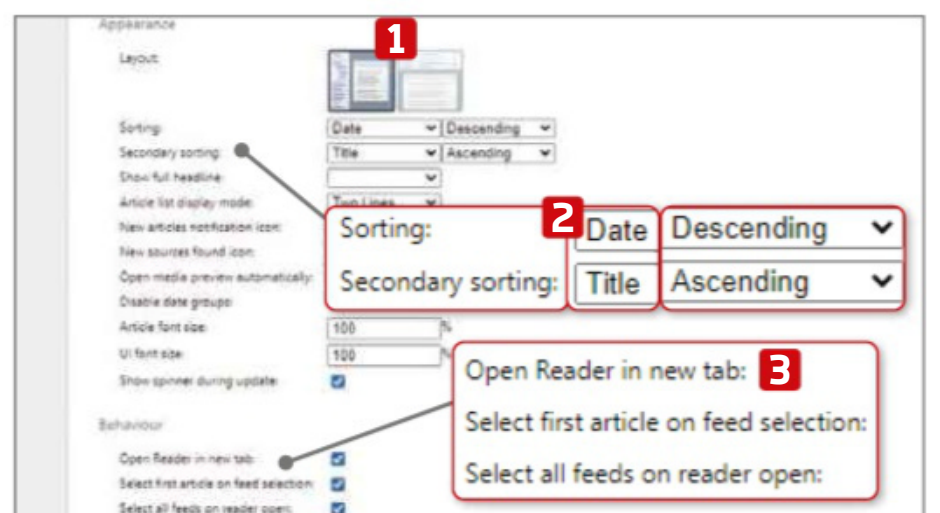
3 To create folders for organising feeds, click New Folder **1** and give it a name. To move a feed into a folder, right-click the feed and choose Properties, **2** then select the folder from the drop-down list labelled Parent. **3** If you add a new feed with a folder selected, it will be filed there automatically.



4 Once you've added some feeds, you can see everything listed chronologically under 'All feeds', **1** along with the number of unread articles. **2** Click the 'Update all' arrow **3** to refresh the list. The middle column **4** shows headlines of currently selected feeds. Click one for a preview on the right. **5**



5 Unread articles are displayed in blue; **1** read articles are black. **2** Use the tick buttons **3** **4** to switch the status between read and unread. Some feeds display the whole article so you don't need to go to the main site; others show a preview snippet. Click 'Full article' **5** to open it in a new tab.



6 Click the spanner button to go back to the Settings. You can change the layout **1** and the order in which content is displayed. **2** There are also options to control the way the software works. **3** Scroll down further to see a handy list of keyboard shortcuts that are well worth mastering.

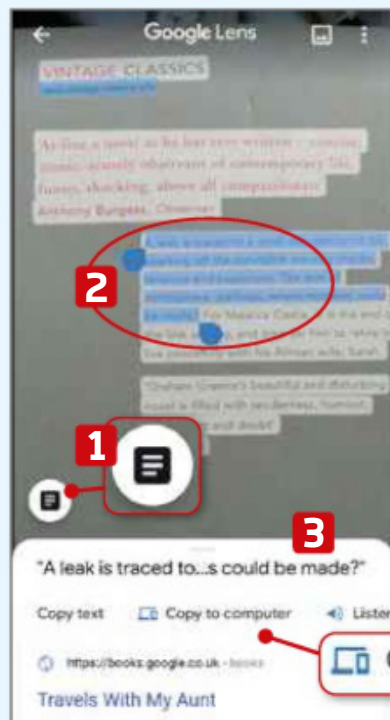


Explore the new tools in Google Lens

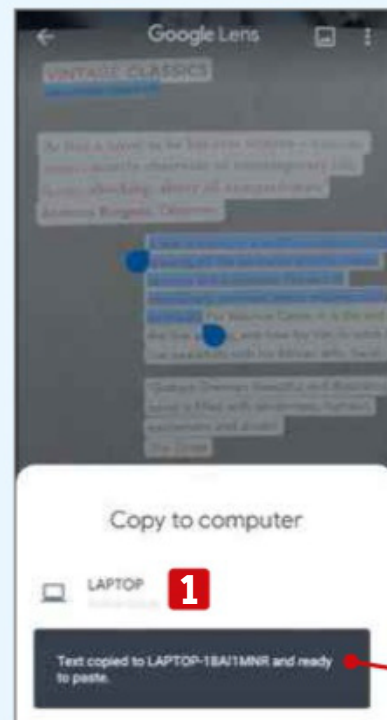
Google Lens is a clever app that can 'read', copy and even translate printed text and handwritten notes. The app was recently updated for the first time in a couple of years, introducing a range of new features that better

Google Lens: bit.ly/lens503 | 10 mins | 6.0+

reflect how people use it. If you haven't tried Google Lens yet, it's worth having a fresh look because its new tools make scanning and searching much smarter.



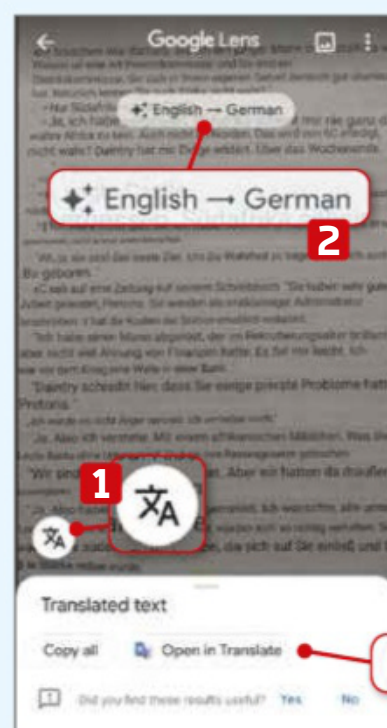
1 Google Lens now has a new option when copying text: 'Copy to computer'. Tap the Text icon, **1** then point the camera at your notes. Press the Text button again and use the handles to select the text you want to copy. **2** A tray appears at the foot of the screen, **3** which includes the new 'Copy to computer' option. **4**



2 Tap 'Copy to computer' to see the available computers. **1** Choose your preferred device and wait for the confirmation message. **2** The text is sent to your computer's clipboard, ready for pasting. make sure that you are running the latest version of Chrome and sign into both devices with the same account.



3 To help you learn the correct pronunciation of a word, Google has added a Listen option. Tap the Auto Search button, **1** bring the words into focus, then press the Auto Search button again. Select any word and drag the selection handles **2** to highlight additional words. In the tray, **3** swipe across and press Listen **4** to hear the word spoken.



4 The Listen feature works with many foreign words but it's missing from Lens' dedicated translation tool. You can still hear pronunciations in Translate, but it's a longer process. Tap Translate, **1** choose the relevant languages **2** and select a word or phrase in the text. Now tap 'Open in Translate' **3** to listen to pronunciations when tapping the audio key.



5 It wouldn't be Google without search tools and that's what the new Look Up feature offers. Whether it's a word, phrase or even a concept, you can point your camera at it and let Google 'read' it. Press Auto Search **1** to lock on the words and then, as before, choose your word or words. **2**



6 With your capture complete, drag the tray upwards **1** to see Google search results. **2** Tap any result to visit the relevant page. Google Lens is still running in the background, though, so you can quickly return to it by tapping back or pressing the X along the address bar.

Weekend Project

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



How to...

Transfer all your files and programs to a new PC

If you're thinking of replacing your current PC, **Wayne Williams** explains what you need to do to move seamlessly to a new one

With many of us still stuck at home, we're making more use of our home computers than ever before. You may have found that yours needs updating, perhaps because it's running slowly, or the built-in camera and sound aren't giving you good enough quality during your video-based family get-togethers.

If you've decided it's the right time to buy a new computer, you'll probably want to make the transition as seamless as possible by moving your favourite programs and precious files over from your old device to the new one. In this issue's Weekend Project, we explain exactly what you need to do.



Drive options

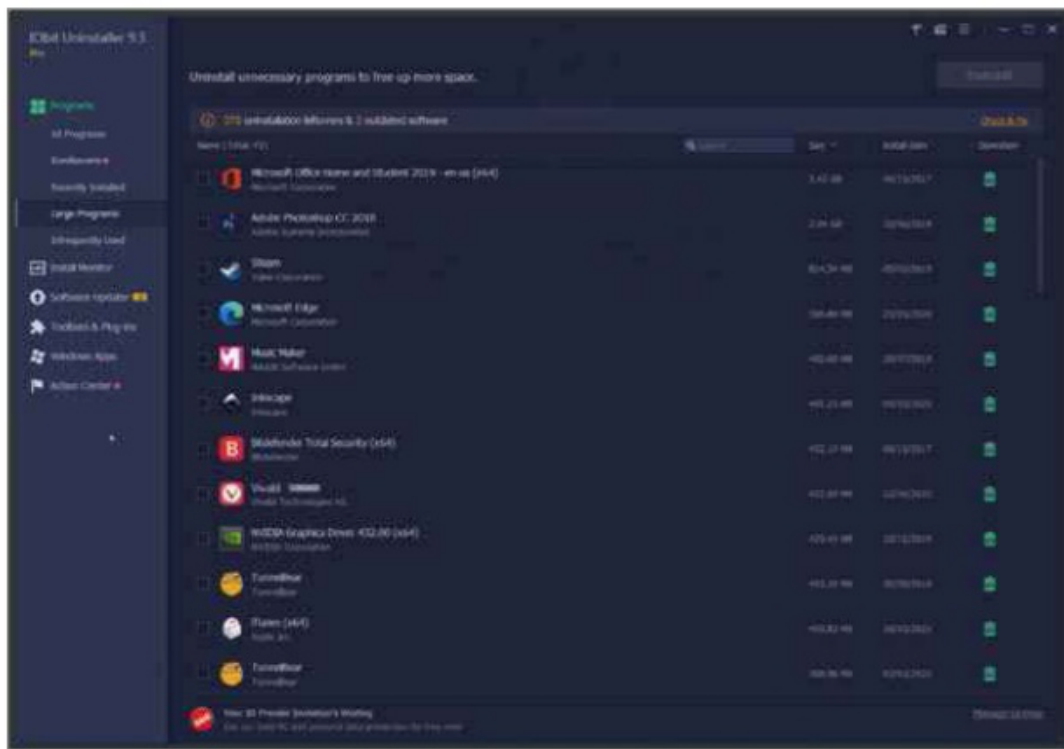
When switching to a new computer, the simplest approach is to take the hard drive out of your old PC and put it in the new one. This gets you up and running on the modern device with a minimum of fuss, and you'll still have all your software and files where you left them.

The obvious downside to this is that you'd be replacing a faster and possibly larger modern hard drive or SSD with an

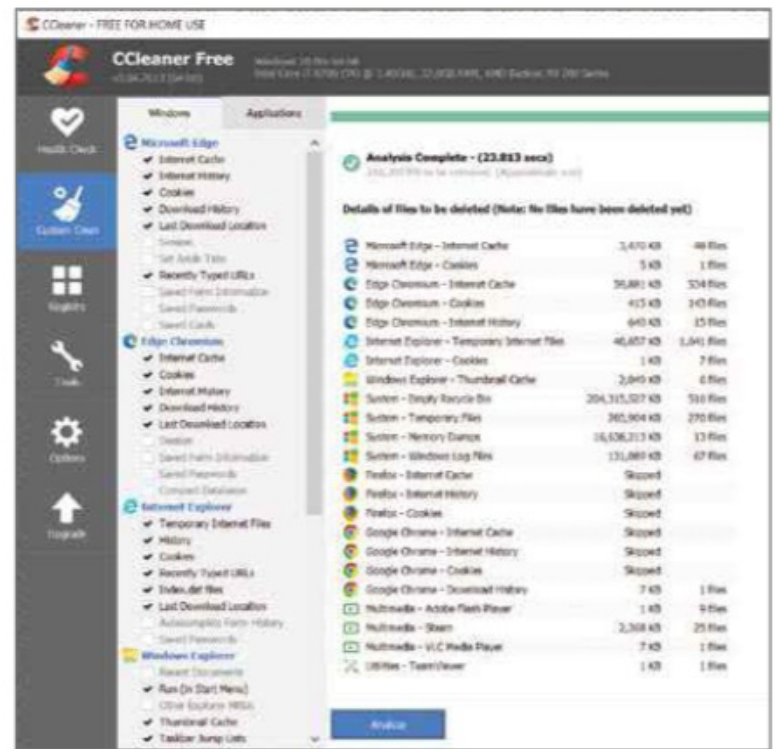
older, inferior one. Other problems could also arise, such as your new PC or Windows not recognising the old drive. That's assuming you can remove both the old and new drives in the first place. Some laptop makers solder or glue components in place, making upgrades and repairs harder than they should be.

If you'd prefer to keep the new drive – which is the sensible choice – then you have three approaches. You can simply

start from scratch, installing software and copying over files from your old drive as and when you need them. Alternatively, you can back up the old drive and restore the files on the new one, or clone the old drive in its entirety. This last option is the preferred solution for most people because it offers the best of all worlds – all your programs and files, exactly as you had them, including any customisations, but on brand new hardware.



IObit Uninstaller is better at removing unwanted software than the default Windows tool



CCleaner can remove the junk from your drive before you back it up

Do some spring cleaning

Before you clone or back up a drive, take some time to remove unwanted apps, files and leftover junk. This will make the backup smaller and take less time to create. IObit Uninstaller (bit.ly/iobu503) can batch-remove unnecessary programs and clean up after them, clearing away junk that would normally be left behind. You can filter the list to show large programs or infrequently used ones. The uninstaller can also remove unwanted toolbars and plug-ins from your browser, and uninstall Windows apps, including those bundled with Windows 10.

Once you've removed any surplus software, go through and delete any files – photos, documents and the like – that you have no further use for. If you have a spare drive, you can copy them over, in case you need them at a later date.

Finally, use a cleanup program such as CCleaner (www.ccleaner.com) to find and remove unwanted junk. Remember, a new computer is a chance to start afresh, so the more you can remove from the old drive before copying its contents over, the better.

Back up the old drive

There's certainly no shortage of free backup software and we rounded up our favourites back in Issue 495 (bit.ly/webuser495), giving the Gold Award to AOMEI Backupper Standard (bit.ly/backupper503), thanks to its ease of use and powerful features. The software can back up or clone your hard drives, and content can be backed up or synced to any attached storage device, which makes it perfect for our needs here. Restoring a backup of the old drive

on the new one is just a matter of clicking the Restore button and navigating to a saved Image file.

The one major downside of Backupper Standard is that its system clone feature (which can move an entire Windows system from one drive to another, including the operating system and apps) isn't available in the free version. That said, if you only need to use the feature this one time, you can download and run the trial of the paid-for edition.

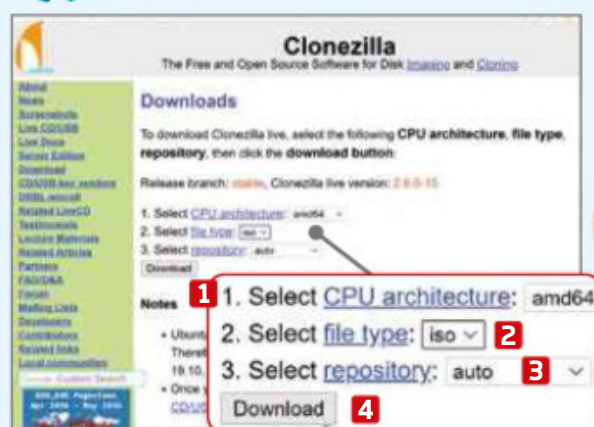
Another option is EaseUS Todo Backup Free (bit.ly/tbfree503), which took the Silver Award in the same issue and is also great at backing up hard drives.

Clone the old drive

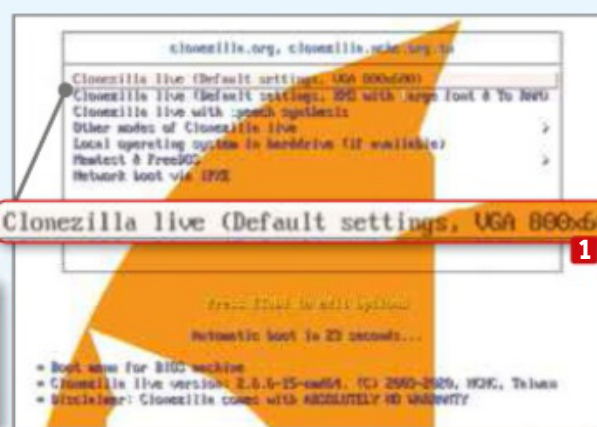
Most good backup software lets you clone a drive, or you can use partitioning tools for the task. MiniTool Partition



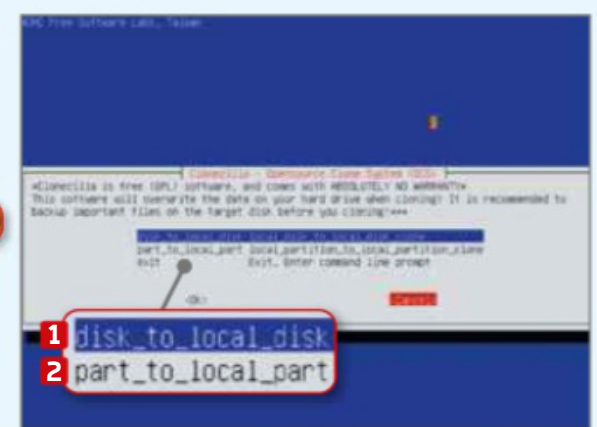
MINI WORKSHOP | Clone your hard drive with Clonezilla



1 Specify the version of Clonezilla you need by using the drop-down menus. Select the CPU architecture **1** and change the file type to ISO. **2** Leave repository as 'auto' **3** and click Download. **4** When the download completes, burn it to CD or DVD or write it to a USB drive using Ventoy (www.ventoy.net) or Rufus (rufus.ie).







2 Boot into Clonezilla and choose an option from the menu. The top choice, 'Clonezilla live (Default settings, VGA 800x600)' **1** should be fine. Either select that or wait until the timer runs out. On the next screen, select English as your language and set the keyboard language, then click Start Clonezilla.



3 We're going to clone one drive to another, so select the second option to 'Work directly from a disk or partition'. Next, choose between Beginner and Expert mode (Beginner is fine for most users). Finally, choose if you want to clone a disk **1** or a partition, **2** and complete the process.

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3		Virgin: M100 Fibre Broadband	£28.00 (£42 after 12 months)	12 months	108Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£336.00
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**SNEAK
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Computer
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- **WHY YOU MUST BUY A NAS DRIVE**

Best ways it will transform your computing

- **FREE UP YOUR PC PORTS**

Use adapters, extenders and hubs

- **UPGRADE AN OLD LAPTOP**

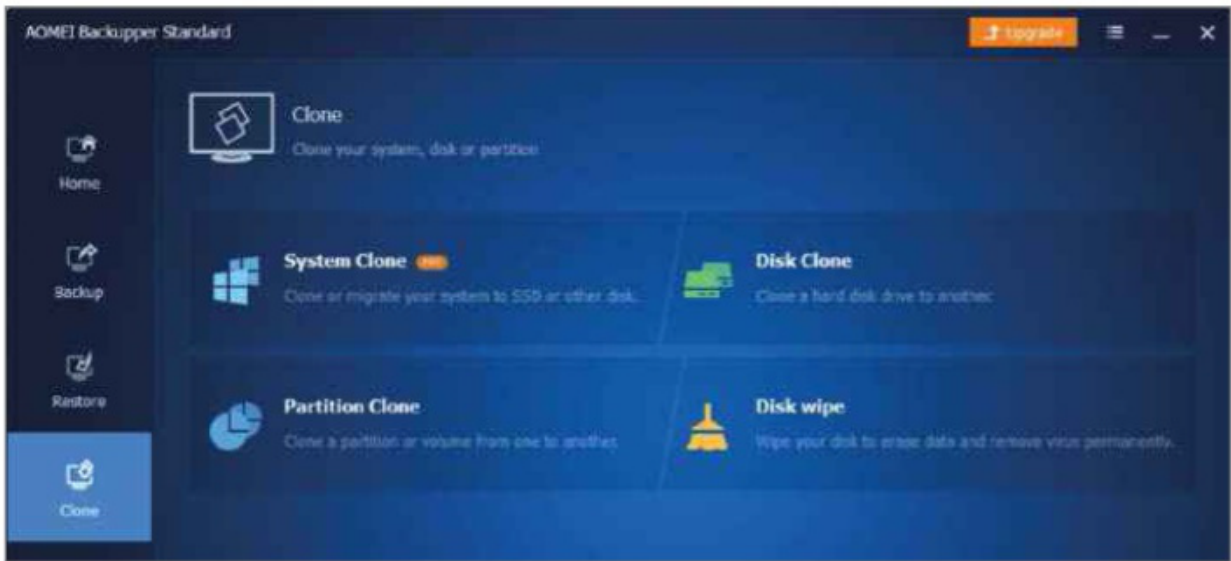
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AOMEI Backupper Standard can back up or clone the contents of your old drive

Wizard Free (bit.ly/minitool503) took the Gold Award in Issue 498’s partitioning software round-up (bit.ly/webuser498) and is ideal for the job.

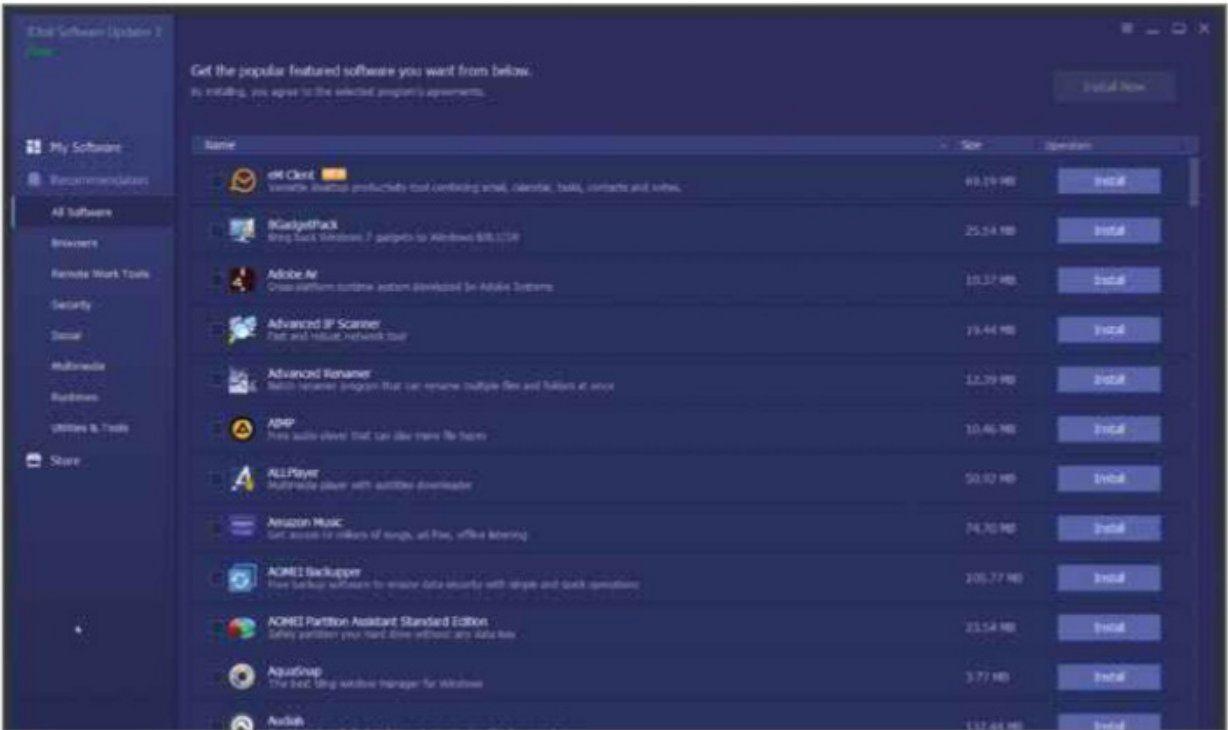
Another program we’d recommend is the open source Clonezilla (clonezilla.org), which has been around since 2007 and does a fantastic job of cloning hard drives. There are three versions of the software available, but Clonezilla Live is the one you want. To use it, you need to write it to bootable media – a CD, DVD or USB flash drive – and then boot into it and choose what to copy. We show you how to do this in our Mini Workshop on page 59.

Set up your new PC


If you opted to start afresh or just backed up your personal files rather than the entire contents of your old PC, you now need to install your software. If you have

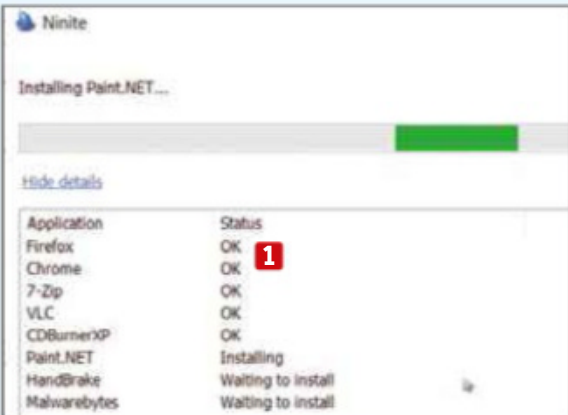


the original CDs, DVDs or digital files, this is straightforward enough, though it

could be very time consuming. There’s a good chance that a lot of your favourite programs are free, so rather than downloading and installing each one in turn, you could use Ninite (ninite.com) to batch-download and silently install the latest versions. Aside from the ease of doing it this way, another benefit of using Ninite is that all the programs offered are completely free of bundled junk. We show you how to use Ninite in our Mini Workshop, below. Ninite isn’t the only tool that can do this job. IObit Software Updater (bit.ly/iobitsu503) has a Recommendation section that lets you choose the programs you want from a list of popular applications. ■



IObit Software Updater helps you install programs from its ‘Recommendation’ list

**MINI WORKSHOP** | Install your favourite programs using Ninite



1 Ninite is designed to make installing software on a new PC as easy as possible. Open a browser on your new PC, go to ninite.com and select the software you want from the list. There are sections for web browsers, **1** messaging, **2** media, **3** imaging, **4** security **5** and more. Don’t select too many security tools as they may clash.

2 Once you’ve chosen all the programs you want to install, scroll down and click the Get Your Ninite button. **1** This creates a custom tool that installs and updates your selected software. The name of this file contains the titles of the programs you selected, which means you can quickly identify the correct installer if you create more than one.

3 Run the installer and it will get to work fetching and installing each item in sequence. Once it starts, you can leave it to its own devices (you won’t need to answer any questions). When you return, all your software should have been installed **1** in the default locations. You can retry any failed ones.

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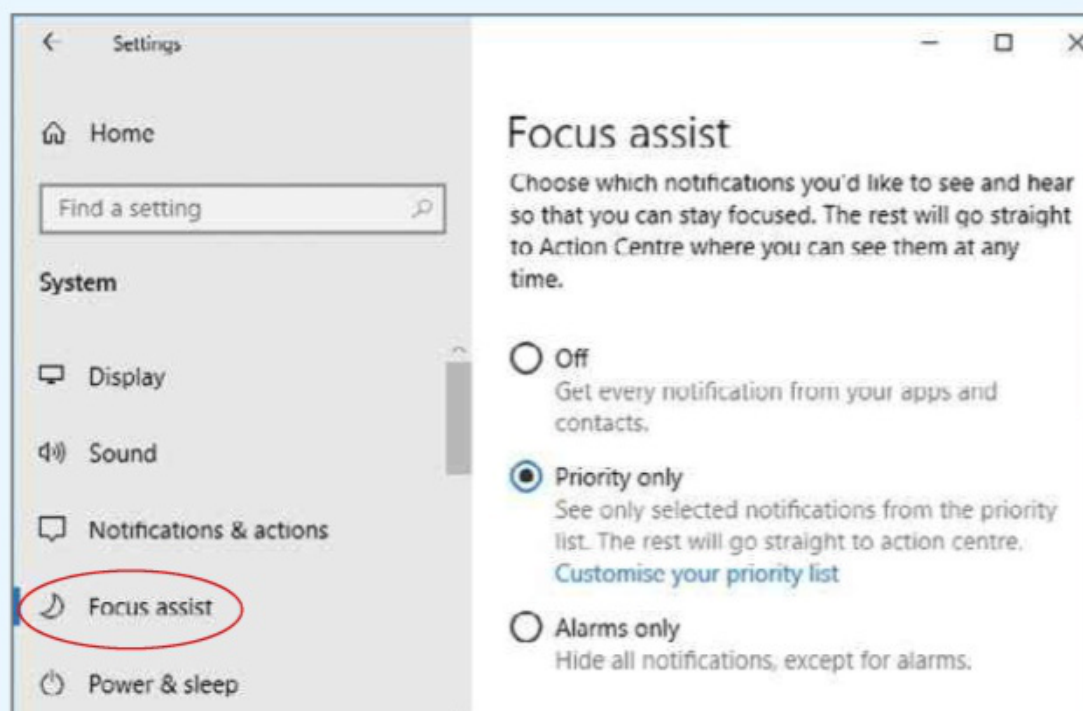
Block notifications, set quiet hours and avoid pop-up distractions

Control Windows notifications using 'Focus assist'

Notifications that pop up on your screen when you're working or playing games are distracting, especially when they have to be clicked to be dismissed. To avoid these interruptions, you can use 'Focus assist' in Windows 10 to limit notifications or stop them altogether.

Open the Settings app (Windows+i) and click System, then 'Focus assist'. There are three options: the default Off setting, which shows all notifications; 'Priority only', which hides unimportant notifications and only shows those that need your attention; and 'Alarms only', which hides all notifications except for alarms that you've set for yourself.

Click the icon at the right-hand end of the taskbar's notification area to open the Action Centre, then click the Focus-assist button to cycle through the three notification settings.



Allow, block or show only important notifications in Windows 10

Set global notification settings

Notifications can pop up in a variety of locations – in the bottom-right corner of your screen, within the Action Centre and on the lock screen. Sometimes they're accompanied by a sound.

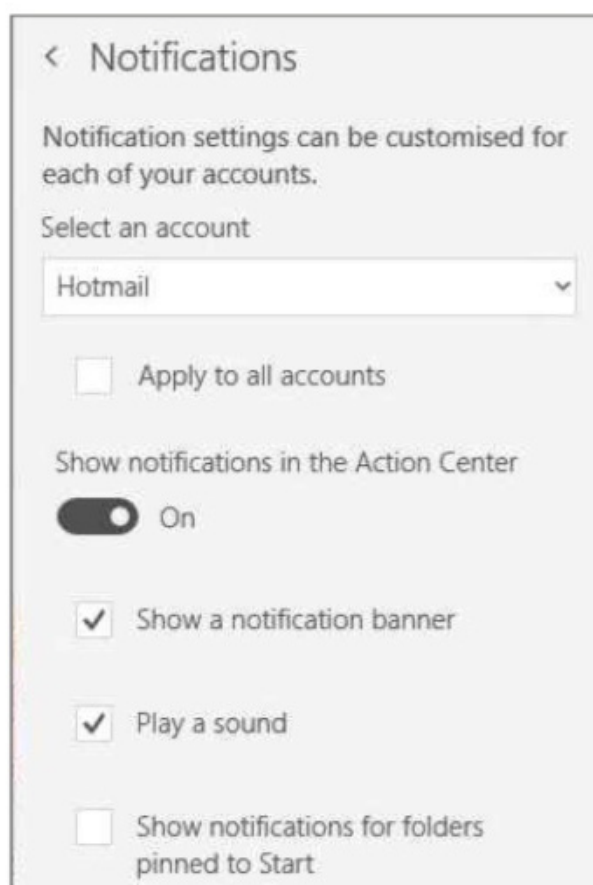
To configure these notifications, go to Settings, System, 'Notifications & actions' and look for the Notifications section. Tick or clear 'Show notifications on the lock screen' to suit your preference. This is a global setting, so it applies to everything. You can also set the global 'Allow notifications to play sounds' box, as you prefer.

Enable or disable app notifications

Most notifications come from apps bundled with Windows or downloaded from the Microsoft Store, but it's also possible for other programs to display them. To see which apps are able to pop up these distractions, open Settings, System, 'Notifications & actions', then scroll down to the list of apps. Here, you can use the switches to choose whether or not you want to see notifications from each app.

If you can't find a program on the list,

it may be because it can't display notifications in the official Windows 10 way. However, it may still show its own notification when the app is running. Some apps have their own settings that



Look in app settings for additional customisation options for notifications

let you configure notifications from within the app.

For example, open Microsoft News from the Start menu and click the cog icon in the bottom-left corner to open its settings. Under the General tab, there is a Notifications section with three switches for 'Breaking news', 'Top stories' and 'Daily brief'. Turn them on or off as you prefer.

Open the Windows 10 Mail app and click the cog icon at the bottom. Select Notifications in the settings. If you have more than one email account, you can configure each one separately. For example, if you have both Outlook and Gmail, you can set one to show notifications while the other one doesn't, and one to play a sound while the other is set to silent.

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.



Not all apps have notification options, but it's worth looking for them in their settings.

Customise notifications in the Action Centre

Some notifications are sent straight to the Action Centre, rather than popping up in the bottom-right corner of your screen. You might also miss notifications if you take a break, because some are on a short timer and may disappear before you get a chance to see them.

To see missed notifications, click the icon on the right-hand side of the taskbar to open the Action Centre. Move the cursor over a notification to see its controls. You can click the up and down buttons to expand or shrink the notification.

Expanding a notification may display more information or provide buttons to interact with it. Click the X to remove the notification and click the cog icon to display a menu with additional options.

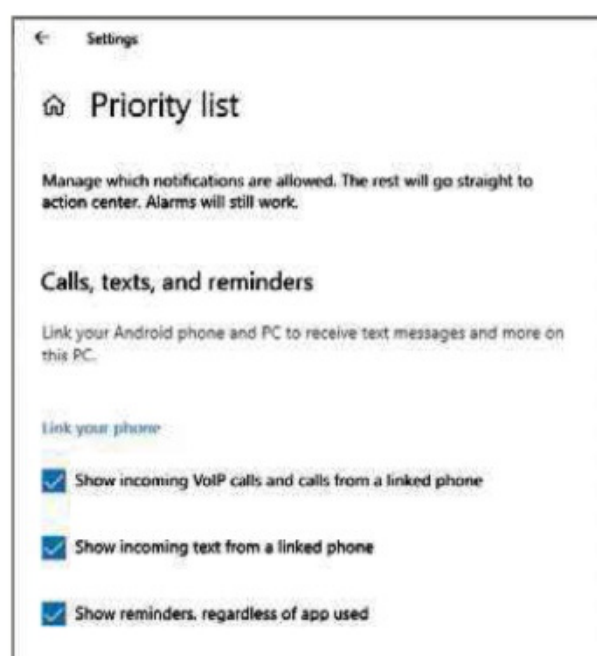
Configure the Priority list

You can use the 'Priority only' setting to exclusively show important alerts (see main tip, left), but who decides what's important and what isn't? You do.

Go to Settings, System, 'Focus assist' and click the 'Customise your priority list' under the 'Priority only' setting. The 'Calls, texts and reminders' section lets you choose whether to show incoming calls, such as Skype or another video- or voice-calling app. Reminders can be shown regardless of the app.

In the People section, you can choose to always show notifications from contacts pinned to the taskbar. Use the plus button to add individuals.

At the bottom, in the Apps section, is a list of apps that you always want to see notifications from. You can add more apps to this list by clicking the plus button.



Link your Android phone to Windows to get notifications when you receive calls

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

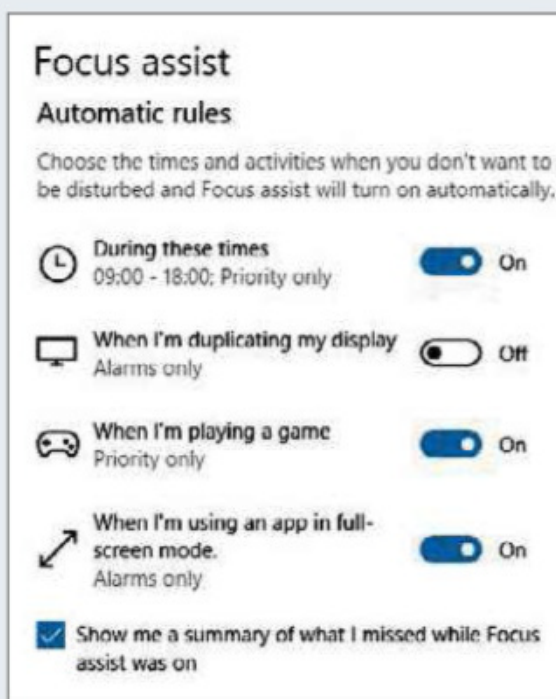
Set rules for notifications

As well as letting you choose which apps show notifications, focus assist lets you control when they appear. So you could, for example, set quiet times during work hours when only limited notifications are allowed.

Open the Settings app and click System, then 'Focus assist' and scroll down to the 'Automatic rules' section. If you play games, turn on the switch next to 'When I'm playing a game' so you won't be interrupted.

If you watch videos on your PC, turn on 'When I'm using an app in full screen mode'. Clicking the option after enabling this lets you choose whether to show only alarms or alarms and priority messages.

The 'During these times' option is particularly useful. Turn on the switch, then click the option. Set the start and end times for when you normally work, play games or watch videos. You can set the repeat to Daily, Weekends or Weekdays, and choose 'Alarms only' or 'Focus only' for the 'Focus level'.

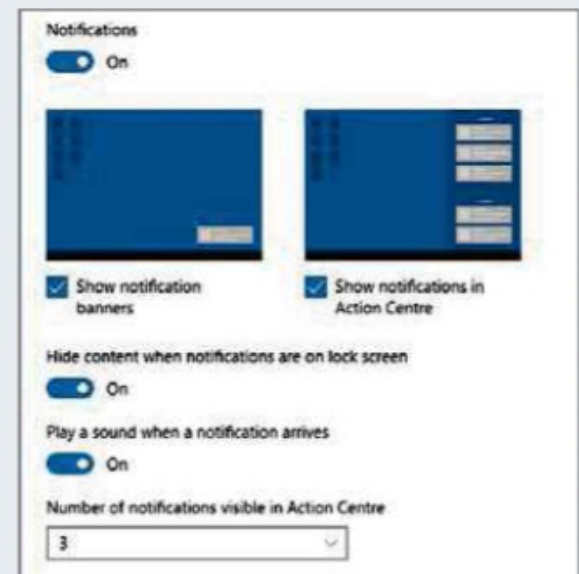


Limit notifications during specific times and activities

Tweak advanced app notification options

Every app that displays notifications can be individually configured. Go to Settings, System, 'Notifications & actions' and click one of the apps in the list. There are separate tickboxes to choose whether notification banners display in the corner of the screen or in the Action Centre.

You can set the number of notifications you want displayed in the Action Centre, from 1 to 20 – set a



Configure each app's notifications individually in the Settings app

low number if you want to avoid over-active apps filling it up.

To ensure important notifications don't get pushed out of the Action Centre by less important alerts, scroll to the bottom of the section and select either Top or High for the priority, rather than Normal.

Control website notifications

As well as Windows and apps, websites and services can display notifications on your desktop. However, you need to be selective or you'll be inundated, so think carefully before clicking OK if a notice pops up when you're visiting a website asking to send notifications.

If you are seeing too many website notifications, open the menu in Chrome, click Settings and find the 'Privacy and security' section. Click Site settings, then Notifications. In Edge, go to Settings, 'Site permissions', then Notifications. There is a simple switch in both browsers. If you don't want to see any notifications from websites, turn it off.

Both Chrome and Edge have a quiet switch. If notifications are allowed, turning this on shows a less intrusive style of notification. A normal pop-up stops you browsing the web until it's dismissed, but quieter notifications can be ignored. In fact, if Google detects that people often block a site, quiet notifications are automatically applied.

With notifications turned on, when you visit a site and are asked whether to allow the site to send them, your response is added to the Block or Allow list. Use the controls to add or remove sites from these lists.

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



STORAGE

Access OneDrive's settings

Q Thanks for replying to my question on OneDrive (Issue 500, bit.ly/webuser500). Unfortunately, I can't access my OneDrive settings. When I right-click OneDrive in my C: drive, the list of options doesn't include Settings. Going via File Explorer also fails to display a Settings option and, similarly, trying this on OneDrive in my complete list of files under the This PC shortcut shows various options, including Move and Delete, but no Settings. Can you enlighten me on this, please?

Alex Bennett, via email

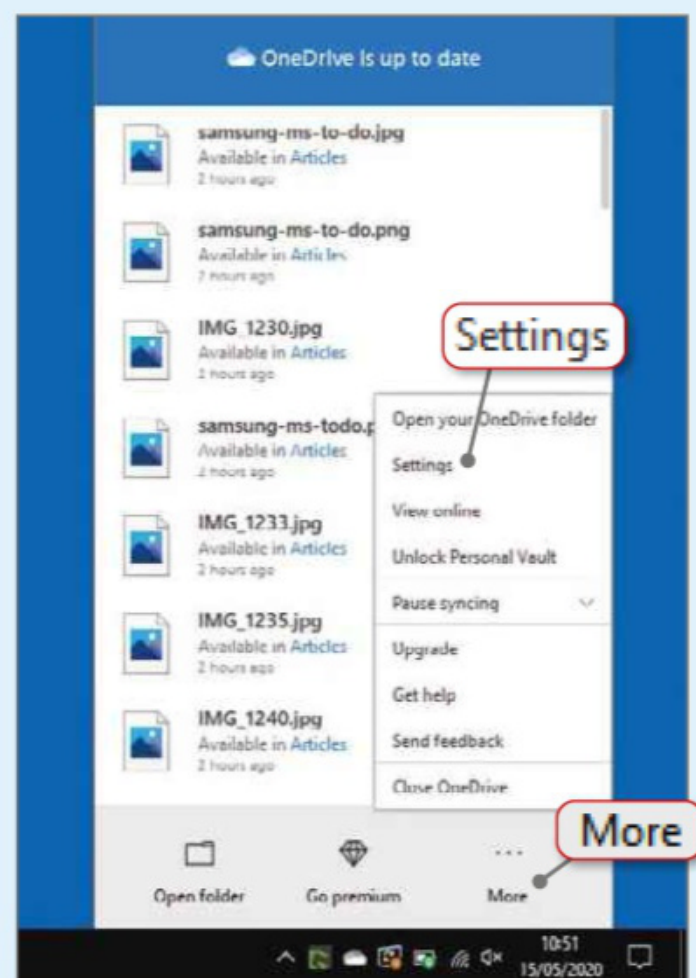
A There are several ways to access OneDrive's settings. When you open Explorer, OneDrive appears in the sidebar on the left. Right-click it to open a menu that includes a Settings

option. Alternatively, go to C:\Users\Yourname, right-click the OneDrive folder and you'll see Settings in that menu, too.

Note that OneDrive used to be called SkyDrive, and an old PC upgraded to Windows 10 may have both OneDrive and SkyDrive folders. Your files will be in SkyDrive, but there is a OneDrive shortcut to redirect to SkyDrive.

If you're still having trouble accessing OneDrive's settings, click the OneDrive icon in the taskbar. Select More at the bottom of the window that appears, then Settings.

Click OneDrive in the taskbar, then More to access these extra menu options



GENERAL PC

Recover missing space on a laptop's hard drive

Q My Medion laptop suddenly stopped working, so I took it to a repair shop to get it fixed. When it came back, it was working properly again, but now I've noticed that my hard drive is only 117GB in size. Before the repair, the C: drive was 1.6TB and the E: drive was 1.5TB. What happened to my C: drive and why can't I access my E: drive?

R Burns, via email

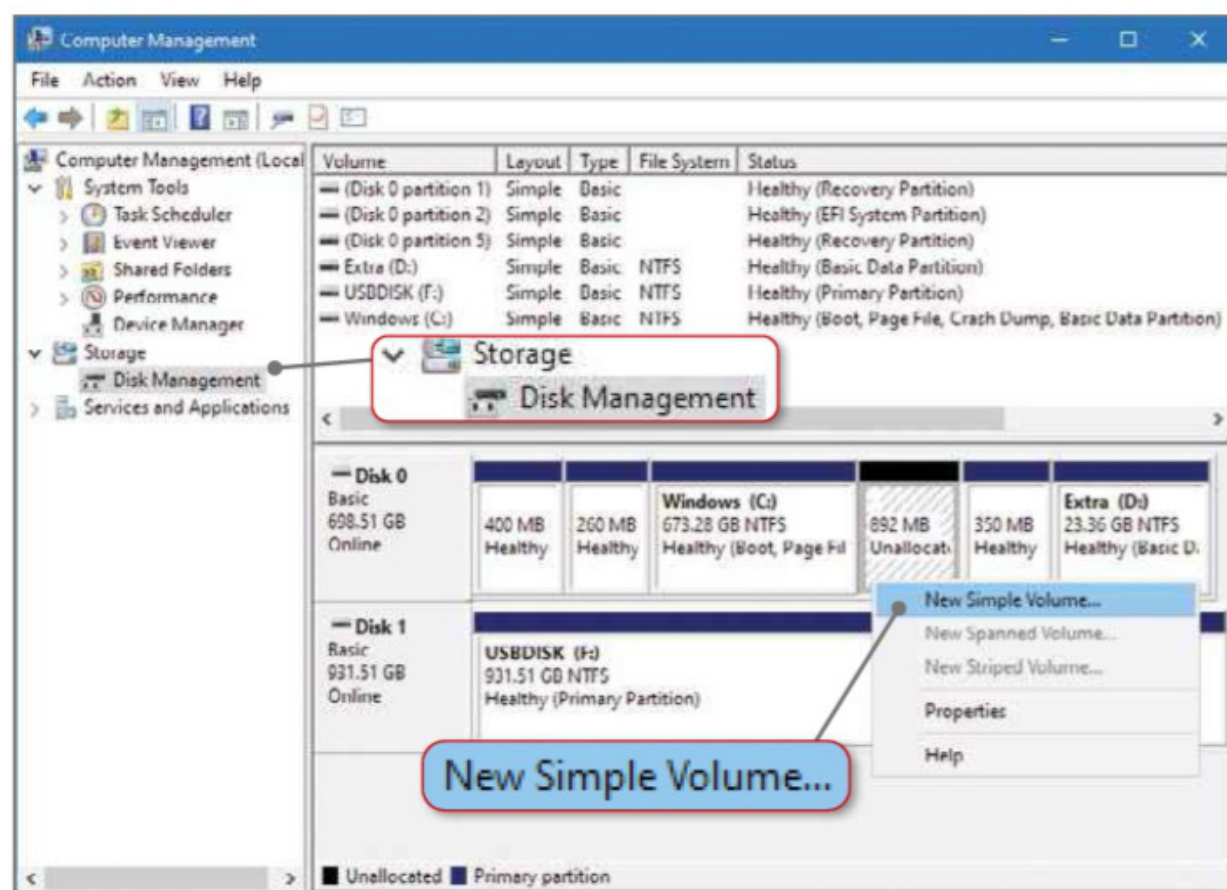
A It sounds as if there was a problem with your hard drive, which may have been misreporting the amount of space it had. Laptops don't generally have 1.6TB and 1.5TB drives. Perhaps yours has a 128GB drive, which – after formatting and space for Windows' hidden system and recovery partitions – leaves you with 117GB of usable space.

To check your available drives and partitions, open Explorer, right-click This PC in the sidebar and select Manage. In the Computer Management

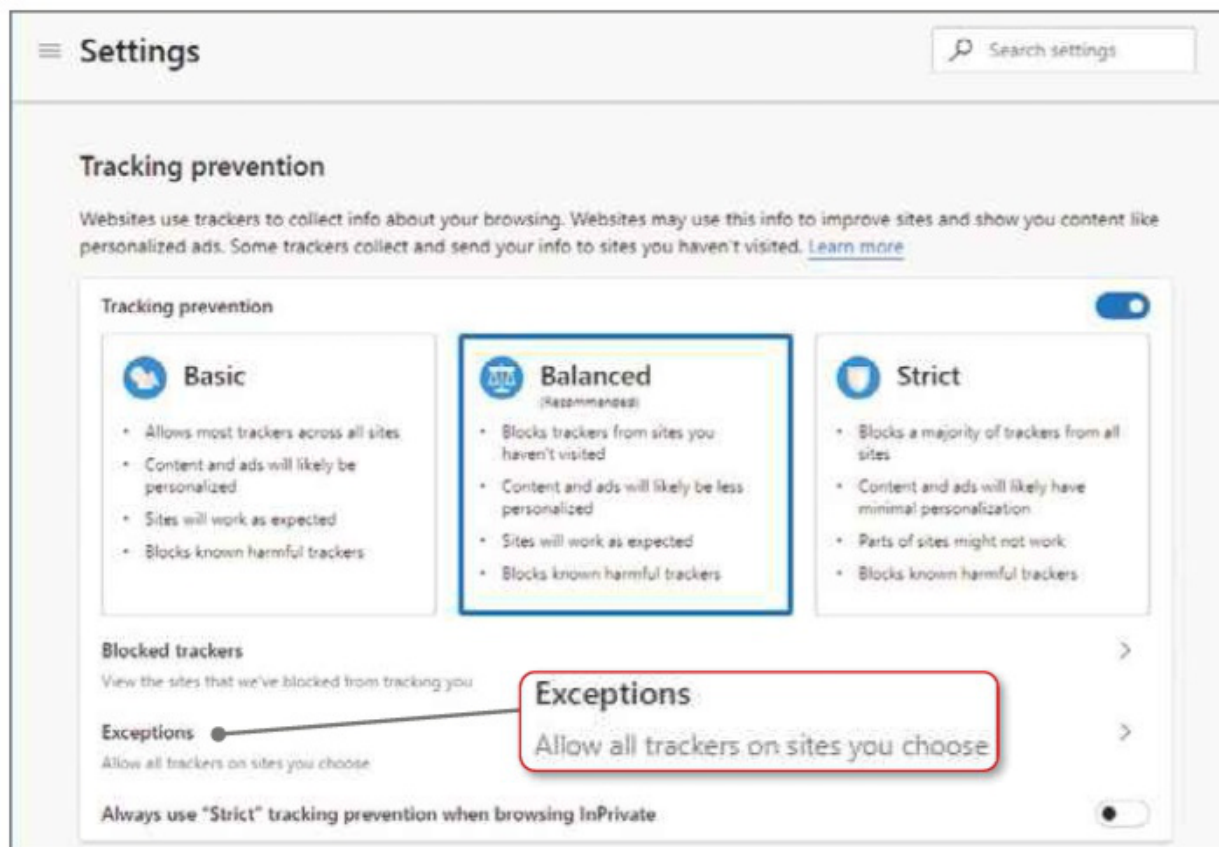
window, expand Storage (if necessary) and select Disk Management.

The graphical display in the lower part

of the main window shows how your drive is divided into partitions and what they're used for. The C: drive is where



Right-click unallocated space on a hard drive and create a New Simple Volume to use it



Use Edge's tracking-prevention settings for increased privacy

Windows and your files are stored.

So what is your E: drive, and why can't you use it? There are two possibilities and the first is that the drive letter was accidentally assigned to one of Windows' hidden system partitions. This is an essential part of the PC so, if that's the case, don't try to use it – just ignore it.

The other possibility is that it's unused space, in which case Windows will label it as such. We've occasionally seen unused drive partitions that are just a few tens of megabytes in size – such a small amount of space that it's barely useful – but, if you find gigabytes of unused space in a partition, you can right-click and format it.

INTERNET

Cut down on your trackers

Q My PC has been infested with trackers, which I want to eliminate permanently. I've gone from two trackers to 10 to 200 over a few months, and now it's rising exponentially. I'm running Windows 8.1 with Norton 360 and CCleaner Pro.

I've just run CCleaner Pro and it found 1,700 trackers, which is my current record, yet I'd removed all trackers just four hours previously! When I first ran CCleaner, it indicated that only 50 had been removed, so I ran it again and all but seven had been removed. I have run it yet again and it has removed eight, although it showed that only seven had to be removed.

I have three problems to solve. Is it possible to access a website without agreeing to accept trackers? Is there a way to find out which sites are generating trackers. And how can I eliminate them permanently?

My computer is synced with my iPad and iPhone, which I use for emails and internet searches, mostly through

MOBILE

Print from an Android phone

Q I have a OnePlus 3 smartphone running Android 9 and a Samsung laser printer that's attached to my Windows 10 PC via USB. Is there a way to connect my phone directly to my laser printer so I can print from it?

The printer works well, even after lying unused for months, so I don't want to buy another one just to get wireless printing. Is there an app and cable combination I can buy, or some other device to connect wirelessly?

Roger Dutton, via email

A Support for connecting phones to printers is patchy, and many don't offer it. However, it's worth a try if you can find a cable with the right connectors. You may need a USB Type-A to USB Type-B cable, with a converter to attach your phone's socket to the Type-A end of the cable. Check the sockets on your phone and printer to see what you need.

A better option is to install Google Cloud Print on your computer and phone. First, open Chrome on your PC then go to the menu and choose Settings. Expand the Advanced section and click Printing, Google Cloud Print. Click 'Manage Cloud Print devices', followed by the Add Printers button. Make sure the printer is

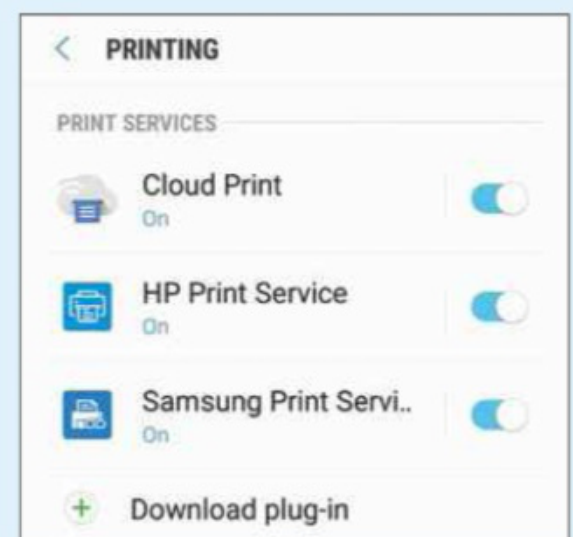
Google. Neither the iPhone or iPad has any additional antivirus protection, so should I install Norton on those, too? Are they likely to be adding to the problem?

Alan Smith, via email

A You can browse the web without agreeing to accept trackers by blocking all cookies and JavaScript. In Chrome, go to Settings, find the 'Privacy and security' section and click 'Site settings'. Click JavaScript and 'Cookies and site data', and disallow them.

Unfortunately, blocking all cookies stops many websites working properly, so it's not a useful way to deal with the problem. A slightly better option is to open an incognito window when visiting a website. When you close that window, all browsing data is cleared. You can then open a new incognito window to browse the next site. Your browser never saves anything, and nothing can track you from site to site.

There are many Chrome extensions that block trackers without using



Install Cloud Print and printer-specific apps to print from an Android phone

plugged in and switched on, then follow the instructions to add the printer and test it.

Leaving your computer and printer switched on, go to the Google Play store on your phone and install the Google Cloud Print app (bit.ly/cloud503) – some phones already have this installed. Now, when you print from your phone, you should be able to select Cloud Print and send the document, photo, email or whatever to your printer.

Cloud Print works by sending your photo or document to your Google account. From there, it goes to your computer, then to the printer. You should also see an option to save your document to Google Drive as a PDF, so if your PC isn't switched on, you can print the PDF next time you boot it up.





incognito mode, such as Ghostery (bit.ly/ghost503), Privacy Badger (bit.ly/badger503) and DuckDuckGo Privacy Essentials (bit.ly/duck503). Install them from these Web Store links.

Other browsers have built-in features to block trackers, which makes them better at dealing with this problem than Chrome. In the latest version of Edge, for example, open Settings in the menu and go to 'Privacy and services'. Turn on 'Tracking prevention' and select the Strict option. This won't block everything, but it stops most trackers.

If blocking trackers causes a site not to work, click Exceptions and add the URL. This means trackers are allowed on that specific site, but if a site won't work without them and you have to visit it, there's nothing else you can do.

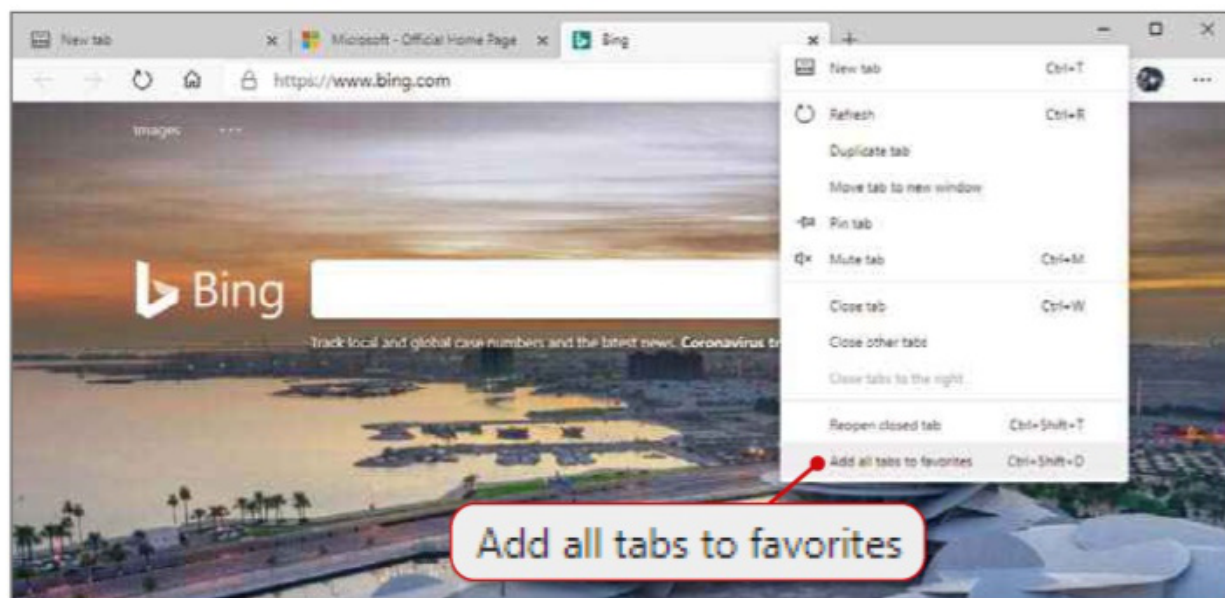
The iPad and iPhone are both very secure, so you don't need any additional security software for them. You can use a private-browsing window in Safari to limit tracking.

BROWSERS

Save Edge tabs

Q I'm currently using the new Edge browser. Is there a way to save all my open tabs so I can pick up where I left off when I next open the browser? Something like a bookmark that, when clicked, opens all my tabs.

Julian Fowler, via email



Right-click a tab to see options for saving all your tabs to your bookmarks

A There are a couple of ways to do this. Open the menu and select Favorites, 'Show favorites bar'. Then right-click any tab and select 'Add all tabs to favorites'. Select the Bookmarks bar and name the folder you want to save your tabs in. When you next want to open all those tabs, right-click the folder in the favorites bar and you'll see options to open them all in the current window, a new window or an InPrivate window.

Microsoft has added a new Collections feature to the latest version of Edge, which you can use instead. When you want to save all your open tabs, right-click any tab and select 'Add all tabs to a new collection'. The

Collections panel opens on the right, where you can give your collection a name. The Collections button in the toolbar opens or closes the panel. Right-clicking a collection reveals a menu with options to open all items in the current window, a new window or an InPrivate window.

WINDOWS

Shut-down Your Phone

Q There are several programs I don't use in Windows 10, one of which is Your Phone. It has its own program tile and appears at the bottom of the Start menu, too. I've removed some items I don't use by right-clicking their program tiles or Start menu entries, but Your Phone doesn't have an Uninstall option. How do I remove it?

Carl Gates, via email

A Not all bundled Windows apps can be removed, but you can at least stop Your Phone running in the background. Open the Settings app, click Apps and scroll to the bottom. Click Your Phone, then 'Advanced options' and click Terminate to stop it running, then turn off the 'Background apps' switch. When you restart Windows, Your Phone will no longer run in the background.



You can't uninstall Your Phone from Windows but you can shut it down

PHOTOS

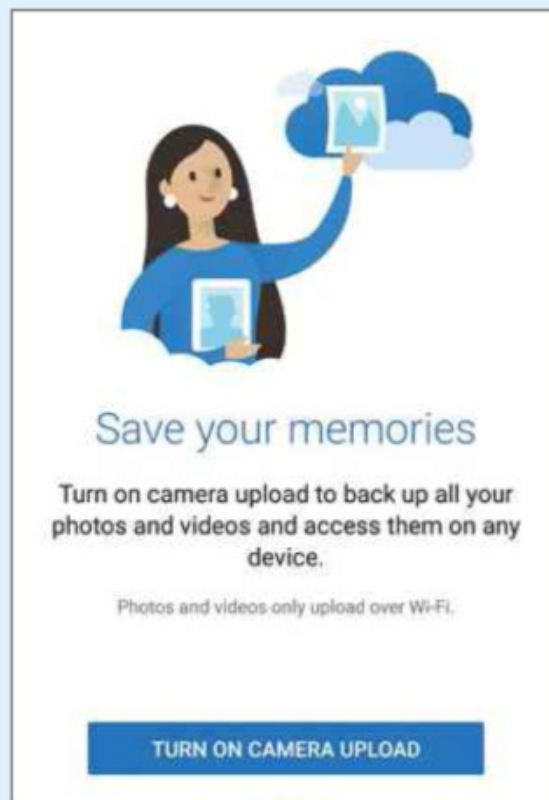
Sync smartphone photos to PC

Q For a long time, I was using Google Photos on my Android phone and Google Drive on my computer. When I took photos on my phone, they synced with Google Drive on my computer and appeared on the hard drive in my Google Drive/Google Photos folder.

As you're probably aware, Google ended this handy feature a while ago, which means the photos on my phone no longer sync with my computer. Is there another way to do it?

L Adams, via email

A Install the OneDrive app on your phone and configure it to upload your photos to OneDrive online. Tap Me, Settings, 'Camera upload'. OneDrive will then sync your photos



Install OneDrive on your phone and it asks you if you want to upload photos

to your computer. You might need to pay for extra storage space on OneDrive if you have a lot of photos.



This fortnight Roland has been improving his fitness, using apps on his phone to provide exercise plans



Readers' Helpdesk

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

BROWSERS

Change IP address origin in Tor

Q After reading your article in Issue 500 on the best Android browsers for privacy and security (bit.ly/webuser500), I installed the recommended Tor browser. Is there a way to change the country of the IP address in the app? I want to watch BBC iPlayer from abroad but the content is only available with a UK IP address. Is this possible or should I use a VPN?

Peter, via email

A Unfortunately, one of Tor's best features is precisely the cause of your problem: the browser constantly changes IP addresses to protect users, so there's no control over whether an exit

node is based in the UK, USA or anywhere else in the world.

As you suggest, you'll need to run a VPN. However, combining Tor with off-the-shelf VPNs can have security issues. Nothing major, but you may not be quite as well-protected as before. To get around this, run the browser alongside Orbot (bit.ly/orbot503). This is

Tor's apps help you maintain privacy and stay safe online

an ultra-secure app, also developed by the Tor Project, with a VPN mode that lets you select a specific country. However, you should note that the BBC blocks Tor and many VPNs from accessing iPlayer from outside the UK.

Steve Clark, Features Writer

GOOGLE

Stop Google taking over your screen

Q When I download a folder from Google Drive, I'll head over to another app or program while I wait for the file to zip. But when it's ready, Chrome jumps to the front of whatever

READERS RESPOND

EBOOKS

Send PDFs and ebooks to your Kindle

A In Issue 502 (bit.ly/webuser502), Helen Garraway asked if it's possible to send PDFs and ebooks to her Kindle. You need to find your Send-to-Kindle email address, which is assigned to each device, so visit www.amazon.co.uk, then go to 'Manage Your Content and Devices', Preferences, Personal Document Settings. Next, open an email, attach up to 25 files, and send them to the corresponding Send-to-Kindle email address. If certain file types won't open, resend them with



Find your Send-to-Kindle email address in Amazon's Personal Document Settings

the word **Convert** in the subject line.

HL Lane, via email

CAN YOU HELP?

webuser@webuser.co.uk

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

SOFTWARE

Q What's the best way to master Photoshop? I've tinkered with it on my son's computer but, frankly, I find it mystifying.

George Kent, via email

BROWSERS

Q When I click a search result in Microsoft Edge for Android, it always reloads the page. Why is this and how do I stop it?

Maxi, via email

I'm working on. If I'm typing or entering a command, that text transfers to Chrome. Is there any way to force Chrome to stay in the background?

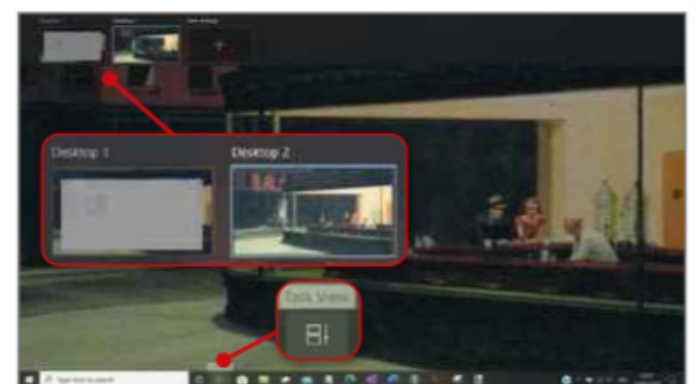
Lawrence, via email

A Unfortunately, we couldn't replicate your problem in our tests, but all is not lost. First, open a different browser – Firefox is a good bet – and see if the same problem occurs.

Alternatively, you could try using multiple virtual desktops. This lets you leave Google Drive to download and zip folders in one desktop, while using your work apps in another without fear of interruption. For Windows 10, either click the Task View button next to Cortana, then switch between desktops at the top of the screen, or use the following

keyboard shortcuts: Ctrl+Windows+D to create a new desktop and Ctrl+Windows+Left or Right arrows to cycle through desktops. If you're using a Mac, virtual desktops are known as 'spaces' and can be created through the Mission Control (F3) key.

Steve Clark, Features Writer



If apps are taking over your screen, try opening them in a separate desktop

Your Top Tips

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



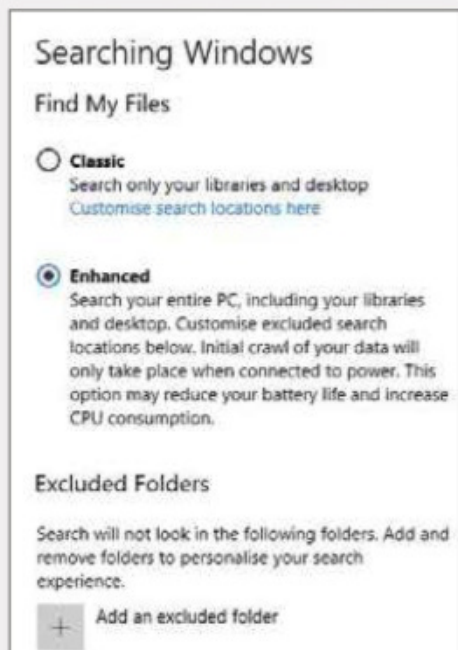
TOP TIP

WINDOWS

Improve Windows search

Searching the hard drive for files has always been dogged with problems and, for months last year, the Windows tool was completely broken. A Windows update fixed it, but I can't remember which one.

Now that it's working again, you can configure it to improve results when searching in Explorer or the taskbar search box. Open the Settings app and go to the Search section. Under Find My Files, change it from Classic to Enhanced. This indexes the whole PC instead of just libraries, such as



Choose between Classic or Enhanced search from the Settings app

Documents and the Desktop.

Windows needs to index all the files everywhere, so it will be busy in the background for the next few hours with higher than normal processor and hard-drive activity. However, once it's done, you should be able to find files faster and more accurately.

There is an Excluded Folders list, which you can add any folder to. It already has quite a few exclusions, such as backups and temporary files folders. Click the plus button to add any more that you want to exclude.

Rory Harris, via email

Back Issues disc winner



appear to work in either the Android app or on my TV.

James Haddaway, via email



Drag and drop YouTube subtitles to move them if they're in the way

WINDOWS

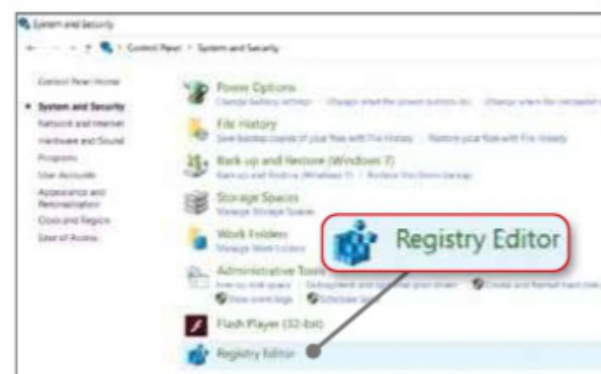
Add the Registry Editor to the Control Panel

Like many PC users, I'm often in and out of the Registry Editor, making minor tweaks (and, occasionally, major edits). So I was delighted to discover that Winaero (winaero.com) has come up with a way to add the Registry Editor to the Control Panel. After all, there's only so many times I can search for it using the Start menu!

To start, download the files at bit.ly/regcontrol503. Extract them and, if necessary, unblock them with Powershell, using the following command:

```
dir c:\[file location]
-Recurse | Unblock-File
```

Depending on your computer setup, you may not need to do this. In any case, double-click the file named Add Registry Editor To Control Panel. Click Run,



Add the Registry Editor to the Control Panel, where it ought to be

WINDOWS

Remotely control another Windows 10 PC

After reading your article 'Fix other people's tech remotely' in Issue 500 (bit.ly/webuser500),

I thought you might have mentioned the Windows 10 built-in remote connection program called Quick Assist. It sure beats having to install another program.

Quick Assist is found in the menu under Windows Accessories. All you have to do is log in with your email address.

You're provided with a code – the person you're trying to help can then enter this into their Quick Assist program and also grant you permission, so you can control their desktop. It worked really well when my mother had some problems with her PC and I would definitely use it again.

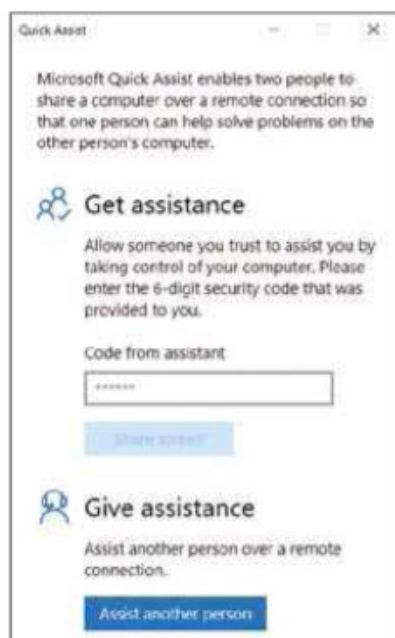
Daniel Coe, via email

VIDEO

Change YouTube subtitle placement

Did you know that you can move YouTube subtitles anywhere on the video-player window when watching clips on the website? With the captions turned on, you can just drag and drop them anywhere you like – although they eventually return to the default position.

I find this very useful when watching tutorials because it means I don't have to switch the subtitles off when they get in the way of what's being displayed on screen. Unfortunately, this doesn't



Windows 10 has a built-in remote-access tool



Accept, OK, and anything else Windows throws at you.

With that sorted, open the Control Panel and go to 'System and Security'. You should see Registry Editor at the bottom of the screen. To reverse the process, double-click the Remove Registry Editor From Control Panel file.

Tom, via email

WINDOWS

Find facts faster from the taskbar

The search box in the taskbar is different in the latest update to Windows 10. It has some quick-search buttons at the bottom to show the weather, latest news, 'what happened today in history' and new movies. The quick-search weather opens an excellent widget that shows the forecast for the whole week. There is a slider that can be dragged to see how the weather changes over the course of the day, which I particularly like.

Mike Carpenter, via email

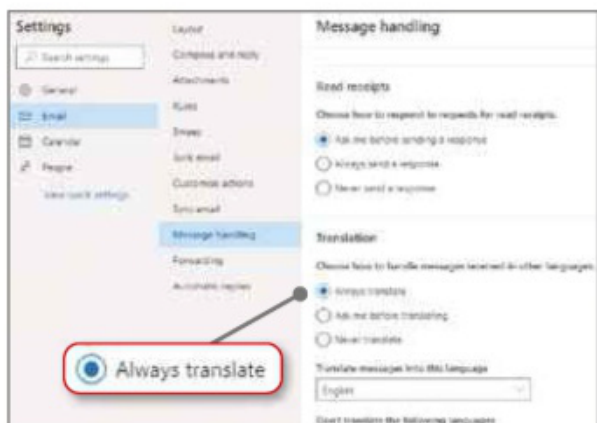


Use the quick-search button in the taskbar search window for the weather and more

EMAIL

Translate emails automatically

I don't get any emails in foreign languages, apart from the occasional spam message. However, while browsing my Outlook mail settings, I noticed an option to automatically translate them. It's not a feature I need, but for those that do, go to www.outlook.com, click the cog and choose 'View all Outlook settings'. Select Email, then 'Message handling' and, in the Translation section,



Select this option to ensure Outlook translates foreign emails automatically

choose 'Always translate'. You can select the target language and remove any languages you don't want to translate.

Dennis Roberts, via email

GENERAL PC

Send and see software feedback

When a program isn't working properly, it sometimes hogs too much processor or memory resources, or freezes altogether. Right-click an empty part of the taskbar and select Task Manager. On the Processes tab, right-click the program to see an option to 'End task'.

Underneath 'End task', there is a menu option called 'Provide feedback'. Before ending the errant process, or if you restart it, click 'Provide feedback' and the Feedback Hub opens. If you don't already have it, it's a free Microsoft app available from the Store. It automatically finds the program and lists everyone else's comments, questions and bug reports. So, if you right-click Chrome and click 'Provide feedback', you'll see lots of other people's comments about it, which may include a solution to your problem.

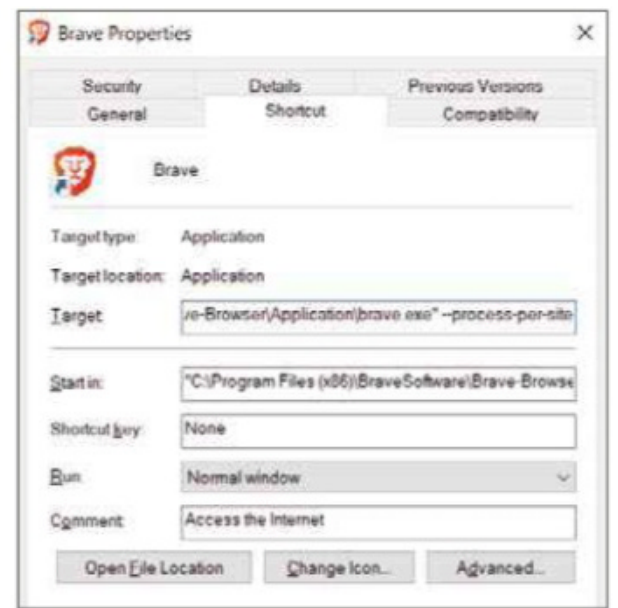
If no one has mentioned the program before, you're invited to be the first to comment.

G Johnson, via email

BROWSERS

Speed up Brave

There's a clever way to make Brave run a



Tweak the command that launches Brave to help the browser perform better

bit quicker and prevent the dreaded computer lag. Open the browser, then right-click the icon on the taskbar. A list of options should pop up. Right-click the word Brave, select Properties and make sure you're in the Shortcut tab. Click into the Target text field, scroll to the end, then type the following after the target application, including a space at the beginning:

--process-per-site

Every time you open a new tab in Brave, it starts its own process. That's usually fine, but not if you're running multiple tabs on a single website, which can be a memory drain. This command stops that from happening.

Baz Martens, via email

BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

GOOGLE

Navigate Google Drive the smart way

I realised I'd not been using Google Drive properly. I used to be frustrated by the fact that I could either navigate it using the file tree in the sidebar, unfolding the branches of the tree using the arrows but still having to click the desired folder at the end of the process; or I could double-click folders in the window on the right to get to the folder I wanted, but then not have the navigation tree open for easily navigating my way back.

What a fool I was! Several years after starting to use Google Drive full time, I noticed that if you double-click a



You can navigate Google Drive folders in all sorts of different ways - find the best one for you

folder in the sidebar, it opens that folder in the window on the right, and expands any subfolders so they stay visible for future navigation. This is life-changing. I've probably reduced the number of clicks I make by hundreds per day. Revolutionary!

Andrew M, via email

Have you managed to fix a PC-related disaster?

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



Star Email

My experience with cancelling Sky TV

In reference to Barry's column in Issue 501, 'Why Sky was the limit for me', this is exactly what happened to me.

I wanted to cancel Sky TV at the start of the lockdown but was put off by the 'leave us alone to help the NHS'-type plea. By week six or seven, this was wearing thin, so I contacted Sky anyway and, like Barry, managed to get through in record time - which was no surprise.

I was going to cancel Sky TV and buy a Freesat recorder, but Sky decided they could suddenly reduce my £37 per month fee (which they had



just increased) to £17 per month, on a new 18-month contract.

This made the cost of a new Freesat receiver only slightly less than staying with Sky over 18 months, so I kept Sky. I am sure that in 18 months time, there will undoubtedly be a new, faster, updated Freesat recorder - probably at lower price to buy. So I can then cancel Sky - if they're still around, and haven't been killed off by Netflix, Prime Video and BritBox.

In the end, I saved myself £20 per month, but had to pretend I was 'vulnerable' or a NHS worker to do so. I agree with Barry - this is shameful and disingenuous behaviour from Sky.

Dr David Cross, via email

Back Issues disc winner



Sky's also the limit down under

I live in New Zealand and what Barry wrote in his column is very similar to what happened to me.

It is extremely difficult to quit Sky. The process is hidden deep in their website

and involves a minefield of call backs, emails and 'emotional blackmail'.

I told the call operator that

I wanted to cancel my subscription, but this fell on deaf ears. I was given all kinds of "alternatives", including how I could put my account on hold and pay NZ\$16 per month for nothing!

Eventually the voice changed and became grumpy, and I was told that I may not ever be able to subscribe to Sky again if I proceeded. I ended up having to return the decoder to the nearest agent (an 80km return trip) to save a \$50 pickup fee.

I have replaced Sky with YouTube, Freeview and other programs available on the web, and can now watch what interests me.

Laurence Pask, Motueka

Clearing your cache can boost your browser

Being an avid *Web User* reader and a seasoned IT technician in my spare time,

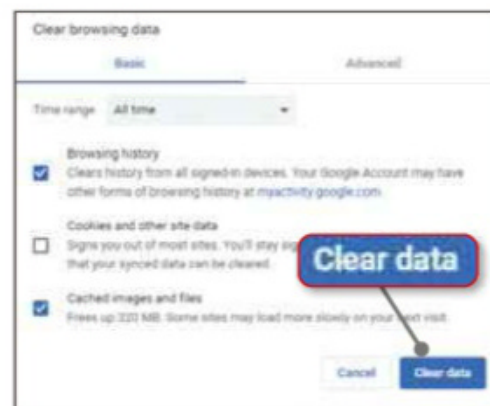
I cannot help but notice a serious omission in your 'Web myths exposed' feature in Issue 501.

In the section 'Clearing your cache boosts browsing speed', you almost accuse individuals of only clearing their browser caches to hide traces of the sites they've visited. However, all modern browsers are prone to crashes, freezes or misbehaviour. This is quite often (albeit not always) caused by the browser being stuck in a so-called 'cached mode' and can be easily rectified by pressing Ctrl+Shift+Del, then using the browser's Clear function to fix problems. Although the speed increase may only be nano-

seconds, cache clearances are sometimes necessary, and not just for hiding your activities

As I normally regard *Web User* as very balanced and knowledgeable, I felt the need to point this out. Please keep doing otherwise excellent work in your magazine!

Mr Wedral, Norwich



Quiz Answers: Issue 502

1 **Honey, I Shrunk the Kids**



2 **Herbie Goes Bananas**



3 **Bedknobs and Broomsticks**



4 **The Parent Trap**



5 **Inspector Gadget**



6 **Pirates of the Caribbean**



WINNER!

Well done to **Nicholas Grogan** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



WAYBACK MACHINE

2001



Windows updates wiped my Office

This week, I had cause to check the contents of my spare laptop. While looking at various pictures and documents, a window popped up saying that Microsoft Office had updates to

install. There were no further details or queries, just a simple alert.

Thinking it may be the usual sort of updates, and not realising that Office 2010 was installed, I accepted the

updates and left the installation to quietly trundle away. Big mistake!

When I returned, I found *all* the Microsoft Office elements on my laptop (Word, Excel, Outlook, Access and so on) had been completely removed! On looking for my install disc, I discovered that it was Office 2010, which is still a quite usable version.

Microsoft has seemingly not only declared that Office 2010 expires this year, but appears to be craftily causing users to remove it themselves, without clear warning, thereby forcing them to purchase a newer version!

Andy Swain, via email

Keep an expired Chromebook running

I read with interest the Star Email from R Thomas in Issue 501 of *Web User*, 'How I beat my Chromebook's expiry date', in which he says he will continue to use his Chromebook even though it no longer gets security updates.

There are options when Chromebooks go out of support, such as installing Neverware's CloudReady OS (www.neverware.com), a free commercial variant of Chrome OS; or installing GalliumOS (galliumos.org), a Linux distro that's specifically for Chromebooks.

In an age of greater environmental awareness, I think it's irresponsible of Google to withdraw critical support from Chromebooks that are in perfect working order, just so that they can make more money by selling new Chromebooks.

Perhaps you could do an article on keeping Chromebooks going after official support has been withdrawn?



Tim Wyndham, via email

What you say...

HAVE YOU WATCHED ANY HELPFUL HOW-TO VIDEOS DURING LOCKDOWN?

I watched a video on how to install the Google Play store on an Amazon Kindle Fire 8. It makes a huge difference to the device's usability.

Caroline Chapman

I've watched a few how-to videos on YouTube, including making scrambled eggs in a saucepan, glossing a door properly and making bread.

Brian Brown

I watched a couple of videos on how to remove a tap head and valve to replace a leaky washer. Saved me a fortune on calling out a plumber!

Paul Giddings

I have learned how to cut my own hair from watching videos on YouTube. It's a lot harder than it looks!

Sarah Perks

WOULD YOU TRUST APPLE AND GOOGLE'S CONTACT-TRACING SYSTEM OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S APP?

I wouldn't trust Apple and barely trust Google, but either one is better than trusting the government (no matter which party). However, the actual tracing app seems far from reliable and I don't see how this is better than proper testing, which would actually allow us to reduce the spread of the virus and pinpoint the source of outbreaks (something we have failed to do completely).

Rich Grove

Apple and Google are brilliant companies, but their practices are dodgy because they only want to make money out of everybody. The

government is incompetent and cannot build IT systems or apps that work. Witness the countless changes in the questions the app asks. Can users understand the questions and is there any validation used against malicious people inputting false information?

Lance Parkington

I trust Apple, but not Google. The tracing system can easily be turned off for those that don't agree to it, and could help us ease lockdown quicker.

Ben Ward

It's contradictory: you're not supposed to have contact with people if you're following the rules, like all my family are doing, so why do we need an app?

Geoffrey Boow

I'll try both when I get the opportunity!

Lynn Sharpe

HAVE YOU HAD TROUBLE TRYING TO CANCEL A BROADBAND OR TV CONTRACT?

I told Sky: "I am thinking about cancelling my subscription as it is getting costly, but of course if you can offer a discount I may be tempted to stay". I now have a few active offers, saving me £30 a month, and got Netflix thrown in for free.

Kevin Gadget Man Benton

Aye, with BT. I sent the CEO an email saying that I was leaving because of poor service, and they soon telephoned me.

John Mason

I cancelled mine in one phone call. Ideally, you shouldn't cancel Virgin Media until your new broadband is up and running.

Christopher Chesters

I cancelled my Sky broadband a long time ago because, from day one, we had nothing but problems. We would lose connection a few times a week. As soon as we went with Plusnet, we never had a single problem.

John Young

! Page 404



Barry Collins despairs at a Somerset council's desperate 5G conspiracy theories

Glastonbury is off its rocker over 5G

Glastonbury is, I'm sure, used to dealing with fantasists spouting nonsense after a heavy session in the festival fields. They perhaps didn't expect them to be elected to the town council.

Glastonbury Town Council – self-described as a “town that punches above its weight” – has produced a 20-page report of recommendations from its 5G Advisory Committee. The long and short of it is that the council is, like such great scientific minds as David Icke and the morons torching phone masts, opposing the rollout of 5G in the town on public-safety grounds.

Lest anyone accuse the council of conducting a piece of scientific research so half-baked Paul Hollywood wouldn't prod it with a fork, it convened a panel of experts to help guide its opinion on this matter. Those “experts” include Dr Andrew Tresidder, a GP whose website espouses the benefits of flower remedies to “flood us with positive vibrations and dissolve patterns of imbalance”; Roy Procter, a retired aircraft engineer and spiritual healer

who offers to heal “sick houses” suffering from “geopathic stress”; and the retired Professor Martin Pall, who has written a paper claiming Wi-Fi causes “sperm/testicular damage”.

To its credit, the council's advisory committee also included some actual experts with qualifications relevant to the matter in hand. Sadly, according to a brilliant report from the BBC's Rory Cellan-Jones, they all walked out before the report was complete, with one complaining “the whole thing turned out to be a clueless pantomime driven by conspiracy theorists and sceptics”.

Still, the open-minded councillors overseeing this “pantomime” would surely be able to divine the nonsense from the evidence, right boys and girls? Oh, no they wouldn't. All five of the published “reflections” from the town's councillors published in the report demand – at the very least – further

research into the health concerns of 5G, in particular so-called Electromagnetic Hypersensitivity (EHS). Even though no less a body than the World Health Organisation has already concluded that “there is no scientific basis to link EHS symptoms to EMF [electromagnetic field] exposure” – a fact contained in the report but by and large ignored by the weighty scientific brains on the council.

“Why listen to tinpot organisations such as the WHO when you've got a folk musician on the town council?”

And why listen to tinpot organisations such as the WHO when you've got Lindsay McDougall on the council, a folk musician willing to

dispense first-hand ‘evidence’ such as this gem contained within her own “reflections”? The councillor self-diagnosed herself with a “bout of this pandemic virus”, one of the effects of which is “a reduced immune system, which has made me electro-sensitive”.

“Recently I was in the vicinity of the telecoms mast at Bridies Yard in Glastonbury, and very distinctly felt unwell (general weakness, and more of a desire to clear my airways) when exposed to it (perhaps 100 yards away), and well when a v large tree (50-100 feet high) was between me and the mast, or when I was protected by Brides Mound itself.” Case closed, your honour. No more witnesses.

All of this would be – and is – laughable, except these people are running a town council and most people won't bother to dig into the detail of the report, but have just read that their elected representatives have taken months of evidence and concluded that 5G might be unsafe.

Someone call me when sanity is restored. On my landline, obviously.



WebUser

**SUBSCRIPTION
OFFER**
FOR MORE INFO SEE PAGE 62

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Thank you for reading this issue of *Web User* – we hope you found the tips and advice useful. The good news is that you don't have to wait too long for the next issue. If you subscribe to *Web User* by **Monday 15 June (8pm)***, you'll receive it through your letterbox before it's available in the shops!

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- Turn an old laptop into a Chromebook
- Best free tools for encrypting your files

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